

WIMBLEDON PLANNING

STEVE HOWARD **Page 8**

COVER STORY: LOVE WITHOUT WALLS

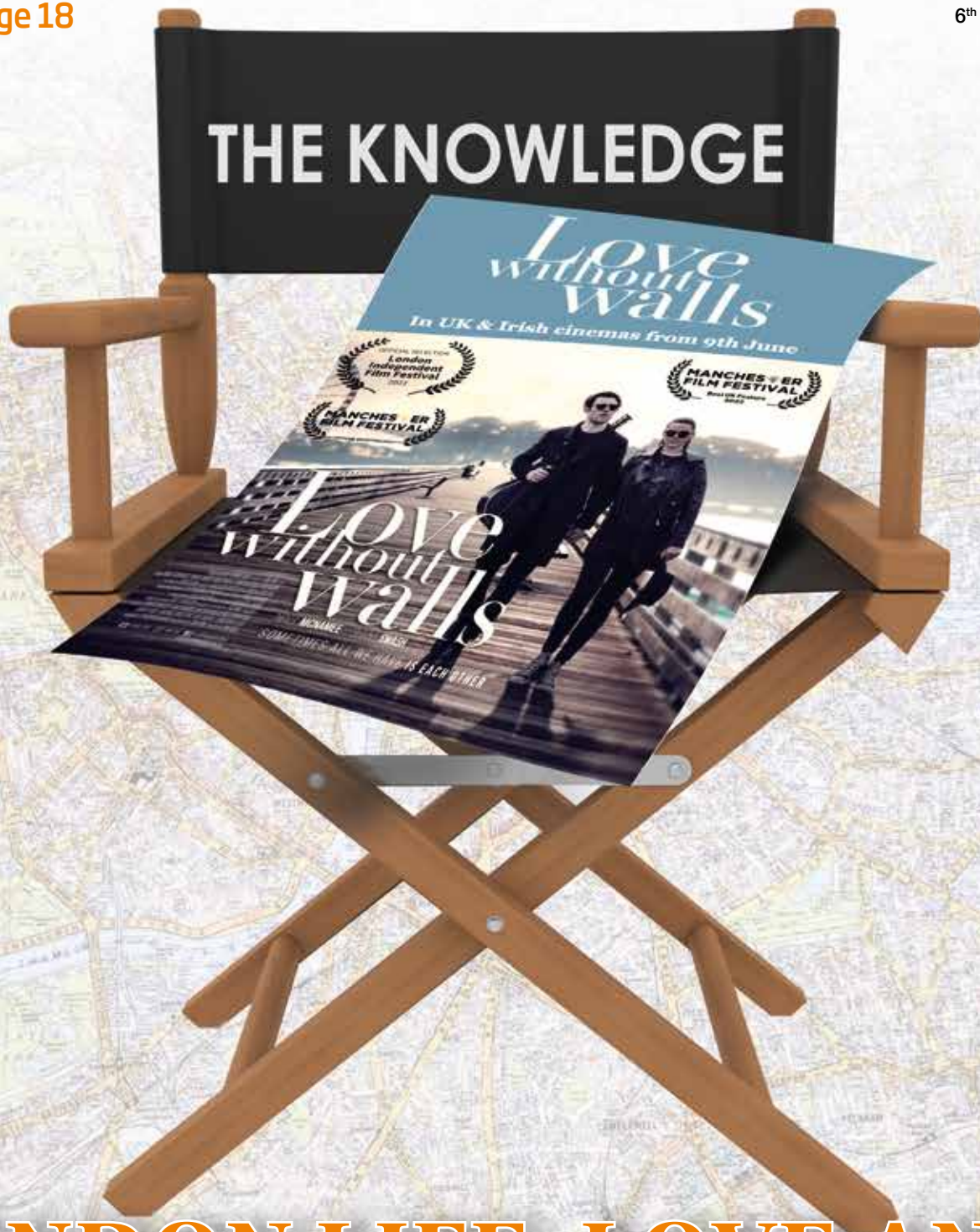
FEATURE **Page 14**

IS THE GIG ECONOMY IN RETREAT?

WIM FABER **Page 18**



6th June 2023 #542



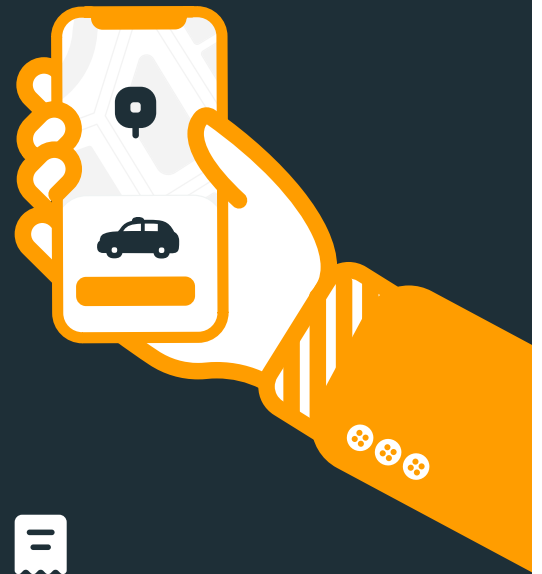
LONDON LIFE, LOVE AND THE KNOWLEDGE

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Puzzler answers

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WANDSWORTH BRIDGE TO CLOSE TO VEHICLES FOR 10 WEEKS

Wandsworth Bridge will be shut to road traffic from July 24th for "essential" maintenance. Wandsworth Council has announced that the weight bearing parts of the bridge need to be replaced to avoid long-term closure. The repairs will take approximately ten weeks and will be completed mainly during the school summer holidays, when traffic levels are lighter. Pedestrians and cyclists who dismount will still be able to cross. The northbound cycle lane and southbound bus lane are both already closed for some initial preparatory works. There will be temporary changes to bus services that normally cross the bridge. Once the closure is in place and motorists will be directed to other bridges. With Hammersmith Bridge still closed, there is likely to be significant pressure on Putney Bridge. Council leader, Simon Hogg said: "Unfortunately a repair job on this scale to an important river crossing means some degree of disruption is unavoidable, and we are sorry for the inconvenience it will cause, but we have worked hard to keep this to the absolute minimum."

NON-EMERGENCY NHS AMBULANCES AND POLICE CARS TO USE BUS LANES

TfL has announced that non-emergency NHS ambulances and police cars will now be able to use bus lanes. This follows a pilot scheme which showed that letting 'passenger transport' ambulances use the lanes, led to a 20 per cent drop in missed appointments. TfL will now allow more than 8,000 "liveried" emergency services vehicles to use its bus lanes. They



will also encourage the 32 London Boroughs and the City of London to adopt the same approach for their bus lanes.

LAST FEW PLACES AVAILABLE ON FREE SELF DEFENCE COURSE

There are still a few places remaining on the LTDA members-only

self defence course run by cabbie, former kickboxing champion and self defence expert, Richard Smith. The interactive course will take place on Tuesdays between 10.00am and 12.00pm in Clapham Junction, starting 20th June. The course covers self-defence, fitness, conflict management and more. To sign up please call Taxi House on 0207 286 1046.



SPEEDING CONVICTIONS HIT EIGHT-YEAR HIGH

Some 236,480 motorists were prosecuted for exceeding the speed limit in England and Wales in 2022, according to analysis of government data by Churchill Motor Insurance. The figures represent a 16 per cent rise on the total in 2021 (203,545) and were the highest in records dating back to 2014. Meanwhile, in a recent report on road traffic casualties in London during 2022, Transport for London (TfL) noted that the Met Police enforced around 620,000 speeding offences committed in 2022/23, an increase of 35 per cent compared to the previous year. The Evening Standard also covered the story of a laundry delivery driver banned from driving after receiving 22 speeding convictions in just three weeks, losing his ability to make a living. All the offences were committed on the A40 Westway flyover with the professional driver handed a whopping 67 penalty points. Be careful out there!



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Good Deeds, Good PR

The cabbie was so dismayed to hear what had happened to her that he went out of his way to help and ended up taking her all the way home to Oxford.

Steve's comment

I was recently very happy to see people sharing their stories about good deeds done by cabbies on Twitter. This came in response to a tweet from an author, who found herself stranded in London late at night, with nowhere to stay, and was rescued by a taxi driver.

Tales from Twitter

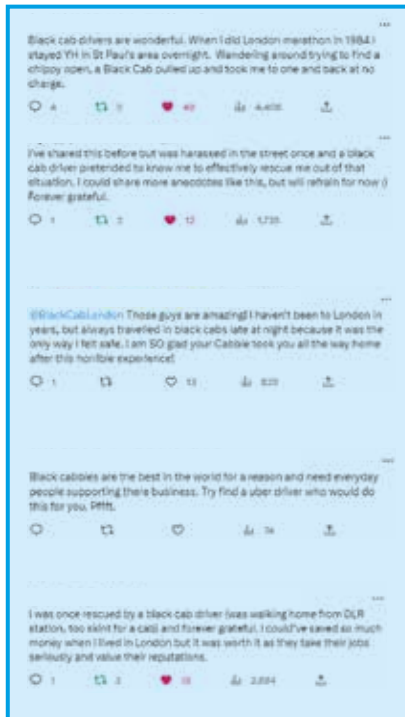
Twitter isn't always the best place for our trade. There is a lot of negativity out there. Some of the stuff that goes on doesn't paint London's licensed taxi drivers in the best light. I sometimes wonder whether the worst offenders are even cab drivers or just people trying to cause trouble in our name. Either way, they don't do us any favours, so when I saw people retweeting a story about a woman, who found herself in need of help and turned to a taxi to get her to safety, it was a nice change of pace.

