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Issue 298 August 2024

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INSIDE



WHY CAN'T THEY SOLVE THE ERAD PROBLEM?
 PAGE 23

NEWS



VETERANS ATTEND BATTLE PROM PICNIC
 PAGE 27

NEWS



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM OLYMPIC BOXERS AS PROS?
 PAGE 28




TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
 EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

TAXI DRIVER REMINDS TfL THAT TAXI LAWS STILL EXIST IN COURT CLAIM
 PAGE 3

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Published by
The London Cab Drivers' Club Ltd.
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The Badge is distributed free to the
Licensed London Cab Trade.

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necessarily those of the Editor or of the
Management Committee of the
London Cab Driver's Club.

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

The London Cab Drivers' Club Ltd.

Printed by Iliffe Print. T: 01223 656500
www.iliffeprint.co.uk

TFL CASE AND ERAD CHAOS

A big hello to my fellow taxi drivers and I hope you are all enjoying this weather and having some sort of break before the long dark winter comes along.

As you can see from the front page, a licensed taxi driver will be going to court in an attempt to seek clarity on Hackney Carriage regulations and the way in which TFL uphold these, (or not) as the case may be.

He has supplied two QR codes on page 3 so drivers can read both his submission against TFL and also his submission in his case against the Bolt taxi app, again over his views on Hackney Carriage regulations.

You will also read a letter I have sent to the LTDA Chairman, as both myself and the LCDC Committee feel very strongly that both TFL and LEVC need to sit down with trade groups and explain the Erad / parts situation - as we have many members who are finding having a broken Erad can result in many weeks off the road and much anxiety. I personally feel a quarterly meeting with these two should be a regular occurrence anyway.

There has been much chinese whispers in the trade regarding a new Ford taxi coming into London. In my opinion the trade cannot be happy with a

monopoly and with Tfl looking to stop the green grant, the cost of a taxi will again be increasing.

Within the trade Orgs my view is on its own but the view by some that we need an "iconic" shape needs addressing IMO. I was recently ranking up on Waterloo and whilst stretching my legs, I noticed a E5 silver Vito behind a navy blue E6 Vito which funnily enough was behind a white TXe who was a couple of cabs back from a late TX4 and to top it off I was a cab back from a white Nissan Dynamo.

Do passengers come out to the rank, see a silver Vito and say "You're not a taxi".... and walk down the rank to find a black...TXe or a TX4? I think with the trade looking to lose nigh on 1k cabs a year.... we (in my opinion) need a grown up conversation on this one.

For all you snazzy dressing cabbies out there, you will see John Simmons in Chiltern St is offering us all a 10% discount so if passing, pop in.

Looking forward to seeing you out there on the road. **Grant**





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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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DRIVER GOES TO COURT WITH TfL

The LCDC has reviewed legal documents revealing that a taxi driver is filing a claim against Transport for London (TfL) for allegedly neglecting its regulatory duties, thereby failing to uphold Hackney Carriage regulations.

As the industry evolves with new technology, many cab drivers now rely on taxi apps to earn a living, and the public has increasingly embraced this change. Some drivers may feel that challenging these practices is counterproductive, but the claimant argues that there are significant future consequences for the trade. He contends that the Hackney Carriage Trade in London cannot selectively choose which regulations to follow.

The claimant highlights that, similar to the "Conditions of Fitness" where drivers advocate for maintaining the turning circle while accepting the 12-year vehicle age limit, selective adherence to regulations could be detrimental. He asserts that the trade in London must either fully comply with the regulations or not at all.

The claim asserts that taxi app operators are breaking the law by stating in their Terms and Conditions that the driver is the contractual principal, while also facilitating charges that exceed the metered fare plus the £2 booking fee. This is supported by Section 44 of the Serious Crime Act, which prohibits third parties from encouraging or assisting in the commission of an offence. The claim seeks judicial clarification due to TfL's alleged disregard for this illegal activity.

The taxi driver further points out additional unlawful practices, arguing that once a driver is the contractual principal, any deviation from Hackney Carriage regulations, such as charging more than the metered fare plus the £2 booking fee, is illegal.

The claim references the Bassam v Green case, which



could create VAT and other liabilities for the company. Instead, the claimant argues, these companies manipulate agent/principal rules to sidestep Hackney Carriage regulations, undermining the integrity of the taxi industry.

It is clear that app companies prevent drivers from starting the meter upon accepting an app-based hire, as doing so would put them at a commercial disadvantage compared to street or rank hiring. Given TfL's regulatory failings, it could be argued that TfL is complicit in undermining the law, whether intentionally or through negligence.

To protect Hackney Carriage regulations, the industry must recognize that criminality has no place in the taxi trade, and the regulator must be compelled to enforce the rules.

We asked TfL for comment, and received the following response:

Good afternoon Grant
Please accept my apologies but, as a number of us are on leave at the moment, we will not be able to provide a response to your email today. I am back from leave tomorrow and will look to ensure you receive a response as soon as I have been able to discuss the matter with my team.

established that booking fees or other charges are part of the fare, meaning offences are being committed and Hackney Carriage regulations are being ignored.

The claimant also contends that if the app company designates the driver as the contractual principal, regulations apply from the moment the driver accepts the job on the app.

Additionally, the driver may face potential charges under the Equality Act if they accept a job via the app and then cancel it without just cause.

Cab drivers are required by law to complete a 12-mile or 1-hour journey within the Greater London Authority area once they accept a hiring, and failure to do so constitutes a licensing offence.

Drivers must also provide wheelchair assistance, meaning that canceling an accepted job could violate their equality obligations, exposing them to

claims from wheelchair users who booked through the app.

Given that cab drivers are bound by law from the moment they accept a job on the app, the claimant argues that TfL and app companies preventing drivers from starting the taxi meter at

that point is legally incorrect.

Although an app company might try to designate itself as the contractual principal in its Terms and Conditions, which could allow them to prevent the meter from starting until the passenger enters the cab, this

SCAN THE QR CODES TO FOLLOW HIS SUBMISSIONS



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

AN OPEN LETTER FROM LCDC CHAIRMAN

Navigating the Future in a Changing Landscape

Taxi and private hire vehicle statistics, England, 2024 - GOV.UK

Introduction

Fellow London taxi drivers,

The taxi industry in London is at a critical juncture. As you've likely noticed on the streets and in your daily takings, the landscape has been shifting rapidly, and not always in our favour. The latest data for 2024 confirms what many of us have felt—traditional taxi services are on the decline, while private hire vehicles (PHVs) continue to expand aggressively. This report aims to shed light on the challenges we face, the reasons behind these changes, and, most importantly, the strategies we can employ to secure our place on London's roads in the future.



Current State of the Industry

According to the latest statistics, the number of taxi-only licenses across England has decreased significantly, while PHV licenses have surged. In London, the number of PHVs has grown by nearly 10% in just the last year, outpacing the number of taxis on the road. This growth is driven by the proliferation of ride-hailing apps like Uber and Bolt, which offer convenience and often lower prices, making it harder for traditional taxis to compete [oai_citation:1,Welcome to GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) [oai_citation:2,Search - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/search).

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that only a small fraction of PHVs are wheelchair accessible, placing the burden of serving disabled passengers largely on the taxi sector. Despite this important public service, the regulatory environment and market conditions have not been favourable to us.

Challenges Facing London Taxi Drivers

- 1. Increased Competition from PHVs:** The rise of app-based PHVs has brought fierce competition, with drivers often charging lower fares and offering rapid booking through mobile apps. This has siphoned off a significant portion of our customer base, especially among younger passengers who prefer the convenience of app-based services.
- 2. Regulatory Disadvantages:** London taxis face stringent regulations, including mandatory wheelchair accessibility, which, while socially important, adds to our operational costs. Meanwhile, PHVs benefit from more lenient licensing requirements, enabling rapid growth without the same level of oversight.
- 3. Operational Costs:** The cost of maintaining a traditional London black cab, including insurance, fuel, and maintenance, continues to rise. Coupled with the stagnating or declining fares, many drivers are finding it harder to sustain their livelihoods.

Strategies for the Future

While the challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable. Here are some strategies we can collectively adopt to reverse the decline and revitalise the taxi industry in London.

- 1. Leverage Our Unique Selling Points (USPs):** Unlike many PHVs, London taxis are highly regulated, ensuring safety, reliability, and accessibility. We must emphasize these strengths, particularly our role in providing accessible transport to those with mobility challenges. Marketing campaigns that highlight the unique advantages of using a black cab—such as driver knowledge, safety, and accessibility—can help attract customers who value these attributes.
- 2. Adopt Technology:** It's time to fully embrace technology. While many of us already use apps like Gett and Free Now, we need to expand our presence on digital platforms. Developing or partnering with more sophisticated apps that offer similar functionalities to Uber but exclusively for licensed taxis (like Unify) could help us regain market share. This technology should include features like digital payments, real-time tracking, and customer feedback.
- 3. Promote Sustainability:** With London's air quality targets and the growing public concern for the environment, transitioning to electric vehicles (EVs) could be a significant advantage. The government offers grants and incentives for the adoption of EVs, which can reduce long-term operating costs and appeal to environmentally conscious passengers. We should also push for additional support from Transport for London (TfL) to assist with this transition.
- 4. Engage with TfL and Policy Makers:** As drivers, we need to be more involved in the decision-making processes that affect our livelihoods. By forming a united front through driver associations, we can lobby for policies that level the playing field with PHVs. This could include advocating for stricter licensing requirements for PHVs, particularly regarding accessibility, and pushing for fare adjustments that reflect the true cost of providing taxi services in London.
- 5. Community Engagement and Local Partnerships:** Building stronger ties with the local community can create a loyal customer base. Initiatives such as offering discounts to local residents, partnering with businesses for corporate accounts, or providing school transport services can help secure a steady stream of passengers. Engaging in community events or offering special services during major London events can also boost visibility and patronage.

