

MATCHING PASSENGERS TO TAXIS

Virgin Atlantic has launched an initiative to help its passengers find other travellers to share taxi rides into city centres across the world. The Taxi.to website helps match passengers who are on the same flight, or whose flights arrive at a similar time, travelling to a similar part of a city, so they can share the taxi ride. The scheme, launched by Virgin Atlantic, also allows passengers on other airlines to benefit, as it is not limited to Virgin Atlantic customers. The service is provided free and is currently the scheme is being trialled on the London – New York route.

Passengers log onto <http://www.taxi.to> and input their flight and destination details and the website will match them with a suitable travelling companion. They are then sent the details of the matched traveller and can decide whether to agree to the match and make arrangements of where to meet following their flight. They then print off the easy to make Taxi2 sign, which folds into a T shape, from the website so they can locate each other at the airport. The system will also match female travellers who also only want female travelling companions. Dee Cooper, Director of Product and Service, Virgin Atlantic, commented: “We are always looking at ways to help improve our passengers’ journeys and this is a simple initiative which helps them to connect in a clever way. We expect this scheme to be popular with our passengers.”

At Heathrow, BAA is keen to ensure passengers have a smooth transition to onward journeys from the airport, so it could be one way of ensuring the work goes in the back of a cab and not a private hire vehicle. The passengers simply meet at the airport, then get into a taxi. For those who do not speak the same language as their destination taxi driver, the destination is clearly printed on the “T” sign ticket. Ed Maklouf, the Taxi2 founder, said: “We are delighted to be partnering with Virgin Atlantic for this scheme, and our expectation is that this simple, sensible way of saving money and cutting down congestion and carbon footprint will become common activity for air travellers worldwide.”

ADVANCED FACTOR 001 BICYCLE

Mayor Boris Johnson is a keen cyclist and would like to more people on their bikes. Although it is now too late to put a new bicycle on your Christmas wish list, there is a new bike on sale at Harrods, which you might like to start saving up for! Factor 001 is a most advanced bicycle, created and built by motorsport specialists, BERU f1systems. The custom built bicycle prices start at £21,995. Weighing a mere 7.4kg, the Factor 001 has a carbon composite frame and wheels, Shimano’s ultra precise Di2 electric shift, hydraulic disc brakes, integrated LED lights and a novel front fork arrangement. A comprehensive range of complimenting accessories will also be available for the British built bike including carbon discs, transit cases and an infinite array of colour options. A further option is an electronic training and monitoring system, which transforms the Factor 001 from highly efficient road transport into a scientific training tool.



NEEDY CHILDREN FROM LIVERPOOL EXPERIENCE ‘FLYING’ VISIT TO DISNEYLAND PARIS

By David Millward, editor of Taxi Talk

It was an early start on Sunday morning 18th October for over fifty local Liverpool ‘needy’ children and their parents, but did they care? Absolutely not, because they were on their way to Disneyland, Paris with Bernie Buxton and the committee from the Liverpool taxi Drivers Children In Care Outing Fund. The easyJet plane took off from Liverpool’s John Lennon Airport with a cabin full of excited children. “Ooh... look down there mummy, I’ve never been over the River Mersey in a plane before, are we going faster than the birds in the sky?” I heard one little girl say with her happy little face pressed hard against the aircraft window. I don’t usually like flying, but on this occasion it was an absolute delight!



We touched down an hour later at Charles De Gaulle Airport and on to a waiting coach; it wasn’t long before we were at the Explores Hotel. The children and parents were gathered together before going to their respective rooms. It was then down to the hotel’s restaurant and an ‘eat as much as you like’ buffet! It goes without saying, they ‘filled their boots’ including the committee!

Monday morning soon came, and after breakfast it was ‘make haste’ to the Disney Theme Park. As the shuttle bus arrived, a ‘mad dash’ was made to climb aboard as the vehicle’s doors opened... just as well standing room was available! The happy ‘crowd’ were soon in the Theme Park and on the rides, I’m sure I seen



two committee members chance the ‘cup and saucer’ ride, while some of us found the bottle to go into the Haunted House – as we entered the spooks and zombies ran out screaming... The day concluded with the Disney Character Parade and it was back to the hotel restaurant to ‘fill yer boots’ once again!

Another full day was enjoyed in the Them Park on Tuesday as our flight was not due to depart until 21:50. Delightful faces swallowed down hot dogs, fries and beef burgers galore and afterwards as ‘yours truly’ didn’t

fancy the Space Mountain ride, I had the honour of baby sitting four children for 30 odd minutes...

The exciting weekend was soon over... and back in the air on the easyJet flight homeward-bound to John Lennon Airport. I listened as the children talked amongst themselves and how much of a good time they’d had; discussing how many rides they had been on, while munching the popcorn from the hotel restaurant. As the plane touched down it was a BIG cheer from the children and parents for the Liverpool cabbies who gave them such a wonderful weekend to remember... indeed, the BIG thank you’s were endless from a delightful bunch of well-behaved little children.