

**WILL LONDON BE NEXT TO BAN
E-SCOOTERS? Page 3**

**CAROLINE PIDGEON INTERVIEW
Pages 12 & 13**

**200 YEARS OF THE HACKNEY 'CAB'
ROB LORDAN Page 18**

TAXI

12th April 2023 #538

**200
YEARS ON**

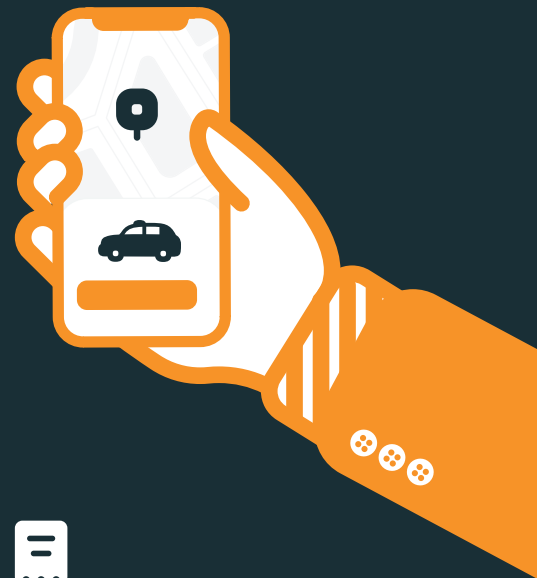


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PARIS BANS SCOOTERS, WILL LONDON BE NEXT?

In a landmark referendum, 90 per cent of voters in Paris chose to ban rental e-scooters. This came amid a growing number of accidents and safety issues in the French capital. The UK's leading road safety charity, *IAM RoadSmart*, has since revealed that e-scooters are similarly unpopular in the UK and specifically in London. Over two thirds of respondents UK-wide stated that they would support a ban, with Londoners and residents of the West Midlands found to be the most concerned about the impact of the rise of e-scooter rental trials.

The IAM RoadSmart's 'Safety Culture Report', which surveys over 2,000 UK motorists' opinions of key road safety issues over time, discovered that 68 per cent of respondents support a law totally banning e-scooters. As casualties involving e-scooters triple in just 12 months, the charity is calling on the government to take action, before more road users are seriously injured or killed by e-scooter riders.

CABBIES ADD BASIC LIFE SUPPORT TO THEIR KNOWLEDGE

The free basic life support course at Taxi House at the end of March was a great success, with 20 taxi drivers attending two separate sessions. Feedback from the course noted that instructor and fellow cabbie, Paul Tippett, was "superb" and "an excellent teacher".



Participants reported feeling much more confident, able to deal with emergency situations and help people in need, saying they "learned a lot". One driver even suggested that "every cab driver should be trained. It can save lives."

Thank you to all the drivers who took part! The LTDA will be organising further courses later this year. If you would be interested in participating and gaining the same skills and confidence, or even just refreshing your knowledge, please email info@ltda.co.uk or contact Taxi House on 0207 286 1046.



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At TAXI, we've been out and about in London, visiting some of its lesser-known locations and refreshing our Knowledge of London. Can you name the location below? Email your answers to editor@ltda.co.uk if you're right, you will be in with the chance to win a prize. The Winner will be selected at random from those with the correct answer. Look out for the answer in the next edition.



MINISTER BANNED FOR SPEEDING

A Court has banned government minister, Robert Jenrick, from driving for six months. Jenrick was caught driving 68mph in a temporary 40mph zone on the M1 in Northamptonshire, back in August 2022. The Immigration Minister and Conservative MP for Newark, pleaded guilty to the offence, but in a statement maintained that he was unaware of the variable speed limit in place and "wouldn't knowingly exceed the speed limit." The Minister had previously received a conviction and three penalty points for breaking a 40mph speed limit on the A40 in west London during the summer of 2021. If Jenrick was a licensed taxi driver, under TfL's new policy, he would lose his taxi licence following this latest conviction, but so far it looks like he can keep serving in the government. Double standard?



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The Cab, the Myth, the Legend

I can only imagine what one of our predecessors from 200 years ago would make of a modern cab, but they would still recognise what we do.

Steve's comment

The cab trade, like London itself, is steeped in folklore, history, legend, and myth, some true, much of it not. I have a reasonable claim to knowing a bit about our history, having driven most of the cabs that have been part of this City since the 1970s. These vehicles include FX4s, FX4Rs, FX4Ss, Fairways, Fairway Drivers, Metrocabs, TXIs, TXIIs, TX4s, Vitos and TXEs, all without actually knowing where the term 'cab' originated. It turns out it comes from 'cabriolet' which was a two wheeled, one-horse carriage with a leather hood, introduced to London (originating in France), in April 1823. This became known as a 'cab' and the drivers came to be known as 'cabbies'.

40 Years of change

I can't speak to those original 'cabs' but the leap in technology and driver comfort in the past 40 years alone, means that the early cabs I drove, would be unrecognisable to someone driving a TXE. They had no power steering or servo assisted brakes, had pull down windows and a lever on the metal dashboard to open a vent instead of air conditioning. I can only imagine what one of our predecessors from 200 years ago would make of a modern cab, but the real link with our history is that they would still recognise what we do. People hail us, we stop and take them where they want to go, who says everything always changes?

On the Cotton

To mark this anniversary, the London Transport Museum hosted the premiere screening of *On The Cotton*, a short film which documents a project that saw seven Black Cab drivers and seven London-based poets work together to create poetry celebrating London's taxi trade. I attended the event, as the LTDA originally helped to get the project off the ground. Poetry isn't really my thing but



I was genuinely impressed by what they had come up with when I saw the original show, and the film gave a really great insight into the whole process. The experience of driving a cab on London's streets day-by-day gives taxi drivers a unique and interesting perspective. It was great to see this celebrated.

Legal cover

Elsewhere in this paper, you can read about another success of the LTDA's legal team - saving yet another member's licence. I can't reiterate enough how important it is to have the LTDA in your corner when you come up against a legal issue that could impact your cab licence. Their expertise, advice and assistance is unrivalled. You would also be surprised surprised to know how often they

find errors in the paperwork or mistakes which could have cost drivers their licence, which mean a prosecution is not valid or that a driver actually did nothing wrong and has been incorrectly accused. If you aren't already a LTDA member join today and make sure you're protected.

Data protection breaches

Interesting news last week from Amsterdam. The Court of Appeal there ruled that Uber and Ola had breached UK and EU data protection laws and had to divulge information on everything from their controversial dynamic pricing algorithms to driver's performance reviews and pay. This case was brought on behalf of a number of UK based minicab drivers, including drivers licensed

in London by TfL. This ruling clearly shows that the companies have broken UK law.

As I understand it, one of the terms of Uber's licence in particular, is that they must not breach data protection rules, which according to the Court in the Netherlands, they now have officially (we all know it has happened before but now its undeniable). I have written to TfL asking them how they will be responding to this. As far as I am concerned, they should be reviewing their operators' licences and asking both to disclose information that they have previously refused to provide, arguing that it would compromise their business model or breach their platform's security. I will keep you updated on their response. **LTDA**



Have Your Say

I can't recall another period of time, in my near three decades of pushing a cab around London where we have experienced so many changes to our working lives and at such a rapid pace.

Top rank

If you thought that any of these recent changes were wrong or detrimental to our trade and were disappointed that you never got to have your say, then you really need to think about doing so this time round.

TfL consultation on improving safety

Right now, TfL are asking for opinions on a set of proposals designed to "improve safety for Taxi passengers", or to put it more accurately, are asking for opinions on what 'they' think is a good way to improve safety for passengers. They are also consulting on more stringent proposals for PHV, which we all know are required to raise standards there.

The LTDA took part in a pre-consultation impact assessment and we've already fended off proposals such as an English language test for taxi drivers and a new photo ID and even more identifiers, which are surely unnecessary.

So what are they proposing?

- A licence condition that will require all taxi drivers to inform TfL of any arrest and release, charge or conviction of any offence within 48 hours. This will cover all offences.
- Require all taxis to display signage that will include information on how to make a complaint to TfL, alongside other statutory and important safety information.
- Add an application requirement that requires all applicants for a taxi driver's licence, both new and renewal, to provide evidence of registration with the DBS Update Service.
- To introduce a licence condition that once licensed, all taxi drivers maintain continuous registration with the DBS Update Service. Once taxi drivers have registered with the Update Service, they will undertake six monthly



checks with the DBS.

