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# EDITORIAL

It wouldn't be Christmas without a good heated argument would it?

Well, this Christmas it's more one-sided than we would have liked, but the NTA have had their say over many years, unanswered. So we have taken their endless (usually unflattering) statements on the taxi industry to task. Enough. No more shouting on high about how many drivers have been found without licenses (an extremely small amount by the way) and what kinds of complaints the public have about drivers – unkempt facial hair and armpit smells et al. Now we're hitting back on behalf of the industry. Our "debate" takes place on pages 12 & 13.

Insurance premiums are slowly beginning to slip back down from their unattainable heights of earlier this year. Not that much, mind, as many drivers are still having to leave the industry due to their sky-high premiums. Tony Row has taken the Irish insurers to account on pages 32 & 33.

In Dublin's city centre the Luas works have been causing untold grief for what feels like centuries, finally those works are coming to a

close but Dawson Street is where taxi drivers are making their last stand against the decisions enforced on them. Dawson Street has become the Alamo. The DTA take us through what's at stake there, as do the ever-watchful TTnH.

Elsewhere, one in five taxi drivers could lose their jobs in Tralee as a result of local council decisions and in Cork last week, we spoke to Derry Coughlan to hear his thoughts on the state of the modern taxi industry.

It seems a driver shortage is looming this Christmas and New Year with many warning that revellers will be left waiting hours into the night for a lift home and mytaxi are at the forefront of trying to entice new drivers into the industry. What is certain in the short term is that there is a driver shortage and no doubt the public outcry will be loud.

We have all that and much more in this festive edition of *Tacsaí Magazine*. All here at the publication would like to wish you and yours a very safe and joyful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Safe travels,  
**Stephen Young**  
*Editor*

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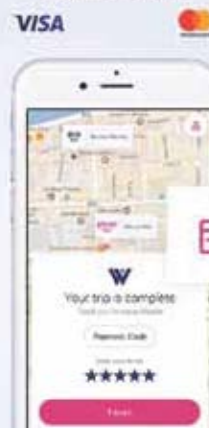
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**DON'T LOOK NOW...  
BUT THE NTA ARE UP  
TO THEIR OLD TRICKS**

**WHILE THE REAL PROBLEM  
LIES IN PLAIN SIGHT**

**J**ust like all proper debates, let's take the argument first and then give our rebuttal.

The argument (brought to you by the NTA):

Nearly 30 taxi drivers operating in Dublin have been prosecuted for doing so without a valid licence so far this year, new figures have revealed.

Figures released under Freedom of Information legislation show that 29 unlicensed Special Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) drivers were prosecuted in the capital in the first six months of 2017.

A total of 18 drivers were prosecuted across the rest of Ireland for the same offence, including in Donegal (5 drivers), Louth (3), Mayo (3 each), Westmeath (2), and Clare, Cork, Galway, Kerry, and Sligo (1 each).

The figures, the NTA say, reflect the growing trend in the last three years of drivers across the country being prosecuted for not having a relevant licence to operate a taxi.

More drivers were summonsed in the first six months of 2017 than in the whole of 2012, 2013, and 2014.

However, 2015 marked a step-up in prosecutions, with 87 drivers prosecuted that year. In 2016, 110 drivers were prosecuted.

Speaking about the figures, a spokesman for the National Transport Authority said: "The increase in prosecutions has come about as a result of NTA targeting illegal operators. This was possible as a result of us securing additional enforcement resources in 2015."

He added that the concentration of prosecutions in Dublin could be attributed to the fact that most SPSV licence holders operate in the capital.

Thank you, NTA.

A well-presented and informative stance.

And it would hold water but for one thing - or thousands as the case really is - RICKSHAWS.

How can the NTA look anyone in the eye whilst cast a dark shadow on the whole of the taxi industry over the misdeeds of a small minority of drivers when not one rickshaw driver is compliant to the same set of standards?

And so here is *Tacsai's* rebuttal.

This summer Dublin City Council issued a public advisory notice warning of the safety hazards of using rickshaws.

The vehicles, which are often motorised, are a popular form of transportation for late night revellers in the city centre.

"Dublin City council wishes to advise members of the public, for their own safety and the safety of others, that rickshaws operating in Dublin City are not regulated by DCC or otherwise," the Council said in the notice posted on its website.

"Some rickshaw operators appear not to have public liability insurance," it added.

Earlier this year, it emerged that the council hoped to have rickshaws banned at some stage this year, although to date there has been no movement regarding such a course of action.

"Rickshaws are a real difficulty in Dublin because they're unregulated," Green Party councillor Ciaran Cuffe told *TheJournal.ie*. "We have written to the Department of Transport seeking such regulation and we're still waiting for

that to happen."

Cuffe said that he and others are "quite frustrated" about the current regulatory situation, but stopped short of saying that a ban on rickshaws is necessary.

"I don't necessarily think that rickshaws need to be banned, but those who use them should ensure that they're insured," he said.

There have been a number of accidents with people falling out of rickshaws and of collisions with other vehicles – it's a real worry because the combination of crowds and alcohol and narrow streets is so dangerous.

"We do need to regulate these vehicles – they need to have insurance, and lights, and at least some element of driver training," he added.

And then there's this....

Last year a number of rickshaw drivers operating in Dublin City Centre were caught selling class A drugs while they work.

An Irish Independent reporter approached rickshaw drivers working in the capital and each of them confirmed they had drugs for sale.

These recordings reveal how the drivers are selling weed, cocaine and pills while working on our capital's streets.

When asked to show the pills, one of the drivers lifted up the seat of his rickshaw to reveal where he was keeping his supply.

Another stated that they weren't "selling tonight" as gardai were in the area and it was "too risky".

Each driver had the same set price, indicating that they may be working under the same supplier.

A source told *Independent.ie* that some drivers keep locks on their seats to conceal their stash of drugs in case of a spot check by gardai or Revenue.

It is believed that up to 20 rickshaw garages are currently in operation across Dublin, with two garages located on Montague Lane near the popular nightlife area of Harcourt Street.

The main business for rickshaw drivers comes from picking up punters as they leave pubs and clubs, with the majority of drivers being of Brazilian nationality.

However, the drugs business is said to be becoming increasingly popular with rickshaw drivers as a way to make extra money on the side.

## Conclusion

The NTA should keep their double standards to a minimum. Note their silence on rickshaws, note their unwillingness to act on them and then ask why they are so eager to trot out some unflattering figures about the taxi industry on a quarterly basis. You, the NTA, are an umbrella authority for all public service vehicles. You owe the vehicles under your authority some respect. We have suggested before that for once it might be wise to broadcast some positive news about taxis rather than bombarding the public with the rogue operators. Oh, and how many of those rickshaw drivers have licenses?

How many?

If you hear nothing it's just the sound of silence, a deaf ear being turned, and hypocrisy at work. Hard at work.



