



More trade stories than all the others put together

Issue 279 March 2021



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LEGAL BACKING FOR OUR TRADE

Since the last edition of the Badge, much has happened in the way of legal judgements.

We have seen decisions in both the Street Space scheme and also the Uber employment tribunal.

Uber Tribunal:

After six long years the Uber employment tribunal finally reached its conclusion at the Supreme Court. Thankfully, the judgement came down in favour of workers' rights. This could have ramifications for not only the Taxi & PH trade, but for the Gig economy as a whole.

See pages 4-5

Street Space Decision:

Whilst it was a very positive result for the taxi trade, it was disappointing that the Mayor has decided to appeal the decision (funny he and TFL never appealed the Uber decision?)

See page 18

Opposite on page 3 you can read the reply from the Mayor

(two months after our original letter). What we at the Club find so alarming is the dramatic decrease in the number of taxis, which currently stands at 13,660 vehicles, of which 3,950 are ZEC taxis and 9,710 are diesel which equates to a staggering 56% reduction in diesel taxis since 2013.

At this current rate we only need to lose another 10% of diesel taxis to meet the reduction target the Mayor has set us for 2025. Surely the current age limit as it stands of 14 years should stay as it is more than sufficient for us to reach the 2025 target?

LCDC TV

Many of you have seen the new LCDC TV Youtube channel in which we aim to bring you interviews, news and features on everything that affects our trade.

This week we are interviewing Tory Mayoral candidate, Shaun Bailey, whom we hope will be the first of all the Mayoral candidates.



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MAYOR REPLIES... TWO MONTHS LATER

Dear Grant,

Thank you for your letter of 11 November 2020. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

I recognise the economic difficulties being experienced by taxi drivers, alongside many other professions across London and the UK, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. I have recently written to the Treasury to ask for the provision of targeted financial support to the taxi trade, and to urge consideration of how to exempt Zero Emission Capable (ZEC) taxi purchases from capital allowances so that drivers claiming income support due to COVID-19 are able to access adequate support for their work from the past three years. Please be reassured that I will continue to make representations to the Government to provide self-employed Londoners, including drivers, with the support they need.

Reducing taxi emissions is an important contribution to achieving compliance with air quality limit values in London, which must be done by 2025 or earlier. Although London has seen additional improvements in air quality during lockdown with lower traffic levels, there is still much work to do before London meets legal pollution limits and Londoners breathe clean air.

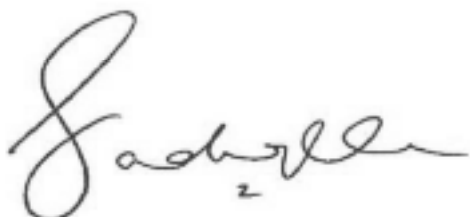
I welcome the efforts the taxi trade has already taken to reduce its emissions. Given evidence of the association between air pollution and the most severe effects of the coronavirus, it is essential we continue to take action to protect Londoners' health. The 9,000 ZEC taxis target was included in the Government's statutory UK plan for tackling roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations (July 2017)⁽¹⁾ and was modelled to reduce London taxi emissions by 45 per cent by 2020. It became apparent by 2019 that it was likely that this reduction would not be met, which led to the introduction of a phased approach to diesel taxi age limit reductions, along with support for delicensing and the uptake of ZEC taxis. This means we are back on track to meet the 2025 plan requirements.

The taxi delicensing scheme has been very successful in reducing the number of older, polluting taxis, with over £30 million paid out. Without tighter age limits, diesel taxis would have continued to dominate the taxi fleet and the pollution profile of road transport emissions in central London. TfL's modelling for taxi age limits took account of emissions reductions expected from delicensing. Taxis were forecast to contribute around 30 per cent of central London road traffic NOx in 2025 without the introduction of the phased taxi age limits. By introducing the phased taxi age limits, taxis are forecast to contribute around a third less road traffic NOx in 2025, or the equivalent of 20 per cent of all central London road traffic NOx in 2025. Reducing diesel taxi age limits is the most effective way to ensure we deliver the necessary cleaning of the fleet while taking a measured and supportive approach by phasing over a three-year period.

I recognise that the number of diesel taxis registered has reduced in recent months, but we still have to achieve and sustain emissions reductions to fight London's air quality crisis. We do not yet know the number of diesel taxis that will return to the fleet as London recovers from the pandemic. Those who have left the fleet may have done so temporarily and are able to re-enter the fleet for up to two years. We will keep the numbers and composition of the taxi fleet and its air quality impacts under review.

It is important to balance coronavirus related reductions in emissions, which can be attributed to lower taxi usage, with lower uptake of ZEC taxis than expected (which has also been impacted by coronavirus), and ensure that when taxi use in London recovers it does so in a way that continues to reduce its impacts on emissions and poor air quality.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London

JUDGEMENT: UBER IN BREACH

In the recent Uber employment judgement, there were three paragraphs : 46 – 47 – 56 Where the Judges confirmed what we at the LCDC have stated since 2014 through our lawyers, John Halford at Bindmans LLP that the booking process that was used by Uber LDN did not comply with the 1998 Private Hire Act (see paragraphs below).

We questioned the legality of the Uber booking process at the time but our voice fell on deaf ears at TFL? But even now, the LCDC believes that with Uber Britannia and their “ghost offices” drivers are accepting the bookings directly.

The ramifications of this judgement are already sending shockwaves through the Gig economy and the ADCU union who originally took Uber to

court are calling for Sadiq Khan and TFLPH to “implement the supreme court ruling and force Uber to respect worker rights as a condition of continued licensing”.

Only this week on the LCDC TV News Channel, Chairman Grant Davis interviewed prospective Tory Mayoral candidate, Shaun Bailey in which he stated that should he become Mayor, workers rights would be a condition of licensing for a PH Operators license.

Also, another implication of this ruling was that Uber will now be liable to pay VAT on all previous journeys and at this stage, we believe it could run up to £2 billion pounds. This legal action undertaken by Jolyon Maugham which was fully supported and part funded by the LCDC.



“TfL’s actions are nothing short of regulatory abdication and the explanation it has offered to its board simply doesn’t stand up” - John Halford

Uber’s sleight of hand laid bare

It is an important feature of the context in which, as the employment tribunal found, Uber London recruits and communicates on a day to day basis with drivers that, as mentioned earlier: (1) it is unlawful for anyone in London to accept a private hire booking unless that person is the holder of a private hire vehicle operator’s licence for London; and (2) the only natural or legal person involved in the acceptance of bookings and provision of private hire vehicles booked through the Uber app which holds such a licence is Uber London. It is reasonable to assume, at least unless the contrary is demonstrated, that the parties intended to comply with the law in the way they dealt with each other.

47. Uber maintains that the acceptance of private hire bookings by a

licensed London PHV operator acting as agent for drivers would comply with the regulatory regime. I am not convinced by this. References in the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998 to “acceptance” of a private hire booking are reasonably understood to connote acceptance (personally and not merely for someone else) of a contractual obligation to carry out the booking and provide a vehicle for that purpose. This is implicit, for example, in section 4(2) of the Act quoted at para 31 above. It would in principle be possible for Uber London both to accept such an obligation itself and also to contract on behalf of the driver of the vehicle.

However, if this were the arrangement made, it would seem hard to avoid the conclusion that the driver, as well as Uber London, would be a

person who accepts the booking by undertaking a contractual obligation owed directly to the passenger to carry it out.

‘The inevitable conclusion is that, by accepting a booking, Uber London contracts as principal with the passenger to carry out the booking.’

If so, the driver would be in contravention of section 2(1) of the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998 by accepting a private hire booking without holding a private hire vehicle operator’s licence for London. This suggests that the only contractual arrangement compatible with the

licensing regime is one whereby Uber London as the licensed operator accepts private hire bookings as a principal (only) and, to

fulfil its obligation to the passenger, enters into a contract with a transportation provider (be that an individual driver or a firm which in turn provides a driver) who agrees to carry out the booking for Uber London.

Once the assertion that Uber London contracts as

a booking agent for drivers is rejected, the inevitable conclusion is that, by accepting a booking, Uber London contracts as principal with the passenger to carry out the booking.

In these circumstances Uber London would have no means of performing its contractual obligations to passengers, nor of securing compliance with its regulatory obligations as a licensed operator, without either employees or subcontractors to perform driving services for it.

Considered against that background, it is difficult to see how Uber’s business could operate without Uber London entering into contracts with drivers (even if only on a per trip basis) under which drivers undertake to provide services to carry out the private hire bookings accepted by Uber London.

Uber drivers consider appeal in Dutch case over data access

AMSTERDAM (REUTERS) - A group representing former Uber drivers from Britain is considering whether to appeal a decision by a Dutch court that largely backed the ride-hailing company in a dispute over access to data collected about drivers.

