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Issue 263 October 2018

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DFT REPORT

As you can read on pages 4-5
there are some of the
recommendations made in the
recent DFT Task & Finish Report.

The report runs for a full 68
pages and for those of you who
are interested, it can be
downloaded online. On the
whole, the report has made some
very positive observations that
would help the trade.
Unfortunately in the current
political climate it is not very likely
that this gets passed through
Parliament in the near future.

GLA TRANSPORT TAXI & PH SERVICES AGENDA

This week the Club gave
evidence to the GLA at City
Hall in relation to their
investigation into Taxis &
Private Hire.

To say this had a touch of deja
vue about it is an
understatement. I personally
attended a similar process a few
years ago and the end product
was the FUTURE PROOF
document, full of
recommendations for TfL. Had

TfL implemented the majority of
the 19 proposals, we would not
be in the mess we are in today.

STONEY SILENCE

At the time of going to press,
we still have not received a
reply from either the Mayor or
the Lord Chief Justice in
response to our letters
regarding Judge Arbuthnot's
handling of the Uber licence
case.

Are we in anyway surprised? So
much for the judicial system...

AMERICAN AMBASSADOR MEETS THE TRADE

Just like to say a big thank
you to Mr. Woody Johnson, the
American Ambassador to
London, who held a reception
for London cab drivers at his
residence in Regents Park. It
was very much appreciated.

It was nice to know that there
are some people in high positions
who still hold our trade in such
high esteem - it is just a pity our
own government does not feel
the same.

Grant Davis
LCDC Chairman




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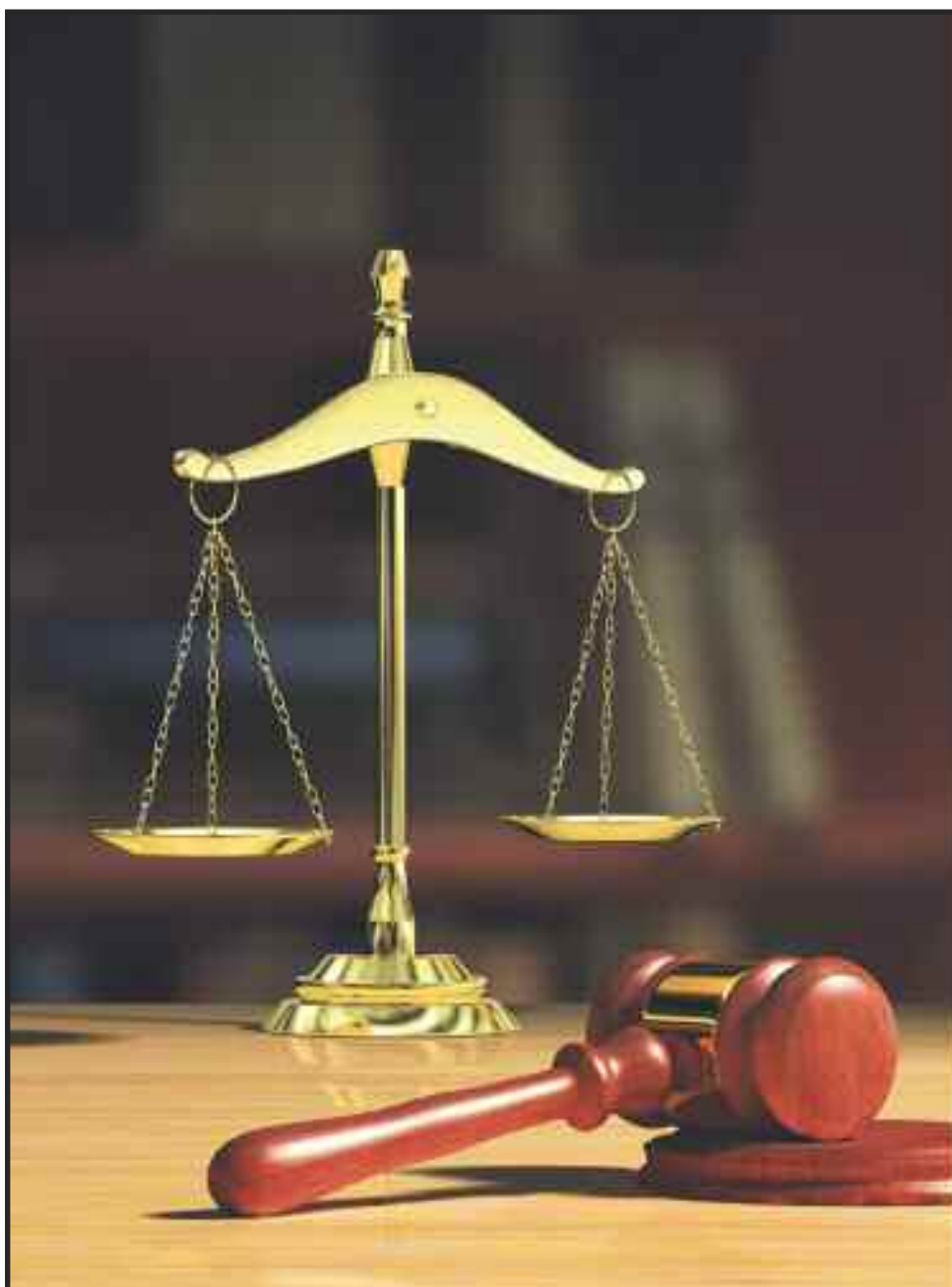
We at the LCDC don't often bang our own drum when it
comes to helping our members with their legal troubles. A
lot of the cases which come our way with members are quite
sensitive and we respect their wishes to keep things in house
and out of the paper which I can fully appreciate.

However, not only do Payton's Solicitors offer our members
a 24 Hour Duty Solicitor 365 days a year, but since getting
involved with the Club, our solicitor Keima Payton has the
distinction of having a 100% success rate in all her cases which
she has handled on behalf of the Club's members.

Keima Payton has a fearsome reputation in court and should
ever the need arise you will find no one better able to fight
your corner and save your Badge than Keima.

- Grant Davis, LCDC Chairman

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WHAT HAPPENS WHEN POLICY IS BUILT ON PROMISES...

As you would have seen on the front page, the GLA and TFL have once more turned their attentions to the age limits that were imposed onto the licensed taxi trade a couple of years ago.

It seems that once again Transport for London have chosen the taxi trade as the whipping boys. According to TFL, taxis are responsible for a significant contribution to London's toxic air quality, with the trade being blamed for 16% NOX and 26% of PMs.

When one considers the number of buses, lorries,

vans and finally four times the number of Private hire vehicles than taxis driving in the capital, then surely one must question the validity of such figures?

"The 15-year age limit for taxis was introduced as part of the drive to tackle London's air quality crisis. Diesel black cabs make a significant contribution to the city's toxic air. Urgent action is needed to reduce the pollution they cause"
Helen Chapman

The stick which Transport for London and the GLA are seemingly using to beat us is the statement made by

Steve McNamara in his submission to the Ultra-Low Emission Zone consultation, see below:

'The LTDA suggested that many vehicle owners would choose to move to ZEC taxis at an accelerated rate and that the existing diesel taxis would be seen as an undesirable vehicle to own and Operate. Therefore without a compulsory age limit but with purchase grants there would be a removal of diesel taxis across all age categories and the associated emissions benefits would be compounded by the

benefits of adding ZECs to the fleet. In their place the LTDA suggest there could be 9000 ZEC taxis in the fleet by the end of 2020'

It is incredible to think that TFL can use the totally illogical optimistic statement above as a means to justify the cab trade accepting a whole new range of age limits for our vehicles. Only last month we attended a meeting with LEVC, who find the same problem when dealing with TFL, and say that TFL constantly quote the 9,000 vehicles and even they admit that with the best will in the world they just could not produce these

amount of Tx vehicles in that time frame.

What Transport for London should be addressing with the trade is the plethora of false promises they had made to us during all the ULEZ meetings and consultation. For instance, we were promised that we would have a choice of five taxis and that you would literally be tripping over charge points throughout the capital etc. etc. etc.

Once again and not for the first time, Transport for London is incapable of administrating the transport needs of this City.

FIVE PROMISED...



BUT JUST ONE DELIVERED!

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT'S REVIEW OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE

This report is about public wellbeing. Its genesis and mission were framed by the vision of the then Minister of State at the Department of Transport, the Rt. Hon. John Hayes CBE MP.

In commissioning me to lead this vital work, he made clear that in his view the current regulatory regime for the taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) sector is no longer fit for purpose.

