

**GETT SOLD FOR \$175 MILLION**

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CAB YOU DRIVE Page 20



14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 #564

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## CYCLIST FACES NO ACTION AFTER FATAL COLLISION WITH PENSIONER

There has been widespread condemnation after a Court ruled that a speeding cyclist involved in a fatal collision with a pensioner could not be prosecuted because speed limits "do not apply to bicycles". 81-year-old Hilda Griffiths sadly died two months after the incident which took place in June 2022, from injuries she sustained, including several broken bones and bleeding on the brain. In yet another example of dangerous actions from a cyclist, with little regard for pedestrians and other road users, the cyclist, a Credit Suisse banker, who crashed into Ms Griffiths in Regent's Park causing her fatal injuries will face no consequences for his reckless actions. Regent's Park has a 20 mph speed limit in place yet the Coroner's report said the group Mr Fitzgerald was riding with were travelling at 29 mph. According to *the Telegraph*, he reportedly described how he had "zero-reaction time", adding how cyclists are not required to obey 20 mph signs because "the legal speed limit doesn't apply to cyclists [the same] as motorists". In a shocking decision, police concluded there was "insufficient evidence for a real prospect of conviction" and the case was closed.

## PEDICABS BILL BECOMES LAW

The Pedicabs London Bill has officially become law, completing its passage through Parliament and gaining Royal Assent at the end of April. Under the new legislation, pedicabs will be subject to regulation for the first time governing how they operate and what they can charge for their services. They will be regulated by Transport for London, which will now develop a regulatory framework designed to protect passengers and to clamp down on noise and nuisance behaviour. Nicky Aiken, Conservative MP for the Cities of London and Westminster, who campaigned on this issue for a number of years and led the charge on this legislation told *The Evening Standard*: "After 10 years of campaigning we've finally succeeded in ensuring that pedicabs will be safer, tourists will be protected from unregulated fares and local people will not be disturbed by blaring music. It is a victory for everyone in the West End."

# Gett.pango

a Mobile Smart City Company

## GETT BOUGHT BY PANGO FOR £175 MILLION

Gett has been purchased by Israel-based Pango, in a deal signed last Thursday, reportedly after months of negotiations. The Israeli parking payments app takes one hundred per cent ownership of the taxi app but the company reportedly plans to retain Gett's global teams and expertise. Valued at as much as £1.197 billion just four years ago, it was well known that Gett had been for sale and looking for a buyer for some time.

By acquiring Gett, Pango seeks to position itself as a broader smart mobility platform offering a range of services and hopes to grow its business in the markets it operates in, including the UK and Israel. Matteo de Renzi, CEO of Gett, said, "We are delighted to welcome Pango as our new shareholders. Gett has made significant strides in growing from a startup to a profitable international business, and we are grateful to our shareholders VNV, Access Industries, and MCI Capital for their guidance and support over the years, as well as to our employees for their significant contribution to Gett's success. We look forward to starting our next chapter as part of the Pango family."

## CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DAVID 'CHICAGO DAVE' HART

The family of David Hart, known to many as 'Chicago Dave', would like to pay tribute to an amazing man, who sadly passed away in March. David is described by his family as a man with an open, often overly emotional love of romcoms, the natural world, animals, planes, trains and automobiles and all things culinary. A man with the biggest heart, loudest laugh and eternal love to give.

If you knew David and would like to leave a tribute to him you can do so at the following link: [david-hart1.muchloved.com](http://david-hart1.muchloved.com). Those wishing to do so can also make a donation to his favourite charity, the RNLI in his memory.



## BLACKWALL TUNNEL WEEKEND CLOSURES

Transport for London has announced further weekend closures of the southbound Blackwall Tunnel across four weekends between May and July. The closures are to facilitate work being carried out to roads south of the Blackwall Tunnel to support the new Silvertown Tunnel, which opens in 2025. The southbound route will be

closed 18-20<sup>th</sup> May, 1-3<sup>rd</sup> June, 8-10<sup>th</sup> June and 29<sup>th</sup> June-1<sup>st</sup> July. Northbound traffic will not be affected by the closures and will be diverted via the southbound tunnel when required.





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# Dorset Dilemma, Insurance Costs and CCTV

I hope City Hall give CCTV some proper thought. They must recognise that drivers already face enough costs when it comes to licensing and running a cab.

## Steve's comment

**D**uring the past few years our call takers and legal team have dealt with every kind of problem imaginable, or so I thought, until one day last week.

### Dorset disqualification

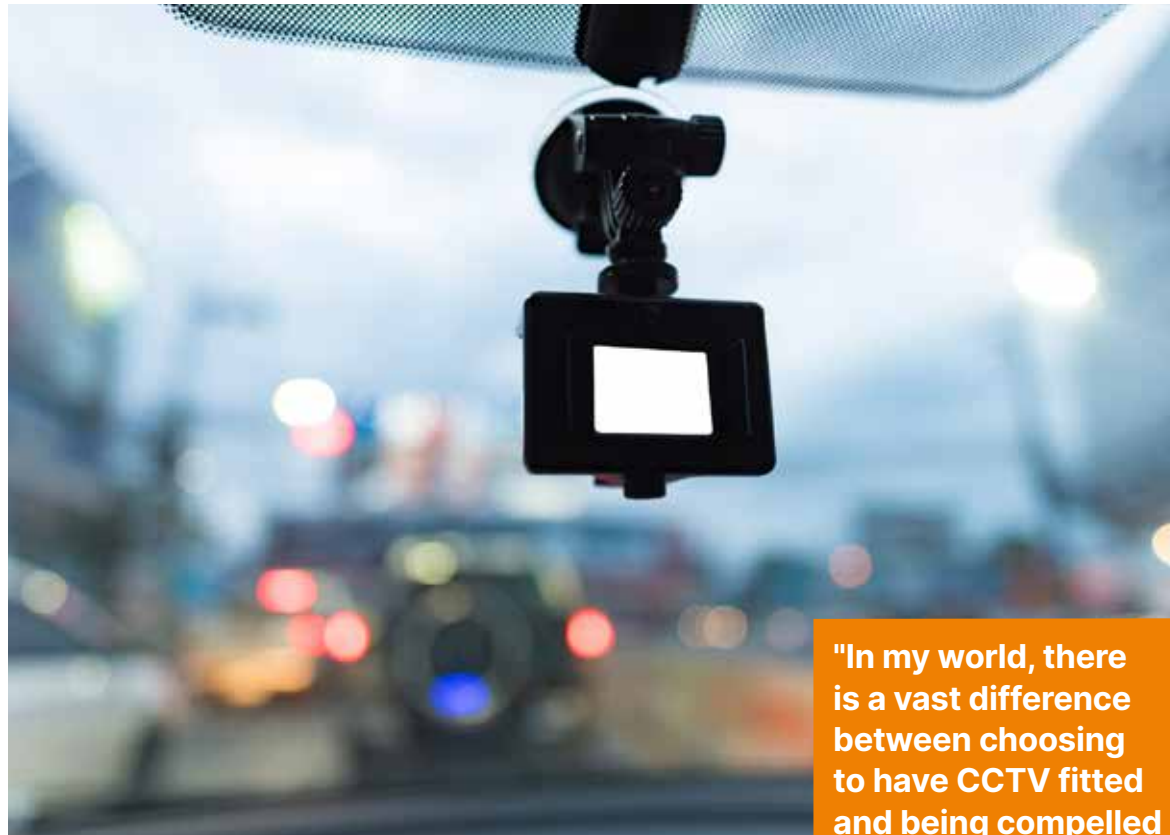
A member called us to explain that he had received a letter from the DVLA in Swansea asking him to surrender his driving licence, as he had been disqualified from driving by a court in Dorset until October. The problem was that our member knew nothing about it, had not been to Dorset in the last 35 years, and had certainly not committed any driving offences there!

Our licensing team were able to ascertain from the online DVLA portal that he had been given six points for failing to notify the police, presumably in Dorset, who was driving a vehicle registered to him - again pretty much impossible, as he did not own any vehicles. It is even more confusing because even then, with the three points he did have, he should not have been disqualified with only nine points, that's presuming that three plus six equals nine in Dorset, as it does pretty much everywhere else.

