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SOARING COST OF EV CHARGING

A new study from financial comparison website, Swithcer.ie, looking at the rising cost of electric vehicle charging has found that on average, EV charging costs for a 62mile road trip surged by 21% across Europe during 2022, with a similar picture in the UK. Electricity costs shot up by 50% during 2022, which has also impacted the cost of EV charging at home. On average, a UK motorist can now expect to pay, £15.40 for a full charge and £4.48 to drive 62 miles. Overall, the UK was ranked as the 11th most expensive country in Europe to charge an EV, in the study. Denmark was the most expensive, with average cost for a full charge coming in at a whopping £30.

CONDEMNS OUT OF TOWN DRIVERS

The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, has condemned taxis registered 'hundreds



CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON



of miles away' to avoid meeting local standards. He expressed specific concern about drivers getting licensed in Wolverhampton and Sefton, where standards are lower, but then trading in Greater Manchester. Speaking on BBC Radio Manchester he said, "How are they allowing it, the other authorities, who are 100 or so miles away. How are they not checking up on those taxis and those drivers, but they're taking in the money for it. How are they allowing that situation? They shouldn't be doing it because they're giving plates without being able to then monitor the performance."

This is a problem not just in Greater Manchester but around the country, with Wolverhampton plate vehicles and drivers often found working in London too. This is why action is so desperately needed on cross-border hiring.



TXE TAXI DECALS

Christine's Crafty Cabin is offering taxi drivers the opportunity to purchase decals for LEVC TXEs. They include 'Please pay here', Pull here to exit, 'Pull here to close the door' and 'Push this side to open door' stickers. You can purchase these individually or buy a bundle at a special price of just £12. They are easy to fit and durable having been tried and tested in cabs. You can find out more online via the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/ ChristinesCraftyCabin and private message to order.

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

Congratulations Mr Paul Keane!

August's LTDA Lottery winner was Mr Paul Keane. Paul has been a member of the LTDA for 20 years and buys one ticket every month to be in with a chance of winning

Paul has had an unlucky 12 months, first breaking his foot and then on returning to work he was involved in a series of three non-fault accidents! We all hope that this win well and truly starts the beginning of a well-deserved, extended lucky streak for Paul. He hopes to use some of the money for a trip to Las Vagas for a show, so maybe a small bet on black will keep the streak going. Be lucky Paul!



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



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Poor Enforcement

From taxi drivers being targeted for mobile phone offences, incorrectly fined over seatbelts and blatant abuse of a cab rank going unchecked, enforcement in London leaves a lot to be desired...



Steve's comment

ere at the LTDA, we are now seeing and representing more and more members with every passing week, many of these are cabbies with 20 or more years behind them, who have never had so much as a parking ticket, but are now facing prosecutions for speeding, licence and medical red tape problems at TfL, and increasingly threats of licence suspensions and revocations.

Mobile phone offences

Some of these issues are easily avoided. An obvious one being don't hold a phone ever, yes that's ever, keep it in a cradle. There is a small but tenacious group of quite sad and I assume bored and lonely, vigilante cyclists, who spend their days searching the highways and byways hoping to catch someone stuck in the traffic holding a phone.

These people are everywhere but their favourite hunting ground is in Regent's and Hyde Parks. Once they've caught someone out, they then post glory videos online of, what is, i can only imagine their only success in life, gloating over possibly costing someone their livelihood. They would argue holding a phone is dangerous, and I would agree, but there is a vast difference between looking at it stuck in near gridlocked traffic, probably out of utter boredom, and actually driving a moving vehicle. Unfortunately for some of our members, who make what is often a simple mistake or unthinking moment, the offence is the same, as is the penalty, 6 points. The only solution is don't do it. Let these sad losers ruin someone else's day

Seatbelts

Meanwhile, just to prove that they can always get more petty and keep focusing on all the wrong 'crimes' or in this case actually applying the law incorrectly to target people who've done nothing wrong, we now have members being stopped and ticketed by the Met, (again, that's the police service that's in special measures) for not wearing a seat belt (see Anthony Street's column page 6).

Corruption?

In other news, whilst the Police are seemingly merely useless, it may transpire that some Parking Wardens in Westminster are actually corrupt!

The mystery of how a constant procession of high-end cars is allowed to stay parked on the Novikov rank in Mayfair for hours, with the doormen at Novikov treating it as their own personal valet parking bay, without ever receiving a ticket, may finally have been explained.

A video taken on the rank and circulating on Twitter would appear to show a Westminster Parking Warden surreptitiously accepting something from the Novikov doorman before quickly walking off and leaving the rank blocked by a Range

Rover and a Porsche.

My understanding is that a complaint, and a copy of the video have been sent to Westminster for investigation. I contacted the Westminster Press Office asking them for a comment on the video and next steps and I received the following statement from a spokesperson. "We are very concerned by these r eports and there is an ongoing investigation into the matter." I'll be interested to see what comes out of their investigation and at the very least I imagine the rank won't be full of parked cars for the foreseeable future! **LTDA**



Know the Rules

We continue to see members being incorrectly issued with fines over seatbelts – make sure you know the rules so you can avoid a fine!

Streets ahead

ollowing up on recent articles, I wanted to make sure members have the information they need to defend themselves, should they encounter a police officer, who doesn't seem to know the law on seatbelts in relation to taxi drivers.

In recent years, since the closure of the Hendon Police College, there have been many occasions where police officers, whether through poor training or a lack of knowledge or understanding of our basic laws, incorrectly issue fixed penalty notices or report drivers for process.

It used to be the case that many of these would be cancelled by the various administration units, once somebody who knew what they were doing, actually reviewed them. Unfortunately, this is no longer always the case. On too many occasions, it is now necessary to attend court to get these matters dropped.

I have written to the Assistant Commissioner at the Met, to highlight the problem and ask that they educate officers on the relevant regulations and points of law. You can read my letter below.

On page 8 you can also find an excerpt from *The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1993.* I suggest that you keep this with you in the cab. Our advice is always to wear a seat belt but in the event, you are stopped by a police officer for not wearing a seat belt, this could be useful in explaining to them how and why you are doing nothing wrong and avoiding a fine.

"On many occasions, it is now necessary to attend court to get these matters dropped."



The Licensed Taxi Drivers Association
Taxi House
133 Great Suffolk Street
London SE1 1PP

Louisa Rolfe OBE Assistant Commissioner Metropolitan Police Service New Scotland Yard 35 Victoria Embankment London SW1A 2JL

22nd August 2023

Dear Assistant Commissioner,

Exemption of Taxi Drivers from Wearing Seat Belts

I write concerning a number of fixed penalty notices for not wearing a seat belt, incorrectly, being issued to our members, London Taxi drivers.

The relevant legislation is the 'Motor Vehicles (wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1993' Within the exemptions category the driver of a licensed taxi is exempt (from wearing a seat belt) "while it is being used for seeking hire or answering a call for hire or carrying a passenger for hire".