In scoping the work together we were determined, above all, to chart a future which ensured public safety for all, a working environment for those in the trade which guaranteed fair working conditions and whilst maintaining a competitive, dynamic market, preserve the character, integrity and aesthetics of this time-honoured trade.

It is clear that the status quo whereby taxi and PHV licensing is inconsistent, ineffective and incompatible with the protection of vulnerable people must not be allowed to continue. Alongside other incidents of criminality, the events in Rotherham, Rochdale, Oxford and elsewhere have brought the fundamental flaws in the licensing regime into the sharpest possible focus; these oblige uncompromising determination to make taxis and PHVs safe for all.

As my task is now complete, the onus falls



Professor Mohammed Abdel-Haq

to the Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling, MP and his Ministers, in particular Nusrat Ghani, and Parliamentarians to take the ideas of the report further and to begin to craft the legislation that it will, in some instances, require. In other instances, I trust that Parliament and the Department will lead the cultural change which is necessary to ensure that passengers, workers,

operators, and neighbouring authorities are treated fairly. I look forward to the Government's prompt response to this report in order to maintain the momentum for improvement. Undue delay would risk public safety.

*Professor Mohammed Abdel-Haq
Chairman, the Task and Finish Group on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing*



Rt. Hon. John Hayes CBE MP.



Department
for Transport



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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:**Recommendation 1**

Notwithstanding the specific recommendations made below, taxi and PHV legislation should be urgently revised to provide a safe, clear and up to date structure that can effectively regulate the two-tier trade as it is now.

Recommendation 2

Government should legislate for national minimum standards for taxi and PHV licensing - for drivers, vehicles and operators (see recommendation 6). The national minimum standards that relate to the personal safety of passengers must be set at a level to ensure a high minimum safety standard across every authority in England.

Government must convene a panel of regulators, passenger safety groups and operator representatives to determine the national minimum safety standards. Licensing authorities should, however, be able to set additional higher standards in safety and all other aspects depending on the requirements of the local areas if they wish to do so.

Recommendation 5

As the law stands, 'plying for hire' is difficult to prove and requires significant enforcement resources. Technological advancement has blurred the distinction between the two trades.

Government should introduce a statutory definition of both 'plying for hire' and 'pre-booked' in order to maintain the two-tier system. This definition should include reviewing the use of technology and vehicle 'clustering' as well as ensuring taxis retain the sole right to be hailed on streets or at ranks. Government should convene a panel of regulatory experts to explore and draft the definition.

Recommendation 6

Government should require companies that act as intermediaries between passengers and taxi drivers to meet the same licensing requirements and obligations as PHV operators, as this may provide additional safety for passengers (e.g. though greater traceability).

Recommendation 7

Central Government and licensing authorities should 'level the playing field' by mitigating additional costs faced by the trade where a wider social benefit is provided – for example, where a wheelchair accessible and/or zero emission capable vehicle is made available.

Recommendation 8

Government should legislate to allow local licensing authorities, where a need is proven through a public interest test, to set a cap on the number of taxi and PHVs they license. This can help authorities to solve challenges around congestion, air quality and parking and ensure appropriate provision of taxi and private hire services for passengers, while maintaining drivers' working conditions.

Recommendation 9

All licensing authorities should use their existing powers to make it a condition of licensing that drivers cooperate with requests from authorised compliance officers in other areas. Where a driver fails to comply with this requirement enforcement action should be taken as if the driver has failed to comply with the same request from an officer of the issuing authority.

Recommendation 11

Government should legislate that all taxi and PHV journeys should start and/or end within the area for which the driver, vehicle and operator (PHV and taxi – see recommendation 6) are licensed. Appropriate measures should be in place to allow specialist services such as chauffeur and disability transport services to continue to operate cross border.

Operators should not be restricted from applying for and holding licences with multiple authorities, subject to them meeting both national standards and any additional requirements imposed by the relevant licensing authority.

Recommendation 13

Legislation should be introduced by the Government as a matter of urgency to enable Transport for London to regulate the operation of pedicabs in London

Recommendation 17

In the interests of passenger safety, particularly in the light of events in towns and cities like Rochdale, Oxford, Newcastle and Rotherham, all licensed vehicles must be fitted with CCTV (visual and audio) subject to strict data protection measures. Licensing authorities must use their existing power to mandate this ahead of inclusion in national minimum standards.

To support greater consistency in licensing, potentially reduce costs and assist greater out of area compliance, the Government must set out in guidance the standards and specifications of CCTV systems for use in taxis and PHVs. These must then be introduced on a mandatory basis as part of national minimum standards.

Recommendation 19

National standards must set requirements to assist the public in distinguishing between taxis, PHVs and unlicensed vehicles. These should require drivers to have on display (e.g. a clearly visible badge or arm-band providing) relevant details to assist the passengers in identifying that they are appropriately licensed e.g. photograph of the driver and licence type i.e. immediate hire or pre-booked only.

All PHVs must be required to provide information to passengers including driver photo ID and the vehicle licence number, in advance of a journey. This would enable all passengers to share information with others in advance of their journey. For passengers who cannot receive the relevant information via digital means this information should be available through other means before passengers get into the vehicle.

Recommendation 28

Licensing authorities must require that all drivers are able to communicate in English orally and in writing to a standard that is required to fulfil their duties, including in emergency and other challenging situations.

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Alan's Angle



Holborn car crackdown to cut Bloomsbury traffic accidents approved by transport chief

Plans for a crackdown on cars to make Holborn more pedestrian-friendly and prevent traffic accidents have been approved by Camden Council's transport chief.

Cllr Adam Harrison, cabinet member for improving Camden's environment, gave a green-light to changes around Bloomsbury at a special meeting last night at Camden Town Hall.

The plans aim to reduce traffic and accidents on roads which have seen scores of collisions in recent years, causing serious injuries and deaths.

The proposals include closing the southern roads from Bloomsbury Way onto Bloomsbury Square for motor vehicles, and banning left turns by motor vehicles from Vernon Place onto Southampton Row. Cyclists will still be able to access Bloomsbury Square from the south and turn left at Vernon Place.

The plans would also create an Oxford Circus-style diagonal crossing for pedestrians over the junction of High Holborn, Southampton Row and Kingsway, outside Holborn tube station.

Cllr Harrison told the Camden Citizen today: "High collision rates at both High Holborn and Vernon Place junctions mean we need to improve both places for cyclists and

pedestrians.

"At Vernon Place two deaths occurred due to turning vehicles, one of which resulting in a prevention of death notice from the coroner. "In the longer term we would like to see even more improvements made for the Holborn area, including new cycling provision and changes to accommodate the growing numbers of pedestrians."

A council report notes the high levels of traffic on these roads, with 200 vehicles per hour in Bloomsbury Square during rush hour, and 3,000 motor vehicles using the Vernon Place junction at morning rush hour.

There were 54 collisions on the Vernon Place junction between 2013 and 2016, leading to 24 injuries to cyclists and pedestrians, and six people being seriously injured or killed.

Twenty-eight collisions took place on the High Holborn and Kingsway Junction over the same period, with 21 injuries to pedestrians and cyclists, and three serious injuries or deaths.

A majority of residents and local groups supported the changes in a public consultation held in February and March 2018, with 75 per cent and 77 per cent respectively backing the plans.

But 62 per cent of businesses consulted opposed the



Bloomsbury Square and the planned changes

changes, bringing the consultation's total figures to 51 per cent in favour and 47 per cent against.

The plans are supported by the Friends of Bloomsbury Square residents group and Camden Cycling Campaign. But taxis worry about lost business through longer

journey times, and police have raised concerns about an increase in road rage. The council report also notes that the plans could push traffic onto nearby Grays Inn Road, Kingsway and Southampton Row, increasing air pollution there. But the report says the

decrease in pollution around Bloomsbury Square and other benefits makes this trade-off acceptable.

The proposals will need to be approved by Transport for London to go ahead.

**Courtesy of The Camden Citizen*

Euston Rank update

You may be aware that there will be a significant increase in people coming to the area with the opening of the Crossrail Station in 2018 at nearby Tottenham Court Road and a 50% predicted increase in the number of passengers using Holborn underground station by 2026.

A new second entrance to Holborn underground

station is planned to be built in Procter Street by London Underground, between 2021 and 2025, with a planned opening date of 2026. This has been consulted on separately by Transport for London.

Camden needs to make sure the area is prepared for these changes, as well as improve conditions for the existing high numbers of people using the area.