### Legal team to the rescue

The good news, other than that he is an LTDA member and has our lawyers to sort it out for him, is that it can be resolved through him making a statutory declaration to the Dorset Court, getting the matter set aside, and presumably sorted out eventually. The bad news is that until that happens, he is banned from driving, and earning a living.

Luckily, our legal team have managed to talk to someone at the Court in Dorset, something which is virtually impossible with any of the London courts, and at the time of writing this we are waiting for an update. I will keep you posted on this strange tale, as I am sure you are as intrigued as I am to know what's happened here. In the meantime, if anyone suddenly



"In my world, there is a vast difference between choosing to have CCTV fitted and being compelled to have it."

finds themselves in a similarly strange situation or hears anything from a random Court in Dorset remember we are always here to help!

### Spiralling insurance costs

Turning to issues impacting the trade as a whole now, I knew insurance premiums were rising and that older members in particular were struggling to get cover, but even I was shocked by the escalating cost of fleet insurance as detailed on page 20.

Personally, I was always very wary of having CCTV in the cab, but with the number of false

or exaggerated claims on the rise, the standard of some of the driving on our streets and the cycling vigilantes trying to get you convicted for what is often normal and perfectly safe driving, I have changed my mind.

### Mandatory CCTV?

Interestingly, the Mayor touched on introducing mandatory CCTV in taxis and minicabs in his manifesto, which will now become his policy programme following his re-election. The problem is, in my world, and I am sure all of yours too, there is a vast difference between

choosing to have CCTV fitted and being compelled to have it. That difference is in the cost of installing and maintaining it. If we are to be compelled to have it, surely TfL should pay for it?

There are also all sorts of complicated issues to consider when introducing it as a mandatory requirement to do with data and privacy and who controls that data. It's caused huge problems in other licensing areas, so I hope City Hall have given it or will now give it some proper thought. They must recognise that drivers already face enough costs when it comes to licensing and running a cab.

I have the first meeting of the new mayoralty next week with Seb Dance, the Deputy Mayor for Transport (I am assuming the current team is staying in place as I haven't heard any different) and Andy Lord the Transport Commissioner. It goes without saying that the Mayor's manifesto pledge and his vision for the future of our trade were the first items I asked to be placed on the agenda. I will update you after the meeting.





# Warranties – What You Need to Know

Purchasing a new taxi is a major investment in your livelihood. Understanding the manufacturer's warranty is key to safeguarding that investment for the long term.



## Knowledge is power

**W**e often hear from drivers who are confused about what is and isn't covered under their cab's manufacturer's warranty. There are also those who haven't adhered to the service plan and find that work which should be covered, isn't.

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## Understanding your warranty

As a licensed taxi driver, the decision to invest in a new taxi is a significant milestone in your career. Buying a new taxi not only ensures passenger safety and comfort but also provides peace of mind for the long road ahead. I know most drivers will do their due diligence and will investigate a payment plan that suits their needs when deciding to purchase a cab, whether it will be a PCP or finance, to buy the cab outright. However, an equally crucial aspect of this process is understanding the manufacturer's warranty that comes with your new vehicle.

There are many important questions you need to be able to answer. Does the cab come with three or five years cover? If only three, what are the added costs to have five years? Here are some key things to think about.

## Know your manufacturer

As a manufacturer of specialist vehicles, LEVC stand behind their products with a comprehensive warranty. Although some drivers have had issues and say that LEVC's aftercare service is not always up to scratch, a couple have told us

that it is becoming like the old days, when Mann Overton didn't care about the driver once he left the showroom. I have a slightly different view, as at the LTDA we speak to LEVC regularly and often work with them to try to get a positive outcome and resolve drivers' problems. I am not saying problems don't happen, but they do seem to genuinely care and want to help drivers as best they can.

## Understanding the coverage

The manufacturer's warranty typically covers certain aspects of the vehicle for a specific period or mileage, whichever comes first. It's crucial to read and understand the warranty document thoroughly to know what components are covered and what is excluded.

## Warranty duration

The duration of the manufacturer's warranty can vary, with some lasting for a set number of years or a specific mileage limit. Longer warranties will provide extended protection. Always take the longest warranty on offer. Whilst it might be more expensive upfront, the peace of mind and extra cover will be worth it in the long run. For example, an LEVC TX comes with three years as standard but there is an option for an extended five-year warranty, which is what I would suggest you go with. It also means that if you want to part-ex or sell the cab later (before the five years is up) it will be more valuable.

## Transferability

For taxi drivers who plan to sell their vehicles in the future, it's essential to check if the manufacturer's warranty is transferable to the new owner.

A transferable warranty can increase the resale value of the taxi, as potential buyers will have added assurance.

## Understanding limitations and exclusions

It's equally important to be aware of the limitations and exclusions in the warranty coverage. Make sure you read the terms and conditions thoroughly as some warranties may not cover wear and tear items, routine maintenance, or damage caused by accidents or improper use. Understanding these limitations can help you plan for potential expenses that may not be covered by the warranty.

## Authorised service centres

To stay within the manufacturer's terms and conditions, all work is to be carried by authorised garages and dealerships. This ensures that the proper manufacturer approved parts are used and that repairs are performed by skilled technicians. This also applies to any bodywork.

## Keeping records and maintenance logs

To ensure the validity of the warranty, it's also crucial to keep detailed records of all maintenance and repairs performed on the taxi. Following the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule is essential to preserve the warranty coverage.

Purchasing a new taxi is a major investment in your livelihood, and understanding the manufacturer's warranty is key to protecting your ability to make a living and safeguarding your investment for the long term.

I hope that this information has been useful to drivers. **LTDA**

## Kirby's PCN Hotspots

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

### YELLOW BOX CAMERAS

- Upper Woburn Place/ Endsleigh Gardens
- Eversholt Street/ Churchway
- All along Piccadilly
- Park Street/Green St W1
- Vauxhall Cross
- Shepherds Bush Green (Westfield)
- Hans Road (Rear of Harrods)
- Victoria Street/Palace Street
- Bayswater Road/Westbourne Street
- Bayswater Road/Brook Street
- Bayswater Road/Hyde Park Street

### CAMERA PCN ENFORCEMENT

- Harrods (Brompton Road) Over-ranking/Zig-Zags
- Tottenham Court Road
- Sopwith Way (Chelsea Bridge) Do Not Enter
- Cornhill (coming from Leadenhall Street)
- Bath Street EC1 No Motor Vehicles 24/7
- Wilton Road, Victoria Station Over-ranking
- Edgware Road W2 Red Route
- Borough High Street Red Route
- Tower Bridge Road Red Route
- Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel, No Right Turn
- Lower Belgrave Street AM/PM Timed School Restrictions