The woman in question had tried to check in to the Hilton hotel on the Edgware Road at 1.00am, after her train home was cancelled. She ended up getting into an argument with the staff, who refused to give her a room, because she had no photo ID, and they were suspicious of her and why she was in need of a room so late at night. The hotel staff demanded that she leave and threatened to call the police if she didn't. This argument ended with her being escorted out of the hotel and left on the street with nowhere to turn. This shocking incident was caught on film by the woman involved, who posted it on social media to widespread outrage. At that point, she was picked up by a taxi driver, who she named on Twitter as 'Marlon'. The cabbie was so dismayed to hear what had happened to her that he went out of his way to help and ended up taking her all the way home to Oxford. This is what she tweeted along with a video:



Sharing stories

This video was shared extensively on social media and in response people began tweeting their own positive experiences of being helped out by taxi drivers. There were some brilliant stories. It became a thread demonstrating just how dedicated London's licensed taxi drivers are and their willingness to go the extra mile to help someone. Some of the stories were from other women, who found themselves in vulnerable or potentially dangerous situations, and were rescued by a cabbie. Others were simply in need of a lift or directions to a local convenience – even a good chippy in one case. I've included some of the best ones below.



Safer travel at night

Women's safety and safer a travel at night is high on the agenda at the moment – as it should always be. That's why we are supporting initiatives like the Women's Night Safety Charter.

Taxi drivers like this one go out of their way to help women, and indeed, anyone in trouble and offer an important form of night-time transport for many people. Keep up the good work Marlon, and all the other drivers who work nights out there.



New TX battery

Many will have seen or heard that LEVC has changed the battery for new TXs. This new battery means that new cabs will now be even cleaner and greener. It is also more efficient and so slightly increases the range of the vehicle. This won't make a huge difference for taxi drivers day-to-day, but it is positive. It also helps combat any criticism we get about the fact that the vehicle is a range extended EV (REEV) and not a pure EV (those determined to, will always find a way to put us down, whatever we do)!

From now on in meetings, I will be quoting the new stats on the cab to demonstrate just how green our green credentials are, particularly to anyone in power I'm trying to convince to give us proper road access or asking to support us. The stats are that the new 34.6 kWh battery (up from 31kWh) results in CO₂ emissions of just 14g/km, as a comparison the last of the diesel TX4s had figures that were way over 200g/km. Meanwhile, the electric only range for TX is now 78 miles (up from 64). Since launch, more than 8,500 TXs have been sold globally (7,262 of them in London) with the vehicles travelling more than 569 million miles and preventing 173,000 tonnes of CO₂ being emitted into the atmosphere. Pretty impressive if you ask me. ■ LTDA





Getting the Message Out

Can we expect the rollout of LTNs to slow, as councils will now be forced to spend their own money or will the cash cow schemes still be far too lucrative for some to resist?

Top rank

I've been asked why I write so often about LTNs, cycle lanes, congestion and road schemes, as every cabbie already knows it's hell on London's roads. I know it can become boring to read it time after time, but I do it for two reasons.

Firstly, believe it or not, it's not just us cabbies who read the paper. This publication is read by many councillors and politicians too. We know this because we are often contacted by them for some additional info on something we've written about or featured.

Facts and figures

Whilst trying to not overburden you with stats, so you don't switch off and turn the page, I do try to give you a good soundbite or two, just in case you have someone of importance in your cab and you can share that stat with them. Once again, we know this happens, as often they then get in contact with us to find out more.

In recent months, we've been contacted by outsiders for additional info on my Park Lane cycle lane exposé, which highlighted how TfL had massaged the number of bikes using Park Lane. I argued that they had done so by adding bike usage from within both Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens to try to justify why it was needed in the first place, and then why it should stay.

'Poison underground'

Something else I've written about, both earlier this year and last year, was the fact that the London underground was the most polluted place in London. To me, this showed Mayor Khan and the 'clean air brigade' were merely paying lip service to the issue when it suited them or more to the point made them money. These articles also resulted in contact and people asking for more info.

The poison underground story has now seen multiple outlets looking at this issue and some



real pressure being heaped upon the Mayor, with many articles and social media posts causing questions to be asked about Sadiq Khan's hypocrisy on ULEZ.

A recent post I saw, shows another example of individuals and groups testing the air quality on the tube and comparing it with roadside levels. This particular post pointed out that the World Health Organisation states that Particulate Matter (PM) in excess of 10 micrograms per cubic metre is considered unhealthy. They then proceeded to go into Pimlico Station, which let's be honest having only the Victoria Line running through it, isn't exactly a major hub and so will see levels comparably lower than

elsewhere. Yet, in the ticket hall, levels were already at 17.5 and once on the platform, reached an eye watering 122.0. That's over twelve times the safe level.

We then see the presenter back at the roadside on Parliament Street (I think you'll agree that's no quiet side street) and the measurement was just 2.4, which the maths genius in me will point out, is a quarter of the safe level.

So please forgive any article I do that may seem to be stating the obvious to you. There is a method in my madness, and please should you have an important person in the cab, use this info, and let them know if they want more, we're always here to talk.

Government listening?

As well as the pressure on Sadiq, it's finally looking like the powers that be are also feeling the pressure on the ridiculous road closing schemes. The government has recently told local authorities that if they want to bring in more LTNs, they must pay for them themselves rather than use funds meant for encouraging walking and cycling.

Can we now expect the rollout of LTNs to slow down as councils will now be forced to spend their own money to introduce them or will the cash cow schemes still be far too lucrative for some to resist? These schemes are often ideology driven and those who push for them could be described as fanatics, who are usually only happy to spend other people's money to push their own agenda with little accountability. Whilst councils'

"It would appear that even Sadiq 'I never admit I'm wrong' Khan has had a change of heart. It seems he now concedes that some LTNs in London are not justified and need removing."

money is still 'other peoples' money, namely us the taxpayers', it will come under much more scrutiny and spending on LTNs would likely mean cuts elsewhere, which would need justification and explaining.

Not all LTNs work

It would appear that even Sadiq 'I never admit I'm wrong' Khan has had a change of heart. It seems he now concedes that some LTNs in London are not justified and need removing. It would also appear that the Mayor, who usually seems quick to disregard figures that don't fit his argument, does believe the government when it states that their figures don't suggest that LTNs reduce the number of miles driven i.e. there has been no 'evaporation'.

Anyone would think there is an election coming up soon... **LTDA**



Where to now? What's next for Taxiapp



TAXIAPP

Since we launched the new app and introduced 0 per cent commission for drivers, Taxiapp has been growing steadily. We've got more drivers than ever on the app, with new faces signing up each week. Our passenger numbers are growing nicely too.

While this is great, we of course want more of both. Competing against the big apps isn't easy. Their pockets are deeper and they have greater numbers with PHV filling their ranks. But we're committed to pushing on for the sake of the whole trade.

We all sacrificed a lot to get The Knowledge. Lie-ins were replaced with running routes, come rain or shine. Time with your other half, kids and friends made way for call over sessions. We told ourselves it was all worth it in the long run to get our badges.

Then the apps came along. They wanted us to sacrifice a bit

more. But this time, they wanted a cut of our fares. After all the graft we each put into getting our badges, this never sat right with us. It still doesn't.

That's why Taxiapp is commission free. Drivers shouldn't be paying for work. Renting or running a cab is pricey enough. The last thing anyone needs is a hand in their pocket, especially with the cost of living going up. So we made four promises to ourselves and our drivers.

No commission & no cost to drivers

You wouldn't use a card machine if it charged you 15 or 20 per cent commission, so why accept paying commission on fares? Our drivers pay nothing and get 100 per cent of every fare they take. So with us, app work is worth the same as street work.

We'll never have PHV

Not now. Not ever. Black cabs are the best licensed taxi service in the world. We're proud to be part of this elite group. So the fact that



some apps happily bolster their ranks with PHV is not on in our book. We are not the same, but they treat us like we are.

Taxiapp can't be sold

We all remember Hailo. No one wants a repeat of that. We have it written into our legal structure that Taxiapp can never be sold. It will always be driver owned and operated. Which means Taxiapp will always put your interests first, as we share them.

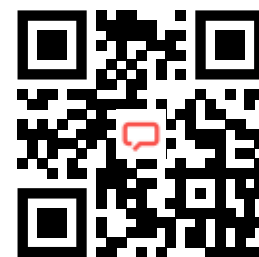
Drivers have veto votes on any changes

The only way any of the above can change is if our drivers vote for it. It's unlikely they would, but to set these principles in stone and show our commitment to the trade, we introduced our veto vote. We

are an app for drivers first and foremost.

If you're up for joining us on our journey, we'd love to have you on board. There's literally nothing to lose and a lot to gain. The more of us there are, the better service we provide customers, the more they'll use us. Which means more money in all our pockets.

Scan the QR code to sign up or visit our website for more information.
taxiapp-partnership.com





Wimbledon 2023

Every year SW19 is invaded by the tennis fans of the world, we as cab drivers try to give them a transportation service second to none.

