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Issue 239 May 2016

EXCLUSIVE

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Contributions for publication are welcomed
and should be sent to the Editor at the
above address.

The London Cab Drivers' Club Ltd.

Editorial:

EMAILS REVEAL CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

Finally, after many months of
the Club stating that TfL were
in cahoots with Number 10
regarding the licensing of
Uber, we can now exclusively
publish damning emails that
prove beyond doubt that this
has been the case all along:
see page 3

MAYORAL ELECTION

As you will all know by now,
we have a new Mayor of this
great City. The candidates have
already been informed by the
Club about our concerns
regarding certain senior
individuals within TfL and their
relationship with both the
Government and UBER.

At a recent meeting with one
Mayoral candidate, we informed
them that Leon Daniels purposely
misled the GLA when asked if
Uber had a land line.

At first, Leon insisted they had...
but when asked what the number
was, he could not come up with
an immediate answer and after

coming under pressure from
Caroline Pidgeon, he blurted out
the private number of Uber CEO
Jo Bertram.

The candidate was also made
aware that under Leon Daniels'
leadership at TfL, the Surface
Integration Programme (SIP) was
introduced, which meant that
LTPH was lumped in with 5 other
Departments within TFL.

This has proved to be an
unmitigated disaster; the Trade
desperately needs our own Dept
and Directorate within TfL which
is accountable to the trade.

Whoever is our new Mayor
needs to put this sorry state of
affairs at the top of their agenda
and actually start supporting our
industry.

AGM

The Committee has decided to
move this year's AGM to
September due to the fact of
the uncertainty of the new
Mayor, the European football
championships taking place in
France and the start of the
summer holidays straight after.

Grant Davis



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Uber is biggest threat to buses, says TfL chief Leon Daniels

To regulate or not to regulate? That is the question that dominated much of last week's UK Bus Summit in London, but Transport for London's managing director of surface transport believes that more attention needs to be given to the growth of app-based mobility.

Expressing his personal opinions, Leon Daniels said: "Whilst we're arguing a bit about the structure of the industry, and subsidy and ticketing and information, the real news is personal mobility.

"The generic name we use is 'market disruption by technology', although in short we call it 'Uber'. And when I say Uber I mean any private hire or taxi service that is provided using apps." When Daniels joined TfL in 2011 there were 57,000 licensed private hire drivers. Today that number is around 100,000, with an extra 20,000 in the last year.

"Any time of the day or night diesel-hybrid, clean Prius or similar is available to you in this city, and increasingly in other cities ... It will take you to where you want to go. "This is your biggest threat in the commercial bus sector. It's cheap and it's even cheaper if there's more than one person travelling, and in many places it comes with an optional ride share scheme. So for three people travelling, whether they are friends or strangers, you can travel nearly as cheaply in many cases as you can on the bus network.

"And it's on-demand, and it's any time of the day, and it's personal to you, and it's door-to-door, and you are literally in a modern saloon car with air conditioning and even your own music channel through Spotify." The apps keep fares down by making the utilisation of vehicles very high (typically on hire for 50 of every 60 minutes). And he said that in selected markets these vehicles would soon start to carry parcels as



well as passengers.

He warned: "Believe me because I have it in London already, that competition from personal mobility, app-based very efficient cars, through the taxi and licensed and private hire markets, is coming down the road to the commercial bus sector in cities and in our rural areas right now."

He suggested that the demographic profile of the industry's management – white, male, middle-aged – meant that it was not well equipped to understand this phenomenon.

"The young, and those of you who have teenage children will know this, leave home with a debit card and a mobile phone – that's their transport,

their food and their drink, and that's what they carry with them. Those people will grow into become the mainstream adults in our society, those will be the mainstream of our economic activity."

Looking at the 300-strong audience, he said: "We are not representative of the people that we carry, and we're certainly not representative of the people we will carry in the future. "I bet in this room people still own a car. I bet people in this room still have cash. And I bet we're all struggling to make a phone call on our smart phones, never mind turn on the central heating at home."

He added: "These youngsters are growing up with this in their hand and

they will want the increased personal mobility, and the commercial bus sector has to rise to that challenge if it's going to survive into the future." Meanwhile, commenting on the issue of smart ticketing, Daniels said: "I think it continues to remain really tricky that outside London there isn't a single smart ticketing system, there isn't common information. And we know from all of our experience in London that when that is provided ridership grows because it is the simplicity and the ease of use that is really very important."

Article courtesy of Passenger Transport.



Self-driving cars set to disrupt UK's £14bn motor insurance industry

Self-driving cars threaten a “seismic” change to the multi-billion pound motor insurance industry, with the number of accidents on the roads plummeting as computers take the wheel.

Research for a motor industry conference predicts an 80pc drop in crashes over the next 20 years thanks to so-called “autonomous vehicles”.

Drivers in Britain pay £14.2bn a year in motoring premiums – representing more than 40pc of all non-life premiums – and fewer accidents on the roads mean this massive industry faces huge disruption.

Data from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) shows the average UK motoring policy costs £429, but also reveals the industry has not made an underwriting profit on selling the premiums since 1994.

Volvo is one of the motoring companies at the front of the starting grid when it comes to self-driving cars. Last week it announced it would have 100 of its autonomous cars on London’s road by 2018 and has pledged that by 2020 self-driving systems will mean that no one will be killed or seriously injured by a new Volvo.

Håkan Samuelsson, chief executive of Volvo Cars, said: “The impact on the

insurance industry is likely to be significant but let’s not forget the real reason for this – fewer accidents, fewer injuries, fewer fatalities. Autonomous driving cars are the single most important advance in automotive safety to be seen in recent years.”

Driver aids such as automatic braking are already reducing the frequency and seriousness of accidents, and data from reinsurer Swiss Re and digital mapping business Here forecast that with the spread of autonomous driving technologies, premiums will cost 43 per cent less worldwide by 2035 than they would without.

Although fully autonomous

cars are at least a decade away, the conference warns that unless insurers start to examine the implications now, they face being left behind by new entrants to the market with a greater understanding of the changes new technology will bring to the industry.

But rather than fighting self-driving cars, the ABI – which has 250 members and accounts for 90pc of the UK insurance market – welcomes the technology.

James Dalton, ABI director of general insurance policy, said: “There will always be a need for insurance and our industry is used to adapting as new risks emerge and others fade.

“The potential prize here is

a massive reduction in road accidents, leading to fewer people killed and injured on our roads. Insurers would love to see that become a reality.”

He also warned that car manufacturers need to be just as prepared for changes brought by self-driving cars as insurers.

“Automated driving will send shockwaves through many industries,” Mr Dalton added. “Motor manufacturers are facing threats to their own business models from technology giants such as Google and Apple and need to move fast to keep up.”

Article courtesy of The Daily Telegraph

'Free market' - when it suits TfL!

As many of us are aware, from 3rd October this year, TfL will require that all taxi drivers accept credit card payments for passengers wishing to pay their fare by debit or credit cards.

At last year's AGM, LCDC members in attendance voted unanimously in favour of compulsory credit card acceptance, providing that it is mandated without being a financial burden to drivers. The LCDC Committee agree with our membership that mandatory CC acceptance is a positive initiative for the trade and the traveling public.

There has been a series of meetings between the trade orgs and TfL on how this mandate is carried forward. The LCDC have looked for solutions that are favourable to the driver as well as the public. Unfortunately and of no great surprise, from the meetings so far, TfL appear to have scant regard for the impact and effect this mandate will have on drivers. All the orgs, but one, disagreed with TfL on how they plan to implement this, to go live in October.