The District Court of Amsterdam on Thursday largely sided with the U.S. technology company, which said it already provided as much information as it could to drivers, and that it could not do more without compromising the privacy of customers.

The drivers at a hearing in December had demanded full access to data



gathered through the app they were required to use to do their job, saying Uber's algorithms ultimately decided how much money they could earn.

The case was brought in the Netherlands because

it is home to Uber's European headquarters.

Uber was ordered to give drivers information on the ratings customers gave on individual rides, as long as the information was made anonymous, but several other claims were

dismissed.

Worker Info Exchange, the group representing the drivers, hailed the ratings decision as a victory, and said there were good grounds for an appeal on other matters.

"The court has required drivers to provide greater specificity on the personal data sought rather than placing the burden on firms like Uber to clearly explain what personal data is held and how it is processed," it said in a statement.

The court also disagreed with a complaint by some drivers that Uber had automatically deactivated their account solely on the basis that its algorithms

had indicated they were suspected of fraudulent behaviour.

"Decisions were not based only on automatically generated data," the court said.

It ordered Uber to give drivers more information about the decision to terminate their account, but dismissed claims for financial compensation.

"This is a crucial decision," Uber spokesman Gus Glover said in a statement. "The Court has confirmed Uber's dispatch system does not equate to automated decision making, and that we provided drivers with the data they are entitled to."

Why aren't roundels removed?

After the recent and horrific abduction and murder of Sarah Everard, women's safety is at the forefront of everyone's minds (as it should be) but a recent FOI request by the LCDC has highlighted just how easy it is for any sexual predator to buy a PH vehicle with the green roundel still intact, thus promoting the appearance of a "licensed vehicle" and making the snap decision that the driver is also. Outside venues in the capital we have all seen rows of PH Prius mini cabs, all look the same and as we know jumping into the wrong car may be disastrous - that's why TFL should not be so lax on this issue.



A typical advert, showing the roundel still in the vehicle for sale

The number of Private Hire Vehicles who's vehicle licence had expired and were unable to renew due to reaching their age limit on Wednesday 21/10/20, and of those the number of identification roundels that have been surrendered/recovered from those, now unlicensed vehicles.

There were 104 vehicle licences that fall into this category. Of these, our records show that 12 have returned their licensing documents. However, this does not include recovered vehicle licensing discs and documents and licences which are routinely removed as part of the vehicle licensing process and as part of our on-street compliance operations.

STAY INFORMED AT WWW.LCDC.TV

As many of you know throughout the last few years the LCDC have used the full potential of social media to educate the trade and bring "as it happens" periscope videos on matters such as Bank Junction and Tottenham Court Rd protests, informing the trade on the outcomes of meetings we attended with MP's or with TfL.

We have always felt it was and still is vital drivers are

informed of changes and proposals to our Industry, drivers may not always like what's being said, but as they say, forewarned is forearmed.

Being kept in the dark may work for mushrooms but not for the cab trade.

Also, we hope that if drivers see and hear what is actually happening, it may spur them on to feel more collective with other drivers and hopefully shake off the scourge of apathy within the trade that

has chewed away within the trade for decades. The "I'm alright Jack" mentality has now led us to the "were all in trouble" position.

PH on apps, cost of taxi ownership, tariff, all these important issues should have been fought as a trade collective.

With the C19 pandemic and the lack of a physical presence on the streets, the LCDC looked at a way of still keeping the trade informed and thus we have brought

LCDC TV to the trade.

Mayoral candidate interviews, KOL school interviews, app developers, manufacturers, in fact all the other parts of the taxi industry jigsaw that have real meaning to every taxi driver.

We also want to hear what you have to say and by launching our very own channel on Youtube, drivers can watch, like, subscribe and importantly, leave a comment.... or two! this isn't a LCDC promotion, it

is a powerful media tool that we hope the drivers will hopefully enjoy and embrace. Just go to Youtube and look for www.lcdc.tv and see what pops up. We have already interviewed Shaun Bailey, Tory mayoral candidate, Derek Stewart from cabapp and discussed the Uber employment tribunal with LCDC committee member, Danny 'O Regan.

We have upcoming interviews so please watch and hopefully get involved.



A large promotional banner for LCDC TV. The background shows a busy London street at night with several black taxis and a red double-decker bus. The "LONDON CAB DRIVERS CLUB" logo is in the top left. The text "LCDC TV" is prominently displayed in large, green, outlined letters. Below it, the text "the new channel for London cabbies" is written in white. At the bottom, there is a YouTube logo and the website address "www.lcdc.tv".

Conservative Government Minister rides to the aid of Uber... yet again

Once again in the House of Lords last week, a Tory Minister Lord Callanan highlighted once again the never-ending support the Conservative party lends to Uber.

He was challenged after the supreme court decision on workers' rights as to whether the Government would ensure that Uber does not weasel out of its obligations to drivers past and present and whether he would also encourage HMRC to go after billions in back taxes, and will he bring forward early legislation to make sure that all companies in the so called "Gig economy" no longer are able to exploit the lowest paid workers in this country?

Responding to the question, Lord Callanan, Government Minister for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, instead shared his thoughts on



London's licensed taxi industry. He responded saying: "The monopoly previously enjoyed by black cabs was bad for the consumer. They were overpriced and Uber has

been a thoroughly good thing for the market in London."

As we already know to our cost, this is not the first occasion when the higher

echelons of the Conservative party have come to the defence of Uber's business model. As far back as 2016 the Badge newspaper published emails between Number 10 and Uber regarding the PH regulations that TfL were looking to enforce. Chairman Grant Davis was personally told by the then Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, that he had received a call from David (David Cameron PM) who told him to "leave Uber alone".

Another illustration of this never ending support came from the Ex PM, Theresa May, who whilst attending the World Economic Forum at Davos was quoted as saying that the UK needs "more Companies like Uber"

It comes as no surprise to us to discover that Lord Callanan was Parliamentary under Secretary for transport in 2017 at the very same time when Uber was

under intense scrutiny over its business model.

Ironically his current brief is Under Secretary of State (Minister of Climate Change & Corporate Responsibility) It is hard to see how this Minister with this responsibility can support this company that claims to have 40k vehicles working in London creating congestion and pollution and has spent the last six years vigorously opposing workers rights for the drivers on their app?

Lord Callanan did however say in his summing up that the "Supreme Court's decision is, of course, final. Uber will have to comply with this judgement, as everybody else has to comply with Court Rulings"

Will the current Conservative Government make sure that Uber finally complies with the Law of the Land...Over to you Boris?

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Government backs Uber over PH regs

TURNING THE SCREW

See pages 3, 4 & 5

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PM MAY ASKS FOR TRADE UPDATE, BUT THEN BACKS UBER AT DAVOS

SAME OLD TORY?

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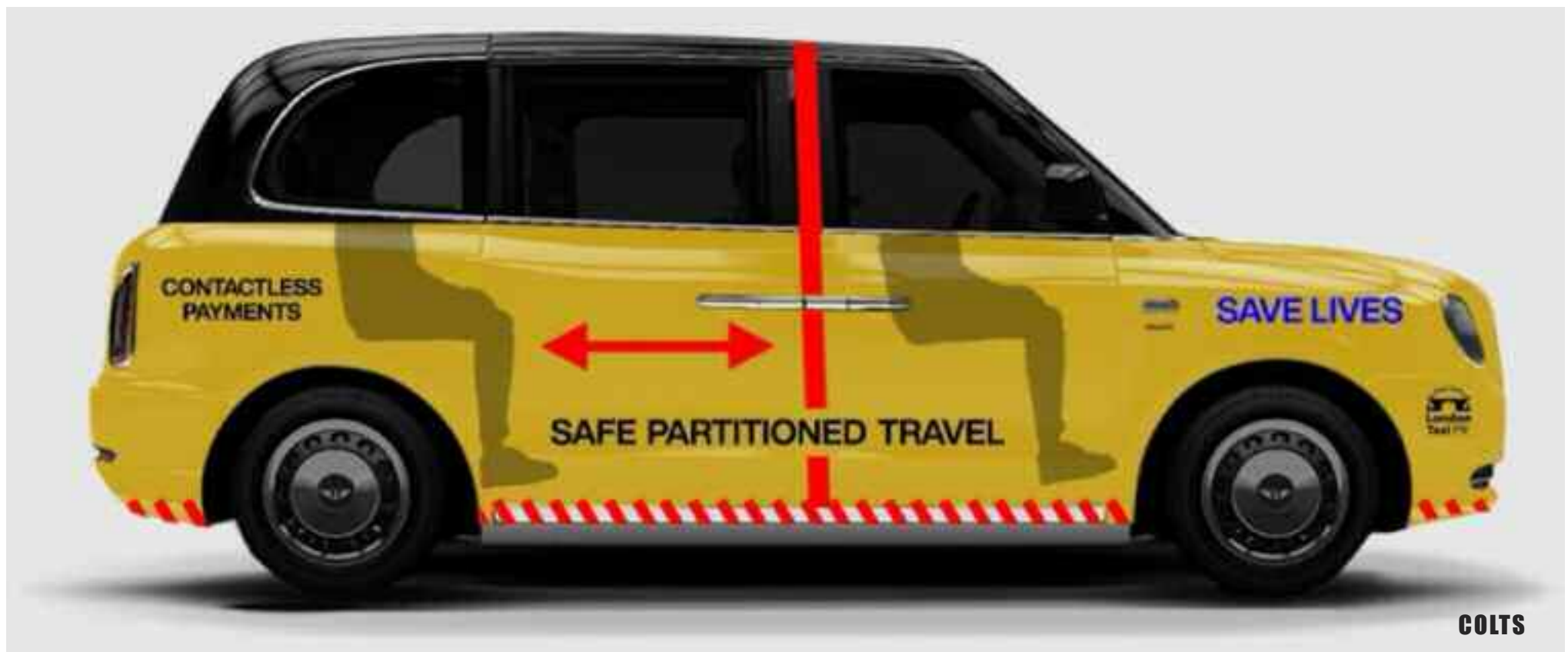
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Cab:app sees exciting future for the Trade