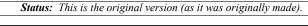
We are aware of numerous instances where members have been issued a fixed penalty because the officer is either unaware of the exemption, or in some cases, mistakenly believes that the 'for hire' light on the taxi must be illuminated for the cab to be 'seeking hire'. This is not the case, and the driver may be responding to hire or seeking hire via a telephone, various hailing apps or any of the radio circuits that our members subscribe to.

I would ask that you address this issue and disseminate accurate information to your officers who may not be fully aware or trained in the relevant legislation nor the intricacies of the definitions of 'seeking hire or plying for hire' This would avoid undue distress for taxi drivers who are fulfilling their duties within the parameters of the law.

We fully support all the efforts by your roads policing and other teams and recognise the vital role they play in ensuring road safety for us all, including taxi drivers and their passengers. However, we would ask that you also recognise that our members should be able to go about their lawful business without fear of being incorrectly targeted or penalised.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Street LTDA Executive



STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1993 No. 176

The Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1993

PART II

ADULTS IN THE FRONT OR REAR OF A VEHICLE

Exemptions

- **6.**—(1) The requirements of regulation 5 do not apply to—
 - (a) a person holding a medical certificate;
 - (b) a person using a vehicle constructed or adapted for the delivery of goods or mail to consumers or addressees, as the case may be, while engaged in making local rounds of deliveries or collections;
 - (c) a person driving a vehicle while performing a manoeuvre which includes reversing;
 - (d) a qualified driver (within the meaning given by regulation 9 of the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1987(1)) who is supervising the holder of a provisional licence (within the meaning of Part III of the Act) while that holder is performing a manoeuvre which includes reversing;
 - (e) a person by whom, as provided in the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1987, a test of competence to drive is being conducted and his wearing a seat belt would endanger himself or any other person;
 - (f) a person driving or riding in a vehicle while it is being used for fire brigade or police purposes or for carrying a person in lawful custody (a person who is being so carried being included in this exemption);
 - (g) the driver of—
 - (i) a licensed taxi while it is being used for seeking hire, or answering a call for hire, or carrying a passenger for hire, or
 - (ii) a private hire vehicle while it is being used to carry a passenger for hire;
 - (h) a person riding in a vehicle, being used under a trade licence, for the purpose of investigating or remedying a mechanical fault in the vehicle;
 - (j) a disabled person who is wearing a disabled person's belt; or
 - (k) a person riding in a vehicle while it is taking part in a procession organised by or on behalf of the Crown.
- (2) Without prejudice to paragraph (1)(k), the requirements of regulation 5 do not apply to a person riding in a vehicle which is taking part in a procession held to mark or commemorate an event if either—
 - (a) the procession is one commonly or customarily held in the police area or areas in which it is being held, or

(1) S.I.1987/1378; relevant amending instrument is S.I. 1990/1396.

[DET 4531]

PLEASE NOTE

The exemption is for taxi drivers 'seeking hire' This is a much broader term than 'Plying for Hire'. There is no need for the 'For Hire' light to be illuminated, the driver can be 'seeking hire' electronically on an app or radio circuit or answering a call for hire elsewhere, received by any means



TAXI and LTDA **Member Mail**

Subject: Thank you James Tinker, Badge No: 58738

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am writing this commendation on James Tinker, taxi badge no: 58738, as he has gone above and beyond for myself and my partner. We both have Multiple Sclerosis and experience mobility issues. I am in an electric wheelchair and my partner has a walking stick.

James helped us into the cab safely along with our bags. He was very polite, showed us great empathy and we felt safe and comfortable with him. He chatted with us and took time to get to know us and we had time to get to know him. He went out of his way to get us to our destination. He picked us up late at night to collect us from our trip back from the airport. He went above and beyond to make sure he got there, despite the M11 being closed and having to re-route. I am sure that anyone else would have given up and told us to find some other taxi but not James.

We are eternally grateful to have met James and we recommend him to all other passengers out there. We will be continuing to use him for all other future journeys. We would be grateful if there was any reward you could give to James as he is an exceptional black taxi driver and you should commend him.

Kind regards **Daniel and Amanda**

Editor's Note: Well done James, you're a credit to the trade! Keep up the great work.







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Sopwith Way Charges

Within minutes, I had emailed Rendall and Rittner, as I could now prove to them that PCM didn't care for the rules. They confirmed it was unjust and would be cancelled.

On Point

ver the last couple of months, I've received calls from members who have received invoices for parking charges whilst dropping off or picking up from Sopwith Way in Chelsea Bridge Wharf.

Same old story

The parking invoice is from a private parking company called Parking Control Management (PCM). As it seems with all appeals made to private parking companies, the appeal is rejected when the cabbie points out that they were only there doing their job and taking a fare where they wanted to go.

I decided to go around PCM, to the Chelsea Bridge Wharf ground management company - Rendall *and Rittner* – with the intention of going straight in with 'if this is the way it is then I will inform our members to drop people off on Chelsea Bridge Road and then people visiting the area can walk down Sopwith Way.' I'm happy to say that it didn't come to that. It turns out that they were genuinely concerned and asked for more information.

15-minute grace period

After making the initial call, I was promised I would be contacted by the person responsible for instructing PCM to control the parking in their complex.

As promised, they did reply to me and answered all my concerns via email. They made it very clear that there is a 15-minute grace period for dropping off and picking up. To be honest, I believe that is fair and gives us enough time to do what we need to do. I know there's a rank there, but don't believe we can wait on it. It's not the same as a TfL appointed rank. It's on private land and it looks to me like all the markings are worn.

I thanked them for this information, but I then pointed out that PCM would probably not take a lot of notice about the 15-minute grace period. I



"They made it very clear that there is a 15-minute grace period for dropping off and picking up. '

asked them if they realised what sort of organisation they had instructed. In response, they asked me to keep them informed if any invoices are issued for less than 15 minutes.

Another invoice

Well, as if by magic, ten minutes later, I took a call from Gavin, who had been issued with an invoice. He had barely finished telling me about it before I blurted out, "How long were you there?" Gavin replied, "Oh it was about 15 minutes." He remembered an issue with the passenger's card payment. I asked him if he could tell me exactly how long he was there for. It turns out that he was clocked in and out within 15 minutes - 14 mins and 24 seconds to be precise.

Within minutes, I had emailed Rendall and Rittner, as I could now prove to them that PCM didn't care for the rules. They immediately emailed back asking for invoice details and confirmed it was unjust and would be cancelled.

Poor signage

I have since been down to have a look and taken pictures of the signage PCM have put in place. There are lots of signs, but only one faces a cabbie as he drives down. The rest of the signs are on buildings at right angles to a driver. They are all also a mat finish. The one that does face you, looked really dirty, but on closer inspection it's not. I can't think why that may be and there is nothing about the 15-minute grace period on them (funny that).

At the end of the day, remember we've got 15 minutes to go in and come out. I would be careful if taking an app job from there and if you do receive a letter from PCM and they have you there for less than 15 minutes, please call me. I will pass it on and hopefully get it cancelled!







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Two Years Too Late

Even if you miss the deadline to renew, make sure you re-apply for your licence within two years to avoid the additional stress of a re-test.

Airports & beyond

wanted to write this article to let drivers know what will happen if you fail to renew your badge within the two-year period of the

11111111111111111111111111111

Knowledge re-test

licence date.

