

WORTHING WELCOMES WAR VETS

The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled held their 59th outing to Worthing on 12th June 2007. It is also the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War. Taxis carrying veterans from all over London arrived at the quiet village of South Holmwood near Dorking where everyone made their way into the hall to meet up. As every year, the residents of South Holmwood welcomed everyone and made sandwiches, tea and coffee.

At about 11.15 the convoy set off in brilliant sunshine. At Worthing, the convoy parked in the Civic Centre car park and everyone made their way into the Assembly Rooms, where the tables had been set out for lunch. The Mayor Councillor Dr Heather Mercer welcomed our Patron Dame Vera Lynn DBE LLD and all the veterans and drivers. She hoped they were going to have a very enjoyable day and she thanked the Benevolent Association for all the fund raising and hard work that goes into the organisation of bringing the veterans to Worthing. A minutes silence was held, followed by grace said by Major Darrell Thomas of The Salvation Army. Lunch was served and the resident organists Mr Flitcroft entertained the guests.

The Vice President of the LTBAWD, Doug Sherry MBE gave the toast. Master of Ceremonies Melvin Zeff announced the Chairman of the Association, Michael Calvey who thanked the Mayor, Council and people of Worthing for their warm welcome. He then welcomed the 436 veterans who had travelled in 121 London taxis and 2 taxis from Hemel Hempstead. He also welcomed Henry Allingham who recently celebrated his 111th birthday, three members of 3rd Parachute Regiment who recently returned from Afghanistan, two ladies who served in the Land Army and 4 ladies who served in The First Aid Nursing Yeomanry – it was from this organisation that women were recruited to carry out espionage work behind enemy lines. Sadly some were captured and executed.

The guest of honour was Major General N. Carlier, CB OBE who served in The Royal Engineers and was Commander British Forces South Atlantic at



Worthing

the time of the Falklands Conflict. Paul Davis, Secretary of LTBAWD read out a letter of Royal greetings from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 2nd, wishing everyone an enjoyable day. There was also a letter from Prince Charles and The Duchess of Cornwall.

After lunch there was time for a walk along the seafront, with taxis providing a shuttle service for those unable to make the walk. Then it was back to the Assembly Rooms for tea and scones. Harry Joel, MBE, is President of the Association and he said that when he joined the charity he would make sure the charity would help the veterans. He said he is pleased that the Committee in office today is fulfilling all that he wished for. He also announced that Doug Sherry, Vice President of the Association was donating £25 to each driver of the taxis to help cover their fuel costs.

All too soon it was time to leave Worthing and return home, once again via South Holmwood. Next year is the 60th anniversary of the charity and the Association is planning a visit to Normandy. The Committee would like to thank the villagers of South Holmwood, The St John Ambulance Service and the drivers for giving up their time to make this and other outings possible. Thank you all for your continued support.

Derek Leone



Mayor of Worthing Cllr Dr Heather Mercer with Michael Calvey



Dame Vera with Henry Allingham



Guest of honour Major General N. Carlier, CB OBE



South Holmwood

Images Courtesy of Stuart Pessock