On the 4th March, Derek Stewart from Cab:app attended the LCDC office to bring the trade up to speed with the developments regarding Cab:app. Below are twenty quick fire facts that he wanted to flag up with the trade and show just what huge strides Cab:app has made and the exciting future for the Trade...

20 Quick fire points on cab:app

1. Founded London 2010 – by Derek Stewart & Peter Schive (Green Badge Driver)
2. Ireland launch 2012 – Lar Kelly joined as partner/shareholder (Dublin Driver)
3. No. of locations – active in 59 towns & cities across the UK & Ireland
4. No. of drivers – over



5. Vehicle types – black cabs & licensed taxis only (NO PHV EVER!!)
6. Largest coverage – London, Dublin, Manchester,

7. No. of shareholders – 281 in total, 130 are taxi drivers, Derek largest @ 51%
8. No. of card payments – 1.6m card transactions processed for drivers

9. Payments to drivers - £47m in total paid out, next day settlement
10. Drivers with cash back – 5,500 with option to convert to shares in Mar-Apr
11. Driver share save

12. New driver app – in development, planned go live date May
13. New digital banking app – in testing, goes live in May-Jun
14. Automated accounting – included in new digital banking app
15. National taxi booking app – in development, planned go live date July
16. Booking commission – 0% in perpetuity for all driver sign ups
17. Business accounts – 10% commission, with 2% cash back or charitable donation
18. Driver rewards & discounts – planned go live Jul-Aug with rewards partner
19. Fuel card – cheaper fuel linked to banking debit card, plan Q3 2021
20. Insurance – in discussion with partners, launch by summer 2021.

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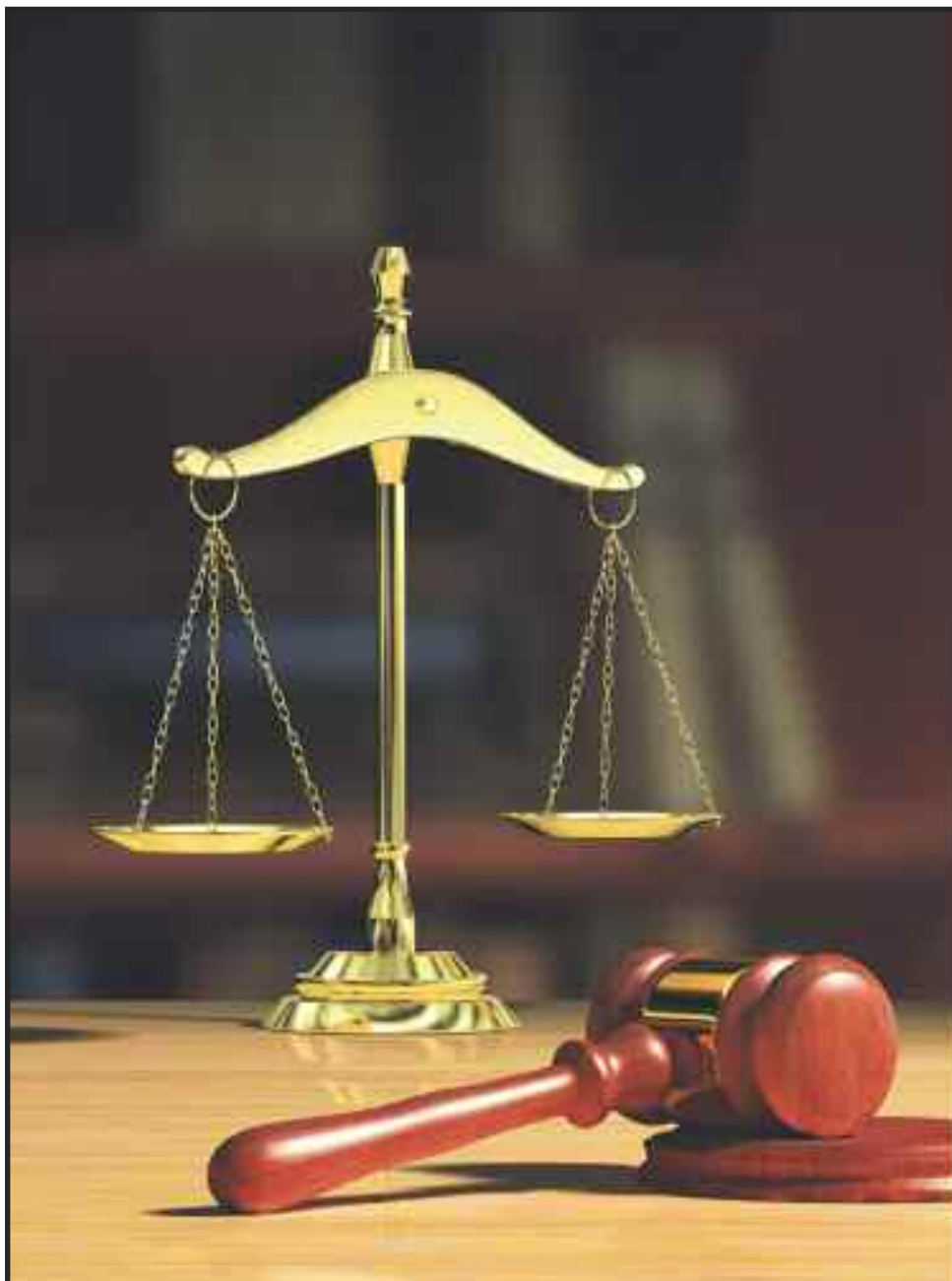
We at the LCDC don't often bang our own drum when it comes to helping our members with their legal troubles. A lot of the cases which come our way with members are quite sensitive and we respect their wishes to keep things in house and out of the paper which I can fully appreciate.

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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Dr Mike Galvin: Industry faces

The Taxi and Private Hire industry is facing more upheaval when parliamentary time becomes available to legislate for national standards.

IF NATIONAL STANDARDS ARE THE ANSWER... What was the question?

Humans have an endearing feature whereby a simple slogan is grasped and adopted as a great idea with little or no real consideration of what the implications actually are. The Government has committed that it 'will take forward legislation when time allows to enable these' [minimum national standards]. So great, here we go then 'National Standards' or is it 'Minimum National Standards' or as oxymorons go this is a great one 'high minimum national standards'. Heaven knows what we are getting, what the implications actually are and whether they are a good idea or not. The bandwagon is rolling and national standards, minimum, high or low will provide a new utopia for the industry won't it.....er haven't we been here before?

CALL ME OLD FASHIONED – BUT WHAT PROBLEM ARE WE SOLVING?

It is probably a personal view but when does piecemeal legislation actually work? A quick tweak here, a little change there, an extra clause stuck on the end of some entirely different legislation has time and time again left industries fuming, helpful politicians with egg covered faces and policymakers trying to present to regulators a bodge up as a logical and sensible piece of ground breaking legislation on which to build and develop regulation and actually enforce it. Dare I mention the Deregulation Act? I believe that change had a lot to commend it but I am probably a lone voice and since the implications, unforeseen consequences and practice have come into view it has not only divided the industry but left it clamouring for another knee jerk solution.....ABBA. How many bites at this apple do we want before we give it the level of scrutiny it rightfully deserves? Parliament is not going to set aside an annual allocation of parliamentary time for 'the taxi

and PH allocation rules bill' debate and discuss it every year until the industry decides they like a particular version. No instead we will find the door shut firmly in our faces every time we ask for another change and heaven forbid a complete overhaul of the legislation that governs us.

