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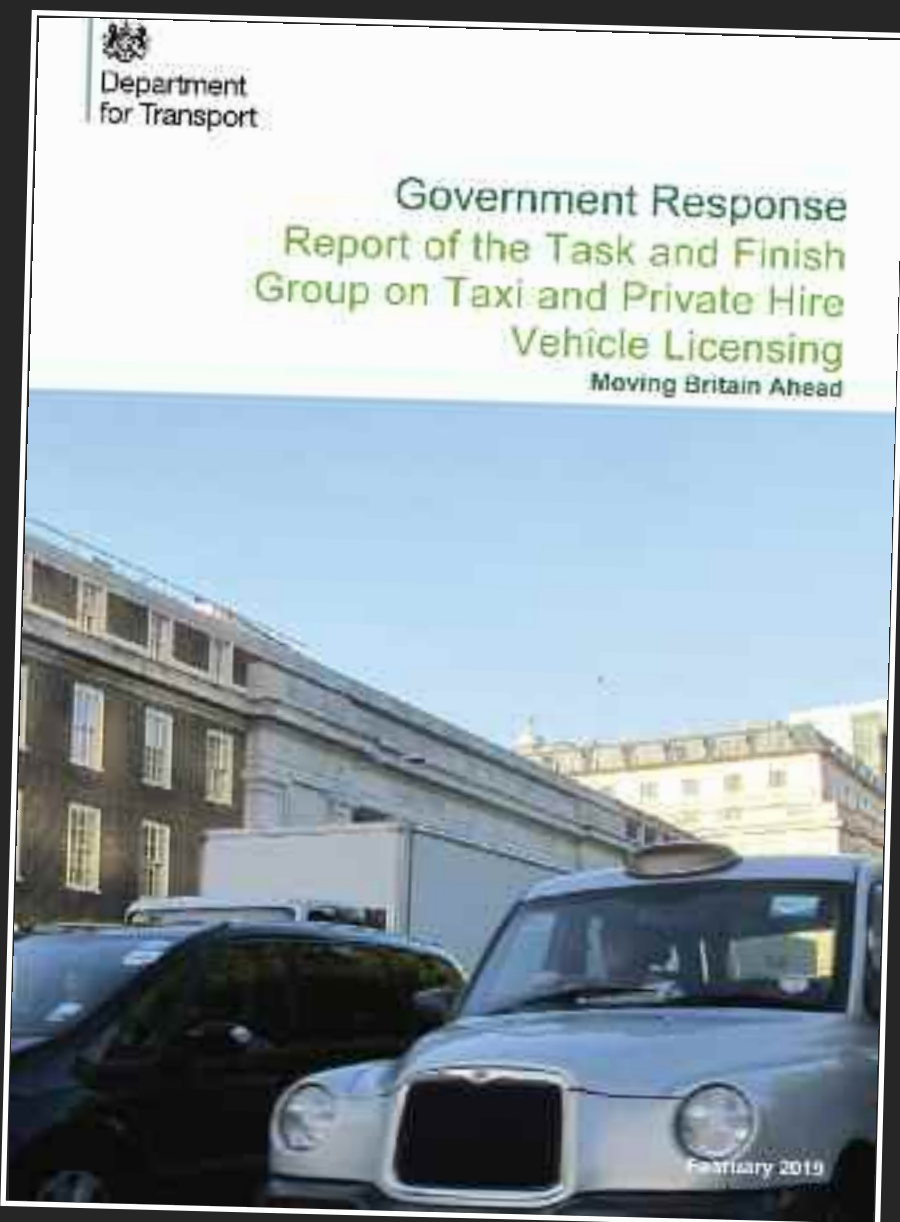
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Issue 266 February 2019

STITCH UP!



REPORT IGNORES TRADE'S CONCERNS OVER PHV NUMBERS AND APPS

PAGE 3

INSIDE



STREET CLOSURE PROTESTS

PAGES 4 & 5

NEWS



LORD WINSTON: BIKE LANES ADD TO POLLUTION

PAGE 7

NEWS



CABBIE WINS RUM AWARD!

PAGE 15

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The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Management Committee of the London Cab Driver's Club.

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

The London Cab Drivers' Club Ltd.

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WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE...?

In our first edition of 2019, we find ourselves embroiled yet again in more turmoil and angst regarding both our Mayor and TfL.

Not only are we being restricted on many well known and used roads, TfL have also announced to the trade a bombshell consultation regarding reducing age limits on taxis to just 12 years.

At the same time Addison Lee announced it was purchasing 1,200 Euro 6 diesel Volkswagen Sharan people carriers to comply with the new ULEZ requirements. Chief Executive, Elsa Burger stated, "whilst they were keen to move to an electric fleet... we were unable to do so over the limited charging infrastructure which would not support the shift to electric", It is also pertinent that TfL have stated that all the bus fleets must be Euro6 diesel by 2020.

So, the Club must ask - why are

taxis being made the scapegoat when it comes to pollution in London? In the last three years there has been a drop of taxis entering the congestion zone by 15%.

According to the Mayor, we are responsible for 20% of pollution in the capital, but we know the figures he is using are from 2013 and since that time we have lost 2,000 taxis but added 50,000 PHV onto our streets.

Last year, TfL licensed over 46,000 diesel PHVs, of which 8367 were new vehicles.

Below you can see a chart that indicates various modes of transport and their pollution percentage.

Grant Davis
 LCDC Chairman





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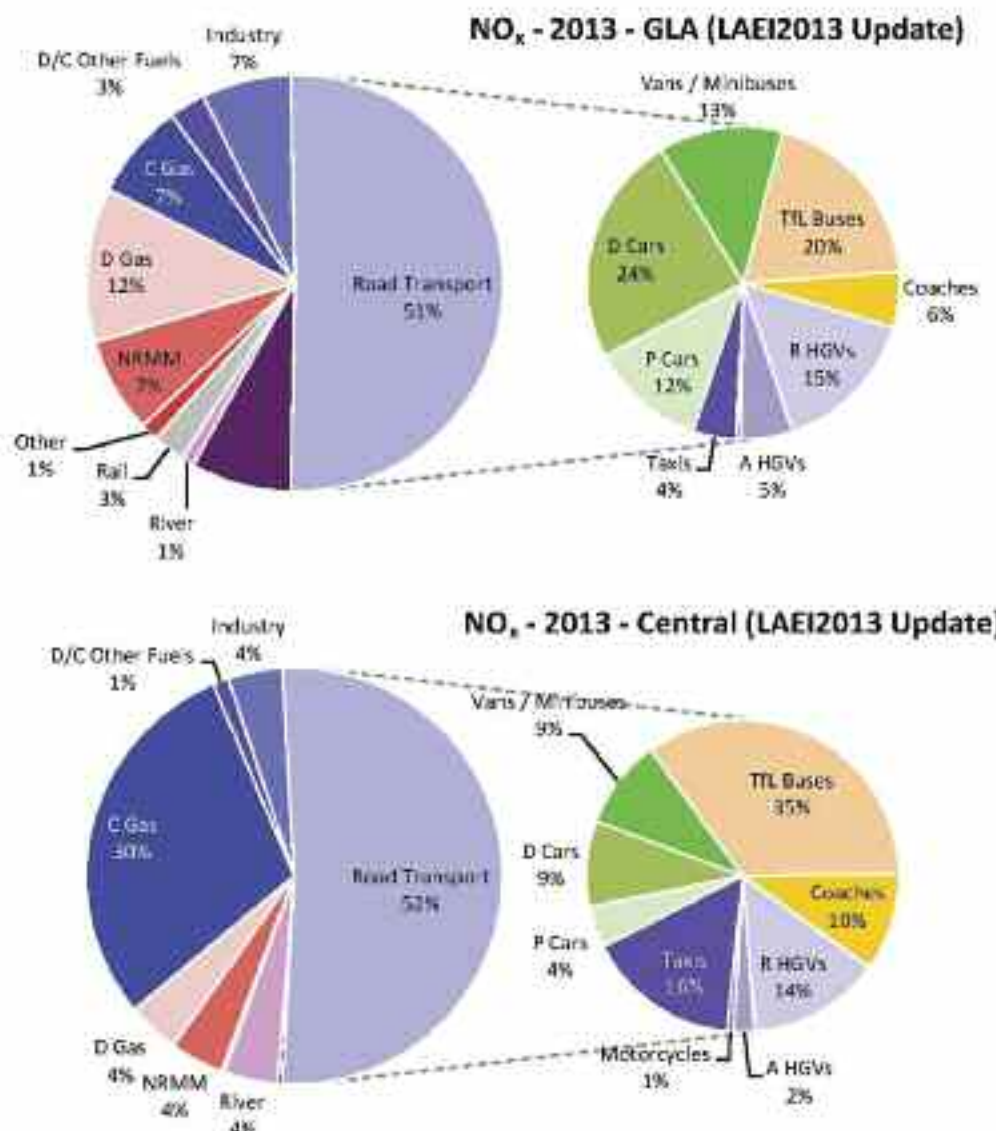
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CHART SHOWING VEHICLE POLLUTION LEVELS IN THE CAPITAL