Our long term plan for Holborn seeks to improve

streets for walking and cycling, reducing collisions and traffic congestion, making Holborn a better place to live, visit and do business in. The area is currently congested and dominated by motor traffic, with a high number of traffic collisions, a high number of pedestrians, indirect and inconvenient crossing facilities and inadequate footway space. There are high numbers of cyclists using the area; however,

the facilities provided for cycling are currently insufficient for the current and future demand. In addition, bus routes and general traffic movements are indirect due to the Holborn gyratory system operating along Bloomsbury Way/Vernon Place (two way for buses), with Procter Street, High Holborn and New Oxford Street one way for all traffic. We want to remove the gyratory and make it better for walking

and cycling, but recognise this will be challenging to deliver it all in one go. We will therefore continue to work with Transport for London to ensure we arrive at a scheme that addresses the problems taking into account the competing demands placed by different road users in a limited road space. In the meantime, we want to address safety and make improvements at key locations.

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UBER HAVING A SMASHING TIME IN THE CAPITAL!

STOP PRESS

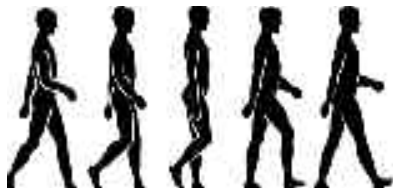
As part of Uber London Ltd private hire licence conditions it is stated:
ULL shall, within 48 hours of receiving a safety related complaint concerning a ULL driver:

- a. assess whether it is necessary to remove or suspend that driver account pending further inquiries; and
 - b. notify any such decision to remove or suspend the driver to the licensing authority, including specifying the details of the driver and the allegation.
- Since the licence conditions were placed

can you supply me the figure of how many notifications have been received by TFL as the licensing authority and if costs permit, the nature of those notifications.

Between June 26 and July 17, an FOI request found 97 suspensions or dismissals





Walker on the March...

CREDIT CARDS

I would imagine I am not exceptional in finding that the proportion of my customers that pay by card has been steadily increasing since the mandate compelling us to use cards came in.

I have no problem with that in principle, but I think we all have a problem with TFL in this regard. They never gave us enough on the meter to cover the costs when it was introduced. In the first place they only accounted for transaction costs and not any other fees or equipment costs. In the second place, they worked it out on a maximum percentage transaction charge and then failed to limit these charges from the suppliers.

The trade tariff team have been asking for three years to have these costs and also App fees to be included in the Cost Index and



was waiting for somebody in Morgan's but no, he wasn't.

Three girls walked past his car and as they did so he called out to them asking if they wanted a taxi. They declined and then he looked over and saw me looking at him and as I got out of my cab he drove off.

I mean, for f*&\$'s sake! TFL have let things go so far that this a-hole is touting opposite a full taxi rank.

been swerved every time. This is not asking for an increase on the meter for these charges per se but simply asking that any increase in costs should be reflected in the tariff. This is only fair; every other business in the land pass on their overheads to their customers and your credit card charges are overheads.

Anyway, it finally happened to me. At the end of the journey she says to me "do you accept cards"? "Certainly", says I. Then she asks "do you do cash back"? With great effort I POLITELY said no.

BOLD AS BRASS

At least, I think he was bold, but he may just have been very stupid. I'm sitting on the rank at Bank St on The Wharf, when I notice a scab parked almost opposite me. I just thought he

they have held a badge. The Butter that gets out today is the same as the 50 year lifer.

I had always worked in jobs where you strived for promotion and advancement and suddenly I was in a job where the only challenge was how much dosh you could put into your money bag. It took me more than 10 years to adjust to that.

time, he fills everything in and then gets a call to say they cannot renew his licence because his DBS check is for Nicholas and his driving licence says his name is Nicky.

He explains that this was the fault of the examiner that passed him on his DVLA driving test but it has previously been accepted by TFL on four other occasions. Ah yes, but we changed our internal structures two years ago and now we cannot accept it.

He asks what he should do and they say he won't be able to work until he contacts DVLA, fills a form to change the name on his driving licence and receives the new one back, completes another DBS check and then re-submits his licence application to TFL.

He asks why they waited until just before his licence to run out before contacting him. Not their problem. I tell him to ask for a temporary licence and they say they don't issue them. I tell him they do and he goes back and they agree to issue a temporary licence.

He makes an appointment for 8.00am at Palestra and is told to arrive 10 minutes early. He duly arrives at 7.50am and the doors are locked and the security guy won't open the door. After five

PROUD OF THE BADGE

It made me smile the other day. I'm so old that my first badge number was 26895. My current number is 62870 and it wasn't something I thought very much about in the past. I've realized though since the identifiers came in just how important it is to some drivers of how high or low their number is.

Not for the first time, I sat behind another cab with his identifier in and below it a self-printed notice explaining that his previous badge number was lower and printed on the notice.

Why? One of the first things I personally had to come to terms with when I "got out" was that a cab driver is a cab driver and all the same irrespective of how long

TPH – COULDN'T RUN A BATH!

The re-licensing problem has raised its ugly head again.

When the GLA Transport committee ran their investigations in 2014, they were critical of the shoddy way drivers were being treated over the time delay with the DBS checks and other licence renewal problems. You will remember that some drivers were left being unable to work for up to two months.

Eventually, under pressure, TPH produced temporary licenses to alleviate the problems. Well, it's happening again. Some drivers are experiencing the delays again. Let's hope it doesn't get as out of hand again.

My son had to renew his licence for the fourth time. He had no trouble with the first three. This



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minutes, the security bloke comes to the door and tells him they don't open until 8.00am and is having none of it. Anyway, he gets his two week licence.

Meanwhile, DVLA say he cannot change the name on his licence and suggest he change his name by deed poll to "Nicky". Seriously, that is what DVLA suggested he do!!!

Back to TPH and they say do a DBS check as Nicky. He explains that all his other documents – passport, birth cert., bank account, utility bills, etc are all in the name of Nicholas. So they suggest he submits as "Nicholas aka Nicky".

Meanwhile, he goes into TPH and they help him do the DBS and DVLA forms. He then phones on the Friday before his temporary licence runs out to get an appointment to renew it. The fella from TPH addresses him as "man" – very professional – and says not to worry because they have everything back from DBS and DVLA and it's all cool and he can drive because his licence has been issued but will take 10 – 14 days to arrive to him.

On the following Monday, he gets a call from TPH to say his temporary licence expired the day before and he cannot work until he gets it renewed. He relates Friday's phone call and is told it was all garbage and his licence has not been issued.



TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

**EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS.
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He had to stop working, go in the following day and get another temporary licence and then got his full licence before that one ended. In the end, he didn't lose too much work but had to endure a lot of stress, worry and frustration.

TFL – COULDN'T RUN A BATH: MK2

Then there are the phones. TFL were savaged by the GLA in 2014 over the phones taking an average 20 minute answer. They sorted it out to an average 2 minutes as a result. Four years later and where are we?

It's time for the cab's annual test. Bring back NSL – pleeease! Four years ago, NSL were answering the phone for

appointment booking in an average two minutes. Now, you have to ring TFL.

So, on the Friday before going on holiday, I ring for an appointment. 52 minutes later, they answered the bleedin' phone. I tried to book in but was told I could only book a month in advance and that would be on Monday, the next working day. I explained that I would be in Spain on Monday and couldn't they do it now? Sorry, the computer says no. My son did the booking for me in the end.

Between my son and I we have had reason to call TPH about 20 time recently. It has taken at least 25 minutes to be answered and over an hour at worst. All calls were timed so I'm not exaggerating. The worst two were

one where after waiting for 35 minutes, a message came on and said they were unable to answer calls at the moment and cut the connection.

The worst of all was when my son, while waiting for the phone to be answered, drove from Gt Suffolk St to his home in Swanscombe, Kent and managed to make and sit down with a cup of tea before the phone was answered.

The worst of all was when my, while waiting for the phone to be answered, drove from Gt Suffolk St to his home in Swanscombe, Kent and managed to make and sit down with a cup of tea before the phone was answered.

TFL – Every Journey Counts. Unless you're a cab driver!

