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Issue 237 March 2016

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NEWS



LCDC MEMBER DELIVERS - IN THE BACK OF HIS CAB!

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and should be sent to the Editor at the
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The London Cab Drivers' Club Ltd.

Editorial:

TRAGEDY WAITING TO HAPPEN?

Whilst writing the latest edition of *The Badge*, news broke from LBC radio that the driver allegedly involved in the fatal accident of a one year old infant was an UBER Driver. As stated on the page opposite, at every compliance meeting the Club has attended, we have made the point that the way in which Uber and others operate is not only illegal but could be considered dangerous. Surely TfL must be held to account for their unlawful licensing of Uber?

CREDIT CARDS

On page 8 you can read a full account of both the recent tariff and credit card updates with TfL. I can confirm to you that the Club has firmly objected to the implementation of fixed units in the back of taxis and also for the driver to be charged.

DEMONSTRATIONS

On Wednesday 10th February the cab trade held one of the largest demonstrations London had seen in the last few years. Remarkably, the coverage in the mainstream media was almost zilch,

without wishing to sound like a "conspiracy theorist" you have to ask yourself what is going on in a so-called democratic country. This is an issue we know about and one has to wonder what other restraints are being exerted on the media to keep quiet. Under this present Government, democracy seems to be flying out the window.

Farewell Boris

I attended the last Cabbies' Cabinet with Boris and once again expressed my profound disappointment at the final outcome of the PH Regulations. However, I was able to convince him that it is imperative for public safety that all PH vehicles must produce Hire & Reward insurance certificates at the point of licensing the car. Boris also accepted our concerns that there could be thousands of cars just licensed as PH to avoid paying the congestion charge.

Boris was of the opinion that this was unacceptable and PH vehicles should pay the charge.

Grant Davis



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Tragically it has finally happened, something most of us have been dreading.

An innocent young child has died after being involved in an accident with a PH vehicle. Despite being told from the outset that the way Uber operated was not only illegal but worse still... highly dangerous.

To allow somebody with no working knowledge of London to be allowed to take an instant hiring through an app, not only goes against everything the 1998 Private Hire Act was put in place for, it must surely go down as one of the most disgraceful abdication of its responsibility by any regulator in the history of this Country.

Anybody who listened to the interview on LBC Radio last week with Theo Usherwood And Peter Blake can be under no illusion that the staff at TFL, who are responsible for our industry, are totally inept... But the question we must be asking is are they that useless by design or accident?

We are all aware that pressure has been put by both Cameron and Osborne over the PH Regs and also PH numbers, but the fact of the matter is the responsibility for initial licensing lies at the feet of Leon Daniels, Head of Surface Transport. Mr Daniels has been the strongest advocate of Uber since the outset and even went so far as to mislead the GLA by stating that Uber did in fact have a land line, which at the time was not true, and to the best of our knowledge, they still do not.

When TFL took over from the Public Carriage Office, it seemed to have lost the fact that the PCO was set up to protect the public, not the cab trade. Unfortunately TFL has morphed the PCO into the PRIVATE HIRE PROTECTION AGENCY. Why else would the figures set out at the bottom of the page shows sexual assaults by licensed and unlicensed PH drivers not been released?

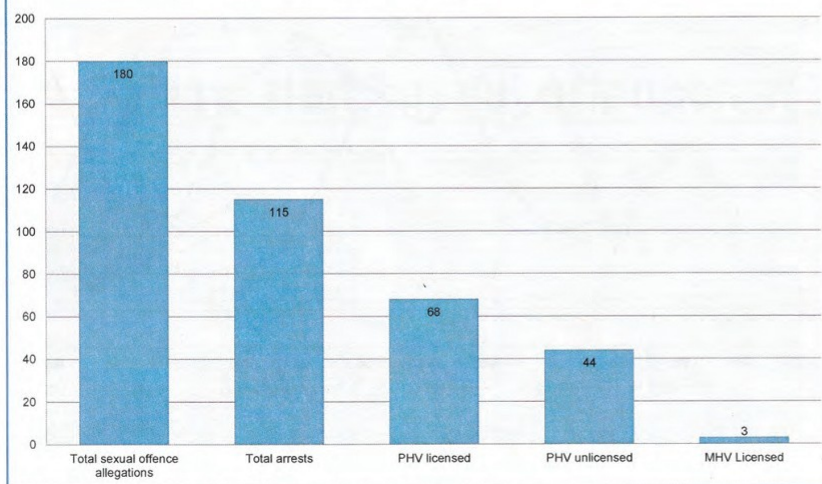
When asked what TFL was going to do with the figures, we were told nothing as they did not want to alarm the public!

Since putting these horrendous figures out on Twitter the Club has been warned that we could face expulsion from any further meetings.

In the light of recent events, the time has come for Mr Daniels to do the honourable thing and resign from his post before the results from his decisions affect any more innocent Londoners.



Sexual Offences Overview



STOP PRESS



TfL chief Mike Brown reveals they are planning to fix the licensing loophole around minicabs after LBC investigation



TfL Chief Mike Brown Live On LBC: Watch From 9am
lbc.co.uk

3/10/16, 10:53 AM

Today, on LBC, Mike Brown stated on three occasions that no embargo was enforced against the LCDC for releasing the sexual assault figures you can read (left).

However, LCDC committee members attending the meeting took minutes that clearly show that there was a threat made against us if we made these figures public. They argued that releasing these figures would scare the public.

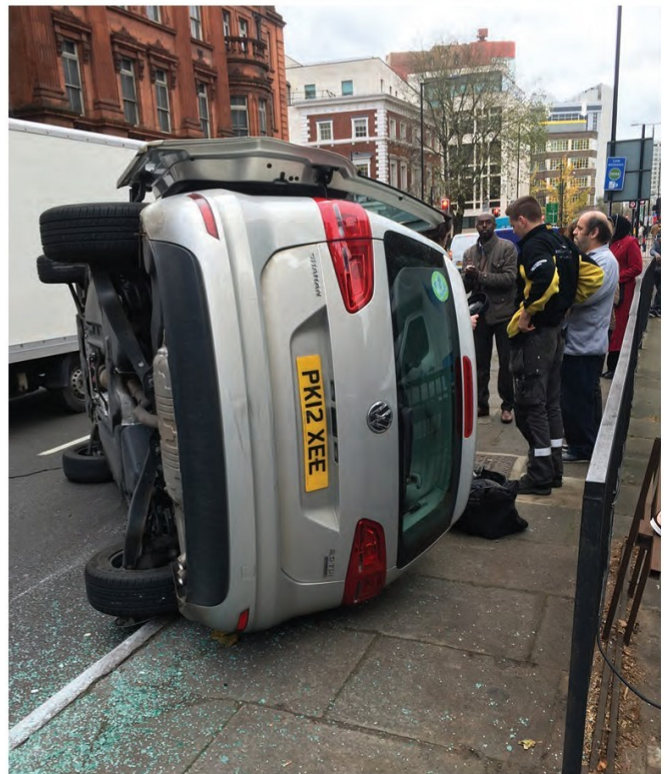
Nevertheless, the LCDC stands firm in its belief that it is in the public interest to publish these figures.