- Introduce a mandatory safety, equality and regulatory understanding assessment (SERU) for all new and renewing taxi drivers.
- Where possible, apply any new licensing policies immediately. Where appropriate this would include reviewing licences already issued.
- In order to re-assess licensees' fitness if there are changes in licensing requirements, TfL propose that for taxi drivers they retain the DBS certificates where information is recorded so they are aware of any criminal history that it disclosed.
- Change the current Certificate of Good Conduct (CoGC) requirements and require from applicants for a taxi driver licence a CoGC to cover any periods outside the UK since the applicant was 18.
- When renewing, taxi drivers will have to declare any further extended periods when they have lived overseas for three or more continuous months since they were 18, and then obtain a CoGC accordingly.

Potential impact

Some of the above will make little difference to most drivers but there are proposals which

could have a negative impact. The LTDA will be responding formally to the consultation. The main thing we will be calling for is more information on what some of these proposals would entail to make sure that they aren't too burdensome or costly for our members. What we want to avoid is them adding more red tape to the licensing process, with little to no benefit to passengers or their safety.

Some of the measures are things many drivers already do and that we recommend, like signing up to the DBS Update Service, others like additional signage on how to complain, we will be arguing used to be provided by TfL and drivers displayed them.

There are however questions to be asked about what the SERU assessment will look like and mean for new and existing drivers and the proposed Certificate of Good Conduct (CoGC) rules. My reading of the wording on CoGC and three-month period stipulated, suggests it could cause problems for drivers in all sorts of circumstances, including those who may have been lucky enough to go on a long holiday or have lived abroad for a few months or travelled a bit when

they were younger and have never given it a second thought.

Give your opinion

Now I'm not saying if any of the above are right or wrong, and I'm not writing this to give you my opinion. What I am saying, is that if you have an opinion, tell them anything you feel is good or bad. Don't just swear to yourself or have a moan up at a watering hole to a fellow cabbie or burden your other half on the 'next load of cobblers they've come up with'. Instead go to www.haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/improving-safety-for-taxi-and-phv-passengers and give them your opinion, no one knows what will work within the trade better than those of us who work in it.

I know responding to this kind of thing can all too often seem like a pointless exercise, and they may do what they want to do regardless of what you or I say. Of course you may very well be right, they might just crack on, but it will be more difficult for them to do so if we all respond.

It's the old adage, all that's required for injustice to prevail is for good folk to do nothing. Now, I know I've taken a bit of a liberty with that adage, but hopefully you get my point. ■ LTDA



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Keeping the Airport Moving

You may be unlucky to get a local job twice in a week, just like you may be lucky to get a roader twice in a week. In my experience, it all evens itself out.

Airports & beyond

I get approached by many drivers at the airport who want to talk about local journey times being extended. One driver even asked if we could have unlimited time, which would mean that wherever you go locally, you would have all the time in the world to come back, regardless of traffic. I have explained that if we extend the local journey times, then the feeder park will naturally slow up and it won't be beneficial.

Increased wait times

The recent tube strike on 15th March illustrated the potential problem. Due to the strike, there were many local journeys coming out of the terminals, to go to places like Isleworth, Brentford, Twickenham, and more local areas near to the airport, that are normally served by the Piccadilly Line.

I did six local journeys back-to-back. I personally like locals as it means you are earning, and you don't have to sit in all that traffic on the M4. Other drivers I spoke to on that day felt the same. However, the feeder park slowed up considerably and wait times reflected the big increase in the number of local journeys being made. Some drivers I spoke with tried to blame it on new tags having been released. Only 50 extra tags have been released in March, which is not enough to make that much of a difference to the feeder park.

We have all experienced the blow of getting a fare to Twickenham, Brentford, Isleworth and even Southall, but it's not that common. Usually when it happens, we get a better job the next day or a series of bad and good luck jobs. If you choose to work the airport, you have to accept this. You may be unlucky to get a local twice in a week, just like you may be lucky to get a roader twice in a week. In my experience, it all evens itself out.

If we extend the local journeys too much, some drivers will be



happy, whilst others will moan that the feeder park is doing too long. The current system is the fairest way for all. I know some people reading this will disagree, but the facts speak for themselves.

Wardens

Anyone who works the airport will know that we have wardens, who help operate the feeder park and keep it running efficiently. They work to get taxis into the chute, ensuring cabs arrive at the terminals as quickly as possible, getting bums on seats and drivers earning.

Wardens are also responsible for preventing taxis queuing on the road by filling the North Park to its maximum. Contrary to what drivers think, we can pack them into the South Park if needed and we can over-ride the system to ensure drivers are not on the road. I had a driver recently tell me, "You can only fit so many in, so what's the point in moving up?" He wasn't concerned for his colleagues, who could potentially be stuck on the road, it seemed he was more worried about keeping his cab clean and away from all other vehicles.

We have also had issues with drivers randomly parking in the North Park causing issues. We had an incident last week, where four lanes were taken up by just three drivers. This meant we lost 35 spaces and other drivers were stuck on the road. Once again, I had a driver complain, "It's because new tags were distributed", but again that's not the case.



Don't shoot the messenger

At the airport, we all need to work together to keep things running smoothly and the wardens are an important part of this. For example, after Easter, it is expected to move again so it will be imperative that we have wardens manning the South Park, as without them drivers can get caught out and block the park.

They aren't there to boss people around or wind you up. They are simply requesting that we all assist each other and help everyone get to work, so please work with them and be cooperative. Under no

circumstances will any abuse of a warden be tolerated.

Wardens do get incentives and if you ask me rightly so. They stand there for hours in all weathers and do a fantastic job, in what can sometimes feel like a thankless task. There are a minority of drivers who moan, but the majority will thank us and comment that the park runs a lot more efficiently with our presence.

I've run the wardens for five years and have seen the positive impact they can make with drivers' cooperation, so I am kindly asking you to help us to help you. ■ LTDA

Clarification

In my previous article, I explained my cab failed its recent overhaul because my garage didn't display my tablet for credit card payments in the front of the cab. I wanted to make it clear that this was the tablet that links to my registered rear-mounted card machine and not a secondary handheld device. The tablet was in the boot and so not set up and running and that's why my cab failed. It's the first time I had heard of this happening, so I was just trying to warn drivers to be mindful and set it up.



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Modernising Beyond London

London has always led the way when it comes to changes in the Taxi sector but what does this mean for other areas of the UK, and are other areas now pulling ahead?

National correspondent

Is the green revolution stalling beyond London?

A buoyant second-hand electric taxi market in the capital grows hotter by the day, but that high demand could be stalling the electric revolution outside of the capital, as fewer cabs leave the London market.

Since 2018, over 6,900 zero emission capable (ZEC) have been licensed, making the capital the fastest city in the UK to adopt the new technology. Five-years on, and as PCP leasing deals expire, a growing number of vehicles are now making up a new EV second-hand taxi market.

Historically, many of the older London taxis would find their way outside of the M25 to carry on their working life as a licensed taxi. However, high demand for second-hand EV cabs has seen the dealerships demand between £36,000-£40,000 for a 2018 black cab.

Despite the slow and steady growth in taxi vehicle numbers since the pandemic, there is still considered to be a shortage of taxis in the London market. This is pushing cabbies and fleet owners to pay top dollar for a taxi when one becomes available.

Inflation and interest rates have pushed the cost of a new LEVC TX up to record levels, which has prompted many TX owners to consider extending warranties and keep the taxi

beyond their PCP agreement.

This decrease in available second-hand cabs is impacting cities like Glasgow, where drivers are desperate for an affordable zero emission capable (ZEC) taxi, has prompted serious concerns north of the border.

Unite Union Glasgow Cab Section has long expressed worry that they could see around 1,000 iconic taxi vehicles removed from the streets for being non-compliant with new Low Emissions Zone (LEZ) rules coming in June 2023.

As of February 2022, of the 1,420 taxis licensed by Glasgow City Council, around 1,000 did not meet the new emissions criteria. Unite taxi section has called for councillors to make black cabs exempt from the scheme until 2027 to allow the sector to recover sufficiently from the Coronavirus pandemic and to allow more financially viable taxis onto the market.

So far, Glasgow City Council has stood firm on their stance, offering only a one-year extension if owners meet strict criteria set. Taxi owners can apply for a temporary exemption if they show they either do not have access to a funded retrofit solution for their taxi or that they have applied for or submitted an expression of interest in securing retrofit funding, but are waiting for the necessary upgrades to be undertaken. Very few cabbies have gone down this route, leaving an air of uncertainty around the future of Glasgow's taxi fleet.

Welsh White Paper Defines Digital Hail

There are big changes afoot in Wales. The Welsh Government recently published a white paper on the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (Wales) Bill, which aims to radically reform and modernise the taxi and PHV sector.

The White Paper, which is the first step in making new laws, sets out proposals for legislation that would replace the outdated and fragmented laws that currently govern the industry. It acknowledges the potential impact of new technologies and business models on the taxi and PHV sector, such as app-based ride-hailing platforms and electric vehicles.