So why, as an industry, do we accept and even support at times this sloppy and poor approach to legislation? In fact, why is legislation seen as the natural answer whereas maybe within the current legislation and with some hard miles with regulators a better or even workable outcome could be achieved – why because there



is no glamour in meeting the 300 or whatever licensing authorities, berating the LGA and generally trying to work with councils and others when a few high level and highly publicised meetings with Minister X and Lord y is an option and a photo opportunity.

SO WHY IS THIS SITUATION ACCEPTED?

Why are we not engaged in important decisions that will impact every business in the industry? Why do trade associations think that a survey constitutes consultation and scrutiny, provides not only the

answer but somehow legitimises the process and ultimately the policy? Would you make other decisions in this way?

The car showroom sends you a survey – do you want a new car Y/N? You tick yes. They take your car away and give you a new one – a Robin reliant....happy?, a Bentley which you can't afford....happy? A two seater, an MPV or a pink pick-up truck....ok I'll stop there but you get the concept. I think the causes and reasons are relatively straight forward – the industry is lethargic, often inept, not prepared to invest and prone to leave it to someone else. That 'someone else' doesn't

have the time, maybe the competence, the budgets or the energy to do what should be done and that is to critically examine what problem we are trying to solve, what the options are and what the implications and likely, and even unlikely consequences of each are. The outcome is sadly inevitable.

WE EITHER ENGAGE OR WE TAKE THE CONSEQUENCES

The democratic process takes time, energy, often money, requires competence and lots of shoe leather and persuasion and engagement. New legislation can

fundamentally change the rules of the game. The, if we are honest, forlorn search for the mythical level playing field in an uneven world and the constant ranting about potential judicial reviews and other nonsense to overturn every 'mistake' made, every stupid idea, many of which the industry championed or passively or even unknowingly acquiesced to neither enhances our industry to policy makers nor does it make for a framework that is better suited to prevailing conditions. Short circuiting the process, a quick read at best, a survey, and the acquiescence or even support and then years of moaning, ranting and impotent threats is not a public policy strategy – no sir! Neither is the victim's lament of 'it seemed a good idea at the time' or it would have been alright if they had applied the lazy catchall of 'common sense'!

SO WHAT HAS THIS GOT TO DO WITH ME?

Oh, nothing much, just your business, your income, your exit or whether you have anything to pass onto your kids so not important really (sic). Folks, let's wake up here. National Standards flow smoothly off of the tongue but like any concept, like any bright idea and like any unifying policy (let's get Brexit done and drain the swamp spring to mind) the devil is in the detail. Will national standards, high, low or whatever be good for the industry? I can put my hand up here and say clearly – I don't know! So why don't I know – because I don't know what it means, I don't know what the problem is we are solving and importantly I have not seen anyone start to consider what is wrong with what we have now and whether national standards actually solve whatever problems we perceive that we currently have and at the risk of being nerdy may I mention it... evidence!. New legislation is always a risk – a nuance here, a poor interpretation there, an amendment or two and what we had before looked like the promised land in comparison. We need to risk assess any change. These are complex nuanced issues – if what we have is unworkable, wrecking businesses and importantly putting customers at risk change it – if not.....maybe

National Standards upheaval



talk yourself off the ledge.

In the dim and distant past (the 80's) when Westminster Council wanted to close Oxford Street and make it a pedestrian zone I and a group of colleagues at the LTDA spent months looking at all sides of the argument, of the benefits to each stakeholder group, of the options, and after reaching a clear decision why it was bad for the London Taxi Industry and importantly other stakeholder groups including I might add the traders in Oxford Street, of critiquing and testing our arguments and then we spent months lobbying and away it went. The victory was not that we (by this time not just the taxi industry) had stopped it BUT that we were clear why it was a bad idea what the alternatives and options were and were able to authoritatively deliver those arguments and crucially evidence. We had also built incredibly strong alliances and positioned ourselves as an authoritative and evidence-based voice. Important for future challenges.

WHERE IS OUR EVIDENCE?

New legislation is not like going to the barbers for a quick trim to cheer yourself up. It is major surgery. Once in place it is not going away anytime soon. No one would normally undertake elective surgery without considering the options, the risks and maybe getting a couple of opinions. This is a big step and deserves serious consideration. Every business is one decision away from disaster – this is one big decision.

In many respects it has gone forward to Government because 'we' support it. Government will find time for legislation because it appears to be a problem that can easily be fixed and has some perceived public benefit in respect of safety. Meanwhile back on the farm I'm not sure that anyone has really given this much more than a cursory glance or a catchy title. And before anyone pipes up with the Task and Finish Group and with great respect to them, I am not talking about a few meetings where the goal was consensus on a basket of different agendas. I am talking

about line-by-line scrutiny of detailed policy documents, of facilitated discussion of hard miles looking critically and as far as possible clinically at the options and potential outcomes. Who is gathering the evidence? I thought, he said and someone told me is not evidence. That is not happening and the industry does not have the infrastructure to make it happen. Neither I will add does the industry have the infrastructure to support the passage of any legislation through parliament – changes of this nature which are, make no mistake, fundamental to the industry's future need constant lobbying, review of amendments, trade-offs and attention during its passage and implementation. That body does not exist in this industry.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

National Standards are unlikely to go before parliament any time soon but that is no reason to leave it for another day. No one in the industry is busy at the moment and technology enables discussion. Rather than sit back,

let it happen and then spend the rest of your career moaning and lamenting the change now is the time to actually develop clear and well thought through policy proposals and come out with something that is a better fit or and let's be really radical here decide that what we have is already a good fit and that legislation with all its risks is not worth it.

Although better/good fit might not sound much of an ambition you are highly unlikely to get legislation that works solely for your business – so a good fit to me is a good outcome. However, before any of that is considered whoever will do this work should look carefully at the benefits and disbenefits of what is in place now - maybe its not perfect but is it a good fit? The best can be the enemy of the good – be careful what you wish for!

Dr Michael S. Galvin
Mobility Services Limited

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

■ CAB TRADE ADVICE

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■ 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.

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our standard as a London taxi driver. Recently we have held meetings to work against the ULEZ strategy and the introduction of taxi age limits.

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Alan's Angle



Westminster Council updates

Westminster Council are looking to revamp the western end of Oxford Street to make it more desirable to the returning shoppers after covid restrictions are lifted in April. We will see many changes which are listed below but the most

The first phase of the overarching Oxford Street District strategy involves plans to install a temporary scheme on Oxford Street itself, with the aim of showcasing innovation, sustainability, culture and diversity. Quick-win interventions that could be delivered by late Spring 2021 present an exciting

imaginative, building anticipation for future stages of the project.

THE CONCEPT

The planned temporary changes will make Oxford Street more exciting and attractive to visitors and residents, increasing dwell time and creating a more vibrant experience.

the temporary footway widening could provide an opportunity to trial a variety of interventions. Some traffic diversions would be required during the works, but disruption will be minimised. The council and its partners will also review all street signs, bollards, and pedestrian guardrails, and all redundant or unnecessary clutter would be removed or consolidated wherever possible.

The temporary scheme would be delivered via a Temporary Traffic Order (TTO) for 18 months. Upon commencement of any scheme, Westminster City Council will garner feedback from stakeholders during this period, to collectively assess which changes should be considered as part of the longer-term plans for the district. This is an opportunity to test and pilot ideas that are both high impact and generate enthusiasm for the district's reinvention in the future.

what they come back to the table with. I keep you updated when they do.

Westminster Ranks Update

These are four new rank appointments that should be implemented by April hopefully. Westminster council are still the most active borough council looking to appoint ranks where we require them.

Wilton Road – Park Plaza Hotel 1 rank space
Bruton Street – Hakkasan 2 spaces
Dean Bradley Street – Burberry 1 space
Buckingham Gate – St James' Hotel 1 space this will act as a point and be fed from the seven cab rank.

Paddington/Hyde Park Low Traffic Neighbourhood

Last year saw WCC put out a consultation to residents around Hyde Park Sq and surrounding area to block off many roads making it virtually impossible to drive through the area. This will push more traffic onto already congested roads on Edgware and Bayswater. Well some good news the Project is on hold, the Scheme was advertised in Oct/Nov and will not be going ahead there was a 66% objection during engagement. Feeling from residents was that they wanted more involvement in consultation.

WCC is still committed to bringing forward a traffic management solution for the area to better manage the rat-running problems that residents face on the HP Estate. WCC to start some workshops in coming weeks to discuss resident/stakeholder objectives for the area, before any new options are drafted and taken forward for local consultation. So watch this space hopefully the local residents can keep blocking this scheme.