I have been dealing with drivers, who for whatever reason have not renewed their licence. Two years then pass and then it all changes and things get a lot more complicated if you want to be relicensed. There has been a steady increase in the number of drivers in this situation, due to Covid. Some drivers took up different careers in order to make a living and carried on in their new trade of choice, even though the cab trade was busy again. Time passed by and before they knew it, two years



had passed, and they were required to sit a Knowledge of London re-test.

TfL do all they can to support cab drivers on a re-test. They set up an informal talk to discuss what is required and drivers are given a clear set of guidelines setting out the basic test will have to pass.

I have included these guidelines supplied by TfL below.

The drivers I've been dealing with told me the process is scarier than doing the Knowledge the first time. I advised them to go out and look at all new points, but especially new hotels that will be commonly asked for by customers. I'm sure it can be dauting, but it's a myth if you hear a driver saying they are 'being held back' for whatever reason. TfL do not want cab drivers back on the Knowledge, it's in their interest to relicense them.

My advice to any driver, is not to let your licence lapse. Even if you miss the deadline to renew, make sure you reapply within two years to avoid the additional stress.



The wardens have discovered that 23 plate EVs in the taxi feeder park at Heathrow, are regularly failing to start. We don't know what the cause of this is, but we are finding it to be an increasing problem.

What we have found is that the way to get the vehicle started is to simply walk away from the cab, return after a few minutes and it normally starts. However, as wardens, you have to understand that if the chute empties and a driver can't get the cab started, we need to ask other drivers to go around you.

As much as we empathise – it's a working rank and by holding up the park, we are stopping other drivers from going to work. We know it can't be helped and it's not your fault, but the driver stuck behind you also needs to get to work. As wardens, we do our best to accommodate all, but our top priority is to fill the ranks.

One driver who couldn't get his cab started and didn't complain about the wardens directing cabs around him. told me later that he got it started eventually, and then got a good job all the way to Northampton, so anything can happen...



Transport for London Guidelines on Knowledge of London Re-test

As a former taxi driver applying to be re-licensed who has not been licensed for two years or more, you are required to undergo a Knowledge of London re-test.

In the re-test, you will be expected to demonstrate that you still have an adequate knowledge of your licence area and are aware of major changes to roads and locations since you were last licensed.

As you may have completed the knowledge several years ago, we will invite you in to meet with a Knowledge of London Examiner. In this informal meeting the examiner will explain to you what will be required for you to be relicensed. This meeting will also give you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have regarding the re-test process.

Following on from this meeting you will be expected to book a re-test examination when you feel you are ready and at the required standard. The examiner will have explained to you how much revision they feel is required.

You will be tested via an oral one-to-one examination with a Knowledge of London Examiner lasting approximately 30 minutes. You will be tested in accordance with the structure below.

If sufficient knowledge is demonstrated, subject to all other licensing criteria being met, you will be re-licensed.

If insufficient knowledge is shown, regardless of your score,

you will be asked to attend for a further one-to-one examination in a time frame determined by the Knowledge of London Examiner. This period should be long enough to allow you to learn the information required.

If, after this second appearance, your knowledge is insufficient, you will be required to enter the Knowledge of London Examination system at stage 3, 4 or 5 in accordance with the marking scheme overleaf. In effect, you will be back on The Knowledge.

All London Applicants

- You will be asked six questions that demonstrate your routefinding skills within the sixmile radius from Charing Cross. You may also be asked routes going from a location within the six-mile radius to London Heathrow and City Airports.
- Each question will be marked out of 10 and one mark will be deducted for each point that you fail to identify. Further marks will be deducted if you:
- Give an unacceptable amount of incorrect street names
- Call a route that is not the most direct available.
- Call a route that involves making banned turns or u-turns, contravening 'no entry' signs or travelling the wrong way down one-way streets. Candidates must be aware of recent major road changes that will affect them when driving a taxi
- Show hesitancy in the delivery of your answer that would indicate that you cannot recall the route quickly enough to be able to drive confidently and safely in London traffic.
- The start and finish points asked in these questions will be selected to test your knowledge of:
- Points of interest where you would be likely to pick up fare paying passengers as a working taxi driver
- For instance, you could be asked a run, the Natural History Museum to Golders Green Station; or Royal Courts of Justice to Honor Oak Park Station.
- Shorter runs in central London may also be asked, such as

Victoria Station to the Prince Edward Theatre.

■ In addition, you will be asked to identify the location of 10 points of interest which will test your knowledge of major points, but also new buildings or new tourist attractions since you were last licensed. One mark will be awarded for each correct answer.

Suburban Applicants

The Knowledge re-test will be carried out in the same format as for All London applicants. The questions will reflect the above although they will relate to the area that you are applying to be relicensed for.

Marking System

The re-test will be marked out of a total of 70: 10 marks for each of the six runs, and 10 for the additional points of interest. Your score will determine the outcome of the re-test as follows: The first re-test will be a pass or fail.

42 - 70 Pass - Re-Licensed

0 - 41 Fail - Return for a second re-test

From your second re-test onwards, your score will determine the outcome as follows:

42 - 70 Re-licensed

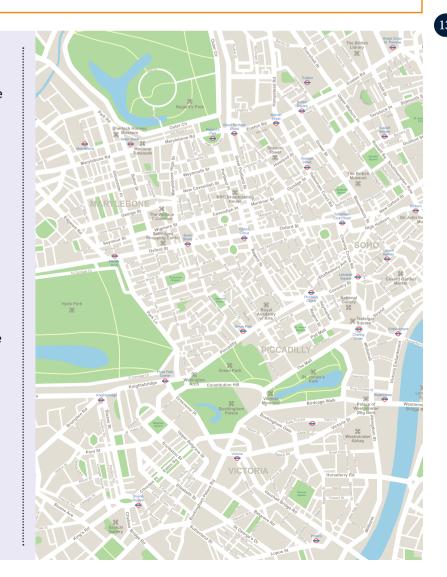
28 - 41 Further re-test (after a third score of between 28 and 41 you will revert to Stage 5 appearances)

18 - 27 Revert to Stage 5 appearances

10 – 17 Revert to Stage 4 appearances

0 – 9 Revert to Stage 3 appearances

Finally, once you have attended the first meeting with an examiner you will have a maximum of two years in which to complete the above process and become re-licensed. After this you will have to re-apply for the Knowledge of London (this does not apply to those applicants who after two years are still on Stage 3-5 appearances).





Knowledge 'Still Relevant', Financial **Support & Cross-Border Petition**

The latest developments in the taxi industry around the UK and how they compare to what's going on in London.

National correspondent

Incentives for Scottish taxi drivers

The taxi industry in Scotland has received a welcome boost. with the latest round of grant funding from the Energy Saving Trust and Transport Scotland. The funding presents an excellent opportunity for cabbies operating in the region to obtain interest-free loans on new electric taxis or upgrade their Euro 5 taxis to Euro 6, thereby avoiding Low Emission Zone (LEZ) charges.