Since the 4th April, all taxi drivers who take CC now have to absorb the credit card transaction fee. The customer now only pays what is on the meter. In my opinion, it is wholly unreasonable for taxi drivers to cover the commission for all CC transactions, rather than the passenger. The 20p increase in the flag fall will go no way to cover the cost of a CC terminal or device that could cost in the region of £300. TfL, increasing our fares, making us more expensive is hardly a positive initiative to attract new passengers. When you consider that TfL have facilitated UBER's entry into our market place, ignoring the PH legislation to do so, diminishing our work levels in the process, it is outrageous that they plan to burden us with more outgoings.

Initially, TfL said that they would have the bargaining power to negotiate a commission fixed at 3%. It appears that TfL's talk of getting a low fixed rate was just false bravado. My suspicion is that the large CC companies informed them they would not commit to it. The percentage at present appears to be 3-5% from most CC suppliers, but nothing is in place to stop it eventually reaching 10-15 perhaps 20% in the near future if the larger CC companies gain a monopoly of the market. There are no safe

guards in place by TfL to prevent us being exploited further down the line. I suspect that TfL do not want the public to pay the transaction fee, in case taxis' with different CC providers have different percentage rates. They do not want the passenger to experience a different rate each time they use a taxi paying by card. The reluctance by the CC Companies to agree a fixed, uniformed rate could be a reason why TfL want the driver to cover the fee. Whatever the reasons we should not have to cover any fee as with booking tickets, flights or



holidays this cost should be handled by the customer.

TfL want all taxis to be fitted with a CC terminal in the passenger side of the cab or a bracket to hold a CC device. Unbelievably, TfL plan to make this subject to all taxis as a condition of fitness, putting even more regulation and control over taxi drivers, whilst UBER, it seems to me allowed to operate void of regulation. A taxi will be deemed un-roadworthy if this equipment is found unworkable. Drivers could find themselves out of work for days, waiting for appointments to repair equipment, this is totally unacceptable.

It is scandalous that we should have the added expense of having to purchase or rent equipment/machines/brackets to be fitted to the rear of the cab. Fittings will require drill holes causing damage and add another unnecessary cost for the driver. Many drivers have been offering customers CC payments with handheld devices without any complaints from their passengers, this will no longer be permitted. Over recent years, I have heard Boris

Johnson and TfL Management pontificate about the virtues of the "Free Market"; sadly, they do not share this ethic when it comes to London Taxi Drivers. We should have a choice, choosing what type of CC equipment we wish to have. Those renting cabs from garages are likely to see a significant increase in their weekly rent to cover the cost of having this equipment.

Hand held Credit Card systems are used in most restaurants, particularly the large chains, such as Pizza



person to drive a taxi, in jeopardy. Amazing how TfL can change legislation to suit their agendas but find excuses to stop the money making machine of selling PH licences to anyone who has a pulse, wishing to drive for a certain app.

Recently, TfL have been in the process of recruiting more Compliance Officers. My fear is that from October, they will be used primarily to check that drivers have workable CC equipment, rather than the thousands of min-cabs parked up illegally with inappropriate insurance. Recently, newly trained CO's have been witnessed targeting (harassing?) taxis trying to get on station ranks, whilst PH vehicles parked up round the corner plying for hire on the UB*R app are left undeterred. I expect TfL to order CO's to pose as customers, wishing to pay by card aiming to catch drivers who decline.

Recently the LCDC have worked closely with Ask POB, an excellent impartial London Taxi Trade consultancy set up by working taxi driver, Perry Richardson. ASK POB gathers taxi driver's opinions on subjects that have an impact on our trade, via on-line surveys. A recent survey conducted asked cabbies their thoughts on the credit card consultation. The LCDC presented the results to TfL at the last CC meeting; hopefully they will finally understand the concerns drivers have by proceeding with the current mandate.

The Taxi Trade is a public service and we need to offer the customer the choice of paying for their journey by either cash or card just like any other reputable industry. It is very rare these days that you shop, eat out or use a service that does not have a card facility, it should not be any different for us, but we should not have to do that under TfL's current draconian terms.

Express. If it is good enough for them why not for London Taxi Drivers? What happens if there appears to be a problem with the terminal? Does the driver compromise their safety and their passenger, by getting out and help process the transaction, perhaps even be accused of fraud. What about night drivers dealing with customers who are drunk or a woman worse for wear travelling alone at night, too intoxicated to process the payment, this will put drivers in dangerous and vulnerable situations.

Perhaps TfL's real aim is to have all CC equipment attached to the meter and can use to check drivers hours worked and earnings if they require. Fixed units fitted into rented cabs could even see more taxis' with the blighted sight of plastic bags over the terminals than we have already.

Another very concerning aspect to this mandate is that TfL want to introduce legislation to make taxi drivers accept credit, when legally we do not have too. Drivers who refuse to or find they can't because of a fault to their CC equipment and reported, could find that their licence as a fit and proper

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NEW MAYOR NEEDS TO BACK US

Well, after all the campaigning from candidates, eventually, London has a new mayor.

What does this hold for us in the licensed cab trade?

Before the election was decided the trade had met with all candidates and we know from what the Club had been saying that they have been fully briefed about the situation we now find ourselves in.

The breaking emails which you can see in this

edition of the Badge highlights just how much senior staff at TfL were involved with Government advisors regarding Uber. We have been banging the drum for many, many months about

Government collusion with Uber, and now with the email link with TfL exposed, the trade really needs to make the new Mayor fully aware of these and make it clear that the Cab trade can no longer accept Leon Daniels being at TfL anymore.

Transport for London is supposed to be an independent and unbiased regulator and what these emails show to us is that under Leon Daniels, they were anything but.

I am looking forward to having my first meeting with the new Mayor and I can assure members of the LCDc that I will be starting as I mean to go on.

We are dying out here due to the actions of TfL and their interpretations of



Hackney & PH law which from UBER. in my opinion has been polluted by the influence

Grant Davis

London Uber drivers operating in Bristol

Uber cars from London are flooding into Bristol for work, leaving local taxi drivers angry and out of pocket. Dozens of the private hire cars have been spotted taking fares in the city – even though they are licensed in the capital.

Taxi drivers based in Bristol say it is damaging to point they have considered strike action in a bid for authorities to clamp down on the influx. It is not illegal for Uber drivers based elsewhere to work in Bristol, as long as they fill the right licensing criteria. But Transport for London, which licenses taxis in the capital, said a 'grey area' could make it easier for cabbies based in

the capital to take jobs in Bristol.

Photos sent to the Post reveal scores of Uber cabs registered to TfL working in Bristol.

"It's affected everyone's earnings to a point where I'm probably at least 10 to 15 per cent down on what I was earning last year," said Bristol-based driver Bill Sawyer, who has been taking fares in the city for 26 years. "They're quite clearly working here full time and nothing is being done about it."

Mr Sawyer, who drives for V Cars and also works for Uber occasionally, is one of dozens of drivers angry that London-drivers are taking fares in

Bristol. A WhatsApp group used by more than 250 taxi drivers in Bristol is now being used regularly to point out TfL-licensed cars.

An Uber spokesman said the company, which works in 60 countries, encourages its drivers to work in the authority they are licensed – but 'does not instruct partners on where they should work'.

He added: "Private hire drivers are able to start or end a trip anywhere in the UK provided that their private hire licence and vehicle licence match the licensed operator that processes their booking." Mr Sawyer said he has been picked up by London-licensed drivers when using Uber as a



passenger, but that some of those drivers have insisted they are Bristol-based.

Striking was 'a serious consideration', he said.

A Transport for London spokesman said working between cities is legal 'as long as the booking goes through' where a driver is licensed.