Marble Arch hill

important changes for us will be rank allocation. The ranks outside Marks and Spencer's will be retained and we will get a three cab rank for Selfridges but it will be located behind the bus stop outside Selfridges due to footpaths being widened outside Selfridges. It's looks like at the moment we are set to lose the ranks outside Debenhams and John Lewis due to footpaths being widened for pedestrians. Westminster Council have tried to offer us a rank in Vere Street which is totally unacceptable for us. It's has no sight line for customers looking for Taxis on Oxford Street and passing Taxis will take the work before customers work out the rank is in Vere St. we would like one of the ranks to stay in situ and were still waiting for update from WCC.

opportunity to test and experiment, as the first step towards the longer-term revitalisation of the district. The temporary interventions could reinvigorate and reimagine the nation's high street for new patterns of use, safely welcoming people back to the district post-lockdown, with an atmosphere of celebration. Increased footway space on Oxford Street to enable safe, distanced access to the district is part of our plans. The proposals include complementary streetscape changes designed to improve the look and feel of the area, and create enlivenment and atmosphere; additional greening and seating. Space to play is also planned, to surprise and delight people returning to district. These proposed and temporary interventions are designed to be exciting and

The improvements are planned to include will be footway enhancements: extended pedestrian space and footways. A 'street dressing scheme' which will significantly increase plants and green areas to enhance the streetscape, contemporary seating, particularly in 'pocket' spaces along the street. Colourful, themed banners which will be designed to create a sense of place and aesthetic continuity. A urban theatre': spaces for outdoor performance, features that create a sense of enlivenment, with 'smart' technology-based installations, and concept lighting. The improvements have the aim of setting a global benchmark for a post-Covid response, supporting communities, visitors and retailers in recovery but also creating a sense of excitement and surprise. Other proposed features

Harewood Avenue Ranks

Last month we also had a meeting with the team looking to put in a new cycle scheme which will see more cycle pushed up Harewood Avenue. They are looking to take away the rank in the middle of the road that feeds the station rank and the rank outside BNP offices. They want to put the feeder rank on Rossmore Road and yes you haven't read that wrong. It's miles away and was rejected by all the trade orgs at the meeting for being unusable and we had major safety concerns for drivers on the rank. They wanted the rank to be governed by a monitor when cabs moved off the station forecourt rank. This will cause so many problems we asked them to go away and come up with a better scheme. They said they was very reluctant to do that but have taken all our points on board so will we see

London crisis: Sadiq Khan sparks fury with 'war on statues' – 'We need a fresh start'

LONDON mayor Sadiq Khan is "waging war on statues" when he should be concentrating on tackling crime, Tory mayoral contender Shaun Bailey has claimed.

Mr Bailey said if he becomes mayor, he will instead focus his efforts on "waging a war on criminals". The news comes after London Mayor Sadiq Khan has been accused of planning to tear down historic statues in London that have controversial links to the historic slave trade. This led Conservative Housing minister Christopher Pincher to write to Mr Khan to say he is concerned the mayor is using £250,000 of taxpayers money on a new statues commission.

Mr Pincher claims the new commission is made up of 15 mainly left-wing activists.

Mr Pincher said that this expenditure is being made at a time when Mr Khan is putting up Londoners' council tax bills.

With the new commission, the Tory housing minister said that Mr Khan is seeking the destruction of British history and heritage.

The news saw Conservative Party mayoral candidate Shaun Bailey today tweet: "Sadiq Khan is waging war on statues."

"As Mayor, I'll wage war on criminals. London needs a fresh start."



One follower of Mr Bailey said: "London is being lost to crime, disorder, and lawlessness."

"If you don't manage to get Khan out then I genuinely fear for our capital."

In his efforts to tackle historically controversial statues, Mr Khan has been backed by Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer.

Mr Starmer has backed the removal of

Sir Edward Colston's statue.

This statue is being targeted by Black Lives Matter activists in Bristol and the Labour group on the Local Government Association who want Labour councils to pull down such landmarks that have controversial links to slavery.

Conservative Housing minister Mr Pincher has now demanded the controversial statues commission set up by Mr Khan should be "disbanded".

Mr Pincher said: "Putting some of London's most important pieces of history into the hands of 15 activists, the majority of whom are not historians is a regrettable decision."

"On top of the enormous costs, some very troubling statements by your panelists, such as praising the "guerrilla-style" removal of statues, have been made public."

"These will not command public confidence or support."

"As London Mayoral candidate Shaun Bailey has said, this commission will neither heal divisions nor promote inclusivity."

The Mayor of London's office has been contacted for a response to Mr Pincher and Mr Bailey's claims but has yet to reply.

Courtesy of The Daily Express

Sadiq Khan forced to hole-up inside coffee shop after protesters turn up at launch

Sadiq Khan's re-election campaign hit trouble today when he was forced to hole-up inside a coffee shop for an hour to avoid a small group of residents protesting about a transport scheme.

The Mayor had chosen the Hot Milk cafe in Bounds Green for the media launch of his bid to win a second term at City Hall.

But as news of his visit began to spread, six residents gathered outside, asking to speak with Mr Khan about a low traffic neighbourhood (LTN) introduced by Enfield council.

They said it had made their lives a misery by forcing them to divert via the North Circular Road, displacing traffic and worsening already high levels of pollution.

Mr Khan, on the advice of his police protection officers, remained in the cafe for an hour in the hope the protesters would leave. When they refused to go, he made a dash for his car and ignored their requests.

Lead protester Roland



Hughes, who arrived on a bike, pursued Mr Khan as he walked to the awaiting Metropolitan police vehicle, a black Range Rover. "Sadiq, please talk to us," he asked. "We are just a few residents."

He told the Standard as the Mayor departed: "It's very disappointing. We live in a democracy and it's not good enough. He's come here for our votes, I would have thought, and there was no engagement with us at all. It was just a photo opportunity, sadly."

Mr Hughes added: "We didn't really feel that we looked like a threatening mob and we just wanted to ask some questions. It's all about stage-managed photo opportunities, as far as we can tell, and he's been holed up in the cafe with the door being held shut. It's been a bit odd."

Mr Khan launched his campaign for a second term with nine weeks until polling day on May 6 and after last year's election was postponed due to Covid.

Mr Khan called for a 1945-style programme to rebuild the economy and promised to focus on "jobs, jobs, jobs" and encouraging domestic tourists back to central London.

He criticised Chancellor Rishi Sunak for failing to provide a "long-term vision" for after the lifting of lockdown, or to guarantee jobs or training and said that a £367million hole in City Hall's finances due to Covid meant "inevitable" cuts to public services.

But Mr Khan faced criticism for increasing the cost of living for London households by hiking his share of council tax bills by almost 10 per cent at a time when consumer spending is seen as a key way to boost the economy.

At the campaign launch at Hot Milk Cafe in Bounds Green, which has received £5,000 from City Hall to keep trading and £12,500 from the Mayor's "pay it forward" advance payment scheme, Mr Khan vowed to "relentlessly bang the drum for London — both at home and around the world" to

attract jobs and investment.

More than 18,000 Londoners have died with Covid. Mr Khan said he was determined to "build an even better London" in their memory.

At least 16 candidates, including several independents, are expected to run for mayor but Mr Khan said it was a "two-horse race" between himself and Tory rival Shaun Bailey.

"We're the only two candidates who can win and the choice couldn't be starker," he said. Mr Bailey said the Budget was "supporting London's recovery, because Sadiq Khan won't".

He criticised the council tax rise and the proposed greater London boundary charge, which would charge motorists up to £5.50 a day to enter the capital.

Mr Bailey said: "In the middle of a pandemic Londoners need support, not higher taxes. So as mayor, I'll reverse these harmful decisions."

Courtesy of The Evening Standard

THE WEST INTENDS ENERGY

Tilak Doshi

Suicide is viewed as a crime in many countries. In a court of law, it is a serious charge and the evidence needs to be conclusive for such an accusation to stand (e.g., did you actually see him attempt to jump off the bridge?). But when societies (or at least their leaders) attempt it, one can say that it safely falls under the rubric of the sovereign right to misrule. In the hallowed tradition of Western liberal democracy, so long as its political leaders are elected in free and fair elections, misrule leading to societal death by suicide is merely an unfortunate outcome of either gross negligence or culpable intention led by, say, an ideology of de-industrialization. Nevertheless, let us proceed with the case for the prosecution.

The Circumstantial Evidence Of Societal Suicide

The first piece of evidence is an astonishing article published last week in the Boston Review by a professor of anthropology in Rutgers University. The good professor opined that Zimbabwe and Puerto Rico “provide models for what we might call ‘pause-full’ electricity”. The West, he continues, has created a vast infrastructure for generating and consuming electricity 24/7, 365 days a year. Since this is based on “planet-destroying fossil fuels and nuclear power”, we need to emulate the aforementioned poor countries and save the climate by giving up the demand for the constant supply of electricity.

