

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

How many times have you been caught short and lost 20 – 30 minutes of your working day looking for a WC? Somewhere to park, without fear of a fixed penalty fine: We've all had that at some point. When you are in the West End you might take a chance and leave the cab on a rank, pop in to a "friendly hotel" but more often than not we'll be driving cross legged until we can find a meter bay near a fast food outlet with the facilities we need.

What about when we set-down in Highgate, Archway, Kentish Town or Holloway and nature calls? We are up *****creek without a paddle. My circuit is Radio Taxis and they are based in North London and they have a fitting bay in N19 which has a driver's lounge and other facilities. So I called Stevie Cooper in Driver Services to enquire about the feasibility of drivers making use of those N19 facilities. I half expected him to say that it would not be practical to allow drivers to turn up just to use the toilets but he said that he would consider my suggestion.

The next day I had a call to tell me that it was felt that if drivers wanted to make use of the wash rooms at the Station Road Driver Centre, they will be welcomed AND although it was not my intention to include anyone other than Radio Taxis and Xeta drivers, they will extend the invitation to ALL licensed drivers, Radio or Non Radio alike. Steve went on to say that if there is a demand for the facilities he will look at adding extra, purpose built, "driver" cubicles, in the near future.

So watch this space,
John Coplan



WITNESS APPEAL

Licensed taxi driver, Mr D Simmons is asking for help in finding any witnesses to an incident that took place involving his licensed London taxi, a Storm Grey TX4 Reg No LS59YLX and a Yamaha motor-bike on 25th January 2010 at 16.40 Hrs at the junction of Hyde Park Corner and Constitution Hill.

If you can help Mr Simmons, please contact him on his mobile 077937 42048.

NO CALL IS A WASTE OF TIME

A national counter-terrorism campaign called 'No call is a waste of time', encourages the public to pick up the phone and report any activity or behaviour which is suspicious or out of the ordinary to the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321.

The annual campaign, advertised on national and regional radio, as well as in national and regional press including Taxi Globe, includes a picture of what appears to be a normal neighbourhood garage brimming with bottles of chemicals and boxes. It asks the reader to consider what they see and questions whether the garage is being used by a handyman, a pest controller - or whether it is being used as storage by a bomb maker.

STOP DITHERING AND START DECIDING

49% of Brits claim Tuesday is the most decisive day of the week. After a weekend, the nation writes off Monday and finally snaps back into action on a Tuesday. Research reveals that as a nation we tend to dither or react in haste when it comes to decision making. Life-changing choices seem to take a fraction of time and small ones can fill the day, with the study revealing two thirds (66 per cent) pick a political party without hesitation. However, not all political campaigning for the Election will go to waste if the parties focus on youth, as 45% of 18-24 year olds do spend time weighing up their voting options, compared to 78% of 65+ who are set in their ways.

Another decision that requires more thought is ending a relationship, but a third of people (32%) dump their partner on a whim, even though a quarter (25%) will umm and ahh over what sandwich to have for lunch. After the recession the one decision the nation doesn't take lightly is a change of job with almost two thirds (63%) putting strong thought behind their next work environment. Paul Stoddart, Bing's Consumer and Online UK Search Lead, said: "We're faced with an average of 107 decisions a week so the choices available can be overwhelming with the added pressure to make the right decision. A quarter of Brits look to the internet for help with decision making and often the first port of call is a search engine. Bing works by organising results in a more logical, user friendly way that reduces internet clutter to provide the most likely response and with the clever refining tabs it means less redundant clicks and quicker answers."

HANDS-FREE PHONES ARE A MAJOR DISTRACTION

Driving performance is dramatically impaired when using a hands-free mobile phone for 97.5% of drivers according to new research by the University of Utah.

Drivers using hands-free mobile phones took 20% longer to hit the brakes when needed and following distances increased 30% as the drivers failed to keep pace with simulated traffic while driving. Memory performance declined 11%, and the ability to do math problems fell 3%. Ellen Booth, Campaigns Officer for Brake, the road safety charity, said: "The evidence is overwhelming. Using a hands-free or hand-held phone while driving is dangerous, full stop. It's time that our politicians took note and put an end to the ridiculous situation where using a hand-held mobile is banned, but using hands-free isn't."

"Using a hands-free phone isn't safer than using a hand-held because it's the conversation that's the distraction. The person on the other end of the phone can't tell when you are coming up to a junction or trying to manoeuvre so they will keep on talking and distracting you and expecting you to answer. To drive safely you need to give your full attention to the road. If you need to make a call or check your messages, pull up in a safe place first."

DUBLIN GETS ELEKTROMOTIVE

Ireland is set to get over 1,000 EV (Electric vehicle) 'juice points' before end of 2011. Recharging infrastructure provider Elektromotive has been engaged to get the country's green motoring revolution under way. The Elektrobay was first introduced in Westminster, London, in 2006, and currently more than 135 units are installed across the UK capital. A further 165 Elektrobay charging stations operate in cities and shopping centres around the UK. As part of a pilot project co-ordinated by electricity supplier ESB, a total of 10 Elektrobay EV recharging posts are being installed in key locations across Ireland, and last month saw the first three units were connected to the grid in Dublin.

The Irish Government wants at least 10% of all cars on Irish roads to be EVs by 2020. "Ireland is fast becoming an important growth market for us, and we are impressed with the vision and drive of the ESB and our supply partners, Carra Group, in making electric vehicles a viable proposition throughout the country," said Calvey Taylor-Haw, Managing Director of Brighton-based Elektromotive.

Pictured – Standing (left to right): Paul Mulvaney (ESB ecars Managing Director), Pdraig McManus (ESB Chief Executive). Foreground: Eamon Ryan (Irish Minister for Energy)