London cabbies take hundreds of sick children on a trip of a lifetime to Disneyland Paris



The 25th Anniversary trip of the Magical Taxi Tour left Canary Wharf, after the Big Breakfast with a convoy of 100 Taxis bound for Disneyland Paris on Friday 28th September 2018. The trip is an annual event organised by the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers and fully funded by donations and sponsorship, has become the highlight of the London Taxi calendar. Children suffering from a range of chronic illnesses and life limiting conditions are treated to a magical trip to Disneyland where they are thoroughly spoilt the whole weekend. The amazing convoy can stretch up to 3 miles long when travelling and is supported by the City of London Police,

Gendarme Nationale, London Ambulance Service and the AA. This event is all about the children and giving them a weekend that they will never forget, they are left wanting for nothing. Travelling from Canary Wharf to Disneyland with the Police Escort really makes these children feel very special. On the Saturday the children get to enjoy the delights of Disneyland where their fast pass allows them to beat the queues for the rides and attractions. As this was the 25th Anniversary, 3 London Taxis were allowed to take part in a special pre-parade in the Disneyland park which obviously attracted lots of attention and the children were given VIP treatment in a special area to view the parade.

Saturday night everyone is treated to the children's gala party, held this year in the New York Hotel with food, a disco and of course the Disney characters who join in with the party and dance the night away with the children.

This year's trip was a truly fantastic weekend and extremely befitting for the 25th Anniversary of the Magical Taxi Tour. Sunday was the long drive home with many of the children sleeping in the taxis, tired from a thoroughly enjoyable



weekend. Sadly 2 of the committee members decided to retire this year so many thanks go to Mike Saunders and Malcolm Linskey for all for their hard work throughout the years serving the committee and making the possible for the thousands of children lucky enough to have invited.



Also Phil Davis decided it was time to stand down from the role of Chairman of the charity but remain on the committee and take a back seat, Phil works tirelessly to make this event happen every year so we are glad that he has decided to stay and help out for the foreseeable future. Of course this trip would not be possible without all of the drivers who offer their time and taxis free of charge every year, 5 of whom have undertaken all 25 trips a couple of whom have decided that the 25th was their last due to their age, thanks goes to all of these big hearted people who go out of their way to make this very special for all of the children. Here's looking forward to next year's Magical Taxi Tour and many more.

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Britain not ready for car revolution

Unless you are in the market for a new Porsche, a recent development at the German luxury car maker might have passed you by. Porsche is ditching diesel.

In three short years, the fuel has gone from the answer to greenhouse gas emissions to a toxic pollutant with no place in transport—largely due to the diesel emissions rigging scandals at Volkswagen. Porsche (owned by VW) has said it will fill the gap left by diesel with petrol, hybrid and electric motors. Electric motors make up less than 5% of UK car sales now, but they are taking off. New models will hit the market with increasing frequency, each more capable of travelling farther and lasting longer. With all this happening in plain sight, it might have dawned on the government to try to prepare the country and its creaking infrastructure for this looming wave of change with a coherent and long-term strategy.

Despite a flurry of ministerial reports, however, there is scant evidence of this. Land Rover's new i-Place electric car is being built in Austria. A battery research centre is being built in the Midlands, but a full-scale factory has yet to materialise. The government has committed £400m to upgrading charging infrastructure, but this is a minuscule sum compared with the true cost of installing charging stations across the UK and linking them to grid. A further £246m is being sliced up into tiny parcels as part of the government's Faraday battery research fund. What about satisfying the inevitable surge in demand for demand for electricity which some say will equate to 20 new Hinkley nuclear power stations? Transport secretary Chris Grayling has drafted a Road to Zero strategy to cut emissions, which gamely talks about car batteries being used overnight to supply back into the grid. Fine, but who pays to upgrade



the grid? Plus, the electricity still has to be generated somewhere. Road to Zero says only: "We are confident that existing market mechanisms

will be able to meet additional electricity demand from electric vehicles". The UK's automotive industry is ill prepared for electric cars. It

needs a considered, long-term plan that knits together power, transport and manufacturing if the industry is to survive its biggest upheaval in a century.

Electric car prices to soar as axe falls on green subsidies

Thousands of pounds will be added to the price of some electric and hybrid vehicles as one of the government's main green initiatives falls victim to cuts, the Observer can reveal.

The Treasury is being warned that emergency funds will be needed to avoid an imminent cut in the subsidies given to people buying plug-in cars, which some fear will dent Britain's green credentials. The government announced last year that it would ban all new petrol and diesel cars and vans from 2040 to reduce the rising levels of nitrogen oxide. It followed a similar commitment in France and formed part of the government's green air plan. Consumers are given a discount of up to £4,500 when they buy a green vehicle that qualifies under the "plug-in grant" scheme for low-emission vehicles. However, ministers have warned the Treasury that the tight budget for the scheme means large cuts will have to be made. Under current proposals, the

maximum grant would fall to £3,500, while the grant of up to £2,500 for hybrid plug-in vehicles would be abolished altogether. A cap is also being considered, which would mean only cars worth up to £60,000 would be eligible for the scheme.

This could have serious implications for Jaguar Land Rover, the UK's biggest automotive company. The cap would mean its luxury Jaguar I-Pace would no longer be eligible. Ralf Speth, its chief executive, said last week that it was delaying its decision on whether to build electric cars in Britain, partly as a result of uncertainty around Brexit. Sales of electric vehicles reached a record high in August and accounted for one in every 12 new cars purchased in the UK. According to figures released by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders last month, hybrid, plug-in hybrid and pure electric cars made up 8% of the overall market. It represented an increase of 23% on the year before.



Funding is causing concern at the transport and business departments. Some ministers believe that boosting the sale of green cars should be a priority in chancellor Philip Hammond's budget this month. Business department insiders believe that the cuts could be reversed with a relatively small amount of money. The current budgets for the plug-in grant scheme are £124m for 2018-19 and £96m in 2019-20. The dispute comes just days after Theresa May used her Tory party conference speech to claim "austerity is over" and that "there are better days ahead".

A source close to the negotiations said: "Developing new technology and maintaining our car industry are both strategic priorities, Philip should see this more clearly than anyone. Greg [Clark, the business secretary] isn't asking for huge amounts, unlike other departments, but does want to deliver for business and the consumer." Ministers are taking May at her word on ending austerity and are scrambling to secure money for their pet projects. It is understood that there are also concerns about the budget for universal credit. Tories at all

levels of the party are said to be worried about the transition to the new benefits system in which some families could lose out by as much as £200 a month. Hammond has a difficult task in his budget, in which he is already under pressure to raise taxes to pay for extra resources for the NHS.

The Treasury declined to comment. A Department for Transport spokesperson said: "The Road to Zero Strategy sets out a clear path for the country to be a world leader in the clean transport revolution, including continuing to ensure the tax system incentivises the purchase of the cleanest vehicles. "We have already supported the purchase of more than 150,000 ultra-low-emission vehicles and offer a range of infrastructure incentives as part of our nearly £1.5bn investment to support the transition to zero-emission vehicles. We will continue the plug-in grant until at least 2020, and keep the rates under constant review." *Courtesy of The Observer*

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Black-cab ride that led Comcast to aim for Sky

It was a chance ride in a London black cab last November that alerted Brian Roberts to Sky's potential.

The chairman and chief executive of America's biggest cable company, Comcast, was in London on a business trip with a colleague when he had his epiphany.

"The cab driver was incredibly knowledgeable about the difference between Virgin and Sky in every feature," he later recounted. "We were learning a lot there. Then when we to the Sky store, we spent at least an hour going through every feature and comparing it to our own... We were really terribly impressed."

When Sky clinched the rights to show a package of Premier League football matches in February for a price well below expectations, it helped to make his mind up.

In February, the mild-mannered media mogul made his first move — gatecrashing an agreed deal between Sky and 21st Century Fox, run by Rupert Murdoch's family, which owned 39%. Comcast's rude interruption forced Sky's board to withdraw its recommendation for Fox. The £29.7bn deal, clinched at the final stage of a three-round auction, reflected Roberts' determination to win. Comcast blew Fox away with a



£17.28-a-share offer — 10% higher than Fox's £15.67. Fox had been bidding with backing from Disney, which outmanoeuvred Comcast this summer to buy Fox's film and TV assets, including its minority stake in Sky. Comcast's winning bid was more than double Sky's price before Fox made its first approach in December 2016. A source close to Comcast said Roberts and his team had decided to put "clear blue water" between the two bids so that

Fox's board — chaired by James Murdoch, Rupert's son, who recused himself during the takeover process and let deputy chairman Martin Gilbert take the reins — would have no choice but to recommend Comcast's. The deal reflects the seismic upheavals reshaping the media world, as established names try to fend off online upstarts such as Amazon and Netflix and stem the flow of customers terminating their cable and satellite subscriptions in favour of on-demand viewing. It also

signals the end of Rupert Murdoch's three-decade reign over Sky, which he built from a pay-TV minnow in the late 1980s to a titan spanning Europe with 23m customers. Roberts, 59, inherited the helm of Comcast from his father, Ralph, who founded it in 1963 when he bought a tiny Mississippi TV company with just 1,200 subscribers. Roberts senior handed over presidency of the company to his son in 1990, and remained as chairman until 2002. Brian Roberts has since been on an acquisition spree — trying and failing to buy Disney in 2004, acquiring NBC Universal in 2009 and attempting to buy Time Warner in 2015.