Conclusion

The road ahead may be challenging, but by working together and adapting to the changing landscape, we can ensure that London taxis remain a vital part of the city's transport network. Let's leverage our strengths, embrace new technologies, and advocate for fairer policies to secure a prosperous future for all London taxi drivers.

Let's take the wheel and drive towards a brighter future.

Safe travels,

Grant Davis

London Cab Drivers Club



GRANT DAVIS TO LONDON'S TAXI DRIVERS

Headline figures

The total number of licensed taxi and PHV vehicles and driver licences in England have both continued their long-term upward trend, reaching 313,000 and 381,100 respectively on 1 April 2024. The increase since 2023 has been driven by a 10.5% increase in the number of PHVs, reaching 256,600. The number of taxis has decreased over the same period by 1.4% to 56,400.

Chart 1 is a line chart that shows how the number of licensed vehicles and drivers has changed over time. The number of licensed vehicles has been steadily increasing since 2005, apart from over the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic where numbers temporarily fell to a low of 251,000 in 2021 before resuming the upward trend. There were 313,000 licensed taxi and private hire vehicles in England in 2024, an 8.2% increase from 2023 and 70% increase from the 184,500 in 2005.

Chart 1 shows that there the number of driver licences held has been steadily increasing from 242,100 in 2005. This number dropped temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic to 330,000 in 2022, before continuing the upward trend. There were 381,100 in 2024, an increase of 10% compared to the previous year, and a 57% increase compared to 2005.

The upward trend for both driver licences and vehicles is being driven by the PHV industry. The number of taxis and taxi drivers has fallen slightly (-1.4% and -7.4% respectively) since 2023, whilst the number of PHVs and PHV drivers has increased (10.5% and 13.6% respectively) over the same period.

Prior to 2005, the only data available relates to the number of licensed taxis and licensed taxi drivers for England and Wales as a whole. Other than for London, data at a lower geographical level is not available.

Chart 2 is a line chart that shows that since 1972 the numbers of licensed taxis in London, and in England and Wales outside of London, both broadly followed similar trends of increasing until 2015 before

declining to the present day.

The number of taxis in England and Wales outside London reach a high of 58,800 in 2017, almost 5 times as many as the 12,400 in 1972. Since then, numbers have dropped to 45,800 in 2024, a similar level to what was seen in 2004 but still almost 4 times as many as when records began in 1972.

London follows a similar pattern, with a high of 22,500 in 2015. Again, the number of



taxis in London has dropped over more recent years, falling back to 14,800 in 2024. This is still a 47% increase from the 10,100 in 1972.

Chart 3 is a line chart showing that there were 313,000 licensed taxis and PHVs in England in 2024. Around a fifth (56,400) of these vehicles were taxis. The total number of licensed vehicles increased by 8.2% between 2023 and 2024, driven by a 10.5% increase in PHV numbers. The number of taxis fell by 1.4% over the same period.

As at 1 April 2024:

- there were 56,400 licensed taxis, a 1.4% decrease from 2023
- licensed taxis in London fell by 2.1% compared to 2023
- licensed taxis in England outside of London fell by 1.1% compared to 2023
- there were 256,600 licensed PHVs, a 10.5% increase from 2023.

There was a much larger increase in PHVs in England outside of London compared to London, 15% and 3.4%

respectively.

Licensing authorities (outside of London) are able to impose limits on the numbers of taxis licensed to operate within their area. However, they are unable to impose such limits on PHVs. In 2024, 66 licensing authorities (23% of licensing authorities with licensed taxis) applied a limit on the numbers of licensed taxis, with a further 9 setting limits either for some of the areas they covered, or some vehicle types. These figures have been broadly similar over the last couple of years.

were 12.1 vehicles per 1,000 people, compared with 2.5 in areas that were largely rural. These figures are broadly similar to 2023.

It is important to note that when talking about the number of licensed vehicles per 1,000 people in an area, this is the number of vehicles licensed by that authority and not the number of vehicles available for hire in that area.

Wolverhampton has had more licensed PHVs per 1,000

licences and 20% were dual taxi and PHV licences, a similar split to the previous year. Dual licences allow the holder to drive both taxis and PHVs without needing to hold 2 separate licences. In 2024, 2% of licences were instances where both a Taxi and PHV only licence were issued to the same individual.

The regional picture varied considerably when looking at the change in the number of licensed drivers between 2023 and 2024. While the West Midlands saw a large increase (26.5%), again mainly due to a large increase in Wolverhampton, most other regions saw increases of between 7% and 12%, with the exceptions of the North East (16.8%) and the South West (5.9%).

Licensed PHV operators

PHV operators need to be licensed to accept bookings and dispatch vehicles to customers. The number of licensed PHV operators in England increased by 8.9% between 2023 and 2024 to 16,300, returning to the upward trend seen before the pandemic. The picture is similar across the country, with London seeing an increase in PHV operators of 9.9% to 1,700 operators. England outside of London saw an increase of 8.8% to 14,600.

In the year ending 31 March 2024, 3,610 applications were made by new PHV operators (either new companies, or existing operators not already licensed by that licensing authority). This represented an increase of 30% from the previous year, and is likely to indicate continued recovery in the sector following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accessibility

In England, 11.5% of all licensed vehicles were wheelchair accessible in 2024. Compared to 2023 the proportion of wheelchair accessible taxis remained similar at 53.9%. The proportion of PHVs that were wheelchair accessible in 2024 has remained lower than Taxis at 2.2%, this is similar to 2023.

In London all taxis are wheelchair accessible. Less than 1% of London PHV's are WCAV's.

Mark White

In England as a whole, licensed vehicle numbers increased by 8.2% between 2023 and 2024. All regions saw an increase in the number of licensed vehicles compared to 2023. However, there was considerable variation between regions, with some regions seeing small increases in numbers, while others saw large rises. The number of licensed vehicles in the West Midlands increased by 20.1% between 2023 and 2024, mainly due to a large increase in Wolverhampton, a trend that has been seen year on year since 2017. The 2 neighbouring regions, North West and East Midlands both showed the smallest change in vehicle numbers outside of London, both increasing by 6.7%.

In 2024, there were on average 5.5 licensed taxi and PHV vehicles per 1,000 people in England, similar to the 5.1 in 2023. Chart 4 is a stacked bar chart that shows that the number of licensed vehicles per 1,000 people generally decreases as areas become more rural. In London there

people than the rest of England and Wales over the last few years, reaching 109 per 1,000 people in 2024. This is 5 times more than the figure observed for all other licensing authorities, which have less than 20 licensed vehicles per 1,000 people. Differences between local authorities can reflect factors such as licensing policies and processes, as well as levels of provision. For example, it is sometimes the case that private hire vehicles can be licensed in one authority while operating primarily elsewhere. The large increase seen in licensed private hire drivers and vehicles by the City of Wolverhampton Council since 2017 is likely to be as a result of some of these factors. The differences in licensed taxis are less stark, with all licensing authorities having between 0 and 6.3 taxis per 1,000 people.

Driver licences

As at 1 April 2024, there were 381,100 driver licences in England, 34,800 (10%) more than in 2023. Of the total licences, 69% were PHV-only licences, 9% were taxi-only

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LCDC REACHES OUT TO LTDA IN BID TO TACKLE ERAD ISSUES

Dear Paul,

I hope this letter finds you well. I recently had the opportunity to read your article, "What Does the Future Hold?", and I wanted to take a moment to commend you on the clarity and urgency with which you addressed the challenges facing our industry. Your insights reflect the growing concerns that many of us share about the future of the London taxi trade.

As you highlighted, the situation with LEVC is becoming increasingly precarious. The issues surrounding the TXE, from

parts shortages to prohibitive insurance costs, are creating real difficulties for drivers and fleet owners alike. Moreover, LEVC's recent shift in focus towards the L380 luxury MPV and their broader ambitions as an e-mobility technology company have left many in the trade questioning their long-term commitment to the London taxi market.

Given these significant concerns, I believe it is imperative that we take decisive action. I am writing to you, as Chair of the LTDA, to propose that we call for an urgent meeting with LEVC and Transport for London (TfL).

This meeting would provide a crucial platform for a "grown-up" conversation about the future of our industry. It's essential that LEVC addresses the concerns raised and clarifies their intentions moving forward. Additionally, TfL's involvement is vital given their regulatory role and the potential impacts on the conditions of fitness and overall operations in London.

The current uncertainty is unsustainable, and the livelihoods of thousands of drivers, as well as the future of the iconic London taxi, are at stake. By coming together and initiating a transparent and

collaborative dialogue, we can work towards solutions that protect the interests of all involved and ensure the continued viability of our trade. Paul, your leadership in this matter would be crucial. I believe that by uniting our efforts, we can bring the necessary stakeholders to the table and begin addressing the challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I look forward to your thoughts and hope we can take this forward together for the benefit of the entire industry.

