

# PINEWOOD STUDIOS PRIZE DRAW TOUR DAY

## by Jim Rainbird

The Pinewood Studios prize draw was held to raise funds for the Children's Magical Taxi Tour. The lucky winner was a regular driver at City Airport who after finally being convinced it was not a wind-up, donated his prize back to 'give to someone less fortunate' than himself. A wonderful gesture and a reflection of the licensed taxi trade's big heart.

As the Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers has an affiliation with The Royal Docks Community School, the prize was offered to their GCSE photographic course students as an invaluable experience to enhance their studies. All their names were put in a hat by the school and the lucky winners were Megan, Laura and Lakeisha accompanied by their teacher David Oliver.

They were picked up at the school in a Pinewood Studios/Magical Taxi Tour liveried taxi and the prize day began. On arrival at Pinewood they were met by a film crew and stills photographer who were going to record the whole day for them, in fact in true movie style, it took two takes to get through the main entrance! The girls started with a tour of Heatherden Hall, the old house whose grounds Pinewood Studios were built in. They were told the history of the studios and shown two cabinets full of Oscars and Baftas, and huge framed stills from some of the vast library of blockbuster films produced here. Outside in the gardens they saw locations in Pinewood used in films like Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Harry Potter and the Bond films. Then it was off to Technicolor for an explanation of the digital film editing and enhancing process that starts with production rushes right through to distribution to cinemas on hard drive. The treat to follow was a selection of clips in 3D, including the trailer for the new Shrek film, in Technicolor's amazing private viewing theatre where all three of them looked like Harry Potter in their special 3D specs!

Time for lunch and everyone was taken to the Palm Suite, a film themed restaurant close to Pinewood Studios. The whole place is filled with film memorabilia and signed photographs of some of the stars who have worked at the studios. At the end of a lovely meal all three girls enjoyed exactly the same last course - chocolate cake with ice cream. Even the sweets were in 3D!

The tour continued after lunch in the Underwater Stage. This unique facility is used for films, TV, photo shoots and adverts. The 1.2 million litres of water has an ultra violet filtration system for clarity and heated to 32 degrees centigrade. Along with details of various shoots that had taken place here, the importance of health and safety when filming underwater was explained. In a swim by shot, two divers per actor are required so that they have air immediately before the take and immediately after. When filming Harry Potter, a special dive chamber was built for the actors to rest in between takes while still under water. This was to prevent ear damage by pressure if they had to keep coming up and diving again.



A visit to Alpha Grips showed the girls the huge cranes used for spectacular camera angles that makes you wonder how the shot was achieved. Then off to the Powell Theatre in the sound department of Pinewood where the girls were given an in depth explanation of the sound re-recording that takes place in another fantastic private theatre. They were shown a clip of Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang with the sound at an amazing level.

At the end of a wonderful fact and fun filled day the girls 'wrapped' their own short film in Pinewood's streets - 007 Drive and Goldfinger Avenue - and posed for some last photos, then back in the cab for the journey back to school.

This prize draw raised a lot of funds for the Children's Magical Taxi Tour but it didn't just happen. It was the brainchild of Terry Bamber, the Production Manager on the James Bond films and many more produced at Pinewood. Terry was the host for the day and used his vast repertoire of new (and old!) jokes to make the girls wince and laugh in equal measure. He gave each of them some film related books and a film crew tee shirt from upcoming film 'Gulliver's Travels' starring Jack Black. His enthusiasm for the film industry is infectious and I'm sure they came away inspired and amazed at what goes into making movies.

A lot of people generously gave up their time and services to make this prize draw the success it was. These included the following:

- Yellow Dot – Design and print of the prize draw tickets free of charge
- Geoff Russell and Dennis Knight at Eon Productions – For selling lots of tickets
- All the guys in the cab trade (you know who you are) - For also selling lots of tickets
- Terry Bamber – Production Manager from the James Bond films for selling lots of tickets and pulling the whole day together
- Dave Worrall – Publisher of Cinema Retro magazine, author and James Bond expert
- Julia Hillsdon – Head of Marketing, Pinewood Studios
- Fern Colao – Marketing, Pinewood Studios
- Chris Smith – Technicolor
- David Williams – Palm Suite Restaurant
- Dave Shaw – Diving Services UK (Pinewood Underwater Stage)
- Graham Anderson – Alpha Grips
- Richard Pryke – Pinewood Sound Re-recording Mixer (Oscar winner for Slumdog Millionaire)
- Christian Black – Stills Photographer
- Saloum N'jie – Film Crew
- Tony Chivers – Film Crew
- Dave Fuller – The original prize winner who donated it back

A big thank you to everyone who helped out and gave the three girls a great day at Pinewood, and from the kids who will travel on this year's Children's Magical Taxi Tour.

## NORTH WEST TAXI DRIVERS AID CHILDRENS OUTING 2010

The "Day Out to Chessington" on June 9th was again a great success. With the unsettled weather, we approached the day with some apprehension. However, by 9 am the sun was shining. 50 taxis carried more than 90 children with a variety of disabilities from schools in Brent and Barnet, along with families, helpers and carers.

They were seen off from the Harrow District Masonic Centre by the Mayor of Brent Councillor Harbhajan Singh and Mike Higginbotham, a senior Masonic Officer.

Despite lack of any police support en route, the journey was noticeable for the manner in which it ran so smoothly, thanks to a combination of careful planning and good luck!