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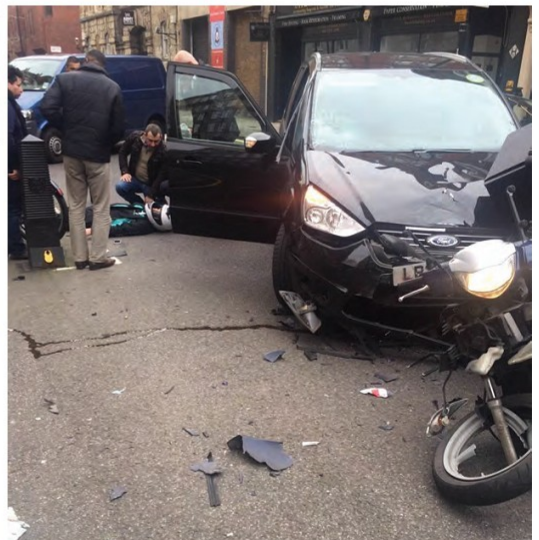
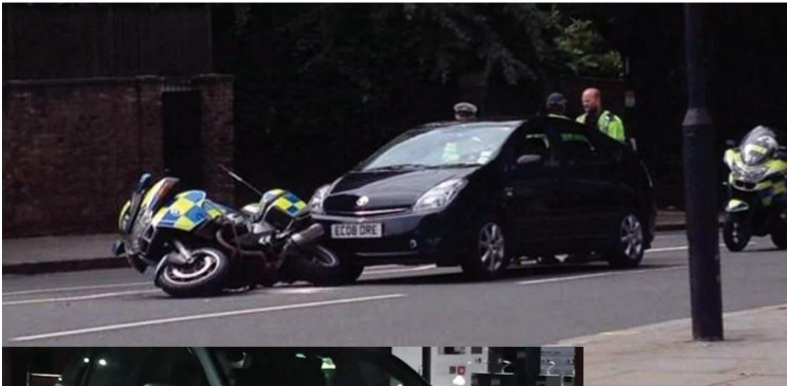
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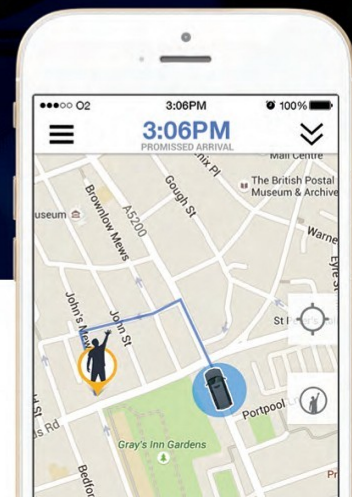
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TfL director savaged on LBC

On 3rd of March LBC broadcast an investigation on how simple it is to become an illegal mini-cab driver. This report was in two parts on the Nick Ferrari Show.

LBC reporter Theo Usherwood demonstrated with considerable ease that a person could operate as an illegal PH driver whilst having an official licensed vehicle from TfL.

Mr Usherwood went to a TfL/NSL test centre in Heston with someone else's car, logbook, MOT and no Hire and Reward insurance. Unbelievably, he was then able to walk out with his vehicle licensed with an up to date roundel.

The investigation proved that vehicles are licensed by TfL without basic sufficient structures in place to protect the travelling public from serious danger. Have TfL given permission for NSL to license vehicles in this way? Why are TfL and NSL allowing PH vehicles licensed without H&R insurance? Due to the high amounts of PH licences issued every week, do NSL have sufficient staff numbers to make the necessary checks of documents before licensing? We need TfL to address these concerns ASAP.

The second part of the report was equally alarming as the first as Mr Usherwood parked up his licensed vehicle on a side of a road in Bank. Within an hour, members of the public approached him, on four separate occasions for a lift. They saw the driver sitting in the vehicle with the roundel on the windscreen, as some sort of "For Hire" light, able to be hired without a booking. Due to TfL blurring the lines

between Taxi and PH and now UBER, members of the public believe that they can jump into a mini cab just like a Taxi. They naively see the roundel as a form of security and legitimacy, believing the driver is a fully registered licensed PH driver and fully insured to transport the public.

Towards the end of the investigation, Nick Ferrari then interviewed Peter Blake, Director of Surface Operations. This was the first time I have heard Mr Blake speak to the media in an official capacity. Unfortunately, for him it was a memorable debut for all the wrong reasons, as Nick Ferrari tore him to shreds. Mr Ferrari who speaks on a range of subjects on his show each morning is no



Peter Blake, Director of Surface Operations, TfL

expert on the Taxi trade or legislation, but he was able to highlight that the current licensing system is not fit for purpose and is a danger to the public.

From the beginning of the interview, Mr Blake was defensive; it seemed he tried to accuse the reporter of carrying out an illegal activity, parked up in the vehicle. He was unable to accept

responsibility for the woeful licensing system that he is head of, and highly remunerated for.

He appeared to find Mr Ferrari's style of questioning difficult and tried to divert the conversation away on several occasions. He bought up the Safer Travel at Night programme, which was rather ironic as at the last Compliance meeting TfL did not want the latest high number of sexual assaults by PH drivers released in the public domain.

Ferrari made the valid point that the licensing system is open to abuse not only from unlicensed drivers but also to anyone who wants to avoid paying the congestion charge. Mr Blake reverted to TfL spin jargon that the cab

trade as become accustomed to hearing and said that they have compliance teams on the streets to deal with this. It always disturbs me when TfL management mention their compliance teams, giving the impression to the public that they are some sort of zero tolerance, tough task force who arrest high numbers of dangerous touts when nothing could be further from the truth.



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Throughout the entire interview, Mr Blake in my opinion, was incomplete denial and would not admit to serious flaws in their licensing system.

To summarise this was an excellent piece of investigative journalism and credit to LBC for showing a sense of public duty by broadcasting it. . None of the issues brought to light would have come as a surprise to the majority of Taxi Drivers, who have been raising these points for years, but would have concerned the public listening.

TfL have in the past, had the audacity to self-proclaim their licensing system as the "Gold Standard" worldwide, a statement that seems extremely far of the mark to those that were listening. Licensing just seems to be a way to print money with no moral implications on public safety, the ability for both Taxi and PH drivers to earn a reasonable living without having to work excessive and exhaustive long hours. There is no regard to the impact on mass congestion, extremely

high emission levels, endless serious road traffic accidents and fatalities in their quest to fill the TfL coffers. They have neglected their civic duty by not having a sensible and secure licensing structure in place and proper meaningful compliance for 100k PH and 25k taxi drivers.