News from the Suburbs

The operational hazards that are put in place for security and safety at Wimbledon don't always run hand-in-hand with us providing the best service we can, but we try our best. Below is some information on the known procedures that will be place for licensed taxis at the fourteen-day operation at the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club (AELTC).

The details

The Tournament will take place between Monday 3rd July and Sunday 16th July 2023.

Southfields AM "Cab Share" or Clock rank operation will operate as usual in Augustus Road up to the junction with Albert Drive, which will have a temporary one way operation (timings to be confirmed). Set down will be in Wimbledon Park Road just short of Victoria Drive on the south Side. Private local Marshals will be in attendance. Share price of £2.50ph.

Wimbledon Station AM "Cab Share" or Clock rank operation will operate as usual from the station setting down at the bottom of Marryat Road by the barriers. If using cab share, it is priced at £2.50ph. Once again local marshals will be in attendance.

We have been told by the AELTC that they will be advertising the ranks to all ticket holders by various means. There will be signage and QR codes on ticket sales to help in directing passengers to the correct rank area for their destination. They will also be attempting to direct more passengers to Wimbledon Station at the end of play, away from Southfields.

Somerset Road PM rank will be in the usual place (Gate 13) to access via Burghley Road, hopefully to accommodate the higher volume of passengers. We have asked for a bigger rank area for standing more cabs, (awaiting response), again Cab Share to Wimbledon will be available. TfL appointed marshals will be there and hopefully TfL Compliance.



Church Road PM rank will be the same as last year, entrance via Gate 5 inside park to rank, the biggest change will be that not only "Cab share locally" but also

"Cab share" into Central London. Share charts will be given out on rank, exit through park leaving by Gate 10, once again there will be TfL appointed marshals

and TfL Compliance.

Please assist in covering the work where possible as there will be 43,000 people using the courts and watching the games! **LTDA**

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TAXI and LTDA Member Mail

WARNING

Subject: Beware the Bilker

Dear TAXI,

A word of warning to all drivers.

I was bilked by a very strange female. After ranking up on the Euston rank for well over an hour due to the train strike (Wednesday 31st May). I was asked to take her to Edgware Road Station, the entrance closest to Bell Street.

On arriving, the fare came to £12 to which she said she would pay by card. I asked whether she was ok to do that, as she seemed

to have something wrong with her eyes. As we pulled up, I told her it was safer to get out on the right-hand side and as soon as the card was declined she was out like a bullet on the left-hand side. I caught up with her, but she had no intention of getting back in the cab. I believe this is probably not the first time she has pulled this off.

If you happen to have the misfortune of getting her, think very carefully before you let her in as she will do this to you as well!
David Goldman

Subject: Seeking hero driver

The LTDA was contacted by Rita McGeehan, who would like to find a driver, who took her home on Sunday 21st May at around 3.30pm. She was picked up from John Lewis on Oxford Street and was very confused and had effectively lost her memory. She couldn't remember her address but could direct the driver. It turns out that she was having a mini stroke and was in need of assistance.

She is now looking for the driver to say a big thank you, as she was unable to at the time. She explained that he was extremely patient with her, managed to get her home to Marylebone Street and helped her with her shopping. She thinks he was wearing shorts and had a shaved head, but has no other information beyond that.

If this was you please contact editor@ltda.co.uk and we can put you in touch.

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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!**

Mr Bryan Leach was the May's LTDA Lottery Winner!

Mr Bryan Leach has been a cab driver since 1985 when he got his badge at the tender age of just 22. Bryan didn't express any immediate plans for the money but after talking with him it sounded like it would help towards a possible move in the near future or to help out his daughter, who is currently at university. Whatever the money goes to, we wish him and his family all the best.

LTDA LOTTERY

The first prize in our lottery is **£5,000 - every month!** But you won't win it if you're not in it. **Tickets cost £5 each per month.** And even if you don't win, you'll know that proceeds from the lottery contribute towards promoting the trade.



LTDA Chairman, Paul Brennan hands Bryan Leach his cheque for £5000.

ENTER LTDA LOTTERY BELOW

SCAN ME!



To be in it to win it, scan above to enter online or call **020 7286 1046** and ask about the LTDA Lottery.



Keep On Moving

I am always very impressed with cabbies and how they conduct themselves, so a big thank you to all those drivers who supported this event and kept things moving.

Airports & beyond

Driver who work the Airport will be aware that the Feeder Park has been moving quickly. With that comes more problems and drivers have been holding up the Park for various reasons.

It has been so bad of late, in fact on Sunday 21st May in the evening, every lane had a hold up and the ranks ran dry. This is not acceptable. Those drivers are stopping their colleagues from going to work. **Would you leave the rank at Paddington, King's Cross, or Euston to get a coffee, use the gym or pray?**

Working rank

Drivers forget that the South Park is a fully working rank and not a car park. The wardens are there to keep the Feeder Park moving and to get bums on seats as soon as possible. This job becomes more difficult as the Park moves more quickly. If you work the Airport, please think of your colleagues. The last thing anyone wants is for our potential customers to walk off and find other forms of transport.

There have been too many drivers holding up the Park at all hours of the day. APCOA will have no choice but to send warning notices to drivers who stop the Park moving. So, a final plea from me, please try to think of the bigger picture. Think about our customers, our colleagues and our trade.

Buckingham Palace

The LTDA provided taxi marshals at the request of Buckingham Palace for the garden parties on 3rd and 9th May. We manned the rank from 4.30 to 7.30pm. It ran well until 6.00pm, when the cabs dried up and the queue became like a very long snake. We put disabled passengers on a separate rank and as cabs arrived, we directed them equally to both. I was very impressed with all the cabbies, who were all extremely obliging and most helpful.

We were thanked by all the passengers for helping. A lot were not from London. In fact, there were visitors from around the country and it was their first experience of a London taxi, so it was fantastic to see them leaving with an excellent impression.

When the queue got very long and a taxi hadn't arrived on the rank for fifteen minutes, the marshals started to double up journeys. This helped massively. The drivers who I spoke to were again happy to oblige.

Whenever I do any of these events, it can be stressful trying to please all, but I am always very impressed with cabbies and how they conduct themselves, so a big thank you to all those drivers who supported and did their best to keep the queue moving. Special thank you to Steve Howard for organising it.



Credit cards

Once again, I would like to talk about credit cards. My service provider keeps insisting that my issues are because I haven't updated my device, so I took time out to visit them and spent over an hour getting the latest version. Within a week of this happening, I had a fare from Heathrow to the Old Kent Road. Lo and behold, it happened again! The card declined three times. I did everything I had been advised - if contactless doesn't work start again and insert the card with the pin. Nope, it still didn't work.

I rebooted my machine, only to find that the passenger's phone was saying it had gone through, but my system said it had declined. At that point, my customer refused to try again. Who could blame her? That was fifteen minutes of complete frustration, sat on a red route (I will likely be expecting a PCN), with my poor customer, who had travelled from Dubai and had then spent another two hours in rush hour traffic from Heathrow, having to sit there trying to get into her hotel.

I eventually rang my credit card provider, who confirmed it was still pending my end and I would be paid. I was lucky to get through. I know that the majority of drivers don't, and it wouldn't have been resolved. The more likely result would be that the driver wouldn't be paid.

TfL need to accept that this is a huge problem. I believe it's not just my credit card provider that is the problem. I get calls from drivers using all providers. We are not allowed to have a secondary handheld system, so if that's what TfL are going to insist on, then they need to find another solution!

LTDA





Using an unapproved payment device? Time for a re-think.

Headline rates are just the tip of the iceberg.

Cabvision's research shows that drivers earn more tips when they used approved payment devices rather than unapproved handhelds.

On average, **CabPay customers averaged 102.5%** of the metered fare after transaction costs and tips, which is **4% more than drivers using unapproved devices** after transaction fees are deducted.

LOWER UK TRANSACTION FEE

The diagram features a blue iceberg floating in a grey sea. A horizontal line represents the water level. Above the line, a small black box contains the text "LOWER UK TRANSACTION FEE". Below the line, the submerged part of the iceberg is filled with several red boxes, each containing a disadvantage of using unapproved payment devices. The boxes are arranged in a funnel shape, narrowing from top to bottom. The text in the boxes is white.

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1. Unapproved Handheld Payment Device

Example 1:

£20.00 (average fare) - £0.30 (transaction fee) = £19.70

MONTHLY PROCESSING VOLUME	0.99% (fees calculated on average 1.5% transaction for all card types)	MONTHLY TIPS	EARNINGS AFTER COSTS
£3000	£45.00	£0.00	£2,955.00
£4000	£60.00	£0.00	£3,940.00
£5000	£75.00	£0.00	£4,925.00

2. CabPay Approved Payment Device

Example 2:

£20.00 (average fare) + 5% (tip) - £0.52 (transaction fee) = £20.48

MONTHLY PROCESSING VOLUME	1.99% + 10p	MONTHLY TIPS	EARNINGS AFTER COSTS
£3000	£75.00	£150.00	£3,075.00
£4000	£100.00	£200.00	£4,100.00
£5000	£125.00	£250.00	£5,125.00

On Average earn £0.78 more per Transaction on our TfL Approved Payment Device



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Love Without Walls

TAXI spoke to Jane Gull, Director of *Love Without Walls*, a new film centred around two young people struggling to make it in London, which also showcases life as a Knowledge student.