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# DTA ROUND ON DAWSON STREET CLOSURE AND RICKSHAWS

## *We hear from Tommy Barton*

**J**ust before going to print, Tacsai spoke to the DTA's Tommy Barton to get a full update on the issues surrounding Dawson Street and the Luas plans.

Tommy told us: "Just to keep taxi drivers up to date in relation to the Dawson Street closure to taxis at present there was a meeting held on Monday the 26th of November with Hugh Creegan of the National Transport Authority and Ben O'Brien, Dublin area manager of Dublin City Council.

"At this meeting, Dublin Taxi Association can confirm, the National Transport Authority in conjunction with Dublin City Council have decided to postpone the review of the Dawson Street issue until after Christmas.

"At this present moment only three bus routes from Dublin Bus can fully use the Dawson Street area, this has been a serious restriction for Dublin Bus considering 46 route at one stage went through and down Dawson Street.

"We believe also that any private operators for example aircoach and Mathews' coaches who have routes along that street will also be stopped from using it as well.

"It has been over three years now since taxis were fully allowed to drive down Dawson Street onto Dame and Westmoreland Street.

"DTA believe that from Cafe en Seine to the Mansion House, pubs restaurants should be able to avail of taxis at any time of the day. But by giving the new Luas line a chance to bed in over the Christmas period it would also give the National Transport Authority some breathing space on how they would like to proceed in the new year in relation to taxis fully operating down Dawson Street. We were told at this meeting that taxi drivers would be allowed to

use the full length of the street at night time but the daytime is the issue at this moment it would be preferable though that we could fully operate down the street at all times.

"There was a sign that buses and taxis could use Dawson Street for a few weeks but now that sign has been taken away. We don't know why that happened, but my hoping is the thinking that it may be available to us at night.

"I'd like to make the point also that it is important that we have the usage of Dawson Street and Stephen's Green as taxi drivers at this present moment. We should always pull up and set down passengers in a safe area and be conscious of the fact that the Luas will be fully operational from Saturday at 2pm (correct at the time of going to print) when Minister Ross we'll be opening the new route if we are conscious of this fact and leave the tracks clear at all times it would benefit us as drivers for this review in the new year.

"Also just a quick note on the Rickshaw issue; the minister has been sitting on his hands over the last one in regards of legislation for rickshaws we still want them banned because Dawson Street and the adjoining area will be Rickshaw Heaven now and in the future if they are not banned now that we can't fully use Dawson Street.

"On a more positive Christmas note...

"Dublin City Council closed down one premises recently in Summerhill Ballbough area which is a great help in curtailing these death traps and many more to come.

"The industry has picked up over the last year or two at Christmas time and the DTA would like to take this opportunity to wish you and all your loved ones a safe and peaceful Christmas and New Year."

# TRALEE TO LOSE ONE IN FIVE TAXI DRIVERS



**The Tralee Taxi Association has warned that one in five local taxi drivers could be forced out of business within a year as a result of new Taxi Rank arrangements for the town centre which were approved by councillors last week.**

**A**t a special meeting last week Tralee Municipal District Councillors formally approved the location of new 24-hour and night-only taxi ranks in the town centre.

Despite demands for a rank on Denny Street this was not included in the formal proposal that was put before the councillors for a vote. As such the councillors were not in a position to consider a rank on the town's main street.

They were however able to make a minor adjustment to the proposal that will see two additional 24-hour taxi spaces at Bridge Street, these will be located directly in front of Shaws Department Store and in front of 'Small' Benners hardware shop.

A rank on Denny Street was not included in the proposal despite fervent demand from local taxi drivers which was supported by a significant number of businesses and over 1,200 members of the public. Ahead of last week's meeting Tralee Taxi Association presented 1,386 signed submissions from the public backing their calls for a rank on Denny Street.

There were doubts about the legitimacy of around 125 of these signed standard letters but council management acknowledged that at least 1,200 were definitely genuine submissions.

Members of Tralee Chamber Alliance also backed the Denny Street Rank proposal. Of 63 members who responded to a TCA survey on the proposed pedestrianisation of The Mall 32 said they were on favour of a taxi rank on Denny Street.

The Tralee Traffic Strategy designed by transport planning consultancy MVA an published in 2010 recommended a rank on Denny Street but this was removed from the Tralee traffic redevelopment plan following objections from some town centre traders.

Members of the Tralee Taxi Association have said they are "disappointed but not surprised" by the councillors' decision and criticised the public consultation process as 'farical'.

The Association has warned that the new rank system will have a disastrous impact on their members' business and could see many of them forced out of work.

"The adoption of these bye-laws will lead to job losses and there will be a reduction in the taxi fleet of at least 20 vehicles in the next 12 months," said the Association.

Such a reduction would represent almost one in five of the roughly 100 taxi drivers currently operating in Tralee.

The Association added that the new ranks would be especially problematic for non-national drivers who "don't have a busy phone trade and are hugely dependent on a workable taxi rank."

There has already been one high profile casualty.

Last Monday - just three days after the vote on the new ranks - Chairman of the Tralee Taxi Association Terry Boyle announced he was quitting the business after 26 years as a taxi driver.

"After over 26 years driving Taxis in the Tralee area I will be bowing out of the business in the coming weeks. High running costs and in particular high insurance coupled with a difficult Taxi Rank situation in Tralee at present are among the reasons for this decision," said Mr Boyle.

Mr Boyle is to take up a new job with Acorn Life next week and Windmill Cabs will continue to operate as normal.

"I would like to thank the many customers and drivers that have supported me more over the years. It is hugely appreciated," he said.

"While there were several difficult challenges along the way in those years the encouragement and support of you all made that journey a lot easier and enjoyable. I made life-long friendships with many people in those years and this is what makes this decision so difficult," he said.

"I again thank for your support over the last 26 years and hope that you will support me on my new journey. Windmill Cabs will continue to operate with Maurice James Albert and Mike continuing at the helm," Mr Boyle said.





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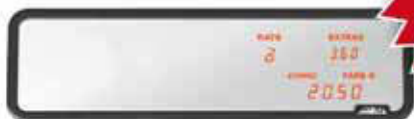


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# SHAMEFUL ATTACK

*Taxi driver was punched in the lip by a Moldovan man who did not have money for his fare and then tried to sell the driver a €400 phone for €25*

**T**here aren't too many weeks that go by that news of a vicious attack on a taxi driver in this country is not hitting the headlines once again.

It is shameful that nothing more has been done by the NTA or the Department of Transport to prevent this. For years, from Sherriff Street to Tallaght, Cork City to Kilkenny, this kind of thuggery has had drivers reduced to nervous wrecks behind their wheels.

Last week a taxi driver was punched in the lip by a Moldovan man who did not have money for his fare and tried to sell the driver a €400 phone for €25.

Alexandr Tabachnic, aged 46, of an apartment at Copper Gate, Anglesea Terrace, Cork, pleaded guilty yesterday to assault causing harm.