LTPH management NEVER seem to me to admit responsibility for their failures. LTPH department needs a root and branch overhaul with a change of culture and leadership, which hopefully a new Mayor will bring in. It appears that they are accountable to no one least of all the elected The London Assembly, who's 19 recommendations for change has been largely ignored or played lip service.

The recent PH regulations mainly suit a certain app company rather than the Taxi and legitimate PH industry. The disgraceful way that TfL have dealt with the Credit Card Consultation, leaves me convinced regrettably, we do not have a secure future with the current leadership of LTPH.

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FACT AND FICTION ON TARIFF AND CREDIT CARDS

by Micky Walker

THERE HAVE been a lot of rumours around lately, regarding the tariff and the credit card mandate. So, we have decided to put the record straight.

TARIFF

In addition to the normal tariff discussions with TFL, there were a series of meetings last summer to discuss various aspects of the trade. TFL invited all the main driver groups, taxi apps and radio

meter, in the forthcoming consultation. Most of the driver groups, including the LCDC, objected to this. It was also pointed out to TFL that any loss resulting from this would have to increase the tariff elsewhere to compensate, in order to maintain the integrity of the Cost Index used to calculate tariff changes. Tariffs 2 and 3 also came under discussion. One driver group suggested that T3 should only kick-in between 11.00pm or

claiming that TFL had the figures wrong on vehicle costs. After checking, they doubled the tariff increase to 1.6%. Then last month, completely out of the blue, a TFL board paper was published, stating that the enhanced meter rate was changing in April from a point on the meter to a distance of six miles. It was also announced that T3 would end an hour earlier at 5.00am. This cranked up the rumour mill with all and sundry claiming that trade leaders had sold the trade down the river in agreeing to these changes. Let's be clear here. Not only did the trade not agree to this, it was a complete surprise to all the trade's negotiating team. The result of these changes would actually mean we get a tariff reduction in April, rather than a 1.6% increase and the driver groups immediately began lodging protests. In short, we were stitched up. However, since then, the TFL people involved in the tariff have claimed that the board jumped the gun and these changes were not going through this April. We have lodged our objections and now we must all wait until April to see who's telling the truth at TFL.

THE CARD MANDATE This has generated another rumour mill.

All those that can't wait to have a go at one driver group or another have had yet another excuse to claim that trade leaders are selling the trade down the river. For what gain, they fail to explain but hey, why let truth and logic get in the way of a chance to criticise those that work for the trade?

If you believe the rumours and lies, the trade leaders have agreed to compulsory card acceptance, equipment in the passenger compartment and all charges to be levied on the driver rather than the card user in exchange for a paltry 20p on the hiring charge, paid by all customers.

If you are happy to believe the rumours and lies, fine. If you want the truth, read on. Knowing the card mandate was in the offing, the membership was asked at the last LCDC AGM whether or not they supported card acceptance in every taxi. They voted almost unanimously in favour of this. Thus, the leadership had no choice but to support the mandate, not that they disagreed with the decision anyway. What all but one of the driver groups, including the LCDC, objected to was the way the mandate has been implemented. We don't disagree that a 10% surcharge for paying by card is excessive but maintain that there should be a surcharge. Originally, TFL suggested that there would be a maximum charge of 3%, charged by the card service provider and paid by the driver. In return, there would be 20p added to the hiring charge on every job. That would have been fair to drivers, if not to cash-paying customers. However, when questioned, TFL admitted that this 3% limit was only on transaction charges and did not include equipment rental, which would

be left to the provider. In other words, we could only charge the customers 3% but the card providers could charge us as much as they could get away with. We have never agreed to this or supported it. Then, TFL even withdrew the 3% maximum on the transaction charges and are insisting on fixed terminals in the passenger compartment. This is a double whammy that we have argued against consistently. By insisting on these terminals, many of the

cheaper card providers such as apps like iZettle are ineligible, leaving us to the mercy of the 10% - ers like Verifone.

The LTDA is the only trade org that has accepted the fixed terminals.

Once again, TFL appear to have stitched the trade up. While we all agreed to card acceptance in all taxis, we never agreed to fixed terminals and we certainly haven't agreed to card providers being able to charge us whatever they like while we can only get 20p per fare back in return, plus whatever they give us in future tariff increases. For the record, the club supports card acceptance, with drivers having freedom of choice as to what suppliers and methods are adopted so long as they are legal and a surcharge on customers for card usage. We object to everything TFL have put forward, except mandatory card acceptance itself.



circuits to take part.

As everybody knows, or should know, at a certain point on the meter, depending on the time of day, the day and evening/weekend rate increases considerably and reduces slightly on the night rate. It was put forward that this should change from a specific point on the meter to a distance travelled of twelve miles. This was immediately challenged and resisted by most of the driver groups, including the LCDC.

Nevertheless, TFL decided to investigate the possible effects on the tariff but when the results were produced, it was unanimously shelved due to the very high losses that drivers would incur. Then, it was decided by TFL to include a change to six miles distance instead of a fixed price on the

midnight until 4.00 or 5.00am, instead of 10.00pm to 6.00am. The rest of the driver groups objected to this. After some haggling, the driver groups reluctantly agreed to inclusion in the consultation an ending of T3 an hour earlier, at 5.00am. This agreement was reached largely because one driver group claimed that their phones had been ringing off the hook with early-morning members pleading to end T3 earlier. However, agreeing to inclusion in the consultation does not necessarily mean agreeing to such changes. It should also be remembered that TFL do not negotiate with us but merely hold discussions with us and listen to our views and concerns. Ultimately, a tariff increase of 0.8% was proposed. The driver groups objected to this,



Us v Them: an independent test

by Ross Aller

I hate the very mention of their name so I apologise in advance for the amount of times you will read "Uber" in the next few minutes but rest assured this is not really the sort of publicity they will thank me for!

We all know the real reason people use Uber, it's because they are CHEAP. Not because of their "disruptive technology", as we have our own app technology, not because "it's easier", because our apps are just as easy, and not because "I don't carry cash", because our apps accept card payments and account work. Price is the one and only thing Uber can beat us on, but only on one of their four options. We all know the reasons why. Tax dodging, not paying drivers minimum wage, drivers having cheaper insufficient insurance and not having to pay approximately £40,000 for a purpose built fully wheelchair accessible vehicle all bring costs, and therefore fares, down.