To be fair, the professor also noted that the Zimbabweans and Puerto Ricans did not choose to accept electricity rationing but were imposed upon by the gross negligence and corruption of their governments. The professor cannot be lightly dismissed, and the Boston Review shares its domicile with MIT and Harvard University, the temples of wisdom in modern Western civilization. And the Review has its share of kudos, at least for those of a particular persuasion: “When it comes to publishing fresh and generative ideas, Boston Review has no peer” says Robin D. G. Kelley, Professor of American History at the University of California, Los Angeles and Naomi Klein, activist and New York Times NYT -1% best-selling author, opines that “Boston Review is so good right now.”

Let us move on to our second piece of evidence, this time from the other side of the “climate emergency” aisle. Professor Fritz Vahrenholt is a giant among environmental circles in Germany. (The country is well known as the world’s leading champion for all things environmental and for pushing



Europe to “net zero emissions by 2050”). Prof. Vahrenholt holds a doctorate in chemistry and started his professional career at the Federal Environmental Agency in Berlin (responsible for the chemical industry) before joining the Hessian Ministry of the Environment. From 1984 until 1990 he served as state secretary for environment, from 1991 till 1997 as minister for energy and environment in the state of Hamburg.

One day before the publication of the Boston Review article on October 5th, Prof Vahrenholt stated baldly in a German TV interview that climate science was “politicized”, “exaggerated”, and filled with “fantasy” and “fairy tales”. He pronounced that “The [Paris] Accord is already dead. Putin says it’s nonsense. [...] The Americans are out. The Chinese don’t have to do anything. It’s all concentrated on a handful of European countries. The European Commission is massively on it. And I predict that they will reach the targets only if they destroy the European industries.” He lambasted Germany as a country “in denial when it comes to the broader global debate taking place on climate science”. He went on to characterize Europe’s recent push for

even stricter emissions reduction targets to madness akin to Soviet central planning that is doomed to fail spectacularly.

The Substantive Evidence

At this stage, the lawyer for the defense against the charge of societal suicide might well jump up before the presiding judge, saying “Enough, Your Honor, this is merely circumstantial evidence! Show this court the proof!” After all, the jury might well agree with the suggestion that despite the weighty credentials of the two professors, these are still mere individuals who in the nature of things might be prone to exaggeration or hyperbole. Where is the evidence that society is jumping off the proverbial bridge?

At this turn in court proceedings, the prosecution, possibly with a quiet confidence in its case of societal suicide, might say “let us now go beyond the circumstantial, and into the realm of substantial evidence, Your Honor... Let me now turn to the example of Germany itself”. In an analysis of 126 countries using purchasing power-adjusted data, Germany ranks 16th in the international ranking (the highest in Europe) in

household electricity prices. Most of the countries with even higher prices are crisis-ridden developing countries such as such as Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso where many people cannot afford electricity at all or in isolated island countries such as Vanuatu, the Cook Islands, and Tonga. According to data for March 2020, the electricity price for households in Germany was \$0.38 per kilowatt-hour (kWh), compared to \$0.15 for US households, \$0.17 for Sweden, \$0.21 for France and \$0.26 in the UK.

Germany has felled thousands of acres of its ancient Teutonic forests and threatens its endangered species of birds and bats by constructing thousands of windmills with blades made of petroleum-based glass-fiber-reinforced epoxy or polyester resins and made in furnaces fueled by natural gas, its motors using rare earths such as dysprosium, neodymium and praseodymium which are extracted using fossil fuels. Windmills are constructed on thousands of tons of reinforced concrete towers with cement and steel manufactured in fossil fuel-intensive factories. Most disturbingly, the leading German newsmagazine Der

SUICIDE: WILL IT SUCCEED?



Spiegel found that in 2014, 17% of all German households live in poverty due to an “energy cost explosion”. Since then, in the Green-propelled rush to shut down its nuclear reactors, natural gas-fueled power and coal power plants, average electricity prices for a three-person household have risen by almost 68% over the last 15 years.

Let’s turn to another leading example of societal suicide: California. According to engineer Ronald Stein, “California’s green crusade direction and actions are increasing the costs of electricity and fuels which guarantees growth of the homeless, poverty, and welfare populations, and further fuels (no pun intended) the housing affordability crisis.”

California, the world’s fifth largest economy, now imports most of its crude oil from overseas (since the extraction of its ample local oil resources are practically banned) and it imports nearly a third of its electricity from neighboring states (since nuclear and natural gas-fueled power plants are progressively shutdown by legislation). Between 2011 and 2017, California’s electricity prices rose five times faster than they did nationally and now Californians pay 60

percent more, on average, than the rest of the nation, for residential, commercial and industrial electricity. With rolling power blackouts, it has accorded itself a third world status. Indeed it seems the state has anticipated the advice proffered by the notable Rutgers University professor of anthropology.

In a remarkable moment of candor, Governor Gavin Newsom said in mid-August that the state’s transition away from fossil fuels is a contributing factor to the state’s rolling blackouts. The elimination of fossil fuel products and the shift to solar power, windmills and other forms of green energy has led to what Newsom called “gaps” in the energy grid’s reliability. To top it off, the Governor signed an executive order on September 23 banning the sale of new gasoline-powered vehicles within 15 years to cut down on air pollution and reach the state’s goals for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) delivered this common sense verdict to Governor Newsom: “California’s record of rolling blackouts – unprecedented in size and scope – coupled with recent requests to neighboring states for power begs the question of how you expect to

run an electric car fleet that will come with significant increases in electricity demand, when you can’t even keep the lights on today.”

But It Is To Save The Planet!

At this juncture the lawyer for the defense would appeal to what would seem to be the ultimate moral arbiter of all debate related to energy policy: “We need to save the planet!”. This, the defense will conclude, is all there is to say about this overly-long court battle. “We are not committing suicide, Your Honor, but indeed we are doing our level best to avoid this headlong rush to precisely the suicide that the prosecutor so drastically misconstrues”. And, with a flourish, the defense might rest its case with the unveiling of a predictive global warming chart which threatens an impending planetary catastrophe for maximum effect on the jury.

But the prosecution might offer a final counter before it rests its case. The prosecutor consults the work of Nobel Laureate William Nordhaus — whose pioneering work on the economics of climate change won him the award — and states that the best current research

shows that the cost of climate change by the end of the century, if we do nothing, will be less than 4% of global GDP. This means, as the New York Times best-selling “environmental sceptic” author Bjorn Lomborg puts it, “that instead of seeing incomes rise to 450% by 2100, they might “only” increase to 434%.

But “how can we trust this assertion?” a juror or the judge himself might ask. “Well, as much as the global warming hockey stick chart can be trusted” comes the inevitable reply. For example, what does one make of a predictive long-run global temperature chart which does not record the well-documented historical Roman and Medieval Warming periods with temperatures as high (or higher) as they are currently shown in other charts?

Ultimate Resolution: The People Will Act

At this stage, an on-looker of this courtroom drama might well raise his hands in exasperation and say that a hung jury is inevitable. But while this might be the case in our theoretical court of law, there is bound to be a resolution in real life. There is nothing theoretical about the unstoppable force of climate alarmism meeting the immovable object of people’s natural attachment to their accustomed material standards of living. And such resolutions are occurring in real time, in different parts of the world, and may well be the leading indicators as to whether economic suicide is in prospect for Europe and perhaps for a post-Trump USA.

Perhaps one of the more striking examples of resolution took place in Australia’s 2019 national elections where the center-right Liberal-led coalition Prime Minister Scott Morrison retained power despite all the opinion polls predicting an easy Labor victory. The opposition Labor party’s election strategy to make climate alarmism and anti-coal legislation the key issue badly backfired in what was widely dubbed a “climate election”. One Australian commentator remarked: “How to lose the unlosable election: be anti-coal”. The US election upset of 2016 exhibits some parallels as well. Failed presidential-hopeful Hillary Clinton claimed that her biggest regret was in doubling down on ex-President Obama’s ‘war on coal’ and stating in her campaign trail that “we’re going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business”.

The jury is in: modern economic growth has not shown a single instance of a country successfully developing without the concomitant use of fossil fuels, and ordinary people across the world are fully aware of this.

Courtesy of Forbes Magazine

WWII VETERAN GEOFF PULZER PASSES AWAY AT AGE OF 97

The Taxi Charity was sad to hear that WWII Veteran Geoff Pulzer, a much-loved member of the charity family, had died on 2 March 2021 in Barnet Hospital

WWII veteran Geoff Pulzer, 97, from Brookmans Park, Hertfordshire, served with the 23rd Hussars, attached to Brigade HQ of 29th Armoured Brigade, part of 11th Armoured Division and on 6 June 1944, spent his 21st birthday preparing to land on Juno Beach which they did on D +7. Seventy-five years later he was back in Normandy with the Taxi Charity to mark D Day and celebrated his birthday with his wife Julianne, and a group of WWII veterans and volunteer London licensed cabbies.