Inspector Adrian Gamble outlined the background to the case at Cork District Court.

"Shortly before 5am on December 27, 2015, a taxi driver called into Anglesea Street Garda Station.

"The driver said he picked up a fare on Evergreen Road who wanted to go to Greenmount. He didn't know precisely where in that area.

"He [the passenger] showed him a box containing €400 phone

and speakers. He said he would sell it for €50 and later said €25. The taxi driver refused several times.

"He pointed out a house at Gould St. He said he would drop in and get the money to pay for the ride.

"The driver agreed if the box could be left in the car until he returned with the money. He said he would call the gardaí if he did not return. The man became aggressive when there was mention of the gardaí. Suddenly without warning the driver received a blow to the upper lip from this man.

"About 30 minutes later the driver saw the same man on Bishop's St. He drove behind him at a distance and called that gardaí. He identified him to Sgt Seán O'Donoghue at Grand Parade a few minutes later."

The defendant also pleaded guilty to counts of shoplifting where he stole bottles of perfume from a number of pharmacies.

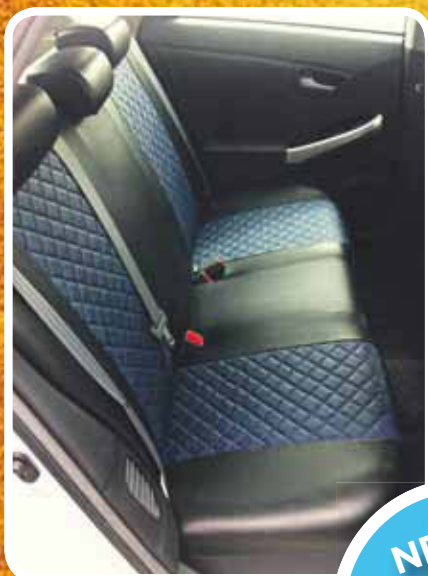
Eddie Burke, solicitor, said the defendant had a heroin problem at the time but was now clean, working part-time, and trying to get back into education.

Judge Aingil Ní Chondúin told the accused to bring €300 to court as compensation. "If he does that he gets a suspended sentence of eight months. Otherwise it is the real McCoy," the judge said.



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# THE CHRISTMAS CHEER IS HERE WITH THANKS TO THE GOOD FOLKS AT MYTAXI



## *App company rewarding their drivers this festive season*

**T**he busy Christmas season is now upon us and the demand for mytaxi is set to reach record highs.

The company are keen to give back to their hardworking and dedicated drivers. And mytaxi drivers earn more in December than any other month during the year and they're offering an added bonus to make this Christmas even merrier.

We spoke to the team to hear all about it and here it is...

### **THE MYTAXI 12 NIGHTS OF CHRISTMAS!**

There are 12 bonus days in December and we're offering our drivers the opportunity to earn a minimum €75 bonus per bonus day leading up to the new year.

#### **How does it work?**

If you can complete 20 jobs during any of the bonus periods we will give you a €75 bonus. That's not all though, we'll also give you an additional €25 for every 5 jobs you complete after that.

We expect our top performing drivers to earn at least €1200 in bonuses this December.

#### **When will my bonus be paid?**

Your bonus will be paid on the following dates:

##### **7th of December**

(for 1st & 2nd of December)

##### **14th of December**

(for 8th & 9th of December)

##### **21st of December**

(for 15th & 16th of December)

##### **4th of January**

(for 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 26th, 30th & 31st of December)





**M**eanwhile, mytaxi is offering a total of €1 million in incentives to the first 500 drivers who pass the test needed to enter the taxi sector and drive for mytaxi, the e-hailing app has announced.

The €2,000 per-driver offer is available to the first 500 who pass the Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSV) entry test using the new mytaxi online manual and become active mytaxi drivers.

Tim Arnold, General Manager of mytaxi Ireland, said: "This announcement is intended to boost our taxi fleet by as much as 5% by early next year and is another big push by us to increase taxi supply in Ireland to meet the surging demand. In 2016 three drivers retired from the industry for every new driver who passed the SPSV test – we badly need to reverse this trend and recruit more drivers to service huge customer demand, especially at peak times. We are continuing to call on potential taxi drivers to consider the real career possibilities that are on offer by entering the sector and we're keen to provide them with our financial and technical support to do so."

The €2,000 offer is broken into two parts. The €1000 reward covers €90 for the SPSV test fee, €250 for the SPSV licenses, with the balance to be used at the taxi driver's discretion to cover other setup costs associated such as car rental or purchase, smartphone purchase, and insurance. The €1000 payment will be made to drivers in four instalments of €250 per week for the first four weeks, once they become an active mytaxi driver.

The second part of €1000 is an additional sign-up

bonus that a driver can earn on completion of 60 jobs per week after the first 4 weeks with mytaxi. Drivers must pass the SPSV industry entry test before January 31, 2018.

As part of this initiative, drivers will also receive free training for the SPSV test using the new mytaxi online manual, with the platform already helping drivers to pass the test. Tommy Connolly, the first applicant to pass using the facility, said: "I used the mytaxi manual, passed the test and I would say to other drivers wanting to enter the sector, if you're serious about passing the test, the mytaxi manual is absolutely perfect. It's easy to use and understand, and helps you study with purpose – it is a huge help."

The innovative learning platform incorporates the use of spaced repetition which automatically helps focus users on questions where they are weak. mytaxi has developed the material with the help of data from 20 million Dublin taxi journeys to identify the most important locations for taxi drivers to know. This modern approach utilises embedded Google Street View and Google Maps content to provide visual context for users while preparing for the difficult entrance exam. mytaxi partnered with intelligent learning platform Synap to develop the manual.

The online resource is available to anyone free of charge, on condition they sign up to drive with mytaxi once they pass the SPSV test which mytaxi also pays for. The content available helps users prepare for both the Dublin Area Knowledge and Industry Knowledge parts.

All aspiring taxi drivers can visit: **[manual.mytaxi.com](http://manual.mytaxi.com)** for more information.

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# DERRY COUGHLAN SPEAKS ON THE MODERN INDUSTRY



## *We hear from the Chairman of the Cork Taximen's Association*

**D**erry Coughlan is the Chairman of the Cork Taximen's Association. Founded in 1938 it is the oldest representative body in the country. Having driven taxis for 39 years, Derry has been a taxi owner all of that time too, and he is of the belief that these days something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

He told us: "Recently a submission was made (by us) to the NTA about the poor development of the taxi transport system since deregulation and the removal of the Garda Carriage Office functions, with self regulation instead taking over, which is dangerous and non-protective, and is being hijacked these days by the 'digital sharecroppers'. This is not what the service needs. Taxi rank legislation must be updated and upgraded overall, along with proper safety screens, signage, road markings, public guideline notices and heavy fines for parking or leaving vehicles unattended.