### 20MPH MOBILE CAMERAS

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

### \*CHANGE OF SPEED LIMIT\*

- Bath Road Hounslow reduced from 40mph to 30mph
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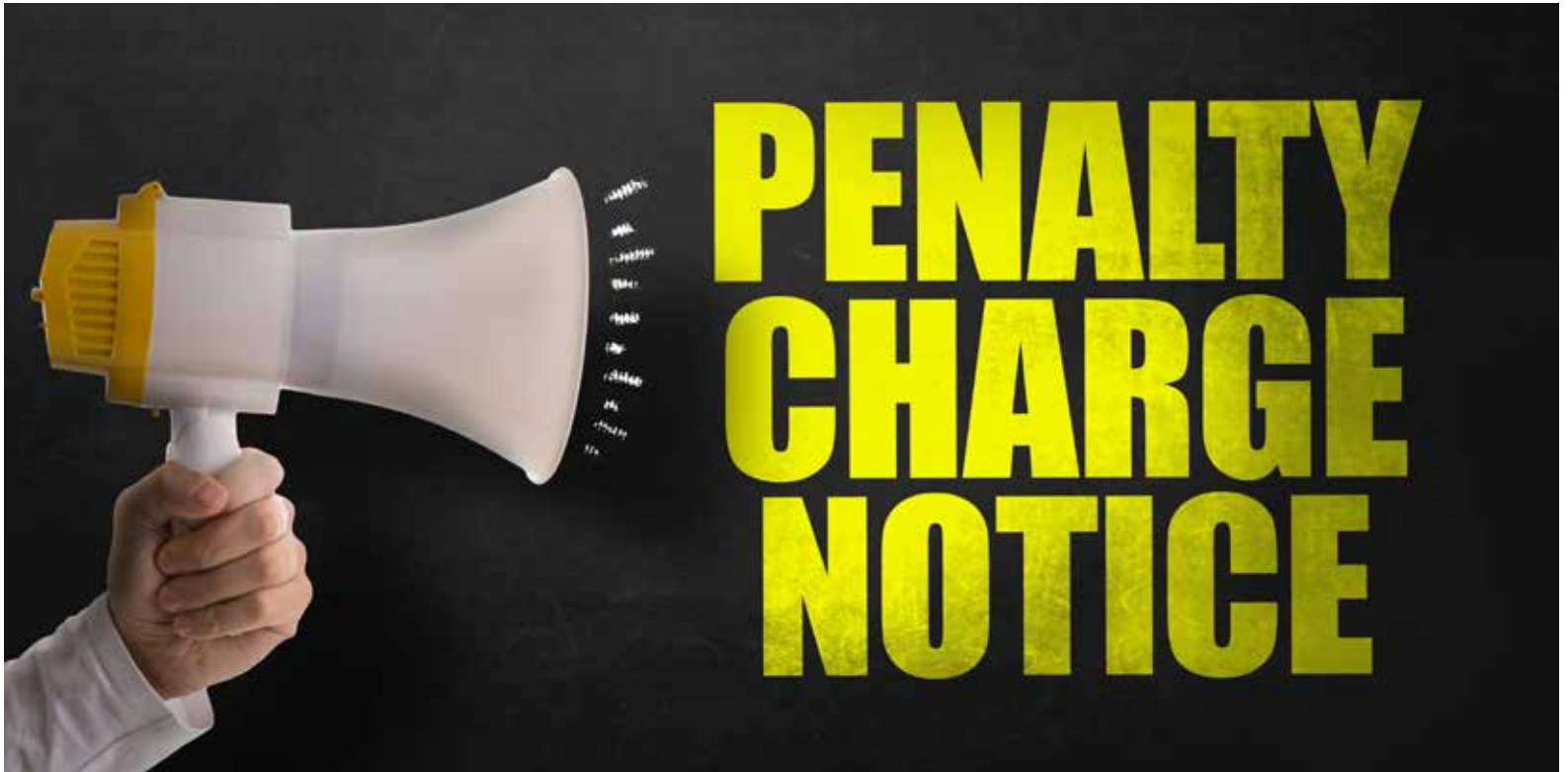
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# Fines from the Flyers

Two years on, we are still battling with Heathrow over problems with enforcement of the Terminal Drop-off Charge and now there are challenges at Gatwick too.



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## Airports & beyond

**I**t's now been over two years since London Taxi drivers had to pay the Terminal Drop-Off Charge (TDOC) at Heathrow Airport, yet we are still having issues with inter-terminal jobs and drivers being charged the five-pound fee incorrectly.

### Heathrow charges

Drivers are exempt from Heathrow's Terminal Drop-Off Charge if they are in the Taxi Feeder Park system and on an inter-terminal job, but the system doesn't always work. We have many members who are on auto pay and who find that £5 has been taken when they are in the system. This should automatically be refunded, but we are increasingly having to write to refunds to claim their money back.

### Terminal 3 issue

Terminal 3 is also still a big problem. A driver gets sent to Terminal 3 from the Feeder Park, only to receive a parking charge notice a few weeks later from APCOA for £40. Their taxi gets

recorded passing by the drop-off on the way to T3 and it assumes it is dropping off.

Often the agent on the Terminal gets the blame for not entering the correct Vehicle Registration Number when a driver is on an inter-terminal job. This isn't always the case, it's more likely to be a problem in the system. I have tested it and received a PCN myself, where the agent got the blame in my appeal reply but I had been sent from the Feeder Park, so the agent wasn't actually involved.

I have brought up this issue, time and time again, yet we are no closer to resolving the problem and it seems Heathrow are no closer to giving us any answers.

We have been successful in our appeals where this is the case, but it's a lot of what should be unnecessary work for us and worry for the drivers.

I will continue to pursue Heathrow for answers and solutions on these issues, always backed up with plenty of evidence.

### Gatwick drop-offs

We also continue to see NCP Gatwick parking charge notices from members for non-payment and autopay failures at the North or South Terminal drop-off zones.

These PCNs can sometimes take weeks or months to come through and until they're received by the driver. They are, however, usually offered at the £60 discounted rate, if payment is received within 18 days from the date of notice. After that they then go up to £100 which must be paid no later than 32 days from the notice date. Beyond these time parameters, it's likely to go over to debt recovery, who will send a 'letter of claim' requesting a due balance of a whopping £170 and they are very difficult to deal with. Failure to pay or ignoring them, will inevitably end with county court action, which if it goes against you can end up with a total cost in the region of £300.

As soon as you receive ANY PCN please either pay the fine/invoice or seek advice at the earliest opportunity. In my experience it is always best to appeal as soon as possible, to avoid these escalating figures,

as an initial £60 fee seems a small price to pay compared to a visit to your local county court, with the possibility of a County Court Judgment (CCJ) against you.

We tend to find NCP Gatwick fairly reasonable and understanding when communicating with them on our members' behalf. They usually reduce a legitimate contravention down to a £15 goodwill offer. When we're not successful, we find it's usually due to the time lapse from the initial PCN.

### Don't let things escalate

I understand when a driver feels the injustice of the situation and it becomes more about "principle" rather than a perhaps more rational approach. We have had plenty of members keen to battle it out, who suddenly find themselves facing the prospect of a court action, when all of this could have been resolved a year or so earlier and all for the sake of a fare from the flyers to Cromwell Road or the price of a tank of fuel.

Dealing with all PCNs at the earliest opportunity will help lead to a better result. Please get in contact with your LTDA rep as soon as possible if you need help appealing or aren't sure what to do when you receive a PCN. We are here and happy to help. ■ LTDA





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# PHV VAT Consultation Sparks Debate and Concern from Taxi Industry

What are the implications of the recently launched LTDA's consultation on the VAT treatment of private hire vehicles and how could it impact the licensed taxi trade?



## National Correspondent

**The Government has recently published a comprehensive consultation document through HM Treasury and the Department for Transport that addresses new VAT considerations for the private hire vehicle (PHV) industry, following pivotal High Court decisions.**

### What's it all about?

Unless you've been living under a rock recently, you'll know that the legal outcomes mentioned above have prompted a re-evaluation of how VAT obligations are applied within the sector, potentially reshaping financial and operational frameworks for PHV businesses.

Previously, PHV operators managed VAT payments as agents, but court rulings in 2021 and 2023 have mandated a shift to treating them as principals. This shift is designed to simplify tax procedures and enhance fair play across the transport industry. The consultation now underway aims to examine whether PHV operators can retain their agent status for VAT while still functioning as principals in terms of service delivery, a move that could significantly mitigate VAT costs for these operators and thus prevent price increases for end-users.

### Potential impact

One of the big concerns for any hackney carriage driver is the threat, however unlikely, that this could see a 'zero-rated' VAT status introduced for just the PHV sector. If introduced the government would have to encourage PHV drivers, who are not currently registered for VAT, to do so voluntarily. This strategy could allow minicab drivers to reclaim VAT on substantial outlays such as vehicle purchases and fuel, which could lead to reduced operational costs and, consequently, lower charges for passengers. Essentially, you could have a minicab driver claiming VAT back on a Prius and its annual fuel, but a black cab, wheelchair accessible taxi would still require tens of thousands in VAT.