The Takeover Panel, the City's mergers watchdog, had insisted on a rare winner-takes-all auction beginning at 5pm on Friday. When the bidding went through to the final round, Roberts knew he had to land a knockout blow, and authorised the £17.28 bid.

Sky's fate was sealed when the Takeover Panel revealed the two final bids shortly after 7pm. Sky's board, comprising its non-executive directors, led by Gilbert, chief executive Jeremy Darroch and finance director Andrew Griffith, had camped out all afternoon in a first-floor boardroom at Sky's west

London campus.

They took just minutes to agree to recommend Comcast's offer, issuing a statement at 8.23pm giving their backing and urging shareholders to accept it. Within minutes of the final bids flashing up, Roberts and his team were on a conference call to work on next steps. "They came here determined to win," said a source. They celebrated last night with beers and dinner. Murdoch's vision was to create a mass market TV service, linking households to a wealth of content and channels via satellite dishes. With few rivals on the pay-TV stage, Sky went on to flourish. The 1992 creation of football's Premier League, and Murdoch's victory in a five-year deal for the rights to broadcast games, turbo-charged Sky and injected a flood of cash into the game. The fierce battle over its future reflects American media giants' determination to insulate themselves from the relentless attack of online rivals, who have lured customers from lucrative pay-TV contracts to on-demand TV over the internet — a phenomenon known as "cutting the cord". With its swoop on Sky, Comcast has made its cord stronger.

Courtesy of The Sunday Times

Cabbies prepare for Kilimanjaro

The inventiveness of London's black cab drivers knows no bounds, especially when they decide to do something in aid of charity.

Earlier this year four intrepid cabbies did a parachute jump with the Red Devils in aid of the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, but clearly that was not enough. Now seven drivers, (including one of the jumpers, Brian Heffernan, clearly a glutton for punishment), have got climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in their sights next year to raise £20,000 for the same charity. But this is not simply a fund-raising enterprise. It is also a determined mission to lose weight, and not just a few pounds, but 40 stone between all seven of them. This ambitious and laudable project is the brainchild of Rosh Varma who is completely honest about his need to lead a healthier lifestyle. He admits that he needs to lose 5-7 stone as

well as stop smoking, and he hopes that this might also help reverse his type 2 diabetes. Rosh describes his team as "seven fat middle-aged cabbies" and the other six joined up after he put out a tweet to see if anyone was interested. They are all equally committed to success, and have been enormously boosted by the support of Be Military Fit who will train them for a year at no cost — a really outstanding offer of support.

There has already been media interest in the Fat Cabbies' plans: there have been interviews on British Forces Broadcasting Network and ITV London News as well as London Taxi Radio. What fantastic PR for the trade this is. Some of the businesses have already pledged support, including Plan Insurance, CabVision, TaxiApp and Ubiquitous, and so far they also have the backing of the LCDC



and the UCG : it is early days and there is plenty of time for much more involvement. The drivers who have undertaken this impressive challenge are: Rosh Varma, Cliff Tyler, Paul Watts, Kevin Paul, John Dillane, Brian

Heffernan and Daren Parr and you will see a current photograph above. Watch out for the reports of weight loss on twitter and do follow them @cabbiesdokili The links for donations are <http://www.justgiving.com/Cabbi>

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UNITED TRADE ACTION GROUP (UTAG) AGAINST TFL, WESTMINSTER MAGISTRATES AND UBER

The UCG with support from a key group of trade suppliers has recently instructed senior commercial QC to provide a legal opinion on taking legal action against Transport for London, Westminster Magistrates Court and Uber.

It is now time for you to take action for the right earned by completing the Knowledge of London, abiding by strict regulations enforced by TfL and being forced to drive a prescribed purpose-built vehicle which is both Wheelchair Accessible and subject to very rigorous Conditions of Fitness. "This is an unprecedented legal challenge against Uber, Transport for London and Westminster Magistrates Court. It will shock many how Uber operate and are allowed to operate under the watchful blindness of the regulatory body there to protect" Robert Griffiths QC and Barrister Stuart Jessop
6 Pump Court, Temple.

This group action will take action:

1) Against Westminster Magistrates and Judicially Review the decision to grant a license to Uber on the basis of conflict of interest and flawed reasoning.

2) Against Transport for London under

multiple causes of action including its failure to regulate the statutory regime.
3) Against Uber under multiple causes of action including economic torts and

United Trade Action Group

the interference of your exclusive right to ply for hire.

It has long been known by members of the trade that Uber operates a model which is identical to hailing and therefore infringes London taxi drivers'

exclusive right to ply for hire. This action will seek to address that injustice.

This action will forcefully pursue the argument that TfL knew or ought to have known that Uber is not and has never been a fit and proper person to hold an Operators' Licence.

One of the many reasons why it will be argued that Uber is not a fit and proper person includes issues relating to its corporate structure and fiscal operations.

This is a concerted, comprehensive and unprecedented action against key parties including YOUR regulatory body and will seek to bring each and all parties to account for their part in the damage caused to our 360-year-old trade. Other similar actions are exclusively seeking damages, but this action will seek more than damages for any previous loss. It will seek to protect YOUR exclusive right to ply for hire and ensure that PHV drivers

and London Taxi drivers compete fairly. It will seek to protect the trade from current and further threats to its exclusive right to ply for hire and ensure that the distinct Two-Tier System is restored and not eroded.

"We will seek to protect and preserve your exclusive right to ply for hire from current and future threats, the two-tier system has to be restored"

Darren Rogers – Chiltern Law
It is the considered opinion of Robert Griffiths QC, Mr Stuart Jessop (6 Pump Court) and Mr Darren Rogers (Chiltern Law) that these series of actions have a very good chance of success. The trade will understand that disclosure of our causes of action are confidential and sensitive, but senior members of the UCG and other key Stakeholders fully support and can attest to the merits of this action.

Although the initial instructions have been given by UCG, this is not a singularly UCG action. The United Trade Action Group (UTAG) is made up from a wider group of taxi supporters. We invite all drivers and stakeholders to support us in this action.

Our future is in the balance, we must act now as a unified trade to protect it. More details regarding projected costs and next steps will follow shortly. UTAG strongly recommends that all London taxi drivers and stakeholders endorse these actions and donate as much as they can to our Crowdfunding to support this historic legal challenge.

If there was ever a time for UNITY between trade organisations, their members and stakeholders it's now. Now because you a committed legal team already taking action, now because never before have you faced the challenges you face today. Now because we have a very strong case and compelling material and arguments to support our legal actions.

Do nothing apart from unhelpfully barrack and comment from the sidelines will only confirm public opinion. Galvanise, modernise and fight for your future will earn some much needed support.

The trade organisations must unite or face the prospect of having nobody to organise in 5 years from now. The stakeholders must support or see the trade they supply be decimated in the same time.

UTAGs legal team has ALREADY acted, we haven't postured and procrastinated, we have been proactive and purposeful. Such expertise, commitment and determination costs and this will need funding. Analogous to what we have done is this: we have picked up a fare in London and driven to Gatwick with a fare that has no money. On route to Gatwick we are told to go to Bournemouth

where our fares friends will have a collection to try and raise the fare. Would you commit to that job? Well, we have and we are the only legal team to be doing anything meaningful at this time, the only team to be genuinely and selflessly behind the trade and ready to charter these murky waters.

A negative thinker sees a difficulty in every opportunity. A positive thinker sees an opportunity in every difficulty. The choice is yours.

How long will the JR and legal actions take?

1. The JR is lodged. Permission will be decided on paper by a single judge. That could be this side of Christmas. If we get permission the hearing will be early New Year, probably. If not we will apply for an oral hearing for permission. That could be December or early New Year. But there is no guarantee re

time as we are in the hands of the court and have no jurisdiction over case listing. In respect of the other claims we would work towards issuing a claim as soon as possible. The claim will require the utmost care to draft and therefore we must take appropriate time to complete it and not be rushed. It is impossible to say how long the whole process might take as one doesn't know what other parties involved will do or how they will respond.