Proposal to define 'pre-booking'

There are lots of interesting proposals throughout the paper but one in particular stands out for onlookers across the border; a proper new definition for what constitutes as a 'pre-booking'. It reads:

"The hiring of a taxi or PHV via an operator either at the operator's office, via the phone, internet or electronic device, for future travel. Taxis can also be pre-booked in person directly with the driver, but this cannot be done in a PHV where bookings are made via an operator."

If this becomes law, it will be the first time that mobile app bookings will be officially defined

as pre-bookings. London cabbies have long called for definitions in this area, but the argument here is that these app-based bookings are effectively electronic hails and should be treated as a hail, not a booking.

Defining Plying for Hire

There's also a proposed Welsh definition of plying-for-hire called 'there and then hire' which is as follows:

"The hire of a taxi in person for immediate travel, by a hirer in the location of the vehicle; either on the street (including private land to which the public have access) or by hailing an available taxi."

The interesting terminology here is the 'in the location of vehicle' bit. The new proposal completely distances the act from digital and makes hailing completely physical. Ever since technology gathered pace and smartphones enabled the 'immediate pre-bookings' of minicabs, many drivers and representatives within London and beyond have argued that the technology is used to circumvent the regulations currently in place and illegally ply for hire.

So far the UK Government has refused to act on these issues and despite many recognising the need for new legislation for taxis and PHVs in the modern age in England, nothing has been done. With Wales now leading by example, could we see the Government finally acting in England? Watch this space. **TAXI**

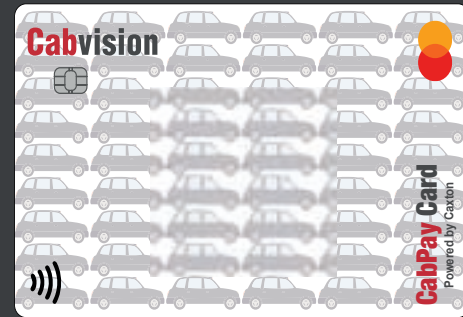




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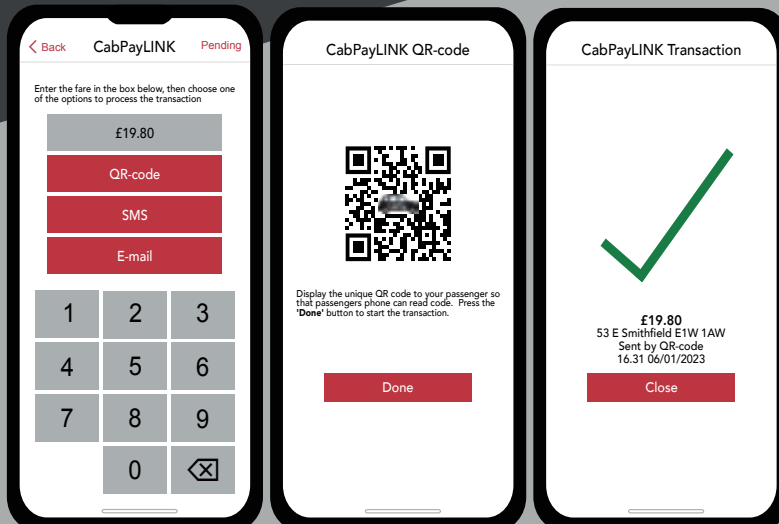
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Interview: Caroline

Almost everybody within the taxi industry knows Caroline Pidgeon MBE, the Liberal Democrat Assembly Member. She's also Chair of the Transport and Greater London Authority (GLA) Oversight Committees.

Interview

Caroline has been a consistent and vociferous supporter of the taxi trade for years. She has kindly agreed to an interview in a bid to shed some light on some of the issues that drivers face on a daily basis.

Many within the taxi trade have asked what the GLA's role is in relation to holding the Mayor of London accountable. Can you elaborate?

Caroline: The GLA is made up of the Mayor of London, who is the executive and has all of the power, and the Assembly, which is a very small part of it. The Assembly has 25 elected members and our job is to hold the Mayor to account and to ask those difficult questions that are of concern to Londoners. We can amend his strategies and budgets but only with a two-thirds majority. Therefore, this means people from his own party either have to vote with us or must be absent. We can shine a light on these issues and if a sitting Mayor is reasonable then they will take good ideas from everyone and use them. All Mayors have taken good ideas, however, they never give credit to where those ideas come from!

I had campaigned for the one-hour bus ticket for a number of years. This was eventually brought in under Sadiq Khan, and became the Hopper fare. Other ideas, such as the bike hire scheme, were raised with Ken Livingstone, by Assembly Member Lynne Featherstone, and latterly became the Boris bike scheme.

The challenge we have is that we are a scrutiny body. We can Summon the Mayor under certain circumstances but we can't force him to come to meetings. We are tied by how legislation has been set up, partly because Labour were trying to prevent another



Lewis Lisley

Greater London Council (GLC). Good scrutiny is about shaping and improving policy. This Mayor has become harder and harder to scrutinise, and sits more with his small collective around him and doesn't listen.

Moving on to road safety, is there a case for professional cyclists, such as Deliveroo

riders, to carry a registration mark and full insurance?

They should all be insured and there is a real issue there. Another danger that I see on London's roads are motorcycle riders with L-plates, working for Deliveroo and UberEats type delivery companies. They are driving professionally with nothing more than the basic

training, rather than the more advanced one.

I pushed the Mayor back in September of 2022 about this subject and he said to "watch this space". I have also raised this with TfL, so I am hoping that something is progressing here to get all of those delivery companies together so they conform to a Mayoral charter,

Pidgeon, MBE

so that those motorcyclists all have insurance and facilities to take a break. There are issues with them parking all over pavements and all over the roads. We are also blighted by motorcyclists reversing over pavements and it's also a nightmare for taxi drivers.

So, should e-bikes and e-scooters be considered motor vehicles, given the speed that they can attain?

Well, technically e-scooters are illegal on the road, although the government has extended trials of their own scheme. We need to have proper regulation for e-scooters and e-bikes because if these are able to travel at excessive speeds then they do need to look at training, just to make sure people are safe. I'm not a fan of e-scooters but if they are here to stay let's make sure they are as safe as possible. This means bringing in regulations around them.

With an increase in the number of dockless bikes being abandoned on the pavement, what responsibility is being taken by the providers of the service?

With the rollout of dockless bikes, the challenge is that although these companies can geo-fence where the bikes go and where the bikes are left, they have agreements with some London boroughs but not others. This means that companies are actually trying to force some London boroughs into having agreements. I attended a meeting with the Lime Bike Company and they didn't deny this, so clearly this is the global growth strategy for the likes of Lime and similar companies.

Boroughs are going to have to come to arrangements with these companies. They should be agreeing where they can be parked and should be tightly geo-fenced. One of my Kensington and Chelsea councillors raised issue with one of the providers because the bikes were being dumped, blocking Earl's Court Station. The provider has now blocked being able to leave the bikes there. So there are things that they can do, they can penalise riders and take away permission



to use the app. The TfL-docked bikes seem to be well managed but it's other companies that are less so. It's great to see people encouraged to use these but I don't like to see clutter on the pavement and worry about people with mobility issues.

With the recent revelation (by The Telegraph's Steve Bird) that some Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) schemes have been brought in on the back of manipulated or incorrect data, should those LTNs be suspended with immediate effect until accurate research can be collated?

I think LTNs are here to stay. They think that they were rushed in, pushed in by the Conservative government's Andrew Gilligan, in London. TfL didn't just say 'here's some money, go and spend it on LTNs'.

My general view of these things is that it's right to calm traffic in residential areas, but how these things have been brought in, in my view, hasn't been done very well by some boroughs. I believe the best way to make any changes is to work with the local community. Nobody likes things being done *to* them, they want things to be done *with* them. I know, as a local resident, that I can't get out of the end of my street anymore - that was done *to* me but not *with* me. It might be good for the wider area but there are problems with other bits of it. I wasn't taken along a journey to shift my thinking, it was done *to* me and that really gets my back up. I think a lot of

people feel that way.

The real issue is about any further rollout or introduction and what boroughs have learnt, and how they engage and consult with the community. The bigger thing that may happen in the coming years is whether London goes ahead with road pricing and pay-as-you-go driving. I think that may be the game-changer in reducing unnecessary journeys, and allowing professional drivers, such as taxi and vans, to be able to go about their work without sitting in congestion. People see driving as the easy option, they might think twice if they have to pay. It's just a matter of whether London leads the way on this or whether the national Government brings it in. I believe this is where we are headed in the next five to 10 years.

Should there be a blanket policy across London for taxis to be allowed through camera-controlled LTNs?

It would make sense to me but ultimately there are 32 boroughs in London and they all set whatever rules they want. You can have a policy and push it,

yet ultimately they are borough roads; they control those roads and it's up to them.