After the trip to Normandy in 2019 Geoff sent the charity a lovely thank you email from which this extract is taken. "I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how much Julianne and I enjoyed the very nostalgic trip to Normandy. I cannot thank the Taxi Charity enough for the fun and kindness you all expressed, the efficiency of the operation and the enthusiasm of all concerned. The hotel was comfortable, good food and the itinerary was excellent. Lastly to let you to know that I was humbled by the whole experience, tear jerking at times and I cannot find suitable adjectives to further express our feelings. Bonhomie comes to mind!"

Dick Goodwin, Vice President, Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, said, "Geoff was a fabulous advocate for the charity and would always help with requests from the media to talk about the second world war. In May 2020 he spoke with Dermot Murnaghan about the 75th anniversary of VE Day for the Sky News Podcast and told Dermot that after the liberation of Belsen he was headed towards Lubec when the surrender was announced.



He used to say that he couldn't remember much about VE Day as he was so inebriated. Someone had looted a liqueur store and given him a bottle of brandy and he had drunk it all.

"Geoff was a much-loved member of the Taxi Charity family and we send our deepest condolences to Geoff's wife Julianne and his two sons Michael and Philip. Rest in peace soldier and thank you for your service."

Michael Pulzer, said, "Our wonderful Father had a fabulous life which was enriched by his family and his many friends. He played rugby regularly when he worked at Shell BP as part of their team and he loved playing golf. He enjoyed life in the outdoors and spent a lot of time cultivating a beautiful garden and walking in the countryside. In his later years Dad was an avid Bridge player. The Taxi Charity was very important to our Father and we have asked the charity to be closely involved in the funeral when we say our final goodbye."

The Taxi Charity arranges free trips to the



to, the Netherlands, Belgium and France, and days out to museums, concerts, or fundraising events in the UK, to catch up with friends and comrades. For the last twelve months, pandemic restrictions have meant their events have had to be cancelled so the Charity has made a huge effort to ensure veterans have received regular contact; sending out a greeting card each month, gifts to mark the 75th anniversaries of VE and VJ day, stockings at Christmas and arranging Guards of Honour at veteran's funerals. Volunteers have also helped with; regular phone calls, food shopping, transport to hospital appointments, and more recently taking veterans for their Coronavirus injections.

To fund and facilitate their work, the charity is reliant on generous donations from members of the public, businesses and trusts.

www.taxicharity.org

Netherlands, Belgium and France, and days out to museums, concerts, or fundraising events in the UK, for veterans to catch up with friends and comrades. www.taxicharity.org

About the Taxi Charity

The Taxi Charity is run by volunteer London licensed taxi drivers and has been supporting hundreds of veterans since 1948. The charity arranges free trips



CAB CHAT CORNER

Hello one and all, it seems such a long time since I last wrote anything in The Badge, well it has been a year since I last wrote anything.

How are you? this pandemic has turned everything and everyone's lives upside down and it has been a struggle to make ends meet for most, the same applies to other things in life where the lockdowns have caused severe disruption to everyone's lives. Over the past year we have found it exceedingly difficult to produce Cab Chat, I took the decision to pause the show in March 2020 as I was finding it extremely hard to convey a positive outlook due to everything that was going on around us.

Some members of the team felt that we should have carried on and been there for our listeners and to some extent I do agree, but it has been extremely hard to sit behind the microphone and come up with things to say, there have been many times when I have sat down to record the show and could not do it, I suppose that due to the situation that we all have found ourselves facing I was not in the right mental state to do the show.

This brings me onto the inevitable fact that many drivers will be facing severe mental pressure due to the financial hardship and the lockdowns that the past year has brought about. If you are suffering mentally then please do not feel ashamed, we are all in the same boat and please reach out and speak to someone about the way you are feeling. I am not expert in mental health or wellbeing, but I do know that if I had been stuck at home for the past year, I would have gone insane.

We did produce a couple of shows towards the end of 2020 as we were all looking forward towards the future but with the new lockdown announced in January, I found I had once again to find the right words to say. During the past year there have been a lot of changes in all our lives and the same goes here at Cab Chat, the team are mostly earning money doing other jobs and also we have lost our studio, if you want to hear what has been happening in our lives you will have to listen to the next show.

Cab Chat will be back and hopefully the next show should hit your podcast apps around the same time as you are reading this in The Badge.

Over the past year there have been a plethora of new podcasts launched, aimed



at the Taxi Trade, Sean Paul Day is involved with a podcast called Cab Class which interviews Taxi Drivers, there is also a short news podcast, all of these formats were pioneered by myself and the team at Cab Chat, there is also another podcast in which the hosts proclaim that there is nothing else like it out there aimed at the Taxi Driver,

well we can only assume he has been hiding under a stone for the past 10 years as that is how long we have been producing podcasts. They are all worth a listen but none of them will ever equal your favourite Taxi Podcast, Cab Chat.

YouTube seems to be the thing to do now, and Grant and the LCDC have launched their new channel, Grant aims to bring news to the trade and interview key people within the trade and those outside of the trade who could have an influence on our future, the channel is well worth watching, just search for London Cab Driver Club on YouTube and to coin a phrase, Like, Subscribe and Leave a Comment.

With YouTube being so popular we have decided that not only are we going to produce Cab Chat as a Podcast, but we are also

going to upload it to YouTube, some weeks it will just be the audio, but other videos will have the team in them. So, watch out for the new Cab Chat videos coming soon, once again Like, Subscribe and Leave a comment.

Our Twitter account has been locked after by team member @Iamcabman Rob who has had to take a break due to moving home, but Rob has said once they have settled he will be back bringing you the daily quizzes and competitions, the team wish Rob and his partner the best of luck with their move.

Something else that should be of interest to Taxi Drivers is a new app that I have been given a sneak preview of the app is called LondonCabby and it is a directory of useful information with clickable links to give you directions to any given point such as Police Stations, Toilets, Charge Points etc. The app is still being built but looks very promising, the developers are hopeful to be launching in April 2021 and will continually be updating the app with new information and points. You can find the app at londoncabby.co.uk or they also have a Twitter account @london_cabby

The Government have now announced their "roadmap" out of lockdown so let's hope that we can all look forward to returning to some sort of normality to the later half of this year and getting back to what we all do best, that is driving our Taxis and serving London's travelling public.

Once again, thanks for being a loyal listener to Cab Chat and we look forward to your continued interaction.

Be Lucky



Cab Chat Radio Show

The show that takes a light hearted look at London and it's World Famous Cabbies
Hosted by @SuperCabby and the Team

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Revealed: TfL spent more on failed Garden Bridge than maintaining Thames' crossings in last decade

In total, TfL has spent just under £43 million on maintaining Thames crossings since 2010 – some £10million less than the £53 million spent developing plans for the Garden Bridge under Boris Johnson's mayorship. According to the AJ's sister title New Civil Engineer (NCE), this total maintenance spend only accounts for capital expenditure by TfL and does not include any additional maintenance funding from local councils.

This £43 million spend on upkeep is equivalent to the cost to the taxpayer on Heatherwick Studio's doomed Thames crossing - the other monies having come from private donations (see AJ 30.04.18).

During the same ten year period, TfL spent a further £13 million drawing up proposals for a bridge between Rotherhithe and Canary Wharf, before the plan was axed in 2019.

MPs, council leaders and London Assembly members are now questioning why less money has been spent on maintaining London's ageing river crossings in comparison to developing failed proposals for new schemes.

In particular, politicians are asking how Hammersmith Bridge could be left to deteriorate while tens of millions of pounds were spent on bridge schemes that never came to fruition.

Hammersmith Bridge has been closed to all traffic since August after council leaders warned that the bridge faced 'catastrophic collapse' after engineers noted that a crack in the bridge's cast iron pedestals had widen.

The latest figures were revealed in a letter – seen by NCE – from TfL commissioner Andy Byford to London Assembly member Murad Qureshi. Qureshi added that if the £53million spent on the Garden Bridge had been invested in Hammersmith Bridge five years ago then



'perhaps it wouldn't be in the state it is in today'.

'Fundamentally, I don't understand how the amount spent on the Garden Bridge is more than what TfL has spent on maintaining all the other existing bridges across the Thames for the last 10 years,' Qureshi told NCE.

'If the equivalent amount was spent on Hammersmith Bridge five years ago, then who knows, perhaps it wouldn't be closed today.'

The full closure of Hammersmith Bridge followed years of partial closures and restrictions following concerns about the bridge's deteriorating condition.