14

Love Without Walls is a romantic music-drama coming to selected cinemas this month. It's about a young couple, Sophie and Paul, an aspiring musician, living in Camden but struggling with the pressures of London life. It's a story of Love, hope and survival.

Love, hope and survival

The film stars Niall McNamee (*The Foreigner*) and Shana Swash (*My Feral Heart*) as well as Paul Barber (*Only Fools & Horses*, *The Full Monty*), Adam Deacon (*Kidulthood*), Sheila Reid (*Benidorm*, *Brazil*), Theo Ogunidipe (*Top Boy*), Amy Molloy (*Animals*) and Ricci Harnett (*28 Days Later*).

Unable to pay their rent, the young couple turn to friends and family for support. Over



the course of a summer, things go from bad to worse: They lose everything and find themselves lost in the underbelly of life on the streets. Though frustrated, their good humour and positivity

land them odd jobs and a temporary shelter. It's a story of love, hope and survival in the darkest of times.

At the time of writing, more than 70,000 households have

been made homeless since the pandemic, with numbers continuing to rise at an alarming rate. Whilst this is not a film about Covid-19, it is a film relevant to what we are going through as a society in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Showcasing the Knowledge

In the film, as well as trying to pursue a music career, the character of Paul, played by singer/songwriter and lead actor Niall McNamee, is studying the Knowledge. His late father was a cabbie so he's looking to follow in his footsteps. Audiences will see him out on his moped, calling over his books and going up for an appearance. His wife Sophie encourages him and calls over with him.

Many of the songs featured in the film are written and performed by Niall. One of these original songs is also called 'The Knowledge' and will be released this month alongside the film.

Director, Jane Gull's husband, is a licensed taxi driver. He passed out ten years ago and has driven a cab ever since. Jane was keen to portray the taxi trade positively. She wanted to show the work and dedication that goes into studying the Knowledge.

Jane told TAXI about her own experience of supporting her husband through the Knowledge, even calling over with him on their honeymoon. She explained how she spent the trip relaxing, reading a book and enjoying a nice break, while her new husband studied the Blue Book, something anyone with a cabbie in the family will likely be all too familiar with.

One of the stars of the film, Shana Swash is also connected to London's licensed taxi trade, as her late father was also a licensed taxi driver and a member of the LTDA for many years.

Love Without Walls was premiered at the Manchester Film Festival, where it won 'Best UK Feature' and also won 'Best UK Feature Film' at the London Independent Film Festival.

***Love Without Walls* will be in UK and Irish Cinemas from 9th June.**

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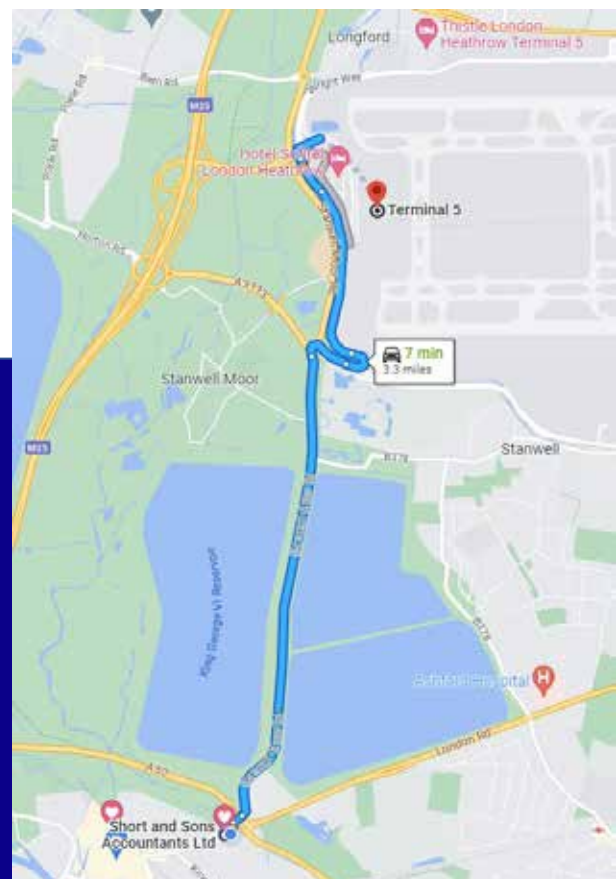
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Werewolves of London

A growing problem in London is one that sees out-of-town mini cab drivers scuppering our attempt to make an honest living.

Man in black

Whilst twiddling my thumbs at a charging point somewhere in the sprawling metropolis, I was ruminating on compiling a playlist of songs which mention momentous dates in their title or opening line. Straight away, September '77 from the song *Biko* by Peter Gabriel, popped into mind.

It was quickly followed by the last day of June from *Summer* by Bobby Goldsbro, *New Year's Day* by U2 and 21st March in *The Town With No Cheer* by Tom Waits. (Note: Every one of these songs is a classic, *Biko* being a giant among them). A random date then popped into my head, one which bore no relation to any song. That date was 12th July, 2017. After wracking my brain for a minute or two, I had a eureka moment. It was the day the All-Party Parliamentary Group On Taxis - Lessons From London: The Future of the UK Taxi report was released. This was something that I, along with a number of others, made a contribution towards.

Motivation

What inspired me to get involved was a concern the taxi industry was being treated like a second class citizen in the face of unfair competition. I was concerned at the level of sexual offence cases that seemed to be emanating from the private hire industry, including those licensed outside of London.

Unfortunately, that particular report was punted like a rugby ball into the long grass. This meant many of the issues faced by the industry six years ago still remain. One is cross-border hiring - it has become a real menace and compromises public safety.

Roaming werewolves

It hasn't gone unnoticed that there's an influx of private hire from Luton and Wolverhampton roaming about London. In fact, the last time either were this prolific Malcolm MacDonald was playing up front for the



former and Derek Dougan was hammering them in for the latter.

Regarding Luton-registered PH drivers, there may be a valid reason behind it because of the airport and its proximity to London. However, the volume of drivers who hold Wolverhampton licences in particular is concerning.

As of March 2023, there were 21,853 drivers holding private hire licences in the Wolverhampton region. Over 4,000 of those are currently working in Manchester. In a report produced by the City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) in January, it's claimed London is an anomaly as it has its own separate legislation, the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998. Operators licensed in London under that act may not subcontract bookings to operators licensed under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, nor use drivers licensed under said act. This applies to PH outside of London. Curiously, there are only 23 drivers licensed in London, primarily with one operator who makes bookings directly through a Wolverhampton licence. According to the CWC

report this is relevant, as there is unlikely to be increased demand in applications from London. However, this seems to fly in the face as to what is actually occurring there.

Wherever the operator is situated, they may only accept a booking in the area for which they are licensed. If a PHV operator makes arrangements for drivers to go to areas where neither vehicle, driver or operator are licensed (the triple lock system), the operator could be acting unlawfully by allowing the invitation and procurement of PHV bookings. A PHV operator who knowingly sends drivers to areas other than the ones for which they are licensed could end up having their licences revoked on several grounds, including undermining the local licensing criteria.

Wolves 1 v Brighton 0

The situation regarding Wolverhampton isn't a new one. In 2018, a petition was submitted in a bid to stop its council from promoting cross-border hiring. It claimed the council had licensed around 10,000 vehicles and continued to do so via a "fast-track" online Taxi licensing system. This allegedly

allowed applicants to complete an application in two weeks, resulting in cars being licensed in Wolverhampton but working as far away as Brighton. The petition was ultimately rejected due to the fact the government is not directly responsible for CWC's actions.

Unless the government steps in to change the law, which is what the APPG report was designed to help promulgate, the status quo will remain and PH licensed in other areas will continue to flood major cities. This of course creates issues regarding enforcement from TfL. Officers can pull drivers over, but if they're licensed in another region an officer's hands could be tied in relation to upholding PH regulation - again, this applies all over the country.

Next time you see a private hire vehicle from the midlands working in London, don't blame the orgs for not trying to tackle the issue or Wolverhampton Council for issuing licences like they're going out of fashion. Instead blame the government for sitting on their hands and absolving themselves of responsibility.

And I'm now inspired to add Warren Zevon's *Werewolves of London* to my playlist. ■ TAXI

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Is the Gig Economy In Retreat?

Why do new platforms think they're revolutionising the industry, by offering things the taxi and PHV trades have been doing successfully for decades?

International correspondent

Isn't it remarkable, and somewhat sad, that platforms so often go rummaging through the taxi trade's toolbox for inspiration? They so much want to be seen as reputable cab companies, luring business away from fully-licensed taxi drivers. Meanwhile, insiders predict that the gig economy has peaked.

In its never-ending search for more bums on seats, at its recent annual Go-Get product showcase, Uber (re)discovered both the concept of phoning a ride and the concept of 'family'. They created an actual phone number in the US (1-833-USE-UBER) so that the young (Uber now offers rides to 13-17-year-olds over there) and elderly can call a ride. Yes, phone for an Uber, just like booking a cab. The 'teenie accounts' started on 22nd May in selected cities across the States and in Canada.

Uber said it created them "to make life easier for parents who may need to juggle work while also getting teens to sports practices, mall trips and more." Ever so thoughtful.