"We also feel that presentation of the transport services is very important to the image of our country. People hiring a cab are not impressed if it is not clean, same for the dress code of the driver. Drivers must be informative and give reasonable value for money too. These are important factors in our business.

"I also feel, to support drivers, the government should omit taxes on new vehicles to assist the operator provide a quality care in the industry - you should be able to claim back your vehicle taxes in cash refunds

etc. This country needs to wake up and financially support our industry."

The Cork Taximen's Association are also concerned about the rise in rickshaws not just in the city of Cork, but nationwide.

Derry added: "Rickshaws are not public transport and therefore must not be permitted to operate in cities, especially in public places. They violate many rules, bye laws and regulations and safety and public liability problems arise. This manually operated equipment is not to public transport specification and it has limits of safety and welfare precautions.

"People under the influence of alcohol/drugs etc are never permitted to operate taxis so why rickshaws? The current illegal system competing with taxis in public places must be banned forever.

"If investors want to form such a business under the Freedom Act they must have an office and private off-street store yards where people can go to just like any other business during day time hours, but such a business is not fit for night work, in the dark, the wet and the frosty nights. They are a big obstruction to other road users and pedestrians.

"The new breed of civil servant and law society would want to realise that cities are not amusement parks, therefore the Pavement Act would want to be restored under present circumstances and street conduct/behaviour."

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# INSURANCE PREMIUMS FINALLY INCHING DOWNWARDS

A close-up photograph of a person's hand, with fingers slightly curled, holding a small, dark green toy car. The car is a four-door sedan with silver wheels. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a light-colored surface and some indistinct shapes.

**But Dáil TDs raise concerns about drivers who are still being forced out of the industry as Tony Roe also calls for further reductions**

**T**hough the issue has been raised and debated, and discussed at length, concerns have been raised again in the Dáil that taxi drivers are being forced out of their jobs as a result of continually rising insurance premiums.

During a debate urging the government to implement an action plan set out in the Report on the Cost of Motor Insurance, several TDs spoke about the need to curb insurance for the sake of taxi drivers' jobs.

Fianna Fail TD Michael McGrath said rising premiums were discriminating against several types of drivers, including younger and older drivers.

Among the challenges he said drivers of all kinds faced as a result of rising premiums were taxi drivers who were "being driven out of business" because of high quotes.

He said: "We know from the declined cases agreement with Insurance Ireland that the number of people who simply cannot get a quote has multiplied elevenfold in the past four years."

Mr McGrath's party colleague John Lahart added that he knew of two drivers whose premiums had increased €1,800 in two years, a figure he called "colossal".

People Before Profit TD Richard Boyd-Barrett also said the Government had an obligation to make insurance affordable for those who needed it for a living, given that having it is a legal requirement.

He said: "Taxi drivers are literally being put out of business by these guys. If one has the slightest prang - of course, one is going to have small prangs if one is driving all the time for a living - one is gone."

"Premiums are already massively high and people who have never had accidents are getting premiums of €17,000 and €20,000, which are ridiculous figures. That is not sustainable for taxi drivers."

"Of course, over the course of driving for a living, one is going to have some little accident, which is not even one's fault. It could be a small thing, but that is it - one is out of a job."

Dublin Central TD Maureen O'Sullivan echoed Mr Boyd-Barrett's





comments, saying that in some cases she had seen taxi insurance increases to over €10,000.

She said: "Taxi drivers use their cars to make a living. I have numerous constituents who are taxi drivers and they tell me they cannot afford to work. Their taxis are off the road because of the huge increase in insurance.

"These are taxi drivers who have completed all the tests. They are adhering to very stringent standards, including the NCT and public service yearly checks. They are dealing with increasing anti-social behaviour on the part of some customers.

"They are providing a service and are being crippled by the rise. I have seen increases of insurance up to over €10,000."

Now, Tony Roe, Chairman of the National Transport Assembly Committee, has some good news for taxi drivers for a change.

He said: "Since we contacted the European Commission to investigate accusations of a cartel operating in the Irish insurance industry that resulted in insurance companies being raided by the Gardaí. Now we are starting to see some policies being reduced at an alarming rate, which is welcome news, but further reductions are needed.

"Now that insurance companies are making large profits exploitation of transport workers must stop and we want government ministers to stop sitting on the fence on this issue and means the Minister for Transport, Shane Ross, in particular.

We want to see him acting here  
and being more  
proactive

on  
the matter.

"Taxis are the only form of public transport that are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week, 365 days of the year and are under the NTA's umbrella and yet we feel like we're being subdued. We are the biggest contributor to revenue of all the transport systems and drivers just feel like they're maligned by the government – only seen as a form of raising revenue.

"Taxis all over Europe have standard, fair insurance premiums and those are implemented and monitored by their governments. This happens all over Europe, in all the other big European capitals and cities. So we'd like the Minister now to stop this fantasy, fairytale carry on and we want insurance legislation to be implemented here and for it to be fairer for taxi workers.

"All the minister seems to do now is urge people to do his job and we want input from Shane Ross. We feel that's needed. Not evasive cop-outs that are random and unnecessary by the government.

"The function of the state is to look after its citizens, and taxi drivers are citizens, and taxis are the only section of public transport to have had a reduction in its minimum fare for example. So this, along with insurance... we're calling on all taxi drivers now to get in touch with their local TD and raise these issues. It's time to call these people to account."

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# TTNH SPEAK OUT ON THE LUAS SHAMBLES

**“This proposal is anti-competitive to taxis, would add huge costs to customers”**

**T**he Dublin City Centre Luas works have caused chaos, widespread and total chaos for years now in the capital.

What was supposed to be a “clean and swift operation” has turned calm into calamity every which way but loose across the Fair City.

Local businessmen have complained, other public transport modes have voiced their displeasure, and of course the Luas works have wreaked havoc with the taxi industry. Ranks have been displaced – most never to return – and it seems to anyone with a keen eye and sharp wit that the government are steering the public ever closer to a Luas City where taxis and maybe even buses no longer get their fair crack of the whip on the streets of Dublin.

All of this added to the College Green shambles, and many have the right to be feeling disgruntled.

Yes. Drivers are furious about this eventuality, and also the massive disruption caused during the endless building process. We spoke to Dave McGuinness of the TTnH to hear his take on things as they currently stand.

He said: “As taxi drivers are aware the Luas Cross City project has been ongoing for a number of years. This project has seen many prime taxi stands becoming Luas Stops, and the works have caused considerable disruption to taxis and customers in the City Centre.

“At the start of this project and through three years of negotiating we had offered many alternatives to Dublin City Council, however none of our proposals have been adopted to date. It is expected the larger trams will come on stream in February 2018 and Dublin City Council have relayed it is their intention to ban taxis travelling through College Green, whilst allowing private coaches and buses carriage through the corridor.



**Dave McGuinness**

“This is totally unacceptable to drivers and will cause huge problems. Currently we are corresponding with all stakeholders in the industry. We would hope for a show of unity from all sectors of the industry on this important issue. We would request all drivers contact their local political representatives and make their views known.