What are the estimated costs to take these 3 actions?

2. Estimated costs for all three claims have been provided. The losing party is responsible for the other sides costs. We understand costs insurance is being sought to cover this eventuality.

Can we hold TfL to account?

3. A claim can be brought against TfL. We are of the view

that TfL has facilitated the conspiracy to cause economic loss and wrongful interference with your exclusive right by its action or inaction. We are also of the view that there is a potential claim against TfL for breaching its statutory duty, by failing to police and regulate the statutory regime. This would be a claim in damages for economic loss.

Can we ban Uber?

4. There is a great deal of evidence to the effect that Uber is not and was not a fit and proper person. If the JR is successful this will result in a rehearing of the licence appeal. Issues as to fit and proper person will feature in that rehearing. But they are also relevant to this claim against Uber. The claim is much more than seeking damages. It will seek to deal with a fundamental issue that really hasn't been grappled with by the courts or

anyone else: whether Uber's model is effectively "plying for hire". If it is, it is unlawful.

Compensation

5. Working out loss will be a major exercise and one of the reasons why the legal team need to get on with the job in hand with the full backing of its clients. But damages are not the client's central concern. We are told the central issues are preserving the two tier system and holding TfL to account over its failure to properly regulate that system, including Uber.

Who will liaise and instruct the legal team?

6. We are instructed by an entity that was in existence at the time that the claim relates to: the UCG. They act on behalf of UTAG. It would be a matter for you how you formulate your instructions but any legal team needs firm and clear instructions from one source.

Who decides when to settle if negotiation is offered?

7. The client. It's up to the client who it consults but it's the client who gives us the instructions.

What is required from you?

8. Funding, clear support, clear instructions

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My electric car drove me to distraction _instead of Scotland!

By Isabel Hardman

Do you ever have those anxious dreams where you're running hopelessly late for an exam you actually sat decades ago? Or that you're speaking on stage and suddenly realise you're stark naked? Or turn up late to your own wedding?

I do — but I never expected one of those nightmares to come true.

Last weekend, I was on my way to a literary festival to speak about my first book, *Why We Get The Wrong Politicians*. As I left my home in south Cumbria and headed for Wigtown, in Dumfries and Galloway, in my little electric car, I was buzzing with excitement. I'd prepared my talk, packed a smart outfit and even allowed myself seven hours for the four-hour drive so I'd be sure to arrive in good time.

But in the event I ended up sprinting in at 5.45 pm, 45 minutes late, out of breath and praying that at least a few members of the audience had hung on to hear me. The cause of this hugely embarrassing delay? My Nissan Leaf, an electric vehicle marketed as an 'eco-dream' but which in reality proved rather different.

I bought the car last summer for £25,000 (that's including the Government's electric vehicle or EV discount — road tax is 'free') and I love driving it. Electric vehicles are a far smoother ride than those with internal combustion engines. Most importantly, they don't emit toxic fumes.

I'm a keen cyclist and have become very aware of the soup of polluted air making its way into my lungs every day as I pedal to work. I wanted to do my own small thing to help change that, so an electric car seemed to make sense.

What makes less sense, however, is how the power-charging network for electric cars operates in this country. It's a bit like having an iPhone on wheels: you're constantly worrying whether the battery is going to run out and so always on the lookout for a socket to plug into.

With a top speed of 90 mph, the range of my car is about 160 miles but this reduces quickly if

I'm on a motorway, driving uphill or the weather is cold.

I'm lucky enough to have an outdoor socket in my back garden, so I can charge up at home. But if I'm on a long journey, I need to stop and top up the battery.

Once on the road, I am then reliant on the charging network, which is often unreliable and sparse or non-existent in rural areas.

A few years ago, presenter Jeremy Clarkson reviewed the Nissan Leaf on BBC's *Top Gear*. The car ran out of power while he was driving in Lincolnshire, and he discovered the county had no recharging points at that time.

In any case, the 'refuelling'

frequency identification (RFID) card that help me find and access power sources in different places, then debit my account (it costs about £8 for a full charge).

That's fine if, once I've logged in, the power supply is actually working. But last weekend it wasn't. I'd stopped at Todhills Services in Cumbria to top up but found that the charge point was offline.

Fortunately, I had enough power left to reach the next service station, at Gretna — only to find on arrival that neither of its charge points was working. By this point, the battery was too low for me to drive on and try to find another source of energy, so I phoned Ecotricity, the

target instead.)

My own particular electric car-crash, however, wasn't over. When I returned the next day to collect my car from the service station, I found the charging points were still out of order and, once again, Ecotricity couldn't do anything about it.

The helpline staff were very pleasant but told me their maintenance team don't work at weekends, and no one would be along to fix the chargers until Monday at the earliest. Eventually I called my breakdown service, who towed me ten miles to another charger that was working. Experiences like this are the reason why, when family and friends ask if they should buy an electric car, I

network let me down so badly. He pointed out that his company has been running a loss on its Electric Highway — the network of charging stations on motorways — ever since it started in 2011. As a result, it has had to scale back its support services so it can afford to keep the chargers going. In consequence, the helpline for stranded drivers no longer operates 24/7, and the company doesn't rush to fix broken chargers.

Mr Vince adds that with only 170,000 electric vehicles registered in the UK, just 4 per cent of Ecotricity's pumps are in use at any one time. But there won't be many more takers unless the Government encourages far more investment, both in the charging network and in developing better electric vehicles that can go the distance.

While it's true that sales of electric vehicles rose by 28 per cent in the UK over the first half of this year, that's tiny compared with Australia, where there has been a 98 per cent rise; Finland, where sales have gone up by 148 per cent; and Canada, with a 168 per cent rise.

Dustin Benton, policy director at the Green Alliance, which campaigns for better environmental policies, warns that Britain could end up being one of the last developed nations still prioritising the internal combustion engine over electric vehicles.

'A good comparison is the steel industry, which we didn't invest in 15 years ago and which now really struggles against its international competitors,' he says.

I'm not convinced the Government, for all its warm words about tackling air pollution and the money it has allocated so far, really understands the problem.

It would be a great shame if the electric dream turned into a nightmare because policymakers failed to solve the problems that early adopters like me have experienced so far. For the time being, it seems I'll have to let the train take the strain — leaving my not-so-trusty electric Nissan connected to its charging point at home, like a patient on a hospital life-support machine.

**Courtesy of MailOnline*



process could take 13 hours, which meant the journey from London to Lincoln would have taken longer than a stagecoach in the 18th century!

Nissan was furious and said the *Top Gear* test was unfair. It claimed Clarkson had set out with the batteries only partially charged — and that he had driven aimlessly round and round in Lincoln until, inevitably, the car spluttered to a halt (the BBC denied it had misled viewers).

It's true that the technology has improved greatly since then, but for today's electric car owners needing to top up their charge or recharge, the best hope is either a motorway service station or a local authority car park.

To complicate matters, charging points are run by different companies. I have four apps on my phone and carry a radio-

company that runs these particular charge points. Over the next hour, they tried to reset the Gretna chargers twice — but to no avail.

Thankfully, when I rang the folk at the Wigtown Book Festival to tell them of my predicament, a kind volunteer drove 80 miles to collect me.

When at last I arrived, I found the room still full of people who wanted to hear about my book. Many saw an irony in its title, considering that politicians — step forward Environment Secretary Michael Gove and Transport Secretary Chris Grayling — are behind an initiative to replace all petrol and diesel cars with electric or hybrid vehicles by 2040. (They actually considered banning the sale of any new petrol or diesel cars but have seen sense and downgraded this to a political

hesitate to endorse the idea. Most people buy a car because it gives them the freedom and flexibility that public transport can't deliver. Of course, if you are only driving short distances around town, then an electric car is perfect. But as I have found, longer trips — to an old friend's wedding, perhaps, or a family emergency in another part of the country — are a different matter. I had actually considered hiring a petrol-fuelled car for the journey to Wigtown — which, given how much the Nissan cost me, is ludicrous. I can't see how the Government is going to persuade the majority of people, not just the environmentally minded ones, that electric cars are a sensible move.

Dale Vince, the multi-millionaire founder of Ecotricity, tried to explain why the charging

Cab Chat update...

The Cab Chat Team recently launched the Cab Chat Daily podcast.

The daily podcast brings news and information to the drivers in a short simple podcast. To listen to the Daily show just subscribe to Cab Chat in your favourite podcast app. The daily show is in addition to the main weekly Cab Chat Radio Show which goes out every Wednesday and is available in your favourite podcast app or via Mixcloud.