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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.

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- Grant Davis, LCDC Chairman

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GOVERNMENT/ 'UBER' TASK & FINISH REPORT

As you can see from some of the Government recommendations in the "Task & Finish" report published this week, it would appear that those meetings between Chris Grayling & Dara were more than fruitful?
As we are aware, UBER

want more than London and to help them achieve their goals, they need a Govt that's on their side regarding recommendations over vital Taxi & PH legislation. As you can see from below, the three main bones of contention for

the taxi Trade in London are:

- A. Capping PH numbers
- B. Plying for hire
- C. App regulation

Reading the Uber...sorry, Govt recommendations they have no appetite to look at changing any of

the above.

The disappointing side of all this for the cab trade is Steve Mac at the LTDA has been the sole taxi trade representative and as such none of us have been privy to any suggestions put forward or any updates for the other Trade Orgs

throughout the last two years.

More recently with the Mayor who is now using Steve McNamara's statement that there would be 9k ZEC taxi on the street by 2020 to threaten us with a twelve year age limit.

Some key excerpts from the report:

TFG 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.

Government response

2.11 This matter was the subject of specific consideration by the Law Commission in the course of its review. The Commission ultimately concluded that a statutory definition of plying for hire would not be a practical improvement on the current position. This decision was reached with the advice of an expert panel established specifically for the purpose of discussing reform of "plying for hire". The Commission's main reason for reaching this conclusion was that whether a vehicle is plying for hire in particular circumstances is a matter of fact and degree that the courts must consider. It concluded that many of the current grey areas would remain unresolved as no statutory list of factors could be sufficiently determinative to give clear guidance.

2.12 We have no reason to believe that the legal situation has changed since 2014, and thus no reason to believe that a new or reconvened expert panel would reach a different conclusion. As a result, the Government does not intend to take this recommendation forward at this time.

do perform functions that appear very similar. However, the Government is not convinced that there is a compelling case for the licensing of taxi intermediaries (such as taxi apps or radio circuits).

2.14 An operator is fundamental to the booking of a PHV, and so has a distinct and legally necessary role in the regulatory

degree of regulation applied to taxis than PHVs.

2.15 The Law Commission also considered this, and concluded that intermediaries working solely with licensed taxis should not require licensing.

TFG 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.

Government response

2.16 Government is aware of the additional cost involved in the purchase of a wheelchair accessible vehicle

TFG 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 private hire vehicles 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.

Government response

2.20 Local licensing authorities outside London can currently limit the number of taxis they licence, provided there is no significant 'unmet demand' for taxi services in their areas. It is not currently possible by law for any licensing authority in England to limit the number of PHVs it licenses.

2.21 The TFG members had differing opinions on this recommendation, recorded in their comments in the annex to

the report; Transport for London (TfL) strongly supports it, while some other members flag concerns about the effects on competition in particular. Competition benefits consumers by incentivising operators to give value for money, to innovate, and drive improvements in service standards.

2.22 Of particular concern would be any potential impact on safety. An undersupply of vehicles would increase wait times and cause people to be stranded in vulnerable situations, potentially increasing the use of unlicensed, unvetted and illegal drivers and vehicles. We acknowledge that the recommendation is that licence 'caps' should require a public interest test, which may allow for consideration of any negative impacts. Nevertheless, the potential negative impacts of capping for passengers are considerable, and real-life demand for taxi and PHV services can be very difficult to accurately calculate. Reducing the availability of PHVs could also result in higher prices for passengers, as, unlike taxis, PHV fares are not controlled.

2.23 There has been significant growth in the number of PHVs licensed in London in recent years; there was an increase of 66% between March 2014 and March 2017, from around 53,000 vehicles to nearly 88,000. Since then, the number does appear to have stabilised at around 87,500.4 TfL has congestion charging powers, and has announced following public consultation that the exemption from the congestion

To read the report in full, visit:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/775983/taxi-task-and-finish-gov-reponse.pdf



Nusrat Ghani MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport

TFG 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).

Government response

2.13 PHV operators, and companies that act as intermediaries for taxi bookings,

system. Conversely, when a taxi is requested via an intermediary, that intermediary is doing nothing more than passengers could do themselves - they merely convey the request from the passenger to a taxi driver. This is unlike the situation with PHVs where it would be illegal for the passenger to engage the services of the driver directly, and the involvement of the PHV operator is necessary to make the journey a lawful one. This distinction reflects the greater

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OSBORNE BLAMES CONGESTION ON CYCLISTS

George Osborne, who served as the U.K.'s Chancellor of the Exchequer under Prime Minister David Cameron from 2010 to 2016, has today blamed cyclists for London's traffic congestion.

Writing in the Evening Standard newspaper, which he has edited since May 2017, Osborne wrote that London's "choking gridlock" was caused not by too many motor vehicles but by infrastructure built for cyclists.

Specifically, he blames the Embankment Cycleway besides the Thames, built in 2015, and which took the space that was once reserved for parking tourist coaches along this stretch of road close to the Houses of Parliament. Until the 1950s, this part of the road was a tram line.

Osborne said he "applauded" the fact London was now "one of the more bicycle-friendly cities in the world" but he has come out against one of the icons of that friendliness.

Without citing any evidence he claimed that "some of the cycle superhighways are ill-conceived, causing near-permanent congestion and

pollution. The one running along the Embankment is the most obvious mistake."

The Embankment Cycleway was installed under the leadership of former London Mayor Boris Johnson, a political rival of Osborne. According to Transport for London, almost 7,500 cycle trips were made along the Embankment each day before the protected cycleway was installed. Since the creation of the cycleway the number of cycle journeys have increased by 38% to more than 10,300 a day.

Despite the many millions of pounds it cost to create the cycleway, Osborne wants it to be destroyed: "If the Mayor, Sadiq Khan, started again with a better design on the Embankment, he would win plaudits and support for the further work to make ours a capital of cycling."