But just how cheap are they, and what is the real price you pay for this cheapness? Last month I went head to head with three of Uber's "finest" to compare of course price but also routes and time taken, here's how it all came about... Whilst flicking through twitter I saw someone had posted a link to an app called OpenStreetCab app, a project that is a collaboration between Cambridge and Lancaster Universities, which compared the price of a London Taxi and an UberX car. Naturally curious as to the accuracy of these comparisons I road tested it against jobs I was getting and found that Taxi fares were always ending up £4-£6 more expensive than the real fare for the majority of "normal" fares of between £10-£20. I sent the app some feedback and received a very positive and encouraging email from Tassos Noulas, a computer engineer and



University Lecturer who is one of the people responsible for developing the app. He told me he would adapt the fare calculator and could I retest, which I done, with better results. I thought that would be the end of it but after a few emails he asked if I would be interested in having some real time "races" between a Taxi (me) and some Uber cars, I jumped at the chance as any self respecting cabbie would. We arranged to meet at Kings Cross station, Tassos asked me to time my journeys and take a GPS tracker to compare routes and agreed that King William St is where we would head for. I set off, Tassos ordered one of the "available" Uber cars parked in a two minute waiting bay outside St Pancras station! Quite what the difference between an "available" car on one side of a road and a "ranking" taxi "plying for hire" on the other side of the road is unclear, I am still waiting for an answer to this from @TFLTPH! We then went from Borough High St to Canada House, Cockspur St and finally from Cockspur St to Wilson St. I am sure you can all work out in your heads how much these journeys would come to on the meter at rate 1. Unfortunately, but totally understandably Tassos's university has a policy regarding the publication of statistics and

data from tests so we will have to wait to release the actual results of mine and many other tests Tassos and his colleagues have done. These results are expected to be out in May. In light of the above mentioned restrictions and for illustrative purposes I was going to use the OpenStreetCab app and uberfarefinder.com to show estimated fares for the journeys we undertook but as happens all too often, the Taxi fares ended up being more expensive and the UberX fares cheaper than in reality. One showed a £17 difference overall and the other showed an £18.50 difference overall when in reality the difference was nearer half these estimates! Overall I was quicker getting to the destinations but again due to the restrictions on data publication that's all I can say.

I was also going to use uberfarefinder.com to show the estimated fares for the same journeys for UberXL, UberExec and UberLux but you might as well blindly throw a dart at a dart board to get a number! One day the UberLux estimates totalled £85-£111 (so approximately £98!), the next day they totalled £70-£98 (so approximately £84!), they will probably be different again tomorrow. One thing that was clear though time after time was the fact that only UberX worked out cheaper, and only just! You see that's the thing

about a fare "estimate", its hyperthetical, not reality. I can estimate that my Taxi fare from A-B will only be £2.60, but in reality, we all know it will not be. The same applies to Uber's fare "estimates", the actual fare will nearly always will be more expensive due to traffic, road closures or going round and round in circles because the driver has never heard of The Shard as has been tweeted by one unlucky victim! If they do not use a "time and distance" meter to calculate fares then why can they not give a fixed fare price as every other law abiding Private Hire firm does? In my opinion these fictional and actual price differences between us and them needs to be highlighted a lot more as it is their only marketing tool they have to beat us and is what always seems to be focused on in the media. Listen, I am not against competition, competition keeps us on our toes and hopefully standards high, and in any industry ultimately benefits the customer, but that competition has to play by the rules. Customers have every right to choose who they use to get them from A-B. I know that the three journeys we tested are far from making this a scientifically conclusive experiment, but it's a start, and Tassos has done many more tests and is currently analysing his data, even down to the number of turns made by each driver en route(!) so I will hopefully be able to share his findings with you when he and his team release them. In conclusion though, if your destination is an airport, train station or important meeting and traffic is bad as it usually is in central London, then best to choose a Taxi because as they say, time is money. If however time is no issue and saving an average of approximately £3 per journey is your priority, then go for UberX, just hope that your driver has valid hire and reward

insurance and is not coming to the end of an 18 hour shift. What price your safety?

A couple of things to point out in the interest of fairness is that the time differences recorded were not taking into account the time Tassos had to wait for his cars to arrive, they were the amount of time taken for each driver to complete the journey. He waited 12 minutes to be picked up from Cockspur St which he explained maybe why the UberX car managed to complete one journey quicker than me as traffic conditions may have changed slightly in that time. I bloody well hope that was the case, as with the second journey. If I had of started it 5 minutes later I would not of got stuck behind a reverse parking articulated lorry and been even quicker! If and when we do some more tests departure times will be as close as possible. Equally, this could explain why I was quicker on the first and third journeys... although I don't recall Tassos mentioning getting stuck in anything other than traffic. Also, the fares paid by Tassos were the cheapest UberX fares (UberXL, UberExec and UberLux are as mentioned above, considerably more expensive!) and without any surge price whilst the Taxi fares were Rate 1. We will hopefully be doing some more "races" in the very near future where waiting times and surge prices will be included, so watch this space for Us v Them, Part II.



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City of Westminster

WESTMINSTER RANKS UPDATE

The LCDC and the cab ranks Committee have been meeting Westminster Council monthly since about September to discuss the West End Project.

The project is to look at changes within the West End and hopefully talk about any changes that affect the taxi trade. At the moment there are lots of changes being planned within the West End - one of these being Crossrail. These stations are being touted as major transport hubs, but yet again the taxi ranks are the last thing to be talked about. It now looks like the rank for the Bond Street station that exits in Hanover Square will have a taxi rank on the corner of Brook Street with a feeder; this is what we proposed at a site meeting in January.

The problems start when we get down to Tottenham Court Road station, where we have no viable road space to site a rank near the station, as buses yet again have got everything they want. Camden Council wanted to get rid of the rank at the Dominion Theatre and reposition it across the road facing north. What a complete waste of time, a rank facing north with no

sight line to the station. We have asked for the rank to be retained outside the Dominion, so at least we will have a rank in sight of the station. We have asked to see a more detailed drawing of station and I'll keep you updated with any rank news near the station.

A good piece of news to come out of the meeting, but I'm not sure that Camden Council was too happy with it, was that WCC will be enforcing Oxford Street by camera from 7am to 7pm six days a week. The LCDC and the ranks committee have been asking for this to be enforced from the very first meeting. I don't think Camden Council had planned for the closure when they looked at the traffic modelling around the closure of Tottenham Court Road; I left the meeting with the representative from Camden deep in conversation with WCC and looking slightly worried. There should be about eight new ranks coming in Westminster by April/ May. We also have another twenty ranks that TPH have agreed to fund and maybe more up until 2017/2018. We also saw the plans for the cycle routes going through W1 called the grid. There were some issues with them; one was that they are planning to make Brook

Street and Davis Street two way. They had taken the rank away at Claridge's and not repositioned it to the right of the door; hopefully we have rectified that and maybe added a space that we have taken away from the feeder in Davis Street. The other two spaces from the feeder will be recited at C London on Davis Street. These planned cycle routes are going to see some of our rat runs narrowed down for segregated cycle lanes and will cause more congestion in the West End if it wasn't bad enough already. I know I might get some stick for saying this but WCC are probably the only Borough willing to listen to the trade at the moment and give us ranks. But they do say be careful of people bearing gifts, I think this all could be to sweeten the blow of Oxford Street being pedestrianised going west from Oxford Circus. But then again that might be me being way off the mark.