“This proposal is anti-competitive to taxis, would add huge costs to customers due to the circuitous route been taken and we reject the precedent this proposal sets in banning taxis from certain parts of the city. We are currently in talks and would hope for a favourable resolution. We will keep drivers informed on this issue.”



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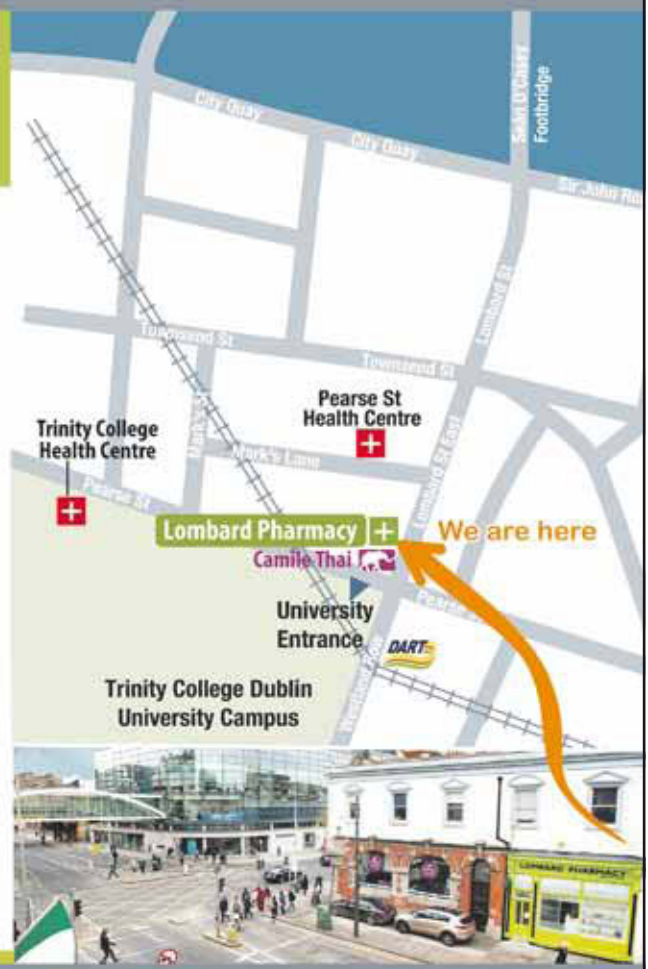
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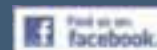
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Tacsaí Magazine spoke to the good folks at Wheelchair Cars Ireland at the beginning of December to all about what they have to offer.

“We guarantee competitive prices and make wheelchair accessible motoring affordable to all families on different budgets.

“Our aim is to provide you with the car, conversion or adaption that meets your mobility needs; giving you the freedom and independence to enjoy driving.”

Wheelchair Cars Ireland is brought to you by Gerard Murtagh, Laura Murtagh and their newest member Dillon Murtagh. Laura and Gerard Murtagh both have over a decade of experience, knowledge and expertise in the area of meeting the needs of drivers and passengers with a disability. This began with Donal Murtagh car sales and has continued to this day with Wheelchair Cars Ireland. They play an active role in the disability community, the latest being sponsorship of Spina Bifidas 24 in 24 campaign. Proudly sponsored by GM, LM and DM. Mobility Experts.

They added: “We have a wide range of stock which includes both new and used wheelchair accessible vehicles for disabled passengers, both new and used modified cars, or drive from any one of our wheelchair accessible vehicles for drivers with a disability.”

Wheelchair Cars Ireland have Wheelchair accessible vehicles that meet G9 taxi regulations along with wheelchair accessible buses and vehicles for groups and organisations and wheelchair accessible motorbike.



“Our wheelchair adapted vehicles are professionally converted to the highest standard.

Wheelchair Accessible cars include a lowered floor for easy access, remote electric winch, 4-point belts/clamps and twin side doors.”

This has been Gerard Murtagh and Laura Murtaghs’ passion since the start their journey with Donal Murtagh Car Sales over 10 years ago.

Wheelchair Cars Ireland are the largest stockists of wheelchair accessible cars in the country. This means that we offer a wide range of cars and vehicles that are G9 Taxi specification, all vehicles provided with technical assessors report. Our team has a working knowledge of the Taxi Grant and can offer advice on paperwork. Call Martin, Paul or Gerry on 0838243125 for more information on all our vehicles adaptations and conversions.

Vehicles in stock include Peugeot Expert, Peugeot Partner, Ford Custom, Ford Connect, Volkswagen Caddy, Citroen Berlingo.



# WIN A FREE TRAINING COURSE AT SPSV TRAINING!

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ANSWER OUR QUESTION BELOW TO WIN...**

**T**acsaí recently spoke to Ron Duffy to hear about SPSV training, who are celebrating a birthday this year. There have been a myriad of changes in the industry in the last few years and SPSV Training are the only people to help you find your way along.

Ron said: "We are Dublin's only quality approved Taxi Training Group and have trained for twenty years for the Carriage Office Test since opening in 1992. Now that it has passed on to new a type of test, we have had to move on with the times and have brought our training programme completely up to date over the last five years.

"What this means is any person who may be thinking of becoming a Taxi Driver or Chauffeur Driver; you will need to do this test and pass it first before you can drive any small public or private vehicle.

"The present failure rate for this test is 95% over all for first time applicants. We are lucky to have such a good quality training programme and we have kept up to date each month to help people pass this test. Our pass rate is 90% for first timers and to back it up we offer a free day mid-week to anyone who has done our course and failed. The extra day must be taken within one month of test they failed. T&Cs apply.

"Our training takes place every two weeks on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We open at 9am and start 9.30am to 3.30pm each day in The Grand Canal Hotel, in Grand Canal St Upper Dublin 4. (Day Regulations and day two

Area Knowledge) study pack and maps are included in these courses, parking is available on each day at a very special rate.

"We also run a one-day special intensive course once a month on Saturday mid month this one day special runs from 9am to 6.30/7pm this day course includes lunch and parking for the day and a study pack and maps, please call the telephone numbers below for free help and information if you intend to enter the SPSV Business, jobs are available.

"And for people who are long term unemployed please contact their Local Employment Services in your area who may be able to help fund you with their approval this is up to their decision not ours, please ask them to contact Ron at 086 608 7478. Our success has been achieved by a combination of factors, in providing you with the necessary skills and knowledge. For the latest dates available to book contact 085 767 9651 or 01 662 3333 ask for Ron or Paul.

Now, if you would like a free SPSV Training course, worth to the value of €300, just answer this question:

***How many years has the SPSV Training Centre been open?***

Send your answers, with your name and number to our Editor, Stephen Young, at:  
[stephenyoung399@hotmail.com](mailto:stephenyoung399@hotmail.com)  
Good luck!