Osborne is the second former Chancellor to object to London's tiny number of protected cycleways. During a debate in the House of Lords in 2015, Lord Lawson incorrectly claimed that the building of cycleways in London had done more damage to London "than almost anything since the Blitz."



Nigel Lawson was the UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1983 and 1989. He is also a leading climate-change denier.

His comments were in a debate where fellow Conservative peer Lord Higgins had steered the subject on to cycle lanes, blaming not motoring for London's foul air but cycling. He said the "appalling increases in congestion and pollution" were "caused by the introduction of bicycle

lanes."

Answering this strange claim with an even more bizarre one of his own, Lord Lawson said:

My Lords, we all know the Mayor of London's addiction to cycling, but is my noble friend Lord Higgins not absolutely right that what is happening now has done more damage, and is doing more damage, to London than almost anything since the Blitz?

George Osborne's

intervention is significant because the Evening Standard is London's leading daily newspaper and can often shape debate in the U.K. capital.

Last week, writing in the same newspaper, London's Walking and Cycling Commissioner Will Norman said: "It's more high-quality cycle lanes, not fewer, that London needs to sustain its success. And that is exactly what we are delivering."

Courtesy of Forbes

LORD WINSTON: CYCLE LANES ADD TO POLLUTION

The capital's pro-cycling campaigners have hit back at Lord Robert Winston after he claimed that bike lanes increase pollution.

The professor said in a debate in the House of Lords on Monday that he believes cycle lanes cause increased levels of pollution by forcing cars and vans to travel more slowly.

Calling on the government to publish figures for pollution levels both before and after the introduction of cycle lanes, he claimed: "The reduction of lanes which traffic can travel down means that there are more cars taking longer journeys than ever before at slower speed

"The evidence is that the internal combustion engine is less efficient and pollutes more at slow speed particularly when it's waiting."

Simon Munk, infrastructure campaigner for the London

Cycling Campaign told the Standard: "As a scientist I expect Lord Winston to back up his claims with evidence, all studies so far show that most cycle schemes in London have decreased pollution."

Although Lord Winston did not point to any cycle lanes in particular, Mr Munk said that he assumed he was talking about the east to west and north to south cycle superhighway schemes. He said: "Pollution monitors along the embankment actually show a marginal decrease in pollution levels since the cycle schemes were brought in."

Mr Munk also hit out at Transport Minister, Baroness Sugg, who took part in the debate and said the the construction of bike lanes had reduced available space on the roads increasing congestion.

Pointing to a TFL study which found that the primary



cause of the increase in congestion was down to unnecessary car journeys, Mr Munk rejected her comments.

He said that the study found that there was no evidence that cycle lanes had a "significant impact on slowing cars down". In order to decrease congestion, Mr Munk

suggested that more people should ditch motor vehicles in favour of cycling or walking.

Pointing out the Mayor's pledge to halve the number of private car journeys on main roads by 2041, he said: "The Mayor knows that the only way to get out of the slow jam is to build more for cycling."

A spokesman for Sadiq Khan's office also disputed Mr Winston's comments. He said: "Cycle lanes do not cause congestion and pollution. With our limited street space it is vital that we encourage more Londoners to cycle, walk and use public transport. These are cleaner and more efficient uses of our roads, with cycle lanes proven to help move people along our streets.

"With London's population set to expand to 10.8 million over the next 25 years, making our capital one of the best cities in the world for cycling is not only about improving our health, wellbeing and quality of life, it is absolutely fundamental for our future economic prosperity."

Currently, Britain has one of the lowest rates of cycling in Europe with only four per cent of Britons cycling daily compared to 43 per cent of people in the Netherlands

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Alan's Angle



ANOTHER ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTMINSTER

As part of the Mayor of London's Healthy Streets Vision, Westminster City Council is proposing to introduce a pilot "School Street" scheme outside St. Mary's Bryanston Square Church of England Primary School in Enford Street.

The main objective of a school street is to enhance road safety and provide opportunities for children to be active through travel and play by closing a road during school opening and closing hours.

This initiative is being piloted to create a safer and more pleasant environment at the start and end of the school day as part of the City Council's Active Streets Programme and Air Quality pledge to create clean air zones outside and within the direct vicinity of schools. It is proposed to close Enford Street to motor vehicles between 8.00 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. and between 2.45 p.m. and 3.45 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays, during school term time. The closure would be controlled through the

installation of removable bollards at the junction of Enford Street and York Street. The traffic signs would not be visible during school holidays, and advanced warning signs would be placed to advise drivers of the closure.

It is also proposed to introduce double yellow line "at any time" waiting and loading restrictions at the junction of York Street with Enford Street and the south-western arm of Wyndham Place to prevent obstructive parking.

What I can't understand about this scheme is the council wants to create clean air zones outside and within the direct vicinity of schools, but this school sits on top of one of the most congested and polluted roads in London and that pollution will always be in the area. The area in and around Enford St is not going to all of a sudden be pollution free. Closing this road will make the near by road of Seymour place heavier and I don't think they will give us anymore green time to allow us and our passengers to get to Marylebone Station. I do get trying to make the area around the school entrance safer for



the children but feel that WCC should also be concentrating on how the kids get to school

and try and get the parents to make their school runs in a different mode of transport and

not block up the already congested roads in and around the school.

Harrods feeder rank update

This month saw the end of the trial of the Taxi Rank in Basil St. This has come to end due to residents complaining of Taxis over ranking in the side streets. We have had many discussions over the last year with TPH, Harrods and Kensington Council to

try and solve the problem with Taxis queueing up around Harrods looking for work. All parties involved are trying to work this out for us and the residents.

The rank was a trial and unfortunately it hasn't worked but we've given the council and Harrods a few other proposals to look at. Hopefully we can try and get another feeder rank in another position in Basil Street and also maybe a trial of making Hans Road one way at the junction of Basil Street.

I will keep you informed after the next meeting with the stakeholders happens. This was the tweet from TPH confirming the rank closure:

Today is the last day of the trial feeder rank on Basil Street outside

Harry Dolce Vita restaurant. As a result of issues with over-ranking on Hans Road and Hans Place, the council has decided not to continue the trial. The yellow box will remain in place.

Taxi toilet trials

As you may recall, the Mayor committed, in his Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan, to giving taxi drivers better access to toilets on the TfL estate.

This took the form of an initial trial which provided taxi drivers with access to toilets within Oxford Circus and Warwick Avenue Tube

stations. Unfortunately, due to the minimal use of the facilities at these two stations, this trial was not successful and was subsequently withdrawn.

I am pleased to inform you that from Monday 11 February 2019, we will be commencing an enhanced three month trial, which includes parking provision at nearby rest ranks, at four London Underground stations:
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PLAN TO SELL OFF COACH STATION

Transport bosses are facing a furious backlash over a £350 million proposal to relocate Victoria Coach Station to a residential area near Paddington.

Campaigners claim the arrival of the capital's main bus terminal, which is used by 14 million passengers a year, would "pollute our neighbourhood and blight our landscape". Transport for London believes the Grade II listed, Art Deco building in Belgravia is no longer viable for a coach station. One option being considered is a strip of TfL-owned land on railway sidings by Royal Oak station, near the garden squares of Bayswater. The proposal, which would also include new housing, has "horrified" residents and received cross-party condemnation at the Tory-run borough of Westminster.

More than 2,000 people have signed petitions against it. Bayswater Labour councillor Maggie Carman said the residential area was a "very unsuitable site" for one of Europe's busiest coach hubs.