"It's a grey area because you don't know how the booking is accepted, so if the booking is accepted in London then it's legal," he said.

"If a driver is licensed and

their vehicle is licensed and the operator is licensed in the same place, they can then operate in other parts of the country. With Uber there is an operating centre in London and as long as a driver and vehicle are licensed they could go and work in Bristol." A Bristol City Council spokesman said: "Private hire operators can perfectly legally subcontract bookings between operators."

Article courtesy of The Bristol Post



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Airport matters...

BY PETER "THE CANNON" L.C.D.C AIRPORT REP



MINICAB HOLDING AREA

The proposed minicab holding area at Heathrow Airport is being show-cased by Heathrow Ltd. (HAL) as evidence of the company's intention to claim back local residential streets from the thousands of minicabs that cram into every parking space they can find.

HAL wants the new minicab facility to be known as an Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA). It is obvious that one of the main functions of the so-called AVA will be to serve as a virtual rank for Uber drivers and a call centre for processing bookings from would-be minicab passengers. The whole project is about HAL finding ways to make money from the minicab industry and very little to do with HAL trying to help the residents of Hillingdon. They are having their environment blighted by armies of empty minicabs and out of town taxis, but HAL will never be able to contain all the offending vehicles in a designated holding area. There is not going to be a big clean up of residential streets, but HAL still wants the show to go on. The proposed AVA will not have sufficient capacity to accommodate even one tenth of the unwanted vehicles. First and foremost it is a business venture that will eventually provide HAL with an entirely new and profitable revenue stream from the minicab industry. As the law stands, HAL is unable to take even 1% of a £60 taxi fare, but there's nothing to stop HAL from taking 25% of a £60 minicab fare.

HAL claims that minicab drivers will pay to use their holding area (AVA) and then pay again to use a short term a car park where they will meet and greet their passengers.

It's a foregone conclusion that big companies like Uber would successfully appeal against rule imposed by HAL to make Uber drivers pay twice before they pick up passengers. No matter what HAL, the MPS and TfL may have to say to the taxi trade about this minicab holding area, it's an ill-conceived plan that cannot possibly work. Right now, the private hire industry at Heathrow is totally dependent on Heathrow Police (MPS) showing favour to minicabs by

allowing them to ignore the private hire byelaws forbidding them to pick up passengers on the forecourts. If the MPS could be compelled by the Home Secretary to enforce existing private hire legislation at Heathrow, the plague of minicabs would disappear from the airport and the taxi feeder park would start to flow again.

HAL'S BIG PLANS FOR PRIVATE HIRE
There's no shortage of passengers at Heathrow who demand and expect to be picked up by a minicab as soon as they emerge from a passenger terminal.

Heathrow PCSOs seem to be following instructions to turn a blind eye to all the forecourt pick-ups and the number of passengers making their way to Heathrow's taxi ranks is falling everyday. Very soon HAL will declare that the travelling public at Heathrow deserve to have the same kind of private hire services that operate at Gatwick and Stansted. HAL's plan for a new minicab holding area is just the first step and the second one will be to mark out designated meet and greet bays for minicabs on all terminals. The number of minicab pick ups commencing from the forecourts is already ten times greater than the number of taxi hirings that commence from Heathrow's taxi ranks. HAL has more to gain from urging Heathrow police to allow minicabs to illegally pick up on the forecourts, than it has from having the byelaws enforced under a zero tolerance policy. Without doubt many travellers would transfer their custom away from Heathrow to other London Airports, if they were forced to trek with loaded luggage trolleys to the official car parks to meet up with minicabs or private cars. The obvious solution for HAL to prevent all the road and forecourt congestion is to stop the forecourt pick ups and encourage travellers to use the designated taxi ranks. But as already said in this article, HAL intends to make money from PH operations, that it can't make from licensed London taxis

HEATHROW POLICE AND PORKIES
The lack of enforcement of the private hire byelaws by

Heathrow police has led to a situation where minicab drivers now assume that they have a right to park directly outside the passenger terminals.

Police officers who turn up at taxi trade meetings and boast they are doing their job properly are telling silly bare-faced lies and when they are challenged they sit and sulk. The unchecked presence of minicabs all over the airport is evidence of Heathrow's thriving black market in onward transport that HAL and the MPS have jointly created at Heathrow. Something is seriously wrong with the terms of the Police Service Agreement (PSA) that HAL makes every year with the MPS. For some reason HAL and the MPS are showing favour to companies such as Uber and out of town taxis that specialise in forecourt pickup for their passengers, even though such pick ups are illegal. The taxi trade doesn't have a say in the terms of this commercial agreement (PSA) and the same goes for TfL executives. Details of this all important contract are supposed to be in public domain, but policemen from the lower ranks who meet the taxi trade at meetings with HAL never know anything about it. They have to rely on the LCDC to keep them up to date with information that doesn't filter down to the lower ranks at Heathrow police station.

What taxi trade knows for sure is that the forecourts are being used as minicab ranks because senior officers at Heathrow police station are protecting HAL from having to pay higher law enforcement costs.

The same officers are also helping minicab companies such as Uber to keep their Heathrow fares to an absolute minimum. The LCDC would like to see these MPS decision makers at taxi trade meetings instead of the constables and sergeants who only have very vague ideas about what level of police manpower is supposed to be applied to enforcement of minicab byelaws and parking regulations.

SECURITY RISKS ON THE FORECOURTS
Illegal parking outside the passenger terminals is rife and congestion black spots

are left unattended to sort themselves out.

Taxi trade orgs know that HAL has no intentions of paying to have police manpower on the forecourts increased to a level that would eradicate the illegal parking. HAL relies on lethargic PCSOs from Heathrow police station to deal with traffic regulation and parking. In practice, the PCSOs are acting under an official instruction to do nothing more than make a symbolic effort to enforce the minicab and parking byelaws. Police tow-away trucks are placed on show on the forecourts, but very often they are driverless and manned by MPS attendants who are not authorised to do anything other than mind their own business.

Unidentified cars and minicabs parked on the forecourts, present a variety of security risks including the risk that they could be carrying explosives or weapons. The risk is there, irrespective of whether or not the offending vehicles are with a driver. Traffic congestion on and near the forecourts makes it harder to spot the tell tale signs of danger. London taxi drivers provide some of the best eyes and ears available at Heathrow for spotting potential security issues. Although the imposition of a zero tolerance policy on parking outside all passenger terminals would prove to be unpopular with the travelling public, it would certainly not be over-extravagant. (The minicab industry would be up in arms, but so what ?).

LCDC'S CONCLUSIONS
There is no objective justification for HAL to provide the private hire industry with a minicab holding area at Heathrow.

It will do nothing to prevent the over-supply of minicabs in the area and in fact it will aggravate the situation. Thousands more of them are likely to arrive in the Heathrow area as soon as word gets around that HAL has given them their very own minicab feeder park on Heathrow property. (The AVA - Authorised Vehicle Area). There are more effective steps that HAL could take to stop or at least deter all the illegal parking in local residential streets and on Heathrow's forecourts. HAL has

sufficient power under existing legislation to discourage empty minicabs from coming to the airport by directing them as soon as they arrive to the official car parks, where they will have to pay the charges. Essentially, the over-supply of minicabs at Heathrow is due to HAL's failure to ensure that relevant legislation is being rigorously applied to all offenders and not just a token number of them.

During the past year, information on how policing costs at Heathrow are calculated and paid is very hard to obtain from the MPS Heathrow and they use every trick in the book to thwart attempts to get basic facts. It may need government intervention, but the law enforcement terms of Heathrow's Police Service Agreement with HAL are obviously in need of a thorough over-haul. Senior police officers and HAL are making decisions about taxi and minicabs and they are doing it behind closed doors.

