



Receiving their awards are Mr Robert Theodore and Mrs Christine Turner with Professor Brian J Ford (centre).

## The Storers Awards

The academic year had a great start for two students from Eastrea. Mr Robert Theodore and Mrs Christine Turner were both awarded grants by The Storers, the ancient Eastrea Trust.

Robert graduated this year with a BSc degree from Portsmouth after studying palaeontology. Much of his work was done in the Whittlesey brick pits, where so many notable fossils have been unearthed. He has just been accepted to read for a Master's degree at Leicester University. Robert has been working at Matalan during the summer and has had many part-time jobs to try to fund his Master's degree. 'I have been working hard to try to get the funds together, and the bursary from the Storers is really very important - being a student is so very expensive these days.'

Christine has been helping teach students at Peterborough College of Adult Education. She also runs art courses and has given training in 'customer care'. This year she has enrolled for a full-time BTEC Foundation Course in Art and Design at Peterborough Regional College and has her sights set on a possible degree course after that. She says, 'The costs of going to college full-time are always increasing. I am of retirement age - but only just! - so funds are strictly limited, and this student grant is wonderful news.'

The Trust dates back to 1717 and is also known as the Herds and Bulls Grass. Their Chairman is author and scientist Brian J Ford who lives in Eastrea. Brian explains that the name of the Trust dates from when Eastrea was an isolated island for much of the year. 'In earlier centuries, survival meant that the villagers had to pool their resources,' he explains. 'And maintaining enough grass and fodder for the cattle was the key to surviving until each winter until springtime.'

The Storers make confidential grants to villagers who have a specific need for funds throughout the year. Each summer they offer a public bursary and possible supports grants for students resident in the village. 'We all hope to see Robert running a great museum later in his career,' says Brian. 'The students can be of any age, and we hope Christine's course will inspire more mature students to apply in future.'

## Illegal taxi operators... are they driving you home and us out of business??

A local Private Hire Taxi company, which had already had to make cutbacks, reducing operations' office space and cutting travel fares has now been forced to move from its premises on the market place. The business suffered financially due to the increase in licensing fees claimed by local authorities to cover the cost of employing a law enforcement officer for fenland towns. Now, despite contributing to the funding of this law enforcement, it is the rise in unlicensed vehicles operating in and around the town which have fiercely undercut fare prices and threatened legitimate business.

The legal taxi operators have, on many occasions, reported illegal taxi operations in Whittlesey to the local authorities, but to no avail. Even though they are now paying extra licence fees for a law enforcement officer, these vehicles are still operating, one of which was recently working with an out of date licensing plate, which was reported to the law enforcement. The plate has since been removed from the vehicle, but the vehicle is still operating as a taxi.

You are probably unaware of the risks you are taking by using these illegally run taxi services; you may even be unaware that they are illegal - just that the fares are cheaper, or they maybe a friend of a friend.

The bad service you may also receive from these people, who may not even be classed as fit to operate as a taxi driver, reflects badly on the authorised, legal taxi firms.

### What do you know about the Private Hire Taxis you use?

Private hire vehicles cannot ply for hire in the street or at taxi ranks. Journeys must be pre-booked, normally by phone or in person at an office. Failure to do so is an offence and may invalidate the vehicle's insurance cover. Fares for private hire vehicles are not regulated by the Council - the cost of a journey will normally be based upon a rate per mile or should be agreed with the company before the journey.

### How can you identify a legal Private Hire Taxi and driver?

Private hire vehicles licensed by the Council must display a yellow/white plate on the rear exterior. Private hire drivers must wear an ID badge issued by the Council, which includes his/her photograph.

### Are you safe?

If the taxi does not comply with any of the above, then the answer is no! For one thing you are not insured while the vehicle, in the case of injury from an accident.

Next time you use a Private Hire Taxi at a cheap rate, or because someone in your local gave you the phone number, check it out before you get into it. Does it have a valid licence plate on the rear, does the driver have ID?

Don't let these cowboy operators get away with it and drive the legitimate companies out of town, to eventually ruin another good service we do have.

## Line Dance Disco raises funds for Whittlesey JFC Under 7 Boys (Yellows)

Amanda Hollis organiser of the Line Dance Disco fundraising event held on Saturday 21st October 06 at Coates Public Hall would like to thank all the local businesses who donated raffle prizes, and to everyone for their help and support, which made it such an enjoyable and worthwhile evening.

**A grand total of £270 has been raised for the lads.**