She said: "There's already issues with congestion and it's one of the most polluted bits of London. This will just make it worse." She warned that, if hundreds of coaches came through the area, garden squares would be a magnet for rough sleepers and tired travellers. "It would just change the character of the area completely," she added.

Nearly a quarter of a million coaches arrive and depart annually from the 87-year-old Victoria terminal, serving 1,200 destinations in the UK and 400 foreign cities. The Duke of Westminster's Grosvenor Group owns the



freehold of the 3.3-acre site, thought to be worth £150 million.

Emily Payne, a Conservative councillor for Bayswater who grew up in the area, said a 24-hour coach station at Royal Oak would be

"incredibly disruptive", adding: "It's a residential area where families have lived for generations. There is a high number of primary schools in the area, and the impact on the pollution will be terrible."

TfL says no final decision has been taken. The hub could be split into several mini-stations scattered around London, while Old Oak Common, Heathrow or Stratford are other possible locations.

Cab Chat show

The Cab Chat Team would like to wish all our listeners a Happy New Year and we hope that 2019 has got off to a good start or you.

Cab Chat is now back after a short unplanned break, (please listen to episode 195 to find out why we took a break). We have all the usual features in the show plus a lot of new ones planned for the coming year. The next Cab Chat Pie & Mash Club meet is on Monday 4th March 2019 at Flo's in Crayford at 2:00pm, this is the big one where many of the team will be taking on the 5 Pie Challenge, this is where you must eat 5 Pies, Double Mash and Liquor in 20 minutes. If any of our listeners want to come along and join us in the 5 Pie Challenge, please do so and we will pay for your Pie & Mash. 4th March will also be the day

when we record the 200th Cab Chat Radio Show, we have now been bringing you Cab Chat every week for over 4 years and plan to carry on bringing you a weekly show. During the 200th show we will be looking back over the past 4 years and playing some of the highlights from previous shows.

The Cab Chat Cheesy Boat Cruise and Awards will be later this year (dates to be confirmed soon) The Jukebox Party Band of Joe and Jon we be providing the entertainment on the boat along with the Cab Chat Team plus of course the coveted Cab Chat Awards. We are expecting this to be a popular event so get your tickets early when they go on sale.

Cab Chat Team members Joe and Jon have been covering some of the demos with the very popular Periscope videos



that go down very well with the trade, it can be very tiring walking around with a camera and mic for 3 hours talking, especially during the cold weather, so a massive well done and thank you to Joe & Jon.

Joe and Jon have also brought

out another track "Save the last dance for me" which is available for purchase and download on iTunes and also available in Spotify, you can find the links on our website, this track comes after the success of their Christmas single "Christmas just wont be Christmas without you" which was well received and was played on Radio London by friend of the trade Duncan Barkes.

Good news for Cab Chat is that Plan Insurance and Drivertax have agreed to carry on Sponsorship of the show for 2019, this helps us to pay for the costs associated with producing the show each week and the purchase of equipment as our older stuff wears out. January 26th was the Annual Hack Shack Dinner & Dance which is quickly becoming one of the highlights of the trades

social calendar. This year's party was held at the Tudor Park Marriott in Bearsted Kent. Revellers sat down to a 3 course meal with wine on the table, then were entertained by the Jukebox Party Band of Joe & Jon and Disco by Simon all for the very reasonable price of £45.00 per person. There was also a raffle which raised over £600 which is to be donated to the Magical Taxi Tour. The night was a roaring success with everyone commenting that it was the best one so far and that they will definitely be going again next year. If you would like to get in touch or contribute to the show in any way, produce a feature or just send in a voice sound bite airing your views, please visit our website at <http://cabchat.london> or give us a call on 020 8144 8294.



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UBER IS HEADED FOR A CRASH

By steamrolling local taxi operations in cities all over the world and cultivating cheerleaders in the business press and among Silicon Valley libertarians, Uber has managed to create an image of inevitability and invincibility. But the company just posted another quarter of jaw-dropping losses — this time over \$1 billion, after \$4.5 billion of losses in 2017. How much is hype and how much is real?

The notion that Uber, the most highly valued private company in the world, is a textbook “bezzle” — John Kenneth Galbraith’s coinage for an investment swindle where the losses have yet to be recognized — is likely to come as a surprise to its many satisfied customers. But as we’ll explain, relying on the extensive work of transportation expert Hubert Horan, Uber’s investors have been buying your satisfaction in the form of massive subsidies of services. What has made Uber a good deal for users makes it a lousy investment proposition. Uber has kept that recognition at bay via minimal and inconsistent financial disclosures combined with a relentless and so far effective public-relations campaign depicting Uber as following the pattern of digitally based start-ups whose large initial losses transformed into strong profits in a few years.

Comparisons of Uber to other storied tech wunderkinder show Uber is not on the same trajectory. No ultimately successful major technology company has been as deeply unprofitable for anywhere remotely as long as Uber has been. After nine years, Uber isn’t within hailing distance of making money and continues to bleed more red ink than any start-up in history. By contrast, Facebook and Amazon were solidly cash-flow positive by their fifth year.

The fact that this glorified local transportation company continues to be a financial failure should come as no surprise. What should be surprising is that the business press still parrots the fond hope of Uber’s management that the company will go public in 2019 at a target valuation of \$120 billion. That’s well above its highest private share sale, at a valuation of \$68 billion. And Uber’s management and underwriters will no doubt hope that the great unwashed public looks past the fact that more recently, SoftBank bought out insiders at a valuation of \$48 billion, and its offer was oversubscribed. Why should new money come in at a price more than double where executives and employees were eager to get out?

Uber has never presented a case as to why it will ever be profitable, let alone earn an adequate return on capital. Investors are pinning their hopes on a successful IPO, which means finding greater fools in sufficient numbers. Uber is a taxi company with an app attached. It bears almost no resemblance to internet superstars it claims to emulate. The app is not technically daunting and does not

create a competitive barrier, as witnessed by the fact that many other players have copied it. Apps have been introduced for airlines, pizza delivery, and hundreds of other consumer services but have never generated market-share gains, much less tens of billions in corporate value. They do not create network effects. Unlike Facebook or eBay, having more Uber users does not improve the service. Nor, after a certain point, does adding more drivers. Uber does regularly claim that its app creates economies of scale for drivers — but for that to be the case, adding more drivers would have to benefit drivers. It doesn’t. More drivers means more competition for available jobs, which means less utilization per driver. There is a trade-off between capacity and utilization in a transportation system, which you do not see in digital networks. The classic use of “network



effects” referred to the design of an integrated transport network — an airline hub and spoke network which create utility for passengers (or packages) by having more opportunities to connect to more destinations versus linear point-to-point routes. Uber is obviously not a fixed network with integrated routes — taxi passengers do not connect between different vehicles.

Nor does being bigger make Uber a better business. As Hubert Horan explained in his series on Naked Capitalism, Uber has no competitive advantage compared to traditional taxi operators. Unlike digital businesses, the cab industry does not have significant scale economies; that’s why there have never been city-level cab monopolies, consolidation plays, or even significant regional operators. Size does not improve the economics of delivery of the taxi service, 85 percent of which are driver, vehicle, and fuel costs; the remaining 15 percent is typically overheads and profit. And Uber’s own results are proof. Uber has kept bulking up, yet it has failed to show the rapid margin improvements you’d see if costs fell as operations grew.

If Uber were to drive all competitors out of business in a local market and then jack

up prices, customers would cut back on use. But more important, since barriers to entry in the taxi business are low, and Uber lowered them further by breaking local regulations, new players would come in under Uber’s new price umbrella. So Uber would have to drop its prices to meet those of these entrants or lose business.