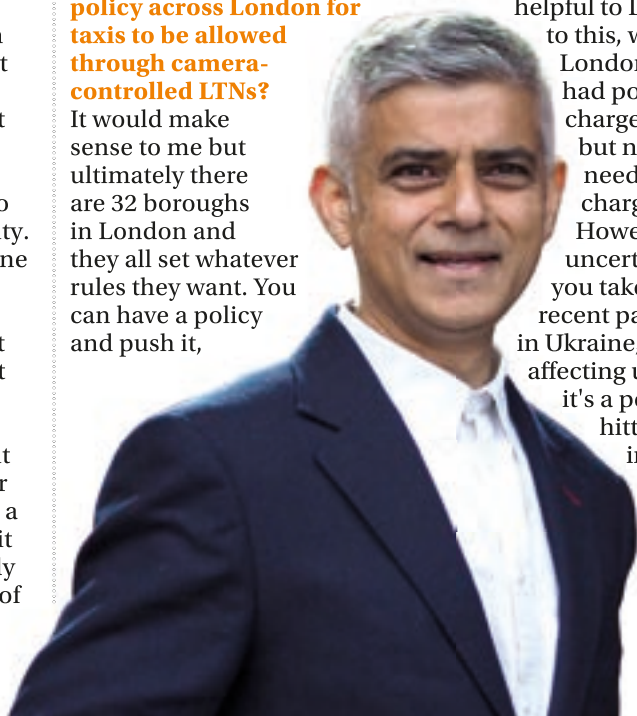
Given the shortage of cabs on London's roads, due to the Mayor reducing the working lifespan of diesel taxis, what is your view on extending it, in a bid to try and halt declining taxi numbers?

I think that the Mayor does need to address this problem and should consider extending vehicle licences if there is this problem. I've pushed the Mayor in the past, in relation to interim solutions in dealing with this problem, but he seems very constrained by his own views and is not often open to movement. However, if there is a supply issue and drivers are being put out of work then the Mayor needs to look at this.

With a 200% increase in electric vehicle charging costs and a scarcity of charging points, what can be done to help the industry keep ZEC taxis running on electric? How can drivers be helped?

There is clearly an issue around the supply of rapid charging points, as well as the price. I've been in communication with the Mayor in a bid to look at converting space on rest ranks to have rapid chargers. I think this is a chicken and egg situation because if you want more and more ZEC vehicles on the road, it's got to be affordable and has to have the charging facilities available. The Government has been less than helpful to London in relation to this, with their anti-London agenda. They've had pots of money for chargers across the UK but not for here, so we need more dedicated charges for taxis. However, we are in uncertain times when you take into account the recent pandemic and war in Ukraine, as well as Brexit, affecting us. Unfortunately, it's a perfect storm hitting drivers and, in particular, the taxi industry but I am trying to get some movement.

■ TAXI



LTDA Legal Team Wins Again (without stepping foot in a court room)!

Our lawyers are different. They are working to get justice for our members, irrespective of how long, or how much it costs. It's getting the right result that matters.

Legal Eagles

Our legal team already has quite a reputation for the number and scale of their successes in Court, but what you might not know is that they frequently help ensure our members retain their licences, and livelihoods, outside the court room too.

From the moment a member is referred to the '3rd floor' (at Taxi House the 3rd floor is home to the solicitors, secretaries, and paralegals), our team pays attention to every aspect of the summons, charge, or allegation, down to the smallest detail. This kind of attention to detail is incredibly time consuming. Time is the one thing most solicitors don't have, because they are

either working on the clock or to a fixed cost. Our lawyers are different. They are working to get justice for our members, irrespective of how long, or how much it costs. It's getting the right result that matters.

A great example of how this approach gets results, concerns an LTDA member, who wishes to remain anonymous. We will call him John. Just over a year ago, John had received three camera offences in a week for driving down the same spot of road, on his way to work, as he had been doing for the ten years he had been a cabbie. He had failed to notice the reduction in the speed limit and as a result had nine points on his licence. So it's understandable that he was very concerned, when he received a Notice of Intended Prosecution for driving at 24mph on Park Lane at 1.00am, on a Sunday morning. He was already

"Our team pays attention to every aspect of the summons, charge or allegation, down to the smallest detail."

on nine points, so the next thing he received was a summons to appear at the Magistrates' Court, where inevitably he would be disqualified from driving. He could then expect to receive a licence revocation from TfL, effectively putting him out of work for a considerable amount of time.

Armed with the summons, he attended the 3rd floor for the lawyers to take the 'brief'. Almost immediately, an anomaly was spotted in the paperwork. Some enquiries

were made, which clearly showed that the evidence would not result in a conviction in court. The timings were crucial in this matter and our legal team's expertise meant that by the time the errors were pointed out to the prosecution, they were 'out of time' to reissue the correct paperwork. The case was therefore discontinued.

Needless to say, John was one happy cabbie and says that joining the LTDA was one of his better decisions. To join the LTDA family and get the same 'badgesafe' cover that John and all LTDA members enjoy, scan this QR code: **LTDA**



UBER AND OLA CABS BREACHING DATA PROTECTION LAWS

The Amsterdam Court of Appeal has ruled that *Uber* and *Ola* violated driver rights with 'robo-firing' of workers and are in serious breach of data protection laws in the UK and the EU. The Court rejected *Uber* and *Ola* arguments that disclosure of information about fraud allegations made against workers, leading to their dismissals would undermine platform security and expose trade secrets.

The case was brought by the Worker Info Exchange and App Drivers and Couriers Union (ADCU) on behalf of several UK drivers, including some licensed in London and a driver based in Portugal.

As a result of the Judgement, *Uber* and *Ola* have been ordered to provide information to the workers on automated decision making relating to work allocation and fares, including dynamic pay and pricing. The Court also ruled that secret worker profiling and management assessments are personal data and must be disclosed.

James Farrar, Director of Worker Info Exchange said: *"The information asymmetry and trade secrets protections relied upon by gig economy employers to exploit workers and deny them even the most basic employment rights for fundamentals like pay, work allocation and unfair dismissals must now come to an end because of this ruling. Uber, Ola Cabs, and all other platform employers cannot continue to get away with concealing the controlling hand of an employment relationship in clandestine algorithms."*

Interestingly, one of the conditions of *Uber's* licence to operate in London, set by Transport for London, was that they must abide by data protection laws. In light of this ruling, will TfL act and either reconsider the licence or at least force *Uber* and *Ola* to be transparent on issues like dynamic pay and pricing, details of which they have refused to disclose previously? Interesting times could lie ahead.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTS FOR PHV DRIVERS

From 1st April anyone applying for a PHV licence has been required to take and pass an English language speaking and listening test and SERU assessment, in addition to the topographical assessment, before they can be licensed. This new English language requirement to ensure minicab drivers can communicate effectively with their passengers is long overdue. The LTDA and others have been calling for this for years. Passing the Knowledge of London continues to be the standard for taxi drivers, and we maintain that this is sufficient to demonstrate a drivers' English language proficiency.



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London Taxi Drivers' Charity for Children Update

The LTCFC held its AGM earlier this year looking back at its achievements in 2022. The Charity is now embarking on a busy 2023, which marks its 95th year.



Chairman's Report 2022

Dear Members, Supporters and Friends,

When Covid affected all of us, including the LTCFC, abandoning all our events was a tremendous disappointment. However, I am delighted to report that 2022 with the continued support of our benefactors, London taxi drivers, and the public, the dedication of the LTCFC Committee, 2022 was extremely successful. However, like most within our industry, I know the trade's difficulties in some areas.

The reduction of cabs to work, the ever-increasing maintenance costs, the closure of some taxi companies, the many road closures for one reason or another, and the ever-increasing issue of penalty notices. All affect the working practice of the renowned London taxi service. The hours drivers must work to stay ahead of financial commitments. I mention this because these factors did also have an impact on the LTCFC.

The charity has relied on the generosity of taxi drivers and other benefactors who invest their time

in helping the charity achieve its mission of helping less fortunate children enjoy the children's taxi outings and other events for the past ninety-five years.

2023 is a significant year for the charity as we celebrate 95 years of helping special needs and disadvantaged children. Our success is due to the efforts of our dedicated committee members, taxi drivers, their wives/partners, and their families. Our assistance to many worthy causes could only be achieved with our supporters and financial benefactors. I thank the taxi trade media for their assistance in promoting the efforts of the LTCFC.

At this point, I offered my personal gratitude to our Patron, Her Majesty, The Queen Consort, for her continued support of the activities of the LTCFC. Thank you all for your continued support on behalf of the Executives, Committee, Associate Members, and the children.

If you want to know more about our activities and get involved, log on to www.ltcfc.org.uk.

