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Issue 294 April 2024

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WHOEVER IS OUR NEW LONDON MAYOR - THEY NEED TO BACK OUR ICONIC TRADE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

As you can see from the front page, we now face another Mayoral election. Unfortunately, the taxi trade has always been politicized by whoever resides at City Hall.

Under Boris we suffered terribly with Uber and his chums, Dave and George, and under Khan we have had to accept a whole "greener" strategy with the cost of a taxi going up from £47k in December 2017 to £67k in Jan 2018.

Under Khan's watch we have seen an alarming rise in PH numbers without any inclination from TFL to introduce any sensible and reasonable regulations... it's a free for all.

If we are to get a new Mayor, I really think we need to sit down with them on day one and demand root and branch reform in the way we are treated by TFL.

And were Khan to be re-elected, he should also accept that our trade

is being driven towards extinction, purely on the back of poor political decisions.

Our roads are becoming more and more congested, we are being forced out of roads with ridiculous LTN plans and also the situation of having over 100k PH drivers and a cab costing just under £100k is, in my opinion, not sustainable for a healthy future.

Personally, I will not be voting for Khan as I believe we need a new "pair of eyes" to look at our Industry. I do not believe Khan is miles ahead in the voting so please, if you have the vote, use it.

Candidates will tell you that our trade is 'iconic', which it is - but if they realise our huge value to London at election time, why can't they realise it all the year round, every year?



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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

Tel: 0207 405 1999
FAX: 0207 405 1991



LCDC WRITES TO OUR NEW MAYOR...

Dear Mayor...

We, the London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC), are writing to you with deep concern regarding the lack of substantial action taken to support the viability of London's black cab service under the leadership to date.

Despite pre-mayoral acknowledgment of the challenges facing black cab drivers and the commitments made in the Taxi & PH Plan, the reality paints a starkly different picture.

Sadiq Khan's initial stance on leveling the playing field between traditional black cabs and private hire vehicles was promising. However, the implementation of meaningful changes has fallen short, leaving black cab drivers in a precarious position. The failure of his Taxi & PH Plan underscores the urgency of the situation.

Khan's acknowledgment of the challenges facing black cab drivers before assuming office should have translated into concrete measures to address the disparities between black cabs and private hire services.

Regrettably, this has not been the case. It is evident that the regulatory framework continues to favour private hire services, perpetuating unfair competition and placing the future of black cabs in jeopardy. One of the key issues exacerbating the



situation is regulatory arbitrage, where private hire services exploit loopholes in regulations to gain unfair advantages over traditional black cabs. This not only distorts competition but also externalizes costs onto the public purse.

Traditional black cabs are all wheelchair accessible, a social inclusion that should be supported, yet private hire operators often neglect this responsibility. We propose that private hire operators should be required to have a percentage of their fleet as Wheelchair Accessible

Vehicles (WAVs) to ensure equal access for all passengers.

Furthermore, we strongly advocate for the reintroduction of driving tests for all private hire drivers, ensuring that they possess the necessary skills and competency to operate safely on London's roads. This measure would enhance passenger safety and contribute to a level playing field between traditional black cabs and private hire vehicles.

As the Mayor of London,

you have a responsibility to ensure the equitable treatment of all transportation providers and to safeguard the accessibility and reliability of public transport for all Londoners, including those with disabilities.

We implore you to revisit these commitments and take decisive action to support the viability of London's black cabs. This includes advocating for clear definitions of "plying for hire," implementing fair fare calculation practices, enforcing higher standards for private hire drivers,

addressing regulatory loopholes, and conducting regular impact assessments to evaluate the effects of policy changes.

The time for rhetoric has passed. London's black cab drivers need concrete action to secure their future within the city's public transport system. We urge you to rise to the occasion and fulfill the promises made to support our service.

Yours sincerely,

Grant Davis
London Cab Drivers Club

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"The Badge is the only Taxi Trade Newspaper we advertise in, great responses" Peter Decosta - KPM Taxis

THE CONTEST TO BE THE NEXT

On 2 May Londoners will head to the polls to elect a mayor and 25 London Assembly members.

Around six million registered voters will choose who will be in charge of the capital for the next four years.

This year there will be a new voting system first

past the post (FPTP), similar to what is used in general elections.

A total of 13 candidates will stand for the office of Mayor of London for the next four years.

Voting takes place on Thursday 2 May 2024, polling stations open from 7am to 10pm. Verification

of ballot papers takes place on Friday 3 May 2024 from 9am and the counting begins on Saturday 4 May from 9am.

The order candidates will appear on the ballot paper is:

Femy AMIN, Animal Welfare Party – People, Animals, Environment

Count BINFACE, Count Binface for Mayor of London
Rob BLACKIE, Liberal Democrat
Natalie CAMPBELL, Denise Independent
Howard COX, ReformUK – London Deserves Better
Amy GALLAGHER, Social Democratic Party
Zoë GARBETT, Green Party

Tarun GHULATI, Independent
Susan HALL, The Conservative Party Candidate
Sadiq KHAN, Labour Party
Andreas MICHLI, Christoffi Independent
Brian ROSE, London Real Party – Transform London
Nick SCANLON, Britain First – No To Immigration

HOW MAIN CANDIDATES STAND ON THE CAB TRADE:

SADIQ KHAN LABOUR



1. Promised a "renaissance" under his Mayoralty
2. Cut taxi age limits from 15 years to 12 years
3. Suspended PH SERU tests just two months before the election
4. When elected - 24,870 taxi drivers, now only 17,412
5. When elected 21,759 taxis, now only 14,800
6. Refused to meet with taxi trade associations
7. Failed to publish any financial summaries on Taxi & PH department at TFL
8. Failed to introduce Advance driving test for Taxi & PH drivers
9. NO PH signage
10. KOL applications nosedived

SUSAN HALL CONSERVATIVE

London's black cabs are iconic.

They're a familiar sight on our streets, known worldwide as a symbol of our great city. They're dependable, increasingly green with electric models, and fully accessible.

But despite their modern advancements and historical charm, in Sadiq Khan's London, our black cabs are hit with unnecessary restrictions that affect not just the drivers, but all of, Londoners and visitors to our city, who rely on them.

You might be wondering why these capable, swift vehicles have been stopped from using bus lanes, where they could easily whisk commuters through traffic?

Currently, they can't use bus lanes, bus gates, or important thoroughfares like Bishopsgate, which means slower journeys and higher costs for passengers. It doesn't make sense, does it?

Sadiq Khan's rules seem to ignore common sense by keeping our quickest cabs stuck in the slow lane, literally.

That's why I'm stepping in with a promise: when I'm Mayor, black cabs will go where buses go.

It's time black cab drivers and your passengers enjoyed the smoother, quicker journeys they deserve.

But we also need to go further and put an end to Sadiq Khan's war on the motorist. His support for low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) have been a disaster.

They were meant to cut traffic but have ended up gridlocking it, creating headaches for drivers and residents alike.

We've all seen the chaos: increased congestion, blocked emergency routes, and community frustration. This isn't the way.

I'll work with councils to review, adjust, or remove these schemes where they just aren't working. Let's cut through the gridlock—in every sense.

This election, the choice is clear. Do we stick with Sadiq Khan, who ignores our cabbies and keeps our roads in knots?

Or do we choose a Mayor who listens, who acts, and who gets London moving again?

On May 2nd, vote for a Mayor who backs our black cabs. Let's keep London's legacy alive and get our city moving.

Together, we'll steer our city towards a smoother, smarter future.



T MAYOR OF LONDON IS HERE

ROB BLACKIE
LIBERAL DEMOCRAT



The Black Taxi trade forms an important part of the transport mix in London and black taxi drivers invest a lot of time in passing the knowledge, and money, in purchasing their vehicles, which have a high specification. It is worrying that in the last ten years we have seen a fall in black taxis from 22,200 to 15,100 in 2023.

I know from talking to drivers, and my colleague outgoing Assembly Member Caroline Pidgeon, that the new Zero Emissions Capable black taxis, with finance costs are nearly £100,000 and there is no choice for your vehicles to ensure competitive pricing. This is a huge barrier to people entering the trade and is also a real issue for taxi fleet owners.

As Mayor, I would carry out a comprehensive review of Taxi and Private Hire Services in London, working with all parts of the industry including trade bodies such as the LCDC, to develop a new Black Taxi Strategy that is fit for purpose.

As part of this work, I would personally attend a roundtable with the taxi industry to hear in detail about the issues on the ground and potential solutions. I know one of the big issues is around access to rapid charging points. I would look to pilot charging hubs, near transport interchanges. These would bring together rapid charging points, with toilets, parcel drop off and collection points and cafe facilities. Professional drivers need to have somewhere to have a break and recharge, which can be very challenging. I would hope to work with the private sector to bring to life this idea which could be of huge benefit to drivers and the community.

I would meet with new vehicle manufacturers to encourage more competition with the sector and also meet with the current manufacturer to discuss how they can keep the taxi affordable.

Whilst I welcome the Government extending the plug in taxi grant for another year until next April, this is short term funding. I would look to work with Government to ensure a clear grant to help drivers and fleet owners to purchase the new ZEC black taxis and consider using some funding from City Hall to supplement this. Black taxis are rightly fully accessible and I therefore believe there is a strong case that they should be VAT exempt. I would therefore work with officials in the Treasury to try to secure this exemption, which would help considerably with the exorbitant costs of the vehicles.