Best regards,
Grant Davis, Chair, LCDC



ERAD Accounts:

Today I had the dreaded loud bang from the rear. Thought something had crashed into me but it was the ERAD. Had it recovered to Ascotts who inspected it straight away. (Excellent service). The drive shaft had snapped inside the ERAD. Both parts need replacing. They currently have 16 cabs waiting for the parts. No symptoms or warning about this. Cab was driving as normal. Pulled away and BANG. My last cab was a 19 plate.

ERAD replaced at 43k.
Laurence Sargent

'Deffo Erad not up to the job, like Laurence says. Taxis have a very hard stop start life. Likely cut some corners and put in an underpowered unit. Mine popped at 90k super quick service again at Ascotts. TXE super taxi mine still drives like new it's a very early 18 plate. Just the Erad issue with this vehicle.'

Nick Milbourn

"I've been waiting 4 weeks already and no sign of one yet. Absolute disgrace we are all being mugged off not a great advert for any body involved in

the trade. 19 plate 110000 miles. Now off the road as my overhaul is due."
Brian Pilgrim

"Just had my ERAD replaced at E1 Taxis. 73 plate. 19500 miles !!!"
John Davis
ERAD just gone on city Rd no warning no leaks, just bang. Got over 60k out of it so it was just a matter of time.
John Donahue

Curiosity what's your driving style like? Easy driver or as fast as u can not slowing down over speed bumps etc? I'm an easy driver and mine went on 110 and I'm on 189 now. Mates of mine who drive rough have had



about 2/3 erads with less mileage than me same as cars 2018/68

Mine went at 76k no warning just a loud bang.
Mark Lee

TfL's responsibility in addressing ERAD failures: an urgent call to action

The London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC) has raised significant concerns about the ongoing issues with Electric Range-Extended (ERAD) failures in the vehicles mandated by Transport for London (TfL). The LCDC, recently penned a detailed letter to Dan Maskell at TfL, outlining the critical need for TfL to take a more proactive role in addressing these failures.

The Core Issues

1. Safety Concerns: There have been numerous reports of ERAD failures, which pose potential safety risks to both drivers and passengers. The LCDC has called for a thorough

investigation by TfL to ensure that these vehicles are safe to operate.

2. Availability of Spare Parts: Despite assurances from the London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC), drivers are experiencing significant delays in obtaining necessary spare parts. This leads to prolonged vehicle downtime and financial strain on drivers who are unable to work while their vehicles are out of service. TfL must verify LEVC's claims and ensure that parts are readily available.

3. Provision of Backup Vehicles: LEVC's fleet of backup vehicles is insufficient to meet the demand, leaving many drivers without a vehicle for extended periods. This directly impacts their livelihood, as they are unable to generate income while waiting for repairs. TfL

should ensure that a sufficient number of backup vehicles are available.

4. Warranty and Repairs: The high cost of extended warranties, coupled with frequent ERAD failures, places a significant financial burden on drivers. It is crucial for TfL to advocate for more affordable and comprehensive warranty coverage options from LEVC.

The Regulatory Responsibility For the past six years, taxi drivers have been required to purchase the only vehicle approved by TfL, creating a regulatory monopoly. As the regulator, TfL has a duty of care to these drivers, who have complied with stringent licensing terms and conditions. It is unacceptable for these drivers to be left unsupported, particularly when they face

unfair competition from operators using a variety of fossil-fueled vehicles subject to lower standards.

Call to Action

The LCDC's letter emphasises that TfL's current approach of merely relaying concerns to LEVC is insufficient. Instead, TfL must exert its regulatory authority to protect the interests of taxi drivers. Proactive measures should include:

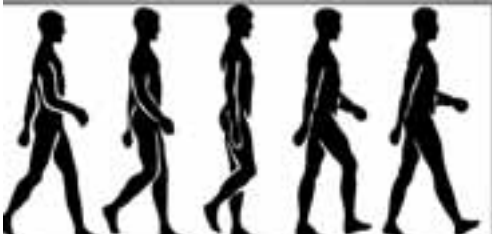
- Conducting a thorough investigation into the safety concerns associated with ERAD failures.
- Ensuring that spare parts are available promptly to minimize vehicle downtime.
- Increasing the availability of backup vehicles to support drivers during repairs.
- Advocating for more affordable and comprehensive warranty

coverage options from LEVC.

Conclusion

The LCDC is calling for TfL to take decisive action to safeguard the interests of taxi drivers who have dutifully complied with the licensing requirements. It is imperative that TfL addresses these issues promptly and effectively, ensuring that drivers are not left to navigate these challenges alone.

This report aims to keep taxi drivers informed about the ongoing dialogue between LCDC and TfL, highlighting the urgent need for regulatory intervention to address ERAD failures and support drivers' livelihoods. For more updates on this issue and other matters affecting London taxi drivers, read 'The Badge'.



Walker on the March...

WE'RE CAB DRIVERS; TfL DON'T LIKE US!

There are many among our number that believe that TfL want to deliberately undermine London's taxi service and want to destroy it. They can be forgiven for thinking so because TfL give us plenty of reason to think it.

I don't think that is the case. While I do believe that they go out of their way to undermine our trade, I think this is accidental. They only look at the cab trade from the customers' viewpoint. They're civil servants so why should they understand how business runs?

HAD THIS GEEZER IN THE CAB THE OTHER NIGHT

He initiated a conversation about how the cab trade and PH operate and compete. The first thing that came up with regard to TfL inadvertently undermining our trade was the vehicle. Now, this guy was a city bod who had a good understanding of business and we started with the cab.

I explained that the manufacturer holds a monopoly as the only supplier and that the cab my son and I bought at the end of July, retails at £77,609.99. He immediately asked why such a monopoly was allowed to exist and as such, why was such a high price allowed to be demanded.

He was gob-smacked when I told him that even at that price, the current owner, LEVC, nor the several previous owners since I began driving a cab in 1979, had been able to make a profit, even at these prices. The very reason that monopoly is a bad thing is that monopolists make supper profits, not losses.

He questioned how we compete with Uber and their cars.

I then explained to this guy that while being a monopolist, LEVC operate in a very small market for the vehicle that does not allow any scale economies in production. While it costs very little per unit to produce an individual car like a Prius, with a global sales market, it costs hugely more per unit to produce a vehicle that only has a limited market of London and a few bits and bobs.



WE NEED TO CHANGE THE CoF

It's great having the iconic vehicle and the TC (turning circle). Its crucial that we have WAV (wheelchair access), etc. Otherwise, we would find ourselves out of bus lanes.

I would hate to lose the TC but it isn't worth the cost. Clearly, manufacturers such as Ford, Toyota, Vauxhall, etc, are not prepared to change their platforms and models to suit TfL. So, TfL need to change their CoF to make production models of these manufacturers suitable as London Taxis, albeit with some modification.

Nobody would argue for loads of types of vehicles running around London like the PHV trade. What we are talking about is standard vans and or MPVs, adapted for London usage. If we're still worried about our iconic identity despite this, then simply do what other authorities across the globe do and standardize the colour rather than a single model.

IMPACT ON OUR FARES

TfL whinge on every year about the increase in our fares and the difficulty some customers have in paying them. This to the point, that they more often than not

reduce the Cost Index increase and in 2023, did not allow us any earnings increase.

At the same time, they appear to fail to realise that the vehicle represents more than 10% of our costs. However, they do not appear to be able to put together the relationship between our costs and our fare increases. They worry about the increases but are not prepared to do anything to keep fares down by reducing their regulatory cost.

TRAFFIC FLOWS AND TAXI FARES

Aside from the Covid period, traffic flows have been reducing significantly since 2016. This effectively increases taxi fares because we run on time and distance. We tell them this but they don't listen.

It would be fair to say that during this period, increased traffic puts more money on the average fare than the annual fare increase. To be fair, there are some things that are beyond TfL to fix but there are others they can fix.

We all know that bike lanes are a bit of a farce. However, governments local and national, have to be seen to be doing something, although not actually doing anything, about pollution and safety. So, crazy bike schemes are here to stay.

But there is stuff they can do if

they want to help taxi passengers. Make no mistake, it's the passenger that ultimately pays for the nearly £80,000 cab, via taxi fares. Equally, if 50% of a fare is down to sitting stationary in traffic, it's the passenger that pays for it, while both they and the cab driver loses from it.

The biggest reduction that TfL could make to passenger fares would be to adopt a rule of "taxis go where buses go". Unfortunately, they fail to see this connection and instead worry about whether to pass on all of our running costs to our customers or reduce our real income.

AND THEN WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE

TfL pretend that they are trying to something about the appalling KOL figures. The reality is, and they know it, that the only way to get applicants back on The Knowledge is do something to stop drivers applying for a PH licence and then use that PH licence to become a pseudo taxi driver, using an app and GPS to do our job picking up from the street.

The are supposed to accept only pre-booked jobs but there's the catch; TfLs interpretation of what represents "pe-booked" is different to everybody else.

On top of the cab fleet being down nearly 40% down on a decade ago, driver numbers have fallen by a third in the same period. Those numbers will continue to fall as there are nowhere near enough KOL students to make up for drivers leaving the trade in the near to mid-term future.