Moreover, Uber is a high-cost provider. A fleet manager at a medium-scale Yellow Cab company can buy, maintain, and insure vehicles more efficiently than individual Uber drivers. In addition, transportation companies maintain tight central control of both total available capacity (vehicles and labor) and how that capacity is scheduled. Uber takes the polar opposite approach. It has no assets, and while it can offer incentives, it cannot control or schedule capacity. The only advantage Uber might have

achieved is taking advantage of its drivers’ lack of financial acumen — that they don’t understand the full cost of using their cars and thus are giving Uber a bargain. There’s some evidence to support that notion. Ridester recently published the results of the first study to use actual Uber driver earnings, validated by screenshots. Using conservative estimates for vehicle costs, they found that that UberX drivers, which represent the bulk of its workforce, earn less than \$10 an hour. They would do better at McDonald’s. But even this offset to the generally higher costs of fleet operation hasn’t had a meaningful impact on Uber’s economics.

But, you may argue, Uber has all that data about rides! Certainly that allows it to be more efficient than traditional cabs. Um, no. Local ride services have backhaul problems that no amount of cleverness can remedy, like taking customers to the airport and either waiting hours for a return fare or coming back empty, or daily urban commutes, where workers go overwhelmingly in one direction in the morning rush and the other way in the evening. Similarly, Uber’s surge pricing hasn’t led customers to change their habits and shift their trips to lower-cost times, which could have led

to more efficient utilization. If Uber had any secret sauce, it would have already shown up in Uber revenues and average driver earnings. Nine years in, and there’s no evidence of that.

While Uber has reduced its negative gross margin over time, those improvements have come mainly from squeezing driver compensation, so that they now net less per hour on average than taxi operators.

Through 2015, 80 percent of fares went to drivers. In its early years, Uber gave drivers high payouts to attract good drivers and also offered drivers incentives to buy cars. Uber cut that to as low as 68 percent, then partially reversed it as driver turnover became acute to its current, roughly 70 percent level. In 2017, Uber’s margin as reported using GAAP was a negative 57 percent. It would have stayed at the negative triple-digit level absent the driver pay-throttling.

The pay cuts have led to more driver turnover, which leads to higher managerial costs. And it is degrading service quality. A comment on an article about Uber’s third-quarter earnings: I needed a ride from Burbank to LAX on a Thursday morning around 5:45 AM. I requested a car the night before. At pickup time there wasn’t a Lyft or Uber within 20 miles. When I did get one the driver said that at the rate they are being paid it wasn’t worth getting out of bed early anymore.

Uber’s other way of making its margins less terrible has been ditching its worst operations. But even then, Uber’s new CEO Dara Khosrowshahi effectively admitted that Uber isn’t profitable in any market when you factor in corporate overheads. Uber has been frantically adding new business like Uber Eats and scooter rentals to keep its growth story alive. Uber not only tacitly admits that they aren’t covering their costs, it refuses to give any detail about these operations beyond their revenues and does not discuss what it would take for them to turn the corner.

But what about driverless cars? Let’s put aside that some enthusiasts like Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak now believe that fully autonomous cars are “not going to happen.” Fully autonomous cars would mean Uber would have to own the cars. The capital costs would be staggering and would burst the illusion that Uber is a technology company rather than a taxi company that buys and operates someone else’s robot cars.

Uber has succeeded in getting the business press to treat its popularity as the same as commercial success. A few tech reporters, like Eric Newcomer of Bloomberg, have politely pointed out that Uber’s results fall well short of other tech illuminati prior to going public. The pitch that dominance would produce profits is demonstrably false and Uber seems unable to come up with a new story.

There’s every reason to think that investors, not local cab companies, will wind up being Uber’s biggest roadkill. *Courtesy of Intelligenter*

LEVC ANNOUNCE JOB CUTS

The London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC) is to lay off 70 temporary employees, according to information from the BBC. Reasons were not given, but it is likely that Brexit has played a role.

According to the British company, only workers on temporary contracts will be affected by the changes. They asserted that it was "important affected staff are treated in a fair and transparent way".

The London Taxi Company, since renamed LEVC, faced financial problems in 2013 before China's Geely Holding Group stepped in to rescue the firm.

In 2017 the company opened its £300m Ansty plant, creating more than 1,000 jobs.

LEVC recently announced a global reorientation of its commercial vehicle strategy in cooperation with its parent company Geely.

The British company has recently filled orders in Germany and France, but with Brexit, things may change.

The exact reasons for the layoffs are unknown, however; a LEVC spokesperson only said that "2019 will be a challenging year for the British automotive industry."

The change could also have to do



with new leadership. After the current CEO Chris

Gubbey announced his retirement, LEVC appointed the former Audi-

and GM-Manager Jörg Hofmann as his successor reportedly.

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To honour this heritage and realise a long-held dream, Moses Odong, a London Cabby, has opened the first ever Rum Distillery, at Mile End. Named after his current profession, Taxi Spirit Co. will drive Moses’ passion to craft a range of premium

quality Rums for the UK, and to the international market as well!

Taxi Spirit Co. is the first business of its kind in London. Honouring tradition, Taxi Spirit Co distills its own Rum from cane molasses, to create intense, robust, bittersweet flavours, carefully balanced to tantalise your taste buds for maximum enjoyment!

After five years of hard work and passion in developing and perfecting the craft of rum distillation, Taxi Spirit Co is proud to launch their first product, ‘Cabby’s White Rum’, with rich, full-bodied taste notes of sweet cane, delicious black treacle, a hint of oak and refreshing coconut and citrus! At 41.2% ABV, this fantastic drink is available in 50 cL bottles, at a retail price of £29.50., to enjoy as is, on the rocks, as



the popular rum ‘n’ cola, or in delicious cocktails!

Taxi Spirit Co also offers Cabby's Gin, born out of a very fortunate accident while experimenting with juniper and few other botanicals for their spiced rum. Distilled from molasses spirit, this gin is crafted with eight scintillating botanicals. It has been an arduous journey, but Moses has stuck to his guns and made it, with support from his lovely (and very patient!) partner Bianca Whiskey. Apart from their natural affinity for distilling,

having had families with domestic distillation tradition back home in Uganda and Jamaica, Moses and Bianca are helped by Abhishek Banik, a technical expert, and ex-ICBD (International Centre of Brewing and Distilling at Heriot-Watt University) graduate in the profession, and backed by a dear Cabby friend, Frank Tumwesigye.

Reflecting on their journey so far and the path ahead, they said: “Taxi Spirit Co team is proud of being part of and further propelling the

craft revolution by distilling their Rums from scratch, in the heart of his home city, for all the wonderful people who love, and will love rum! “Just within a month of launching we have scooped six awards at the International Wine and Spirit Competition 2018. We are speechless. Our product speaks for itself.”

The Cabby’s Rum is available at TT Liquor Shoreditch, The Whisky Exchange, and online at TaxiSpirit.com.

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■ **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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Deliveroo and Uber Eats takeaway riders rent jobs to 'illegal immigrants'

Delivery jobs for two gig economy giants are being traded to alleged illegal immigrants in a black market, a Sunday Times investigation has revealed.

Workers at Deliveroo and Uber Eats who have passed vetting checks are offering up their jobs online.

Whistleblowers claim that migrants who are in Britain illegally are renting these jobs without facing criminal record, insurance, right-to-work or passport checks. The buyers pay up to £100 a week for accounts, giving them the right to deliver food. A legitimate rider in northwest London said he believed dozens of accounts in his area were being rented out.