NEW RANKS IN CITY OF LONDON

The City of London have agreed to give us two new

ranks in the city in the next couple of months.

The first one should be a two cab rank for Revolution on Leadenhall Street. This one has taken the cabs ranks committee over two years of campaigning alongside TPH to get this in. The COL had concerns over the buses not being able to get to the bus stop but we have always argued that the touts that operate there nightly seem to be able to get away with it, so why not give us the rank? This has also been helped by buses agreeing to move the stop forward. The other rank will be going in at Number one new change but on the new change side, this will operate to start with from 7am to 7pm with a proviso to make it 24hr if it works well. The COL are starting to listen to us and looking to give us ranks in the square mile.

RITZ YELLOW BOX JUNCTION

We're still seeing drivers getting issued

with PCNs for getting caught in the box junction on Piccadilly and Berkeley Street.

Do not enter unless you've a clear exit as the camera operator is having a field day with us and issuing fines. I'm sure they are targeting taxis as buses have not been issued with one ticket in the last year and we still seem to catch the operators eye even when three vehicles are in the box.

Times are hard at the moment, so please don't get caught at this moneybox junction. The LCDC has been asking for a camera sign to be put up and yes they did listen but have stuck it by another sign, which makes it harder to see. Maybe they don't want to see a decline in their revenue scheme which is making a fortune for them and is their only box junction that is camera operated.

Oops should I have said that...?



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GOES EAST

SOUTH LONDON'S FAVOURITE GARAGE EXPANDS TO EASTERN PASTURES

Ask any taxi driver to recommend a top quality garage "sarf" of the water and I bet the name Long Lane is the one they mention. Tony and his brother Simon have built up the Long Lane Cab Centre on a solid reputation for being a taxi garage that is very much driver oriented on every aspect of their business, whether that is rentals, mechanical, or their acclaimed body shop which delivers an absolutely outstanding finish.

Also, by working with Cab;aid Long Lane delivers a Non-Fault accident service which has been highly recommended by nearly all taxi drivers that have used it. **"It was simple from start to finish, Tony was really helpful and I lost no down time at all"** Peter McAllister –Romford. **"No fuss, No hassle, it really is that easy"** David Kane - Bromley Now, after months of hard work and planning, Tony and Simon are very happy to announce to the trade their new premises East of Town, in Kingsbridge Road, Barking. "it seemed the most logical thing to do" said Tony Forsythe..." we



Tony is waiting for your call at his brand new offices

have expanded in every department and with more and more drivers coming to us from Essex and North London, we have created a fantastic new office development which caters for our existing and new rental drivers and also a state of the art brand new body shop that can accommodate driver's needs: We have newly decorated offices where drivers can come in after a Non-Fault accident, fill out all their cab;aid paperwork with a cup of tea in clean and modern environment, and then just drive out with our courtesy vehicle... it really could not be more simple" Tony was keen to

emphasize that all their hard work is focused on delivering the very best they can for the driver and working alongside cab;aid, they firmly believe that any driver coming to Long lane in barking will receive the very best of service possible. Tony went on to say " any drivers who live in East London or Essex and are looking to rent a cab, then give us a call, you can pop in for a cup of tea and a chat on your way into work" LONG LANE CAB CENTRE, ABBEY WHARF INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, KINGSBRIDGE ROAD, BARKING, IG11 0BP 0208 594 0306



Tony in front of the two state-of-the-art bodywork booths



New rental fleet operating from the new offices in Barking.

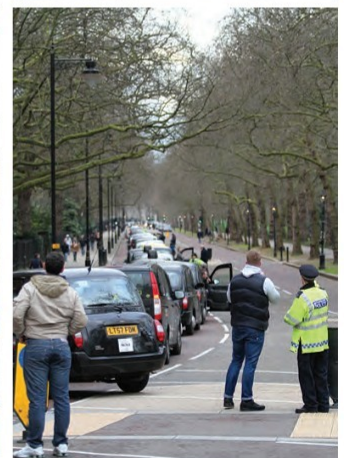


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TAKING THE FIGHT TO NO. 10

- TAXI TRADE DEMO ON FEBRUARY 10TH
- POLICE ESTIMATE 10,000 TAXIS TOOK PART
- MAYORAL CANDIDATE GEORGE GALLOWAY SUPPORTS TRADE

www.lcdc.cab

Father thanks LCDC member after baby arrives on back seat!

A father has thanked a black cab driver for "making a tricky situation easier" after his wife gave birth in the back of a taxi in south London.

Taxi driver Robert Fenlon, 44, rushed Basak Odemis and husband Ozgur to hospital on Wednesday evening after picking them up in Clapham once her contractions started. They made it to St Thomas' Hospital just in the nick of time, but medics were still forced to climb into the cab to deliver the boy, after he started to appear during the journey.

Management consultant Mr Odemis said the birth of his son Atlas, the couple's third child, was "not what we planned" but had gone well despite the unusual location.

He said Mr Fenlon refused to take any money - and even returned to the hospital on Thursday to take the family home.

He said: "We made a mess of his car and probably cost him money because he could not take anyone after this. I wanted to compensate him but he refused and he never charged us for either trip.

"I'm really grateful for his support, he made a very tricky situation easier for us to manage.

"He got us there in time and went into the hospital and brought people out, and was smiling all the



way through."

Mr Fenlon said he picked the couple up at about 11.30pm on Wednesday and they "asked me to get them to hospital as quickly as I could".

He told the Standard: "Before I knew it she was

screaming and her water had broken. They asked me to go a little bit quicker so I put my foot down.

"They were on the phone to the doctor and the head was poking out."

Mr Fenlon, who lives in

Bermondsey, rushed into the hospital to alert medical staff after pulling up outside A&E.

He said about three people got into the cab to help deliver the boy. "It took seconds, it just

flew straight out. It was a lovely little baby boy, a healthy boy," he said.

"I've had some crazy people and heard some crazy stories driving a cab, but never anything like this."

Mr Fenlon added that he was proud of "getting them all to the hospital safely and just in time". "It was just something I will never forget," he said.

Top: Newborn joy: Ozgur Odemis and family with his baby son, and LCDC member Robert Fenlon

Left: A medic looks in the back of the black cab

Article courtesy of the Evening Standard

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16 Issue 237 - March 2016**AS AN L.C.D.C MEMBER YOU WILL RECEIVE:**

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■ **HEATHROW AIRPORT REPRESENTATION**

With our reps at the airport working hard on the trade's behalf for a fairer, and more safer future at Heathrow.

■ **RANKS AND HIGHWAYS**

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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I agree to abide by the rules of the Club. I also agree that the above information will be kept by the LCDC in a computer system under the terms of the Data Protection Act.

I understand that I will not be eligible for legal representation for matters arising prior to the date of this application. Thereby declare that I have no outstanding PCO or police matters pending.

