

## A HANDY CAB GUIDE COURSE!

Of all the London taxi drivers that take up the 'Cab Guide Course' organised by the 'Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers' in conjunction with the 'City University', not many commute to the lectures every Monday evening in the Caledonian Road from near the French side of the Spanish border. One such cabbie is Rob Woodford, who missed just one class in the 8-week Course and just two of the practical guiding walks at the weekends. "The course was great fun" said Rob, "It was not only interesting, informative and obviously beneficial, but the Course Director Graham Woodhouse made medieval London, plagues, great fires and beheadings a bit of a laugh! Graham is himself a cab driver, as well as being a qualified guide, and his style of teaching was a winner for all of us on the most recent 'Cab Guide Course' recently completed."

On the Course, students receive some lectures and guided walks conducted by Blue Badge Guides, and there is also a really interesting 2 hour session with 'Knowledge Point' Director Malcolm Linskey on the history of the cab trade. Fellow students and cabbies John Carter, Eddie Relph, Frank Hoey, Mustafa Shakir, Brian With, Anne Watkins, Gary Rolph, Jim Nolan, Clive Kilmartin, Mick Churchill, Colin Chambers and Alan Martin all agreed how much Graham's enthusiasm rubbed off on them. John from Chingford added: "Graham has now given us the desire for further knowledge, and



indeed, already several of us have signed up for the forthcoming 'Guiding Skills Foundation' followed by the 'Certificate in City of London Guiding' Courses at the 'City University' in Northampton Square; some of our guys want to get well 'badged-up'!"

So, how was the Exam? Rob explained: "As long as we revised our notes in the quite comprehensive course materials that Graham had provided, the written part of the Test went well. But it was the practical 'talk' in the City, in front of Examiners and fellow students that was always going to be a tad tricky."

However, I had a bit of a result a couple of days before the Exam. I did the night shift in the cab over Halloween, and some character left behind a 'severed hand' which I only discovered the following morning. I thought that might come in 'handy' (sorry Ed!), so in my talk about 'Medieval Cheapside' I just happened to mention that punishments were carried out near the pillories by St.Mary-le-Bow, and thieves would have had their hands cut off; with that I took the severed hand which was concealed in my inside coat pocket, then threw it up into the air to scatter my shocked listeners! I think it might have helped – I passed!"

The next Cab Guide Course will start on 23rd February 2009. If you would like any more information about joining the course please contact Graham Woodhouse on 07939 070224 or by email [info@cabgude.com](mailto:info@cabgude.com)

## TAXI TRADE CHARITIES BENEFIT FROM TDOY DINNER DANCE *by Sandie Goodwin and Bob Fisher*

As taxi trade newspaper editors, we were delighted to attend the recent Annual Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund dinner dance. The taxi trade charities benefitted from a substantial sum when the Chairman Russell Poluck made the presentations of cheques. The event was held at The Crowne Plaza in Docklands and the evening was a resounding success. Sponsors of the event this year were John Anderson, from The Royal Oak, Dial-A-Cab, Highway Insurance, K.P.M, Doug Sherry M.B.E and Westminster Insurance. Russell said: "As we know times are hard for all of us, so I would like to thank you for your support not only to this charity but to the charities we will be donating cheques to. We always try to make the price of our dinner dance reasonable and we could not do this without the help of our sponsors here tonight." Russell also thanked the taxi trade press, saying: "I would also like to thank the Taxi Trade Press for all the advertising and assistance they give to the Taxi Trade Charities and us in particular."



Finally Russell told everyone that there may be some exciting news announced shortly with regard to the competition which has previously seen presentations at the dinner to The Taxi Driver of the Year. "Every year I have apologised to you all regarding the competition and trade show. But believe me it is not through lack of trying. Venues are extremely expensive and it would mean that being a small industry it would work out to expensive."

"We have been working with Hyde Park and are hoping to have some news in January. So all I can say at the moment is what this space."

Following the meal, dancing was to a great band called Fraternity, who soon had everyone up and dancing. During the evening a raffle was held with the first prize of a trip to New York. A Tombola was also held with some excellent prizes available. The event was enjoyed by all those present and the taxi trade can look forward to an announcement from the charity soon regarding the competition.

## SWEET TREES

At the TDOY the table centrepieces were Sweet Trees. Many of the guests commented on these and Barbara Poluck is now taking orders for them, at a discounted rate for taxi drivers. The trees make a great gift at any time of the year and can be themed to suit any occasion.

For more details telephone Barbara on 07714040862 or Carole on 0208 952 4007.