I am also concerned that fewer people are applying to complete the knowledge and the current taxi driver workforce is ageing. I would therefore work with you and other key partners to ensure the knowledge remains fit for purpose and consider modular learning, if that makes the process more manageable for new people, including encouraging a more diverse range of drivers coming into the profession.

As part of my comprehensive review, I would look at how TfL carries out its licensing and regulator roles around Black Taxis and Private Hire to ensure it is efficient and proportionate

HOWARD COX
REFORM UK



My promises to London's iconic licensed 'black cab' drivers.

- As your Mayor of London, I will make London safer, and more prosperous.
- I will take back our Capital City from profligate inept politicians and those pointless expensive tsars.
- I will give London's roads back to you with full access to every inch. That means every inch, bus lanes etc.
- Ubers will be subject to the same regulations as black cabs, that means proof they speak clear English, know our Capital's streets without resorting to GPS and are safe to be a passenger.
- I will rid us of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, 20 mph speed limits, excessively wide cycle lanes and other needless road restrictions such as pinch points, speed bumps and floating bus stops.
- Your taxi associations will be listened to, so we bring back the brilliant iconic black cab drivers to be the leading social and business transport first choice of Londoners, visitors and international tourists and.
- I will ensure that all cyclists are registered, identifiable, insured and contribute to the roads they abuse and arrogantly feel they solely own.
- I will visibly triple the number of police officers on the beat to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- I will install unique police public access points in busy consumer locations throughout London.
- I will scrap ALL of ULEZ throughout ALL of London and REFUND all ULEZ expansion fees and fines received since August last year.
- I will end Sadiq Khan's cash-grabbing regressive anti-driver policies and replace them with effective clean fuel technology incentives.
- I will ensure significantly more affordable homes are built to combat soaring rents and sky-high property prices. And reduce NIMBY planning bottlenecks.
- I will do a full audit of the administration in the mayor's office and scrap those costly needless virtue-signalling policies and costly political staff positions that contribute nothing to the benefit of London's prosperity and safety. Everyone of Khan's 1100 managers paid over £100,000 will have to demonstrate they earn 5 times that much that benefits London.

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Q&A with Peter DaCosta



Peter, we've been hearing a lot of exciting news regarding the new extended warranty plan for the LEVC TXE. Can you give us a brief rundown of how this came about?



Yes, with the electric market now being the most dominant we felt the trade needed other extended warranty options, we contacted Autogroup with whom we already have a relationship with to see if they were prepared to take the vehicle on, thankfully they were, the plan has been carefully thought out with our input and a great deal of effort has gone in to producing this very competitive plan for the TXE.



Can the Plan be taken out prior to my current warranty finishing?



Yes! You can now set up the Plan up to 12 months in advance. As an example if your manufacturer's warranty expires 6th March 2025. We are able to set the extended warranty start date at 7th March 2025 given you an extra 3 years' warranty! What's even better is that you won't pay a penny until March 2025.



If my TXE is already out of warranty am I able to take out this new Plan?



Yes, for sure, you can take out the plan up to a maximum mileage of 175k.



Where does the repair need to be carried out?



The repair needs to take place at KPM Automotive Ltd.



Can I still have my vehicle serviced at an alternative garage?



Yes! I have to stress that the vehicle needs to be maintained within the manufacturers guidelines. We recommend that you have your vehicle serviced at an LEVC approved agent.



Is there a claim limit?



£8000 per single claim.



Can a single part be claimed for more than once?



The plan is limited to claiming for one part within the term of the policy which is standard for any extended warranty, but if that part fails within the first 12 months of fitting that should have a 12 month parts warranty on from the parts manufacturer.



Could you confirm if there is an excess to be paid in the event of a claim?



There is only **ONE** £250.00 parts excess to pay and this is in the event an ERAD is claimed for.



Are replacement hire vehicles available in the event a vehicle is kept off the road?



Yes, we have a selection of replacement TXE's on site that can be provided in the event your vehicle is off the road for a sustained period of time. The plan also allows for five-day hiring should there be major repair after the first 24 hours.



The key question, how much is the Plan?



The 3 year plans are the best options and they start from £3995 for TXE's that have mileages between 0-150k.

MY DAD, AL FRESCO - 1943-2024

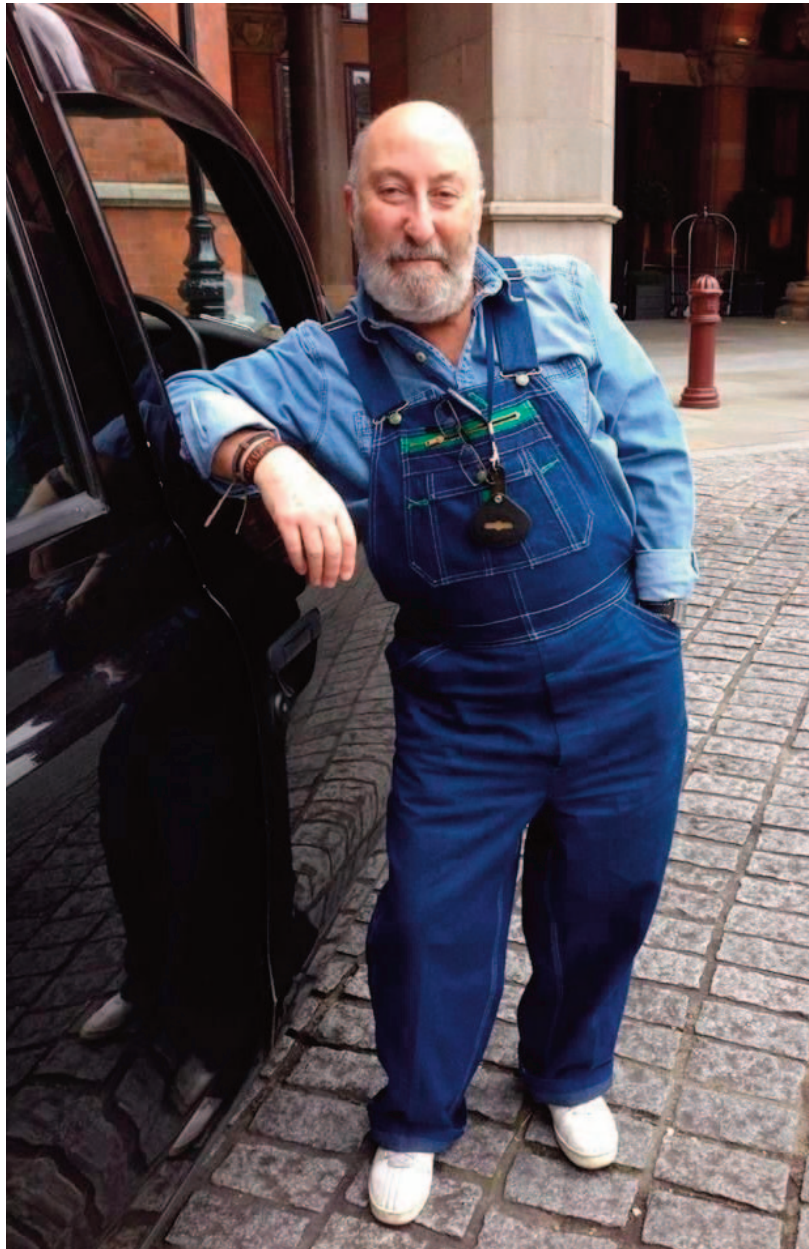
I know that my dad, Al Fresco, was well-known in the trade through his writing, but to me and my brother Gavyn he was just our dad.

And judging by the large number of cab drivers among the mourners that attended his funeral on 5 April, he was highly thought of. But that shouldn't be a surprise because he loved our trade and always spoke highly of it whenever he was speaking to journalists.

Dad got his Green Badge in 1966, but he always told friends that his proudest day was when I completed the Knowledge in 2000 and that there were then two of us driving London taxis!

Although Gavyn went in a different direction, dad always used to take us both to the London Taxi Driver of the Year Show and we'd watch while he actually took part. He usually represented the Radio Taxis group (Mountview) where their three drivers would go through the various tasks needed to win the show and cup. Usually dad would finish third of the three, but he didn't mind! Gavyn and I loved it!

Another small example of how much he loved the business came in 2000 when I needed to find a cab to start my career as a taxi driver. He took me straight to Jimmy Allen at North Eastern Motors and in all honesty, I had never seen him look more proud when he told Jimmy who I was.



Perhaps things were slightly different back then because the taxi trade were looked upon as the icons that we were and we could do things that perhaps we couldn't get away with nowadays. For example, he'd occasionally take Gavyn and me to work

with him where we'd be inside and always got tips!

Then there were the times when we'd see each other in our cabs. Not just a friendly wave to me for my dad; he would leave his cab and chase me down the street. If



he caught me in the traffic, he'd give me a kiss. The passengers always seemed to love it!

Of course, he had his serious side as well and that usually involved his writing.

He edited Taxi Trade Times, London Taxi Times and the long standing title of Steering Wheel – which he controversially renamed The Cab Driver. But the decision proved to be correct because many used to not bother taking the mag as

they hadn't realised it was a taxi magazine. Al also edited Mountview News and wrote anonymously for his friend Alan Fisher in Dial-a-Cab's Call Sign, sharing the nom-de-plume of J.P. Duval. Back then, the thought of a Mountview driver writing in a DaC mag might not have gone down too well, so the duo created some anonymous names for dad!