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# CHRISTMAS DRIVER SHORTAGE CRISIS

## COUNCILLOR WARNS OF FESTIVE CHAOS THIS YEAR

**A** Dublin City Councillor is warning that the city risks returning to a taxi shortage because of rocketing insurance premiums.

Fianna Fáil's Paul McAuliffe says that taxi drivers are being forced to leave the industry.

He says he has already been inundated by complaints from many Dublin residents who have been left waiting for taxis.

"Well we've seen increasingly over the past three years the cost of car insurance increase, but those in the taxi industry have been particularly impacted," he said.

"The real issue now is that we're being increasingly getting taxi drivers who are coming to us saying that they can't enter the market because insurance companies will not insure them.

"This week alone, I've had two people contacting me saying that they just cannot get a quote."

Demand for taxi services is now at an all-time high in Dublin.

New drivers are struggling to achieve the 80% needed to pass the new NTA Small Public Service Vehicles (SPSV) entry test.

Only 20% of those who sit the test are passing.

There are concerns there will be a shortage of taxi drivers coming into the busy Christmas period in the capital.

Three drivers retired for every new entrant to the industry in 2016.

Tim Arnold, General Manager of mytaxi Ireland has launched an online platform to help potential drivers learn "the knowledge".

He said: "There are fewer taxi drivers operating now than at any time in the last 10 years and one of the barriers to new drivers entering the industry is this test.

"It's not the only thing, you also need to have a vehicle that has high insurance costs and all new taxis must be wheelchair accessible.

"There are a number of barriers that have to be overcome,

but we're confident that with more drivers passing entrance exams, they'll be able to help interested parties get into taxis and get driving."

Mr Arnold says their online learning platform can help potential drivers pass the test.

He said: "Our platform will help you prepare the area knowledge part of the test, where you are asked do you know which street in particular, museums or hotels are.

"We've developed the course material with the help of data from 20 million taxi journeys to identify the most important locations for taxi drivers to know."

Meanwhile, Joe Herron, president of the Irish Taxi Drivers' Federation, said that a huge number of drivers are leaving the industry as the economy continues to improve.

"At its peak you were talking about roughly the same amount of taxis operating in Dublin as there are in London", he said.

"Other jobs have become available now and loads of people have left the business."

Meanwhile, A man who took part in the robbery of a taxi driver and was caught using a tracker on his victim's mobile phone has been jailed for three and a half years.

Carl Cullen (30), who has a number of relatives that work as taxi drivers, apologised to his victim. He said the robbery had occurred during a "night of absolute madness."

Cullen, of Dingle Road, Cabra, Dublin pleaded guilty at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court to robbery at Tolka Valley Road on February 27, 2017. He has 40 previous convictions.

Garda Barry Hehir told Fiona Murphy BL, prosecuting, that Cullen and a co-accused jumped into the taxi at about 6 am and asked to go to Finglas. The driver was a bit worried as the men were acting strangely and seemed drunk and high on drugs.

At Tolka Valley Road the man in the passenger seat pulled up the handbrake. The driver asked him to stop but the man then began pulling at the steering wheel. Cullen, who was in the back, also began grabbing the steering wheel.





The taxi driver, fearing they would crash, stopped the car. The men were acting aggressively and he got out of the car, fearing for his own safety. He went to take his phone with him but Cullen grabbed it out of his hand.

Cullen chased the victim and tried to punch his head, but missed landing a punch on his shoulder.

The taxi driver stayed about 40 metres away from his car. CCTV footage showed the two robbers “rummaging” through the taxi before running off. A number of items were taken including a phone, MP3 player and bag of coins.

Gardai were alerted and the victim was able to tell them the location of his phone using a “find phone” setting. Gardai brought him to the location given and the victim pointed out Cullen and his co-accused walking along St Helena’s Road in Finglas.

Gda Hehir agreed with Pieter Le Vert BL, defending, that some of the items had been strewn along the side of the road but that most of the stolen belongings had been

recovered. Mr Le Vert said Cullen, a father of three, had been living at a hostel at the time, where he met his co-accused, and this offence occurred at the end of a three day drinking session. He said his client described it as “a night of absolute madness.”

Counsel said his client has a number of relatives who work as taxi drivers and knows how hard it is.

He said Cullen, who began drinking and using cocaine following a bereavement, had shown promise as an athlete. He submitted his client was “of a certain age” and was not without prospects.

Judge Martin Nolan said this was a particularly frightening episode during which the taxi driver had been confronted by two intoxicated and violent men.

He took into account Cullen’s guilty plea, remorse and his athletic promise. He also noted his previous record of offending and his propensity for violence. He imposed a three and a half year sentence.

# DTSCO SANTA CONVOY IS BACK FOR 2017

Great organisation bringing some festive cheer



**F**ollowing up on the overwhelming success of the Day Out in September, the DTSCO gang are back for some festive cheer!

Last year they ran the Santa convoy and it's back again this year.

Tacsai spoke to Paul Matthews.

He said: "We are delighted to announce the return of our Santa convoy."

"On Sunday the 17th of December Santa will touch down in Dublin. He will be picked up by Black Adder (our branded taxi) and a fleet of decorated taxis. The taxis will be festooned with lights, etc, so it will be some sight."

"Santa will be travelling around the city popping in on some of our little VIPs and the day will finish in Tallaght for a mega party."

"Santa will have presents and goodies galore for the special needs children who have been picked at random from our large data base of children who attend our day out in September."

"With the help of the Dublin Taxi Drivers and some of our sponsors and supporters namely



Leisureplex, Dublins Q102, TGI Fridays, RNLI, Sbarro Ireland and Lets Party Dublin we are happy to spread a little festive cheer.

"If you spot the convoy on the move on the 17th give us a beep and a wave."