HAL is a private sector entity and doesn't have to be answerable to the taxi trade. But the Metropolitan Police Service is a public authority and given that commercial deals are being done with HAL the airport operator, questions about those deals have got to be answered by the MPS - in public if necessary.

Full scale enforcement of existing minicab and parking legislation, supported by an appropriate increase in policing costs paid by HAL to the MPS, would resolve most of the congestion problems caused by the airport being over-supplied with minicabs and out of town taxis. There is no excuse whatsoever for senior police officers to allow HAL to dictate to the MPS that minicab companies such as Uber should be given a free hand to operate on Heathrow's forecourts in contravention of private hire legislation.

The MPS should adopt a position of neutrality in these circumstances and that means enforcing private hire legislation at Heathrow even though it would have a detrimental effect on the profits and operations of private hire companies such as Uber UK.

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Uber's lengthy tax journey...



UBER has put together an opaque corporate structure to slash its tax bill in overseas markets – including Britain.

The controversial taxi hailing service channels most of its revenues from foreign territories via the Netherlands to a sister company registered in the tax haven of Bermuda. The move, revealed in accounts for its main international subsidiary, could see Uber avoid tens of millions of pounds of Corporation tax in Britain and other markets:

The smartphone app, which has raised more than \$7bn (£4.8bn) in funding, and is valued at \$62bn is currently losing money as it ploughs cash into expansion.

The main foreign offshoot, the Amsterdam based CV reported a loss of \$234m for 2014.

However, when the San Francisco based company begins to generate profits, most of the money will be shunted off shore, beyond the reach of HM Revenue & Customs.

When a customer takes an Uber cab ride in London or

Manchester, the entire fare is paid to UberBV, an operating company in the Netherlands. It sends back 80% of the revenue to the driver, but keeps 20% commission.

UberBV retains a 1% cut of the fare, which it reports as profit, and is taxed under Dutch rules. The rest is handed to Uber International CV as a Royalty payment.

According to Dutch filings Uber International CV sends 1.45% of its revenues to the US parent company as an

intellectual property fee. But the rest of the revenues are retained at Uber International CV and are Not taxed. Although incorporated in the Netherlands, the division is registered in Bermuda, which does not charge corporation tax. The structure means that most of Uber's profits derived from British users, will not be taxed in the US, the Netherlands, nor the UK.

Last year, the OECD agreed to clamp down on the use of

licensing and royalty payments to avoid taxes, a tactic used by Facebook, Google and others. George Osborne followed suit with a royalty clampdown on multinationals. Uber said "The lion's share of the revenue generated – fares – stays local as it goes to the driver. Unlike more mature tech companies that are highly profitable, Uber is still investing heavily to roll out our service."

Article courtesy of The Sunday Times

The option you were never given

Why were Dial a Cab members not given the option to dissolve the Society, rather than to demutualise?

Last week members of Dial a Cab received a letter from Chairman Brian Rice outlining the certain options regarding the future of their Society.

In his letter he states that DAC is now running at a loss on an annual basis and that cash reserves will not exceed three years. He goes on to outline two other alternatives - both of which include the demutualisation of the Society.

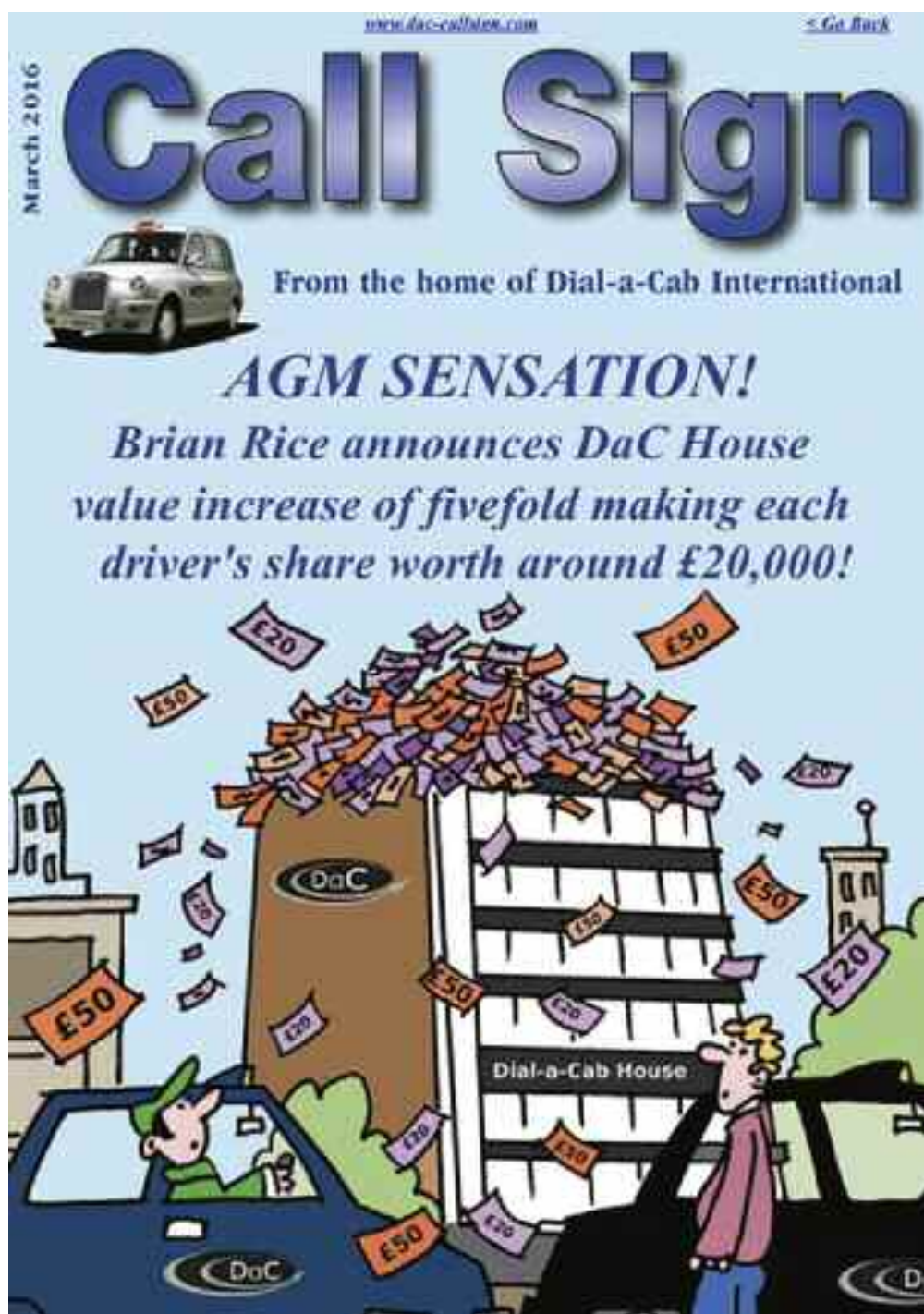
However, he does not offer the most obvious solution, which several members brought up at the AGM - and that is for the society to be dissolved.

Below is rule 26 of the RULES OF THE OWNER-DRIVERS RADIO TAXI SERVICE LIMITED:

26. DISSOLUTION

The Society may at any time be dissolved by the consent of three-fourths of the members, testified by their signatures to an instrument of dissolution in the form, provided by the Treasury regulation, or by winding-up in a manner provided by the Industrial and Provident Societies Act.

