

# HASTINGS WELCOMES THE ALBANY CHARITY SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

As “flaming” June arrived this year, the skies were grey and the rain seemed never ending. So when those drivers taking part in The Albany Taxi Charity Fund outing to Hastings on 4th June arrived at Charlton Athletic Football Club, along with 250 children and their carers, they must have felt blessed to find the sun shining brightly. Cabs were decorated with balloons and banners, breakfast was enjoyed and soon everyone was ready to leave. The first time this trip went to Hastings was back in 1992 and since then it has grown every year. This year was no exception and thanks to generosity from sponsors, even more children with special needs from South East London schools and clubs enjoy a traditional day out at the seaside with their carers, taken in a convoy of more than 70 taxis.

Police cadets were also at Charlton and accompanied the convoy down to Bewl Water, where the convoy made its first stop. This beautiful area of parkland is where largest lake in south east England is situated. The children enjoyed running around and having collected their packed lunches, got back into their taxis for the remainder of the journey to Hastings.



On the outskirts of the town the taxis pulled into a large supermarket, much to the amazement of some of the shoppers, where they were greeted by where they were greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress of Hastings and The Chairman of the Licensed Victuallers in Hastings and an array of cartoon characters. The convoy then continued down through the town where everyone was waving to the visitors. One taxi driver on the Hastings rank certainly looked bemused as he sat waiting for a fare in his TXII! As usual, many of the taxi drivers were playing air horns and for some of the dogs in the High Street the sound of hunting horns and neighing horses was quite a shock!



The convoy amassed in the car park at the far end of Hastings beach where the local Fire Brigade were waiting to greet the convoy. The excited children were keen to get out of the taxis and enjoy their day. The sea itself looked calm and inviting but none of the cab drivers seemed too keen to go

for a dip, the idea of a cold drink and fish and chips for lunch proved more popular. Down on the south coast, the 1066 L.V.A. publicans raise funds throughout the year to sponsor this event. The funfair at Stade Amusements, the Aquarium, Hastings Caves, Hastings Museum and the RNLI all opened their doors freely to those on the trip and it wasn't long before the children were enjoying the funfair. Some drivers were “volunteered” to accompany the children on the rides, others were busy getting ice creams for both visitors and themselves. This day was really enjoyable for everyone, giving the carers a chance to take some well earned relaxation from their normal



routines. The looks on the faces of the children is what the outing is all about and it was clear everyone was having a good time.

At 3.30pm everyone returned to their taxis and the convoy made its way back through the town of Hastings, once again waved on by the shoppers and residents. At the Phoenix Art Centre Parkstone Road there was a disco and tea party for the guests. The hall had been decorated with balloons and streamers and soon everyone was enjoying their food and drinks. The DJ kept everyone entertained throughout the afternoon and local dignitaries, including the Mayor and Mayoress, came along to join the fun, talking to the children and their carers

as well as the taxi drivers. All too soon, the afternoon came to an end and the tired, happy children got back into their taxis for the return journey back to London.

During the afternoon's event, everyone was thanked for all the hard work they had put into making this day possible. The Albany Committee had organised yet another very successful trip and it had been made possible by the continuing support from their friends in Hastings. Sadly, as announced by Mickey Range, Chairman for The Albany, one of their other annual outings has had to be cancelled this year. This is due to a lack of support from their destination of Margate. The support shown by the people of Hastings and in particular the LVA makes these outings possible and without the support from Margate the Committee took the decision to cancel that outing.



MickeyRangealsopresentedatankard to Derek Pearson, who has decided the time has come to retire from his role as Secretary of the charity. The charity is extremely grateful to Derek, and his wife, for all their dedication and the wonderful work they have done over the years. Derek, who has been a green badge holder since October 1973, has been involved with The Albany Charity for many years. He has been on the Committee for 31 years and the last 12 of these have been served as Secretary. Derek thanked Mickey and the Committee for the tankard and passed on his good wishes to Claire Hughes who is taking over as Secretary.



Grateful thanks go to all the sponsors and those who helped make this outing possible and in particular to Ascotts Cabs for sponsoring the fuel. If you would like any more information about The Albany Charity or would like to become involved with the outings they undertake, please contact Claire Hughes by telephone 07932 495257 for further information visit the Albany website on [www.albany-charity.org.uk](http://www.albany-charity.org.uk)