More than 500,000 people deliver takeaway food in the UK in a market worth more than £4bn a year.

Deliveroo was warned about the trade in jobs to alleged illegal immigrants in August. A company representative responded: "We've been receiving numerous reports of this happening, not just in London, but across the country."

Sayed Sayedi, 40, an Afghan who is in Britain legally and works for Uber Eats, said people in the country illegally were renting Uber Eats and Deliveroo accounts. "They come from Italy, from France, from Belgium inside a lorry. They rent other people's accounts."

In seven private WhatsApp and Facebook groups monitored by this newspaper, Uber Eats and Deliveroo accounts are being offered for rent or sale daily. The new worker can be given the reward for their labours in cash, or the bank



details can be changed on the account.

Neither company stops couriers changing the phone number and bank details associated with the account. "Let's get the working year started," read one New Year's Day message in a Portuguese-language group called "Rent account Uber/Deliveroo" last week. "I am renting Uber (£70) and Deliveroo (£60) / both motorbike / for women / message me privately if interested."

One message read: "I'm looking for an Uber account to rent temporarily for two to three weeks, I am waiting for a friend of mine who just arrived from Brazil." It soon had a reply: "I have an account for 100 a week for those 3 weeks."

Uber Eats and Deliveroo generate sales of more than £250m a year but attract controversy for refusing to treat workers as employees

entitled to benefits such as holiday and sick pay.

Instead, the worker is a contractor who has a right to assign the deliveries to someone else — a feature that is meant to show the worker's independent status, meaning the company can avoid paying national insurance. Deliveroo riders are supposed to carry out checks on their substitutes but do not have to confirm that this has happened.

Uber Eats requires proof of the substitute's driving licence and right to work within 24 hours and says riders must inform restaurants of the change. A Deliveroo worker warned the firm in August that jobs were being traded online, writing: "There is a big problem in the area I work, with people working illegally using the [app] and in a way stealing my job. There are . . . Brazilians coming as

tourists and using accounts from [other] people working every single day taking hundreds of orders from legal riders and then disappearing back to their countries without paying a penny."

A Deliveroo "rider support" worker responded: "I can assure you we are taking this very seriously as this activity is clearly not legal and ramifications for us are also very serious."

Frank Field, chairman of the Commons work and pensions committee, said substitute riders were a "desperate attempt" by Deliveroo and Uber Eats "to get around the fact riders work for them". He said their model "exploits" substitutes who may be "illegally in this country, whose status and health record has never been checked, and who presumably cannot pay tax or national insurance". Uber Eats said the right to

use substitutes was a legal requirement. The company added: "Anyone who delivers with Uber Eats must adhere to a strict set of safety-based criteria, including being 18 years or older, passing a criminal background check and holding a valid right to work in the UK."

Deliveroo said riders had to have right-to-work and criminal record checks, and were responsible for ensuring the same checks on their substitutes. "Deliveroo has a zero tolerance approach on this matter . . . Any concerns raised will be fully investigated." The company said reports that illegal workers were renting accounts were "alleged only" and "completely unproven".

Courtesy of The Sunday Times



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A friend of mine took his life recently and it made me think.

Suicide is higher amongst middle aged men. Why? I think it's because we don't talk about anything but politics, women and sport.

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Talk to someone.

How do I say I cannot cope?
That I am living a lie,
Though I cry,
I know I must try
To look as though I can cope.
.... But it's a slippery slope.

Tears of a clown
Like the creases of a frown
But I gotta be sound as a pound

I think it's ok, that I'm keeping it in
But it ain't the case
Take a good look at my face
And you will see I'm playing a game, I cannot win.

I wanna be weak... help I should seek
but that's not street
Just gotta find my feet
then it'll be sweet.

Gotta make a post, look like I'm



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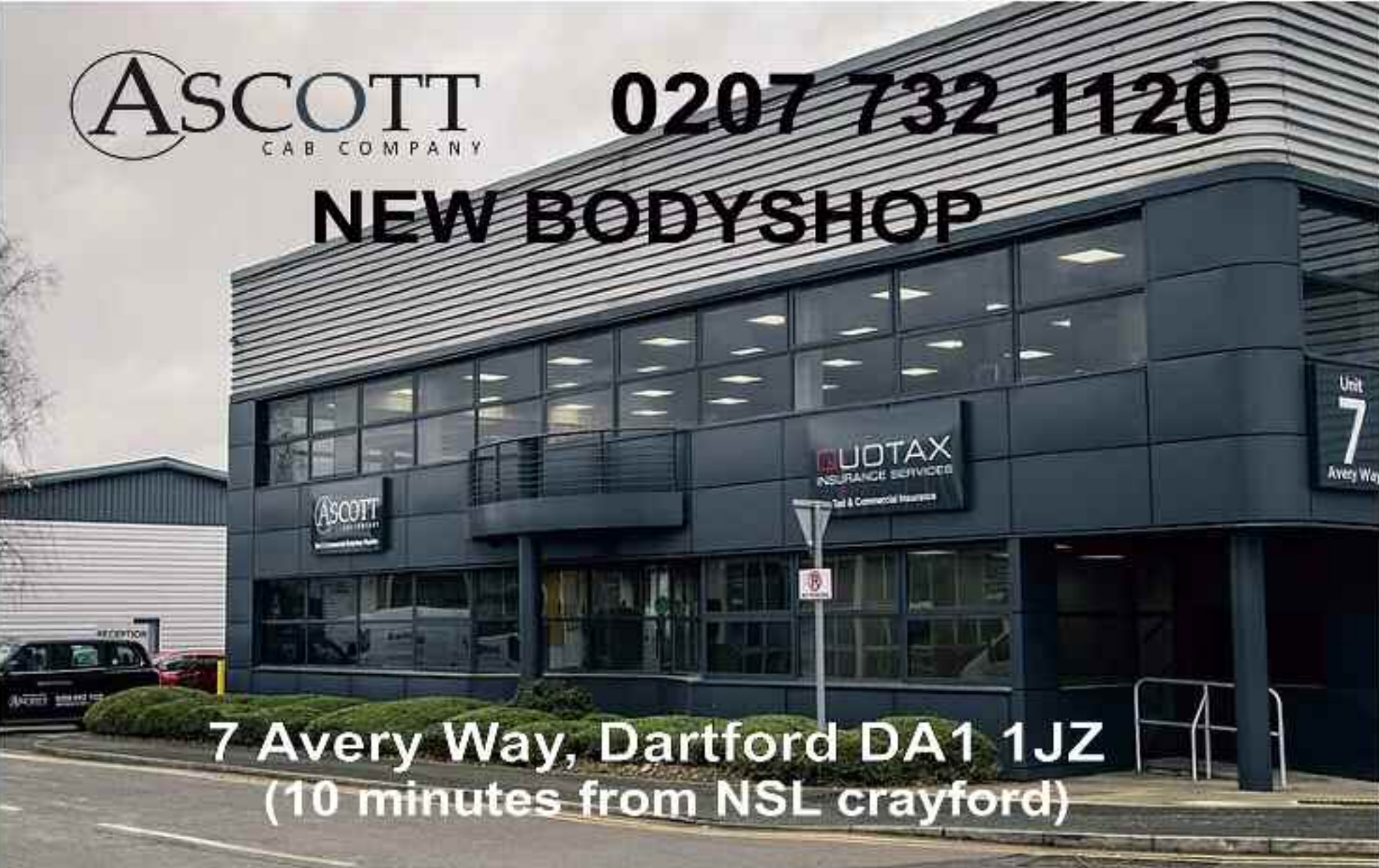
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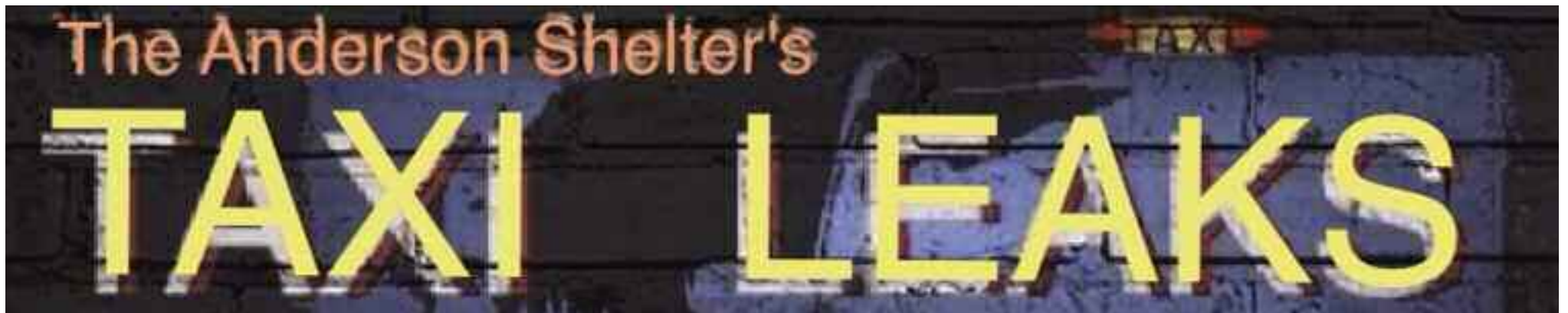
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Tax lawyer takes on Uber over VAT

