

DEVELOPING BIOFUEL THROUGH KNOWLEDGE CONNECT PROGRAMME

Some cab drivers are already using the biofuel produced by Southwark-based Uptown Oil. The company is driving forward the development of biofuel with the support of the London Development Agency and the European Regional Development Fund. Since 2007, Uptown Oil has supplied caterers, schools and restaurants with fresh vegetable oil; they then collect the used oil afterwards free of charge before turning it into low carbon biodiesel. The King James Street-based business has taken part in the London Development Agency's Knowledge Connect programme which allowed it to work with experts from London South Bank University to improve the quality of its recycled biodiesel and sharpen its production processes.

"The Knowledge Connect programme was a real enabler, allowing us to make rapid progress in several key technical areas and helping us to achieve the best biodiesel quality available in London," says Uptown Oil's Stuart Buckingham.

"As a result we opened up new opportunities and markets and have even been able to share our new knowledge collaboratively with other London biodiesel companies that are still struggling with these same issues." Professor Tony Day from the urban engineering department at London South Bank University says: "Working with Uptown Oil has been a highly rewarding and enjoyable experience. Their commitment to the success of the project allowed the academic team to try some radical solutions and supply the necessary resources to test the results of the proposed interventions."

Knowledge Connect is delivered in partnership with Angle Plc and Winning Moves Ltd. It supports businesses to develop new products, services or processes with the help of academic experts who in turn realise the practical application of their ideas and build new commercial relationships. So far, the LDA's Knowledge Connect project has helped more than 1000 businesses and provided more than £1m of subsidised support to assist the transfer of knowledge from universities and research technology organisations to London's innovative business sector. This support has attracted more than £1.6m worth of private sector contributions by the businesses themselves.

Audrey Slade, Director of Business, Jobs and International Promotion at the London Development Agency said: "Through Knowledge Connect we are giving SMEs access to the knowledge and skills they need to grow. London's entrepreneurs have exciting ideas that are waiting to be brought to market and by tapping into the wealth of expertise in the capital's universities, colleges and research and development institutions we are making them a reality."

Professor Tony Day from the Urban Engineering Department at London South Bank University worked with Uptown Oil and said: "Working with Uptown Oil has been a highly rewarding and enjoyable experience. Their commitment to the success of the project allowed the academic team to try some radical solutions and supply the necessary resources to test the results of the proposed interventions."

Leslie Maruziva from ANGLE said: "The Uptown Oil project is a shining example of how a well thought through initiative can benefit from the abundant talent that exists in London's knowledge bases. Our expectations are that the initial introduction to the university will lead to a life-long relationship between LSBU and Uptown Oil. Clearly the impact from this project will not just be felt by the company in terms of growth and profitability but the community as a whole."

THREE CABDRIVERS AND A BOAT

Three cab drivers who are all Liverymen and Freemen of The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers, namely John Beesley, Sean Ferry and Geoff Richards, helped save an exhausted man at sea as they arrived back from a sailing holiday in Europe. The three had enjoyed their holiday on board a yacht which they had hired from an ex cab driver who now lives abroad.

While sailing some ten or so miles from the coast, they came across a man in a kayak who was frantically trying to row back to shore. But the tide was carrying him further and further out to sea; he was exhausted and couldn't have carried on for much longer. Our three cabbies sailed about towards the man, pulled him and his kayak on board and delivered him safely to shore.

VALENTINE VENETIAN BALL

If you are considering a night out to celebrate Valentines Day next month, The Medieval Banquet in beautiful St. Katharine Docks provides the setting for a romantic dining, dance, revelry and entertainment played out against the carnivalesque backdrop of Venetian Fayres of Olde. Throughout the evening minstrels, contortionists, jesters and musketeers will entertain guests with their unique brand of performance artistry. The menu is a fusion of dishes specially selected to complement a Valentine Venetian Ball and these are served at intervals throughout the evening as all the while the entertainment continues to unfurl around you.

A Masquerade Ball is a chance to dress-up in your finest garb but don't forget the thing that makes it 'Masquerade' - the all important mask! The venue will be selling and leasing masks as well as hiring costumes. Why not join the Ballroom class which will take place from 6.00 pm onwards? Limited places only so make sure you book yours when placing your Valentine's reservation on 020 7480 5353.

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The Medieval Banquet presents

masquerade ball



SUNDAY 14TH FEBRUARY 2010
STARTS 7.15PM, TILL LATE

www.medievalbanquet.com