

EVER INCREASING AMOUNT OF LOST PROPERTY

According to the latest statistics, TfL's Lost Property Office is handling more items than ever. The number of items handed in over the last financial year is almost 170,000 items which is more than 10,000 more than the previous year. As well as items left behind in taxis, The Lost Property Office, which is 75 years old this year, handles items lost on buses, the Underground, London's Overground, DLR, or in Victoria Coach Station.

During the past year, the most commonly forgotten objects were books, with 32,268 handed in. This was followed by bags (27,946) and items of clothing (25,802). Of course a large number of mobile phones, wallets, purses, laptops umbrellas, keys and gloves also found their way to the Lost Property Office. The more unusual items handed in over the years have included a stuffed puffer fish, human skulls, breast implants and a lawnmower. According to Julie Haley, manager of the Lost Property Office, a coffin was the most unusual item ever handed in. A set of teeth were another unlikely item. Julie says: "A gentleman came in to the office to see whether his false teeth had been found. He gave a description and date and mode of transport that they were lost on. A pair were found matching the description and shown to him. He confirmed that they were his and put them in. About four hours later he came back and, when asked if everything was OK, he said that they had been rubbing his gums and were not his and proceeded to hand them back!"

As the Lost Property Office is located in Baker Street, one of its famous fictional neighbours was Sherlock Holmes. Today the Lost Property Office uses a computer programme called 'Sherlock' to log details of any items handed in and check for a

match with enquiries received from customers who may have lost an item on the transport network.

TfL say that staff at the Lost Property Office will use their own detective skills to try to reunite property with its rightful owner. If any means of identification is found in the property, they will contact the owner directly. Some have gone a step further, managing to track down the next of kin for two urns of ashes that had been in the Lost Property Office for years even though there were just a few words written on the urns.

Julie told Taxi Globe: "The amount of lost property handed in is increasing year on year. The fact that we get around 700 items handed in every day is a real testament to the honesty of Londoners on the whole. We do our best to reunite people with their property, and would encourage anyone who loses an item of property on our services to get in touch if they think they might have left something on the transport network."

The success rate of items returned to their rightful owners amount to 1 in 3 bags, 1 in 3 mobiles and 1 in 3 valuables. The biggest barrier to returning property to its rightful owner is the large number of people who simply do not contact the Lost Property Office to enquire about their lost items.

Positively identified lost property is returned to the owner (in person or by post) once a restoration fee, postage and (for property lost in taxis) a driver's award has been paid. Property not claimed after three months is either donated to charity or sold at auction, with all revenue generated contributing towards the cost of running the LPO service.

LASTING DAMAGE OF DRINK DRIVING

A new THINK! campaign has been launched by Road Safety Minister Jim Fitzpatrick. The £1.6m summer campaign which includes radio adverts emphasises that a drink drive conviction stays on your licence for 11 years - affecting your work prospects and serving as a constant reminder of the 12-month driving ban you received for driving while over the limit. Jim Fitzpatrick said: "Drink drivers put themselves and others in serious danger but getting behind the wheel

after drinking can have a devastating impact on your life even if you avoid a crash. You'll get a minimum 12-month driving ban and a large fine - and the record will stay on your licence for 11 years.

"As the weather gets warmer we all want to be out enjoying ourselves and might end up drinking when we hadn't planned to, but that doesn't mean we have to drive home. If you've had a drink use public transport or take a taxi - otherwise that quick pint might end up lasting 11 long years."

One man who knows the impact of a conviction for drink driving is Roger, 56, a former bus driver from Chelmsford. He was found to be over the limit the morning after enjoying a few drinks, and was banned from driving. He believed he was safe to drive at the time but takes full responsibility for his actions. Roger said: "Being caught drink driving has changed my life forever. I am taking part in this campaign to highlight to other people the dangers of drinking the night before driving. I never want to drive again."

UBIQUITOUS TAXIS PROMOTE NEW BLACK LABEL SERIES HANDSET

LG Electronics, a worldwide technology and design leader in mobile communications, has launched an extensive taxi advertising campaign through Ubiquitous to promote its latest Black Label Series handset, the LG Secret.

Following the success of its predecessors, the LG Chocolate and the LG Shine, the LG Secret is the third model in the LG Black Label Series.

Running until the end of August 2008, the LG Secret campaign will see over 600 black cabs carry the striking LG Secret creative in a number of different formats across major UK cities. LG worked with Ubiquitous for the launch of its LG-U880 in 2006, when Ubiquitous rolled-out its Megaside format - the first completely new format in taxi advertising for a decade - and then again for the LG Shine in 2007.

John Barton, UK sales and marketing director, LG Mobile, says: "The campaign objective when we booked 200 taxis featuring the LGU880 in 2006, was to retain our high-level advertising profile, whilst using a more cost-effective, longer-term media platform. To measure effectiveness, we carried out awareness research, which revealed that during that three month period, LG exceeded its awareness targets for 2006.

"These results confirmed that the Megaside is a highly visible medium which delivered an excellent return on investment, which led us to work with them for the launch of the LG Shine. We're confident that this year's campaign for the LG Secret can deliver the same impressive results for us and we're very happy to be working with Ubiquitous again."

Andrew Barnett, managing director of Ubiquitous, says: "LG's continued commitment to Ubiquitous is a strong endorsement of our Megaside format and of our unique approach to the taxi advertising sector. The sleek style of the LG Secret made it a fantastic product to work with in terms of inspiration for the creative and we are very happy with how the cabs turned out."