Pam the Cab Chat Cab

Pam is the Cab Chat Cab... The team at Cab Chat asked the listeners for suggestions for a name for the Cab Chat Cab and were offer many different names including: Chatty Chatty Bang Bang, Lady CabChatterley, Vommy, Cabitha, GabCab, Green Badge Rocket, Chitter Chatter Cab, ChatterBox &

Dave. But the name that struck the team as extremely apt came from our very own Drop Kick Rick, who suggested we should call her Pam due to the teams, or rather SuperCabby's Obsession with Pie & Mash. And so it was deemed that the Cab Chat Cab would be known as Pam.

Pam even has her own Twitter account so that you can follow her on her travels twitter.com/pamcabchatcab You will see Pam out and about around London and taking part on nearly all the UK Taxi Charity Outings during 2019. Look out for Pam, if you see her about you can win a Goody Bag.

The Hack Shack Dinner & Dance
This year's Hack Shack



Dinner & Dance will be held at the Tudor Park Marriott Hotel Bearstead Kent on Saturday 26th January 2019. Tickets are £45.00 per person which includes a 3 course meal.

Entertainment this year will be provided by the fantastic

Jukebox Party Band of Joe Lewis and Jon Cox and maybe some special guests.

The Hack Shack party has been going for quite a few years and is the continuation of nights out that I started many years ago, it is held in January as most drivers do not want to take a night off work in December so essentially it is our Christmas Party.

For tickets please contact Peter Savage on 07956 149203.

Cab Chat Pie & Mash Club

The Cab Chat Pie & Mash Club is going strong with the team visiting a different restaurant in or around London every month. All are welcome to come along and sample some traditional London fayre.

For future dates of the Pie & Mash Club meets please visit our website cabchat.london and check the calendar for dates.

Cab Chat Cheesy Boat Cruise

The Cab Chat Cheesy Boat Cruise has been set for Saturday 18th May 2019 - the idea behind The Cheesy Boat Cruise is there are many Soul Boat Cruises throughout the year and the team wanted to do something a little different.

We are considering serving Pie & Mash on the boat (pending logistics) and entertainment will be provided by the Jukebox Party Band and the Cab Chat Team with special guests.

Tickets and prices will be announced in the New year.



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QUESTION TIME WITH DANIEL SEVERIN, CERT CII

With over a decade of commercial insurance experience, Plan Insurance Brokers' Head of Sales & Schemes, Daniel Severin provides informed views about the industry.

Can Plan Insurance Brokers cover younger drivers?

New cab drivers can often find it difficult to get a competitive quote. They can even struggle to be covered by insurers or brokers altogether. At Plan, we think that it's important to help the next generation of drivers, and appreciate the specific requirements that younger drivers may have.

Whether you've decided to become a cab driver at 40 or at the tender age of 21, once you've met the licensing requirements, we can provide you with a cover that matches your needs.

With experts readily available to speak to, we make sure you are given the policy that suits you, so you can enjoy your new journey, safe in the knowledge that you are covered by trusted trade specialists.

"It is important for insurers to embrace the next generation of taxi drivers and help the growing number of drivers under 25."

I have a motoring conviction... can I get insurance?

Throughout a lifetime on the road, many drivers end up in the unfortunate position to receive a motoring conviction. Convicted drivers can be quoted exceptionally high premiums or even sometimes be denied cover.

At Plan Insurance, we place value on treating you as an individual and want to enable you to continue working: we aren't the regulator nor the enforcer of the rules and we feel that, if the Licensing Authority allows you to work and drive a taxi, then we should be committed to helping you.

That's why we've worked with our main insurer partner to offer insurance to drivers with convictions. If you have previously been given a ban or points on your licence for driving offences, give our friendly sales experts a call, they will be glad to discuss and help sort your insurance needs.

Are electric cabs more expensive to insure?

The cost is only marginally higher than it would be for an older vehicle like a TX2, and similar to what we would quote for a recent TX4 or Vito.

Some insurers may be reluctant to quote for electric vehicles, as they don't have much historical claims data, repair costs may be higher and parts could be harder to source, making it difficult to anticipate the value of claims.

Our main insurer partner has not been deterred by this and want to support taxi drivers wishing to make the move to electric. Please get in touch if you wish to discuss your insurance needs for an electric cab.

Thank you for taking the time to read this column. For more information, please don't hesitate to tweet us any questions you may have @PlanInsurance, or to contact us at 0333 003 0063.



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■ HEATHROW AIRPORT REPRESENTATION

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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

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LOSS OF EARNINGS DUE TO UBER? SIGN UP TO CABBIE ACTION GROUP TODAY!

Have you experienced a loss of earnings at the hands of Uber? Sign up to Cabbie Group Action today

You may have heard that thousands of taxi drivers across London are signing up to join a potential group legal action against Uber. We at law firm Mishcon de Reya believe there is a good case to be made against Uber and are encouraging as many drivers as possible to sign up to ensure the claim is a huge success.

Cabbie Group Action aims to hold Uber to account for what we believe are its unlawful operations since 2012 until at least the end of 2017. We believe Uber failed to adhere to the relevant statutory framework, and that this has been to the detriment of licensed taxi drivers who have been operating lawfully. Uber should not be allowed to get away with this.

Over 7,500 drivers across London have registered their interest in Cabbie Group Action and we continue to ask others to do the same. The more drivers that join the claim, then the more evidence we can gather to put together the best possible case. This includes drivers working longer hours as well as a loss of earnings.

Any cabbie who is or has been licensed by TfL to operate in London may be able to take part. Even if you are now retired, you may be able to participate if it can be demonstrated that Uber operating unlawfully in London caused you a loss of earnings.

All you have to do at this stage to register your interest in taking part is provide your name, badge number and contact details. This does not commit you to formally



joining the legal action. We will then come back to you at a later date with more information about how the group action works, and will ask you to provide information about the loss you have suffered.

Should the action be successful, everyone who takes part will win back a share of their lost earnings from Uber. The case is being entirely funded by litigation funding firm Harbour, subject to enough drivers signing up to be able to demonstrate a significant loss. Harbour will take a percentage

share of the damages awarded (up to a maximum of 30%), in return for funding the case. If we lose, Harbour loses its investment with no recourse to the drivers.

We know some of you have been asking why we aren't taking legal action against TfL for failing to regulate Uber. We completely understand the trade's frustration towards TfL, and why this has led to a separate group action on this issue. However, we believe Cabbie Group Action benefits from a direct and streamlined

approach that will have the best chance of addressing the damage that has been caused by Uber's unlawful actions. A legal finding that Uber has operated unlawfully should force the regulator to come to the correct conclusion over Uber's suitability to hold an operator's licence.

We are delighted that so many stakeholders in the cab trade, including LCDC, have been supportive of Cabbie Group Action. We want to make clear that none of the trade's stakeholders are receiving a financial incentive in

exchange for their support. They are backing this because they agree that Uber should be held responsible for its actions.

Please register today at www.cabbiegroupaction.com to find out more and encourage other drivers to do the same.

If you've already registered your interest in taking part, then thank you. We will be contacting you soon with further information about how the claim will work and what it will involve.

**By Richard Leedham,
Partner, Mishcon de Reya**

Hill back on winning trail

TeamWilkey's ID Hill got back to his winning ways on Saturday nights Steve Goodwin's Show at the York Hall, Bethnal Green.

Hill was coming off a 1 point loss to Sanjeev Sahota in a Southern Area Title eliminator which was a contender for "Fight of the Year". He later also scored a draw against Ireland's Sean Creagh. The old ID was back on Saturday up against the Croatian, Luke Leskovic. Hill easily won the first round, Leskovic came out in the second throwing

combinations of threes and fours but Hill soon took control of the fight.

Club member Alec Wilkey, who trains Hill, told The Badge: "I'm very pleased with Hill's performance, he got a good 6 rounds in against a tough boy and we are now looking to push forward to Title fights".

ID Hill will be on the next MTK Show which will be at Brentwood on the 17th November along with his team mate Haisam Ali, who will be making his first appearance with TeamWilkey.



Cantwell in 3

Sammy Cantwell opened up the Steve Goodwin Show at The York Hall, Bethnal Green on Saturday night.

Cantwell was up against the Bulgarian Georgi Andonov. Sam is trained by his Dad Micky, who himself is a former British Champion and World Title Challenger.