This is just one of a number of concerns around scenarios that are very much hypothetical now. The government has made it clear that they do not favour some of the more radical options discussed such as scrapping the two tier system of regulation for taxi and PHV, but they are still concerningly being discussed as options and championed by some operators.

### Industry reaction

Key figures in the taxi industry have been keen to highlight any changes that could tilt the competitive balance in favour of PHV operators by enabling them to offer lower fares due to diminished VAT duties. Additionally, the possibility of PHV drivers being able to

offset major costs against VAT, as just discussed, could lead to an uneven playing field, disadvantaging traditional taxi drivers the majority of whom are not registered for VAT.

The LTDA's Steve McNamara has already voiced strong intentions to respond to the consultation, stressing the importance of maintaining the current regulatory framework

**"The possibility of PHV drivers being able to offset major costs against VAT, as just discussed, could lead to an uneven playing field."**

that distinguishes between taxis and PHVs. McNamara asserted:

*"We will be responding strongly to the consultation to emphasise the ongoing importance of the two-tier system of taxi and PHV regulation, which guarantees passenger choice and public safety and must not be undermined in any way. We will also be seeking reassurance that any changes made to the VAT treatment of private hire vehicles do not put licensed taxi drivers at a competitive disadvantage."*

In parallel, Mariusz Zabrocki, General Manager of FREENOW UK, highlighted the importance of maintaining investment and competition within the transport sector amidst these

changes. Interestingly, he also opposed any proposals that would eliminate VAT for PHVs completely, arguing for the necessity of a level playing field.

Zabrocki said: *"FREENOW is glad to see the Government launching this consultation. The current uncertain VAT status has already led to a sharp reduction of investment and competition in the sector, which is not ideal considering the current socio-economic landscape and the fact that so many people rely on this industry to make ends meet."*

*"FREENOW has paid its share in taxes since its launch in the UK in 2011, and we believe all PHV operators should pay VAT, so we're against the 0% rate for PHV as proposed by some of the operators."*

*"We believe that any future decisions need to ensure there is a level playing field when it comes to the whole industry, ensuring that the taxi industry is not negatively impacted by any potential changes in favour of private hire."*

### What happens next?

Some of the early signs would indicate that the big hitting PHV operators are more likely to push for a marginal 5% VAT rate rather than a complete zero rate. The marginal approach allows operators to account for VAT only on the profit margin—the difference between the total fare charged to the passenger and what is paid to the driver, thus reducing the VAT payable.

However, research within the consultation papers suggests an adjustment to a 5% VAT rate would represent a projected cost the HM Treasury in lost revenue of approximately £1 billion annually, which may make the government think twice. A zero-rating scenario would have an even more profound impact, potentially reducing the Exchequer's intake by an eye-watering £1.5 billion each year. Can the government afford to wipe that type of revenue off?

As the consultation progresses, the responses from various stakeholders within the taxi industry will be crucial in shaping the final legislative changes. Where and when it will all end is very much up in the air. **TAXI**

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Participating in the quiz will be a donation of £ 5.00.

There will also be a raffle and ticket donations of £5.00 each.

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If you cannot attend the event but still want to contribute, you can donate using your mobile device by sending a text message with the amount you would like to donate. Type "TAXI £5, £10, £20, " and send it to 70085.

Alternatively, you can donate online by visiting [www.ltcf.org.uk](http://www.ltcf.org.uk).

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Many of you may have heard of the name, but do you know who it is and what impact the role



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"Lamé, who has close links to former Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown, has seemingly seen her efforts in overseeing the expansion of London's night-time economy do the reverse."

## Man in black

**B**y now many of you will be aware that I love both music and football and indulge in both at every possible opportunity. So after a hard day practising the bassline to The Who's *Who Are You*, I took inspiration from its chorus and decided to examine *Night Czar* Amy Lamé. Incidentally, The Who's bassist, John Entwistle, was a genius.

### The role

London's Night Czar is Amy Lamé, an American-British performer and writer, as well as TV and radio presenter. She is also known for her one-woman shows, her performance group Duckie and LGBT-themed media

works. She is an extremely talented person who excels at what she does from a performing arts perspective.

In November 2016, she was appointed as London's inaugural Night Czar by recently reelected Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. Her responsibilities centre around the promotion of London's nightlife, including safeguarding venues across the city.

### A successful tenure?

Since her appointment, an average of one pub per week has closed its doors forever, up to and including year-ending 2020. That equated to over 200 pubs. This figure gets significantly worse post-lockdown, which ended on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2021. There has been a further closure of 1,100 pubs in just 30 months. This in itself is an astonishing figure, but there's more. A

massive 41% of all nightclubs have closed down under Lamé's tenure. Even London stalwarts, such as Heaven, are staring down the barrel.

The Night Czar, who has close links to former Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown, has seemingly seen her efforts in overseeing the expansion of London's night-time economy do the reverse. Its contraction has come under her watch, and on a salary of £116,000 per annum questions should be asked.

Trips to Australia, Italy and Spain at the taxpayer's expense have left the beleaguered figure scrabbling to answer some of those questions. City Hall claimed that the trips were essential to share best practice, learn from other cities and build partnerships. Given that Sydney's nighttime economy has already gone into decline, that

may well have been a wasted trip. This also applies to Spain, with the decline in tourism, bars and restaurants are closing down in some areas at a rate not seen for decades. These trips seem akin to Arsenal's Mikel Arteta approaching Sheffield United's manager Chris Wilder to ask for advice on how to win the title.

### Where are the pubs?

There are now less than 3,500 pubs left in London, down from nearly 5,000 in 2016. Incredibly, there are now less than 200 nightclubs remaining open in the capital, the lowest figure since the 1990s. There can be a

# A Night Czar

has on London, its businesses and residents.



number of factors attributed to this decline. The UK economy and the fact that we are in a technical recession is an obvious one - but we haven't been in a recession for the entire length of her tenure. Demographic changes could also be cited as another reason why places have closed down. There are areas in London where a drinking culture is no longer considered the norm due to cultural and sociological shifts. Operational costs have to be factored in too. This includes utility bills, which have gone up faster than the Space X rocket. I

spoke to one pub landlord who informed me that his utility bill had increased from £6,000 per month to £16,000 which, of course, is unsustainable.

## Crime rates

Crime and safety is also an issue, there is a general consensus that women in particular don't feel safe at night in London, especially on some modes of public transport. Anybody who has spent more than five minutes on the tube or bus network after dark will testify that both can be intimidating.

Of course, we also have to shoe-horn in the low traffic neighbourhood schemes, which have made life increasingly challenging for those who want to go on a night out and require a door-to-door service. Deserted streets become a haven for crime, and from the taxi industry's perspective it is always more difficult to provide a first and last mile service if you only have one access point within an LTN.

## Placing blame

In truth, some of these issues are not her responsibility. A number

of these failures fall squarely on the shoulders of both the Mayor and current government. However, the issues that she is responsible for just don't seem to have been tackled adequately.

Interestingly, one of the issues that the Night Czar discussed recently was an increase in the national living wage to £11.44 an hour. Lame made the observation that the increase may help businesses grow. There may be some truth there, but when you consider a 40-hour week will give you a take home pay of around £1,859 per month, the figures don't add up. Most employees would struggle to cover rent, utilities, travel and food, leaving them barely enough to afford a pint down the pub (assuming the local hasn't closed down). Therefore, those on the national living wage may just leave their chosen industry and move to an area that may be more financially viable to them - in other words, anywhere but London.

## To conclude...

There are still several key questions that remain.

Is Amy Lamé able to turn London's night economy around?

Is she value for money?

And, importantly, should she have remained in her position for nearly a decade? **TAXI**



# European News Round-up

Focus this month is on extra attention for Dutch LGBTQ+ taxi users and the EU's Work Directive.