Our trade is on the path to becoming nothing more than a tourist attraction rather than an integral part of London's transport system. When it happens, those in authority that have engineered it will try and pretend that our fall had nothing to do with them.

NEW SHERBERT

My son and I have just chopped in our 69 plate TXe for a new one. I laughed out loud when Mike at Ascotts told me that we'd get 75 miles out of the new battery. Fair enough, over 5 years the old cab's battery has degraded but..... we've had it 3 weeks now and used the air-con and everything. We usually put in around £45 of petrol per week between us. Now, 3 weeks in and we haven't used half a tank of petrol yet.

Hopefully, that will mitigate the eye-watering price of the cab at a little bit under £78,000 before the grants and interest.

What a sick joke.



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The Anderson Shelter's TAXI LEAKS

TAXI TRADE IN PRECARIOUS POSITION:

Colts Taxis, have issued a warning on their X(Twitter) account, about the instability of the London Taxi trade.

The warning came after a driver posted this:
I bought my 24 plate cab in March. Yesterday I noticed the dreaded whirring noise so took it to Ascotts this morning. E.R.A.D. needs replacing but there is no stock and they don't know when it's coming! To make matters worse they can't put me in a replacement Cab because I have 9 points. Do I just drive my cab and hope for the best?
I rang around and no garage have E.R.A.D.s.

This was Colt Taxis posts:
1. Owners and fleets are suffering a huge crisis in lack of parts. This needs to be resolved by LEVC urgently as there will be no cabs available when people return from the summer break

2. There will without doubt, be a shortage of taxis this Autumn as fleets now shy away from investing in new stock for reasons that have been highlighted on other platforms.

Cabvision went on to say:
Certainly going to be interesting to see how sales go for September until year end. Not looking good.

Lots of cabs due off in Sept/Oct and that will tighten the market. My own view is that only half the cabs that retire will get replaced and that shrinkage will tighten the market.

To which Colts replied:
On top of that the smaller fleets are being decimated with increased insurance premiums and repossession of their vehicles leaving a massive void to come this autumn. This migration of drivers to the larger fleets is already in progress.

TAXI LEAKS EXTRA BIT:

There is only one solution to this problem (IMHO) and that is...the trade desperately needs



to pursue TfL for other vehicles to enter the market. Problem is TfL appears to be doing everything in their power to stop this from happening.

The biggest hurdle is of course, the turning circle. This is the condition of fitness that most drivers agree that while nice to have, is not completely a necessity. Ask Vito drivers how often they engage their rear wheel steering, most haven't used it in months, some in

years. There are a number of vehicles from a range of manufacturers that could easily enter the market, but TfL's insistence of this facility, block their entry at every turn (excuse the pun).

The situation the trade now finds itself in, has been hidden by the worrying number of drivers who have left the trade, plus our vehicle numbers have currently fallen to 14,634, of which 8,574 are ZEC.

Many drivers on social media worryingly applaud the drop saying the less drivers, the more work for each remaining. Unfortunately, they appear to be blind to the fact that PH drivers numbers are increasing at an alarming rate and the so called extra work is being soaked up by a massive increase in drivers on PH apps.

Latest news on the new Ford MAXiCab:



A certain Taxi 'union' is supporting one of its members, in a claim against TfL, to licence the Ford MAXiCab. But why just the one union?...surely every representative org and union should be taking TfL to task over Geely's monopoly. We need this vehicle to be available to the London Taxi trade...Especially in light of Geely/LEVC having huge problems keeping up the supply of spare parts for the TXe.

MAXiCab is ZEC and meets the CoF except for the turning circle...With current restrictions on U-Turns in central London, surely this requirement is no longer needed!

The basic Ford MAXiCab is £6,400 cheaper but that shouldn't have any effect on the resale value of the TXe.

THE KNOWLEDGE:

There has been much talk about the lack of Knowledge applicants... But when anyone suggests that since the PCO was disbanded in 2008 and TfL took control, gradually extending the length of time students spend on the Knowledge, that perhaps it should revert back to the old system of appointments, it opens up a deep divide in opinion.

We all agree that the standard of drivers knowledge should remain...but why should the appearances be set up to hold back applicants, in some cases for 4 to 5 years. To be honest (IMHO again) there is no need for the process to take this long.

We need to uphold the standard...that goes without saying, but it's the process that needs looking into, the length between appearances, especially in the early stages, which desperately needs amending.

In the week ending 4 August 2024...there was a decrease of 18 licensed Taxi drivers on the previous week. No new licenses were issued.

Private hire driver licenses were up by 44, with 185 new licenses being issued.

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Grant: Irfan, thank you for the opportunity to break this exclusive story to the taxi Trade, via the Badge.
Irfan: No problem Grant, nice to see you again.
Grant: Irfan, can you start off by telling the cab trade how this all came about please because I know this will be great news for all concerned owners of TXE taxis.

Irfan: Yes of course, at IDTAXIS we were keen to strengthen the cab trade for Vehicles "outside of warranty" and we were aware that was developing in the taxi trade where owners of TXe taxis were becoming very anxious that once out of warranty the cost of keeping a TXe was becoming a major worry and with LEVC recently increasing the cost of their warranties to around £5,500 (potentially £6,500 with additional costs) many of them said that they were playing "Russian Roulette" in keeping their cab out of warranty. Many drivers I know are scared of not being in warranty especially with the Erad being the major worry. I know this news will make the driver feel a bit more secure and hopefully keep their lovely cab they now have

and not have to go running to the shop to buy a new taxi every 3 years. We had an internal meeting and decided we were going to develop a more affordable solution to help the drivers keep their cabs.

Grant: And what is the situation now Irfan?

Irfan: I am very happy to say that IDTAXIS have the solution to the trades worries and we are delighted to inform the trade. This has taken months of development and testing and we also fitted our replacement Erads to some working TXE taxis and the results, we are glad to say, have been fantastic

Grant: What is the cost Irfan?

Irfan: The best news is that we are pleased to announce that the replacement Erad Will be £2,495 + VAT this compares with

between £4k - £5k offered elsewhere. The replacement Erad also comes with a 40k miles / 1 year warranty (what ever comes first). Our replacement Erad has been carefully constructed to be as, if not more reliable but at a fraction of the cost. We hope this will resolve the major worries drivers face keeping their TXe Outside of warranty.

Grant: This is great news for drivers Irfan, when will the Erads be available?

Irfan: We are happy to say that we have stock and are ready to go.

Grant: Thank you Irfan

Irfan: No, thank you Grant

'GET A LOCAL TAXI, NOT AN UBER - YOU'LL BE SAFER', SOUTH RIBBLE COUNCILLOR CLAIMS

A South Ribble councillor has told residents they are safer in locally-licensed taxis than Ubers authorised by councils in other parts of the country.

It comes after an operation earlier this summer in which Lancashire Police stopped more than 200 private hire and Hackney vehicles across South Ribble and Preston during a single night of spot checks.

The force says three of those inspected were immediately suspended from operating because of faults found with their vehicles, while it also gave "numerous warnings" to drivers for bearing incorrect plates and stickers or not having visible identification.

Cllr Jane Bell, chair of South Ribble Borough Council's licensing and public safety committee, told a recent meeting of the full council that none of the vehicles or drivers who were reprimanded or taken off the road had been licensed by the district authority.

"They were all Uber taxis...licensed in Wolverhampton," she said.

"So...please be very careful when you use an Uber - you may not be safe. You certainly won't be as safe as in our taxis, because our

policies are very strict - and stricter than a lot of other boroughs."

The operation actively involved City of Wolverhampton Council, with Lancashire Police saying around 85 of the vehicles stopped were licensed in that local authority area - in spite of it being almost 100 miles away from Central Lancashire.

Since deregulation of the private hire trade in 2015, the necessary licences, plates and permissions can be obtained from any council a driver chooses - perhaps based on considerations such as the speed and cost of processing applications and any specific criteria that have to be met - no matter where they are based or where they will be trading.

Wolverhampton Council has become a popular choice.

Neither South Ribble Borough Council nor Preston City Council currently licence Uber vehicles, which are classed as private hires.

In response to the issues raised by Cllr Bell, a spokesperson for Uber told the Lancashire Post: "Uber operates according to the high standards set across the industry and abides by the same regulations as all other private hire operators.

"We engage closely with councils across the country and are happy to discuss any issues with them."

The firm says every driver who uses the Uber app has been licensed by a local council.

Private hire drivers licensed in England and Wales can legally pick up and drop off passengers anywhere in the two nations, provided the driver, vehicle and operator all have all been issued licences by the same local authority.

Private hire vehicles cannot be hailed in the street and have to be booked in advance. Hackney carriages - the only ones permitted to bear the name 'taxi' - can only pick up passengers on spec in the area in which they are licensed. However, they can operate out-of-area if a journey has been pre-arranged.

Any local licensing conditions can only be enforced upon those vehicles licensed by the council in question - not on those lawfully operating in the patch but licensed elsewhere. However, minimum standards, governing the likes of the roadworthiness of a taxi or private hire car, apply nationwide.