The lawyer who spearheaded a landmark court case - which ended with the European Union's top court ruling that the U.K. can unilaterally reverse Brexit - appeared in court Wednesday for a fresh battle, this time with Uber Technologies Inc.

Jolyon Maugham, who runs a group that raises money for lawsuits that promote a progressive agenda, says Uber should pay Value Added Tax, a 20 percent U.K. sales tax on most goods and services. Uber says it doesn't need to because it's only acting as an intermediary between drivers and riders.

Uber would owe 1 billion pounds (\$1.3 billion) if Maugham won his case, once backdated payments are counted, Maugham said outside court, citing his own calculations.

His lawyer Vikram Sachdeva said at the court hearing that the case could leave Uber liable for an estimated annual tax bill of 200 million pounds. The case centers on an Uber journey Maugham took in March 2017, which cost 6 pounds and 34 pence. He wants a court declaration that Uber should give him a VAT invoice for 1 pound and 6

pence for the journey. The invoice would allow him to reclaim the sales tax as the trip was for business purposes.

"The sum at issue is obviously trivial," Maugham said in court filings, but the underlying case is "of great public importance" because of the amount of tax that would ultimately be payable if he wins.

The case will turn on the question of whether Uber should be classed as the supplier of cab rides, or whether its drivers should be. It's a question at the heart of the so-called "gig economy," where technology companies have upended traditional employment models.

"Anyone who gets in an Uber is affected by this case," Sachdeva said in court on Wednesday. Black Cabs Maugham's lawsuit "is largely crowdfunded by the black cab taxi industry, who have a significant commercial interest in seeking to alter the competitiveness" of Uber's services, the ride-hailing firm said in its court filings. Sachdeva said Maugham is motivated by "good governance" and "wants people who ought to pay their VAT to pay it."

Maugham is "expressly saying he's not doing it for



the purpose of the black cab industry," Sachdeva said.

An Uber spokeswoman didn't immediately comment.

Maugham is one of the most outspoken voices against the U.K.'s looming exit from the European Union. In 2016, he ran a crowdfunding campaign for a legal challenge over

Uber says Maugham's latest case has no merit and there's "no need for this claim to be brought." Uber argues that HM Revenue & Customs, the U.K. tax authority, is the appropriate agency to decide on its tax payments, not Maugham. At a hearing Wednesday, Maugham applied for an order that, if he ends up losing the case, the most he'll have to pay Uber is 20,000 pounds in legal fees. Maugham's resources "pale in comparison" to Uber, and he won't be able to continue with the case if he doesn't get the limit, he said in filings.

Uber says Maugham could continue the lawsuit without the costs order because he could raise more money from black cab drivers and others. The ride-hailing giant is also embroiled in a separate British court battle over the employment rights of its drivers. It's taking an appeal to the country's top court over whether drivers are entitled to the minimum wage and holiday pay.

The case is Jolyon Toby Dennis Maugham v Uber London Limited, High Court of Justice, Case No. HC-2017-001496.

Source Bloomberg



Cab Chat Radio Show

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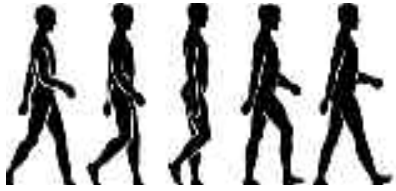
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Walker on the March...

A date with Dave



Our guest speaker this time around was David Kurten (DK) and this session preceded the AGM.

DK was a UKIP member of the GLA but had resigned earlier during the day and had given up a press conference with C4 news to keep his appointment with us.

There was apprehension on the part of some members, including this writer, about associating the Club with UKIP. However, true to our apolitical roots, DK was there as a GLA member primarily. Despite this, the UKIP group on the GLA have stood beside the cab trade since the last elections.

The chairman, Grant Davis (GD) thanked DK for holding the “taxi conference” at City Hall last year, along with the other work they have done for us, in particular at Mayor’s Questions. DK informed the meeting that his group will be arranging another “taxi conference” at City Hall in June with details to follow.

DK’s group support the cab trade because it is part of the heritage and fabric of London, in addition to the 100% access for the capital’s disabled to move around freely.

They are concerned, as we are, that the trade is under threat from unfair competition from PH Apps operating as taxi operations – primarily Uber. However, they place the blame at TFLs door as during the last four years, the regulator has failed to deal with technological change and those that abuse it. The situation has changed from complementary competition between taxis and PH, to one where

one particular operator has tried to destabilise both markets.

DK had thought the 2015 Transport bill would have addressed this failing – cap PH numbers, deal with cross border hiring, etc – but this did not happen. Thus, new legislation is still required. The UKIP and Labour GLA groups raised objections to the Mayor renewing Uber’s licence last year. He was disappointed that the appeal could take years to go through the courts, while Uber are allowed to carry on in the interim.

DK has written to the Mayor to ask if questions on the cab trade are answered directly or through an appointed office. The Mayor has not had the courtesy to respond but DK thought the answer to clearly be the latter. DK is happy to continue asking questions on behalf of the cab trade.

He was also pleased to hear that the “Knowledge” (KOL) is under discussion to gain City & Guilds accreditation.

DK was asked why Val Shawcross has “gone over to the other side”. DK didn’t know her before the last elections but sees her as “the Mayor’s man” now.

GD will be contacting KOL schools and other stakeholders with regard to the June conference. He felt that the more diverse the participants, the greater the chance of combating TFL. Asked if TFL will be invited, DK said they have been invited.