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PRESS RELEASE

TfL Board asked to approve plans to modernise London's private hire industry

- **First significant amendments to private hire regulations since 1998 follow unprecedented increase in private hire driver and vehicle numbers**
- **Private hire vehicles will need to have 'hire and reward' insurance in place for duration of licence – further improving passenger safety**



New regulations that will modernise and improve the private hire industry will be considered by the Transport for London (TfL) Board next week. The measures, which follow an extensive consultation process that attracted over 20,000 responses, will make travelling by private hire safer and more convenient for customers.

The Board will be asked to agree the following changes:

- Even more robust 'hire and reward' insurance requirements – that will mean a policy has to be in place for the duration of the vehicle licence, including when the vehicle is presented for inspection to TfL
- A formal English language requirement for all drivers
- A fare estimate for customers in advance of their journey
- The provision of driver and vehicle details to customers, including a photo of the driver, before the start of each journey
- Private hire operators will be required to ensure that customers can speak to someone in the event of a problem with their journey
- Requiring operators to keep improved records and provide driver and vehicle information to TfL to make enforcement even easier and more effective

These changes, which represent the first significant amendments to the private hire regulations since they were introduced in 1998, follow an unprecedented increase in private hire driver and vehicle numbers. The number of private hire drivers has increased from 59,000 in April 2010 to around 100,000 today, contributing to issues such as congestion, pollution and illegal parking.

The Mayor believes that more action must be taken to address the impacts of these increasing numbers, particularly on congestion and air quality. The Government has been reluctant to introduce legislation to allow TfL to restrict the number of drivers and vehicles on the roads in London. In response, the Mayor has instructed TfL to investigate the potential effects of removing the Congestion Charge exemption currently given to private hire drivers fulfilling a booking, in order to see whether this may make a difference in those areas of concern.

The Mayor has also secured a commitment to progress separate legislation to enable TfL to regulate pedicabs, to crack down on unsafe pedicabs and tackle fare abuses prevalent among some pedicab drivers, whilst tackling the congestion they cause in central London, particularly in the evenings.

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson MP, said: "The private hire industry in our city is flourishing and attracting unprecedented numbers of drivers and passengers. These regulations are designed to manage the continued development of the industry. If properly regulated and supported the private hire industry will continue to thrive in London."

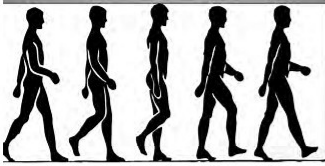
TfL estimates that the number of private hire vehicles operating within the central London Congestion Charge zone has increased by over 50 per cent in the last two years. This means that 1 in 10 vehicles entering the zone is now a private hire vehicle.

Garrett Emmerson, TfL's Chief Operating Officer for Surface Transport, said: "During our consultation process, Londoners have made clear the improvements they want to see in the private hire industry. The package of changes being taken to the Board includes more robust insurance requirements when vehicles are licensed, a formal English language requirement for drivers, fares quotes for customers before their journeys, an easier process for customers to complain if they need to and more information given to customers about the car they are about to get into. This will help ensure a modern, flourishing and even safer private hire industry, and will provide choice for customers alongside London's iconic and world-class taxi service."

TfL will also alter the structure of licence fees paid by operators of different sizes to better reflect the costs of compliance and enforcement activity. This will provide a financial incentive for operators to maximise the efficiency of their operations and minimise the number of vehicles they use across London as a whole.

The regulations will remain under review to ensure that they keep pace with the changing industry and support a modern and thriving trade, given the welcome technological innovations that have increased choice for customers in recent years.

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Walker on the March....

PRIVATE HIRE

PH numbers are a runaway train while the taxi trade is being left by the authorities to wither on the vine.

When temporary PH driver licences were introduced in 2001, there were 43,000 licences issued. By the time full licensing came about in 2003, the number had dropped by almost 25% to 33,000 licensed PH drivers.

Gradually, like many places in the world, driving a PHV in London has become a first, temporary job for recently-arrived immigrants. This was at least partially responsible for an explosion of licence applications. By 2010, PH driver numbers had almost doubled since 2003, with 60,000 licences issued. More than 80% of licences were established or recent immigrants into the country and almost two thirds did not renew their licences. Nevertheless, their numbers kept growing and by the end of 2014, the number of drivers had grown a further 18% to 71,000 PH drivers.

UBER

Since then, we have seen the "uber effect". This operator has no concern for the costs of running a PHV or the returns from it, unlike traditional PH operators, who have to ensure their drivers make enough to cover expenses and have a reasonable amount of income.

Uber help the driver arrange contract hire on a car, distinct from their own operation and the contract hire ties the driver to the car for two to three years and has to be paid for whether or not the driver continues to use the vehicle as a PHV. Meanwhile, Uber receive their cut of the fare no matter which driver does the job and regardless of whether the driver can make a living on the level of fares. Uber are concerned only with how quickly they can supply a customer with a car and have no concern for a balance of supply and demand. They actively encourage an over-supply of cars.

Hence, their ambition to operate a fleet of 40,000 drivers. To this end, they are willing to pay drivers £350 to recommend other drivers and a driver struggling to make ends meet will often be willing to ditch ethics and truth in order to recruit another sucker and pocket the dosh. This is exploitation of drivers of the worst kind. In terms of driver numbers, this has created exponential growth. In just the last year, PH driver numbers have grown another 30%, bringing their number up to 97,000 with another 1000 applications in the pipe every week since.

This is unsustainable. The number of PH operators hasn't grown and London's whole population has only grown by 12%

since PH driver licensing began. Yet, PH driver numbers have grown by 300% in just 12 years.

TFL

Meanwhile, the regulators in their ivory towers and with their own jobs protected from market forces, have decided in their wisdom (some would say lunacy) that the best way to stem this growth is to maintain the current level of PH licence fees rather than increase them.

Enforcement is derisory and will only get worse as PH numbers increase and enforcement is planned to be directed from touting to making sure we all comply with new rules on credit card acceptance. Of course, when I say "all" it is only taxi drivers that will be forced to accept credit cards and not PH drivers; it is only taxis that will have to have a machine bolted in the passenger compartment and not PHVs.

Ain't it funny? When a proposal is likely to adversely affect the PH trade, TFL claim they have to be even-handed and apply it to both trades. When some doo-doo is proposed to land on the taxi trade, there's no need for it to be applied equally to the PH trade.



TAXI DRIVERS

Meanwhile, taxi driver numbers are stagnating. Our numbers are pretty much what they were when PH driver licensing began, although our number is beginning to shrink in the last few years. No surprise really.

There are 25,026 taxi drivers.

Drivers aged over 65, outnumber those drivers under 40 years old by 62%.

Drivers over 50 years of age, outnumber those below 50 years of age by 44%.

More than a quarter of taxi drivers are over 60 years of age.

Well over half of all taxi drivers are over 50 years of age.

These figures suggest the London taxi

trade is a dead man walking. If this were 50 years ago, 15% of current drivers would already have died, according to average life-span.