Courtesy of The Lancashire Post



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

RANKS AND HIGHWAYS

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

CAB TRADE ADVICE

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

TRADE'S FUTURE

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

CAB TRADE REPRESENTATION

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

VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS

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

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

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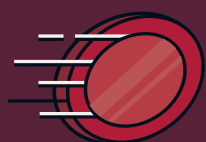


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**SUPPORTING LONDON'S
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New Taxi

It has been 2 months now since I took delivery of my new taxi, this change of vehicle was not something that I had planned to do but a change I had been deliberating over for some time.

There was a couple of personal reasons that brought forward my change of Taxi and the news that LEVC had decided that they would no longer be producing taxis in any other colour than black, and my choice of colour was white!

So, I popped into Ascotts to see what was available and to get the information about prices, hire purchase vs PCP, second hand or new?

There was not much available second hand in white with decent mileage, so I spoke to the lovely Holly regarding a new taxi, I must say that Holly was a pleasure to deal with, she wasn't pushy at all and informed me that they actually had 2 white TXe's in stock, but when she looked at their system only one was left available as the other had already been reserved for another customer, she did show me this on her computer screen.

Holly said that they were not expecting to get any more coloured taxis in stock as the factory had stopped production of any colour other than black. So, I had to decide as to whether I went for the new one that was available or hold off and wait for a second hand one with decent low mileage to become available.

After sleeping on it I called Holly the following day and informed her of my decision to go for the new shiny White TXe Vista Comfort Plus, the vista comfort plus comes with all the bells and whistles and Holly told me that I could take delivery within a week if I wanted, but I still needed to sell my TX4. I took delivery on Friday 28th June so it will be nearly two months since I first drove a TXe.

Before buying this cab, I had only ever driven a LEVC around the block and never been to work in one so did not really have any experience of the vehicle, so I was basically jumping into the unknown.

After being shown the controls of the TXe and the suggested method of driving the taxi by Holly I set off into London from Dartford heading for JV Brights to have some very nice carpets fitted to the cab, 30 minutes into the journey I really started to feel at home in the cab and even called my wife, (who was thinking that I would not like the cab) to tell her how pleased I was with the new taxi.

After having the new carpets fitted and mudflaps to stop the spray of dirt up the side of the cab due to where I now live the cab was ready for work, Now 2 months I can honestly say



that I am really enjoying driving the LEVC, there are of course some things that I do not like about the cab but overall, the experience has been a positive one.

Firstly, the things that I am not too keen on about the cab, the lack of storage space in the front is an issue but one that I am sure I can overcome in time, it just encourages me to carry less crap around with me! The hire sign is still proving to be an issue, whoever designed a hire sign that points towards the sky quite obviously knows nothing about taxis.

The ERAD prematurely failing is a concern and something that LEVC really needs to produce a solution for, and the intercom leaves a lot to be desired. Passengers say that they can hear me quite clearly, but I have difficulty in hearing the passengers in

the back of the cab basically because the speaker is in front of the line of my ears and facing forward.

Now if you are shorter than me and have the driver's seat further forward then you may not have a problem, but drivers who have the seat pushed right back probably encounter the same problem as me.

There is one other downside that I will come to later.

So far those are the only complaints that I have about the cab, but I must say that the positives far out way these negative points that I have made.

This is definitely the best cab I have ever driven, I was not an advocate of electric vehicles, but I must say that while sitting in London's traffic the

virtual silence is genuinely nice, no more noise or vibration from the diesel engine, the higher driving position is an advantage whilst traversing the capital's streets. The cost savings on both fuel and maintenance is quite considerable and covers a substantial amount of the monthly payments.

The customers are really impressed with the electric taxi and especially my tour clients who love the panoramic roof plus the cab has six seats which is quite a benefit when doing tours.

I get home feeling less tired and less clammy than when I was driving my TX4, the air conditioning is a massive improvement on previous taxis and there is distinct lack of heat coming from the engine bay although I can see this as being a disadvantage in the winter with the cab being quite cold.

I can say that I am incredibly pleased that I made the jump into and electric LEVC TXe, I am not going to say that everyone should rush out and buy one as the only other downside is the eye-watering cost of the cab and the monthly payments being extremely high, but the running costs are lower so in essence I am driving around in a new cab for very little money.

It is inevitable that at some point we will all be driving these taxis, and it is a shame that we do not have a choice of vehicle which may reduce the cost slightly and increase customer service and support, but for the time being, if you are happy with your current diesel TX4 or Vito then stick with it.

I think I made the right decision at the right time for me and I am happy that I made the jump.

Until next month, Be Lucky out there on the mean streets of London and be careful and most of all, be nice



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London 'not safe' any more, says Sir Jim Ratcliffe

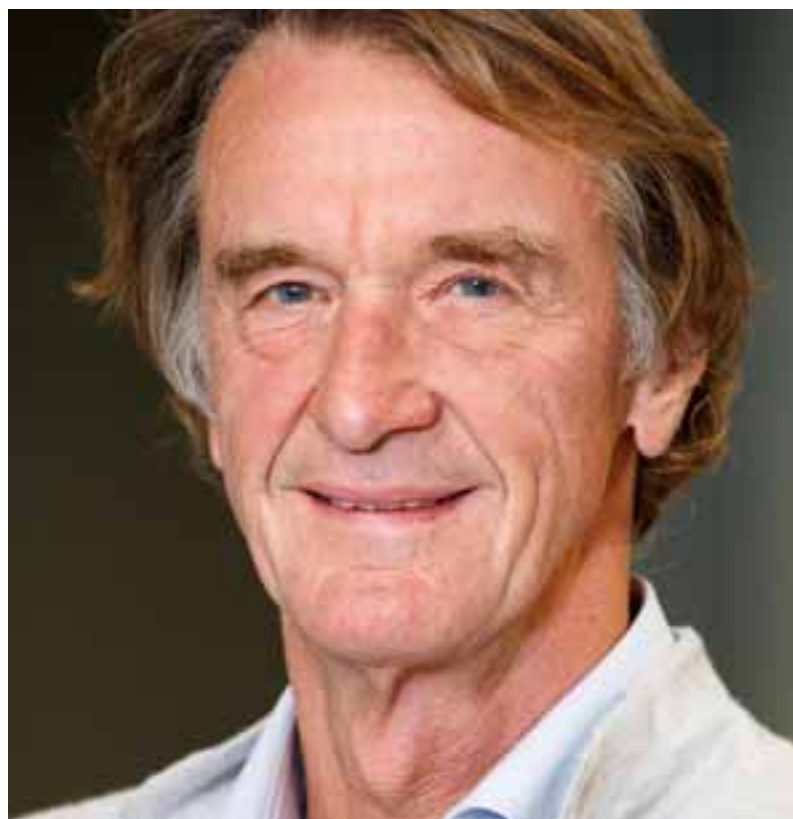
London is "not safe" any more, Sir Jim Ratcliffe, the billionaire owner of Manchester United, has claimed.

Sir Jim said Britain's cities were not as safe as they used to be and revealed that he no longer wears a watch in the capital for fear of being mugged.

Sir Jim said a rise in rates of robbery and shoplifting was part of a wider failure by authorities to provide basic public services, including ensuring that there is enough prison space to house criminals.

The 71-year-old owner of chemical company Ineos and United is worth an estimated £29.6 billion, making him the third richest man in the UK.

He said he has "to be wary" of his safety in London and last year saw someone stabbed to death outside his office in Knightsbridge on CCTV over a Rolex watch.



"I can't wear a watch in London, and I just need to be a bit wary, a bit careful," he told The Sunday Times.

The fatal mugging occurred on Brompton Road, near Hyde Park, and was captured by Ineos security

footage, and Sir Jim said: "He died in a pool of blood because somebody tried to take his Rolex and he resisted. About a year ago we had three guys in hoodies, with machetes, right outside the office, opposite Harrods."

There were 116 murders in the capital in 2023-24, up from 112 on the year before, while there was also a surge in recorded knife crime offences. The 15,016 recorded last year was the second highest number on record and up by about a fifth on the 12,786 the year before.

Sir Jim said leaders had presided over decreasing levels of public safety as well as a decline in health and prisons.

"We don't have enough prison space. I mean, this didn't just happen. We've been talking about the prisons being overcrowded for 10 years," he said.

The billionaire also despaired over Britain's political leaders' focus on five-year election cycles, which he said meant the country lurched "from one crisis to another".

He praised Sir Keir Starmer, the Prime Minister, saying he believed he would "do a very sensible job", but doubled down on criticism of Labour's ban on North Sea oil and gas exploration.

He said it, along with the shutdown of old nuclear power stations, would exacerbate a looming energy shortage, with higher prices for the public leading to a slowing of growth in the economy.

"Americans pay a third of what we do for gas, and a fifth for electricity," he said. "That's why their economy is going gangbusters and ours has stalled."

Courtesy of The Daily Telegraph

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Heathrow Update by LCDC Airport Team

Taxi Feeder Park

Earlier this month, there was a meeting regarding the EV upgrade of the Feeder Park.

After a long period and numerous hurdles, it can now be confirmed that funding for the project has been secured through Heathrow Airport's Capital Expenditure fund. This means the cost will not need to be repaid through the 'gate'.

The lengthy process was due to obtaining approval for the expenditure from the airlines. Over the past couple of years, LCDC Representative Brian Nayar's close collaboration with Heathrow's Surface Access Team has led to the current stage. Through this effort, a significant portion of £5 million has been secured to upgrade the TFP, with the remaining amount allocated for the AVA. The project will provide a 150MW power supply.