Right: March edition of Dial-a-Cab magazine, Call Sign



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Sound of the suburbs...



Around The beginning of February I received DM on Twitter from @SuperCabbie asking me if he could interview me for London Taxi Radio's 'LTR interviews' to highlight the problems suburban drivers are facing, being somewhat apprehensive (due to having a couple of heated debates on twitter over the years with Jamie and the YB/GB divide witch exists) but still intrigued I agreed to it, so on February 25th of this year We conducted the interview at the LTR studios and it went very well!

on arriving at the studios beforehand and I have to say when looking around I was very impressed with the set up and Jamie himself and my curiosity about LTR grew even stronger, so after the interview I happened to mention to Jamie that 'always fancied doing my own podcast' to which he Jamie replied much to my surprise 'you can do one here if you want' so even know I had zero experience of doing anything like this I Took Jamie up on his kind and generous offer immediately and decided instantly to do a kind of 'Gaunty Style' current affairs show as I was a avid listener to 'Talk 2 me radio' and a big 'Talk Radio Fan' so the following week I was a A guest on LTR is flagship show the brilliant 'Cab Chat' which is presented by Jamie himself also co presented by Mark and Sean with joe Jamie and Mark the drum Slayer appearing from time to time (recorded every Monday and available for download at London Taxi radio.co.uk) and the announcement was made about my show coming up,now not

going To lie I was extremely excited that was until I tried to record myself ranting which is not as easy as you think! and made me realise I'm no Jon Gaunt so it was time for a rethink the first thing I thought about was obviously I'm doing a podcast for LTR so therefore it should be Taxi trade based and after much deliberation it dawned on me being a suburban driver myself struggling to make a living like many of us are! I will do a podcast about the suburbs. I discussed this with a friend of mine on the Lewisham station rank and he come up with the idea for the name to show 'sound of the suburbs' and suggested using 'the members' song sound of the suburbs as an intro (obviously can't be done due to copyright) I pitched the idea to Jamie who thought it was a brilliant idea and immediately recorded episode zero which was just explaine the change of format for my show and the reason why so from that point on 'Sound of the Suburbs' was born. 'Journey begins' since then 7 episodes have been recorded episode one with LSTC Committee members Nick and Charlie (two gentlemen working very hard for the sectors) and also mark and graham (sector 3 drivers) talking Lewisham station rank cross rail rank episode 2 with Collin Jackson Who has single-handedly taken TfL to a tribunal over there 'positive action' Campine in the suburban sectors episode 3 was just me on my own giving my own points of view 4 was with Nick and Charlie giving us updates on the work there doing 5 with Grant Davis of the LCDC with have all been realised 6 with Gary Slater



Robert Cardwell

@iamcabman FOLLOWS YOU

@LondonTaxiRadio podcaster/presenter
#soundofthesuburbs suburban taxi driver
#sector3 knowledge boy #Mountaintoclimb

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of SW4 for taxi ranks and 7 with les Hoath chairman of the LSTC should be out by the time you read this! And iv now got a monthly article in the badge word of the suburbs called 'Word of the Suburbs' which I know certain members of the LSTC said I shouldn't do but I see nothing but positives from highlighting the sound of the

suburbs podcast London taxi radio and the issues facing suburban drivers to potentially 25,000 readers why wouldn't I do it? And if these certain members of the LSTC given the opportunity to do this article and refused I would feel they would be failing me as a member to do what's best in my interests take care and be lucky.



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The LCDC attend the Joint Ranks committee, working hard for more ranks and more access for the taxi trade in London.

■ CAB TRADE ADVICE

All members can call the office for any information or up to the date news on any trade related subject.

■ TRADE'S FUTURE

The Club worked tirelessly in bringing in the green & yellow identifiers to the taxi trade.
And are always working hard to protect our future.

■ CAB TRADE REPRESENTATION

We are working hard to work with members of the GLA and also politicians to fight our corner against

TFL and was a major influence in the recent "future proof" document.

■ VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS

The Club works alongside LTC and Mercedes to deliver a vehicle that meets our standard as a London taxi driver. Recently we have held meetings to work against the ULEZ strategy and the introduction of taxi age limits.

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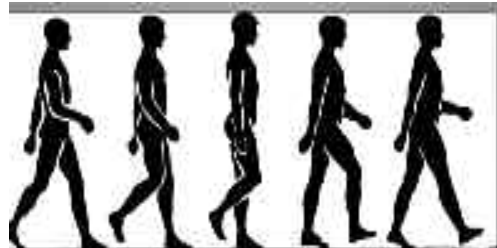


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Walker on the March...

MEMORIES OF AN OLD GEEZER

Radio Taxis (RTG) have just renewed the London Underground (LUL) account and it made me think back to when I joined Comcab (then London-Wide) in early 1980.

Comcab had the LUL account then and the difference between what has happened to that account since is a fair reflection of what has happened to our trade generally.

This account was cab driver's heaven. Drivers were issued with a book runs (schedules). A driver would be issued a schedule number and the book would give a list of stations and time past the hour to reach the station by.

The times allowed between stations was the same as it takes a train to travel between them. It was impossible to keep up with them but it was fun/stressful to try. There was no TFL to mess up the roads, no cyclo-terrorists and no speed cameras in those days, so it could get like being in the Monte Carlo Rally

LUL staff just got on and off at stations along the schedule.

The dream schedule was the one that went from Hainault to Amersham and then back again – all on the meter! Every schedule! Plus a 10% tip! That particular schedule paid well over the average for a whole night's shift.

I was only ever lucky enough to get this schedule on one occasion. During that whole journey, the only staff I picked up was a man and a woman and took them from Manor Hse Stn to Turnpike La Stn on the whole 50 or so mile journey.

It couldn't last forever though. First, Thatcher made state-run operations responsible for their expenditure and LUL was no exception. Long before the end of the 80s, the schedules were abandoned for specific journeys. Next, they stopped paying the gratuities.

By the mid 90s, LUL were only paying 80% of the meter and no gratuities. RTG won the account from Comcab about ten years ago, paying drivers only 75% of the meter and then subsequently I believe many trips became low fixed prices. Drivers are currently speculating over whether the price is going down to 60-65% of the meter.

Aah, the good old days! No licensed PH; no Uber; hardly any touting; reasonable levels of

enforcement; proper regulation; no satellite offices or PH ranks. The days when cab drivers were the kings of London's roads.

Sadly, these were days we will never see again.

WAS PH LICENSING A DELIBERATE STITCH-UP?

All the kerfuffle about PH ranks at satellite offices and large events and E hailing all comes back to one thing. When the PH Act was drafted, the idea was that PHVs were advanced booked.

That must have been the case because it provided the justification for not requiring PH drivers to pass The Knowledge and the creation of a two-tier system.

Unfortunately, the actual wording of the Act stated "pre-booked" rather



than "advance booked". I have assumed for the last 12 years or so that this was an accidental mistake that has allowed TFL and TPH to drive a coach and horses through the intention of the Act. Now I am not so sure.

The intention of the two-tier system, or so I have thought, was to allow Taxis to operate the on-demand market of street hailing and ranks, free from direct competition from PH. This was how the Act could dictate much higher costs on the taxi industry than they imposed on the PH industry – they were operating in distinct markets.

However, TFL have not honoured these boundaries. They allowed PH ranks via satellite offices. They allowed PH ranks at special events like "Shine" by some loony idea that

Shine could pre-book hundreds of cars without knowing who actually wanted to hire them or where they wished to go.