Michael Son BEM
Chairman

Treasurer's Report 2022

I would like to start my 21st annual Treasurers Report by thanking the Chairman and fellow committee members for their support over the past 50 years, 21 of those as Honorary Treasurer, a position I have held with pride. The past year has been difficult in raising funds, but due to careful control of our expenditure we have given away a considerable amount. Even though we did not run our usual Southend outing we did return to Woburn Safari Park and have supported many worthwhile causes.

We donated special equipment to the Hatton School for special needs children to the cost of £5,195. These were special rebounders that the school desperately needed. We were very pleased that the Shadow Health Secretary, Wes Streeting attended to give his thanks when these were presented.

Some of our Committee members helped Norwood replant their gardens, and we also bought them a profiling bed, an integral air chair and some trikes to the tune of £8,563. We also donated £2,000 to the Huruma Orphanage raised by the Cabbies Do Kilimanjaro team. They not only climbed Mount Kilimanjaro but also Mount Meru too. Another of our donations went to Outward Housing for a young person with complex needs, and other small donations were made that took our total spend to over £17,000. Earlier this year we held our annual Xmas party for children with

special needs at the JW Marriot Grosvenor House. Over 550 children enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of entertainment finished off with our Charity holdalls filled with goodies.

I would like to place on record our sincere thanks to the Worshipful Company of Tin Plate Workers alias Wire workers who have supported us for many years. Also, I would like to thank Russell Poluck and the Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund for their generous donations. There are also many other donators that I would like to thank, and they have all been thanked personally.

We are especially proud of the fact that our expenses are one of the lowest of all the registered charities due to the fact that all our members are volunteers and receive no payment whatsoever for their time and energy.

I would like to place on record my thanks to all the garages, pubs and clubs that have our collecting boxes. This is a great source of income for the Charity. If there is anyone who can place one of our boxes in their local pub or club can they please contact the committee. We also have tip up seat adverts

where passengers can donate via our website.

This is a new way of raising funds and so far has raised many hundreds of pounds.

Once again, I would like to thank Michael and the committee for their support over the past 21 years whilst being Treasurer, and I look forward to assisting the next Honorary Treasurer in his new position.

Gerry Dunn MBE
Treasurer ■ TAXI



2023 Events

Activities for 2023 have already begun, starting with the Mad Hatters Tea Party, which took place on 29th January 2023 at the JW Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London.

Planning has now also begun for this summer's Southend on Sea Children's Taxi Outing, which will be held on 28th June 2023. This outing has been organised for over 50 years. **If there are taxi drivers who would like to join the Driver's Support Team or others that would like to know what additional help you can offer, please phone 0300 365 4404 or email committee@ltcfc.org.uk.**



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How the Hackney Cab Came to Be



It's quite something to think that the original Hackney Cab – the fast, horse-drawn predecessor to London's modern taxis – first hit the capital's streets 200 years ago.

Rob's history tips

Incredibly though, the concept of a London taxi can trace its origins back even further... all the way to 1634, when Captain John Bailey, an adventurer who'd accompanied Sir Walter Raleigh on a number of expeditions, established the city's first rank.

This pioneering setup was located beside a maypole on the Strand (close to where the St Mary Le Strand Church is now). And at the same time, Captain Bailey also devised 'An Ordinance for the Regulation of Hackney-Coachmen in London and the places adjacent' along with a rudimentary fare table.

The origins of the term 'Hackney', when used in this context, are very much open to debate. Some believe it derives from the borough of Hackney (or 'Haka's Island' as it was in old English; a place where horses supposedly grazed), whilst another theory suggests it's a corruption of the French word 'haquenee' which roughly translates as 'ambling horse'.

Had you caught a Hackney

coach in the 17th century, you would've noticed that all the vehicles available for hire were four-wheeled coaches. Most were second-hand, having been purchased from grand homes and estates, meaning flaking remnants of various coats of arms could be seen painted on the doors.

Such coaches (which later came to be nicknamed 'growlers' – due to the grinding noise their heavy wheels made when running along cobbles) required two horses to pull them, and as such were expensive to operate. Because of this, owners often cut financial corners, meaning Hackney coaches were usually grubby and poorly maintained.

Nevertheless, they enjoyed a monopoly, with strict numbers being placed upon the number of licences: in 1662, only 400 badges were permitted, although this later rose to 700. The area to which licensing applied was defined by the 'Bills of Mortality', an archaic system which oversaw the city's wards and parishes.

The Faster Cabriolet Arrives

This situation remained in place for nearly 200 years until, in the spring of 1823, two men named Bradshaw

and Rotch began operating a small fleet of carriages from Great Portland Street, just outside the licensing zone. The vehicles they employed were very different to the

"Before long, Londoners had shortened the word cabriolet to 'cab' and were referring to drivers as 'cabbies' rather than coachmen."

four-wheeled growlers.

Constructed by a coach builder named David Davies, a man based on Albany Street, these new vehicles were inspired by the French two-wheeled 'cabriolets', and had the driver perched at the back, with the passengers sat up front, sheltered beneath a canopy.

At first, only 12 such cabriolets (which were all painted yellow) were in operation, although as they proved faster, more agile and, requiring only one horse, cheaper to run than traditional four-wheelers, they rapidly gained in popularity.

The monopoly on licensing four-wheelers was scrapped, thus allowing two-wheeled cabriolets to operate freely throughout the capital. Before long, Londoners had shortened the word cabriolet to 'cab' and were referring to drivers as 'cabbies' rather than coachmen.

The Hansom Cab

Over the next ten years, the cabriolet design was tweaked a little – most notably in a design by William Boulnois – which had passengers facing each other rather than forwards. Although the real breakthrough came in 1834, when a new, souped-up design for a 'Patent Safety Cab' was filed by Joseph Aloysius Hansom.

Hansom was born in York in 1803 and later apprenticed to an architect, completing his training when he was just 20. He went on to design a number of churches in Yorkshire and Liverpool, as well as work on designs for Birmingham Town Hall.

It was just before Christmas of 1834 that he took his cab design to the patent office, with his improvements to the popular vehicle that included a suspended axle, larger wheels and a lower body, all of which were intended to improve safety and reduce wear and tear.

Hansom eventually sold his patent for £10,000 (approximately £1 million today), but the company involved collapsed, meaning he never received any payment.

Nevertheless, the Hansom cab proved an immediate hit and was soon a common sight not only in London, but in other cities across the UK too.

It was Hansom's design that was in use when the Knowledge began to evolve in the late 19th century, with the last working horse-drawn one noted as late as the 1940s.

Joseph Hansom died at 399 Fulham Road in 1882. He is commemorated by a blue plaque at his former home of 27 Sumner Place.

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If you want to see more, you can visit my YouTube channel, [robslondon](https://www.youtube.com/robslondon).



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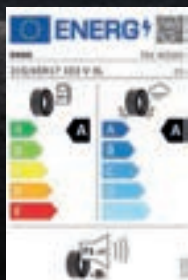
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Beyond Our Ken

On its surface, Bingfield Street, Islington, doesn't seem to hold any real significance. Situated just off Caledonian Road, this street is a non-descript mass of houses and flats. However, did you know that actor Kenneth Williams was born at number 11?

Kenneth Charles Williams entered the world on 22nd February, 1926. Despite claims that he and his family were of Cockney stock, they were actually Welsh.

His parents, Charles and Louisa, managed a hairdressing salon in the King's Cross area. Kenneth lived with his parents above a barber shop at 57 Marchmont Street, Bloomsbury, between 1935 and 1956.

After becoming an apprentice draughtsman to a mapmaker, Williams found his apprenticeship curtailed by The Blitz. He was subsequently evacuated to Bicester. His experience of middle-class life saw him return to London with a new, vowel-elongated accent, as opposed to his typical London one.

At 18, he was called up to the Army and became a sapper in the Royal Engineers. Post-World War II, he was stationed in Ceylon, opting to transfer to the Combined Services Entertainment Unit, which put on revue shows. This paved the way for him to enter the entertainment industry.

After being spotted in 1954 by radio producer Dennis Main Wilson, Williams was cast in *Hancock's Half Hour*, starring Tony Hancock. He remained part of the crew for five years before joining the cast of *Beyond Our Ken* and its sequel, *Round the Horne*.

In 1958, he was cast in the first *Carry On* film, named *Carry on Sergeant*. He went on to star in 26 out of 31 franchise movies, which was more than any other cast member. His final appearance came in 1978's *Carry On Emmannuelle*.

Williams' career went into decline in the 1980s, leading to serious depressive episodes, culminating in his death from an overdose in 1988.

On 24th June, 2010, a Green commemorative plaque in honour of him was unveiled by Sheila Hancock at the site of 11 Bingfield Street.



The Windmill

The Windmill Theatre has stood in Great Windmill Street, in one form or another, since 1909. Residing on a plot which once housed a working windmill (unsurprisingly), the theatre was originally a cinema called the Palais de Luxe.