## International correspondent

### Platforms try to rewrite PWD but fail

Properly regulating the taxi and PHV trade seems an uphill struggle for agencies. Most choose the easy way out: 'regulating' the taxi trade and turning a blind eye to the unfettered and unlicensed growth of the app/PHV side. This is the case all over Europe, as I recently discovered in Germany across cities like Berlin, Frankfurt and Cologne. In the German capital, PHV trade dwarfs the taxi fleet. Only recently the local regulator did a check of PHV number plates against licences. It found that at least one in four of all Berlin PHVs (that's at least 1,000) are illegal. On May Day, taxi operators in Frankfurt took to the streets, demonstrating against the restrictions placed on taxis, while PHVs get a big green light to do as they please, including waiting on or near taxi ranks.

The city of Cologne called in independent advice on how to



regulate both. It then rewrote the conclusions and found a stick to discipline and shrink the taxi trade, initially by freezing the 1,154 licences, thereby slowly shrinking the trade. Yes, you guessed it, the PHV sector gets the nod for unhindered growth. Where Berlin's agency is finally taking steps against unlicensed *Uber*, *Bolt* or *FREENOW* vehicles, Frankfurt closes both regulatory eyes. God forbid that these agencies would actually do what they are supposed to. But that involves tight and fair policing of both sides. More worrying is the political direction these agencies get from their so-called political masters.



### Drivers unite with LGBTQ+ community

Every city has its own particular taxi users. Amsterdam has a large LGBTQ+ and drag community, that not all drivers are used to. To improve understanding between various groups, on 5<sup>th</sup> May - Liberation Day in the Netherlands - Amsterdam's drag queens, the city's taxi trade, *Uber*, *Bolt* and Amsterdam's Mayor sat down during a 'Freedom Meal'. The event brought together

members of the drag scene, other members of the LGBTQ+ community, and taxi drivers from *Uber* and *Bolt*, with the goal of increasing mutual understanding. "Travelling around the city safely - particularly at events like *Pride Amsterdam* - is a challenge for the LGBTQ+ community, especially drag performers," says organiser Jennifer Hopelezz. "Public transportation is often unsafe due to threats and intimidation, and taxi drivers often refuse to take drag performers, restricting their freedom of movement and safety even further, especially at night." In addition, many drivers are themselves victims of discrimination. Many measures (like special emergency apps) have been taken, but improving understanding between the different groups remains the main aim. More initiatives will follow prior to the next *Pride Amsterdam*.

### EU's Platform Work Directive voted in

On 24<sup>th</sup> April, with an overwhelming majority, the European Union finally adopted a 'light' version of the Platform Work Directive (PWD) for the entire EU. Within two years the 27 EU member states must integrate and implement

the directive into national legislation. Undoubtedly, classification rules to determine when a driver is automatically an app employee will vary per country. But the new rules for algorithmic management in the workplace (which has to have human involvement) must be included everywhere.

### Bolt's brazen tactics

App-friendly countries like France, Germany, Greece and Estonia (*Bolt's* HQ) nearly managed to stall the EU vote. The Belgian EU presidency was able to turn Greece and Estonia's 'No' into a 'Yes'. The last two years the apps continued their intensive no-holds-barred lobby in Brussels. The magazine *Euractiv*, based on the findings of the Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), found a stark example of *Bolt's* lobby work. This research group focuses on uncovering the harmful effects of corporate lobbying. Through Freedom of Information Requests, the CEO has revealed the extent of *Bolt's* lobbying of its own government regarding the directive.

The most brazen example of *Bolt's* lobbying was an email sent by Aurélien Pozzana (head of Move EU, the Brussels lobby group including *Uber*, *Bolt* and *FREENOW*), on 26<sup>th</sup> October last year, just as the Spanish EU presidency was trying to unite member states to a position closer to that of the European Parliament (in

favour of a strong Directive). Pozzana asked whether the Estonian Government could sign a letter attached to the email and encourage other 'aligned' member states to do the same, calling on the Spanish presidency to go to a position more critical of the directive. Surprisingly, the attached letter was drafted as if it had been written by the Estonian Government. At the end of the draft was a list of countries (Austria, Sweden, Greece and France) where *Bolt* believed the Estonian Government could send the letter. In the final vote on 24<sup>th</sup> April, Germany and France were isolated; Greece and Estonia suddenly supported the directive.

Miriam Tõnismägi, head of Transparency International Estonia (TIE), said that by *Bolt* writing a letter as if it were the Estonian Government, it was "crossing a line" and she raised broader concerns about lobbying influence at the EU level. The revelations about *Bolt's* lobbying caused quite a stir in Estonia. Move EU chief Pozzana wasn't very happy with the compromise. ■ TAXI





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# A Passage Through Time: A Developing Soho

From periods of pandemics and disease, to an evolving landscape paving the way for medical innovation.

## Footprints and Foundations

**F**irstly, I would like to thank the readership for their continued interest in my articles.

It is encouraging for me to receive emails from cab drivers considering starting a tourist guide course. I know it is a huge leap of faith to return to education, which for most would have concluded at 16. I assure you it is never too late to begin! Therefore, now is the time to engage yourself onto a tourist guide course. The renowned lexicographer Doctor Samuel Johnson said, 'When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life.'

## Healing the sick

The National Health Service (NHS) was founded by William Beveridge in 1948. To be able to access free healthcare is taken for granted in the present day. We must consider ourselves extremely fortunate that most diseases are curable, which enhances one's longevity. In the past, recovery from illness was a matter of birthright. The social disparity of rich and poor was a major factor in 19<sup>th</sup> century mortality rates. At this period, Soho had numerous doctors and specialised hospitals dealing with a multitude of maladies. Those unfortunate citizens who were troubled by body and mind could consult a doctor if he or she had the means to pay. Mercifully, the poor were offered free healthcare by empathetic doctors and charitable institutions. Indeed, the mortality rates of the poor were far in excess than that of the rich. The latter had superior residences, nourishment and hygiene. The impoverished were always susceptible to infectious diseases, which explained their demise at the average age of 30.

## Doctor John Snow (1813-1858)

When Covid reached London in 2019, the population was about to experience a contagion that would prove catastrophic. The health of the nation was at risk, as the country retreated into a complete

shutdown. Thankfully, a new antidote was invented in the form of a vaccine. During these dark days, the word 'epidemiology' was being bandied about by politicians and the medical profession. Epidemiology means 'the study of the incidence and distributions

**"We must consider ourselves extremely fortunate that most diseases are curable, which enhances one's longevity."**

of infectious diseases and of the control and prevention.' In the early days of medicine, renowned epidemiologist Doctor John Snow was at the vanguard of research into curing life-threatening diseases. He was born in the North of England to a working-class family who were mostly

labourers. In his adolescent years, Snow demonstrated an aptitude for mathematics. Although his education was elementary, Snow excelled in academia and would seek a professional line of employment. Breaking away from longstanding family traditions of dexterity as manual workers, at the age of 14 he obtained a medical apprenticeship with William Hardcastle in the area of Newcastle upon Tyne. The young Snow advanced quickly in the medical profession and became an eminent doctor specialising in the research of infectious diseases.

## Cholera in Soho

As Soho developed from green fields into an urban landscape, fine houses were constructed in neatly laid out streets and squares. However, a labyrinth of crumbling houses resided in the secluded back streets of this West End quarter. In this warren of dilapidated dwellings, large families huddled together in accommodation which was not fit for human habitation. These conditions were a prerequisite

for the continual outbreak of infectious diseases amongst Soho's poorest residents.

In 1854, an outbreak of Cholera raged through the London region. Soho felt the full impact of the contagion. Most of the fatalities were confined in the Broad Street location (now Broadwick Street). Fortunately, Snow was a local resident living in nearby Frith Street. The Parish Medical Board attained that Snow was at the forefront of the research into infectious diseases. The doctor was summoned to investigate the huge loss of life in this particular neighbourhood. Snow's research into the sources of Cholera was in its infancy. However, he needed to find the root cause into the epidemic with much haste.