Safety screenings

US media immediately jumped on its safety aspects with underaged kids. "Only experienced and highly-rated drivers who've done hundreds of trips and have gotten consistently positive feedback will be eligible to give rides to teens," Uber told CBS News. "All Uber drivers undergo background checks that cover motor vehicle records and criminal offences at the local, state and federal levels. Each driver is re-screened annually to monitor for new offences." Yet safety screenings, Uber has shown in the past, are the weak link in the platform's protective strategy. "Despite these safety screenings...", CBS News added, "...Uber's most recent safety report, which covers 2019 and 2020, shows the company



Bolt took an old idea from the taxi toolbox: pre-booking cars.



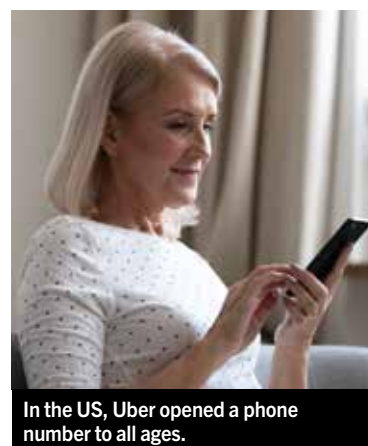
Uber's US competitor - Lyft Inc. - said it is open for serious takeover offers.

received 3,824 reports across several categories of sexual assault and misconduct, over that time period."

A tentacular strategy

The 'teenie accounts' come with safety features like live trip tracking, seeing who's behind the wheel and the option to contact the driver during the trip. All options will automatically be turned on for these accounts and can't be turned off. Even audio recording for each trip can automatically be turned on. Considering Uber's patchy driver vetting and security record, parents may not be easily convinced.

All Uber's 'innovative' approaches sooner or later make it across the pond, so watch this space. "Most of Uber's Go-Get launches are designed not only to create new revenue



In the US, Uber opened a phone number to all ages.

streams and attract new users," commented TechCrunch mag, "...but also to create a closed business loop with each product feeding customers back into other Uber channels." The mag called it a 'tentacular strategy', extending Uber's reach across the transportation industry.

Uber is - in the US for now - also going for hospitality concierges, with "the last vestiges of calling you a good-old-fashioned cab." Uber Central will let them easily arrange rides for guests.

One percent mishaps

Another app has grabbed an idea from the taxi toolbox. Bolt 'invented' pre-booking cars, fancy that! Believe it or not, the Bolt app now lets you book your trip 72 hours ahead. The only snag is, quoting from its press kit, that in 1 per cent of trips the driver may not turn up. So, what do you think? Bolt sends a replacement car? Like a real cab company? Nope. It contacts the hapless customer to simply arrange a new pick-up time.

Imagine you booked your car to get to the station or the airport. If you're one of Bolt's 1 per cent of mishaps, you're grateful for real cabs and reliable taxi drivers instead of jobbing amateurs.

Lyft open for takeover

On the platform front, Uber's US competitor - Lyft Inc. - with 76 per cent market share - said it is open for serious takeover offers. More interestingly, the London-based Gig Economy Project noted a recent Bank of America study, titled *Has the gig economy peaked?*. "The report argues that a combination of lower demand for food delivery as the pandemic has eased and rising wages in other low-income sectors, especially retail and hospitality, are the push and pull factors which are moving workers away from the gig economy."

The Project points out that, despite platforms claiming that 'Uberisation' is the working world's future, others argue that platforms have not met expectations, either "in terms of its size or, indeed, in terms of its business models or employment practices" and are confined to low-margin sectors. "Almost all of them have failed to turn a profit despite enormous venture capital investment." More importantly, we are now in different economic circumstances from the rise of the platforms, and the gig economy may well be in retreat. ■ TAXI

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The world's first set of traffic lights

Traffic lights are sometimes considered to be the bane of a driver's life. No matter how quickly or slowly you drive, you are guaranteed to hit a red light and be stuck for what seems like an eternity. However, did you know that the traffic light system originated in London?

In what can only be described a complete farce, the world's first set of traffic lights were erected outside the House of Commons in 1868. In true comedic style, the traffic light blew up the following year, injuring a policeman who was operating the offending light. It could also be argued that this was the world's first traffic light failure.

The humble traffic light didn't have its genesis in 1868, it was a continuation of a rudimentary traffic control system which had been used since the 1700s. Men would be charged with directing traffic coming in and out of numerous areas across the capital and beyond. These individuals would help to control the flow of people in any given area.

The lights, which were in situ at Parliament Square, were based on an idea proposed by the railway engineer J. P. Knight of Nottingham, who had adapted this idea from railway signalling systems.

The design combined three semaphore arms with red and green gas lamps for nighttime use. It was placed upon a pillar and operated by a police constable. The gas lantern was manually turned by a traffic police officer, with a lever at its base so that the appropriate light faced the traffic.

It is unclear as to the injured police constable's fate but, evidently, traffic lights remain in use with 4,700 sets across the capital alone.

Walter Sickert and the Ripper murders

Some people will be familiar with the Anglo-German artist Water Sickert, due to the two plaques in North London which bear his name. Born in Munich in 1860, Sickert was a member of the Camden Town Group of Post-Impressionist artists in early 20th century London.

The highly influential painter was considered to be both cosmopolitan and a little eccentric, leading the charge in the movement from impressionism to modernism. However, did you know that he was heavily linked to the Jack the Ripper murders?

Sickert's morbid interest in the killings emanated from the belief that he was lodging in the same room as the killer. He had been informed by the landlady of the property that she suspected a previous lodger, who resided there in 1881, was Jack the Ripper. There is, of course, no corroborative evidence to support this but nevertheless it didn't stop him creating a painting of the room and titling it *Jack the Ripper's Bedroom*.

Although he spent most of 1888 (the year the murders took place) outside the UK, it hasn't stopped some from theorising that he was somehow complicit in the spree. A book by Stephen Knight, *The Final Solution*, examines the theory that Sickert was the murderer and goes so far as to state that he was indeed responsible for killing the five women.

A book by crime writer Patricia Cornwall supported Knight's theory that Sickert was the murderer. Again, no supporting evidence was produced to determine whether that theory was true or not.

Ultimately, the claim that Sickert was Jack the Ripper was debunked and replaced by a plethora of other theories from numerous investigators and authors.

Sickert died in 1943. There is a green plaque in Highbury Fields, in commemoration of him opening a school of art. He also has a blue plaque in Mornington Crescent, noting his time living in the area.



SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW LONDON?

The ghost of Greenwich foot tunnel

Most taxi drivers will know that Greenwich foot tunnel is an underpass beneath the River Thames, stretching from Thames Path, Greenwich, on the south of the river to Saunders Ness Road on the Isle of Dogs.

Opened in 1902, this 370-metre tunnel is used by 1.5 million people each year, or more than 4,000 a day. The tunnel is a hugely popular thoroughfare, linking the two sides of London, and although the tunnel is relatively unremarkable it does boast something which makes it unique: a ghost (allegedly).



The foot tunnel has a reputation for being one of the most haunted places in London. As its eerie countenance permeates through its dimly lit illumination and grubby, tiled walls, the extreme silence becomes deafening, save for the sound of dripping water and the echoing of reverberating footsteps. It is at this point some have claimed to have felt very uneasy walking through the cast-iron passage. More alarmingly, some have claimed to have witnessed an elderly couple dressed in Victorian clothing, stalking the path. It's claimed said couple disappear into thin air as they are passed by...

Nobody knows who the elderly couple are and, despite extensive research, there is no indication of an incident taking place inside the tunnel during its early years. So the mystery remains as to who the couple are and why they haunt it.

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Importance of the Taxicard Scheme

Earlier this month Alan McDonald, Strategic Account Manager for the Public Sector at ComCab London and Andy Rollock, Mobility Services Manager at London Councils met up for a chat about the fantastic Taxicard account and what it means to customers and drivers.



Andy explained "All of our customers are either vulnerable or disabled and without the Taxicard service they will be socially isolated, they wouldn't be able to move around because their disability means they can't use Public Transport, so without the Taxicard scheme and ComCab London, people would be housebound and not be able to get out"

Alan added "ComCab London are very proud of being the sole contractor for Taxicard for as long as its existed. It really means a lot to ComCab London drivers, knowing that they are able to deliver a service to people with vulnerable positions and impairments."

Giving something back to people who really need help

Andy said "I think for drivers it's probably not so much about the financial gain, it's more around the social aspect because they are giving people the opportunity to get out. They're building relationships with customers and it's having that trust in that driver, someone the customer can rely on, someone they know, if they have a disability whereby, they need assistance, that driver knows how to provide that bit of assurance and safety. So, I think, for a driver coming onto the scheme it's more about giving something back to people who really need that help in probably the most vulnerable time of their lives. The scheme is more around the social aspect and that relationship than anything else for me."

Improvements to the Taxicard scheme over the years

There have been quite a few improvements to the scheme over the years, such as customers being able to book over the telephone as well as having the option to book via the app or online. ComCab London have gone from 1-2% of Taxicard holders booking digitally 5-6 years ago to 15% booking digitally now. Alan advised "we've done a lot of work with the accessibility monitoring team to make sure our digital channels are accessible."

Another improvement has been the introduction of Futures, where drivers can schedule their work for the day, Andy said "ComCab London drivers don't have to drive around the street trying to find street hails, they know they have advance bookings in place which gives customers reassurance too as they know their taxi is coming, they know if they have to go to a hospital appointment that they're going to get there. It's a great advantage for drivers working on the scheme to be able to plan their day."