Within the near future, if something doesn't change, the London taxi will become insignificant. It will shrink quite quickly due to retirees, while the PH trade continues to grow unabated.

This should come as no surprise as currently a PH licence can be obtained as soon as a driver is able to start work. He/she doesn't need to be able to speak English or own a UK driving licence. Uber will fill out and pay for the PH driver application.

The driver can then go straight to work as a "taxi driver". He can accept e-hail and uses a metered fare. The only difference between a PH App driver and a taxi driver is that the operator sets the tariff rather than the regulator and takes a cut of the fare.

Meanwhile, for those that choose to become proper taxi drivers, they face fees of nearly £500 to do the KOL. The KOL itself takes them over four years, on average to complete before they are allowed to go out and work pretty much the same as a PH App driver.

Frankly, it isn't worth doing the KOL any

advanced stage of the KOL. In any case, the highest proportion of KOL candidates are in the 41-50 year old category.

As things stand, the gap in costs between applying to become a taxi and PH driver is so vast and the difference in which a taxi driver and an apped PH driver works so small, that the KOL is in danger of falling away.

Meanwhile, the current fleet of old geezer taxi drivers is going to fall away as they retire or die. Jeez, 4049 of us (16%) are already collecting their old age pension. If something isn't done, and quickly, the taxi trade will die of old age and natural wastage.

WHY'S IT HAPPENING?

Looking at the performance of Boris and TFL, you may think they are trying to engineer our death and with good reason.

If you've ever bothered to read the bump that led to Boris' daft plan to make all new taxis zero-emission capable and put a ten year limit on the rest, you will find evidence of this. The author suggests that such measures will shrink the taxi trade but not to worry because a growing PH trade will plug the gap.

Meanwhile Boris and government cry "free market". What free market? They look at Uber driving down fares by operating a pseudo taxi service under the guise of a PH service and think this is good for the consumer. It isn't. Competition usually results in efforts to cut costs through increased efficiency. This in turn, leads to lower consumer prices. When this happens, the resulting lower prices are good for both the consumer and society in general.

However, this does not apply to Uber.

Uber is driving down fares not by reducing costs but by exploiting its drivers. By doing so they are not reducing costs but shifting them. They crow about what their best drivers earn but even those elite drivers end up 30% short of the London Living Wage.

Presumably then, most of their drivers will be on some sort of in-work benefit.

Therefore, Uber are only reducing prices to the consumer by shifting costs onto society. In short, society is paying part of the fares for Uber customers and that is neither fair or efficient.

Yet, everybody is falling for it. From the drivers signing up, to the Uber customer that doesn't realise the driver is working for slave wages, to the regulator and government that cannot recognise that Uber isn't a disruptive force but rather a destructive force.

By the time the regulator wakes up, they may no longer have a viable taxi or proper PH service left.

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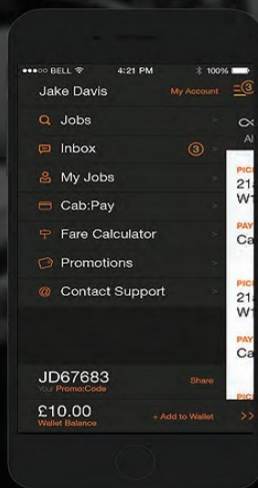


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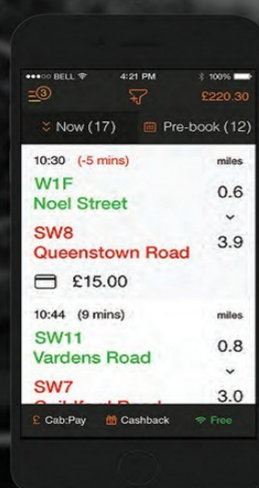
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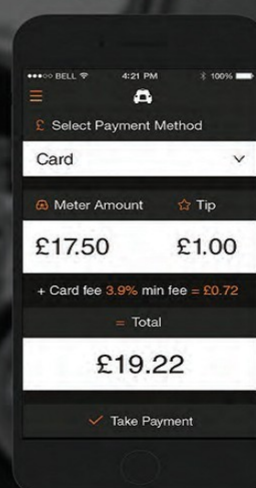
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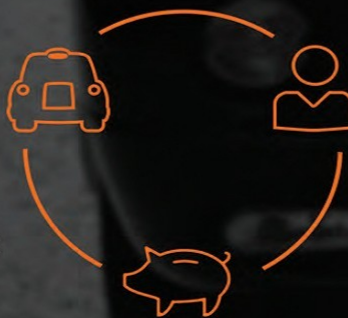
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Joshua world title bid

Anthony Joshua will make his first attempt to win a world title when he fights Charles Martin in April with the IBF heavyweight crown on the line.

The 26-year-old Londoner will take what is viewed as a huge step when he meets the American on 9 April at the O2 Arena.

Joshua, the London 2012 gold medallist, has fought 15 times as a professional and won all of them in devastating fashion. Over those 15 bouts he has accrued only 32 rounds of experience, seven of which came in his last outing against his domestic rival Dillian Whyte. This is a huge step up for Joshua who can join Tyson Fury as a British heavyweight world champion if he wins. Fury vacated the IBF belt at the end of last year, allowing the 29-year-old Martin to beat

Vyacheslav Glazkov in New York in January and claim it. "Fighting for the heavyweight world title has been a dream of mine since I turned professional," said Joshua. "I feel privileged to have the opportunity to turn that dream into reality. Not only that, having the chance to fight for it in my home town is unbelievably exciting. "Charles Martin is a great fighter and a hungry competitor so I am going to have to produce the performance of my career to claim that belt." The promoter Eddie Hearn said: "Life is all about taking opportunities and when the chance to become heavyweight champion of the world presented itself, there was no holding Anthony back." Martin has won 23 of his 24 professional fights, drawing the other.



Khan proves his courage

Fans have doubted Amir Khan's credentials for a decade, but his courage is forever beyond dispute after choosing to fight Canelo Alvarez

As Khan points out, the 35th bout of his nine-year professional career will be the first time he goes in as underdog – and Brook will always be there; Álvarez will not. It is a reasonable strategy, although Khan's contention that he will make more against "Canelo" than against Brook was later contradicted by his father, Shah, who admitted they are taking a pay cut. Also, Oscar De La Hoya, negotiating on Álvarez's side, has insisted on a rematch clause, because they also have their sights on a much bigger contest, against the unbeaten knockout king, Gennady Golovkin. So, if Khan is to pull off the most unlikely coup in boxing this year, he will have to beat Álvarez twice. It is the longest of long shots, but the fighter was unfazed when he and the champion began a promotional tour in London on Monday.