MP for Richmond Park and the Liberal Democrats transport spokesperson Sarah Olney warned that failing to properly invest in London's existing infrastructure could result in more 'Hammersmith-Bridge type sagas'. 'This is a clear and uncomfortable reminder that at the heart of the Hammersmith Bridge fiasco lies a matter of priorities,' Olney told NCE.

'As Mayor of London, Boris Johnson was happy to waste money on a failed vanity project in order to elevate himself into higher office. Now

he's arrived at Number 10, his interest in London's major infrastructure appears to have vanished and his Department for Transport's concentration directed elsewhere.'

She added: 'If the government's reluctance to properly invest in London's bridges continues, who is to say we can't expect to see another Hammersmith Bridge-type saga every few years?'

'The economic, health and environmental cost of this would be profound. The government has to step up and take action now by committing the necessary money to keep London moving.'

As previously revealed by NCE, TfL has already spent £16.7million on investigations, feasibility, design, monitoring and early works for Hammersmith Bridge, with a further £4 million committed to repair work that is now underway. That is more than a third of TfL's total maintenance spend on all River Thames crossings during the last decade (see breakdown below).

Richmond Council leader Gareth Roberts also criticised the 'woeful lack of investment in London bridges' during the last 10 years.

Roberts said that ensuring the Capital's existing infrastructure is adequately maintained should take priority over developing projects including the Garden Bridge and the Silvertown Tunnel.

'There has been a woeful lack of investment in London's bridges under both Conservative and Labour Mayors over the last decade, particularly when viewed through the lens of the millions wasted by Mr Johnson on the failed Garden Bridge,' Roberts said.

'However that amount is quite simply dwarfed by the £2billion cost of the Silvertown Tunnel project. Sadiq Khan should be prioritising the proper maintenance of our existing infrastructure, rather than chasing eye-catching, environmentally catastrophic Grands Projets like the Silvertown Tunnel.'

Capital Expenditure by TfL on Thames bridges between 2010 and 2020
In response to criticism about Johnson's tenure as mayor, a ministerial spokesperson added: 'As Mayor of London, Boris Johnson championed investment in bridges and river crossings across London. As Prime Minister, he is backing massive new investment in transport infrastructure across

the whole United Kingdom.'

In his letter to Qureshi, Byford estimates that TfL will need to spend up to five times as much during the next 10 years to strengthen and maintain Thames crossings.

While stressing the figures are 'early stage estimates', Byford revealed that between £135 million and £215 million will need to be spent on Thames Crossings before 2030, with six crossings requiring significant investment:

'This includes regular structural inspections and carrying out day-to-day and large-scale maintenance whenever necessary to ensure they continue to be in good working order.'

The capital's transport operator has previously estimated that it needs a £2 billion investment in its entire road network during the next 10 years to prevent key road bridges and tunnels from shutting.

Last week, TfL meeting agenda papers revealed that the cost of patching up London's surface transport assets has increased by 762 per cent during the last five years. This includes all bridges and tunnels in the Capital as well as River Thames crossings.

TfL attributes this increase to delays and budget cuts to its surface transport assets renewal programme, which includes major repair work to structures including the Rotherhithe Tunnel, A40 Westway, Vauxhall Bridge and Hammersmith Bridge.

The transport operator has previously warned that key routes such as the A40 Westway, Rotherhithe Tunnel and Gallows Corner Flyover face being closed without the investment for major repairs.

Consequently, TfL bosses have asked the committee to approve £198 million for delivery of the surface transport assets renewal programme through to 2022/23.

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Las Vegas for Joshua v Fury?

Anthony Joshua's mega-fight with Tyson Fury moving to July could bring Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas back into contention... and fans should be back in the Fight Capital of the World for Josh Taylor's world-title fight against Jose Ramirez

The world of boxing is re-crossing its fingers following a revelation that the much-awaited mega-fight between Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury may be pushed even further back into summer, with contracts still not signed and the venue also undecided as yet.

Although Arum insists that all important contract issues have been agreed, there was an alarming whiff of uncertainty when he told IFL TV he is still waiting for the documents to be signed on behalf of Britain's rival world champions.

Frank Warren, Fury's UK promoter with Queensberry, and Eddie Hearn, Fury's Matchroom promoter, are both adamant in saying: 'The fight will definitely happen.' Fury, however, admitted last week: 'I am no closer to getting this fight than I was 12 months ago.' He has been out of the ring since his crushing of Deontay



Fury's US promoter Bob Arum has raised concern about this £200 million bonanza finally taking place by talking about the already proposed delay from May to June being prolonged into July.

That may bring the new Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas into contention as the site, with Arum hoping some fans will be allowed back into boxing on the Strip on May 22 for Josh Taylor's newly-announced battle with Jose Ramirez there for the undisputed world light-welterweight championship. The Middle East, notably Saudi Arabia, and China remain locations expected to offer the heftiest site fees but Vegas timing would massively increase pay-per-view revenue on US television.

Wilder in their second WBC title fight in February last year and will not be happy with a further delay, which would favour Joshua who kept active with a routine defence of his belts against Kubrat Pulev as recently as December.

Also, one possible impediment to Joshua v Fury remains unresolved. Wilder's contractual claim to a third fight with Fury, next, is still in legal arbitration in New York. If he is threatened with being kept out of work even longer, the unpredictable Fury could revert to Wilder.

That would simplify a complex TV rights deal since Arum is the agent for both of them with the giant ESPN network in America, while Joshua is tied to the DAZN streaming service over there.



Saunders could prove a nightmare for Alvarez

Canelo Alvarez had the easiest night of his boxing life in Miami on Saturday to set up possibly the hardest fight of his life.

Alvarez forced his mandatory challenger, Avni Yildirim, to quit at the end of three completed rounds and about six-months of nonsense. It never took much to end the mismatch, in all fairness. Canelo retained his WBC and WBA super-middleweight titles, which is the supposed reason fights like this are forced on boxers, promoters, TV companies and fans.

Anyway, the fight's real agenda was the news that followed the predictable capitulation when it was finally, after 13-months of speculation, announced that Canelo will fight Billy Joe Saunders on 8 May. It is a great fight, a difficult fight for both and fully compensates for the Yildirim mess.

There is no venue yet, but outdoors at one of the Texas sites or possibly the new NFL stadium in Las Vegas are both contenders. The date is the most popular Mexican holiday, an outing with Canelo on that day is unforgettable and any town on the planet resembles Mexico on a good night if one of the ring legends is fighting. This time last year Saunders was getting ready to fight Canelo, training in Los Angeles and Las Vegas and waiting for an announcement; it was boxing's worst kept secret, but then Covid edged in from the outside and the May 2

date was gone. It was scrapped on a Friday; the announcement was meant to be 72-hours later.

Somehow, Saunders scrambled out of Las Vegas, just days before flights and travel stopped, his training camp over, his dream fight vanished. The fight's collapse might have ruined a weaker man.

And then last September Canelo talked about getting back in the ring and Yildirim's name was mentioned, plucked like a startled rabbit from a hat of mirth. It was a joke, surely?

Then last November it was Callum Smith's turn to get the offer; Smith was seven-inches taller, unbeaten in 27 fights, the WBA super-middleweight champion. They fought in Texas a few days before Christmas and Canelo won on points.

On the odd night, the Mexican fighting giant made the job look so easy, Smith never blamed his torn bicep and just accepted the boxing lesson with grace. It was Canelo's 54th win, his 17th world title fight. His one defeat was against Floyd Mayweather in 2013, a defeat that will remain as a glowing reminder of Mayweather's skills and brilliance, even as the American continues to stuff his bank with the spoils from his circus fights.

"He's the best fighter on the planet," Hearn said last December, praise for Canelo. The wonder in Hearn's voice was genuine – Eddie had promoted Smith from zero fights to unbeaten world

champion and then Canelo handled him like a kid. A boxing lesson can be more devastating than a quick knockout and Canelo's mastery of distance is a magic trick he has perfected since turning professional at just 15.

Saunders is unbeaten in 30 fights, an Olympian from Beijing, a world champion at two weights and the most naturally gifted southpaw in the sport. He is fearless, can act like a fool away from the ring, has often looked bored in fights, but can conjure up true ring mastery if the man in the opposite corner is a challenge. Saul Canelo Alvarez is boxing's biggest attraction, a cash-cow for the sport and the greatest challenge available for Saunders. Their fight will be free of any excuses once it is over, trust me.

Saunders will not be given a chance by the Americans and Mexicans, dismissed in the company of greatness and that will also appeal to his fighting pride; Saunders always proudly carries the Gypsy flag – the flag of the Roma – with him when he enters the ring. There will be no look of wonder, awe or surrender from Saunders on the night.

"I have no fear of him – I see what he does, I know what he is doing and I know just how good he is," Saunders said last year. I doubt Canelo has the same awareness.

The great fight is now just 10 weeks away, and that is something to get very excited about.



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