Shine organisers did not pay for these journeys so how could they have had a contract with the supplying operator? A contract requires two parties with one providing goods and/or services and one paying for those goods and/or services. So, if Shine weren't paying, they did not have a contract with the operator; the eventual customer did. The trouble with that is that there was no contract until the customer arrived at the car, in which case, the car wasn't pre-booked.

Nevertheless, TFL interpret these PH ranks as lined with "pre-booked" cars.

Then it got worse as PH operators discovered they could use App technology, aligned to GPS technology, to operate an on-demand system that we now call E hailing. So now PHVs can cruise the streets like a real taxi and do exactly the same job. The trouble for us is that they can do it for half of our costs.

TFL can fanny about and say it isn't "on-demand" but "pre-booked". They can call it "sausages" if they like but the reality is that Uber have an average delivery time from order of a car to its delivery in under three minutes and squealed like stuck pigs when suggested it should be a minimum five minutes. Apparently, women were going to get raped in the streets and men mugged and beaten because of this extra two minutes. Well, TFL thought so anyway.

All of this stems from the accident of inserting one wrong word in the legislation; that of "pre" in front of "booked" rather than "advance". Except I now doubt that it was a mistake; I think it may have been deliberate.

If TFL had announced they were going to operate a one-tier system, where PH drivers could do our job without doing "The Knowledge"(KOL) and without having the expense of a purpose built vehicle(PBV), they know we would have seriously opposed it. We would have banged up Central London and they wouldn't have had any justifiable argument.

By not requiring PH to do the KOL or have the PBV, they were able to put a lot of drivers and vehicles on

the road very quickly. At the same time, they were able to retain the world-renowned London taxi service. They were also able to continue having an integrated wheelchair accessible system for the disabled that did not cost them a penny and could also crow to the world about. They even touted this in the 2012 Olympics bid, even though they then banned those vehicles from the Olympic Lanes.

Being civil servants though, the penny has still to drop that SOMEBODY has to pay for these PBVs and the taxi industry is having to pay for them and exempting the PH industry means sooner or later there will be no PBVs to transport the disabled. It may be because they have to remove the PBV requirement or it may be because the taxi industry goes bust.

So, I'm starting to think we were deliberately hoodwinked by TFL. I'm starting to believe that writing "pre-booked" into the law rather than "advance booked" was a deliberate fuzzing of the law. I'm starting to believe this was a deception. I'm starting to believe that TFL never intended a proper two-tier system at all.

I'm starting to believe that they intended a one-tier system as far as it possible. Obviously, they could not allow PHVs to be hailed in the street but let's face it, they haven't done much to stop it. It only took them three years after full PH licensing came in to allow PH ranks. This was at the same time as STaN policy became less to stop touting and more to prevent sexual predators masquerading as unlicensed minicab touts.

Then, a couple of years ago, following the taxi trade, PH operators came across App technology and there we were with E hailing. Two years of lobbying, one GLA damning report, a TFL PH consultation that was repeated until they got the right answers and what is that result.

Have they rowed back PH by making sure they could not serve the on-demand market? Did they *^*\$?! They simply made sure that outfits like Uber could carry on as they were.

I'm starting to think we were duped. What TFL did to our trade with the PH Act was legal but it was a long way away from being HONEST. Well folks, I reckon they had us over good and proper.

LET'S ALL SUPPORT...



LondonTaxiPR has been set up by two experienced GB drivers, Lee Sheppard & Gary Long, to bring the trade its first ever independent company, dedicated to promoting and advertising the iconic licensed London Taxi trade.

Since forming in March 2015, we have made it our priority to bring positive PR to the trade, through advertising and promotional campaigns.

After contacting many advertising companies, and informing them of our aims, we look at the many different offers of campaigns and decide on which is the best option on costings, to maximise the exposure and promotion of our trade.

We have raised funds for these campaigns by engaging with the trade through our Twitter page, @londontaxi_pr detailing the campaign, the cost and then asking them to contribute towards such campaigns. 100% of all contributions made go towards each campaign. NO money is taken by londontaxipr for their service. We believe that by bringing continual positive advertising & PR campaigns to the trade this would be for the benefit of all.

Every world-recognised brand spends millions on advertising, marketing & PR. We as a trade don't and never have! Just think, if we did, what it could do for our business!

So far, we have introduced three successful trade advertising campaigns. Our first was, we raised 6k for a street level advertising campaign, through leading outdoor Ad company Jcdecaux. The "take a ride in London's pride" campaign was displayed on 54 telephone kiosks situated around London's busy W1 area.



We also approached Verifone media about promoting the trade through their digital rooftops. For many years now we have advertised every other business or service on our brand, but never our own. We saw these rooftops as a positive way to utilise the advertising space to finally promote the trade. Verifone agreed with our view and kindly donated Ad campaigns free of charge, promoting firstly the use of the trade & secondly running the "take a ride in London's pride" campaign alongside the launch of the telephone kiosks.

First campaign



Take a ride in London's pride campaign

More recently we have just raised another 1k for a social media campaign, which enables us to target age, gender, & interest specific users. This will start over the next few weeks & will run for a month.

Our newest fund raising target is for 14k. This is for a 4 week advertising campaign targeting London's clubs, bars & 8 London stations. This enables us to reach the young social audience, as well as the general audience passing through the stations. 30 of London's clubs & bars, plus the 8 stations will promote

the use of our trade.

To join in & contribute towards this

campaign, please visit our website londontaxipr.com and click on the donate button at the bottom of the page.

Alternatively should you wish to contribute monthly via DD, please email us at londontaxipr@gmail.com and we can forward on our bank details to you.

For example if just 3000 drivers signed up to monthly DD we could bring the trade continual advertising & promotional campaigns all year round.

Many of our trade have voiced their demand for more advertising and PR, we at londontaxipr can bring you this & we have many more offers in place and ready. We just need more of the trade to follow, support & contribute towards our campaigns. Please remember that every penny contributed by you is promoting you, your trade, and your future.

HELP US TO HELP YOU

YOUR FUTURE IS OUR FUTURE!

Many thanks

Lee & Gary.



—Khan v Alvarez—



Clash of the Titans

This Saturday night, Amir Khan takes on Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez for his WBC middleweight title at the new T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas.

Khan, 29, has called it the biggest fight of his life, and quite literally. He will step up two weight divisions from welterweight to challenge the fearsome Mexican for his title. The Briton Khan is aiming to win a world title at a second different weight - he had previously held the IBF and WBA light-welterweight titles. The fight will be fought at a

catchweight of 155 lb, which Alvarez has fought at for his last four fights. The 25-year-old Alvarez has only been defeated once in his 48-fight career - to Floyd Mayweather back in September 2013. That fight was fought at a catchweight of 152 lbs. "I'm thinking about making history in boxing and leaving a great legacy behind and fighting the best out there," said Khan, "I wanted the big fights against Mayweather, Pacquiao, and both fights didn't happen. I wanted the next big thing, and the next

big thing was Canelo, and I remembered a long time ago being asked to speak about that fight, and you know, it seems to be more realistic now. I'm in a position where I'm growing up now and getting stronger, and I'm knowing and getting to understand boxing a lot better now, and having a good team around me with Virgil and the team, I think that helps, also, so I just needed that big fight now because that was something that was only going to give me more confidence and kind of give me that more drive."

Hermann wins Southern Area Title



At the famous York Hall on the 16th April Alec Wilkey's new Super Welterweight, Arthur Hermann (16-2), won the Southern Area Title. Hermann beat Asinia Byfield (9-0) over 10 rounds.

The referee scored in favour to Hermann by 1 point, but the more knowledgeable pundits at ringside had him winning by as many as 5/6 rounds. Hermann's trainer, cab driver and club member, Alec Wilkey told *The Badge* that he thought his boy won 7 of the 10 rounds. Alec Wilkey's good friend and promoter, Mickey Heliot, has asked for a rematch and negotiations have started to make this happen.