"It's a massive fight," Khan said, "the first time Canelo has come to London, and with the WBC chairman, Mauricio Sulaiman, too. It's a bigger fight financially [than Brook]. It's not only a big fight in England, it's a big fight worldwide, and that's one of the reasons I took it, because it's global. It will be massive for my profile in America, as well as England. No one ever expected this, and the shock just makes the fight bigger. "I'm very big at my weight



[147lb], he's not a big middleweight [160lb], but nobody will know when I get into the ring with him how I will do. I've seen his fights and guys who move well give him big problems. If I was a flat footed fighter and just standing there, that would be the worst style for me [to employ]. Because I'm a mover, I think it's one of the best fights out there for me." De La Hoya, who has worked with Khan many times, has him back in the fold after the Bolton boxer flirted with the Al Haymon promotional machine, only to be let down by Floyd Mayweather, and then get the cold shoulder from Manny Pacquiao. "When I presented this fight to Amir Khan, I did not once think he would decline, because of who he is," the Golden Boy said. "He is willing

to take on everybody. He deserves the big fights. There is a reason Mayweather and Pacquiao didn't want to fight him. Whether he's come out on top or on the losing end, he's been in great fights. For years a preordained superstar, Canelo now readies for life as the face of boxing – and a summit meeting with Gennady Golovkin in 2016's biggest fight "If Amir Khan beats Canelo, we'll obviously do the rematch. But I'm looking forward to working with him once again. We built him, we drove his career to new heights, we got him the big fights and now we're getting him the megafight, which he deserves." De La Hoya, though, is unequivocally in the Canelo business. A Khan victory would only make life complicated.

Klitschko keeping fit for Fury rematch

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO is keeping himself fighting fit as negotiations for his rematch with Tyson Fury continue.

Rumours have swirled about the rematch – which was written into the contracts of their first fight – not happening at all, however the former heavyweight champion took to social

media to provide a brief update. "Rematch vs Tyson Fury still in the making. I will keep you posted. Meanwhile [I'm] staying in shape," he said. It was even suggested Klitschko may elect to box at Rio 2016, should professional fighters be allowed to enter the Olympic Games. Wladimir won gold at Atlanta

1996, and while he admits he would be interested in representing Ukraine again, only has one objective in mind for now. "I have always said that I would love to participate again in the Olympic Games, but right now I'm only focusing on my rematch with Tyson Fury," he said. Fury's promoter, Mick

Hennessy, recently spoke to Boxing News about talks over the rematch, mentioning that it is likely to happen in May or June, with several venues in play. Marrying up a date between potential broadcasters and venues seems to be the main sticking point at this stage, as an official announcement is awaited.



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The Fightback Against Uber – Here's Some Ammo – and it's Free!

At times it must seem like the Uber and Goldman Sachs steamroller will flatten everything in its path. In their fightback, Licensed Taxi Drivers need ammunition. Of course, there won't be a silver bullet or a wooden stake that sees off Uber. It will take a combination of carefully thought out new ideas. However, one Achilles Heel for Uber is their technology's sole reliance on credit cards. But with ID theft rampant everywhere, the public are very aware of the horror stories. Firstly, there's the obvious risk of ID theft where say, London student is charged hundreds of dollars for a ride somewhere in California! Or Uber jack up the fare during or after the ride. You never can tell. Who do you speak to? Definitely not the Uber driver. The anonymous Uber email system is itself a mass of horror stories.

WorldCash – Download FREE

Uber boast their cutting edge technology based out in California is "disrupting" the London Taxi market. But it needn't be one way. WorldCash offer licensed taxi drivers technology that can tap into foreign currency



that Uber can't even touch. That's from foreign tourists and returning travellers with unspent euros, dollars etc. Right now, fares don't even imagine that they can pay in (over 30) foreign currencies. Now, if you download WorldCash you can confidently accept their foreign currency, give change in pounds and cash your foreign notes for pounds 24 hours a day at Chequepoint locations. I demonstrated WorldCash to Grant and he thought it was a doddle. It's only out on Android at present, but it's available on Apple very soon.

Uber Can't Take Cash, Let Alone Foreign Currency

Licensed Taxis can now take foreign notes and

of course cash – Uber can't close that gap. It's a virtually untapped source of billions of pounds worth of business. With WorldCash, licensed taxi drivers, with the Knowledge, experience and world-class vehicles, are truly ambassadors for London in offering foreign visitors an unrivalled service. Chequepoint have over 40 years' experience in currency, and offer you a constantly-monitored rate. When you use WorldCash – The Currency App, you even share in the currency margin of 4% to make extra cash for yourself.

Look out for WorldCash stickers put them up in your taxi

Because it's such a novel idea it sounds like

a lot to take in at once. But just place a sticker in your cab to let the passenger know that you take foreign currency. At the destination, enter the value of the fare in pounds and select the currency your passenger wants to pay in. The App then tells you how much of their currency to take. Enter that sum in the App and it calculates the change to give in pounds. The deal is done. The stickers are being distributed by the LCDC at the Heathrow holding pool, Eurostar and City Airport. Your passengers will see the currency option throughout their journey and can think about it. It's a very good option for them, as they will anyway have to exchange some of their

foreign cash during their stay in London. Returning holiday makers or travellers could spend their unwanted euros on their fare – it's part of the service. So it works out well for everybody. Finally, this also beats the hassle of credit cards, which you know all too well.

The best way to buy your travel money

Remember you make up to a 4% commission on the currency you take – now that's an unbeatable rate! Also available is the Chequepoint "Badge Rate" at which you can buy currency straight at special rates from Chequepoint branches. Bags of twenty £1 coins are also offered (when available – Tuesdays and Thursdays). See for yourself go to: thecurrencyapp.com, Android App available on Google Play – Search for WorldCash. Coming soon to the App store for iPhone/iPad users! For information, WorldCash has also launched its App in Hong Kong through the Taxi market, who also have Uber "disruption".

Felix Grovit Jr, CEO of WorldCash, working with the LCDC to support the Taxi trade.



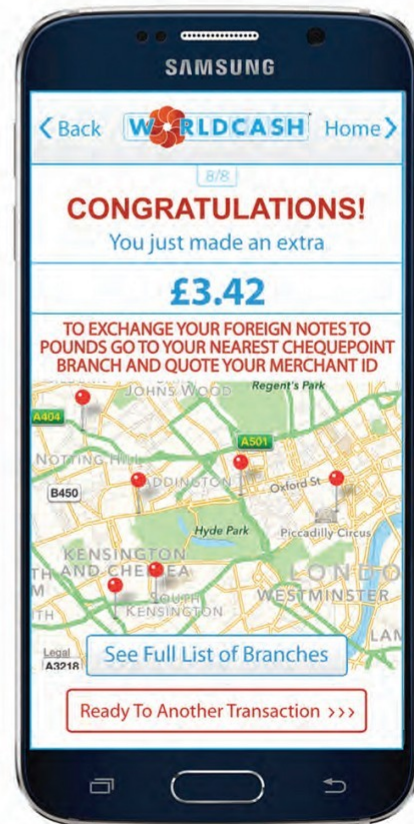
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