## The water pump

Snow conducted a thorough investigation of the Broad Street area. His hypothesis concluded that a water pump positioned on the northside of the street was the source of the epidemic. Upon his observations, Snow diverged that beneath the water pump there was a natural spring that fed the pump. However, the water source flowed through a cesspit that was contaminated. Most of the people in this neighbourhood had fallen ill after drinking from the water pump. He had the handle removed from the pump with immediate effect. Within four weeks the fatalities decreased by 75% thus proving Snow's theory that Cholera was a water-based disease and not airborne as most of the medical fraternity had thought. The original water pump in Broadwick Street was still on display in my early years of cab driving in the '80s. Since renovations of the thoroughfare have taken place over the decades, there is now no trace of the original pump. A public house on the corner of Broadwick Street and Lexington Street called The John Snow recalls the eminent doctor, who ironically was teetotal.

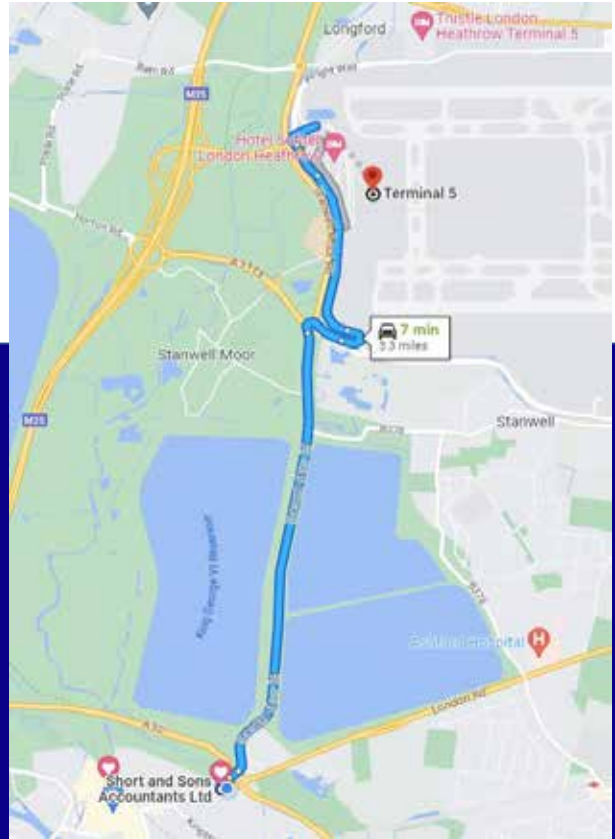
**TAXI**



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# The True Cost of a Cab

The cost of the cab to buy and finance is obviously the primary factor but how many drivers know what it costs to insure a fleet cab?



## Cab you drive

20

This is a strange old business and always has been! Of all the topics that get discussed on ranks and in cafes, and increasingly on social media, the one that is having the biggest impact on us, as a trade, rarely gets a mention, and that's the cost of insurance.

### Huge insurance costs

I regularly hear cabbies moan about the high cost of renting a taxi, without discussing the

reasons why rents are at the levels they are. The cost of the cab to buy and finance is obviously the primary factor but how many drivers know what it costs to insure a fleet cab? Up until very recently, an average fleet was paying about £2500 PA, per cab, which equates to about £50 per week. The same fleets, irrespective of their claims rate, can now expect to pay anything up to £5500 PA, an increase of over 100%, which produces a weekly figure of over £100 per week!

Add this to the cost of financing and running a new cab, a garage, staff, and everything else and the real question should be How can anyone rent a TXE for £350 per week?

### Mushers too

It's not much better for mushers, as insurance premiums are rising by anything up to a third, again irrespective of individual claims, often even for people with no claims in many years. There is also a major problem with insurers refusing to cover older drivers, with some being refused a renewal past the age of 70!

### Why?

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has attempted to justify average rises of over 30 per cent on normal car insurance by quoting the amounts its members pay out (over £1.1 million every hour apparently).

What they fail to address is the fact that in Europe, with a similar payout rate, the increases have all been below six per cent! Many put this down to government intervention on the continent, with the French government as an example, capping premium rises to below that of inflation. The ABI insist that this is not a case of 'rip-off Britain' pricing but is a direct result of increased numbers of claims.

### Market update

On a more positive note, the fleet is holding steady at just over 14,800 cabs, with 67 new TXEs joining the ranks in April. This makes the TXE the second most numerous cab of all time with 8300 cabs licensed. It beats

the TX1 in numbers, but is still way behind the FX4, which in various guises, but primarily unchanged, was sold from 1958 to 1997 with over 75,000 cabs being produced!

Anyone who ever owned or drove the FX4, will testify how tractor-like they were. It was over 25 years into the production run before comforts such as servo brakes or power steering were introduced. They were suffered more than liked and any comparison between an FX4 and a TXE is limited to the fact they both have four wheels!

**TAXI**



DYNAMO	182
LEVC	8,306
TX1	1
TX2	52
TX4	4,197
VITO	2,068
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,806</b>

300

200

100

0

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
	2023												2024			
LEVC	123	49	225	126	117	177	114	61	259	210	211	94	87	46	234	67
DYNAMO										4	1					



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# What's On? West End

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

## Under the spotlight



### **Machinal - Old Vic**

In 1928, Ruth Sydnor was executed at New York's Sing Sing prison after being found guilty of murdering her husband. It was a story that captured the nation's attention, a 'homebody' woman and the man she was having an affair with, teaming up to get rid of her husband. A potentially unexpected topic for a play, let alone one being performed on one of the most iconic stages in the West End.

What could have been an exploitative play is instead something far more moving and profound, exploring the reasons why a supposedly 'happy' marriage could have ever possibly ended in murder. Rosie Sheehy provides a powerhouse performance as the lead, a woman struggling to conform to the stifling role forced upon her by society. The ensemble exacerbate this sense of claustrophobia at every turn, menacing shadows that are as haunting as they are aggravating. With a runtime of 110 minutes (without interval) there's no relief from the escalating tension. An oppressively powerful and essential watch.



*Machinal runs until 1<sup>st</sup> June.*

### **Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York) - Criterion Theatre**

Different in nearly every other way aside from being of equal brilliance, *Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York)* is a play that quite literally does what it says on the tin. Two strangers – Dougal (Sam Tutty) and Robin (Dujonna Gift) – meet at an airport. He's a naïve and impossibly upbeat visitor from just-outside-London visiting New York for his dad's wedding. She's the bride's sister, a jaded New Yorker, escorting Dougal to his hotel before collecting her sister's wedding cake. What follows is more than just errands, along the way they learn just as much about themselves as they do about each other: earnest self-discovery through wonderfully bittersweet and hilarious dialogue as well as gorgeously written songs.

*Two Strangers* is one of the few examples of a new musical with songs that have genuine sticking power. Tutty's *New York* is the epitome of an earworm and Gift's *Be Happy* is heartbreaking in its relatability. For just over two hours we get to follow a story that is both dreamy and real; a moving joy of an almost-romance and definitely-comedy, about two people who find each other when they had no idea they needed to be found. A perfect depiction of a 21<sup>st</sup> adjacent-to-love story.



*Two Strangers (Carry a Cake Across New York) runs until 31<sup>st</sup> August.*



## What else is on?

### ■ **Fawlty Towers - The Play - Apollo Theatre (until 28<sup>th</sup> September)**

Adapted for the stage by John Cleese, the play brings together three episodes of the TV series into one storyline: *Hotel Inspectors*, *The Germans*, and *Communication Problems*.

### ■ **Bluets - Royal Court (until 29<sup>th</sup> June)**

Based on acclaimed author Maggie Nelson's unique and electrifying book is a story about depression and desire, pleasure and pain, and a person possessed by a lifelong obsession with the colour blue. Starring Emma D'Arcy, Kayla Meikle and Ben Whishaw.

### ■ **Kathy and Stella Solve A Murder! - The Ambassadors Theatre (until 14<sup>th</sup> September)**

A raucous musical about BFFs Kathy and Stella, the hosts of Hull's least successful true crime podcast. When their favourite author is killed, they are thrust into a thrilling whodunnit of their own!

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# Taxi Charity Pays Tribute to Veterans William 'Bill' Gladden and Tom Schaffer

**TAXI** spoke to Colin Mills, Vice Chairman of the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, about the sad passings of Bill and Tom, just before the charity's upcoming trip.

