

YOU HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE - BUT DO YOU KNOW YOUR NUMBERS?

As a black cab driver, you have the Knowledge, but new research by two blood pressure charities shows that 75% of cabbies do not know their most vital statistics – their blood pressure numbers.

The 'Know your Numbers!' Survey, conducted by UK charity the Blood Pressure Association in conjunction with Scottish charity the High Blood Pressure Foundation, found that only a quarter of black cab taxi drivers know their blood pressure numbers, yet 61% of those tested were found to have high blood pressure readings (at or above 140/90mmHg).

Uncontrolled high blood pressure is the major cause of strokes and heart attacks and can also lead to dementia and kidney problems. The findings, which were launched during the nation's biggest blood pressure event, Know your Numbers! Week (7-13 September), also revealed an England/Scotland divide when it comes to blood pressure health among cab drivers, with Scotland faring worst.

The research, carried out among black cab taxi drivers in London and Edinburgh, showed that:

- * 70 per cent of cabbies in Scotland had high blood pressure readings compared with 52% of their counterparts in England
- * Twice as many cabbies in Scotland (56%) than in England (27%) said they ate convenience foods like pasties, crisps or chocolate bars either every day or several times a week
- * Half of cabbies in Scotland (51%) admitted to 'never' thinking about the salt they add to food or checking food labels for salt content, compared with a fifth (19 per cent) of their counterparts in England.



Taxi driver Neville Chapman had his blood pressure taken by the Blood Pressure Association's health screener Ashley Alcock (Photo courtesy of Simon Goodwin for the BPA).

Mike Rich, Executive Director of UK charity the Blood Pressure Association, said: "Black cab taxi drivers have The Knowledge when it comes to a city's streets, but our research has shown that this unfortunately doesn't translate into knowing their most vital health statistics – their blood pressure numbers.

"There does appear to be a blood pressure divide between the cabbies we tested in England and Scotland, and this may be down to their respective diets and lifestyles. Although Scotland fared worse, the fact that around half of the London cabbies had high readings is still cause for concern. High blood pressure is the major cause of strokes and heart attacks, but millions of lives could be saved if more people knew their blood pressure numbers and took action to lower them.

"We hope that our research will encourage cabbies, and all adults across the UK, to get their blood pressure checked and take that first step towards lifelong healthy blood pressure."

Susan Inch, Director of the High Blood Pressure Foundation, said: "It's worrying to see that nearly three quarters of the cabbies we tested here in Scotland had high blood pressure readings. It's not surprising given that 50 per cent of them admitted to not watching their salt intake – too much salt is known to raise blood pressure – and regularly eating high fat convenience foods. The good news is that they now know their blood pressure numbers and how to lower them."

AGM FOR WAR DISABLED CHARITY by Derek Leone

Please note the date for nominations is 12th October, this was incorrect in our last notice.

The annual general meeting of The London Taxi Benevolent Association For War Disabled will take place at 3 P.M. on Monday 9th November 2009 at The Royal Hospital Chelsea S.W.3.

Nominations must be sent in writing duly proposed and seconded by first post on the 12th October 2009 to the Secretary, Paul Davis, 88, Grasvenor Avenue, Barnet, Herts EN5 2DB.

Due to the extra security would any person's who wish to attend, please contact the Secretary, Paul Davis by 4th November 2009 on mobile 07860850102.

HELPING MAKE MEMORIES GOLDEN

As more and more of us have digital cameras today, taking photographs should be easy, right? After all, any idiot with a mobile phone can take a picture these days. But taking a good photograph...? That's a little more difficult. Earlier this year, photographer Matt Bingham and his business partner Lee Bown launched a new company offering workshops in travel photography to anyone with a digital camera. Matt said: "We've all seen the holiday snaps with Dad's head decapitated from his body. And then there's the photo of the lovely white wall and a tiny row of heads at the bottom of it. Out of focus, poorly lit and overexposed photos fill albums up and down Britain. Everyone has a digital camera these days but very few people really know how to use them. The vast majority just set them to auto but with just one or two day's instruction anyone can improve the quality of their photographs immeasurably. We knew there was a problem out there of people relying too heavily on technology and not ever bothering to learn how to really use their cameras. But we've been surprised by how much demand there is out there."

With just a brief instruction in the art of using a digital camera Matt and Lee



believe they can improve anybody's photography – and help them to make a much better record of their travel experiences. Called Red Cloud Photography Days uses a network of freelance photographers from all over the UK. Workshops have already been held in London, Nottingham and the South West. Places on their workshops are available through online retailers such as Lastminute.com and ActivitySuperstore.com as well as through the website www.RedCloudDays.co.uk

Red Cloud Days offer one day travel photography workshops for beginners for just £115 and two day courses for £180 at locations across the UK. More

specialised workshops are planned for 2010. Matt said: "We teach people how to use light and not to rely on their camera's flash but to utilise the natural light on their travels to capture sunsets and sunrises and to create beautiful images even when their isn't much light available. We also teach them about composition and portraits and they learn how to photograph animals, both static and on the move, so it's particularly useful to anyone planning a safari style holiday."