For taxi drivers in London, the idea of an interest-free loan to transition into a zero-emission capable electric taxi would be a dream come true. With interest rates soaring, some London cabbies are currently facing

paying up to over £20,000 in interest charges alone over a 5-year leasing term.

In Scotland, sole traders working as taxi drivers can now receive loans of up to £75,000, which is a game changer in the industry. What's more, the grants extend beyond loans for new vehicles. They also cover up to 70% of the cost of retrofitting existing vehicles. This includes funding of up to £6,000 per wheelchairaccessible taxi for installing retrofit exhaust after-treatment systems and up to £12,000 per wheelchair-accessible taxi for replacing diesel engines with battery electric re-powering technology. With these generous offerings, companies like *Clipper Automotive*, who have designed a working electric retrofit TX4, are now likely to be very interested in exploring opportunities in Scotland.



Public demands Glasgow knowledge test remains

Staying in Scotland, Glasgow licensing chiefs have decided to

retain the topographical taxi driver test following a public consultation that highlighted its continued relevance. The consultation gathered almost 850 responses, with 76% of participants acknowledging the importance of the test within the industry.

While the test will be retained, updates will be made every three years to ensure the questions remain up to date. Additionally, the examination process will transition to a digital format to reduce waiting times for test results. Importantly, drivers who previously left the trade will not be required to sit a new test if they return within a ten-year period.

The decision to keep the test came after the council's licensing section received



feedback from the taxi trade on the topographical test's relevance. Of the 840 responses received, 58% came from the public, while 21% were from licensed taxi drivers themselves.

Supporters of retaining the test believed that the questions remained appropriate, with 75% of respondents sharing this view. Critics, on the other hand, argued that drivers now rely heavily on satellite navigation systems, suggesting the need for an updated test format that accommodates changed street names and reduces the number of questions.

This development is of significant interest to London's cabbies as the iconic Knowledge of London (KOL) undergoes its own review process. Would the public's support for the need to retain the KOL be as strong here?

Cross-Border Petition Gathers Pace

A petition calling for an end to cross-border taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing rules on the Parliament website, has gained traction and support with nearly 5,000 signatures already.

The petition urges the Government to establish new requirements that would mandate all taxi and PHV drivers to be licensed only in the areas where they operate.

The creator of the petition, Waleed Hussain, argues that the Deregulation Act 2015 has created loopholes allowing

big companies to monopolise the trade, thereby affecting rates. Hussain highlights how some councils have reduced licensing rates and simplified the licensing process, leading to a significant increase in licenses being granted by certain authorities.

The petition calls for a change in the law, demanding that drivers should only be allowed to work in areas where they hold a valid licence. If you are interested, you can sign the petition here: https://petition.parliament.

uk/petitions/636443





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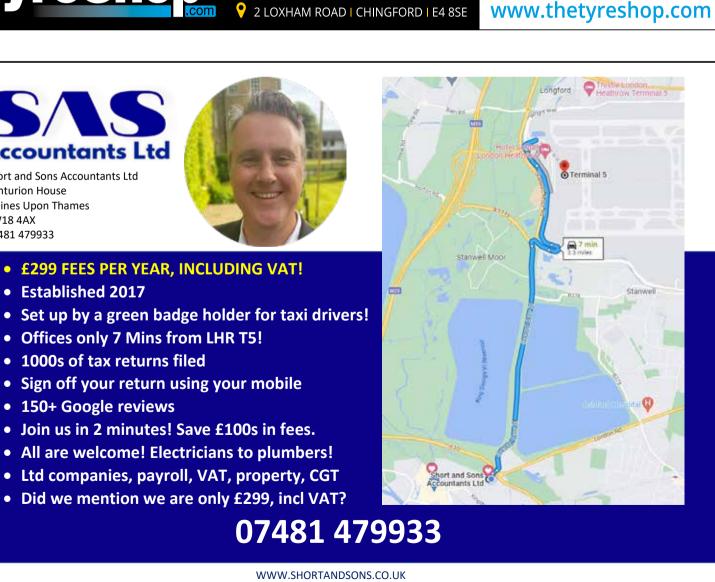
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Two Sides Of The Scale: San Francisco Vs. Rome

Wim Faber rounds up this month's biggest taxi news from across Europe.



International correspondent

wo weeks ago, taxi worlds seemed to collide: the old versus the new. Old style cabbing against 'robotaxis'. Italy battling the USA. Old style pizza going head-to-head with Californian-style deep dish, or more aptly against cioppino (a San Fran fisherman's stew), because San Francisco is where it's all happening. Not that everyone, particularly in the local taxi trade, is happy with

California's trendsetting role. In its inimitable wisdom, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) - already responsible for opening the sluice gates for Uber and Lyft in California in one of its earlier 'bright' decisions - took seven hours of extremely acrimonious deliberations to let Waymo (Alphabet) and Cruise (GM) roam the streets 24/7 in fully autonomous vehicles (AVs). After a collision with a fire engine last week, the California DMV ordered Cruise's robotaxi fleet to be halved, following an investigation into it and other accidents involving them.

Italians, tourists clamour for cabs

Meanwhile, in Rome, Milan and a few other Italian cities, taxi users

are clamouring for more cabs
- not necessarily the robocab
variety. Extremely long queues
have become a regular feature in
Italy's main cities this summer.
Customers are cursing the trade
whilst waiting for rides in the
sweltering heat. Long queues
too in the booking systems, as
operators desperately tried to
match incoming calls with (un)
available cabs. Most drivers
preferred street pick-ups. Old Taxi
Trade versus New Taxi Trade?
Over to the Bay Area...

The New Trade?

A whiff of what the New Taxi Trade might be like can be detected in San Francisco where, on 10th August, the CPUC decided that Waymo and Cruise can both operate a 24/7 commercial driverless taxi service with AVs - the so-called 'robotaxis'. It's a hotly disputed decision which, one day, may be seen as a turning point for the way people move around the Bay Area. Hundreds of supporters and critics offered starkly different testimonies on driverless technology. Amongst the critics: many taxi drivers who saw their business collapse due to the CPUC's ill-advised decision to give Uber and Lyft a free and generous ride in the state. Again, the CPUC is hell-bent on being the trendsetting first in any supposedly 'innovative' mobility approach.

Unexplained AV incidents

Supporters of the CPUC decision hope AVs will reduce human error behind the wheel and improve travel options for everyone, including the mobilityimpaired. Critics, already worried about San Francisco being saturated with AVs, fear increasing traffic congestion and point to robotaxis interfering with public transport and emergency responses. They also worry robotaxis will eliminate millions of human jobs across the US. Yet state commissioners voted 3-1 in favour of Cruise and Waymo's expansion.

Cruise and Waymo, who staunchly defend their technology and safety record, despite over 600 'hiccups' (sudden stops) since June, are already operating hundreds of AVs in the city. They are under intense pressure to turn a profit after spending billions of dollars developing and testing their technology. After almost a decade of testing, the commission's vote allows the companies to fully commercialise in San Francisco, and this essentially puts their driverless taxis on equal footing with Uber and Lyft rides minus the human drivers. And, for better or worse, proponents and detractors both viewed parallels between this vote and the emergence of Uber and Lyft early last decade, clogging up San Fran's streets, generously

helped along by the gormless CPUC. "The CPUC looked the other way on Uber and Lyft," said a local

mobility-impaired."

including the

options for everyone,

Over to the Old World

mobility expert.