24



Tom Schaffer - Glynn Dewis.



Bill Gladden, December 2023 - Graham Baker Photography.

**S**adly, Tom and Bill (the two men pictured above) died just weeks before they were set to make the journey to the Netherlands for Dutch Liberation, and then to Normandy with the charity for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**TAXI** Hi Colin, Thank you for talking to me about Bill and Tom.

**Colin:** It was an honour to know them both, and losing them has had a huge impact on our drivers and volunteers. Over the years, we have lost many of our veterans and it never gets easier.

**TAXI** What were these men like?

**Colin:** There were both wonderful gentlemen who played an important part in the life and times of the charity. Bill loved singing and painting, in fact many of us have pictures that he had painted of our pets. Tom loved sharing a pint and a laugh with everyone.

**TAXI** They were both active in WWII and we have lots to thank them for.

**Colin:** We do indeed. These men participated in the war without hesitation and with the common goal to proudly fight for their country.

**TAXI** Tell us about the part they played in the war? Bill first...

**Colin:** Bill Gladden flew into Normandy on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944, aged 20, in a Hamilcar glider carrying a tank and six motorbikes. For the next few days his regiment was holding the perimeter against the counterattack.

On 17<sup>th</sup> June 1944, while Bill was holed up in an orchard just outside Ranville, he carried two of his fellow soldiers into a barn that was being used as a medical post but sadly they did not recover from their wounds.

On 19<sup>th</sup> June, two days after carrying his badly wounded

friends to the barn, Bill was injured in his right ankle, (while brewing up a dixie of tea), by machine gun fire from a Panzer tank. He was then carried into the same barn. Once inside, he was given morphine and the necessary medical attention, The medics advised that he was evacuated and amputation should be considered.

Bill was luckier than his friends, as he made it back to Portsmouth. After treatment that included cross leg flap, tendon transplant, bone and skin grafts, his leg was saved and he spent the next three years in hospital recovering and learning to walk again.





'Thank you' painting from Bill Gladden to the Taxi Charity.



Bill and Tom.



Colin Mills with Bill.



Tom in the Netherlands for the Market Garden Commemorations.

**TAXI** And what was Tom's impact on the war?

**Colin:** After enlisting during the war and initial training, Tom Schaffer volunteered for the Parachute Regiment. Once accepted, he joined the 13<sup>th</sup> (Lancashire) Battalion. His first military action was in the Ardennes as part of 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne, and his first jump was Operation Varsity in March 1945. Although not as well-known as Operation Overlord, it involved more than 16,000 paratroopers and several thousand aircraft. It was the largest airborne operation ever conducted on a single day and in one location. The aim of Varsity was to establish a bridgehead across the River Rhine for the main Allied advance into Germany.

**TAXI** You talk very fondly of Bill and Tom; how well do you get to know them?

**Colin:** All the drivers and volunteers form special relationships with the veterans and I am honoured to say that we became very good friends. Testament to the love and respect that we feel for these guys is that over 50 of us travelled to Haverhill for Bill's 100<sup>th</sup> party in January, and in April at Tom's funeral his family were overwhelmed by the number of people associated with the Taxi Charity that attended to pay their respects.

**TAXI** How much do these trips the charity takes mean to you?

**Colin:** They are undoubtedly a money-can't-buy experience. It was always an honour to take Bill back to Normandy to the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery, at Ranville, to pay his respects to his two friends. A couple of years ago, we were



Taxi Charity volunteer Colin Mills with WWII veteran Bill and his niece Kaye.

able to locate the barn that Bill had been carried to. It is in private ownership and the French family came out to meet Bill and they could not have been more friendly. They invited him inside to look at where his life had been saved and where his friends had lost theirs almost eighty years ago.

And none of us will forget Tom proudly wearing his beret and shouting, "Airborne!". We fondly referred to him as the poster boy of the Charity, with his impressive moustache and good looks and the reception he received when we took him back to the Netherlands was always brilliant.

My overriding memory of our trips to the Netherlands and Normandy is how revered our veterans are. People stand waving to them as we pass by in our taxis. Military personnel salute them from the side of the road, they never have to buy a drink, people queue up to shake their hands and hear their stories and to say thank you. They are invited into people's homes and ladies often run up to them and plant a kiss on their cheeks with no explanation needed. It truly is something to behold and how heroes should be treated.



Colin with other volunteers in the Netherlands.

**TAXI** And finally, can you tell us more about the trips planned for this year?

**Colin:** Our veteran numbers for the Dutch Liberation trip in May and for Normandy in June get smaller each year. This time, our trips will be tinged by extra sadness for those who are

no longer with us. Bill always travelled with his niece Kaye, and Tom always travelled with John 'Pinky' Pinkerton, who had also served with the Parachute Regiment. Our love goes to Kaye and Pinky, as they begin to adjust to life without Uncle Bill and Tom.

**About the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans**

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

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

To fund and facilitate their work, the charity is wholly reliant on donations, grants and sponsorship.  
[www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org)

Fancy a limited edition D-Day 80 badge or windscreen sticker? Our special badges and stickers will raise funds to allow the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans to take up to 15 WWII veterans and their carers to Normandy this June, for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day.

Please email [info@taxicharity.org](mailto:info@taxicharity.org) to reserve your badges or stickers.

To find out more about the support the Taxi Charity offers to veterans or to donate, visit [www.taxicharity.org](http://www.taxicharity.org)



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26

## **The LTDA goes to bat for its members**

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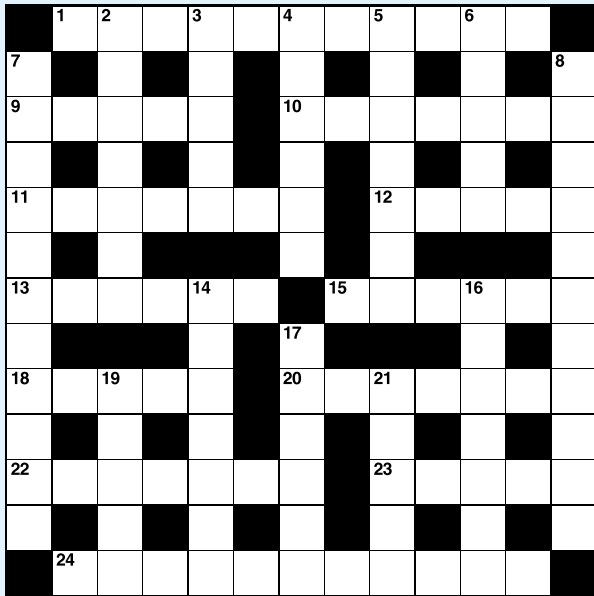


[www.ltda.co.uk](http://www.ltda.co.uk)



# Puzzler Page

## Crossword



### ACROSS

- 1 Having high status (11)
- 9 Vehicle course (5)
- 10 Battery power rating (7)
- 11 Took a breath (7)
- 12 Lurches (5)
- 13 Empty or boastful talk (3,3)
- 15 Loved very much (6)
- 18 Accept with glee (3,2)
- 20 Long-suffering (7)
- 22 Hungarian dish (7)
- 23 \_\_\_ pole, Native American post (5)
- 24 Male relative by marriage (6-2-3)

### DOWN

- 2 Brave the elements (5,2)
- 3 Magic formula (5)
- 4 Enter a country with armed forces (6)
- 5 Poorly brought up (3-4)
- 6 Custom (5)
- 7 Study of birds (11)
- 8 Light near where you sleep (7,4)
- 14 Arraign (7)
- 16 Cheesecake cheese (7)
- 17 Old Testament queen (6)
- 19 \_\_\_ Radcliffe, runner (5)
- 21 Many times (5)

