

ALBANY CHARITY TRIP TO HERNE BAY

In complete contrast to last year's outing when the rain was torrential, this year's Albany outing to Herne Bay took place on a beautiful sunny day. This trip took children from children from Chernobyl and Belarus, along with children from Midfield Primary School Special Opportunity Unit in Orpington for a day of fun and entertainment at the Kent seaside resort. The children from Belarus are suffering from the effects of the Chernobyl disaster 20 years ago, when the accident at the nuclear power plant in that area of Russia happened. The effects are still being seen today.



Children from Belarus

This group of children have been brought to the UK for a month, thanks to the Friends of Chernobyl's Children (FOCCV), Children from the areas affected are brought over to the UK to stay with families for a month, who take them for medical help as well as dental treatment they would not get at home. The fresh foods and uncontaminated air in the UK mean the immune systems of these children receive a boost to



Children from Midfield Primary

increase life expectancy. This year 14 of the original 19 children were making their third trip. Sadly two of the original 19 were not well enough to join their friends this year. From the school in Orpington, 38 children with autism enjoyed their day out, along with staff from the school. Hannah Winter, Head of the Special Needs unit, said how much her group had enjoyed the day. "Some of our pupils had never been to the seaside before, they had a fantastic day."



Leaving service area

First thing in the morning, the convoy set out along the M2, brightly decorated taxis covered in balloons attracting a good deal of attention from other motorists. A comfort stop was made at the service area, before embarking on the final leg of the journey to Herne Bay. Throughout the year, the Committee make trips down to the town to arrange the outing which is made possible by the group efforts of all those involved both in the cab trade and in Herne Bay. The convoy arrives in Herne Bay and parks at the Herne Bay Catholic Club where they are welcomed by the committee and volunteers from the Catholic Club. Thanks go to Trevor Schilling, the Treasurer from the Club, Rose Ledger and Julia Archer for their help, along with the Parish Priest Father Mark. Unfortunately on one of the trips made by the Albany organisers, the taxi they went in was broken into, but the



Lord Mayor of Canterbury

police have managed to apprehend the guilty person. On arrival the children were welcomed by the Lord Mayor of Canterbury and local councillor Vince McMahan, who joined the children as they walked down to the seafront, escorted by a group of police cadets. Once on the front, there was a chance for everyone to enjoy lots of different entertainment. There was a clown who performed magic at the bandstand, circus entertainers on the promenade showing the children how to spin plates and juggle, many took part in various street games as well as taking a tour of the area on an open top bus. Ice creams and packed lunches came into the equation as well and for the children from Belarus the fascination of the penny arcade games was evident!

At mid afternoon, everyone made their way back to the Catholic Club where there was more entertainment in the form of a disco. Fish and chips soon arrived, followed by more ice cream. The children soon formed an orderly line to sample the delights



Clown and her magic act

of the chocolate fountain, supplied by Mr and Mrs Pritchard, and soon there were lots of chocolate covered faces. At 5pm everyone counted down the beginning of the Balloon Race and many brightly coloured balloons were soon flying high. The balloon returned from the furthest point away from Herne Bay will win a cash prize.



Games on the seafront

Everyone was thanked for their help at the end of the afternoon as the Mayor and Sheriff arrived. Thanks also go to Chris West, the town partner who liaises with those providing the entertainment on the sea front and the Seashell Restaurant of Lisson Grove for sponsoring the fuel and breakfast for all the taxi drivers. The committee from the Albany extend grateful thanks to the drivers who had given their time to make the trip possible, especially in view of the economic situation that affects their working lives. A special thank you goes to Jimmy Pullum of T&J's Breakdown for providing taxi breakdown/recovery services free of charge which did come in handy as his services were called upon on the return journey back to Orpington. A final and most important thank you goes to all the Albany Taxi Charity Committee members for all their hard work in co-ordinating Herne Bay and Hastings trips in 2009.