The success has continued this weekend for TeamWilkey as the next "Cab off the rank" was Johnny Coyle (12-0-1) again appearing at The York Hall against Casey Blair (3-8-0). This was a hard fought 8 rounds and Alec told *The Badge* that this was just what was needed for Johnny in his progression to major titles.

Johnny will be boxing next on a Frank Warren show which will be televised live on BoxNation on 10th June.

On Saturday we were once again back at London's home of boxing, The York Hall.

Appearing this time on The Tommy Dove Promotion was Ritchie Grey, another of Alec's Super Welterweights made easy work by stopping Terry George in the 1st round.

Also appearing on this show was Chris Eubank's estranged son, Super Lightweight Nathanael Wilson, who is managed by Alec. Nathanael also making easy work by stopping the very tough Ross Roberts in 1st round.

Teamwilkey has 2 more fighters out over the next fortnight, 7th May at The York Hall is Nathan Wiese and the following Saturday 14th also at The York Hall is Danny "Cassius" Connor.

If anyone is interested in tickets for either or both of the shows please contact Alec directly on Mobile: 07944791360



Fears over 'excessive and unsafe' 65-hour weeks for Uber cab drivers

Uber, the controversial minicab service, has changed a page on its UK website which encouraged its drivers to work 65-hour weeks amid growing concern about "excessive and unsafe" hours driven on the service.

Until last week, the entry page for new recruits on the company's British site promised drivers that Uber could "turn your car into a money machine," with earnings averaging £3360 a month.

This was "based on average net payments of partner-drivers in London who have driven 55-65 hours [per week] in November 2015". The legal safe limit for a bus or lorry driver is 56 hours a week.

After being contacted by the Sunday Telegraph, Uber changed the page to claim that drivers could earn a slightly smaller amount, £3300 a month, simply by being "logged into the Uber app for 55-65 hours per week."

Even this, however, is still potentially dangerous, according to Uber's own general manager in New York, Josh Mohrer, who stated in an open letter to the city's taxi and limousine commission that it is "unsafe to use the Uber app for more than 12 hours at a time." Based on a five-day week, 65 hours equals 13 hours a day.

Uber in New York has recently banned drivers from working long hours.

Mr Mohrer said that the company would "on a daily basis be using our technology to identify a driver-partner

who has been using the Uber app for more than 12 consecutive hours" with "temporary, and possibly permanent, deactivation from the Uber platform" for repeat offenders.

However, a spokesman for Uber in London said it had no plans to follow suit, saying: "Uber does not set hours or shifts and drivers who partner with us can choose the hours they work."



The spokesman said that drivers who drove "too many hours" would "receive a message from us about safe driving," but did not specify how many hours was too many.

Steve Garelick, the private hire drivers' branch secretary for the GMB union, which represents a number of Uber drivers, said drivers were being encouraged to work "excessive and unsafe hours" by the company's net rates of pay, which the union claims are as little as £5.68 an hour in London, well below the minimum wage, after costs and Uber's commission are deducted.

To earn even £20,000 a year at this rate, a driver would

have to work 68 hours a week.

Uber treats its drivers as independent contractors. However, they must pay a set percentage of each fare to Uber – previously 20 per cent, but increased to 25 per cent for new drivers from November 2015.

Drivers must also pay all their own costs, including petrol, maintenance and insurance of their vehicles. Uber says its

London drivers earn an average of £16 an hour after its commission has been deducted, but before costs.

"We definitely know of Uber drivers who have to work more than 12 hours a day," Mr Garelick said.

"It's not through personal choice, it's the economics that make them do that because the rates are so low. Uber could do something about it tomorrow by increasing the rates of pay. Instead they have been cutting the rates.

"Increasing their commission by a quarter obviously means that a new driver has to do more hours to earn the same money as a driver who joined before November."

Uber's technology also allows precise tracking of the hours worked by every individual driver and could be used, as in New York, to identify those working unsafe hours.

Several Uber drivers spoken to by The Sunday Telegraph admitted that they "sometimes" worked more than 12 hours a day.

Mohammed, a driver waiting for business in the West End,

said: "My longest was 16 hours a day but I know people who have done 18, 19 hour days several days together."

In June, a London Uber passenger, Emma Davey, was left unconscious when her Uber car crashed and flipped over after the driver allegedly fell asleep.

Transport for London figures show there has been a 44 per cent rise in the number of casualties involving taxis or private hire vehicles in the capital since Uber launched its main service in London, UberX, in July 2013.

The number of casualties in the year to June 30 2013 was 530. In the year to June 30 2015, it was 691, a 30 per

cent increase. By September 30 2015, the latest available figure, there had been 763 casualties in the preceding 12 months, a 44 per cent rise. Most involved only minor injury.

By September 2015, the taxi and private hire vehicle casualty rate was 102 per cent above the 2005-9 average, according to TfL.

The TfL figures are not broken down between private hire vehicles and black taxis and nor do they identify individual private hire companies.

Uber says it is safer than a high street minicab firm because of its electronic tracking of drivers and because passengers can rate their drivers' skills.

However, the number of black cabs has not changed substantially since 2009 and the major change in the London market over that time has been a sharp growth in the number of private hire vehicles, mainly due to Uber.

The growth in accidents over the 2005-9 baseline has been even faster than the growth in the number of private hire vehicles, suggesting that as well as more vehicles they are being driven less safely.

An Uber spokesman said the company took excessive hours "very seriously" and "regularly discusses driving habits with partners. Furthermore Uber's feedback process flags any issues in real time and Uber takes action whenever necessary."

Article courtesy of The Daily Telegraph

PH LICENCES 'BEYOND SATURATION POINT'!

On the 25th of April the LCDC met TfL for Taxi and Private Hire Licensing and Compliance meetings. It was here that TPH Management admitted that "PH Licences had gone well beyond the saturation point." And have no power to stop new licences going ahead.

As drivers we are seeing increased Accidents (PHVs), higher emissions and also increased congestion.

But TfL, who are there to protect the public, are licensing too many PH drivers, of whom a very high percentage work for the high tech Yankee firm, Fubar!

Are TFLTPH aware that their own policy and the law is being broken by all PH drivers including Taxi Drivers who use these Apps?

The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) 1986 Regulation 104:

Driver's control 104. No person shall drive or cause or permit any other person to drive, a motor vehicle on a road if he is in such a position that he cannot have proper control of the vehicle or have a full view of the road and traffic ahead.

This is also TfL's own policy, but yet we see PHV and Taxi drivers with 3-4 devices/phones/ tablets situated in cradles on the window screens. driving round following Satnavs, interacting with their phone/devices which is also "driving without due care and attention", which is also another criminal offence. So how is it that TfLtpH have licensed these App based companies to work in London, knowing full well

that the driver has to interact with the phone/device/tablet is unbelievable. Have TFLTPH carried out a Health & Safety Risk Assessment? Obviously No! An increase in Vehicle Accidents would mean TFLTPH should have re-assessed its own assesment.

Any more deaths and TfltpH could be up on corporate manslaughter charges!

But TfltpH say it is down to the driver! He/she must pull over to a safe spot to accept a job. I don't think TfL realise it's the one with the quickest spider senses who gets the job, disregarding the law, every driver on an App is guilty of this.

I spoke to a Sgt Mantoura of the Met Traffic division and voiced my concerns about a tweet from the Met's Twitter feed!