Although dad had been retired for some time following a short stint at driving part-time, I often got stopped by fellow drivers to ask how dad was. They usually said they felt as though they knew dad, mum and us just from his stories.

It was his illness that eventually stopped his driving and he missed it terribly. He loved talking to the passengers and often found interesting stories that way.

Sadly, dad has passed away now and the trade has moved into a different direction with fewer and fewer drivers knowing anyone else but just going out to work and then just going home at the end. Dad could have made a good story out of that...

Danny Fresco



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London cab shelter is last of remaining thirteen to be given listed status

The last of 13 surviving green cab shelters providing rest and refreshment to generations of drivers in London has been listed by the government in recognition of its architectural and historical significance.

The wooden shelters were built by the Cabmen's Shelter Fund from 1875 onwards, when cabs were horse-drawn. Many had a rail fixed to the exterior so cabbies could tether their horses while they refuelled with hearty plates of food and exchanged gossip with fellow drivers.

More than 60 were built across London between 1875 and 1950, of which 13 still stand. All have now been protected with Grade II-listed status on the

advice of Historic England.

"Full of intrigue, history, tea and bacon sammies, London's well-loved cabmen's shelters are distinctive relics of the horse-drawn age in the capital," said Luke Jacob, a listing adviser at the public body. "Originally built from 1875 for the drivers of London's hansom cabs, they continue to serve both passersby and cab drivers on the ranks today."

The idea of shelters came from Capt George Armstrong, the editor of the *Globe* newspaper, after he was unable to get a cab during a storm because the drivers had all sought refuge in local pubs.

Victorian cabbies were prohibited by law from leaving their cabs unattended in the

rank. While on the job there was no protection from the elements, access to hot food or a place to rest. This led many drivers to stop at a pub between fares, paying someone to watch the cab or risk it being stolen.

Armstrong helped to establish the Cabmen's Shelter Fund with the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury and other wealthy philanthropists. The first shelter was erected in February 1875 outside Armstrong's home in St John's Wood, north-west London.

Each shelter had a small kitchen and space for about 10 drivers to sit and eat a meal. Gambling, drinking and swearing were forbidden.

At their peak, there were thousands of hansom cabs in the capital. The last stopped operating in 1947.

The distinctive dark green shelters still serve black-cab drivers. Only those who have passed a rigorous test on London's streets and landmarks, known as "the knowledge", can sit inside, but some huts offer takeaways to the public.

All 13 surviving shelters were restored in a campaign by Heritage of London Trust during the 1980s and 1990s. The final shelter to be listed is also in St John's Wood and was probably one of the last to be built.

In the 1870s the shelters were of simple design, with some built on wheels to allow them to

be moved. They later became more ornamental, with perforated gablets, lanterns and decorative panels.

Nicola Stacey, the trust's director, said: "These are unique London landmarks as well as an ingenious Victorian solution to the frenetic city streets. Today they're still a sanctuary for the London cabbie community."

Colin Evans, a licensed taxi driver for 50 years and a trustee of the Cabmen's Shelter Fund, said: "We know how special the shelters are but we need the London taxi trade and public's support more than ever so that this important part of our heritage and working-class history lives on."

Courtesy of The Guardian



L.C.D.C LEADERS NOT FOLLOWERS

Stop talking about it and JOIN!

TAXI EXAMINER 'DOCTORED' KNOWLEDGE OF LONDON RESULTS AND 'ASKED CANDIDATES SAME QUESTIONS'

A former London taxi driver examiner has had his claim of unfair dismissal dismissed by officials after he 'doctored' candidates' Knowledge of London (KoL) test scores after they were consistently above the average of his fellow testers' marks. Aspiring Transport for London (TfL) cabbies need to pass multiple rounds of testing before they are allowed to take fares on the city's roads.

In March 2018, Mr J. Harvey's manager, Katie Chennells, raised with him that the scores he was awarding were 'noticeably higher' than his colleagues'. A Tribunal states that they were at a yearly average of 85 per cent in 2017, 85 per cent in January 2018 and 80 per cent in February 2018. Ms Chennells then suggested that the claimant could be 'inflating his scores' by repeating the questions he was asking cab driver candidates so that they could 'rehearse his questions and give perfect answers'.

Ms Chennells claimed that Mr Harvey agreed to 'keep an eye on' using repeat questions. In his evidence, the claimant stated that all examiners asked repeat and 'banker' questions.

But, having reviewed 32 appearances that Mr Harvey conducted on October 23, 24 and 25 and November 6 and 7, 2018, Ms Chennells found that his scores still



ranged between 83 and 100 per cent - an average of 91 per cent. In 2019, documents state that the claimant's average yearly score was 78 per cent.

The department's average was 51 per cent. Then, in 2020 the Mr Harvey's scores 'crept up slightly' to an average of 82 per cent. This was compared to the department average of 54 per cent.

A year later, the claimant's average scores reached 92 per cent, contrasted with the department average of 60 per cent. Papers state that Ms Chennells again asked Mr Harvey to not repeat

questions and that he should not prompt candidates to repeat their answers as that indicated their first attempt was wrong.

The Tribunal said that it accepted that examiner rules allow candidates to go back on a route and correct errors without being penalised, but 'it is implied that is because of their own initiative and not the examiners'. By the end of May 2022, Mr Harvey's scoring average was 90 per cent.

A disciplinary process was begun later that year. The claimant defended himself, arguing that he had been attempting to deliver a

'modern KoL', and that he 'penalises hesitation fairly in relation to which stage each candidate is on'. Mr Harvey added that he was 'open to reward candidates for more than one valid route from A to B' and suggested that this approach 'isn't necessarily carried out by all examiners'.

He also underlined that 'no formal training has ever taken place', so he is 'self-taught'. In addition, Mr Harvey stressed that he considers his 'style' of examination to be 'relevant to driving a taxi in 2022', and that 'no regular auditing takes place' and appearances are 'not recorded for quality control

and review'. He 'strongly disagreed' that 'statistics alone' should determine how an exam is delivered and the tribunal heard he'd be willing to 'fall on his sword'.

Mr Harvey resigned in March 2023. Ms Chennells claimed that he was 'not a reliable witness' and was 'prone to exaggeration and re-writing of history to suit his own narrative'.

The claimant argued that KoL examiner guidelines are 'imprecise' and to achieve greater consistency as the respondent wanted, officials should have revised the guidelines and made some changes to the format of the examination itself. As an examiner Mr Harvey claimed he was 'presentable and amenable', and his demeanour 'enabled candidates to perform well'.

Employment Judge Joanne Galbraith-Marten concluded: "Ms. Chennells tried to tackle the situation by monitoring the claimant's scores and providing feedback to encourage him to adhere to the Examiner Guidelines more closely but by April 2022, it became apparent the claimant was not prepared to do so." Papers added that Ms Chennells had 'run out of options' when she initiated the disciplinary procedure, as it 'became apparent the claimant was not going to change and that was deliberate'.
Courtesy of MyLondon



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IN THE NEW WORLD OF EVS AND AI, RENEWABLE GREEN ENERGY MEANS MORE GAS/COAL NEEDED, NOT LESS

It is no secret that the expanding suite of AI technologies are becoming powerful drivers of additional demand for electricity. They are, simply put, enormous energy hogs. This technological revolution seems destined to soon overwhelm and dominate almost every aspect of modern society, but there's a catch: It is taking place simultaneously with coordinated efforts by national and international governments to prematurely do away with some of the cheapest and most abundant forms of 24/7 power generation.

The energy hogs, in other words, are lined up at the electricity trough, but that trough is being forced to run dry by ill-considered public policies.

Popular Science published an excellent analysis on March 25 detailing AI's exploding power demands and how developers are responding to the growing challenge of sourcing the generating power they will need. The challenge is illustrated in a recent report by the IEA that estimates the AI models and cryptocurrency mining operations could result in a doubling of power demands from data centers globally. Another recent study estimates that "energy demands from AI servers in 2027 could be on par with those of Argentina, the Netherlands or Sweden combined."

Those findings are in line with remarks made by Open AI CEO Sam Altman during a panel discussion at January's WEF conference in Davos. There, Altman is quoted as saying AI's "enormous" energy needs will require a "breakthrough" in low carbon generation technology soon.



"We still don't appreciate the energy needs of this technology," Altman told attendees. "There's no way to get there without a breakthrough. We need [nuclear] fusion or we need radically cheaper solar plus storage or something at massive scale."

But getting to a new, radical solution at massive scale will inevitably take many years to accomplish. Unfortunately, AI, cryptocurrency mining and – much more so – electric vehicle charging, along with normal population and economic growth, are set to require a doubling or more of generation capacity in the near term. If the power isn't there, the technologies can't progress according to plan.

Complicating matters for power providers is the drive by governments at all levels to force retirement, often prematurely, of some of the

most reliable, plentiful, and affordable forms of generation. For the past decade, this drive has focused mainly on forcing coal-fired power plants off the grid and replacing them mainly with less-emitting natural gas plants. More recently, however, the drive to lower emissions has begun to focus increasingly on also retiring gas-fired plants.