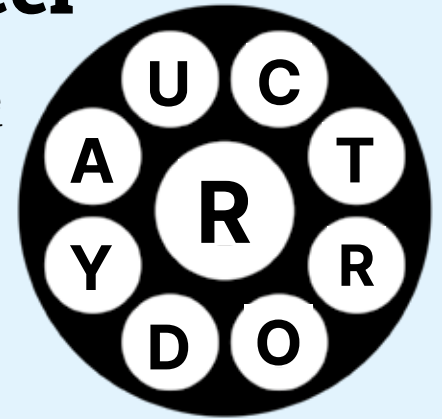
## Sudoku

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

## 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.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	>	<input type="checkbox"/>	>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	>	<input type="checkbox"/>	>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>				2

All answers to puzzler on p30

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- Pay by cash/bank/online.
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**John**  
**07702 554934**

**LINAGE**

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● **Euro 5 about to be decommissioned,** Cabs wanted, TX4's and Vito's. Top Price paid. Call John 07702 554 934

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

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● **TXE comfort plus models no ads from** £320 a week full back up. Based in E17. Ring Tarik 07968623209

● **TXE's available for rent, from £320 per** week. Call Wax 07951 843 66

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

● **TX4s for rent, full backup available,** garage facilities, £240 per week - 07387889206

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

● **A Better Deal. Euro5&6 vitos for rent,** full backup, prices starting from £230 please call – 07956211478

● **Vitos 113 & 114, also tx4s for rent** 07872 504 604

● **TXEs for hire, loan cab available,** no ads – 07980288333

**CABS FOR SALE**

● **TX4 elegance, 14 reg, 160,000 miles,** dark grey, based in North London private £8,500. Call Sanjay - 07956569027

● **TXE for sale, black, 70 plate, 125k** miles, 16 months warranty, fully serviced, change in career. £34,000. Call - 07944982709

● **69 plate, black Comfort vista+, LEVC,** 122k miles, warranty to November. 1 service left, newly plated for 1 year. Clean cab and always parked in the driveway. £37,250. Call Shaikh - 07922264500

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

● **2020 Dynamo, 81k miles, full service** history with one owner, great condition, full bars on the battery. £29,000 Call 07469625057

● **Vito Black 15 plate over 3 years** remaining, 213k miles, excellent condition, overhaul due november 24, £14,500. More details call Ray - 07484251994

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 James Martin

 james.martin@cplone.co.uk

 01727 739 185

**Rest in Peace Daniel Otieno**  
**Funeral will be at Hither Green Cemetery, 12:30 15th May**

# LTDA APPLICATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Twitter \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Badge No. \_\_\_\_\_

Badge colour (please state whether green or yellow) \_\_\_\_\_ Year badge obtained \_\_\_\_\_

Suburban badge sector numbers \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been a member of the LTDA before? (please tick) Yes  No

Do you currently have points on your DVLA driving license? (please tick) Yes  No

If Yes how many points do you have?

Do you have any motoring or other prosecutions pending? Yes  No

Please note: We do not provide assistance for any matters that have occurred prior to you joining the LTDA.

Please tick if you **DO NOT** wish to receive information from the LTDA and other related organisations in the future

I understand that my application for membership of the Association must be approved by the Council of Management and that until this is confirmed I am not eligible to vote in relation to any form of Association matters. I agree that all benefits prior to approval of membership shall be at the discretion of the Council of Management.

**Please note: We do not provide assistance for any matters that have occurred prior to you joining LTDA.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## LTDA Basic Direct Debit Instructions Instructions to your Bank/Building Society to pay Direct Debits:

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

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

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

### Service User Number

9 1 4 4 2 8

### For Office use only

1. Please write the name and full postal address of your branch in the box (left)
2. Name of account holder \_\_\_\_\_
3. Account Number
4. Bank Sort Code --  
Banks/Building Societies may not accept instructions to pay Direct Debit from some types of account.
5. Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_



This guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer

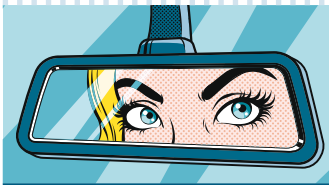
### The Direct Debit Guarantee



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

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





# It's Showtime!

It baffles me why people get so downhearted about going out and enjoying themselves - but it depends on the riff raff surrounding them...



## A woman of words

**I** was busy doing the theatre burst earlier this week, and instead of the usual "It was brilliant!" and "I loved it!" from people who'd been to see *Tina the Musical*, there were grumbles. Not about the show itself but about drama in the audience.

My fares, two lovely ladies, had paid £80 each for tickets, stumped up train fares to and from Orpington and enjoyed a pre-theatre cocktail, burger and chips at *Joe Allen's*. All that, plus taxis to and from London Bridge station. Bye bye £300.

"And do you know whose singing I heard most of and the loudest?" my irate passenger asked me? Not Karis Anderson, the star of the show, but Lulu

from Chigwell. She belted out *Proud Mary* whilst swigging from a litre bottle of Evian 'water' that was yellow and fizzy and definitely wasn't prosecco.

Lulu's seat was in the middle of the row in the stalls, so when she stood up to sing and dance along to the big numbers a lot of the audience were not happy. Shouts of "Sit down!" and "Shut Up!" were ignored by a patron high on Prosecco and the adrenalin for her bootleg West End performance.

Apparently at first it was all relatively good humoured, and Lulu looked like she was going to sit down and shut up as other theatregoers had told her to. Until some fella bellowed, "I didn't pay £95 to watch a drunk bird crucifying *Proud Mary*. Demi Roussos, get back in your seat!"

This caused a lot of laughter from people nearby, but also the question of who is Demi Roussos is? Shirley, Lulu's theatre

companion, got started then. She stood up in her seat and faced the audience.

At this point, the show was stopped and the curtain went down because of all the disruption in the stalls. The orchestra stopped playing but when Karis stopped singing, Lulu just carried on.

Booing and hissing started from the stalls and the circle, with slow clapping in protest at the interruption to the show but still Lulu kept singing, "Rolling, rolling, rolling on the river."

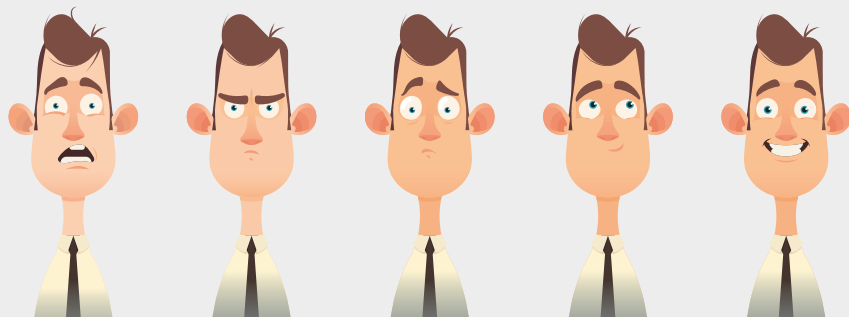
Powered by prosecco, she ended up rolling on the floor resisting the security people who arrived to remove her. They took Shirley too. She had a corkscrew curl perm, the ones that were outlawed in 1985, and hers shook when she screamed. She terrified a grey-

haired chap who hid behind his programme, trembling, when she looked straight at him.

Both ladies, who would probably really enjoy a day at the races, were removed from the auditorium and their curtain call was to hammer on the doors screaming, "Let us in! We ain't done nothing wrong!"

With Lulu and Shirley getting a telling off in the foyer, the show resumed and was rated 'fantastic' by my ladies who declared Tina Turner, and me for getting them to London Bridge station just on time for their train home, 'Simply the Best.' ■ **TAXI**

## PUZZLER ANSWERS



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

## Crossword

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### Sudoku

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

### Futoshiki

2	3	4	1	5		
1	5	2	3	4		
	∨	∧				
5	>	4	>	3	2	1
4	2	1	<	5	3	
	∨				∨	
3	>	1	5	>	4	2

### Wordwheel

**SOLUTION:** COURTYARD

**All words:** Actor, ardour, arty, card, carrot, caroty, carry, cart, cord, court, curator, curd, curry, curt, dart, dour, dray, orca, outcry, racy, road, roar, rota, rotary, rout, tardy, tarry, tour, tray, trod, yard, your, COURTYARD.

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



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