This tweet has since been deleted by the Met, as it is illegal to touch text and read a phone / device in a cradle whilst driving or sitting in traffic with the engine running. But still the Apps operate.

Illegally!

It was recently reported that TfL Licensed vehicles are now working as far afield as Bristol.

Can you please explain how TfL propose to take enforcement action in Bristol?

How are the 82 Officers going to carry out their duties a hundred and thirty miles from the capital?

Can you also explain how the proposed topographical testing for PH Drivers in London will prepare them for operating in Bristol, as most can't navigate London?

Is it not time to admit that TfL have lost complete control of the current situation and the public are at risk?

City of London Police:

Officers have issued up to a 100 fines to PH drivers for driving with their fog lights on.

Would it be possible for a test case against drivers using the apps whilst driving? Maybe TfLtpH will then have to act.



Below is a text exchange between a compliance officer, who at the time was travelling on a London bus, and a taxi driver who is an LCDC member. The officer spotted the driver touching his phone, which was in a cradle at the time of use.

On this basis, Uber drivers are acting illegally, as the only way they can operate is by interaction with their Uber app on their smart phone.

Are you driving over Lambeth bridge?

Yes are you following me lol

No on bus going pass you and saw you using your phone while driving with POB. Please stop!

I was answering a call

!! Do not touch your phone while driving especially as there is a policeman on the roundabout. Buy an

Taxi trade needs to join tech revolution

When the swords are drawn, who will break first?

Do you know something, the irony is that the first victims of Uber's rapid expansion won't be taxis or minicabs; it will be Hailo or Gett, or maybe even both. Looking at the information available in the public arena it would seem that Hailo and Gett's UK losses have increased somewhat and this could potentially indicate that they are starting to get in real trouble. As for any business that reaches a stalemate position, it's going to get much harder for them to raise new funds at this stage in the game. They both need to drastically cut costs and find new areas for growth to have any chance of surviving long term. We may even see Gett deciding to just to pull out the London Market altogether if it can't bring costs under control and reverse a possible stalling in growth.

Beware the sheep in wolf's clothing

Recently, it was reported that Uber has offered zero commission to London's black cab drivers for a year. This may sound great on the outside, but in reality I have a sneaking suspicion this isn't as sweet a deal as it first may seem. Uber has regularly been reported in the press for giving with one hand to only take away at a later date with another. When minicab drivers first started driving for Uber in London, the fares were much higher and the commission was only 10%. It's now nearer 25% and the fares have plummeted, leaving many drivers struggling to make a living. Unfortunately driving for a provider like Uber is a bit like being on a treadmill - once you get on it, it's hard to get off. Uber would undeniably keep many black cab drivers in work but their working conditions and levels of pay would fundamentally change forever.

The aggregators

You may have heard that Kabbee recently tried to raise money via Crowdcube but

sadly fell short, leaving it in a potentially difficult situation. I predict Minicabster will also try to raise additional funds again this year. This would suggest that both companies may be struggling for growth and finding it hard to expand outside London. Minicabit successfully raised over £1m and is targeting £100m in revenue. My personal opinion is that the company has misunderstood its growth in 2015 and what caused it. Making projections on a similar growth level may turn out to be a major issue for them in the year ahead. 2016 is

offer both availability and price to compete with Uber. My gut feeling is that the larger minicab companies won't want to drop their prices as low as Uber. This will probably result in heavily publicised incentive schemes to promote using the service. This is something which all tech companies have done heavily, only to find a large percentage of customers switch back to the cheaper provider once the incentive has ended. Either way, I'm looking forward to seeing a new player in the market and I'm keen to see what they have developed. It's

another company. I can see Hailo becoming part of Gett and Minicabster becoming part of Kabbee.

• New congestion charges - TFL will take some form of action against the number of minicabs that are now causing massive congestion in the capital. The obvious answer is to cap Uber, but Uber are far too cosy with the politicians for this to happen. Instead TFL will look at it as a money making opportunity and introduce a daily congestion charge for minicabs. They will say the money used will go towards

by TFL, meaning they simply cannot charge less even if they wanted to (however some are willing to negotiate a fixed fee up front). I believe changes are afoot to make all black cabs in London take card without a surcharge - a change which is long overdue.

It can often be quite easy to see what is likely to happen. I've been in the market long enough to see problems before they arise and have watched the paths of many competitors enough to know what steps they are likely to take next. The more challenging outlook is that of what should happen (in an ideal world).

I believe the market could be radically improved if the following steps were taken:

- Uber needs a cap on drivers.
- Black cab drivers all need to take card payments.
- TFL should cut the black cab rates to help them to become more competitive on price.
- Minicab and dispatch companies should get together and create a free open platform for sharing drivers and integrating with other platforms and apps.

- Addison Lee needs to expand outside London and offer a lower cost service.
- To keep the market healthy and to protect drivers the government need to impose some new controls on how companies operate, what drivers get paid and how tax is paid.

It is clear that the battle for the taxi market is no closer to ending, but the potential for new market entrants, the likelihood of big brands reaching the peak of their growth life cycle and the increasing pressure on TFL to protect the legacy of the London Black Cab means that the next 18 months are likely to be an interesting watch and certain to include some twists and turns along the way

Jonathan Kettle is the co-founder of Taxicode a self funded startup



going to be much harder for them. On the flipside.

New market entrants

Karhoo is set to join the party, although a much delayed launch could suggest they have some major technical obstacles that need to be overcome - but this is potentially a good thing; the more innovative the solution, the better it can be for consumers and harder to copy by competitors. In my opinion, Karhoo's main difficulty will be persuading customers to switch from someone like Uber.

Assuming the technology works well, it will come down to two things: price and availability. Just having one won't be enough. Having Addison Lee on board will give them availability but not price. We have to hope that the other minicab companies on the network are able to collectively

important Karhoo is successful to help keep the market balanced.

The worst thing that can happen is for Uber to be allowed to become a new monopoly in the taxi and minicab market. Consumers benefit from competition and I feel we need at least five big players in the market to keep things healthy and competitive.

My predictions for 2016

- Prices will continue to fall - Uber will likely become even cheaper, cutting rates again to around £1 per mile or maybe even 90p. The problem they have is the more drivers they have the more work they need - they will try and eat into every possible piece of the pie they can get their hands on.
- Bang or Bust - One or two players will pull out, go bust or more than likely merge with

infrastructure improvements.

- Brand expansion - Addison Lee will make a big price cut and will work to create a UK wide brand. Addison Lee needs to think about the long term 5-10 year plan. In order for it to compete with Uber, it needs to become national and global, and less expensive. I expect to see Addison Lee make some big moves this year to ensure they secure the long term future of the business.

- Stalemate for Black Cabs - For the black cabs, there will be no real change. The black cab trade will continue to stagnate in numbers, its business levels remaining relatively similar. Too many of them taking cash only continues to be a big issue for me - it puts a lot of people off using them and reduces the market of potential customers. Black cab prices are also fixed

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statements showed substantial holes within the Crown's case which couldn't be fixed.

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Dear LCDC,

I have felt compelled to write to you regarding my recent representation not only by yourselves, but your solicitor, Keima Payton.

She was first class and I must say that I owe you all my badge and my wife has also asked me to say a big thank you on her behalf. I have been a member for 8 years and never needed any legal assistance but when I did and was in a bad way, you guys and Keima was there.

Thank you
K. Hershall

Dear Grant,

Thank you very much for all your help, support and words of advice during these last six months of hell with TFL & the Courts. The 50p a day I pay you is worth ten times that after my victory, I will be your biggest advocate on the ranks fellas.

All the best and be lucky.
T. Rawlings



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- Grant Davis, LCDC Chairman

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