Earlier in March, Utility Dive reported on a looming crisis in adequate generation capacity that is being set up by this forced march to lower atmospheric carbon by a microscopic fraction, noting that as much as 58 GW of coal and natural gas generation in the PJM market of the Eastern US is set to be forcibly retired by 2030 without identified replacement capacity in sight – this according to the PJM market monitor.

PJM, for those who don't know, is the regional transmission organization (RTO) that manages the transmission infrastructure in the Eastern Interconnection grid for 13 Eastern states and the District of Columbia. A forced shortage of generation in the PJM market means no AI. Come to think of it, it would also mean no federal government, which might not be all that bad a thing.

Proponents of this obsession over carbon dioxide will invariably claim the difference can all be made up with more wind and solar. But former US Energy Secretary Ernesto Moniz, an appointee of President Barack Obama, told attendees at an event in Texas that goal could be unattainable, saying, "We're not going to build 100 gigawatts of new renewables in a few years." Moniz further pointed out that rapidly rising

demands stemming from expansion of AI, crypto-mining and EV charging would need to be met by more coal and natural gas generation, not less of it.

This premature retirement phenomenon is not isolated to the PJM market region. It's happening everywhere.

The problem is that renewables can reduce the amount of gas or coal burned in thermal power stations. They cannot eliminate the need for those power stations to be there when the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing. That means that increased electricity demand, driven by computing and EVs, means more fossil capacity – not less.

Nuclear fusion is a dream of the future, and many still believe it is one for a quite distant future, as it has always been. Modular fission reactors are being developed on several different fronts and promise to become a viable solution that could begin to be scaled up sometime in the 2030s.

For the near term, though, it is increasingly obvious – even to AI developers who've made their own net-zero by 2050 pledges – that we're going to need more, not less, coal and natural gas generating capacity to meet demand when renewables can't. Now, it's up to policymakers to try to catch up to reality, and deal with it.

David Blackmon had a 40 year career in the US energy industry, the last 23 years of which were spent in the public policy arena, managing regulatory and legislative issues for various companies. He continues to write and podcast on energy matters

Courtesy of The Daily Telegraph

The Anderson Shelter's TAXI LEAKS

The 2nd of May is fast approaching, and could be the difference in our survival or our demise.

We've seen what the last eight years has done to the trade under Khan, it's time for unity to get rid of this blight on not only us, but London as a whole.

Unfortunately the trade suffers badly from football supporter mentality...if it's not my team, I'm not interested. I know many drivers wouldn't dream of voting conservative in the general election, but this isn't a general election... it's the Mayoral election which is a completely different issue and the fate of the London Taxi trade rests on the result.

I've seen many drivers on social media saying they couldn't vote for Susan Hall because she's a Tory and they are either not going to vote, or vote for a no hoper. Their vote will just be a vote for Khan.

Susan Hall may be conservative, but she has shown on many occasions that she supports us 100% and is exactly what this iconic trade needs. She has experience in high street businesses, starting her career running her father's garage, then moving on to setting up her own hairdressing businesses, before going into local politics...resulting in Leader of Harrow council then leader of the conservatives on the GLA.

If she wins in May, Susan will scrap the ULEZ extension on day one, plus many of the unused cycle lanes will be removed, starting with the ridiculous situation on Park Lane. She has also promised to remove the blanket 20mph from major roads such as Finchley Road and Euston Road. Her actual list is quite long. She has also promised to put pressure



SAVE OUR TRADE, VOTE SUSAN HALL

**THINGS COULD BE WORSE ...
RE-ELECT ME
AND I'LL PROVE IT!**



on councils to remove the most of the congestion causing LTNs.

The trade must unite behind Susan if it wants to survive, because if you think it couldn't get any worse under another four years of Khan, re-elect him for another term and watch him prove that it can.

Make sure your friends and family en-masse know how important it is to get rid of Khan, also talk to the Londoners you pick up in your cab and tell them if they want to save London and its businesses, to get out and vote for the only one who can beat him.

Although Khan is said to be in front in the polls, conducted amongst 1,500 or less

participants (such as the ITV poll). There are 10 million Londoners and it's my belief the polls can't be trusted. Remember Brexit...the polls said we had no chance of that, yet when we woke up the morning after...we'd voted 'out'. Khan has posted on his X (Twitter) account that his lead has fallen to less than 5 points in the last seven days, and he's asking the Greens and Lib Dem's to lend him their votes.

Of late, social media has been flooded by Khan's PR team, supported by an army of trolls (many of whom are cycle lobbyists or don't even live in London and therefore won't get a vote).

Who can forget the string of

broken promises from his last campaign, where he promised time and time again, he wasn't going to extend ULEZ, but then bought it in.

He's now saying he won't bring in Pay-per-Mile...at first he said as a project, it didn't even exist. But when it was leaked last year that he had a highly paid team of 150 working on the technology needed for his Project Detroit, he change the name and removed all evidence of Detroit from TfL's and the Mayoral office's websites.

Another bad decision from Khan didn't get much exposure in the media. He blocked the development of a London version of Las Vegas's spectacular Sphere, apparently

on the grounds that the "light pollution" from the arena might disturb the otherwise tranquil East London evenings. Not to worry, the Vegas version only pulled in \$314 million of ticket revenue in its first full quarter.

Khan hates our trade, has done nothing for us and under him, our trade has shrunk to an all time low. Private Hire numbers are at an eye watering all time high. Never forget what Khan has done to our trade...If he is re-elected in May, it won't be the end of the beginning, it will be the beginning of the end.

It's a two horse race and any vote other than a vote for Susan Hall, is a vote for Khan.



L.C.D.C LEADERS NOT FOLLOWERS
Stop talking about it and JOIN!

It's been a while since I last wrote in The Badge, so what's been going on in my life?

Well, I started off the year suffering from some sort of lingering cold or virus and didn't really return to work until February, and I must say that the work levels compared to last year were a little of a shock, not quite as bad as some kippers that I can remember but a definite downturn from 2023. Let's hope that work levels start to pick up after the easter break.

The cab has caused me some problems of late needing quite a lot of repairs and I started to feel a little despondent about it, but when I sat down and thought about it the amount I have spent over the past few months still doesn't come anywhere near the monthly costs of buying a new TXe which made me feel a little better.

YouTube

Those of you who follow the Cockney Cabbies on YouTube may have noticed some changes have been taking place!

Firstly, the name of the channel has changed from Cockney Cabbies to Jamie The Cabby, there are a few reasons for this but the two main ones are that Jon decided that he no longer wanted to concentrate on YouTube and would rather concentrate on his main passion which is music, for those of you who don't know, Jon is an excellent saxophone player.

Also secondly we felt that people from other countries didn't really know what a Cockney is, and also in some parts of the UK there is a little bit of a stigma attached to the word Cockney, I did a bit of split testing and realised that videos that we had posted on Cockney Cabbies social media accounts were getting far more attention when posted on other accounts with just the word Cabby or Cabbies in their name.

So basically, Jon and I decided to kill off the Cockney Cabbies, we deleted all the social media accounts, and I renamed the YouTube channel.

I will still be producing the same sort of content that Jon and I did for Cockney Cabbies but with the addition of a Vlog and also some shift videos, if you haven't already subscribed to the channel, you can find me on YouTube

@JamieTheCabby

I will also be including my escapades converting a van into a campervan.

I have also been quite active on Instagram lately posting nearly every day, all of my social media accounts are @TheCabbyUK if you would like to give me a follow, I would really appreciate your support.

Cab Chat

Mac The Cab and I have not

recording that I think many of you will like, I am not going to go into too many details yet but will explain once the first few episodes are uploaded and ready to be published.

And you never know, you may even hear a new episode of Cab Chat when Mac the Cab managed to come out of hibernation.

I Got a PCN

I consider myself to be a careful driver, I try to stick to the new and uncalled for

the details of the timed restrictions on the bottom section of the road, hence the PCN.

The cynical among us may think that with Eaton Square having road works that traffic is being forced into Lower Belgrave Street and Westminster Council are entrapping innocent motorists and slapping them with PCN's and fines.

Driving around London has become a lot harder since the

the taxi trade, since 2012 all they have ever done is try to damage our trade.

Taxi drivers operating on the Uber platform does nothing to define the difference between Taxi and Private Hire, in fact it does the opposite and goes further to blurring the lines between the two trades.

Those drivers who have signed up could also have a detrimental effect on the forthcoming court cases against Uber and potentially reduce any compensation that drivers within the trade may get.

Also Uber needs that Taxi trade to be able to offer a fully accessible transport solution, none of their current fleet of vehicles offer wheelchair access or have facility for those with mobility issues.

Also by having taxi drivers signed up, Uber can finally call themselves a Taxi company further blurring the distinction between a proper Taxi and a Prius!

So if you have signed up for Uber, you should be totally ashamed of yourself, maybe you should hand your badge back and apply for a private hire license.

The History of London

If, like me, you are interested in the history of London I can totally recommend a podcast that I have been listening to called, The Story of London by a historian called Saul.

The podcast starts in episode 1 at the beginnings of London and travels through the years, the latest episode being 90 and currently focusing on the years 1240-1260.

Although the podcast is quite in-depth it makes for easy listening as Saul's style is such that it is quite easy to binge a few episodes at a time.

You can learn about the City in which we work and maybe give a few quotes to your customers while conveying them around London which may in turn uplift your tips.

If you like recommendations such as podcasts then please let me know and I will make it a regular feature every month.

