

Driving "Right" in London

by Brian Hurlburt
Reporter

Walking around in a city is usually a fairly straightforward thing to do, right? Not in London, England?

Deciding which way the mass wave of vehicles will be coming is the first and one of the most stressful events about walking around London. Here in Great Britain, the saying is, "the British drive on the correct side of the road." In the United States we drive on the right side of the road. As Americans, we obviously drive on the correct side of the road, the right side. But here they emphatically state that they (the British) drive on the correct side. The left side. Are you confused? If you are, then that is what it feels like to walk around the great city of London.

Before stepping off a curb, there are several life-threatening decisions to make. First, the decision of which way traffic is traveling. Second, carefully checking to see if there are no taxis, cars, trucks buses, wanna-be Greg LeMond bike couriers, and Mad Max/Hell's Angels motorcycle couriers. The third, least threatening decision is figuring out if you have any idea where you are.

Couriers and motorcyclist are the worst. They are dressed in full black leather suits, knee-high racing boots and full crash helmets with darkened face masks, looking exactly as if they were cast in the Mad Max movies. They appear to have two goals. One:

To get the particular parcel they are delivering to its destination in world-record time. Two: To terrorize as many innocent pedestrians along the route as possible.

The road may be clear except for one walker and one courier, but there is no way the rider will change lanes to allow the pedestrian a safe, easy passage. It is the courier code to drive by the walker much like a war plane on a bombing expedition.

Another problem in London is the way the city is laid out. In Las Vegas the streets are in a grid system. They run north-south or east-west which makes it easy to find your way. London's streets were created in an as-needed-it design. It appears that whenever a new street was needed, it was built. There is no pattern; not a single street runs north-south. To make matters worse, most street names change from block to block.

Getting lost is easy. A quote that sums up the situation comes from a local Londoner.

Once, while I was aimlessly walking through the streets, I asked where Bedford Way was. Looking surprised, he said, "I don't know, every street looks the same to me." Now I don't feel as bad when I wander around for a while before I find my destination.

Getting around London is one big game. A dangerous, exciting game. I will never forget the experience.



New birth control options introduced

by Shawn Black Snider
Staff Reporter

The problem of safe, effective and easy-to-use birth control is one that men and women have been dealing with for centuries. Today, however, the issue of birth control has transcended its traditional barriers of merely preventing an unwanted pregnancy and has entered the realm of disease prevention and social issues as well.

Birth control options, until recently, have remained basically unchanged since the introduction of "the pill" in the 1960s. Condoms, diaphragms and spermicides, aside from abstinence, were the only real choices available up to that point.

The '70s brought the intrauterine device (IUD), which is inserted by a doctor. It remains in place for a specific number of years, one to four, depending on the kind.

The '70s and '80s also brought an awareness and focus on sexually-transmitted diseases (STD's) and birth control's role in stopping their spread.

According to Nancy Alexander, an expert at the Contraceptive Development Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in Bethesda, Md., this has spurred the study of many other barrier methods of birth control

and a re-examination of partner responsibility for providing that control.

"A barrier method, such as the vaginal film, could reduce the transmission of STD's much like the condom," Alexander said.

The vaginal film can currently be purchased without a prescription. It melts into a thick liquid when inserted into the vagina, and acts as a blocking agent. Its effectiveness is only about 80 percent, which is not much more effective than foam or sponges.

A unique approach to birth control, the male contraceptive injection, is currently being tested. The once-a-week injection of testosterone, a male hormone, has been shown to reduce sperm counts to a level of sterility that is reversible once the shot is discontinued. Experts feel a once-a-year shot will be available in the near future, making it a feasible birth control option.

"These studies show the changing attitudes researchers are having in regard to birth control responsibility," Alexander said. "Times have changed and a diversity of options is being demanded."

On the other end of the spectrum, a female condom called "reality" is in phase III testing in the United States and overseas. It is inserted much like a diaphragm but has an external rim to keep it in place. Dr. Anderson,

director of Clinical Research at Contraceptive Research and Development in Norfolk, Va., said their studies will be complete in eight months. Then it will be turned over to the FDA for approval.

"It has proven itself not only easy to use, but effective birth control as well," said Anderson. "More importantly, it's very effective in reducing the spread of disease."

Another new product, expected to be available after the first of the year, is called Norplant. It offers five years of continuous contraceptive protection. Introduced by Wyeth Laboratories, it consists of six matchstick-size capsules, placed just under the skin of the forearm, which slowly release a hormone much like the one in the birth control pill. They must be surgically inserted and removed by a doctor, and boasts 99.6 percent effectiveness.

The Student Health Center offers some of these birth control options, at little or no cost to students. They dispense free condom kits and provide sponges at a substantially reduced price. Exams are available by appointment for \$25 for diaphragm fittings and birth control pills, which are sold at the clinic for only \$5 a package.

Boredom lacks interest

by Eileen Brady
Reporter

Clock-watching, doodling, daydreaming, fidgeting, yawning, head-nodding and snoring are all indications that students may be losing interest in class.

Many people say they have felt bored at one time or another. Some claim they have been "bored out of their mind," "bored to tears," or even "bored to death."

According to Alan Caruba, founder of The Boring Institute, boredom can, in severe cases, lead to serious depression and even suicide.

Boredom, which Caruba defined as "mental withdrawal," affects college students as much as anyone else. It usually results in self-destructive behavior such as watching too much TV, overeating and sometimes abusing alcohol or drugs.

Dr. Laura Hammond, psychologist at UNLV's Student Development Center, said boredom has a "spill-over" effect.

"Students may have problems elsewhere that can sometimes spill over into class," she said.

Trouble with deciding on a major, or other problems, may make learning seem to have no purpose. This can lead to boredom, according to Hammond. Recognizing the underlying problem could help people deal with being bored.

"They may not even realize why they're bored," Hammond said.

Caruba said boredom starts from within the individual, and has to do with attitude.

"If you think you're the luckiest person on earth to attend UNLV, you'll be more interested in learning," he said.

Boredom in class could result from the possibility that the student didn't get enough sleep or that the teacher is less than exciting. But, Caruba said, the responsibility lies within the individual to remain interested.

"Too often we look for someone to blame when we fail," he said, "Boredom is a terrific excuse."

Blaming the teacher is wrong because the student's job is to learn something whether or not the teacher is entertaining, according to Caruba.

"If you can't learn something in four months (a typical semester), it's not the professor's fault," he added.

Eddie Whitehead, sophomore marketing major at UNLV, disagreed. She said she is bored in one of her classes because the professor is "monotone and often beats a subject to death" during lectures.

Whitehead said that because teachers may be knowledgeable does not mean they are capable of teaching their knowledge.



"We may have a responsibility to keep our minds from wandering, but doesn't the professor have a responsibility to make us excited about what we learn?" she asked. "Is the student responsible for the teacher's inability to communicate?"

Whitehead said that claim-

ing boredom in a particular class doesn't necessarily indicate an attitude problem. If that was the case, most of her class members who have indicated the same boredom, would need an "attitude adjustment."

Caruba said to combat boredom, people should develop an

"ongoing passion for education." He said students should take advantage of the college environment by joining clubs or other campus organizations.

To learn ten secrets to avoid boredom, send \$2 to The Boring Institute, P.O. Box 40, Maplewood, NJ 07040.