

ROCKING 'N' ROLLING AT LONDON'S PICCADILLY THEATRE *by Ray Levy*

Saturday 5th April turned out to be 'electrifying' for 90 'special needs' and underprivileged children and their carers, when they were taken by the London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children to see the smash hit musical 'GREASE' at London's Piccadilly Theatre.

The producers of the show had kindly donated 160 tickets to the LTFUC in celebration of our 80th anniversary and we would like to extend our grateful thanks to them for enabling this wonderful outing to take place and for helping us to give the children such an amazing treat, many never having been to the theatre before, or likely to go again.



The day started off with all the drivers meeting in Bow, east London, where they hastily set about decorating their taxis in bright pink 'Grease' balloons and posters. The children, all from the Pam Mason Group, Bow were then driven in a convoy of 30 decorated taxis through the City streets to London's Piccadilly Theatre, escorted by a Land Rover and five motor cycle outriders from the City of London Police, who did an excellent job. Many people were lining the streets waving to us and one little girl told me later that she felt like the Queen and was trying to wave like her - wonderful!!

The convoy arrived at the theatre at 2pm and to the great delight of all, Sandy (Siobhan Dillon) and Danny (Danny Bayne) came out in full costume to meet and greet us and were quickly surrounded by screaming children. After a photo shoot had taken place and the TV crew had finished filming, the children and their carers were then quickly ushered inside and allocated to their seats.

At 3pm the show started and in no time the children were transported into the magical world of Rydell High School, with its gangs, cheerleaders, denims, leather jackets and slick hairstyles and it was just great watching



the expressions on their faces – they were loving it! During the interval, ice creams were handed all round and, as if this wasn't enough, there was yet another big surprise to come. We had arranged for all the cast to come out after the show to meet the children and squeals of delight filled the auditorium when they appeared. The children were running in all different directions trying to get autographs and photos with their idols and I found myself caught up in the atmosphere, grabbing hold of Sandy for a photo with her. Not to be outdone, my wife then chased after Danny – it was nice being young again, if only for a short while!! I must take this opportunity to thank the cast for all their patience and for being so wonderful with the children.

The LTFUC's Honorary Chairman, David Lessman thanked everyone who made the day possible and Pam Mason also made a speech thanking the LTFUC for giving the children such a great day.

Our grateful thanks go to Paul Nicholas and David Ian Associates, who made the afternoon possible and to Michael Havard-Bilton, the Marketing Director for all his hard work, help and assistance with all the arrangements in putting the day together. We also deeply grateful to the City of London Police for escorting us safely to the theatre and back, and to Westminster City Council for their great help, support and assistance with the parking. Last, but not least, the LTFUC thank all the wonderful drivers who gave up a day's work to enable this outing to take place and also all the helpers involved on the day.

What a truly 'electrifying' afternoon and one that the children will remember for a long time!!

'GREASE' IS THE WORD - If you haven't seen it, you are missing out!