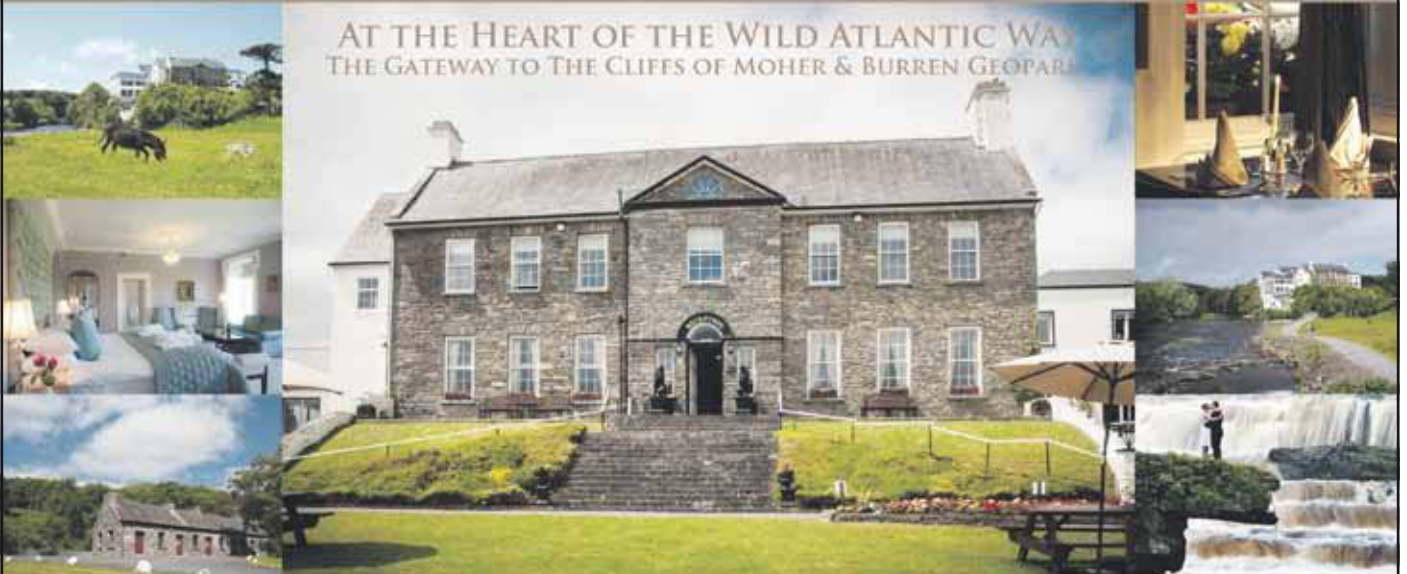
It's yet another great cause for the guys to get involved in, and they never cease to amaze with their time and generosity to those who need it most. Well done all!





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# WORLD NEWS

## TOP STORIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

### SPAIN

Striking taxi drivers caused major disruption across Spain last week as they demanded tighter regulation of digital companies like Uber, which they warn could soon wipe out their industry.

In Madrid, Barcelona and many other cities, drivers observed the 24-hour strike, which began at 6am. The action caused severe problems for many commuters and travellers, with airports and railway stations affected. In Madrid thousands of taxi drivers from across Spain gathered for a march through the centre of the city to congress, which they said should act to supervise digital apps offering transport services.

“Our livelihood is being taken from us. All we can do is fight for our families,” said Alberto “Tito” Álvarez, spokesman for the elite Taxi company, which has been prominent in the campaign against Uber and its competitor Cabify.

“They’re destroying society,” he said. “Uber doesn’t just work with taxis, it works in delivery, and other areas. It wants to Uber-ise the economy ... But this isn’t the United States, this is Europe.”

Last week’s strike was sparked by a supreme court ruling earlier this month that granted operating licences, previously blocked by local authorities, to Uber and similar companies. Although only 80 licences were approved, the taxi industry claims the ruling sets a precedent that will see thousands more granted, thus flooding the market.

Existing Spanish legislation allows only one licence to be issued for so-called VTCs, or private driven vehicles such as those operated by Uber and Cabify, for every 30 taxi permits in circulation. However, the taxi sector has long complained that this ratio is not respected. Undersecretary for transport Julio Gómez-Pomar admitted on Wednesday that the number of VTC licences in use is triple that allowed by the law.

“Markets can be liberalised, society can be liberalised, but it has to be very strictly regulated, supervised and balanced,” said Elpidio José Silva, a lawyer representing several taxi organisations.

### AUSTRALIA

A man has allegedly robbed a taxi driver at knifepoint disguised as an

elderly woman called Fatima.

Sydney man Kemal Yalim, 24, put on a dress, cardigan and scarf that covered his face and booked a taxi under the name Fatima, police allege.

He allegedly waited at a Coogee apartment block at 6.35am on April 16 and asked the cab driver to take him to Westfield Eastgardens shopping centre, The Daily Telegraph reported.

When the taxi got to the shopping centre Fatima allegedly grabbed the driver’s neck and cut his chest with a knife.

Jesse Ruth Moore, 33, was waiting at the shopping centre for Fatima and the driver, according to court documents.

She yelled ‘give me money, give me money.’ The pair allegedly made off with \$30.

Yalim’s lawyer Stephen Alexander told The Daily Telegraph his client will fight the charges against him.

Mr Alexander said: ‘Identity and gender will be an issue in this case.’

Yalim is charged with armed robbery. Moore is charged with robbery in company and breaching bail.

The pair will appear in court on December 12.

### ROME

Authorities in Rome have started classes for hundreds of its taxi drivers to learn good manners and English.

The city said 750 drivers are scheduled to take eight classes of “practical” English, lessons about “cultural manners” as well as instructions on how to make visitors feel welcome in Italy’s capital.

In a country that greatly lives off tourism, Italians’ command of English and other foreign languages is often shaky in the sector.

Earlier this week, tourists had a hard time finding any Rome cabbie, well-mannered or not.

The city’s cab drivers had joined a nationwide, day-long taxi strike to protest against competition from Uber-style drivers as well as private entrepreneurs who have taken to buying sleek, black vans, getting local driver-for-hire licences and driving small groups of tourists around town.





## LIVERPOOL

A woman claims a black hackney driver threw her out on the MOTORWAY after she threw up in his cab.

Vicky Abbott, from Liverpool, said she was left drunkenly walking down the M53, after the driver slammed on his brakes and ordered her to get out - close to the Moreton Spur roundabout.

The 30-year-old claims the driver began screaming and swearing at her, after she threw up in his car and ordered her to pay him £40.

But when she told him she did not have the money and would need to get it from home - she claims he locked her in the taxi and told her he was taking her to a police station, before instead dumping her on the motorway, near junction 1.

Vicky, who works for Wirral Council, said: "I knew I had done wrong and drank too much and I said to him, 'I don't have £40 on me but I will get it from home or clean it up'.

"But he was just screaming and shouting at me saying 'you are going to have to pay for this' and then said he was taking me to a police station.

"I was locked in the back of the cab and he was stopping people and asking them where the nearest police station was.

"Then he said 'I am taking you back to Liverpool.'"

Vicky, who had got in the taxi with a friend, near Debenhams on North John Street, was in the taxi alone at this point and said he became aggressive when she questioned where he was taking her.

She said: "We had dropped my friend in Leasowe and he literally drove past my road saying he was taking me back to Liverpool.

He said 'you are not being f\*\*\*\*\*g sick in my car' and then slammed the brakes on, so I came off my seat.

"Then he said 'get out the f\*\*\*\*\*g car and put his arm through and pushed me out.

"It was only when I got out that I realised I was in the middle of the motorway.

"It was teeming down and there were no lights or hard shoulder and there were cars going 70mph coming towards me."

## ITALY

Taxi drivers across Italy were on strike Tuesday last, as unions protest against competition from Uber and other new rivals.

The strike lasted from 8am to 10pm, with a protest in Rome.

The strike was called on Monday night after talks between union leaders rejected "unacceptable" proposals from the Italian Ministry of Transport.