Peter Blake had been asked why TFL doesn’t promote the KOL and said “why should we”? GD told Brown that the KOL and the vehicle define the cab trade. KOL numbers are at an all-time low, we have been saddled with a

vehicle that none of us can afford and more than 2,000 perfectly good taxis will not have their plate renewed this year due to their age.

A questioner asked if we could promote Sherbet Dab and GS said we would.

DK was asked in regard to the time envisaged to sort out the Uber case, could new driver recruitment be frozen in the interim. This is not possible as PH drivers do not have to elect an operator. However, Matt Newell pointed out that PH drivers have reduced by 2000 in number last year.

Answering several questions on questions about the TXe, DK was of the opinion that drivers need more help on the net price and the charging point fiasco needs sorting out. It was highlighted that the AL report found that if only 25% of the combined taxi/PH fleet was to go “electric”, there would be a need for 25,000 charging points.

It was pointed out that Geely are producing an electric Volvo for £15,000 less than the current TXe price. For the first time ever, no new cabs were registered in December. DK felt that if new cabs are not available, then there should be extensions for cabs that are 15 years old.

A questioner felt that TFL is a regulatory body that doesn’t regulate. The trade have asked TFL and The Mayor what is an “instant hail” on Apps but all refuse to answer; the same response comes when asking when an App driver is outside their area. These questions apply to PH Apps as well as taxi Apps. DK offered to ask The Mayor for answers and Caroline Lucas is also

asking these questions in parliament.

GD has asked MyTaxi to say that their App jobs are “hails” but they swerve answering by saying it’s up to TPH. Chapman of TPH then swerved the question. With the exception of CMT, the taxi Apps refuse to assist the trade in this matter.

Asked if he felt the “powers that be” want to retain the cab trade, DK answered that he did not know. There is no conspiracy but The Mayor’s focus is on promoting walking and cycling and is always speaking of this “modal shift”. DK felt that while this may have worked elsewhere, it will not work in London.

This was also the attitude of Boris when he was Mayor. He quoted Boris’ cycling guru, Andrew Gilligan that “we have to give London cycling, even if it doesn’t want it”.

Asked how many meetings there have been between TFL and Uber on autonomous cars, DK said there had been a couple. However, he pointed out that there are five levels of autonomy; the first four are very limited, while 5 is full automation. Talks so far are on limited autonomy. Asked if there was a chance of a taxi representative attending future meetings, DK said yes.

The final question was to ask if “taxi demo’s” are positive. DK said he didn’t know as they weren’t discussed, which is probably an answer in itself.

It was now 8.00pm and so the chair brought the session to a close by thanking DK for his time. This was an interesting and frank debate and DK was warmly applauded for his contribution.

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Airport matters

by Mark White

Heathrow Electric Charging update

Since our last update, there is basically nothing to report regarding HAL and their movement on the pricing or future infrastructure. Heathrow Airport Ltd (HAL), still believe they are competitively priced. We have supplied them evidence to prove they are incorrect. It is worth noting, they have installed 31 FREE TO USE chargers in their terminal car parks. They are also planning on installing FREE TO USE chargers in all their staff car parks.

We were promised by the Income Manager 'I will make sure that the requests you have made are forwarded to the relevant people within Heathrow'. This was sent to us on December 4th 2018. We have heard nothing since then. During our meeting on January 3rd 2019, we were promised by the Landside Manager he would chase up the Income Managers

request. We received an email from him stating 'I am still working on who would be best placed to speak with'. This was sent on January 22nd 2019. We chased him again on February 6th 2019. We have heard nothing since then.

On Monday January 28th 2019, we were invited by the trade orgs to a TfL compliance meeting with HAL in attendance. HAL stated they will not be discussing the electric chargers as they 'had Brexit to deal with'. We thanked the trade for inviting us, and we left the meeting.

Paul and I have been fighting tirelessly to get to speak with the relevant decision makers at HAL. We have come up against, what feels like, a deliberate brick wall. Thanks to our work, drivers are able to leave the south Feeder Park to charge their vehicle in the Authorised Vehicle Area (AVA). This has become overcrowded with drivers now having to queue to charge. There are many that have decided it's not worth the hassle, and

rather than pay the massive 32.2p per kWh in the north Feeder Park, are driving the TX on the range extender generator. This completely negates having a ZEC taxi.

HAL are pushing the Green agenda, and claiming they are serious about reducing the emissions in and around the airport. They are spending £6m on upgrading their charging infrastructure. Sadly, it would appear, none of that is being considered for the Feeder Park. We have spoken to all relevant parties, and estimate it would cost around £2m to upgrade the north and south Feeder Park with enough charges to ensure every taxi has the ability to charge whilst waiting. The current 50kWh chargers cost £25k each, and are able to charge one vehicle at a time. For the same money, we could buy 10 22kWh chargers, and charge 20 vehicles at the same time. We do not need the expensive 50kWh chargers. The 22kWh chargers we are pushing for, installed in the north and south Feeder Park, would ensure we would be future proofed. To charge

the TX from empty it would take around 1hr 15m, and the Nissan eNV200 Taxi 1hr 45m. In the future with bigger battery capacity, the average wait time of 2hrs 30m would be ample time to fully charge. Simply begin charging in the north park, and finish charging in the south park.

We have also been in contact with TfL regarding the TFP and on street charging. There are well over 1,000 TX's on the road in London, fighting to use 64 dedicated eTaxi chargers. Drivers have been badly let down by TfL. If you look on TfL's website to find locations of dedicated eTaxi charge points, you will notice this has not been update since April 2018.

The UK are way behind every other Northern European country for charging infrastructure. Germany are building dedicated electric charging Autobahn services, with one in particular having 140 chargers. France are way ahead, and are installing 75k on street chargers. This is more than is currently

required. Their though process is if we ensure chargers are easily available, the transfer to electric will be an easy decision. Here in the UK, the Office for Low Emissions Vehicles announced on February 5th 2019, they have awarded £6m in funding in installing 300 charge points for eTaxis. This is a very welcome announcement, until you read that is 300 charge points across the entire UK.

We have set up a new Twitter page, keeping people informed of the charging situation at Heathrow and in London, and can be found at @eTaxiCharging. We have had many notable and influential people showing an interest in the story. One tweet in particular has garnered over 25k views. HAL's unwillingness to discuss moving forward is not good news for them. As we have said to HAL, we are digging our heels in as we know we are right.

Brian Nayar and Paul Falcini.



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Quotax Insurance is pleased to announce that they have recently opened a second office in Dartford, Kent; this is in addition to their current office which is on site at Ascott Cab Co in Deptford, South East London.

Quotax Insurance is a family run business that was started in 2004 by John Fosker who was himself a Licensed London Taxi Driver. This specialist Taxi Insurance Brokers is now owned by John's 2 sons Daniel and Paul Fosker. Daniel explains why Dartford has been chosen as the location for their second office;

"Over the past 14 years Quotax has widened it Insurer Panel so that they can accommodate almost any London Taxi Driver regardless of their age or experience. This has created growth within the business and we consequently have outgrown our current offices in Deptford.

When the owners of Ascott Cab Co advised us that they were developing a New Bodyshop in Dartford we were delighted that they had ample office space that would be a perfect fit for our growing Sales and Renewals Team."

Ascott Cab Co have invested a significant amount into their new Bodyshop; the new premises are capable of carrying out repairs to the new electric vehicle as well as turning around repairs on existing models faster. Quotax recognises that there are a number of London Taxi Drivers who live around the Dartford area and we would be happy to quote for your Taxi Insurance face to face if you are in the vicinity, or of course as usual in the Deptford office.

*The address of the new office is:
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