It was one of the first places to show silent movies. However, as larger cinemas were opened in the West End, business started to slow and the cinema eventually closed down. It was re-opened for a brief period by Elsie Cohen in 1929, when it became the first 'art cinema' in Britain showing foreign films.



The Palais de Luxe was bought by Laura Henderson in 1930 and was remodelled to a small 320-seat establishment and renamed The Windmill, opening in June of 1931. Sadly, its tenure as a theatre was short-lived and reverted back to a cinema.

A new theatre manager was hired and the idea of the Revuedeville, a programme of continuous variety that ran from 2:30pm until 11pm, was born. The first show opened on 3rd February, 1932, featuring 18 unknown acts.

Despite losing £20,000 in its first four years, it survived after theatre manager Vivian Van Damm managed to convince Lord Cromer, in his position of theatrical censor, to allow nude women on stage.

Fortunes quickly changed for The Windmill. During World War II, it was the only theatre to consistently remain open, with the exception of a 13-day enforced closure.

After changing between a theatre, cinema and a nude revue, it remains open as a 350-seat restaurant with a cabaret.

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW LONDON?

Bow Bells

Some would say that the bells at Big Ben are the most famous in the world. Others would say Notre Dame holds that accolade. However, possibly the most famous reside in a church just off of Cheapside in the City of London – the Bow Bells, sited in St Mary-le-Bow church.

These are the chimes to which one can ascertain whether somebody is a Cockney or not. If you are born within the sound of them, you're a Cockney. Interestingly the bells actually have no connection with Bow in East London. St Mary-le-Bow was the Archbishop's London headquarters and the 'le-Bow' designates the distinctive Norman arches, which were such a prominent part of the new architectural style of the day when the church was built.

The sound of these chimes are also the noise Dick Whittington heard in the eponymous fable, which seemed to call 'Turn again Whittington, Thrice Lord Mayor!' as he ascended Highgate Hill to depart the capital in 1392, inspiring his return to London to seek his fortune with the assistance of his cat.

Despite Whittington hearing this in 1392, the earliest record of the Bow Bells is actually from 1469, when the Common Council ordered a curfew rung each night at 9pm, marking the end of the apprentices' working day.

After the Great Fire of London had destroyed the church, Christopher Wren rebuilt St Mary-le-Bow. An association with Whitechapel began in 1738, when Master Founder Thomas Lester, recast the tenor bell. In 1762, he recast the other seven and added two more to make a set of 10. They were first rang to celebrate George III's 25th birthday.

The current set of twelve bells were cast in Whitechapel in 1956 by Arthur and Alan Hughes. Every bell has an inscription from the psalms and the first letter of each spells out D WHITTINGTON.

The sound of Bow Bells is broadcast globally as the interval signal by the BBC World Service, making these the most familiar bells on the planet.





Decision Time

Do I buy an extended warranty, pay the balloon and run it freehold, or do I swap it in and go with a new one? For me, it ended up being a no brainer...

Electric dreams

With over 45% of the taxi fleet now being TXEs, as one of the very early adopters back in 2018, I have gone from being a rarity - with customers and other drivers only wanting to talk about the cab - to just another sherbet.

My experiences with the cab have been good. The very few problems I have had were sorted quickly and without fuss, a cracked windscreen and a leaky erad (whatever that is) were the big ones. The minor ones consisted of a few software glitches, normally resolved by turning it off, waiting and then turning it back on. There was also a failed intercom switch light.

For four and a half years

cabbing, I think this track record is fantastic. I go back all the way to TXIs and spending my days in garages or on tow trucks, so there really is no comparison.

Then recently, it was decision time, do I buy an extended warranty, pay the balloon and run it freehold, or do I swap it in and go with a new one?

All my servicing, and bodywork (got hit by you know who), has been done at Ascotts in Dartford, and I can honestly say their customer service is better than at the dealership which sold me and service my wife's BMW. Everything has always been done on time, they constantly update you on the progress, and the staff are all great. So it was their sales team I visited to look at the options on the cab.

I was very pleasantly surprised with the offer on my existing cab. After mulling over all the options, with some really good advice and



input, I decided to go for a new one. It was a bit of a no brainer really, and a few weeks later, I drove mine in, and drove the new one out after just 45 minutes, with absolutely no hassle. The really good news is my payments have actually gone down!

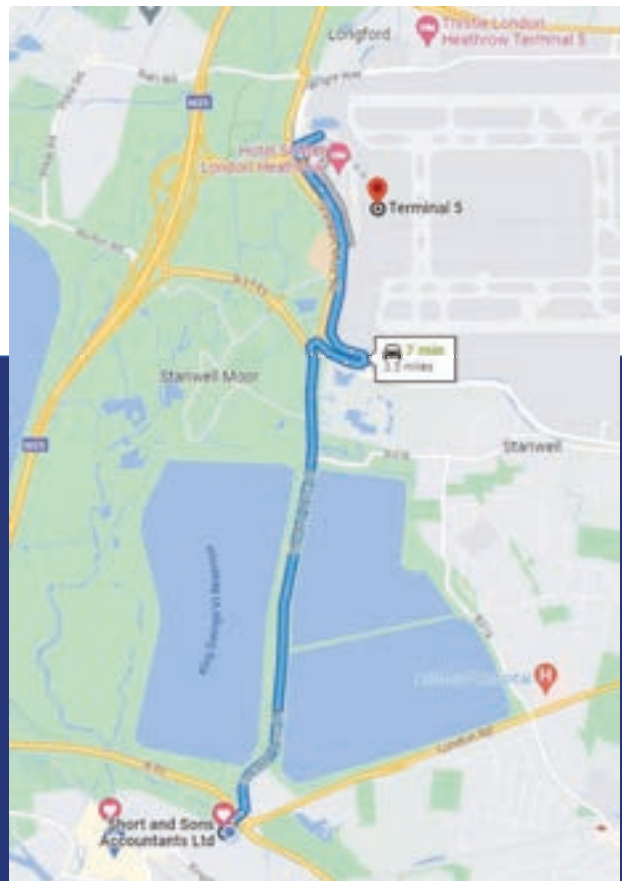
The new cab is identical to

the old one, although it has that great new car smell. The only problem was getting the seat in the right position, which took me about three days of minor fiddling and adjustment. I can only hope this cab is as reliable and as lucky as the old one!

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A Passage Through Time: Delving Deeper Into Clerkenwell

Being a London cab driver requires an immense amount of physical and mental strength.

Footprints and Foundations

Today, the conditions you drive through in the capital have altered the way you take passengers from one destination to another. The changes to the infrastructure of London's streets continue to reshape the topography of it.

Cabbie experience

As an elder statesman of the trade, I sometimes reminisce about the past. My thoughts turn to what it was like driving a cab in the 1990s. Yes, there was congestion, however it was totally different. The cab driver had access to most of the roads. Cities always evolve and the winds of change are a natural phenomenon. The London taxi driver in 2023 is certainly having his or her resolve tested.

To alleviate the pressures of the daily grind, it is imperative to create a work-life balance. From experience, my suggestion is do some physical exercise, as sitting down for long periods has a detrimental effect on your health. The most important stress-relief is absorbing your mind in a hobby or educational pursuit.

As I have mentioned in past articles, a tourist guide course can be a good starting point. If you integrate this new approach into your weekly routine, a balanced mind and body will enhance your working day.

The Way of Water

Once again, we continue our journey through Clerkenwell and arrive in the location of Anwell Street, EC1. Here, London's first water supply was established in the early 1600s. The innovator was Sir Hugh Myddelton, an influential personality who began to solve the capital's requirement for a fresh water supply.

We take for granted the ability to turn on a tap for a drink of water. In bygone days there was no supply for habitats. It was commonplace to take it from rivers, wells, ponds and standpipes. The water was also used for hygiene and washing one's clothes. In the 17th century,



the life span for most of the population was short. Many diseases were not understood by medical practitioners, with one of the most virulent disorders being Cholera, a water-born virus which proved fatal for unsuspecting recipients.

Sir Hugh Myddelton

There are many references to Sir Hugh Myddelton in Clerkenwell and Islington. Statues, squares and streets adorn Myddelton's name. Next time you're driving through Islington take a look at the eastern side of Islington Green. There is a prominent statue of him dressed in period attire while holding the plan of the New River.

In 1606, an act of Parliament authorised the construction of a channel to bring supplies from the fresh springs of Chadwell

and Anwell in Hertfordshire. These sources were 20 miles north of the capital; an adventurous scheme that was to prove a monumental task. It was an abortive start to the project by Edmond Colthurst, who promised to complete the enterprise at his own expense and within a deadline of four years. After a slow start, Colthurst found it difficult to persuade landowners to make a cutting for the New River through their land. It was inevitable that Colthurst would become insolvent. At this juncture, Myddelton intervened and saw an opportunity to improve his status.