Taxi drivers argue that the government has unfairly deregulated the market, allowing multinationals and private ride-hailing companies such as Uber to take advantage.

Unions are calling for tighter rules on where drivers are allowed to operate. Taxi drivers can only work in areas they have a license for, while Uber and other car-hire services are not restricted to a single zone.

Italy's deputy minister of transport, Riccardo Nencini, called the strike "unjustified". According to him, drivers' unions rejected the government's proposals to crack down on abuses and regulate new technology, with some drivers demanding an outright ban on ride-hailing apps.

Italy is not considering outlawing private-hire services, Nencini said, but

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## QUESTIONS

1. How many letters does the Greek alphabet contain?
2. Which English King removed the Stone of Scone from Scotland?
3. Which is the largest of the Greater Antilles islands?
4. Between which two planets would you find the Asteroid Belt?
5. Which songs with "Under" in the title were UK top ten hits for the following artists, [a] Eartha Kitt (1955), [b] Last Shadow Puppets (2008), [c] Sandie Shaw (1966), [d] Queen with David Bowie (1981) and [e] Funkadelic (1978)?
6. What is the occupation of a Biblioplist?
7. Who was President of the Confederate States of America from 1862 to 1865?
8. In the Thomas Hardy novel, what was the name of the Mayor of Casterbridge?
9. In which countries would you find the following wine growing regions, [a] Limari Valley, [b] Napa County, [c] Rheinhessen, [d] Chianti and [e] Cloudy Bay?
10. In the TV series, who was the pilot of Thunderbird 1?
11. From what original TV programme were the following "spin-offs", [a] "Softly Softly", [b] "Timmy Time", [c] "The Fenn Street Gang", [d] "The Green Green Grass" and [e] "NCIS"?
12. By what name was Benin known prior to 1975?
13. What is taught under the Delsarte System?
14. Which four US States start with the letter "A"?
15. What was actor Rex Harrison's birth name?

## THE TAXI MAGAZINE CHRISTMAS QUIZ

16. Which Australian State capital lies on the Torrens River?
17. In surfing terms what is a skeg?
18. Who were the authors of the following Booker Prize winning books, [a] "Midnight's Children" (1981), [b] "The Sellout" (2016), [c] "The Inheritance of Loss" (2006), [d] "Heat and Dust" (1975) and [e] "Amsterdam" (1998)?
19. What is the stage name of singer Alecia Beth Moore?
20. Where might a fumerole be found?

10. Scott Tracey.  
11. a) "Z-Cars", [b] "Shaun the Sheep", [c] "Please Sir!", [d] "Only Fools and Horses" and [e] "JAG".  
12. Dahomey.  
13. Drama & Dancing.  
14. Alabama, Alaska, Arizona and Arkansas.  
15. Reginald Carey.  
16. Adelaide.  
17. A fin on the bottom of a board.  
18. a) Salman Rushdie, [b] Paul Beatty, [c] Kiran Desai, [d] Ruth Praver Jhabvala and [e] Ian McEwan.  
19. Pink!  
20. On the side of a volcano.
1. Twenty-Four.  
2. Edward I.  
3. Cuba.  
4. Mars & Jupiter.  
5. a) "Under the Bridges of Paris" reached no 9, [b] "The Age of the Under Statement", no 9, [c] "Message Understood", no 6, [d] "Under Pressure", no 1 and [e] "One Nation Under a Groove" no 9.  
6. Book binder.  
7. Jefferson Davis.  
8. Michael Henchard.  
9. a) Chile, [b] USA, [c] Germany, [d] Italy and [e] New Zealand.


ANSWERS



# Knock Knock

During an impassioned sermon about death and final judgement, the pastor said forcefully, "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement." Glancing down at the front pew, he noticed a man with a big smile on his face. The minister repeated his point louder. "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!" The man nodded and smiled even more. This really got the preacher wound up. He pounded the pulpit emphatically when he came to the ultimatum: "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!!!" Though everyone else in the congregation was looking sombre, the man in front continued to smile. Finally the preacher stepped off the platform, stood in front of the man and shouted, "I said each member of this church is going to die!" The man grinned from ear to ear. After the service was over, the preacher made a beeline for the man. "I don't get it," the preacher said in frustration. "Whenever I said, 'Each member of this church is going to die,' your smile got bigger. Why?" "I'm not a member of this church," the man replied.

Fred: "Why do elephants wear red nail polish?"  
Bob: "I don't know, why?"  
Fred: "To hide in cherry trees."  
Bob: "But I've never seen an elephant in a cherry tree."  
Fred: "See. it works."



A completely inebriated man was stumbling down the street with one foot on the curb and one foot in the gutter. A Garda pulled up and said, "I've got to take you in bud. You're obviously drunk." The wasted man asked, "Officer, are ya absolutely sure I'm drunk?" "Yeah buddy, I'm sure," said the Garda,

A man walks into a bar and sits down. He asks the bartender, "Can I have a cigarette?" The bartender replies, "Sure, the cigarette machine is over there." So he walks over to the machine and as he is about to order a cigarette, the machine suddenly says,

A disciple went to his master and said, "I have served you faithfully for ten years. Now I have a wish: give me something to eat which will never end." His master said, "Here, have some chewing gum."

A guy spots a sign outside a house that reads "Talking Dog for Sale." Intrigued, he walks in. "So what have you done with your life?" he asks the dog. "I've led a very full life," says the dog. "I lived in the Alps rescuing avalanche victims. Then I served in Iraq. And now I spend my days reading to the residents of a retirement home." The guy is flabbergasted. He asks the dog's owner, "Why on earth would you want to get rid of an incredible dog like that?" The owner says, "Because he's a liar! He never did any of that!"

# Polytrol Revives Faded Plastics, Dull Chrome Etc

Classic car enthusiasts, vintage tractor & machinery restorers, taxi owners / drivers in fact any motorist who wants to revive faded plastic, fibreglass, paintwork, chrome, aluminium etc now have a new option called Polytrol from Owatrol, the well-known specialist products manufacturer.

**B**rendan C Igoe Managing Director of the company said "Polytrol is an easy to use, brush on finish which is ideal where you want to revive a wide array of surfaces from plastic grills, wing mirrors, chrome and even faded old paint work. If the plastic was brown originally it will bring back the brown colour, same with other colours"

Here you will see photos of a red mini bonnet where the paint had faded, Polytrol was applied to one side only but even after ten minutes it looks better than before. On the same car the wing mirrors had become very dull and faded. Polytrol was applied left for five minutes, got a quick wipe of a clean cloth and job done. Not bad for five minutes with very little work.

**Sizes available and recommended retail prices:**

250ml Aerosol €11.07, 500 ml €19.33 and 1 litre €31.09 all INC VAT @ 23%

For further information on Polytrol and all other Owatrol products please contact:

**IGOE INTERNATIONAL LTD**

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