The first round ended fairly even but Sam started to put the pressure on in the second, having Andonov down on the canvas with a great body shot. In the third it was more of the same, with Cantwell targeting the body again with big body shots, Andonov was turning away in agony forcing the referee call an end to the fight.





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Airport matters

... by Mark White



ELECTRIC TAXI - FEEDER PARK CHARGING ISSUES

October 2018

LCDC

Having read in a recent edition of 'The Badge', about the proposed changes to the way Drivers with Electric Taxis operate when charging at Heathrow, LCDC Member Brian Nayar, got in touch with the Club's Office to voice his concerns. Brian was given the details of HAL's Officers and having written to them regarding the issues, was invited to attend the next Liaison Meeting where he made a detailed presentation to both Heathrow and the other Taxi Trade Reps:

Not all drivers that service Heathrow are able to charge at home or live close to the airport. For many, the feeder park is their opportunity to charge and drive solely on electric, without the need for the petrol generator.

I don't believe forcing drivers to charge before entering the Taxi Feeder Park is fair. Drivers are

being encouraged, where possible, to charge before leaving the North Park and enter the South (Main) Park. This isn't always possible, as there may not be any free charge points.

Also, what is the protocol if the North Park is empty? Are drivers expected to

charge and potentially watch the North Park fill up and then join the back of the queue?

The sole purpose of drivers servicing the Airport is for financial gain. Why would drivers of the TX come here if they have to add an hour or more on their wait time

over their colleagues? We are not looking for incentives or rewards, just to be able to pass through the feeder park at the same time as everyone else. Drivers are making huge investments into the TX-e and want to ensure they are doing their bit to clean the air in and around London. Sadly some are trying to create an 'us and them' situation.

There are also unsubstantiated rumours of TX-e drivers leaving the

confines of the Feeder Park to undertake 'app' work or working Hatton Cross. This is purely anecdotal and no basis to force a change in the charging process on drivers. To my knowledge, not one driver has been caught doing this. If any driver is caught abusing the system, they should automatically get a 7-day suspension. Twice it's a month, and three times their tag is revoked. Drivers also need to be encouraged to use the CCS charge and move their cab once it's charged. There is a fixation with drivers using the CHAdeMO connection, which is an after-market fitting. LEVC have confirmed to me there is no difference in the charge time between the two connectors; what is different is how the charge time is displayed onscreen.

The CHAdeMO will always tell you it is 1 hour until you're charged. The CCS gives you an accurate time until you're 95% charged.

Many drivers are leaving their taxis longer than is necessary and taking up valuable space. I have had conversations with many drivers asking them to ensure they use the CCS



and move their taxi as soon as possible, to allow somebody else the space to charge.

Can this message be fed through to drivers of the TX-e via HAL and APCOA, as a condition for using the charging stations? There is no need for drivers, charging on a 50kwh DC charge, to be there for longer than 45 minutes. Quite often, the cab will be at 80-90% in around 30 minutes.

The other issue we have is not all the 50kwh DC charge points work, but the 43kwh AC point does. This adds around 15 minutes to the above charge times. Also, there are times some of the chargers don't work at all. Drivers are being encouraged to take a photo of the HAL bar code, and report these to the Cabin.

Currently LEVC say they are waiting to deliver 400 new TX-e's, and there is a 4 month wait time. The infrastructure doesn't appear to be keeping up with the pace of the adoption of the vehicle. In the near future, we will be seeing the fully electric Nissan E-NV200 Taxi and hopefully, the self-charging Metrocab.

It is also worth noting that Mercedes may enter the market at some time in the future with a fully electric taxi.

The seven (7) charge points in the North Park are not adequate to accommodate the electric vehicles. Every day, we are seeing more TX's coming to the feeder park to charge and service the airport. There are many times whereby drivers are having to queue to get on a charge point. The simple fact is there needs to be more charging points. The conversation should be around future proofing the feeder park to accommodate the electric taxi.

Freemantle have confirmed they are installing charge points airside, as HAL want all their vehicles to be electric. Is it not good news for HAL to say they have the infrastructure in place to ensure every electric taxi servicing the airport is emissions free?



There are also unsubstantiated rumours of TX-e drivers leaving the confines of the Feeder Park to undertake 'app' work or working Hatton Cross. This is purely anecdotal and no basis to force a change in the charging process on drivers. To my knowledge, not one driver has been caught doing this

Electric taxis with adequate charge, will never be pumping out pollution. If the ability to charge is nullified, drivers of the TX will be running on the petrol generator - negating the Zero Emissions aspect, and adding to the pollution figures surrounding the airport.

There is some space for around 5 new charge points on the Bath Road wall. Any installation here will lose 16-17 spaces in the North Park. It could work as a temporary solution, but is it worth losing these spaces to accommodate 5 electric taxis? Or perhaps the Unite portacabin could be removed, to allow 5 charge

points to be installed in its place, without the loss of 16-17 spaces?

However, I the best solution is to install charging points in the s(Main) South Park.

Evolt (part of Swarco), have a 22kw charge point with two outputs. LEVC have confirmed from empty to full using 22kwh is around 1hr 15mins. Roughly the same charge time will apply to all future electric taxis entering the London market.

The dimensions of these charges are H1550mm, W290mm and D450mm. The power supply is less than the current 50kwh points and it can charge two

cabs at once. These could be installed in every other lane in the south park at 5m intervals. This solution also means there will be no loss of rank space.

The cost could be split by all relevant parties including the Office of Low Emissions Vehicles, Defra's Air Quality Fund, TfL, The Mayor of London, Hillingdon Council and more importantly Swarco. If managed correctly, it could be cost neutral for HAL.

Swarco's investment will be quickly returned on a near 24/7 usage of their charging points, as they are guaranteed a captive user base. HAL can then confirm they are helping to change their taxi fleet to zero emissions and taxi drivers can continue to service the airport knowing their electric vehicle is being driven pollution free.

Until such time more charging points are installed, the current arrangement should remain in place. HAL have demonstrated they are serious about lowering their carbon footprint, by ensuring all their vehicles airside are electric. As I've demonstrated above, installing charge points in the (Main) South Park could effectively be at no cost to

HAL, neither will there be any loss of rank space.

Later in the month, Brian gave the LCDC a progress report:

Dear all, I thought I would give you an update on where we are with the chargers in the feeder park.

I met with Richard Freemantle and some colleagues, last Friday morning (14/9), to go through the problems we had been experiencing. Richard immediately contacted SWARCO, and within a few hours every charge point was operating at full capacity.

Chargers 5, 6 & 7 were experiencing RFID failures. As of yesterday, this has been rectified. Unfortunately a driver broke the CHAdeMO on number 6, and this should be replaced today.

Sean Taylor of APCOA is also putting on new signage relating to problem reporting. These should be placed on the units today. I am also awaiting signage relating to how long TX's should be left charging, and not overstay these times.

Once I have more information going forward, I will let you know.

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Film 2018

by Norman Barry



RED – Stop, don't bother wasting your money

AMBER – It's alright, go if you want. Or wait for the DVD

GREEN – Put your foot down, go and see it.



First Man (12A)

The creative team behind the Oscar winning *La La Land* and *Whiplash* return to the big screen this week with a refreshingly, non music themed film.

First Man is a portrait of astronaut Neil Armstrong, focusing on the years 1961 to 1969 and NASA's race to land a man on the moon before the end of the decade. It is a visceral examination of one man's sacrifices and the cost of what was one of the most dangerous missions in history.

"...That's one small step for man..."

Ryan Gosling plays Armstrong with his usual stoic, clenched jaw intensity. Our very own Claire Foy (fresh from her role as Her Majesty the Queen in the Netflix series *The Crown*) is his loyal wife Janet. Her role is the key to opening Gosling's very internal performance. The scenes of them together shine with a real flair of naturalism. A terrific cast of American character actors round up a strong support. Along with their interactions, the film could best be described as the most epic story about a most private

man.

"...One giant leap for mankind..."

Once the Apollo 11 team blast off into space, the film really does its best to keep a level of realism. Filmed in the IMAX format, it is recommended to view the film on the biggest screen that you can. The film has courted some controversy in America, particularly with an omitted scene of the stars and stripes flag being planted on the moon's surface. Fortunately this is not a Michael Bay, USA, gung-ho type of film. It is merely in keeping with the tone of what has lead up to that moment. The 50th anniversary of the moon landing approaches next July and while there are still an abundance of conspiracy theories surrounding it, the film makes for a fascinating story nonetheless.

First Man is released nationwide Friday 12th October 2018



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