

NEW MESSAGE BOARD FOR EMPTY CABS

Empty Cabs is a free service that is aimed at reducing carbon emissions and increasing the efficient use of taxis. Log on to www.emptycabs.com where both taxi drivers and passengers can find a message board where anyone looking to book a taxi, to the airport for example, can be put in touch with a cab that may be passing nearby on its way to pick up from that airport.

Although the service may be more appropriate for taxi drivers outside of London, there are occasions when London's drivers do longer runs outside of the capital and run empty one way. On many occasions one half of long distance taxi journeys are made with the taxi empty, so by putting the two parties in touch the drivers are able to recoup some of their rising fuel costs and the passenger receives a reduced fare.

OLYMPIC FLAG COMES TO LONDON

Boris Johnson brought the Olympic flag to London from Beijing. It will remain here now until after the closing ceremony of the 2012 Games. To mark London's commitment to stage the most unified Games in 2012 the Olympic flag will be raised jointly with the Paralympic flag outside City Hall, following the Beijing Paralympic Games this month. The Mayor said: "It is fantastic to be able to bring this historic flag back to London after 60 years. But the great story of our journey towards London 2012 really begins when I return from Beijing next month with the Paralympic flag and both are raised outside City Hall, to remind the world that in less than four years we will stage an Olympic and Paralympic Games they'll never forget."

LONDON'S CANALS GET TAXI SERVICE

British Waterways has licensed a fleet of canoes to take passengers on London's Regent's Canal and Grand Union Canal. As the top speed of these canoes is no faster than walking pace it is unlikely that the craft will take business away from London taxis. The Thames River Adventures canoe service is aimed at tourists rather than commuters and can take passengers anywhere from Lisson Grove to Camden Lock, Victoria Park to Hackney Wick, or Little Venice to Hayes in Middlesex.



Canal "Cabbie" Danny Gillard

Passengers can book the water taxis online and will get either a two-seater canoe or kayak. A spokesperson for the Environmental Transport Association (ETA) said: "It has been an age since London's canal system and the Thames were vital to the capital's transport system, but

with congestion, the price of fuel and concerns about the environment all on the increase it would be wonderful to see them returned to their glory days. Unfortunately water freight is not promoted or invested in as it should be."

There are 100 miles of canals and rivers in and around the capital, including Grand Union and Regent's canals, the rivers Lee and Stort, and the docks on the Isle of Dogs. Elsewhere in the country, some freight has already been moved from road to river. Eddie Stobart, the road-haulage firm, has invested in a port on the Manchester Ship Canal and plans to expand its waterways routes. Tesco and Sainsbury's have already switched thousands of tons of freight on to ships and barges.



ROAD CLOSURES FOR LONDON FREEWHEEL EVENT

21st September will see the second London Freewheel event. Londoners will have the opportunity to enjoy a traffic-free ride round some of London's most famous roads and landmarks. Mayor Boris Johnson, a keen cyclist himself, said: "Cycling is a fantastic way to get around the city and, to show people just how enjoyable it can be, on 21st September cyclists of all ages and abilities can enjoy some of London's most famous sights by bike on a special car-free route." The road closures are marked on this map but for more information go to www.londonfreewheel.com