Well, that's enough rambling from me for this month, you can contact me through all of the normal social media channels @TheCabbyUK or via the LCDC office. Until next time, Be Lucky



recorded an episode of Cab Chat for well over a year now, we keep talking about getting together to produce another show but as of today we still have not managed to do so, that's not to say that we won't. I keep getting asked by various drivers when are we going to start doing the show again as they all state they enjoyed listening to it.

It's great to remember that we were the first to do anything like this within the Taxi trade as we started way back in 2011 and I am so pleased that we managed to inspire others to produce content both in podcast form and on YouTube as I was posting videos on the YouTube platform 12 years ago.

I have a new podcast series that I am in the process of

20mph limits and obey all of the timed restrictions which have been brought in on certain roads, I give cyclist a wide berth (mainly as I don't want my cab scratched) and am courteous to other road users, but still I received a PCN for a timed restriction on Lower Belgrave Street.

Now as you know there is currently road works on Eaton Square so when you come down Upper Belgrave Street you cannot turn left into Hobart Place and are forced forward into Lower Belgrave Street (hark at me, feels like I am back on the knowledge again, forward here, comply there), now you can't turn left into Ebury Street as it is closed at the end so I drove down Lower Belgrave Street to the bottom and turned left into Buckingham Palace Road totally missing the sign giving

pandemic with all these timed restrictions, cycle lanes and different speed limits along sections of the same road, couple that with having to read every single detail on every road sign makes driving quite stressful.

Uber & The Taxi Trade

I read recently that Uber claim to have 700 Taxi drivers signed up to use their platform and that they have launched to a select number of Uber users, now I am not sure where this figure of 700 has come from but if it has come from Uber, we can be almost certain that the number is overinflated.

Any driver who has signed up or is considering signing up for Uber is part of the problem that the trade faces, do not under any circumstances think that Uber want to help

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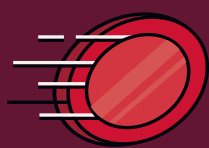
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■ **COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS**

As a member of the LCDC, we will deal with any complaint that has been made against you by members of the public. Also we will attend the LTPH with you on any personal appeals that would affect your licence.

■ **HEATHROW AIRPORT REPRESENTATION**

With our reps at the airport working

hard on the trade's behalf for a fairer, and more safer future at Heathrow.

■ **RANKS AND HIGHWAYS**

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

■ **CAB TRADE ADVICE**

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

■ **TRADE'S FUTURE**

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

■ **CAB TRADE REPRESENTATION**

We are working hard to work with members of the GLA and also politicians to fight our corner against TFL and was a major influence in the recent " future proof" document.

■ **VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS**

The Club works alongside LTC and Mercedes to deliver a vehicle that meets

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

■ **CLUB PROTECTA**

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WELCOME ABOARD!

2024:



Same old story - eight years later

As you can see from the two separate stories, as far back as 2016 PH have been parking locally to Heathrow Airport and soiling local streets, much to the annoyance of local residents.

Unfortunately for them this is a direct result of Non Regulation by TFL and the flooded market of PH drivers. With Mayor Khan recently suspending the SERU tests for PH drivers (I wonder why?) PH drivers would rather park up outside the airport and wait for their phones to ping and not pay the PH car park fee....whilst this is great for the PH drivers, its not that great for local residents who have to walk past human faeces in their roads.

With PH numbers now in excess of 106K and showing no signs of slowing down, this will just carry on.....about time TFL did something about this mess dont you think?

Morning Tim,
I live locally as well as work at Heathrow and I can't say I've ever seen London Taxis (Hackney Carriage/Black Cabs) plotted up around Heathrow - the odd one possibly - but most would wait in or close to the Feeder Park.

However, if you have any evidence to the contrary, please forward to us and we'll put an article in our in-house trade newspaper.

The Gazette has been running these articles for years and continuously calls Private Hire 'Taxis' and Drivers 'Cabbies'.

The enforcement has been worse than poor and opening an Authorised Vehicle

Area did nothing to improve it.

If you're now saying London taxis are plotted up then that's only more proof that Heathrow are only encouraging people to use cut price options rather than using taxis from the ranks as we keep telling you.

Enforcement on forecourts is poor and drivers still pick up from set down points because it's cheaper to do so than go through the short stay car parks. Your own data showed that not all the cars picking up from the AVA go to the SSCP's something that was highlighted in Valerie Shawcross's report to the London Assembly Transport Committee.

It's also the case that Touting by unlicensed and licensed PH Drivers is also out of control at the Airport.

Taxi Drivers are not responsible for the enforcement at Heathrow. TFL, Hillingdon Council, Local Authorities, Met Police and HAL are! We said it back in 2015 and App based service providers only make it worse, not better!

It's not convenience; it's price. What could be more convenient than walking to the rank with taxis waiting? All the cars sitting waiting in side streets are parked to avoid charges because they don't want to increase fares by using car parks. There's a distinct over supply of PHV and out of town taxis (exacerbated by cross border hiring and poor enforcement) that has saturated the taxi & private hire market.

It's not our making, it's Tfl and Government who fail to regulate properly and App companies who exploit workers using algorithms and tell people like you about backfilling.

2016: Uber drivers 'urinating in gardens, littering, and waking residents at 5.30am' in residential streets near Heathrow

Residents of a quiet suburban street have claimed that Uber drivers waiting to collect passengers from Heathrow Airport are making their lives a misery.

People living in Oaks Road in Stanwell have complained of drivers playing music in the early hours, urinating in gardens, leaving litter in the street, and keeping their engines running for several hours at a time.

Facilities manager Ken Fennell, 54, said the road has started to be used as a "cab rank."

He told the Standard: "It's an issue because of road safety, it's narrowing the road."

"They do silly things like do a three point turn in the road, or stop in the middle of the road to chat with their mates."

"The footpath on one side can't be used anyway, it's too narrow, and people are having to walk in the middle of the road because there are cars parked everywhere. It's a nightmare."

Mr Fennell said he has raised the issue with both borough councillors, and county councillors, and has also written to his MP.

Another resident, who wished to be named by just his first name, Ashley, said the problems had started when drivers were told they could not park on Perimeter roads, or wait at petrol stations near the airport.

He claims he has complained several times to Uber, but has yet to receive a response.

Ashley, 21, said Oaks Road, which lies just outside the Perimeter, has no parking restrictions, but is still close to the airport.

"It's a perfect storm," he told the Standard.

"But there are a lot of elderly neighbours who don't want strange men sitting outside their house well into the night - a fair number of our neighbours are over 60."

"Some of the drivers have been very confrontational."

"They're congregating here, causing congestion, leaving bottles full of urine all over the place, and littering, leaving Greggs wrappers, McDonalds wrappers."

"I don't have any animosity towards Uber, I'm an Uber customer, but they don't have to wait outside somebody's front door."

"There are ample industrial roads near where we live, with no parking restrictions, why can't they wait there?"

Businessman Amir Patwa, 67, said one driver had subjected him to racist abuse when he asked him to move his car.

He told the Standard: "They leave their lights and the engine running for hours."

"The drivers park and they go to our garden to urinate."

"They go to the toilet, put it in the street in a Tesco bag."

His wife Rita Patwa, 75, added: "We've got nothing against any one of them, but there must be at least 30 from one end of the street to the other."

"We've had several visits from the police, but they're not breaking the law to park there - it's what else they do that is the problem."

Another neighbour, Jane Laszlaw, 45, said: "They wait there at 5.30am with their boots open, lights on, radios on."

"They make me up at 5.30am when I don't have to be up for work until 7am."

"They wait right outside our house and we can't park when we come home from work."

People living in other roads in the area have also complained of similar problems.

Stefane Ashworth, who lives in nearby



Park Road, told the Standard that on Friday evening there were 41 Ubers waiting in the street.

Earlier that day he said he had encounter five drivers littering, two urinating in his garden, and counted 39 cars parked outside his house.

Matters came to a head on Friday evening when a driver was arrested following an altercation with residents.

A police spokesman said: "Surrey Police attended Oaks Road in Stanwell shortly before 9pm on Friday, January 8 following reports of an assault."

"Members of the public reported that an altercation between two men had taken place outside a residential address."

"A local man in his fifties suffered minor facial injuries during the incident but did not require medical treatment."

"Officers arrested a 33-year-old man at the scene on suspicion of actual bodily harm."

"The man was taken into police custody and interviewed. Following consultation and agreement with the victim the matter was later resolved by means of a community resolution."

An Uber spokesperson said: "We take any reports of antisocial behaviour very seriously, and what has been alleged is clearly unacceptable."

"Whilst this issue is not confined to Uber, we would urge residents to report such behaviour so we can take the appropriate action."

"We are working closely with Heathrow and hope to have a robust solution in place in the near future."

Courtesy of The Evening Standard

MEETING WITH ORC TEAM

During a recent meeting, Mark White, who represents the London Cab Drivers' Club (LCDC), spoke up about the need for Heathrow Airport Limited to better coordinate its budget-setting for Other Regulated Costs (ORC) with Transport for London's (TfL) annual 'Heathrow extra' consultation and Taxi Tariff, usually held in November/December. MW believes that this alignment is crucial for improving taxi services at the airport.

In the meeting, MW also brought up concerns about the use of space within the Taxi Feeder Park (TFP) following the termination of the 'HALT' contract in 2009. MW suggested that there should be a fair distribution

of Property space to support engagement with unions and members, aiming to make operations within the TFP more efficient and inclusive for all drivers.