In Italy, where ride-sharing services like Uber, Lyft and Bolt have been met with strong resistance and are heavily restricted, social media sites have recently channelled angry tirades against long cab queues at train stations and airports. Again, callers were put on hold for long wait times and taxi apps didn't find any available vehicles. Consumer rights groups call it "a disgrace to Italy". With major events like the Catholic Church's Jubilee in 2025 and the Winter Olympics in 2026, the Italian government is under pressure to resolve the situation. It did intervene, introducing measures that would simplify procedures so that cities can issue new taxi licences, including temporary ones to cover peak periods like the summer or major events. Parliament now has two months to convert the decree into law. Considering the grip the Italian taxi trade has over local and national politics, it will be interesting to see what happens next.



The Doll's Hospital and its murky past

It's likely that many taxi drivers have been asked for the location of the Doll's Hospital in Fulham. Despite closing its doors in 1989, it was still occasionally asked by carriage officers, usually in a bid to try and catch some hapless Knowledge boy or girl unawares. Situated at 16 Dawes Road, this charming and seemingly inoffensive toy shop harboured a rather grim past.

During the late-1800s, Herbert Wicks opened the Doll's Hospital. Its remit was quite specific: it specialised in the repair and restoration of broken dolls. So successful was its operation that it became internationally recognised as the go-to shop for all restorative needs. From broken limbs to missing hair, Herbert Wicks could bring deceased dolls back to life.

In 1930, Mr Wicks' son,
Albert, took over from his father,
keeping the business running
until 1949. The building that
housed the so-called hospital was
purchased by Dr Archibald and
Mrs Rose Henderson some time
after 1937. Over a decade later,
the Hendersons mysteriously
disappeared into thin air.

John George Haigh was a fraudster. He became an accountant with an engineering firm after being released from prison. Realising that the only reason why he was incarcerated was because he left witnesses alive, he developed a morbid fascination with French

murderer Georges-Alexandre Sarret, whose preferred method for the disposal of a body was sulphuric acid.

After bumping into his former employer William McSwan in a Kensington pub, Haigh was introduced to McSwan's folks. McSwan, who worked for his parents as a rent collector, disappeared on 6th September 1944. Haigh convinced McSwan's parents that their son had fled to Scotland to avoid being called up to fight in WWII. The fraudster then assumed their son's role in collecting rent that was owed on their properties. A little while later, the McSwans also disappeared. Haigh had murdered all three people and dissolved their bodies in acid. But he didn't stop there.

and Mrs Henderson vanish without a trace. By now Haigh had a thirst for money and an insatiable gambling habit. After seeking out the wealthy Hendersons, he feigned interest in a property they were selling. He then killed the couple and disposed of their bodies via the same method as the McSwans. One more victim succumbed to Haigh before he was eventually caught and hanged in 1949.

In February 1948, saw Dr

During his murderous reign, Haigh had successfully obtained the deeds to the Doll's House Hospital and sold the building to the unwitting Albert Clarke. The hospital was then passed down to Clarke's son-in-law John Smith, before finally closing its doors in 1989.



The King of Clerkenwell

London has bore witness to a Lifew eccentrics over the years. From Ginger Pat, randomly waving at passing taxi drivers, to the gentleman who strolls around Holborn in nothing but a pair of shorts and a tank top in all weathers, these loveable characters are part of the fabric

of London life. One of them was a chap called Jimmy Cleary, otherwise known as the King of Clerkenwell.

Despite being a diminutive type, standing at less than five feet tall, Jimmy had a larger than life persona and was very capable of 'holding his own' in an argument. One of his favourite pastimes was to be an annoyance to any motorist who dared to park

illegally on 'his manor'. In what usually became a foul-mouthed tirade, a driver attempting to park on yellow lines would incur Jimmy's wrath. Should the unsuspecting driver remain insitu, a tattered notebook would emerge from his pocket and the driver's registration details were taken, which were then passed to Holborn police.

Such was Jimmy's legendary

status that in the 1970s and '80s he found himself being immortalised in a photograph with pop group The Happy Mondays, outside their press office at 83 Clerkenwell Road.

Sadly, there is very little information as to what happened to Jimmy beyond that era, but as with all of London's great eccentrics, he will be fondly remembered.

The smallest street in Europe

There are many streets across Europe that could lay claim to being the smallest on the continent. Many of those could be situated in London, including Hanway Place, Gunthorpe Street and Back Lane to name but three. There is, however, a street near King's Cross Station which has been officially cited as Europe's smallest crescent.

Keystone Crescent is a tiny street lined by 24 Victorian houses. Originally known as Caledonia Crescent before being changed to Caledonian Crescent (named after the Caledonian Asylum for Children), the street was initially occupied by lower and middle class families. Around 240 people lived in the properties with one being used as an estate office by Robert James Stuckley, who was the developer of said properties.

major structural alterations and a name change to Keystone Crescent.

The houses now range from two to five bedroom properties, and all are Grade II listed buildings. Interestingly, due to the dynamics of the turning, houses on the outside of the crescent are bigger than those on the inside. According to Zoopla, these properties are currently valued in excess of £1 million, thus proving 'where there's muck,

www.ltda.co.uk

the King's Cross and its environs

diminished considerably and

was widely regarded as a rather

unpleasant den of iniquity, with

change in the 1990s when Robert

drug use and prostitution rife

in the area. This all started to

James Stuckley's grandson,

Algerton Stuckey, took on the

task of redeveloping the area,

in particular the tiny street. Out

and overcrowding and in came

went the reputation for sex work

leveloper of said properties.

Over time, the reputation of tiniest street.

there's brass,' even on Europe's tiniest street.



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Stellantis Rumours & Steady Sales

If the turning circle stays, and it will, this adds another £2 to £5k to the price, pitching it firmly into TXE territory, without any of the benefits of the purpose-built iconic cab.



legends, tales or folklore or a Cab you drive combination of all of the above? I still don't know, but one of the facets, that is most addictive and annoying in equal measure,

his business, our

world' is utterly

and addictive in equal

of those thing.

measures. Over the years, I

have often thought about what

Is it the history, the drivers,

the vehicle, the Knowledge, the

it is specifically that makes it all

business, this 'cabbie

enthralling, beguiling,

years. The vast majority were just plain rubbish, contrived and twisted from some small grain of truth. Others had more than a basis in fact, and the rare ones even proved to be true. When I say rare, I mean extraordinarily

is the rumour mill! I have heard them all over the

rare, in fact the only one I can think of was the original Metrocab

rumour, that started in the early 80s and eventually became a reality about 1987, unfortunately a short-lived reality!

The current rumour of choice is that someone is going to convert a Stellantis E van into a taxi. The van is made by Stellantis but branded Citroen. Toyota, Vauxhall or Peugeot when retailed, with appropriate badge and other minor changes.