The entrepreneur

Myddelton was provincial by birth and drawn to London for commercial opportunity.

By trade, he was an eminent goldsmith who supplied the Royal Court with their bijouterie. Like Colthurst, Myddelton's finances were becoming strained because of the opposition from landowners. They objected to having a ten-foot-wide, four-foot-deep ditch excavated on their land. The scheme was becoming stagnated with continued delays and Myddelton was about to can the whole scheme. His last throw of the dice was to get King James I (1603-1625) to pay for half of the cost. The King agreed to Myddelton terms in return for half of the profits. The deal was sealed and would prove a shrewd bargain.

Let it flow

On 29th September, 1613, in the presence of the great and the good, the first water was let into the Round Pond at the New River Head, Clerkenwell. From this site the water was carried down to the City in elm pipes, from which small-bore lead pipes were ducted into individual properties. The problem of leakages was reckoned to have drained off about a quarter of the New Rivers capacity. At last, for those who could afford to pay for this resource, a fresh supply was obtainable in their homes.

The New River Company was incorporated by Royal Charter, with half the shares in the control of the King. A large area of the old waterworks site still exists in the present day, although it has been redeveloped from its original conception. A large apartment building fronting Rosebury Avenue, whose main entrance is in Hardwick Street, was formally the headquarters of the Metropolitan Water Board. The reservoir at Claremont Square is a reminder of the New River's heritage. The residential houses in Myddelton Square are leased by the New River Company who continue to own the land east of Anwell Street. **TAXI**

If you are contemplating a tourist guide course, or have any question, please contact me via journeythroughtime@hotmail.com



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What's on? WEST END

Charlotte rounds up this month's top London shows to recommend to your passengers.

Under the Spotlight

Guys & Dolls – Bridge Theatre 📍

Few musicals have songs and imagery as iconic as this one – least of all an entire generation being aware of it from its memorable *The Simpsons* parody involving Mark Hamill ('*Luke be a Jedi tonight...*'). It shouldn't have been a surprise that the Bridge picked it to launch its first immersive show since 2019's showstopper adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And what a treat we must thank them for, as we get transported to the streets of New York City and into the bars of Havana.

The production is non-stop, high energy and constantly moving. There are, however, two ways to experience this. Set in a round, a seated ticket will come with an excellent view no matter where you are. But for the more adventurous, a standing ticket gets you in amongst the action, as we follow the most unlikely of love stories.

Story-wise, wheeler dealer Nathan Detroit (Daniel Mays) needs to make a quick buck, so makes a sure-fire bet with gambler Sky Masterson (Andrew Richardson). The bet: whether Sky will be able to seduce the beautiful but incredibly pious Sarah Browne (Celine Schoenmaker). The game is set, and Sky quickly realises he may have finally met his match.

24 The lead performances are incredible, but the two MVP nods have to go to Marisha Wallace's Miss Adelaide (who is bittersweet joy incarnate) and Cedric Neal's Nicely-Nicely Johnson, a character who quite literally takes us to church and brings the house down with his take on *Sit Down, You're Rockin' The Boat*.

This is event theatre at its highest quality, an absolute must-see!

Guys & Dolls runs until 2nd September, 2023.



Oklahoma! – Wyndham's Theatre 📍

This isn't your Grandma's *Oklahoma!*. It's probably not even your mum's. Because, although it does possess an incredibly dark plot, this Rogers & Hammerstein musical has become ever-associated with its joyful-sounding opening number *Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'*. How bleak things get has been largely forgotten until now, 80 years on, with this radical take that is as provocative as it is wild.

In a way that must be seen to be believed, it's sexy without sex or nudity. Instead, it's in the attitude and presentation, as this close-knit community of American frontiers are made increasingly uneasy by the presence of outsider Jud Fry (a terrifying yet electric Patrick Vaill). There are only two things to do here: fire a gun or have sex. And, for Jud, the two desires seem disturbingly interwoven, which most of the community can sense and are fearful of. It's particularly noticeable as he pursues ranch owner Laurey (Anoushka Lucas), whose own affections are supposedly set on all-American good guy Curly (Arthur Darvill).

The tensions between this trio are teasingly pulled out; the fun flirting between Laurey and Curly countered by Jud's loaded and urgent desire. Not only is this done through their magnetic performances, but through some magnificent stagework too, particularly with the lighting. But to mention much more would be a spoiler! Suffice to say, this is a play that will linger and haunt you a long time after it's finished.

Oklahoma! runs until 2nd September, 2023



What else is on?

■ Black Superhero – The Royal Court Theatre (until 29th April)

Taking hero worship to the extreme, a man falls head over heels for a superhero with a more than complicated life.

■ Wagatha Christie – Ambassadors Theatre (until 20th May)

The celeb trial of the century – Coleen Rooney vs Rebekah Vardy – takes to the stage with hilarious results.

■ A Little life – Harold Pinter Theatre (until 18th June)

Four college friends (Luke Thompson, Omari Douglas, Zach Wyatt and James Norton) living in New York City find their lives unravelled by secrets from the past.

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Cabbies Successfully Complete Atlantic Row

London cab drivers Daren Parr, Bob Barber and Stuart Lockhart have joined the small group of names who have successfully rowed the Atlantic.



Daren, Bob and Stuart complete the Atlantic Row.



Cabbies row into Jolly Harbour in Antigua.



A huge welcome for the cabbies.

After 60 days, rowing 3,200 miles across the Atlantic ocean, Daren, Bob and Stuart made it to Jolly Harbour in Antigua, having raised £thousands for charity. **TAXI** caught up with them once they arrived back in the UK.

TAXI What an epic challenge, huge congratulations from everyone at **TAXI**! Remind us why you did it?

Daren: A little bit of madness perhaps! I had already climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru back-to-back, and was looking for the next way we could raise money. This seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to really challenge ourselves as well as raise cash for three great causes.

TAXI So, what were the best and worst bits spending two months in the water?

Daren: The reception we received at Jolly Harbour at the end of the row was absolutely wonderful. The feeling of completing the world's toughest rowing race combined with an unforgettable welcome is something that made it all worthwhile. For me the worst bit is easy: the constant moving of the boat. It just made everything, every day and every night for sixty days, so uncomfortable and difficult. It was such a relief to stand on solid ground!

Bob: The best bit was being present under the stars at night rowing alone, a great feeling of being at one with nature and how awe-inspiring it is being

'alone' in the middle of an ocean. Surfing down the big Atlantic swells, being on the top of them you can see for miles, then at the bottom it's like being in a canyon with water as the walls. I liked the disconnect from emails, work and ordinary life. And the worst was probably trying to sleep, you would finally get off, just before you had to get up for your shift on the oars! Also, we had some of the roughest seas you could imagine, with waves bigger than houses pummeling the boat for the first couple of weeks.

Stuart: For me, the best thing about the row was the reception we received in Antigua. As we arrived, there were some magnificent houses (probably owned by millionaires) and they were all out shouting and ringing bells. The worst thing was definitely the lack of sleep and not being able to stand up or go for a walk. And if I'm really honest - I hated every minute of it from day one!

TAXI What did you learn about each other during the row?

Daren: I learnt that no matter how hard things get, no matter how tough the task seems, you can get through it. The three of us were tested to our limits with this challenge. We needed to respect and tolerate each other and we just about managed that!

Bob: Cabbie banter is merciless. This helped us get through the worst times, taking the mick out of each other kept us in check, laughter definitely is the best medicine.

Stuart: I learnt just how much the other two had to put up with

from me. But, fortunately, that only came out when we were all back in the UK!

TAXI And we understand the media has been very interested in your story?

Daren: They have, which is great for the cab trade. We have been on ITV London News, Talk TV with Peter Cardwell, and on BBC Radio London with Eddie Nestor. We spoke to Heart twice from the middle of the Atlantic, which nearly broke me when they got my two grandkids and my wife on the phone! I went into the Heart studio to meet Amanda Holden and Jamie Theakston to thank them for the support we had received from their listeners. We've had some amazing support and I would like to thank everyone who donated and encouraged us.

I wouldn't normally single anyone out, but I need to give a special mention to The Millcroft Group who stepped in and gave

us a second donation when one of our sponsors reneged on their promise and left us without the funds to get the boat back.

TAXI What's next?

Daren: A year off from challenges! But watch this space we will be doing something else... **TAXI**

The cabbies have, to date, raised £14,300 to support the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, The Stroke Association and a Tanzanian Orphanage. If you are inspired by what they have done, you can donate by visiting www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/sarah-barber-124.