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Missed our last Episode? ComCab London Family - Episode Ten





The Camden Town Killing

Thanks to its proximity to King's Cross and St Pancras, Agar Grove is - to cabbies at least - one of North London's most familiar roads.



collection, which was bloodied and scattered about.

Robert and Ruby

The following day, Friday 13th, a woman named Ruby Young, who'd once been in a relationship with Robert Wood, received a surprise telegram from her former lover, asking to meet.

She agreed, and when they did Ruby claimed Wood told her that, if asked, "you must say you always saw me Mondays and Wednesdays", although he refused to explain why.

Eventually, the postcard from Bruges was found and, having been dated recently, was considered key evidence. It was therefore printed in the *The News of the World*

offering £100 for any information.

Ruby saw this and recognised the handwriting as Robert Woods'. She confided in a friend who worked on Fleet Street, who in turn informed the police, leading to Wood's arrest as he walked along Gray's Inn Road.

"In his trial at the Old Bailey, Wood was represented by Edward Marshall Hall, who was widely regarded to be one of the finest legal minds of his time."

In his trial at the Old Bailey, Wood was represented by Edward Marshall Hall, who was widely regarded to be one of the finest legal minds of his time.

In court, he tore every witness to pieces, and even suggested it was Ruby who'd devised the idea of concocting a false alibi.

Amazingly, the jury bought it and took just 15 minutes to return a verdict of Not Guilty.

No further action was taken regarding Emily's murder, although in the years since, a theory has arisen that the artist Walter Sickert - who lived on Mornington Crescent and dramatised the murder in a series of shocking paintings - may have been responsible.

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

Rob's history tips

22

Agar Grove hasn't always been called Agar Grove. For many years, the street was known as 'St Paul's Road' and it was under this guise, in 1907, that it became the scene of one of London's most notorious unsolved murders.

The figure at the centre of this case was Emily Elizabeth Dimmock. The daughter of a publican, Emily was born near Bishops Stortford in 1884. In 1905, at the age of 21, she moved to London and secured lodgings at 1 Bidborough Street.

This property was owned by a ne'er-do-well named John William Crabtree who, on numerous occasions, was arrested for running a brothel and was responsible for drawing Emily into the city's seedy underworld.

A fresh start?

Emily's situation appeared to change for the better in 1906 when she moved in with a 19-year-old fellow named Bert Shaw. The couple initially lived on Royal College Street, and by day it appeared Emily was content to live the domestic life.

However, Bert worked for the Midland Railway and, in his capacity as a chef on the St

Pancras to Sheffield express, he was often away for lengthy shifts - particularly at night. It was during such periods that Emily, using the name 'Phyllis', would return to sex work, scouting for business in local pubs; one of her preferred places being The Rising Sun on Euston Road.

Today, that pub is now called The Rocket, but if you look up at the building's Chalton Street side you can still see the original name emblazoned in an ornate carving.

Murder

On the evening of Friday, 6th September, 1907, Emily was drinking in another of her haunts; The Old Eagle on Royal College Street, where she met a man named Robert Wood.

Emily happened to enjoy collecting postcards, and Wood, a resident of Frederick Street, happened to have one on him

which he'd picked up on a recent trip to Bruges.

As such, he wrote a note on the back of it, inviting Emily to meet him later at The Rising Sun, although he signed it as 'Alice' to avoid arousing suspicion.

The pair met again in the Old Eagle on Wednesday, 11th September, marking the last time Emily would be seen alive.

The following morning, Bert's mother came to visit her son and partner, who by now were living at 29 St Paul's Road. Unhappy about their relationship, she'd travelled down from Northamptonshire in an attempt to make some amends, but when Mrs. Shaw knocked there was no answer.

Eventually, Bert returned home from work and, himself unable to gain access, they asked the landlady, Mrs. Stocks, to fetch a spare key.

Once inside, the group were met with a scene of utter horror. Emily lay dead in a pool of blood, her throat having been cut so deeply she'd nearly been decapitated. The room had also been ransacked, with particular attention paid to her postcard



Robert Wood.

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What's on? WEST END

Charlotte's back to reveal London's best stage shows, and what's worth recommending to your customers.

Under the Spotlight

Hamilton – Victoria Palace Theatre

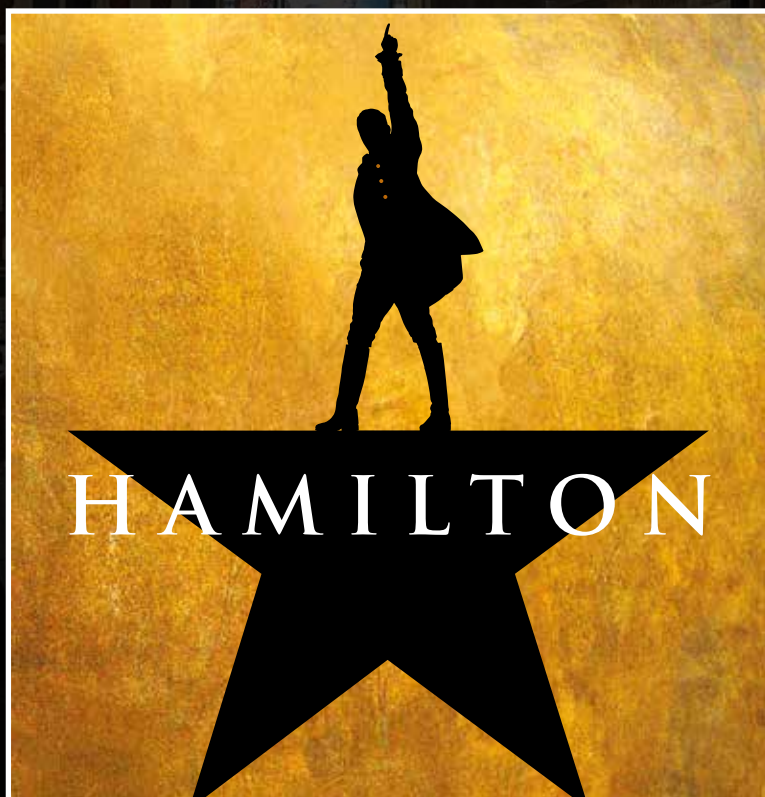
The filmed performance of *Hamilton* dropping on Disney+ in July 2020 was a cultural moment like few others this side of the millennium. Perfectly timed, during the first Covid lockdown, it quenched a yearning so many had for the theatre. Despite the Broadway production having been performed *Non-Stop* since 2015, arriving in London in 2017 it felt like the filmed production saw the following explode into monumental *Hurricane*. Now everyone was *Helpless* in doing anything other than becoming a fan of writer-creator Lin Manuel Miranda. But, having had to *Wait For It*, would seeing the show now, in 2023, still *Blow Us All Away*? Rather delightfully, and relievedly, audiences can still be *Satisfied* – and then some – by this hip hop musical about America's *Right Hand Man* and Founding Father, *Alexander Hamilton*. For those who've seen it previously, any fears about it not being the cast *We Know* from the filmed performance are immediately put to bed with its self-titled opening tune. Here, the ensemble cast's chemistry immediately burns and crackles as they provide their own quirks and takes on their roles. Standouts include Reuben Joseph's attentive and hubristic Hamilton, Trevor Dion Nicholas's commanding and melodic George Washington and Simon-Anthony Rhoden's yearning yet knowing Aaron Burr.

Hamilton is a stage show that is as entertaining as they come. Because when you've been once, you just know *You'll Be Back*.

(And yes, that review was littered with song title references, in case that wasn't clear.)



Hamilton runs until March, 2024.



Leo Friedman

The Motive And The Cue – National Theatre

The Motive And The Cue is a theatre production reimagining the formation of something new. But, in this case, the room in question is a rehearsal one – that of Richard Burton (Johnny Flynn) and Sir John Gielgud (Mark Gatiss). In 1964, Burton – the most famous movie star in the world at the time – decided to perform in an experimental new production of *Hamlet*, under the exciting yet exacting direction of Gielgud.

We get to follow the 25-day rehearsal process, courtesy of a fierce and funny script by Jack Thorne, as we watch things start to quickly unravel. Their collaboration, initially founded on Burton's adoration of Gielgud's undisputed talent and contribution to theatre, becomes a collision between two different ages of theatre and celebrity. Burton is at the height of his career, whilst Gielgud – a contemporary of Laurence Olivier and Michael Redgrave – had seemingly been forgotten.

The result is a play that breezes through its two-hour-and-40-minute runtime, mostly due to the extraordinary lead performances. Flynn's take on Burton is a near-enough pitch perfect impersonation: his inflections and mannerisms all present and correct. But it's Gatiss who brings the play to life, a performance of layered profundity as he grapples with a changing world which, he fears, no longer has a place for him.

A polished reflection on theatre, art and celebrity and why any of it really matters.



The Motive And The Cue runs until 15th July, 2023.

What else is on?

