

LATEST 'SAFER TRAVEL AT NIGHT' CAMPAIGN

The Mayor of London, Transport for London (TfL) and the Metropolitan Police Service has launched the latest phase of the Safer Travel at Night campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of using illegal cabs. The award-winning campaign has been very successful to date, with cab-related sexual offences down 44 per cent since 2002. The proportion of women using illegal cabs to get home late at night has also fallen from 19 per cent in 2003 to three per cent in 2008.

However, 104 cab-related sexual attacks were committed in 2007 and recent research shows that around half (48 per cent) of late night travellers incorrectly believe that minicabs can pick up passengers that approach them in the street.

The Safer Travel at Night campaign launches at a time that sees an influx of university students to the Capital, many of whom are unfamiliar with London's late night travel options. It includes outdoor poster and radio advertising and will continue with TV ads in the run up to Christmas, complementing police work which targets 'touting hotspots'. Mayor Boris Johnson said: 'If there's one message I want to get across, it's that women should never travel in an illegal cab - it is just not safe. Unlicensed touts could pose a real danger, so if you don't have the number for a licensed cab company in the area, you can use the excellent Cabwise text service wherever you are in London. To get two numbers for local licensed minicab firms and a black cab company you just need to text HOME to 60835. Simply, it is a number that all those going out in London should save on their mobiles.'



Steve Burton, TfL's Director of Community, Safety and Policy (CSEP) said: 'While we're pleased to see a drop in the proportion of women using illegal cabs, there is still a lot of work to be done.' Chief Superintendent Joe Royle, Transport Operational Command Unit (TOCU) said: "The dangers of taking an illegal minicab should never be underestimated. Working with our partners to raise public awareness, and continuing our dedicated anti-tout initiatives, the Metropolitan Police Service is committed to clamping down on illegal cabs. Our Cab Enforcement Unit's dedicated anti-tout initiatives help to reduce crime while at the same time improving the safety of passengers who use cabs."

Since becoming Mayor, Boris Johnson has taken a tough line on touting with any licensed driver convicted of touting will now losing their Public Carriage Office driver's licence. He also announced earlier this year that the number of dedicated cab enforcement officers in the Capital would be doubled to 68. The Cab Enforcement Unit, which is part of the TfL-funded Transport Operational Command Unit, has made over 4,000 arrests for touting and cab-related offences since 2003.

Transport for London is continuing to work with boroughs to look at new locations in outer London for marshalled taxi or private hire ranks, at which people can pick up a licensed taxi or book a licensed minicab before waiting in a safe environment.

WAR DISABLED CHARITY THANKS DRIVERS *by Derek Leone*

On 15th August 2008, a service of Remembrance and re-dedication of the national Malta Memorial was held at Tower Place in front of All Hallows by the Tower. This was to commemorate when the island of Malta was continually attacked during the Second World War and in remembrance of the many lives that were lost. The service was attended by the George Cross Island Association and wives and helpers, most of who are over 85 years old, also The High Commissioner of Malta and the Reverend Bertrand Olivier Of All Hallows By The Tower plus four previous High Commissioners Of Malta.

Julia Gaw, Lay Chairman Of The South East Region Of The Association, welcomed everyone to the ceremony then the service commenced. This was followed by the playing of the last post, during which the Standards of the George Cross Association were lowered. There followed a two minute silence followed by reveille, this was followed by the laying of wreaths by the George Cross Island Association.

The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled were pleased to be taking part in this ceremony and supplying the transport to take the veterans to lunch at The Union Jack Club In Waterloo. The committee would like express our thanks to the drivers on the Tower Hill rank who assisted us on the day in taking the veterans.

DIAL A CAB'S OLDEST PASSENGER VISITS DAC HOUSE

Westminster passenger Eileen Pattison was recently treated to a visit to Dial a Cab's Headquarters. Eileen had reached the grand old age of 100 and was a regular rider with Dial A Cab and thanks to the Board's PA, Jacqui Chart, a small reception was held for her at DaC House. Eileen had an amazing past and was the Goddaughter of Hollywood legend Fred Astaire! During her visit to DaC's fourth floor conference suite, Eileen told her "guests" about her amazing life as actress Eileen May.

Her parents had also been on the stage and it was they who had a friendship with Fred Astaire and he asked whether he could be Godfather to their expected baby - Eileen. It was a natural progression for Eileen to fit into her parent's theatrical lifestyle and during her many years on the UK stage, she either appeared with or became friends with the likes of Ginger Rogers, Julie Andrews, Gene Kelly, Joan Crawford, Dora Bryan, Norman Wisdom and of course Fred Astaire, plus many other household names from the theatre and movie industries.

In between the tea and birthday cake, more and more questions were fired at Eileen and rather than appear tired or even confused considering that she is over 100, she lapped up the questions and gave incredibly detailed answers.

When asked for her secret to a long and healthy life, she said: "Don't drink, don't smoke, go to bed early and mind your own business!" She also added, that "too much booze and sex wouldn't help either!"

Amazingly, Eileen also gave the amazed audience a song from one of her shows. Her only regret, she said, was the passing of her husband who she still missed.

Eileen said, "Today has been truly wonderful, you are all such lovely people and the service you provide is unbeatable." Pictured is Brian Rice with Eileen.