The day before the meeting, the Surface Access Team discovered a new power source that could be utilised. This substation may change the locations for new EV chargers, and new designs are being developed to be presented later. HAL is still considering the installation of 150kWh chargers, but the preference remains for 22kWh units.

Compliance

Another meeting has been scheduled in September to discuss issues with Touting. A report will be in 'The Badge'.

Incorrect Charging at Business Car Park

On 31st July 2024, LCDC Rep Cliff Mahoney was assigned a fare from Terminal 4 to the Terminal 2 long stay car park. Upon arrival, the passenger informed Cliff that their vehicle was actually in the Business 2/3 car park. As HAL/APCOA's policy clearly states, taxis can drop off at long stay car parks without incurring an exit fee. However, the policy's application to Business car parks was not explicitly clear.

After dropping off the



passenger, Cliff approached the exit and was faced with a £43 fee. Despite multiple explanations via the intercom, the operator insisted on the payment. Seeking further assistance, Cliff visited the office, only to be redirected back to the intercom, where he faced the same demand. Ultimately, Cliff was allowed to exit after paying £9.40, but was warned against returning under threat of the full fee.

The Response

Sean Taylor, Contract Manager at APCOA Parking UK, promptly addressed the issue once it was brought to his attention. He confirmed several key points:

1. Policy Clarification: Taxis are indeed allowed a 20-minute grace period in both Business 2/3 and Business 5 car parks, similar to long stay car parks. This policy had not been effectively communicated to the intercom control staff.
2. Refund Issued: The £9.40 fee was refunded to Cliff's account immediately after the incident was reported.
3. Staff Reminder: A reminder has been issued to all APCOA control room staff to ensure they are aware of and adhere to the grace period policy for taxis in Business car parks.

Moving Forward

This incident underscores the importance of clear communication and adherence to policies among all APCOA staff. Sean Taylor reassured that all black cab drivers should now be able to exit

Business car parks within the 20-minute grace period without issue.

APCOA apologised to Cliff for the frustration and inconvenience experienced and appreciated his patience and professionalism throughout the incident.

Analysis of Taxi Feeder Park (TFP), Local Journeys (LJ), and Fair Fares (FF) Data (January 2010 - July 2024)

Overview

This report provides an in-depth analysis of the Taxi Feeder Park (TFP) throughput, Local Journeys (LJ), and Fair Fares (FF) services spanning from January 2010 to July 2024. The data encompasses various metrics, including total job numbers, the percentage of cabs using TFP, and the contributions from LJ and FF services, reflecting trends, growth, and notable events affecting taxi services.

Key Metrics and Trends

1. Total Jobs (Including FF & LJ)
 - Growth and Peaks: The overall growth in job numbers has been significant, with peak values notably in 2023. The highest recorded job numbers occurred in September 2023, reaching 150,732, followed by another peak in July 2023 with 127,536 jobs. These peaks indicate robust demand, potentially driven by seasonal factors or special events.
 - Yearly Variations: There are observable variations across years, particularly with increased jobs from June to

September, which may correlate with holiday periods and increased tourism activities.

2. Fair Fares (FF) Percentage of Cabs Through TFP - Trends Over Time: The percentage of cabs participating in the Fair Fares scheme passing through TFP has shown a steady increase. Starting from a modest 3-4% in the early 2010s, it rose to around 7-9% in recent years. The highest recorded percentage was in December 2020 at 10%, likely influenced by economic factors during the pandemic, driving a preference for discounted fares.
 - Impact of Economic Conditions: The increase in FF usage during the pandemic suggests a shift towards more affordable travel options, reflecting broader economic challenges faced by the population.

3. Local Journeys (LJ) Percentage of Cabs Through TFP
 - Fluctuating Percentages: The data shows significant fluctuations in the percentage of cabs from Local Journeys through TFP, with lows around 31% in April 2014 and highs exceeding 70% during specific periods. The most notable spike was during the pandemic in 2020, where April and May saw the percentage surpass 100%, indicating a substantial reliance on local journeys during lockdowns.
 - Post-Pandemic Changes: Following the pandemic, the LJ percentage decreased but remained higher than pre-pandemic levels, suggesting a sustained preference for local travel.

Noteworthy Observations

1. Post-Pandemic Recovery: The data indicates a strong recovery in taxi usage post-pandemic, with notable increases in both FF and LJ service contributions. This rebound signifies a return to more regular travel patterns and a potential shift in consumer behavior towards these services.
2. Seasonal Patterns: Consistent rises in job numbers during summer months highlight a recurring trend of increased demand during vacation seasons, underscoring the importance of these periods for taxi services.
3. Emerging Trends: The continuous rise in FF service usage points to an increasing acceptance and reliance on fare-regulated travel options, which could have future implications for policy and service offerings.

Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis underscores the resilience and adaptability of the taxi industry amidst fluctuating conditions, such as economic downturns and the pandemic. The growing importance of Fair Fares and Local Journeys suggests a shift in passenger priorities, emphasising affordability and convenience in local travel. This evolving landscape necessitates continued monitoring and strategic planning to align services with emerging trends and consumer preferences.

Recommendations

1. Continuous Monitoring: It is crucial to monitor passenger trends and maintain operational flexibility to adapt to sudden demand changes, as highlighted by the pandemic's impact.
2. Service Enhancements: As passenger numbers stabilise, enhancing service quality and maintaining high safety standards will be key to attracting and retaining customers.
3. Data-Driven Strategies: Leveraging historical data to anticipate peak periods and manage resources effectively can ensure optimised operations and service delivery.

The positive recovery and stabilisation in TFP usage indicate a favourable outlook for the taxi industry, with potential growth opportunities as travel demand continues to rise.

GEELY'S \$120M INVESTMENT IN LEVC: WHY CAN'T THEY SOLVE THE ERAD ISSUES?

By Anthony Abetemarco

Geely's recent \$120 million investment in the London Electric Vehicle Company (LEVC) has garnered significant attention. As taxi drivers, we welcome any advancements that promise to enhance our work environment and the vehicles we rely on daily. However, amidst this substantial financial infusion, a critical question arises: why hasn't Geely been able to solve the persistent issues with the Electric Rear Axle Drive (ERAD)?

The Promise of ERAD

The ERAD system was introduced as a revolutionary feature, designed to enhance the performance and efficiency of electric taxis. By integrating a separate electric motor to power the rear axle, the ERAD was supposed to provide better traction, improved handling, and greater energy efficiency. For those of us navigating the busy streets of London, this sounded like a game-changer.

Persistent Issues

Despite its promising design, the ERAD system has faced numerous technical issues since its introduction. Taxi drivers have reported frequent breakdowns, reduced reliability, and costly repairs. These problems have led to significant downtime and financial strain for drivers who depend on their vehicles for their livelihood.

Geely's Investment: A Step Forward?

Geely's recent \$120 million investment in LEVC aims to



expand the electric vehicle lineup and accelerate innovation. However, it raises the question of why these funds aren't addressing the fundamental issues with the ERAD system. The priority should be to ensure that the existing technology is reliable and efficient before expanding into new ventures.

Technical Challenges

The complexity of the ERAD system might be one reason behind the persistent issues. Integrating a rear axle drive with electric motors requires precise engineering and high-quality components. Any compromise in these areas can lead to the kind of problems we've been experiencing. It's possible that solving these issues requires more than just

financial investment; it needs a dedicated focus on engineering solutions and perhaps a rethink of the current design.

Impact on Drivers

For taxi drivers, vehicle reliability is paramount. The ongoing problems with the ERAD system not only affect our ability to provide consistent service but also our earnings and job security. While Geely's investment is a positive sign of commitment to LEVC, we need assurance that the existing problems will be prioritized and resolved.

Moving Forward

Geely and LEVC must take a proactive approach to address the ERAD issues. This involves:

1. **Transparency:** Providing regular updates on the steps being taken to resolve the ERAD problems.
2. **Technical Focus:** Allocating a significant portion of the new investment towards engineering solutions for the ERAD system.
3. **Driver Support:** Offering support to affected drivers, including compensation for downtime and assistance with repair costs.
4. **Feedback Loop:** Establishing a direct feedback mechanism where drivers can report issues and suggest improvements.

In conclusion, while the \$120 million investment is a welcome development, the pressing ERAD issues must not be overshadowed. As taxi drivers, our livelihood depends on the reliability of our vehicles. Geely and

LEVC must prioritize solving these problems to ensure that the promises of innovation translate into tangible benefits for those of us on the road every day.

Call to Action

We urge Geely and LEVC to provide a clear plan for addressing the ERAD issues and to engage with the driver community for feedback and support. Only through a collaborative and transparent approach can we ensure that the future of electric taxis is both innovative and dependable.

Your thoughts and experiences with the ERAD system are invaluable.

Share your feedback and let's work together to drive the change we need.



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£22m spent on stopping fare dodging on buses and tubes last year - but only £1.3m back in fines

Transport for London (TfL) spent almost £22million cracking down on fare dodging across the Tube and bus network over the last year – but only collected £1.3million in penalty charges as a result of that enforcement.

The financial data comes after separate figures revealed that fare evasion across all of TfL's services fell slightly from an estimated 3.9 per cent of journeys in 2022/23, to 3.8 per cent in 2023/24 – despite total journeys rising by 300million.