MW also questioned why Unite the Union and the LTDA occupy Property space without contributing financially, even though they don't pay rent or electricity bills. MW emphasized that the Feeder Park Office Space should benefit all drivers, not just a select few, and should not be used for personal purposes by representatives.

James Cornelius, representing Heathrow, acknowledged MW's concerns and pledged to investigate the implications of TFP office space and ORC-related costs. MW also pushed for broader



Airport matters

by Mark White

representation at Heathrow's Taxi Trade Forum to ensure all stakeholders have a voice in decision-making.

MW's persistence in seeking transparency on funding for the 'TFP Project' and TFP warden costs reflects a commitment to

accountability within the taxi industry. These efforts align with LCDC's mission to protect taxi drivers' rights and promote fairness at Heathrow Airport.

In summary, MW's proactive engagement demonstrates LCDC's dedication to

advocating for taxi drivers' interests and fostering constructive dialogue with Heathrow Airport and other stakeholders. Through collaborative efforts, LCDC aims to improve the taxi trade environment at Heathrow Airport

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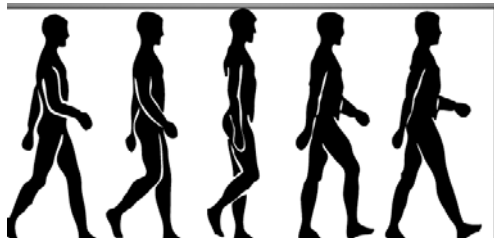
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Walker on the March...

TARIFF UPDATE ALL MY YESTERDAYS

I had a conversation recently, with a customer about house prices and that made me think about the way prices rise.

The Customer was telling me that she had paid £700,000 for a flat in Dalston; that's mad! When I was a kid, you would have had to pay me to live there. She told me that my generation had done well, buying houses cheap and seeing them rise greatly and that it wouldn't be the same for her generation.

I argued that if inflation started running again it would not be long before her flat was worth a couple of million. That seems daft, doesn't it? Time will tell.

I bought my current house in 1980. Its value has increased by 1,800%. That sounds fantastic but if I had invested it in the stock market, the value would have increased by 3,000%. The house was still a better investment because I have been living rent-free for the last 43 years.

PRICE INCREASES

Continuing at the same rate, a £500,000 house today will be worth £8.5 million in 43 years. Sounds ridiculous but it isn't. When you think back to prices of old, today's prices would seem just as unlikely.

Money isn't real; it's a concept. It's just a way of valuing real things. That £500,000 house may well not be valued at £8.5 million because the £ may well be revalued by then. Government may decide to revalue at £1 to £10 old pounds, for example, and the £8.5 million price would then be £850,000 but it would have the same value in either case.

ONE DAY WE'LL BE MILLIONAIRES

When Del Boy said it, to be a millionaire was really something. When I was a lad, it was an impossible dream. We never had the Lottery but instead had the football pools – Littlewood's and Vernon's, based in Liverpool and Zettlers in London (now the Zettlers Hotel in Clerkenwell Rd).



The jackpot was worth about £70,000 and was life-changing and equivalent to the Euromillions jackpot today.

I bought my first house in 1975 and it cost me £10,700 and I wouldn't have dreamed that could be worth what it is today. My brother had bought a similar house in 1970 that had only cost £5,500. Just before WWII, it would have cost £200.

Today, there are many cab drivers that would be worth more than a million when adding up the value of home, pensions, saving, and goods. It's still hard to achieve but not anywhere near impossible. There is no change in value though. The £400,000 house today is probably worth no more than when it was £10,000 in 1975.

THEY BOMBED OUR CHIPSHOP!!

They say that youth is wasted on the young. How true. When we are very young, we want to be grown up. Then, when we become teenagers all we want to do is leave education, get a job, drive a car, go down the pub and most of all, get away from parents telling us what to do. We never realise until much later in life that for most of us, those years were the best of our lives.

I belong to the immediate

post-war generation, born in 1951 when there was still war rationing going on. Nazi Germany was pretty horrific but one thing they gave my generation was the best playgrounds in the world. These were the streets of houses, partly or wholly destroyed by Luftwaffe Bombs.

There were still many, unreconstructed bombsites and there we built camps, played war, cowboys and Indians and other games. OK, we picked up a few stitches and bruises along the way but we didn't need games consoles. We built bonfires on them for November 5th and then guarded them to stop other gangs setting fire to them before the 5th. We'd go down Hoxton market and scrounge potatoes that we cooked on open fires that we made; jacket potatoes have never tasted so good since then.

As they built new flats on the old bombsites, we broke into the compounds and we discovered that ladders and scaffolding made fantastic adventure playgrounds. There was a problem with Night Watchmen but we found that by befriending them, they didn't take too much notice of us.

Sometimes we'd sit with the old codger, who would talk

about "the old days" around his brazier.

IT WAS DIFFERENT IN MY DAY!

Now, I'm the old codger talking about the good old days. I remember weekends especially. I started going to The Arsenal in the 1959-60 season with my mates Tom and Gagsy. Different world. Nobody had heard of football hooligans and we'd go on our own at 8 years old every week, watching the reserves every other week.

The weekend started with Saturday morning pictures at the cinema in Essex Rd. It cost 2.5p (6d). Then we would wander over to "The Waste" in Dalston where we'd buy a banana fritter and a glass of Sarsparilla. Nip home and then off to The Arsenal on a 241 bus for a 1p (2d) fare. It cost 6p (1s/3d) for a junior to get in and you could walk around all the terraces once inside. I stopped going around 2012, when it cost more than £100 for the last ticket I bought on "silver membership".

After football it was home to watch Juke Box Jury and Dr Who on the telly and if there was enough light after that, it was football on the grass between the housing blocks.

Sundays back in the day were boring. Shops didn't open and pubs only opened

for 2 hours at lunchtime and 3.5 hours in the evening. But we had "The Pictures" at 4.00pm. In those days cinemas showed only a single A and B film for the week; no multiplexes.

Sometimes we paid a shilling (5p) and sometimes one of us paid and opened an exit door for the rest to bunk in.

The goal as a kid was always to get into an X rated film but we only succeeded when we found an open exit door.

Brilliant days! If we weren't doing any of that we were playing football or cricket. The kid that owned a plastic football was King. If you bought a bottle of Zingo, you had to share with 14 other kids. In the summer we would go to the Lido swimming pools in Highbury, Victoria Park and Chingford.

In the summer we'd go fishing down The Cut, Vikky Park or Highgate Ponds. At other times we'd buy a "Red Rover" bus ticket for 3 bob (15p). This let you use any red bus all day and we'd go to places like Farningham, Kent, scrumping and collecting bird's eggs. In winter we'd buy a single ticket for one station travel on the tube and so long as you didn't leave a station, you could travel the tube system all day long for tuppence (1p).

Sadly, we also discovered smoking by around 12 years old. You could buy a "threepenny" from unscrupulous newsagent shops; a single cigarette for 1p new money. The pitfall here was that a number of other kids would want a drag and at least one would draw on it so hard that when you got it back it tasted as hot as fire. You could buy 20 Benson & Hedges for 11p (note the mark-up for the unscrupulous newsagents). Thankfully, that packet of fags cost over £13 today.

We all left school at 15 years old, one of my few regrets. I was supposed to be university material but didn't value the opportunities. I made up for it later in life. By 16 years old football was taking a back seat; we'd discovered pubs and women and ssshhh – amphetamines.

All too quickly the teenage years disappeared and real life began. Don't get me wrong. I have had a good life but nothing beats your youth

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SUPPORTING LONDON'S BLACK TAXI TRADE

The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans



The Badge recently spoke to London taxi driver and Chairman of the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans Brian Heffernan, about the charity's plans for 2024.

"After a wonderfully busy year celebrating our 75th anniversary in 2023 we have so much to look forward to in 2024.

Our first trip will be to the Netherlands in May for Dutch Liberation. We are excited that our group of veterans will be joined by Pierce 'George' Brewster a Canadian Spitfire pilot who in early 1945 went into combat as part of the RCAF tactical force, tasked with attacking ground targets related to the German war effort. It was their job to attack trains and truck and ship convoys, doing whatever they could to stop the Germans and clear the way for Allied forces on the ground. He will be lighting the flame of liberation at midnight on 4 June so I am sure he will have lots to talk about with Marie Scott, who transmitted messages to and from the beaches on D-Day and had the privilege of lighting the flame in 2023.

In June, we will be in Normandy for the 80th anniversary of D-Day. We are hoping to be taking 13 Normandy veterans and their carers to attend services of commemorations and unite in remembering those who didn't return. World leaders will be traveling to Normandy accompanied by the world's media and there is already so much press interest in sharing the stories and experiences of our veterans. Some of the WRNS who we hope will be travelling with us this summer, were recently photographed by renowned photographer and friend of the Taxi Charity Robin Savage, and what a wonderful job he did capturing these portraits of Marie Scott and Dorothea Barron.

As a charity that is wholly funded by grants, sponsorship and donations we are under no illusion that there is still a lot of money to raise for this year's plans. Susy Goodwin, one of our volunteers, has designed a limited edition commemorative D-Day 80 badge and a windscreen sticker which are available through our website www.taxicharity.onlineweb.shop



We hope that these badges will raise much needed funds to support our work.