I must have heard it a dozen times in the past week, once from someone who is normally very knowledgeable and knows everyone, so I thought I would do some research.

In Toyota branding, which I think would have the most appeal to cabbies, think Nissan etc, the van in basic form is £46,053.96. That's without on the road charges. Even presuming that the converter could negotiate a bulk buy discount of say, 20%, its still close to £40k.

Then assuming they could design and engineer a partition, adapt it for wheelchair accessibility, provide windows, seating and air con that would work in the back (it never did in the Dynamo), and bring all that in at £20,000. Next, no matter how unlikely, further presume TfL would bow to pressure to scrap the turning circle, then the very best ways this van is over £60,000. It has 160 to 190 miles of range, only charges at 70kW, and with the best will in the world, is a van If the turning circle stays, and

300 200 100 JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL 52 | 207 | 154 | 167 | 109 | 55 | 73 | 285 | 102 | 118 | 115 | 128 | 82 | 243 | 131 | 150 | 123 | 49

"One of the facets [of the cab trade], that is most addictive and annoying in equal measure, is the rumour mill!"

it will, this adds another £2000 to £5000 to the price, pitching it firmly into TXE territory, without any of the benefits of the purpose-built cab, icon etc. Never say never, but I will be amazed if it ever happens!

Market update

Sales wise, 114 new TXEs joined the ranks in July and the fleet total crept up very slightly to 15,190 licensed cabs.

On the pre-owned front, there is now a small but steady stream of early TXEs coming onto the market, with the low mileage ones being snapped up quickly even at an above average premium. My advice to any owner with a good low mileage cab, is get a price from all the dealers if you are upgrading. It's worth your time getting it valeted, and spending the day driving around, as there are deals to be done, despite what they tell you initially.

Then, sit on your hands for a few weeks and wait for any follow up calls. Depending on what you are offered, it's worth sticking a sign in the back window, placing an ad in TAXI, pricing the cab at around 10% more than the best offer. As they say, nothing ventured, nothing gained. Be lucky!

| ř | |
|--------|--------|
| DYNAMO | 183 |
| LEVC | 7,160 |
| TX1 | 1 |
| TX2 | 70 |
| TX4 | 5,388 |
| VITO | 2,388 |
| TOTAL | 15,190 |

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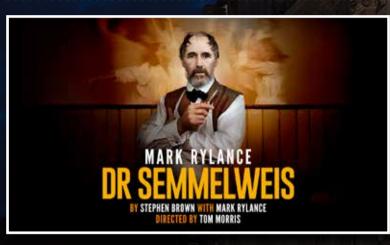


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What's on? EST END

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

Under the spotlight



Dr Semmelweis - Harold Pinter Theatre 1

Dr Semmelweis was a Hungarian doctor who saved countless lives since his discoveries, even if those very same discoveries were not understood or believed while he was alive. Whilst working in Vienna General Hospital he observed discrepancies in the mortality rates between its two maternity clinics. The first had a mortality rate of 10%. The second, 4%. The difference? The former was staffed by doctors and the later midwives. Confounded by it, he worked with a team of trusted companions and thus pioneered antiseptic procedures earning him the moniker 'saviour of mothers'.

It seems unlikely material for a West End theatre production, let alone one co-created and led by Mark Rylance, yet the result is something truly spectacular. The play opens with a middle-aged Semmelweis being asked to return to Vienna, his ex-colleagues persuading him that his contemporaries are finally ready to listen to his discoveries. And so his tale unfurls, from the beginning and the trauma of his first patient dying of 'childbed fever', to his unravelling sense of self in the present day. It blends past and present in a beautifully unsettling approach to storytelling, replicating the whirling within Semmelweis' own mind.

Accompanied on stage by an all-female string quartet and a troupe of ballet dancers, one of the finest actors of our time astonishes in this frenzied and unearthly wonder of a show.



Dr Semmelweis runs until 7th October.

What else is on?

La Cage Aux Folles - Regent's Park Open Air Theatre (until 16th September)

Make the most of the last weeks of summer with a visit to the French Riviera, where a gay couple must pass as straight for an evening to appease their son's future in-laws.

The Crown Jewels - Garrick Theatre (until 16th September) A star-studded cast tell this historical comedy like no other, with Al Murray as Charles II whose beloved crown jewels are under threat of a heist.

■ The Garden of Words - Park Theatre (until 16th September) Two lonely people find solace in each other and their shared love of classical poetry, shoemaking, and bad cooking. But their newfound bond could either save or ruin them.

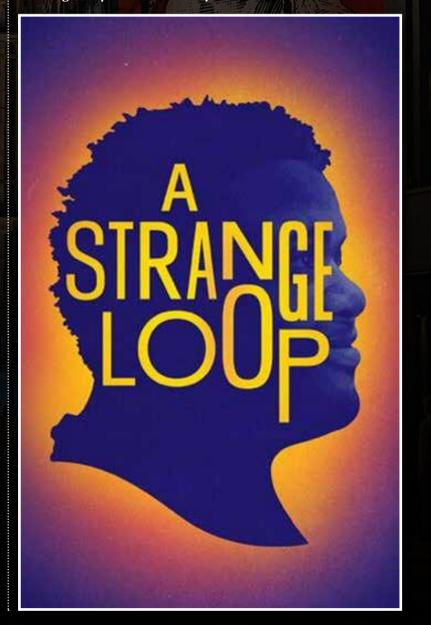
A Strange Loop - Barbican Theatre U

Michael R Jackson's musical, which he wrote the book, music and lyrics of, can only be described as a 'meta' musical. In fact, that word feels like something of an understatement. A Black, Queer, New York theatre usher (Kyle Ramar Freeman) is writing a musical about a young, Black, Queer man who is in turn writing a musical about a young Black, Queer man. That's the strange loop from the show's title, a reflection of the fact that in many ways we are all stuck in our own strange loops when it comes to our identities and sense of self. Over its 100-minute runtime there's musical musing on how we view ourselves, the masks we wear to navigate the world around us, and how we construct meaning in a world that often may not feel right for us.

Usher, for that is his name as well as occupation, is accompanied on stage by six figures; like a Greek chorus of personal neuroses, each is a manifestation of his inner thoughts - from sexual ambivalence and self-loathing. Their interactions provide both joy and trauma, as they force Usher to reflect on who he thinks he is, who he wants to be and who he really is.

A blisteringly offbeat musical that is both thrilling and hilarious.

A Strange Loop runs until 9th September.





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Taxi Driver Cycles From London's Waterloo to Waterloo, Belgium

TAXI spoke to Seb Philp, Danny Shelton and Dean Euesden, three Taxi Charity Volunteers, about the Waterloo Uncovered fundraising cycle ride.

TAXI Who are Waterloo Uncovered and what was this cvcle ride?

Dean: The Taxi Charity has a long standing relationship with the charity Waterloo Uncovered. Since 2015, they have been taking veterans and serving personnel to the battlefield of Waterloo, to undertake a two-week archaeological experience. They combine this with year-round wellbeing support to aid their recovery from the traumas of war. Danny: For the last few years, Taxi Charity volunteer drivers have been taking veterans to Belgium to participate in their summer dig on the Waterloo battlefield. When they told us about this year's fundraiser, we offered our help.