■ The Shape Of Things – Park Theatre (until 1st July)

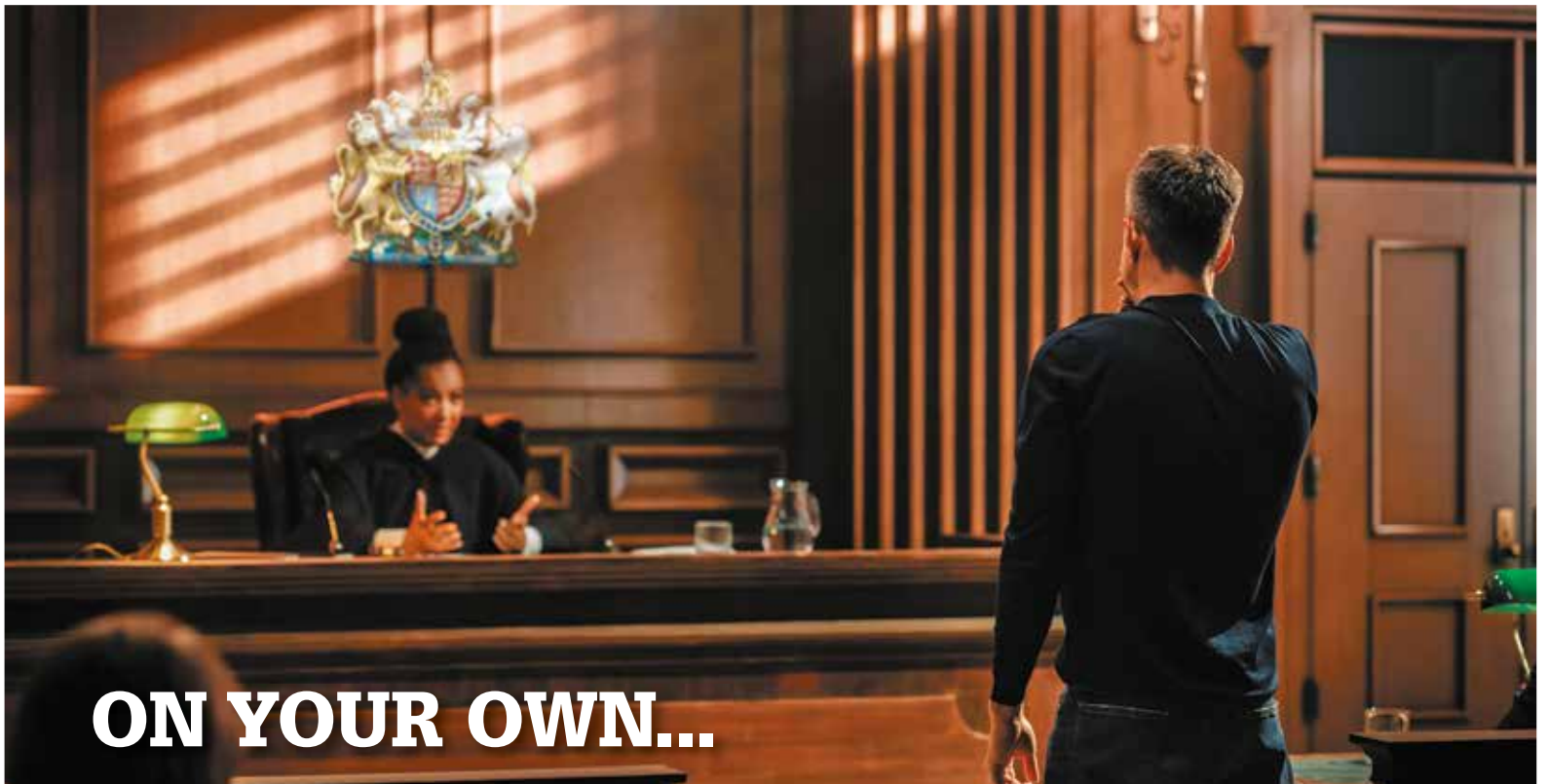
A play about relationships, art and friendship – where nothing is quite what it seems.

■ 42nd Street – Sadler's Wells (until 2nd July)

Fresh off the bus, All-American Peggy Sawyer arrives in New York City, dreaming of Broadway. A role in the chorus line soon follows, but how about that shot as a leading lady?

■ Bleak Expectations – Criterion Theatre (until 3rd September)

Based on the BBC Radio 4 series of the same name, join a medley of much-loved faces as they star in a Charles Dickens-inspired play.



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French Students Meet WWII Veteran in London

In May, a group of pupils met with Harry Rawlins. TAXI spoke to Taxi Charity volunteers Dick Goodwin and Ian Parsons about the meeting.



The Taxi Charity with Harry Rawlins and French students.



Harry Rawlins talking with French students.



Harry Rawlins, King's Royal Rifle Corps.

About Harry

Henry (Harry) Rawlins joined the army at the age of 18 and was posted to the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

After a little over a year in the Rifles, Harry participated in Operation Overlord, the Battle for Normandy and the liberation of German occupied North Western Europe, as reinforcement troops for the British 8th Armoured Brigade, for which the President of France awarded him the Légion d'honneur, France's highest order of merit.

At Operation Market Garden his unit advanced through Belgium and into the Netherlands. They halted briefly at Nijmegen and watched the drop of the Polish paratroopers. Harry went via Elst and then onto Arnhem where he was injured. His officer stopped to chat with Harry about his injury and in that brief moment a German sniper took aim and shot him in front of Harry. Harry has always felt terribly guilty that this kind gesture by one person should have resulted in his death.

In April of 1945, Harry took part in an action which displaced the enemy and allowed his unit to take several prisoners. For this, he was awarded the Belgium Croix de Guerre with Palm.

TAXI Tell us a bit more about this type of event.

Dick: The Taxi Charity is well-known for its trips to the continent with groups of veterans, but what is less well-known is how we also assist with cultural visits. We have been visiting the St. Louis College, in Cabourg, since 2017 when we began annual D-Day tours of Normandy. It is always a highlight of the stay. When the school asked if we could arrange for them to meet a WWII veteran during their trip to London, we were delighted to facilitate this.

Ian: One of our volunteer cab drivers, Danny Shelton, picked up Harry Rawlins and his friend Michael Shanahan and drove them to the French Institute in South Kensington to meet the students. Harry served in France, Belgium and the Netherlands and was awarded the Belgium Croix de Guerre with Palm and the Legion d'Honneur for his part in WWII. The students took lots of pictures and had many questions for him, including ones about the fighting he had witnessed and participated in, and what type of rifle he used.

TAXI What happened when they met?

Dick: The students spent about

About the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans

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

2023 is the charity's 75th anniversary, a remarkable milestone for a small, niche charity, peopled by enthusiastic volunteers. The charity received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021, an award approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the equivalent of the MBE for charities.

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

www.taxicharity.org



Normandy flag signed by the French students.

when a customer approached us and asked if he could pay for our food and drinks. His father had served with the Duke of Wellington Regiment and kindly wanted to settle our bill. Although he now lived in Halifax, he had lived in London for many years and was a huge supporter of the taxi trade, and was interested to find out more about what our charity did.

TAXI What was your overall memory of the experience?

Dick: It was a really positive day and Harry thoroughly enjoyed himself. Our volunteer drivers are taking him and a group of veterans to Normandy on 2nd June for the D-Day commemorations, and we will meet other students from the college on the final day of our trip. The charity plays a big part in the lives of the veterans we support and we love this poem that Harry wrote about us. (See below.) **TAXI**

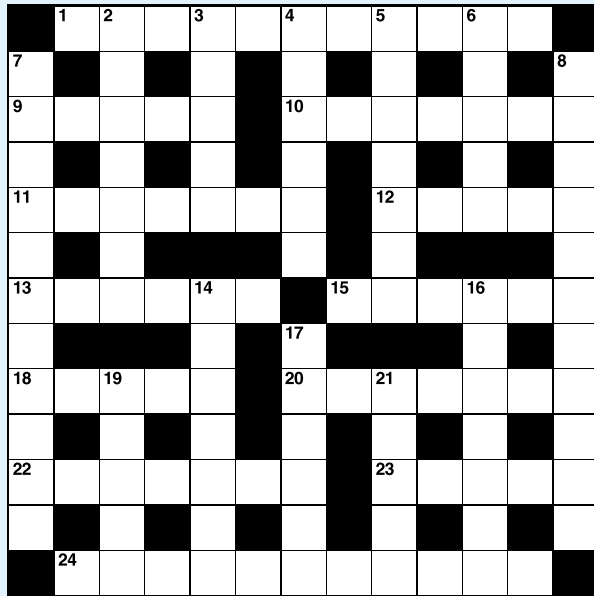
A poem by Harry Rawlins

It was well worth being shot at to join this happy band,
The taxi driver's charity, the finest in the land.
It's for military veterans who've come back from the wars,
They'd been fighting overseas to keep them from our shores.
Now some of these veterans are getting old and frail,
But with their berets and their medals they still can tell their tale.
They are taken to old battlefields to remember former friends,
There they pause and reflect on how suddenly life ends.
With rollators, Zimmer frames and walking sticks they go,
A taxi driver's guiding hand to regulate the flow.
So, here's to the taxi drivers and all their helpers too,
It's almost a tradition, and it's all thanks to you.