We are very fortunate to have others fundraising for us, including two young men who are running the Leeds marathon www.gofundme.com/f/dxk7ek-leeds-marathon and while we are in Normandy two Afghanistan veterans and four of our volunteer drivers will be walking from Sword Beach to Pegasus Bridge of 6 June. www.justgiving.com/page/taximarch6june2024

And continuing the annual tradition that goes back to the start of the charity in 1948 we will be travelling to Worthing in July for our much loved day at the coast. Our veteran collection team are very busy in London Underground stations collecting money for the day at Worthing and raising awareness of everything the charity does.

At a recent collection at Westminster station, we were thrilled that many MPs including Johnny Mercer, Minister of State for Veterans' Affairs, came to chat with us and offer their support.

There is lots of information about what we do on our website www.taxicharity.org do have a look you might be surprised at everything we have achieved over the last 75 years. It is a very special charity with a huge team of dedicated volunteers and I am extremely proud to be its Chairman."

About the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans

The Taxi Charity is run by volunteer London black taxi drivers and has been supporting thousands of veterans since 1948. It is the only Forces charity that focuses on providing fun and entertainment and arranges free trips (for veterans from all conflicts) to the Netherlands and France for acts of commemoration and days out to museums, concerts, or social events across the UK.

The charity received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021 and celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2023, a remarkable milestone for a small, niche charity peopled by enthusiastic volunteers. In 2024, if funding allows, they will be taking a group of WWII veterans to Normandy for the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

To fund and facilitate their work, the charity is wholly reliant on donations, grants and sponsorship. www.taxicharity.org





Steve Bunce's boxing round-up

Jared Anderson must win in and out of the ring to become America's next heavyweight superstar

Jared Anderson is an American heavyweight contender that Bob Arum, his promoter, wants you to know, love and support. The American heavyweight business needs him to become a star.

Moses Itauma is a British heavyweight prospect that Frank Warren, his promoter, wants you to know, love and support. The attraction with Itauma is his age – the kid from Kent is just 19.

In the heavyweight world, both are on the edges of recognition, and both are leading their respective packs of contenders. Right now, there are more British heavyweight contenders than there are American heavyweight contenders. However, the Olympic silver medal winner in Tokyo in 2020, Richard Torrez Jr, is outstanding and unbeaten in nine fights, all stoppage wins. The Californian is also a southpaw. In 2017, in the quarter-finals of the National Golden Gloves, Torrez Jr beat



Anderson on points.

Anderson, a former sparring partner for Tyson Fury, fights in Corpus Christi, Texas, on Saturday, in his 17th fight. Obviously, he has never lost a fight and has barely surrendered a round; Anderson has stopped or knocked out 15 of the 16 men he has beaten.

Itauma fights on the Tyson Fury and Oleksander Usyk undercard in Saudi Arabia on 18 May. Itauma is unbeaten in eight fights and two men have survived to the final bell. Itauma is about 6ft 4in and weighs about 17st; Anderson is 6ft 4in and weighs just over

17st. In tennis or golf, they would meet a dozen times before they reach their peaks; in boxing, they might never meet. It's an odd sport.

Anderson is needed to lead the American heavyweights out of the shadows; there are just two American heavyweights in my top 20 heavyweights – there are five or six or seven British heavyweights in the same top 20. Rating fighters, especially heavyweights, is not scientific; it is a simple and personal process, a guessing game in many ways. In theory, Deontay Wilder is still the best American heavyweight, but he has won just one of his last four fights

since 2019. Wilder is also 19 years older than Itauma.

On Saturday, Anderson fights Ryad Merhy over 10 rounds; it is a perfectly acceptable fight. It will be his first fight since a high-profile incident where he was detained by the police following a car chase in late February. He was taken into custody, paid \$10,000 in bail money and was released. He later apologised for his behaviour. "I have to be a better role model," he said. Anderson is due in court two days after the Merhy fight. He is charged with "third-degree felony fleeing a police officer". He refused to stop when asked and is accused of leading the police on a six-mile chase.

Merhy has lost twice in 34 fights, but in his last fight he travelled to Paris to beat Tony Yoka, the one-time French idol and 2016 Olympic gold medal winner. It was a hard fight, a split decision over 10 rounds; Anderson has never been even close to a hard, 10-round fight, the type of fight that divides the judges at the end. The type of fight that every heavyweight prospect needs before he discovers how hard the business can be.

Last July, Anderson went 10 rounds for the first time when he beat Charles Martin, a former heavyweight world champion. It was not a spectacular performance, but it was professional, and, in the end, it was a shut-out win in Anderson's favour. Martin had previously been knocked out by Anthony Joshua and the Cuban veteran, Luis Ortiz. On the night, Anderson was expected to get Martin out of there and not have to go the full distance; Martin was expertly selected to make Anderson look good.

This Saturday, Anderson and Arum, who has been polishing promising boxers for nearly 60 years, will join forces on their respective sides of the ropes to move the fighter a step closer to the heavyweight neon. Anderson will then have to win in court and that might be a bit more difficult.

Frank Warren urges Tyson Fury to expose Oleksandr Usyk's 'Achilles heel'

Frank Warren has insisted Tyson Fury would be wise to target what he perceives to be Oleksandr Usyk's greatest weakness when the pair meet inside the ring.

For the first time since Lennox Lewis more than two decades ago, an undisputed king of the heavyweight division could be crowned in Riyadh next month.

Usyk and Fury had originally been scheduled to face off in February before the Gypsy King sustained a serious cut in sparring leading to the bout being moved to May 18.



As part of the deal to reschedule the fight, Turki Alaishikh revealed that both fighters had agreed to forfeit \$10m (£8m) if they were forced to pull out.

Speaking ahead of the highly-anticipated showdown, Warren insisted he has identified a weakness in the former undisputed cruiserweight champion's game which he

believes Fury will use to his advantage on fight night.

'One thing about Tyson, if he senses a crack or sees any weakness, he's the biggest exploiter of it and that's why it's going to be such an exciting fight.' Warren told Sky Sports.

'On the other hand, Usyk might feel from the [Francis] Ngannou fight there are some

things that he can exploit and I'm sure he will. He's a competitor. He's a competitor from amateur days right up until the present day. He's done everything that's been asked of him.

'His Achilles' heel, as I've said, and I'm surprised the so-called experts never picked up on it, has always been his body.

'Daniel Dubois, that's what he was trained for, to go and exploit that and he nearly pulled it off.'

Back in August, Usyk put his heavyweight titles on the line against British prospect Dubois in front of a partisan crowd in Wroclaw, Poland.

For much of the contest, the Ukrainian utilised his superb technical acumen to build up a sizeable lead on the judges' scorecards before scoring a KO finish in the ninth round.

However, the win was marred in controversy after Dubois sent the 37-year-old crashing to the canvas in the fifth with a shot that was contentiously ruled by the referee to have been a low blow.

Warren added that Usyk will also likely target Fury's weakness by looking to reopen the cut above his right eye that caused the fight to be delayed in the first place.

'Well, I would. Of course he will [try to exploit the cut].' Warren continued. 'He had a worse cut against [Otto] Wallin. Tyson had a dreadful cut in that fight and won the fight convincingly with a bad cut, a real bad cut.

'He's got plan A, plan B and a plan C and more importantly, he's got a big heart.'

Courtesy of MailOnline

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE: GOVERNMENT PLEDGES £3M FOR CYCLE LANE BUT REPAIR BILL IS STILL UNFUNDED

The saga over the five-year closure of Hammersmith Bridge took an unexpected new twist on Monday when the Government allocated almost £3m for a new cycle lane.

This is due to be open by November and, with the row over who pays the £250m bridge repair bill still unresolved, could remain in place for years.

However, Transport Secretary Mark Harper insisted the Government remained committed to fully reopening the bridge, which links Hammersmith and Barnes, to cars and buses “as soon as possible”.

Cyclists have been able to ride across the bridge since February while repairs under the carriageway – caused when it was hit last December by a “party boat” carrying West Ham fans – are carried out.

This temporary cycle lane will close early next month when the repairs are completed. Cyclists will then have to revert to pushing their bikes across the bridge, alongside pedestrians.



The new cycle lane – which will cost £2.9m and involve resurfacing the bridge’s road surface – will keep cyclists separate from pedestrians. The Department for Transport said it would be a “significant upgrade” on the temporary lane in use at present.

In a statement to the Evening Standard, Mr Harper said Hammersmith Bridge had been a London landmark for almost 140 years and a “crucial road artery” connecting communities, businesses and tourists.

Mayor Sadiq Khan wants the bridge reopened to vehicles. A draft deal would involve Transport for London, Hammersmith and Fulham council and the Department for Transport each paying a third of the cost of repairs – with the council recouping its share via a toll on motorists. However the escalating costs may have put a full repair out of reach.

Greg Hands, the Minister for London and Tory MP for Chelsea and Fulham, said: “This new funding shows the Government is committed to Hammersmith Bridge.”

“But now the Council and TfL need to step up and get the bridge reopened to buses, cars and emergency vehicles, as they’ve repeatedly pledged to do.”

“It’s been five years of inaction from Hammersmith and Fulham since the bridge closed in 2019 and people have lost patience.”

A spokesman for Hammersmith and Fulham Council said: “We are grateful to the DfT for the £2.9million carriageway funding and look forward to its approval of our business case for the full restoration of the historic bridge.”