Responding to a Freedom of Information request on the topic, TfL said that the harm caused by fare evaders "is much greater than simply the missed cost of a ticket" as the culprits can often be "intimidating or abusive to our colleagues and to our customers".

The organisation disclosed



that between April 2023 and March 2024, it spent £14.2million on a revenue enforcement team on the Underground and a further £7.7million enforcing fares on the capital's buses.

TfL said it did not know how much had been spent on the London Overground, Tram network or on the Elizabeth line, as those services are operated by franchisees who outsource their enforcement teams.

On the Tube network, penalty fares totalling £638,520 were issued over that same period, with a further £707,272 worth of fines issued on the bus network.

Despite being run by franchisees, TfL said it was also aware that £560,944 of penalty fares had been charged on the Overground, and £756,534 on the Elizabeth line. In a slightly different period spanning June 2023 to June 2024, TfL said that £32,328 of penalty fares were issued on the Tram network.

The transport authority said: "We take fare evasion extremely seriously and our team of revenue inspectors provide a vital deterrent that influences the rate of fare evasion.

"Revenue inspectors operate across our network day and night, using new technology and intelligence to identify anyone travelling without a ticket. We take action against thousands of fare evaders every year.

Courtesy of The BBC

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SUE ME, SUE ME, SHOOT BULLETS THROUGH ME...



I hated musicals as a kid. They were full of people who broke out into song at any given moment.

'I'm off to the corner shop, tra la la la. Anyone want anything? Tra la la'

But then I saw the film version of *Guys and Dolls* from 1955, I guess in the early 90s and I stopped being such a plank. It helped that by the time I got to it, I was already a massive fan of Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando, so to have both of them in their prime, performing together, well I had to see that. And yes of course, I loved it. The clobber, the sets, the colours and yes, even those damn clever songs.

The premise of the film was based on the Broadway musical of the same name from 1950, which was itself based on a short story from 1933 'The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown' and 'Blood Pressure' both by the celebrated writer Damon Runyan.

The film was directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz and starred as mentioned not only Marlon and Frank but also Jean Simmons as Sarah, Vivian Blaine as Miss Adelaide and Stubby Kaye as Nicely Nicely Johnson.

Set in New York City, *Guys and Dolls* follows the lives of two main characters: Sky Masterson – Brando – a charismatic and high-stakes gambler, and Nathan Detroit – Sinatra – a small-time hustler who runs illegal craps (that's dice to you pal) games. The story revolves around the dodgy gambling pursuits and hoped for romantic conquest,



of the main characters, including Sarah, a devout Salvation Army missionary, and Miss Adelaide, a nightclub performer and Nathan's long-standing fiancée, whilst trying to stay one step ahead of the heat laid down by Lieutenant Brannigan of the NYPD.

The highlights of the film are of course its memorable musical numbers, composed by Frank Loesser. The film is absolutely riddled with classic songs such as *Luck Be a Lady*, *Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat*, *Sue Me*, *Fugue for Tinhorns*, *If I Were a Bell* and *Adelaide*. These toe-tapping tunes have become iconic, and their catchy melodies and clever lyrics continue to resonate with audiences today.

The performances in *Guys and Dolls* are a true testament to the talent of the cast. Brando, primarily known for his dramatic roles, surprised

audiences with his portrayal of Masterson.

Despite not being a trained singer, Brando demonstrated his versatility by delivering a captivating performance and holding his own in the musical numbers. Frank, on the other hand, showcased his smooth voice and charismatic charm as the lovable Nathan Detroit. The on-screen chemistry between Brando and Sinatra added depth and humour to their characters' interactions, making their on-screen dynamic a highlight of the film.

Off-screen however, it is said the relationship was a little 'strained,' with Frank being quoted as telling the director Mankiewicz... 'When Mumbles is through rehearsing, I'll come out.'

Among the well-known names who were originally considered for the main parts, were Betty Grable and Marilyn

Monroe for Adelaide Gene Kelly as Sky and Deborah Kerr and Grace Kelly as Sarah.

Ultimately though, Jean Simmons portrayed Sarah Brown with grace and vulnerability, capturing the conflict between her duty as a missionary and her growing feelings for Masterson. Vivian Blaine, who had originated the role of Miss Adelaide on Broadway, reprised her role in the film, infusing the character with humour and warmth.

In addition to its stellar cast and memorable music, the film is visually stunning. Its colourful costumes and vibrant sets capture the essence of 1950s New York City, creating an immersive and lively atmosphere. The choreography by Michael Kidd adds energy and excitement to the musical numbers, with dynamic dance sequences

that further enhance the film's entertainment value.

Another highlight for me, is the supporting cast, which is full of broken nosed lumps with names like Benny South Street, Society Max, Harry the Horse and Rusty Charlie. Not surprisingly the film received critical acclaim upon its release and became a commercial success, becoming the number one money making film of 1956.

'An escapist and inventive cinemascope delight, *Guys and Dolls* glistens thanks to the charm of its ensemble. The casting is good all the way.'

It garnered four Academy Award nominations, including Best Art Direction and Best Costume Design. The film's enduring popularity has led to numerous revivals of the stage musical, which continues to this day, ensuring that the story and its characters continue to captivate audiences across generations.

With its infectious music, charismatic performances, and entertaining storyline, it remains a classic in the musical film genre. The film's ability to combine romance, comedy, and music in a seamless and enjoyable way has solidified its place in cinema history.

Decades after its release, it continues to be cherished by audiences worldwide for its timeless charm and enduring appeal.

The Mumper of SE5

Read The Mumper's other weekly musings on 'The Speakeasy' blog page

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Since 2011 the John Simons storefront has been situated in the heart of Marylebone at No. 46 Chiltern street. Whilst the commitment to mid-century American style remains, the focus is firmly on the present, a fact which is reflected in a choice selection of products which span the globe: from artisan Japanese denim to premium French workwear, John Simons; the destination for all discerning modernists.



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ULEZ: Mayor Sadiq Khan to shut scrappage scheme as London drivers scramble to apply

London Mayor Sadiq Khan will close the ULEZ (Ultra Low Emissions Zone) scrappage scheme next month as drivers in the capital scramble to make last-minute applications.

The announcement comes after Khan expanded the controversial scheme to more areas of greater London shortly before his re-election earlier in the year.

The scrappage scheme, which drivers can apply to in a bid to replace polluting, non-compliant cars with greener alternatives, has helped 54,000 applicants, the Mayor of London said.

Transport for London said its proposed deadline for new applications is 23:59 on 7 September, with any made before that deadline guaranteed to be processed.

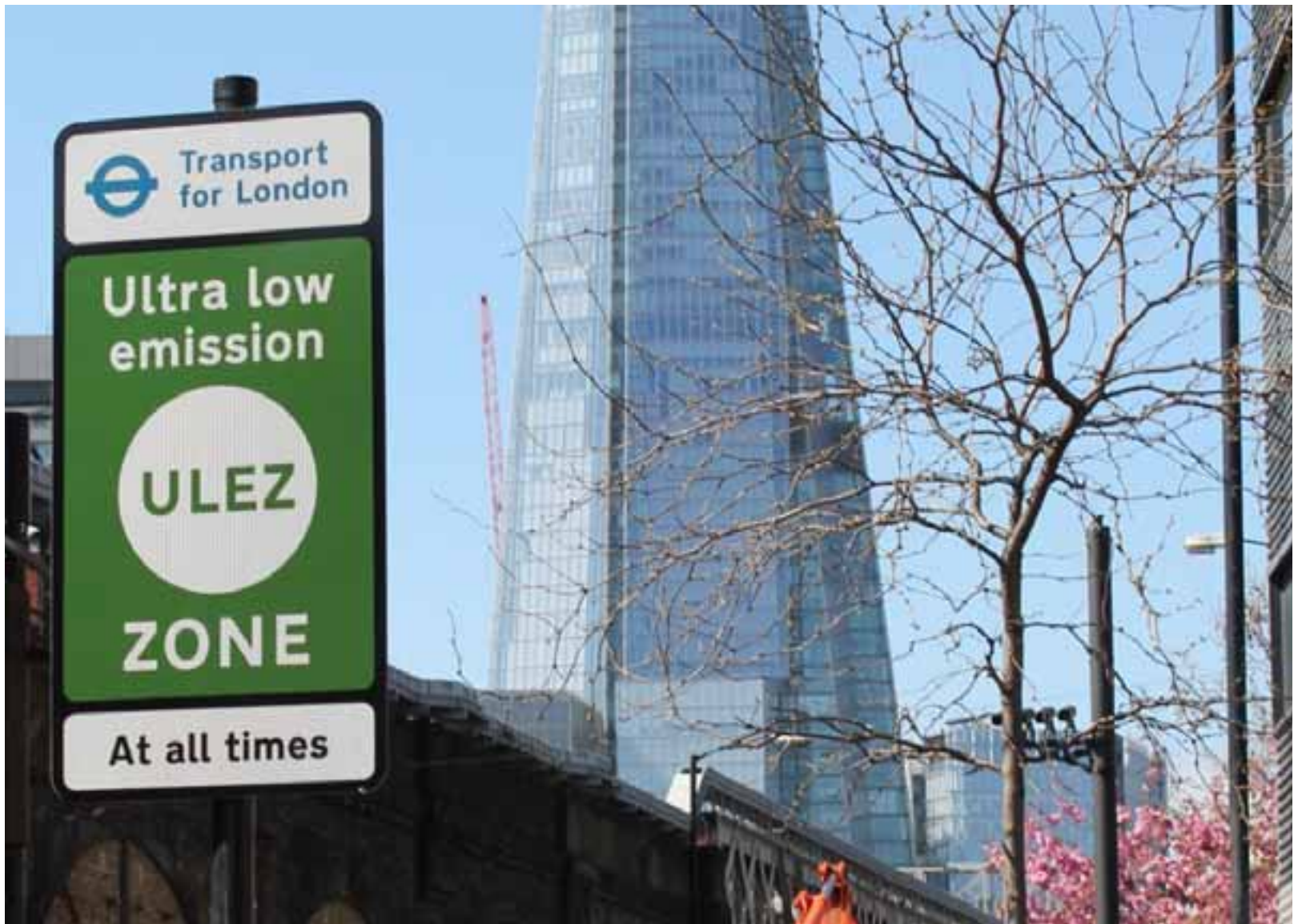
Khan also said he is looking at making a donation to British Ukrainian aid, allowing non-compliant vehicles to be sent to the war-torn country. More than 330 vehicles have been donated to Ukraine.