Seb: In July, Waterloo Uncovered held a charity cycle ride from London Waterloo to Waterloo in Belgium and I wanted to be part of the group of cyclists, and Dean and Danny kindly offered to act as support vehicles along with Waterloo Uncovered's Ben Mead, Mark Evans and Rob Jones.

TAXI What was the route?

Seb: Waterloo to Waterloo is 360 km. I was one of 50 cyclists who set off on 27th July to ride from England to Belgium. We met by the Leake Street Arches at 6am on day one. The first destination was Dover for the ferry, and the support vehicles were kept busy repairing punctures en route, while Danny and Dean rescued two cyclists who needed help. **Dean:** After a night in a French hotel, day two began in Dunkirk. Cyclists crossed the France/ Belgium border and made their way to Ypres for a photograph opportunity at the Menin Gate. I had been asked to photograph the fundraiser and the Menin Gate made a great backdrop. The cyclists laid a wreath in memory of those who gave their lives in the war and observed a minute's silence.

Danny: From there, they rode towards the Belgian city of Kortrijk, which is in the Flemish province of West Flanders and is well known for its beers. Seb had a puncture on day two, and while I fixed it he fixed his barnet! Seb: After a good night and a few









beers in the hotel, we set off for

our final destination of the Lion's Mound in Waterloo. Our first stop was in Ghent, the capital and largest city of the East Flanders Province. The weather was good and the roads were flat, which certainly pleased some of the bikers, and especially those who had gone the wrong way and added miles to their journey! Dean: Seeing all the cyclists reach Lion's Mound was great. Lion's Mound is a large, conical artificial hill which has a wonderful view across the Waterloo Battlefield. It's an almost vertical 226-step climb to the top, which is 43 metres high.

TAXI So it was it a big success? Dean: Yes. The Taxi Charity has a long and very good relationship with Waterloo Uncovered, so it was a privilege to be part of the event. There is a natural synergy between what we do and what they do. I travelled out to Waterloo last year with a few other Taxi Charity volunteers as part of their archaeological project, and through them we have met many younger veterans

who are now joining our events.

It was hard work to get to the top

but well worth it for the view.

ride across the Netherlands to raise funds for the Taxi Charity. So, if they are any cyclists reading this, please do get in touch by emailing info@taxicharity.org

TAXI What's next?

Danny: On 9th September, Brian Heffernan and Simon Hawes are doing the London Bridges Walk. The 25 km route zig-zags through central London, over 16 historic bridges, and they are hoping that drivers will pledge to each raise £250 and join them.

Seb: The walk starts from Putney Bridge, and after crossing 15 bridges, the last is Tower Bridge and we are hoping that people will sign up.

Dean: If anyone wants to join Brian and Simon and our volunteers, supporters and friends for the Bridges Walk, please email Simon treasurer@ taxicharity.org for registration details. After all the rain we had in July, surely the weather will be better in September!

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



Seb: I understand the organisers were delighted with the money raised. I loved taking part and am hoping to organise a cycle

Ben Mead, Volunteer, at Waterloo Uncovered said,

"I'd like to say a huge thank you to Seb for taking part and to Danny and Dean for coming along on the Waterloo Uncovered bike ride with their black cabs. It's a tough event for the support team, but they fitted in straight away and both taxi drivers quickly became known as the fifth emergency service as they drove straight to every puncture, breakdown or injury and dealt with it.

Thank you for taking time to join us and become part of the Waterloo Uncovered team this year and for all your help and support. We are delighted that the working relationship between both charities continues and is stronger than ever."

About the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans

The Taxi Charity is run by volunteer London black taxi drivers and has been supporting thousands of veterans since 1948. The charity arranges free trips (for veterans from all conflicts) to the Netherlands and France, for acts of commemoration and days out to museums, concerts, or social events across the UK. 2023 is the charity's 75th anniversary, a remarkable milestone for a small, niche charity, peopled by enthusiastic volunteers. The charity received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021, an award approved by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the equivalent of the MBE for charities.

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

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Loren Wedderburn

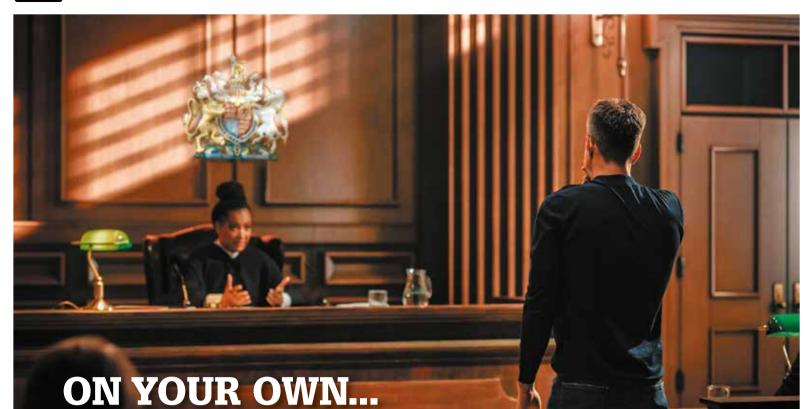


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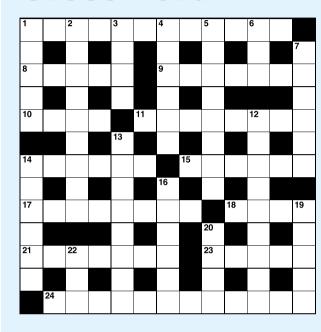


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Puzzler Page

Crossword



ACROSS

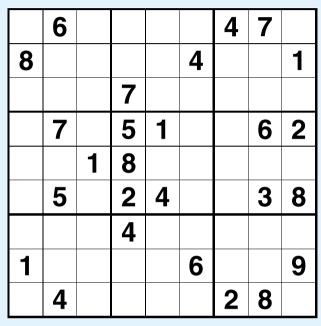
- 1 Short coat with a belt and patch pockets (6,6)
- 8 Old artefact (5)
- 9 Making an agreeable sound (7)
- 10 Crown of the head (4)
- 11 Lasting from dusk to dawn (3-5)
- 14 Lower in status (6)
- 15 Every twelve months (6)
- 17 Area under cultivation (8)
- 18 Pitch (4)
- 21 Secondary earth layer (7)
- 23 Fork tine (5)
- 24 Popular sounds from the rural USA (7,5)

DOWN

- 1 Waste metal (5)
- 2 Employee who works a forty-hour week (4-5)
- 3 Affluent (4)
- 4 Shuffle (6)
- 5 Strainer (8)
- 6 Stop (3)
- 7 Feather-brained (6)
- 12 Loquacious (9)
- 13 Trip over or collapse (4,4)
- 14 Make (a bomb) safe (6)
- 16 Branching horn of a deer (6)
- 19 Correctness of reasoning (5)
- 20 Junk electronic mail (4)
- 22 Jeer (at) (3)

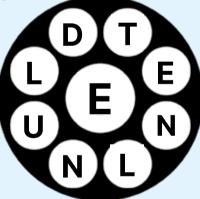
Sudoku

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.