About the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans

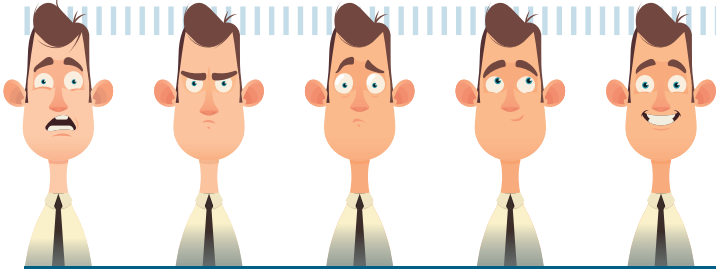
The Taxi Charity is run by volunteer London black taxi drivers and has been supporting thousands of veterans since 1948. The charity arranges free trips (for veterans from all conflicts) to the Netherlands and France, for acts of commemoration and days out to museums, concerts, or social events across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

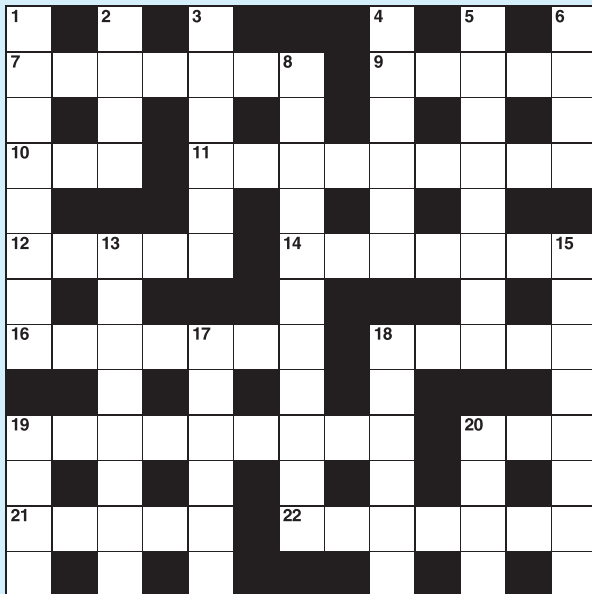
To fund and facilitate their work, the charity is reliant on donations, grants and sponsorship and has launched a '75 for 75' fundraising campaign to raise £75,000 in its anniversary year.

www.taxicharity.org



Puzzler Page

Crossword



ACROSS

- 7 People selling on the streets (7)
 9 Wary (5)
 10 Rayburn-like cooker (3)
 11 Bossy (9)
 12 Firemen's water tubes (5)
 14 Small sign (of hope) (7)
 16 Indonesian island (7)
 18 Convey (5)
 19 Prohibited (9)
 20 ___ Giedroyc, TV personality (3)
 21 Tweaks, yanks (5)
 22 Deepens (a channel) (7)

DOWN

- 1 Plays in water (8)
 2 Suggestion, proposition (4)
 3 Hooked claws (6)
 4 Chinese exercise system (3,3)
 5 Advocate of political change (8)
 6 Elisha ___, elevator inventor (4)
 8 Defended (11)
 13 Wide straw hat (8)
 15 Fan of the monarchy (8)
 17 Desire (6)
 18 Bulging (6)
 19 South Pacific island group (4)
 20 Absolutely huge (4)

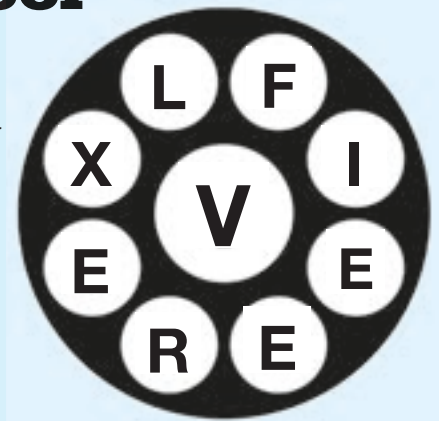
Sudoku

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

			9		3			
		8				2		
		2	5		7	3		
	5		6		1		7	
7				9				6
8			4		6			2
	2						1	
	3	7				9	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 8 words - can you do better?



Futoshiki

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<	3	2	
<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"/>	4	<	<input type="checkbox"/>

All answers to puzzler on p30

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- Euro5&6 vitos for rent, full backup, prices starting from £220 please call – 07956211478
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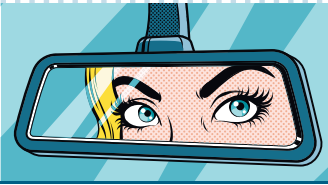
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Not Funny, Hunny Bunny

Last Easter, I spotted my neighbour Liz and her 7-year-old daughter, Trixie, standing at a local bus stop, along with a big box. So I gave them a cab ride home.

A woman of words

In the box was a new pet rabbit. Trixie barely drew breath, telling me she'd named him Flopsy and that he was a dwarf rabbit with lovely toffee and cream coloured fur and had no sharp teeth and she was going to teach him tricks and he was going to get fresh straw every day and I must save my carrot tops for him and that she was going to look after Flopsy her very self. It was very sweet.

The animal got me thinking about my first - make that my *only* - sex education class in school. Two nuns, blushing furiously, held up a poster showing two bunnies facing one another and munching on separate ends of the same carrot. One of the nuns

then yelled, "And that's how babies are made!"

Whilst I was chuckling at that memory, Trixie had decided to open the box to show me what Flopsy looked like. Mummy Liz was busy scrolling through her mobile phone and too slow off the mark to stop her.

Turns out Flopsy was not a dwarf rabbit at all. He was the size of a football and boinged all over the back of my cab, spraying pea-sized pellets of poop as he went. Trixie started to cry. And Liz? She flopped forward over her handbag. "Help! It's Fendi. It's new!" she panted.

Evidently, it was my job to be Super Musher, stop the cab, get in the back and encourage Flopsy back in his box. Easier said than done because Flopsy had hind legs like a rugby quarterback, and it was like wrestling with a baby kangaroo.

Afterwards, it took me several

hours to clean and disinfect the back of my cab. But Liz's new bag emerged unscathed, which was, according to her, the main thing.

Last week, Liz and Trixie flew off for an early Easter break and Mr. Meg volunteered to pop over daily to feed and clean Flopsy's hutch. Days one to six went very well. Mr. Meg and Flopsy are firm friends, at least they were until day seven, when Flopsy (who since last year has grown a crocodile style jaw and incisors) chomped down on his index finger as they tussled over a carrot.

Mr. Meg tried to waggle his finger from Flopsy's mouth and as he did so stumbled sideways and twisted his knee.

So, this Easter Time Mr. Meg's arm is in a sling, his knee is in a brace and he is eating more painkillers than Mini Eggs, which is most unusual for him at this time of year.

And as well as Mr. Meg being KO'd by a bitey bunny, there is another Easter surprise: turns out Flopsy's not a fella.

We know this for sure because the day Liz and Trixie came home, Flopsy produced eight babies.

And here's some bunny know-how for Easter: baby rabbits are called kits, and mummy rabbits can get pregnant again mere hours after giving birth. Eeek! **TAXI**



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- ◆ Martin Cordell, Thomas Road, E14
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- ◆ South Bank Service Station, Great Suffolk Street, SE1
- ◆ TAXI HOUSE, Great Suffolk Street, SE1
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- ◆ Ubiquitous Ltd, E1
- ◆ Waterloo Station
- ◆ Wimbledon Station Rank
- ◆ WizAnn Knowledge School, Watts Grove, E3

PUZZLER ANSWERS



Crossword

S	I	T	T	R	O
P	E	L	A	L	E
L	E	L	A	I	F
A	G	A	O	F	F
S		N	E	H	R
H	O	S	E	S	G
E	O		U		E
S	U	M	A	T	R
	B	H	R	O	A
F	O	R	B	I	D
I	E	R	E	V	E
J	E	R	K	S	D
I	O	T	X	A	T

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SUDOKU

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

Wordwheel

SOLUTION: REFLEXIVE

All words: Ever, evil, fever, five, fiver, lever, live, liver, reeve, relieve, relive, revel, revile, veer, veil, vile, viler, REFLEXIVE.

Word targets: Excellent: 20, Good: 17, Target: 12, Kids: 7

Futoshiki

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



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Edmonton N9 0BG

DRIVE WITH FREENOW

WITH **1000s** OF PASSENGERS BOOKING TRIPS EVERYDAY AND ONE OF THE LOWEST COMMISSION RATES AT 15%, IT PAYS TO BE A FREENOW DRIVER

START DRIVING

FEEL FREENOW **FEEL FREENOW** FEEL FREENOW



One of the lowest commission rates

15% commission (only on jobs you complete) and 0% on tips



More passengers = more work

80% increase in passenger base year-on-year*



No wasted time or money

Don't drive around looking for work, get offers wherever you are



Jobs that work for you

See pickup and dropoff points before accepting trips



Choose your schedule

No minimum or maximum hours



Plan ahead of time

Accept prebook jobs in advance



*Up to 80% more passengers year-on-year between Dec21-Dec22