

GOING TO THE DOGS, HORSES AND A MUSEUM

Taxi drivers who are studying the Cab Guide Course organised by the Education section of The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage drivers recently visited Wood Street Police Station. Firstly the group were welcomed by Roger Appleby, Curator of the Museum, and given a tour of the museum which is dedicated to the history of the City of London Police. Located at the City Police Headquarters, the tour gave a fascinating insight into the history of the City Police. Roger explained the differences in uniforms through the years and there are various uniforms on display. The museum may be small but it is packed with items as diverse as whistles through to the gold medal won by the City Police in 1920 when they became Olympic champions in the Tug of War. They still reign as champions of this event today. The City Police have three main areas of responsibility within the City; anti terrorism, economic and specialist crimes. Officers can find themselves deployed throughout the world in the fight against terrorism and economic crime. They are considered to be the lead force in economic crime, including plastic card and internet fraud.

Currently the force has around 875 warranted officers, half of which are non uniformed. There are also around 230 support staff and are based between Snow Hill, Bishopsgate and Wood Street. Since 1839, there have been 13 Commissioners. Today's force uses the latest to technology in their fight against crime but also playing an important role are the dogs and horses the force has.

MUSEUM

Conducted tours lasting up to an hour, for a maximum of six persons, may take place on Wednesdays and Thursdays beginning at 1030 hours and 1300 hours. Prior booking is essential either by writing to the Curator at the above address or e-mailing him via roger.appleby@cityoflondon.police.uk Tours are usually fully booked many months in advance.



MEETING THE DOGS AND HORSES



The group continued from the Museum to meet with Jonathon Bish, who is a police constable and dog handler. He and his colleagues took the group on a tour of the stables where the horses used for duties not only in the City but also out to other areas. These horses are trained to an extremely high standard and enjoy their working lives split between the stables at Wood Street and fields in Kent. Later in the week of this visit, the horses and their mounted officers were on duty as the Livery Companies of the City attended the United Guilds Service at St Paul's.

Then the dogs were introduced to the group. The first of these was a german shepherd and a demonstration of his skills in apprehending a would be attacker left the group in doubt that he was a force to be reckoned with. Another dog, this time a spaniel is a sniffer dog, again highly trained. Jonathon told us how the dogs are constantly given training and new challenges. As sniffer dogs had recently been in the news headlines as being instrumental in discovering remains at a children's home in Jersey, Jonathon was asked how the dogs are trained for this purpose. This sort of training is done in



real life scenarios such as graveyards. A third dog, a black Labrador was also shown to the group. These dogs are often purchased by the police force today; in the past many were gifted from Battersea but on occasions this meant they came with a history that made them unsuitable for the job. A police officer has to count on his dog in many different circumstances. The dogs all go home with their handlers although the dogs live outside as they are not family pets.

In February, Royal Mail issued six stamps showing working dogs in action. City of London Police dog Max, a German Shepherd, launched the Royal Mail Working Dogs Special Stamps, on the Millennium Bridge. Max was a gift dog, joining the Force in July 2004 when he was nine months old. Max completed his basic training course in November 2004, and his handler is Jonathon. This is the first time a set of special stamps has been devoted entirely to these highly trained dogs, with the issue celebrating two important events; 2008 is the Year of the Assistance Dog, and also marks 100 years since the first British police dogs walked their beat at Hull Docks.

BACK INSIDE

To conclude a really interesting afternoon at Wood Street, the group went to see the vehicles in the garage. The bikes which some taxi drivers will know provide an escort for the Magical Taxi Tour each year were on show, including some new ones. Police vehicles such as a 4 x 4 unit equipped with ANPR, the automatic number plate recognition system which is directly linked to the DVLA database, a stinger, were demonstrated. The garage is also home to the "plain clothes" police cars which are used on a daily basis to protect our City. Finally we visited the Control Room where banks of screens relay images back from CCTV all over the City. ANPR is used here too, cars driving around in the City with no insurance or tax are amongst those which



flash up on a screen alerting officers to their whereabouts. During our visit a shoplifter was being tracked and officers on the street were able to apprehend the person. The Control Room gave a fascinating insight into how CCTV is being used.