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.

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- **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

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- 19 plate TXE Vista Comfort Plus raven black, no ads low mileage warranty/ plated until March 24. Excellent condition, one owner from new £36,950 ONO 07803558146
- All vitos and TX4s for rent, full back up, starting from £200 based in East London 07872504604
- LEVC 20 plate silver 1 owner 54,000 miles FSH nice clean cab £47,000 ono 07813904035 Bryan Watford area

CABS FOR RENT

- TXEs black no ads, Camden area ring Steve 07976729033
- TXEs for hire, loan cab available, no ads 07980288333

- Txe's for rent from £320 pw fully charged and valeted 24 hour backup 02085949080
- TXEs/TX4s available from £230 07932740902
- TX4s for rental from £200 well maintained cabs no ads full backup part time drivers welcomed. Garages in London and the North East call Andy 07970915778
- TXEs, TX4s and vitos available from £260 per week contact Sabri 07958973944

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• Semi-retired cab driver needs 2 days cab share. North London. Also to purchase Euro5 Cab – Call Bob 07783481781

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| Badge colour (Please state whether green or yellow) | Year badge obtained |
| Suburban badge sector numbers | |
| Have you ever been a member of the LTDA before? (please tick | yes No |
| Do you currently have points on your DVLA driving license? (ple | ease tick) Yes No |
| If Yes how many points do you have? | <u> </u> |
| Please tick if you DO NOT wish to receive information from the | LTDA and other related organisations in the future? |
| I understand that my application for membership of the Association this is confirmed I am not eligible to vote in relation to any form of Amembership shall be at the discretion of the Council of Manageme Please note: We do not provide assistance for any matters the | Association matters. I agree that all benefits prior to approval of ent. |
| Signed | Date |
| LTDA Basic Direct Debit Instructions | Operation House Name |
| | Service User Number |
| Instructions to your Bank/Building | 9 1 4 4 2 8 |
| Society to pay Direct Debits: | For Office use only |
| | |

Please complete parts 1 to 5 to instruct your branch to make direct payments from your account. Return form to FREEPOST LTDA

| To the Manager of |
|-------------------------------|
| |
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| |
| |
| Bank/Building Society Address |
| Duniy Dunung Coulty Address |
| |
| • |
| |

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

| 2 | Name of account holder | | | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---------|--------|--------|---------|-------|--------|--------|---------|
| 3 | Account number | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Bank Sort Code | | | _ | | | _ | | |
| Ва | nks/Building Societies ma | y not a | accept | instru | ıctions | to pa | y Dire | ct Deb | it fror |

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

| | Date |) |
|------|------|---|
| Date | | |
| Date | | |
| Date | | |
| | | |
| | | |
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| | | |
| | | |

5 Signature(s)

This guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer

The Direct Debit Guarantee

DIRECT

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit LTDA will notify you (10 working days) in advance of your account being
 debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request LTDA to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the
 request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by LTDA, or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when LTDA asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us

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





Go, Go, Go!

Being a London cabbie is the best job in the world. Presently, thanks to Sadiq Khan't, it is also the worst because of the way he's jammed London roads.

A woman of words

very journey seems to be tortuous. But the drive to Wales, for our holiday a few weeks back, was also a drama-and-a-half.

The Sat Nav lied. It said our journey from North West London to Llangogetlostinthemiddleofbloodynowhereelli in mid-Wales would take three hours and 22 minutes.

Six hours and 43 minutes later, we were parked in a layby so I could pee behind a bush. One that had nettles in it. Just ask my buttocks if you don't believe me. And yes, we were hopelessly lost.

It was tense in the car. Neither of us had any phone reception, the Sat Nav was dead as a dodo, and the family pack of Fruit Pastilles I bought specially for the journey had run out two hours earlier, even though we'd been sucking not chewing.

It was getting dark. Both outside, and inside the vehicle.

Whenever we are in a driving crisis (and they only happen when Mr Meg is behind the wheel funny that) he likes to blame me for everything: the scenery, the road surfaces, the direction of the wind and even the stupidity of other drivers on the road. And please note that would be all other drivers on the road, bar him.

When I said I needed loo stop number seven, he went into a particularly long rant about how I had stupidly ignored his advice to buy a shewee. For other shes who wee, this is a wide neck flask to be used on the go. In theory this seems like an excellent idea, in reality there is a problem.

I need four arms to use it. One to pull my undies down, one to hold the sheewee in position, one

Sudoku

2 6 3 9 8 1 4 7 5

8 9 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

5 1 4 7 3 2 8 9 6

4 7 8 5 1 3 9 6 2

3 2 1 8 6 9 7 5 4

6 5 9 2 4 7 1 3 8

9 3 5 4 2 8 6 1 7

1 8 2 3 7 6 5 4 9

7 4 6 1 9 5 2 8 3

to grip the edge of the car seat and one to hold the lid so I am ready to avoid any splashback. Ideally, a fifth arm would also be handy, armed with a tissue for drips.

Mr Meg thought one of these gizmos would eliminate the need for stops as I could 'go' on the go, even when he is doing 70mph on the M4 swearing and shouting about how the bloke on his left is cutting him up and the fella on the right is going too fast.

I don't think Mr Meg would be such a devotee to shewees if he knew that, in 2021, he had grabbed my sister's one from the kitchen of a rented house in Somerset where we were holidaving together and used it as his water bottle for a cycle ride. It was yellow and pink and looked nothing like his water bottle but what can I tell you? The man is a dope.

She had used it as intended, emptied

it but not disinfected it before he dashed off with it. After that he boiled all the water he drank on that holiday because he complained Somerset water tasted 'tangy.'

Back to Welsh Wales. We eventually found our cottage after eight hours and 3 minutes.

And Google Maps didn't even apologise.



- ♦ 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 KingsCamberfield Taxi Services
- Computer Cab, Mitre Way, W12 Coney Allen, Dunbridge Street, E1
- CP Beehive Service Station,
- Beehive Lane, Gants Hill
- Cricklewood Carriers, Cricklewood
- Dial A Cab, City Road, N1 Edgware Station Rank
- ♦ Euston Station Rank
- G & L Taxis, Crayford Road, N7
- 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 SAFARIJACKET



Crossword

SUBSOIL E O W E COUNTRYMUSIC

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RELIC

SOLUTION: TUNNELLED

Wordwheel

All words: Dell, dent, duel, duet, dune, elude, eluted, etude, lend, lent, lune, lute, need, nude, teed, teen, tell, tend, tune, tuned, tunnel,

Word targets: Excellent: 19, Good: 16, Target: 12, Kids: 7

| <u> </u> | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
|----------|---|-----|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | < 3 | 4 | 5 |

5 > 4 1

Futoshiki

PATEMALLNIGHT

DEMEANTYEARLY

FARMLAND HURL

E E L A R R

2

D T S L O O I L P R O N G

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| \wedge | | | | |
| 2 | 1 < | 2 | 4 | 5 |

2 1 5 > 3





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