Sarah Olney, Liberal Democrat MP for Richmond Park, said: “Funding for a cycle lane on the bridge is welcome, but this small step does not hide the fact that no further commitment has been made by Ministers towards fully repairing the bridge.”

“Almost five years since the Conservatives first vowed they would fix the bridge back in 2019, we are still waiting for them to honour their pledge. It is time for them to honour their word, step up to fund the repairs and end this ongoing nightmare for local residents.”

Courtesy of The Evening Standard

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TESLA SETTLES LAWSUIT OVER 2018 FATAL AUTOPILOT CRASH OF APPLE ENGINEER

Tesla has settled a lawsuit over a car crash which killed an Apple engineer in 2018 after his car veered off a highway near San Francisco, court documents showed on Monday.

The settlement was made as the trial was about to start over the high-profile accident involving Tesla's driver assistant technology, ending a five-year legal battle over the case.

The terms of the settlement were not disclosed.

The case involves a highway accident that killed Walter Huang. Tesla had contended Huang misused the system because he was playing a video game just before the accident. Tesla said Huang failed to stay alert and take over driving. "There is no dispute that, had he been paying attention to the road he would have had the opportunity to avoid this crash," Tesla said in a court filing.

National Transport and Safety Board (NTSB) officials who investigated the crash in 2020 found that Huang made no attempts to stop his vehicle as it sped towards a crash barrier on US Highway 101 near Mountain View, California, before the 2018 crash.

Investigators also found that



Huang was playing a video game on his smartphone at the time of the fatal crash.

Huang's family alleged Autopilot steered his 2017 Model X in to a highway barrier. Lawyers for Huang's family also raised questions about whether Tesla understood drivers likely would not or could not use the system as directed, and what steps the automaker took to protect them.

Huang's lawyer and Tesla were not immediately available for comment.

The settlement may have provided a blueprint for others suing over Autopilot. Tesla

faces a flurry of lawsuits over crashes related to its alleged use, putting the automaker at risk of large monetary judgments.

"It is striking to me that Tesla decided to go this far publicly and then settle," said Bryant Walker Smith, a law professor at the University of South Carolina with expertise in autonomous vehicle law. "What this does do, though, is it says to other attorneys, we might settle. We might not always fight it. That is the signal."

The crash that killed Huang was among hundreds of US accidents in which Autopilot

was a suspected factor in reports to auto safety regulators.

The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has examined at least 956 crashes in which Autopilot was initially reported to have been in use. The agency separately launched more than 40 investigations into accidents involving Tesla automated-driving systems that resulted in 23 deaths.

Amid the NHTSA scrutiny, Tesla recalled more than 2m vehicles with Autopilot in December to add more driver alerts. The fix was implemented

through a remote software update.

Huang's case follows two previous California trials over Autopilot that Tesla won by arguing the drivers involved had not heeded its instructions to maintain attention while using the system.

Despite marketing features called Autopilot and Full Self-Driving, Tesla has yet to prove it can produce an autonomous car despite years of predictions by co-founder and CEO Elon Musk that one was just around the corner, an expectation that partly underpinned Tesla's soaring valuation.

The automaker faces lawsuits and investigations into crashes involving its Autopilot and Full Self-Driving driver-assistance systems, which the car company has blamed on inattentive drivers.

The Autopilot system can steer, accelerate and brake by itself on the open road but cannot fully replace a human driver, especially in city driving. Tesla materials explaining the system warn that it does not make the car autonomous and requires a "fully attentive driver" who can "take over at any moment".

Reuters contributed reporting

Courtesy of The Guardian

MINICAB PASSENGERS 'FACE PAYING EXTRA £4MILLION A DAY' UNLESS TAXI TAX IS SCRAPPED BY CHANCELLOR

CAB passengers will be charged an extra £4million every day unless the Chancellor scraps his taxi tax, critics have warned.

They want Jeremy Hunt to axe the proposed 20 per cent hike in fares.

In November, he pledged a consultation over the VAT levy.

But nothing has happened since and campaigners have called for a resolution before this year's general election.

A High Court ruling last year involving ride-hailing app Uber exposed private hire taxi firms to 20 per cent VAT on full fares.

The industry warns that could mean passengers being stung for an extra £4million a day.

Campaigners say jobs are at risk and pubs, clubs, restaurants and theatres will all lose money.

They also point to safety issues with vulnerable people not taking taxis home if they are too costly.



Former Tory minister Paul Scully said yesterday: "We should not be going into a general election campaign with the taxi tax still hanging over the heads of people and business.

"It would be a huge political own goal.

"The Chancellor should commit to resolving the taxi tax before a general election and not allow it to drift — the costs of inaction are very serious for vulnerable people, jobs and local

economies across Britain."

A spokesman from the Stop the Taxi Tax campaign said: "While the Chancellor's commitment to launch the consultation was welcome, we're still no further and this unfair and unwanted hike is still on the table.

"The delay has only increased concerns over the impact this tax will have on passengers and drivers — we need action ahead of the election."

Courtesy of The Sun

The idea of the book came to me a year after contracting 'pre-jab' Covid in October 2020. I was ill for 10 weeks and it took me a good 6 - 9 months to begin to feel like my old self. When I sat back and reflected, like many of us did on what a strange time we had just lived through,

I realised I had lost six close friends, all with the virus stated as a contributing factor. I also found I began to withdraw from life a fair bit, rushing back from meetings and work, with anxiety hitting me hard and making me feel safer at home.

Added to that, I had lost my mum in March 2020, from the effects of Dementia and I was also coming up to my 60th birthday. As a consequence, I found I was now very reflective on what my life had become. Without really over analysing it, I found myself visiting certain locations on my daily dog walk, like old council estates I had once lived on, my old schools or buildings where I used to work, thinking all the while of people no longer in my life.

Slowly, out of all that, a story for a book began to formulate in my mind, which incorporated much of what I have already mentioned. Real people inspired all of the main characters, though I



MARK BAXTER'S FAMILY NOVEL

changed names and genders in some cases. The books main character, Terry, is I guess, based on me. He has

decided to keep himself to himself, with the result of only really letting in a few selected people into his life, which mirrored what I had done in my own real life.

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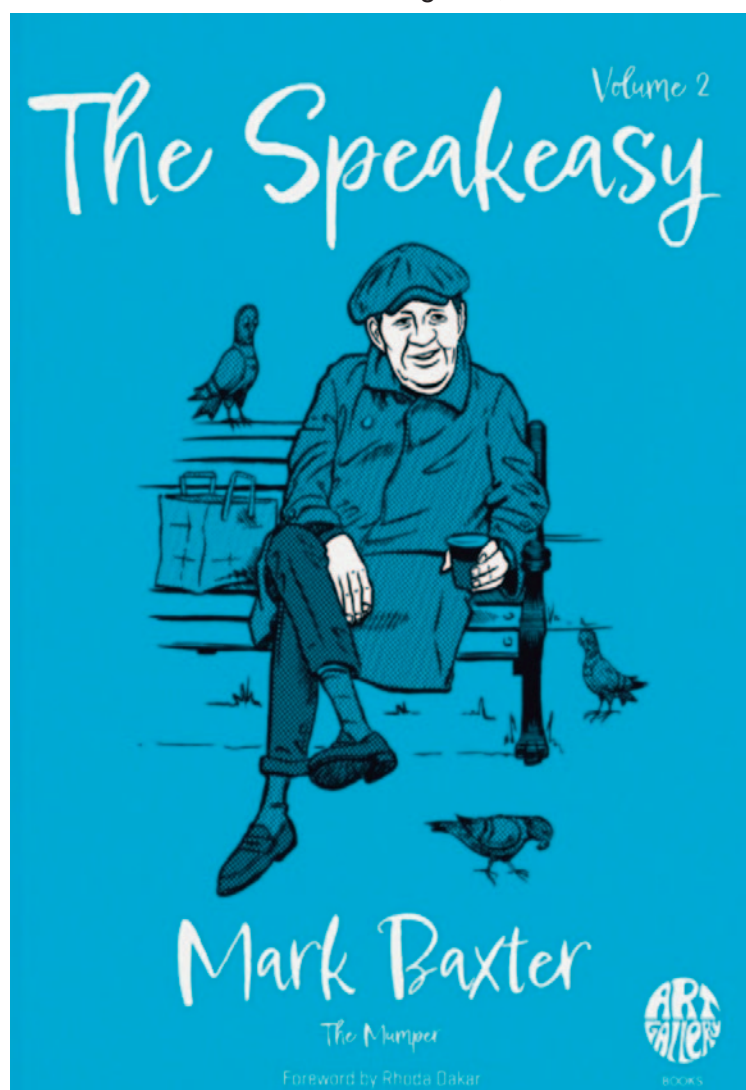
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The books title, 'Family,' relates to these people, though the majority of them were not blood relatives, but people I think of as a family all the same. These were the ones who had helped me and my wife when I was at my most ill, with shopping and phone calls, offering help if needed. They had become very important to me.

In the book, the character of 'Terry' in the book, reluctantly, at first, comes to the aid of someone when asked to, after realising he has no real option, as it is family doing the asking. Writing the book, was a kind of therapy for me and I feel like the conclusion I come to at the end of it, made some sort of sense of the previous few years.

No spoilers of course....

'Family' is published by Mono Media Books and is available now. Priced at





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