

GIVING A CHILD A BREAK

Police Summer Camp Project have written to The London Taxidriver's Fund for Underprivileged Children following their recent visit to see "Hairspray."

TO ALL OUR BRILLIANT CABBIES AND HELPERS!

On Saturday 26th September we were lucky enough to be taken on a very special trip by the LTFUC. They kindly took us to see the amazing show 'HAIRSPRAY' in the West End. The lovely taxi drivers had got us 50 seats for the show and arranged to pick us up from the City to take us there. Our children are all from unfortunate or underprivileged backgrounds, but I don't know who was more excited, them or me!!

We had a coach pick us up to take us to the City to meet the taxis. Imagine the surprise when we saw the cabs. They were covered in balloons and we had a fantastic welcome from the wonderful drivers. They were so friendly and funny and the children just loved them. We were driven through the heart of London, from the City to the West End, on a busy Saturday afternoon, with the cabbies sounding their hooters and waving at all the cars and people. Everyone laughed and cheered at us and all the children saw were smiles. I was asked by one of the children in my cab "are they famous people waving at us?" I said "No, you are the special people today, they are waving at you".

Upon arriving at the Shaftesbury Theatre in the heart of 'theatreland' we were shown to our fabulous seats right at the front of the stalls. We couldn't have had a better view. The children were astounded by the whole experience so far, so imagine the excitement when the lights dimmed, the curtains parted and the music started. The show was spectacular and the whole experience was amazing. When

the interval came, it gave the children a better chance to explore the mysteries of the theatre. The statues around the auditorium with the sumptuous drapes and enormous chandelier caused one of the children to comment "it was nice of them to get the theatre's decorations out for us". The second half was as spell bounding as the first. As the climax of the show came, the excitement rose and by the last song, many of these normally introspective, unsure, disillusioned children were in the aisles singing, waving and dancing. Their faces were a picture of total uninhibited joy. It was only when the show was over and we were allowed to be introduced to the cast that Marvin, one of my group of children, realised that he had been watching a LIVE show. He had thought that the entire experience had been played out before him on a giant screen. It was only then that it struck me that for many of these children, entertainment only consisted of sitting in front of a screen, be it a television or computer.

As we left the theatre, we were again met by our amazing host of taxi drivers and whilst travelling back to the City to meet our coach, Michael, who was one of the children in my cab, said "I think this has been the best day of my life".

I cannot end this letter without expressing my special thanks and gratitude to Michael, the fabulous driver of our taxi and ALL the other drivers who gave up their time to make this day possible. Michael was so kind, friendly funny and caring towards our children and made it a very special and memorable day. THANK YOU FOR A DAY TO REMEMBER - Love Rossi and all our kids.



BLUE PLAQUE FOR FATHER OF MODERN VENTRILOQUISM

Fred Russell, who 'revolutionised the presentation of ventriloquism', has been commemorated on 20 September 2009 with an English Heritage blue plaque at 71 Kenilworth Court, Lower Richmond Road, Putney, SW15, where he lived for twelve years between 1914 and 1926. The plaque was unveiled in the presence of various members of The Grand Order of Water Rats, the oldest theatrical charity and brotherhood, of which Fred Russell was 'King' in 1903, 1914, 1929 & 1939, and William and Marc Parnell, his great grand sons. Fred Russell was born Thomas Frederick Parnell, in Poplar, east London, in 1862. In 1883 he married Elizabeth White, and together they had six children. Russell forged a career in journalism, working as the chief reporter and later the editor of the Hackney and Kingsland Gazette.

Roy Hudd said: "Fred Russell, apart from changing the whole style of ventriloquism, was that rare thing - a political variety artiste. He worked his

entire life to improve the lot of the turns - and he succeeded. Being a top of the bill act meant he was listened to and once heard, he couldn't be silenced until he got what was required! His contribution is indisputable and we are delighted to see him commemorated with an English Heritage Blue Plaque."

Graham Cole - current 'King Rat' of The Grand Order of Water Rats, Marc Russell, great-grandson of Fred, William Russell, great-grandson of Fred, Roy Hudd - variety artist, actor, playwright and leading authority on Music Hall, Wyn Calvin - comedian and entertainer



DUKE OF EDINBURGH VISITS LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM

His Royal Highness recently visited London Transport Museum in Covent Garden to look at the design heritage that has shaped London's transport network. The Duke of Edinburgh was given a tour of the Museum by Sam Mullins, Director of London Transport Museum. They were accompanied by Sir David Bell, Chairman of London Transport Museum, David Worthington, one of the Museum trustees, The Lord Mayor of Westminster and the Lord-Lieutenant.

The museum houses a wide variety of vehicles, both new and old, including a TX4 taxi. Highlights of the tour included the Museum's latest major exhibition Suburbia which looks at how transport has shaped London's suburbs and celebrates suburban lifestyle, architecture, design and popular culture through a series of unique displays. The exhibition runs until 31 March 2010.



MALTA HAILS THE LONDON TAXI

LTI Vehicles has secured further international Orders for its London Taxi with the appointment of Muscats Motors Ltd as the official importer of the world famous London Taxi. Following a successful demonstration of the TX4 vehicle in Malta delivery is set for the end of November 2009. "Maltese dealer Muscats Motors Ltd quickly realised the benefits of a tailor made taxi service that sets them apart from the competition," said Matthew Cheyne, International Market Development Director for LTI Vehicles. "There has been a fantastic reaction to our taxi during the launch. The Maltese say that the service brings them up to date with their neighbouring countries and makes them feel as if their country is coming of age."