

LANE CHANGES ON THE A40 WESTERN AVENUE

The next stage of a major scheme to allow for the replacement of two bridges on the A40, which cross over the railway lines at Wales Farm Road and Perryn Road in Acton, began on 1 September 2007. Due to these vital works, there will be a number of changes to the lane layout on the A40 Western Avenue.

The bridges, which were originally built during the late 1920s, were not designed to manage today's traffic levels of more than 100,000 vehicles a day. The two new bridges will help secure the structural safety for the next 120 years and provide a modern carriageway and safer highway layout for drivers, as well as ensure the safety of the railway tracks below the bridges that handle all rail networks in and out of Paddington. These include the Heathrow Express and First Great Western trains, with more than 800 trains, transporting 145,000 passengers a day.

Minimising disruption to local residents has been a key priority in the development of the scheme. The new bridges have been designed so that traffic on the A40 and rail services can continue running across and beneath the bridges while work is carried



out. The first traffic switch will see the two eastbound lanes diverted from the Wales Farm Road Bridge onto the new bridge in early September 2007, with the two westbound lanes being transferred in later that month.

At the Perryn Road Bridge, the inside eastbound lane will be moved onto the new bridge section in mid September 2007, with the outside eastbound lane and the two westbound lanes being transferred from early October 2007. The transfer from the old bridges to the new bridge sections should be complete by mid to late October 2007, and will signal the end of a key phase of the project. It is scheduled that the whole bridge replacement project will

be completed by Summer 2009.

While the work is being carried out, it is anticipated that there will be little or no effect on traffic flow along the A40, although the speed limit will be reduced from 40 mph to 30 mph when the lane switches take place. Most of the work will be carried out during the daytime, however, for safety reasons, some work over the railway can only be carried out overnight when trains are not operating.

BUS LANE PENALTIES DROPPING

It seems that motorists are heeding warnings that driving in London's bus lanes will result in a penalty. An analysis of the number of penalty charge notices (PCNs) issued by London's 33 boroughs and Transport for London (TfL) between 1 April 2006 and 31 March 2007 show that a total of 288,394 fewer penalties were issued to motorists using London's bus lanes wrongly compared to the same period the previous year. This is on top of 137,638 fewer tickets issued in 2005/06 from 2004/05 – resulting in a reduction of more than 426,000 (51 per cent) over two years.

A total 6,016,683 penalty charge notices were issued in London in 2006/07. These cover illegally parked cars, driving in bus lanes, contraventions under the London Lorry Control Scheme and moving traffic offences, such as ignoring a no entry sign. This is more than 2 per cent less than the previous year.

Parking violations, such as ignoring the rules on parking in resident bays or on double yellow lines, still account for the lion's share of the total PCNs – with 5,185,772 issued. This is an increase of 2.7 per cent on the previous year. But this has to be seen against the fact that 20.4 billion miles are driven by vehicles on London's roads each year. Seven more boroughs adopted the enforcement of moving traffic offences during 2006/07 and this resulted in 418,512 tickets being issued for contraventions such as driving the wrong way up a one way street or entering a box junction when the road ahead is blocked. This is a 7.5 per cent increase from the previous year.

Around 1 per cent of the tickets issued resulted in an appeal being made to the independent adjudicators at the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service (PATAS). In total 57,040 appeals were made to PATAS last year, an increase of 8.2 per cent from the year before. This follows London Councils' continued efforts to raise awareness of the appeals process and the High Court judgement over the date of issue of a PCN which was delivered last August. 67 per cent of the cases heard by the adjudicators were won by motorists.

ACCESS TO O2 – LIMEHOUSE LINK

In response to concerns about access to and from the O2 at North Greenwich, the programme of engineering works in the Limehouse Link has been revised. On nights when there are events at the O2, works on the Link will be starting at midnight which is later than previously planned.

Closures normally take place on Tuesday to Saturday nights, and finish at 5 am. The main events at the O2 finish at 11 pm (10.30 on Sundays). Smaller numbers will be present at after-show parties and some film showings finish later.

Q8OILS FOR THE TX4

If there is a tougher job than being the engine oil in a London taxi, Q8Oils have not heard about it yet! So Q8Oils is delighted to announce that London's new TX4 taxis are running with Q8Oils lubricant in the sump. The stresses of constant stop-start traffic in London's congested streets sets a real challenge for any lubricant. But add in the need to cool and lubricate a Euro IV taxi engine, and suddenly most oils are not up to the job. Phil Davies, Q8Oils UK Technical Manager, explains: "Euro IV is designed to be tough on particulates - the black smoke that comes from diesel exhausts. That means Euro IV engines run their exhaust gases through a special filter. But without the right oil, the filter blocks, increases fuel consumption and ultimately fails."

The problems is SAPS - sulphated ash, phosphorus and sulphur - some of the by-products of combustion. Without a low-SAPS oil like Formula Special, ash, phosphorus and sulphur debris will build up over time and block the particulate filter. With diesel particulate filters costing in excess of £500, it makes sense to use an oil that will keep them clear.

The engine of each new TX4 from LTI will be filled at point of manufacture with Q8Oils, and a special engine plaque makes it clear that top ups and changes should be Q8Oils too.

CAB GUIDE COURSE

The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers' latest Guide Course has had over 50 people wishing to take part. The course, which is being run by Graham Woodhouse, usually has about twelve people taking part each time. But the course, which includes trips to London museums and places of interest, is getting more and more popular. Graham, who is a working taxi driver, is now considering holding the exam over two different dates to accommodate everyone wishing to take the course.

The course is run in conjunction with the University of London. Drivers who have passed the course say that not only is the course interesting, but they have benefited from being London Guides as they have been gaining some excellent jobs from tourists. One driver, who was taking his fare to a restaurant, told the fare all about the history of the restaurant. Unbeknown to the driver, the fare was actually the owner of the restaurant and he was so impressed with the driver that he offered the driver and his wife a complimentary night out in the restaurant.

If you would like to know more about the next course, you can contact Graham Woodhouse on 07968-791117 or e-mail him at info@cabguide.com for further details.

