

# 60TH ANNUAL TRIP TO WORTHING

Back in 1948, The London Taxi Benevolent Fund for War Disabled began taking war veterans to Worthing on what has now become an annual event looked forward to by war vets and taxis drivers alike. On that first outing there were 25 taxis; this year's outing took place on 10th June and took around 250 veterans in 96 taxis! Once again, the charity's patron, Dame Vera Lynn was able to join the veterans at Worthing Assembly Rooms and so did Henry Allingham, who had celebrated his 112th birthday just a few days before.



At Worthing Assembly Rooms



Convoy leaves South Holmwood

The day began as taxi drivers collected veterans from their homes and then assembled at South Holmwood Village Hall. This venue sees the beginning and end of the outing each year and the ladies at the village hall ensure no-one goes hungry. Then the outing leaves in convoy for the second half of the journey down to Worthing.

For some of the veterans, these outings are their chance to catch up with their friends and comrades. Some have been coming on the outings for many years; for others this year's event was their first trip. Harry Joel, who has been lifelong Honorary President of the charity since 1966, made a speech after lunch. He is proud to have been involved with the charity for so long having spent 40 years as Honorary Chairman before becoming Honorary President. He said that the charity had never been involved in politics but would continue support everyone involved in conflicts which continue today. "Mr Brown



Harry said: "If I was asked would I do all this again, you wouldn't have to ask twice!"

says in Parliament that the government are helping children out of poverty, but he still has not told us what he will do for those involved in conflicts today. Medals are handed out to those involved, but you cannot take money out of a medal." Another speech was made by Dickie Hudd, Honorary Chairman, welcoming everyone to Worthing and thanking Worthing Council for their hospitality. Ghurkas had joined the outing this year and Dickie told them they were welcome and the charity would continue to offer them their support. He also thanked Doug Sherry who had provided the lunch everyone enjoyed. He then unveiled a large painting on the stage of the Assembly Rooms which has been painted by artist Rosa Branson in honour of the charity and its 60th anniversary. Dickie went on to thank the taxi drivers who give their time so freely to help the charity. "Without you," he said, "There would be no outing." Many of these drivers also recently took



part in the Normandy outing which so many of the veterans were still talking about. Two ladies from South Holmwood had joined everyone in Worthing and they were delighted to receive a framed copy of the painting which had been unveiled on the stage. This beautiful painting is now on loan to Worthing Council where it will hang in the Town Hall, whilst the framed copy is already hanging in the village hall at South Holmwood. The ladies presented the charity with a framed poem written by one of the villagers to commemorate the annual outing. Then came a speech from Henry Allingham – this was a surprise to everyone as Henry had asked to be able to make the speech during lunch. He thanked all the war vets for what they had done. He is a World War 1 veteran and he told those assembled that we have much to thank the veterans of today for. Mr Allingham had enjoyed a special birthday celebration just a few days before and thanked everyone for all their good wishes.



Henry Allingham



Off to the seafront

After a trip down to the seafront, walking for those who wished or by taxi, the vets returned to the Assembly Rooms once again for tea and entertainment. A jazz band played many of the old favourite songs which the vets were singing along to. As 6pm arrived, the vets departed from Worthing back to South Holmwood, where everyone was once again welcomed by the villages and some young people from the Air Training Corps. As the day had been sunny, the evening was still warm and many were sitting outside chatting. One veteran told me what a wonderful day he had enjoyed once again. He said that London's taxi trade should be proud of itself for helping so many veterans enjoy their day out. He said next year cannot come soon enough so that he can enjoy another day in Worthing with his old friends and comrades.