Puzzler Page

Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Be destroyed by fire (2,2,2,5)
- 9 Disliked (5)
- 10 Hot coals (7)
- 11 Harvesters (7)
- 12 On the ocean (2,3)
- 13 Gratify (6)
- 15 Commandeers (6)
- 18 Carol Ann __, former Poet Laureate (5)
- 20 Sketched again (7)
- 22 Another word for the same thing (7)
- 23 Decorative coating (5)
- 24 Nearby (5,2,4)

DOWN

- 2 Unused film clip (3-4)
- 3 Army chaplain (5)
- 4 Most agreeable (6)
- 5 Instruction books (7)
- 6 Castle towers (5)
- 7 Foot specialist (11)
- 8 Murder for political reasons (11)
- 14 Adages (7)
- 16 Put straight again (7)
- 17 Sebastopol's peninsula (6)
- 19 Last (5)
- 21 Downward distance (5)

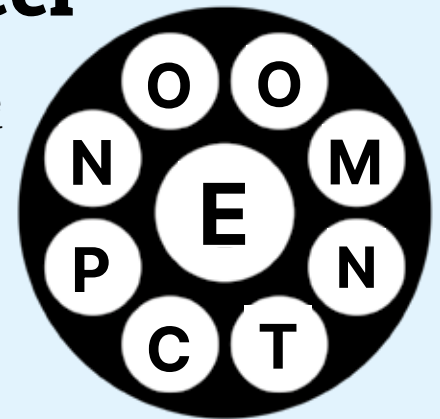
Sudoku

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.

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

Wordwheel

How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Wordwheel? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used once only. At least one nine-letter word can be found. We found 8 words - can you do better?



Futoshiki

Fill in the blank squares so that each row and column contains all the numbers 1 - 5. Use any given numbers and the symbols that tell you if the number in the square is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

			>		<	
						3
3		>		>		
4						
	<				<	

All answers to puzzler on p30

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● All cabs wanted. Tx4, euro 4, 5 & 6 also TXE wanted We come to you, any condition, very quick decision. cash paid instantly. 07702 554934

● All de-commissioned good quality TX4s wanted. Instant decision, cash paid. We come to you. Also white TX4 elegance wanted 07973 335739

● Private London based buyer looking for nice decommissioned TX4 quick collection arranged – James 07931964857

● De-commissioned your tx4's and Euro 5's? Earn more by selling outside London. We pay cash, collect, and drive away. Definitely still buying. John 07702 554934

CABS FOR SALE

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● TX4 63 plate, full years plate, 174,000 miles, mint condition FSH Charcoal grey, £8000 - 07876654253

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per week. Full back up, Caledonia Road, North London area, breakdown service, overhauls, running repairs & body work. Also Looking for a taxi mechanic 0207 700 1045 or 07951 661430 – Nick.

● All vitos and TX4s for rent, full back up, starting from £200 based in East London – 07872504604

● TXEs for hire, no ads – 07980288333

● TXEs/TX4s available from £230 - 07932740902

● TXEs, TX4s and vitos available from £230 per week contact Sabri – 07958973944

Get in touch



Loren Wedderburn



Loren@centuryone.uk



01727 739 184



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Suburban badge sector numbers _____

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2 Name of account holder _____

3 Account number

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4 Bank Sort Code

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--	--	--	--

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

5 Signature(s) _____

Date _____



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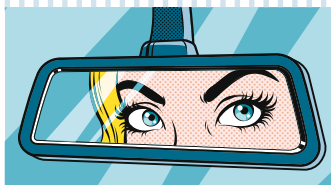
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- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by LTDA, or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
 - If you receive a refund you are not entitled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

One of the perks of being a cabbie is that when I'm working the theatre burst, I get to hear opinions on West End shows that my fares have just been to see.

A woman of words

I don't always agree with them, though. Take *Wicked* – oh lordy, that woman swinging on a zip wire with her face painted green and shrieking – I was flabbergasted. Yet, people come out of the theatre raving that it was the best thing they've ever seen.

And then there's *Hamilton*. If you offered me a million pounds to hum one of the tunes, I couldn't. We had a fancy private box which included a place to hang our coats, a bowl of sweets and a loo all to ourselves. Lovely. Until a bloke nipped into our box during the interval and sat in our private WC for eleven minutes. I'll never know who the fella was, only that he had a lamb vindaloo the

night before because the smell lingered for all the second half.

And my latest theatre gripe is that when I pay over £60 to go to a show, I want to hear the actors sing the songs, not the people in the seats around me. Last week, Mr. Meg and I went to see *Ain't Too Proud* at The Prince Edward Theatre.

It's about the life and times of The Temptations, very much our era, and it was sensational.

At the interval we got chatting to the ladies sitting in front of us, Mag and Jan from Brentwood.

The pair had smuggled a bottle of white

wine in their water bottles and were glugging away. When the actors started to sing *Just My Imagination*, Mag and Jan stood up and started crooning along and hip bumping. "Wanna dance?" Jan asked Mr. Meg,

stretching her arms out to him. Terrified, he

hissed to me, "Make it stop," like I'm his bodyguard, rather than his (long suffering) wife.

But Mag and Jan were restrained compared to the people I sat with during *Dreamgirls*.

A lot of women seemingly bought

tickets that day because when the song *And I Am Telling You* began, those in the stalls lost their collective minds. They were shrieking so loud I couldn't tell if the actors on stage were singing at all. Worse, they pointed fingers, cried, embraced and cussed their menfolk. It was bedlam.

It's great that these gals love a sing-along. Not so great that I paid £72.50 to listen to it. I could get that sort of entertainment for free in my local pub on any karaoke night.

My top three shows are probably *Les Miserables*, *Hairspray* and *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*. I've had people in the back of the cab baffled by *Les Mis*, thought *Hairspray* was cheesier than a smelly old brie and, spoiler alert, that *Priscilla* should be closed down because of the woman who fires ping pong balls from her lady garden.

There's no accounting for bad taste, is there. **TAXI**

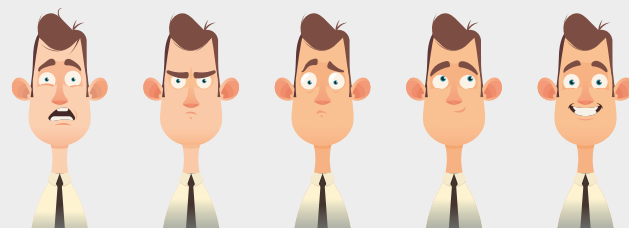


30

LTDA A selection of our numerous Distribution Points

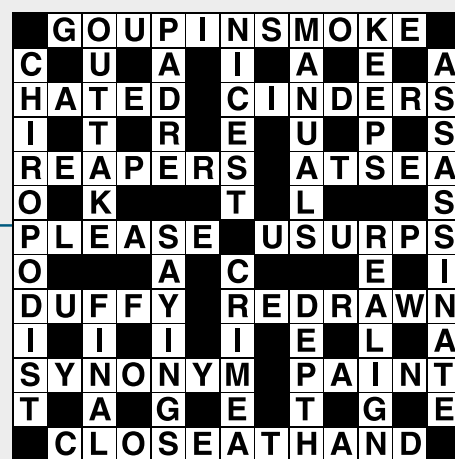
- ◆ A1 Taxis, Melody Lane, Highbury, N5
- ◆ Abacus Accounts, Southbrook Road, Lee, SE12
- ◆ Astral Café, Regency Place, SW1
- ◆ Bubbles Car Wash, E2
- ◆ C & S Taxis, Dunbridge Street, E2
- ◆ Cabsurance, Seven Kings
- ◆ Camberfield Taxi Services
- ◆ Computer Cab, Mitre Way, W12
- ◆ Coney Allen, Dunbridge Street, E1
- ◆ CP Beehive Service Station, Beehive Lane, Gants Hill
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- ◆ Dial A Cab, City Road, N1
- ◆ Edgware Station Rank
- ◆ Euston Station Rank
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- ◆ Globe Transmissions, Cudworth Street, E1
- ◆ The Ham, Brentford
- ◆ Heathrow Airport Canteen
- ◆ Hexagon Garage, Lukin Street, E1
- ◆ Jet Garage, Clipstone Street, W1
- ◆ Knowledge Centre, Caledonian Road
- ◆ KPM, Hemming Street, E1
- ◆ London City Airport Canteen
- ◆ LP Motors, Dunbridge Street, E2
- ◆ Martin Cordell, Thomas Road, E14
- ◆ Paddington Station Rank
- ◆ Putney Bridge Taxis, The Arches, Putney Bridge Station, SW6
- ◆ Richmond Road Taxi Centre, E8
- ◆ Safewise Supermarket, Harrow
- ◆ South Bank Service Station, Great Suffolk Street, SE1
- ◆ TAXI HOUSE, Great Suffolk Street, SE1
- ◆ Taxi & Private Hire, Blackfriars Rd, SE1
- ◆ Temple Place Shelter
- ◆ Turbo Accessories, Three Colts Lane, E2
- ◆ Ubiquitous Ltd, E1
- ◆ Waterloo Station
- ◆ Wimbledon Station Rank
- ◆ WizAnn Knowledge School, Watts Grove, E3

PUZZLER ANSWERS



Crossword

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Sudoku

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

Wordwheel

SOLUTION: COMPONENT

All words: Cent, come, comet, compote, cone, connote, cope, mope, mote, neon, none, note, omen, once, open, pent, poem, poet, tempo, tenon, tome, tone, tonne, COMPONENT.

Word targets: Excellent: 29, Good: 24, Target: 18, Kids: 13

Futoshiki

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



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