The ULEZ scheme has proved controversial among some London drivers. When it was first implemented, a wave of vandalism targeted ULEZ cameras.

According to City Hall, the first six months of the expansion of ULEZ removed nitric oxide emissions equivalent to removing 200,000 cars from the road. It added that nitrogen dioxide concentrations in outer London were down by a fifth compared to before the scheme.

As part of the scheme, more than £186m had been stumped up for 54,000 applicants and more than £60m for 15,000 applicants in the central and inner London ULEZ region.

City hall said most older and polluting cars had already been scrapped, and application numbers had nosedived. There is reportedly a compliance level of more than 96 per cent.



Within the scheme, 36,008 Londoners had their application approved to scrap their non-compliant car or motorcycle, totalling £69,502,200 in grants.

Meanwhile, 17,936 applications were approved to scrap or retrofit a van or minibus, totalling £116,587,500 in grants.

The scheme was also used by 232 charities, with applications totalling £1,716,500 in grants, and 17,704 SMEs, approved, totalling £114,871,000 in grants.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan said: "I am proud that the scrappage scheme – the biggest in the UK – has supported so many Londoners to switch to cleaner, greener vehicles. ULEZ compliance has now reached more than 96 per cent, bringing cleaner air to millions of Londoners.

"I'm also pleased that after

the huge success of the Ukraine scheme, I'm planning to provide additional funding so that vehicles can continue to be donated to the country once the scrappage scheme closes.

I remain committed to taking world-leading action to improve London's air quality and encourage sustainable transport."

Christina Calderato, TfL's director of strategy, said: "The expanded ULEZ has meant that more than five million people are now breathing cleaner air and from the Six Month Report we have seen its success in driving down air pollutant emissions and concentrations."

Harmful roadside nitrogen dioxide in outer London has fallen by over 20 per cent through the different phases of the scheme. The £186m we have committed so far through the scrappage scheme has been

instrumental in the over 96 per cent of vehicles we are now seeing complying with the standards."

Oliver Lord, head of strategy and UK at Clean Cities, said: "The ULEZ scrappage scheme has been a lifeline for many, and TfL's announcement to close it is a significant moment. This now leaves a pot of money that can be strategically targeted where we need it most: driving our net zero goals."

"Supporting small businesses to transition to electric vans and pedal power is the next crucial step. However, removing the electric van grant at this time, especially coupled with the upcoming removal of the congestion charge exemption next year, is not sending the right signal."

"Van emissions in the UK are substantial and continue to rise. At the very least, the Mayor should keep the electric van grant alive and

explore other innovative ways to use it, such as social leasing schemes."

"This approach would put London back on the front foot, establishing the capital as leaders in sustainability business practices and zero emission mobility."

Tory spokesperson Keith Prince AM said: "As the scrappage scheme closes, the Mayor has still neglected to consider the many Londoners on low incomes who own non-ULEZ compliant vehicles purchased through finance.

"The scrappage scheme does not cover the amount they still owe on the vehicle, meaning that the use of the scheme would put them in negative equity and leave them in debt. As a result, they are trapped paying the Mayor's £12.50 daily charge. We have raised this for many months now, with no solution in sight."

Courtesy of City A.M



Not all the Olympic winners in the boxing ring will become major world champions in the professional ring. Not all of them will try.

Many will start preparing for either retirement, like Dublin's Kellie Harrington, or the next Olympics in Los Angeles in four years. We will know about LA by next summer.

There are some, however, with a clear path and vision and before the torch went out late on Sunday night, they had already started their pilgrimage to the paid ranks.

When Bakhodir Jalolov retired his boxing vest, placing it tenderly on the canvas at the end of his final, it was a clear sign that he would now concentrate on winning the world heavyweight title. Jalolov is 30, unbeaten and certainly untested in 14 fights in the professional business; he has not taken a single risk as a pro and only has competitive fights over the three-round distance at the world championships and the Olympics. Has he left it too late, and can he adjust to the longer distances?

The Big Uzbek, as he is known, might just be a genius over three rounds; we have no idea what will happen over eight or 10 and it is certainly time to find out. His only mildly competitive fight in Paris was against the entertaining Australian, Teremoana Teremoana. However, his last competitive fight was probably against Richard Torrez Jr in the Tokyo Olympic final. Torrez Jr is now unbeaten in 10 as a pro, with every fight ending early.

Jalolov is the master of nine minutes and reminds me of Cuban boxing legend Teofilo Stevenson in the way he controls the ring and lets his hands go; the difference is that Jalolov does not finish men the way Stevenson did. There was only one stoppage in 15 fights at super-heavyweight and it was not Jalolov's fists doing the damage.

Stevenson knocked out nine

A FUTURE HEAVYWEIGHT WORLD CHAMPION? WHAT TO EXPECT AS OLYMPIC BOXERS TURN PRO



men on his way to his three Olympic gold medals in 1972, 1976 and 1980.

The semi-final at lightweight for women between old rivals Harrington and Beatriz Ferreira was arguably the fight of the Games. They met

in the final in Tokyo, Harrington won that and refused all cash offers to leave the amateur sport. Ferreira did turn pro and earlier this year, in just her fifth fight, won the IBF world lightweight title.

The pair met on the second Saturday, bout 190, and it was a classic from the first 10 seconds. It should have been the final, a fight for 15,000 at Roland Garros and not for a few thousand in a warehouse near the airport at the very edge of the city.

Harrington was too quick in the first, Ferreira won the second and they never surrendered an inch in the last. The 4-1 split went to Harrington. A few days later she won gold for the second time. She is not interested in the professional business; Ferreira is back on the trail of a massive fight, possibly with Katie Taylor.

The American team threatened, but only light-middle Omari Jones won a medal. He was impressive, just a bit naive at this level. At the same weight, Marco Verde was great to watch. The Mexican will probably be a pro by Christmas; Jones is already holding talks. Team GB's only boxing medallist Lewis Richardson could have got the nod against Verde in their semi. Both Jones and Verde were beaten by another outstanding Uzbek, Asadkhuja Muydinkhujaev.

It was a great tournament and there will be a lot of future stars in the professional game from Paris – some won here and some lost, but all that matters is that they can fight.



Veterans attend Battle Proms Picnic Concert at Highclere Castle

On 3 August, WWII veterans Norrie Bartlett, Harry Rice, Mervyn Kersh and Marie Scott, post-war veterans Vic Needham Crofton and Peter Gospel, and Mike, Ken, David and Trevor from The Royal Hospital Chelsea were invited by the Taxi Charity to attend the Battle Proms Picnic Concert at Highclere Castle.

In beautifully sunny weather, volunteer London cab drivers brought the veterans to the Castle for a programme which included a horseback display by the Worcestershire Cavalry, the Red Devils parachute display team freefall demonstration and the Battle Proms Belles singing vintage favourites before the New English Concert Orchestra rounded off the night accompanied by fireworks and cannon fire.



The charity's vice chairman, Paul Cook, ensured the group did not go hungry, having made three different types of scotch eggs; potato cheese and onion puffs; coconut, mango, cashew nut, mint and chilli salad; savoury croissants and a tarte tatin.

To complete the picnic, Erith based Crumbs Bakery donated a box full of cakes,



a box of bread pudding and two boxes of their famous sausage rolls.

Colin Mills, London cab driver and chairman of the Taxi Charity, said: "As the only forces charity that focuses on providing fun and entertainment, taking veterans to Highclere Castle for the Battle Proms was a great way to spend a summer's evening. Everyone had a wonderful



time and enjoyed a tot or two of a limited edition D-Day rum from Distinct Distillers, which raises funds to support our work.

We also got to meet the Countess of Carnarvon who generously spent some time with our group."

WWII veteran, Mervyn Kersh, said: "It's always so very nice to be invited and

yesterday's outing was a first for lots of us. We were, as always, royally looked after and wanted for nothing. The team's attention to detail is unbelievable.

"Great company in a spectacular setting, rousing music, aerial displays, a handmade picnic and I even had a private word with Sir Winston about the state of our country!"

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