

LONDON TAXIDRIVERS' FUND FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2009

It is with much sadness that I have to report the passing away of former trustees Tommy Smith and Ivor Smer - the latter serving as Chairman over thirty years ago - and Douglas Sherry MBE, one of the taxi trade's true benefactors and good friend to the Fund. Sincere thoughts are with their families, as they are for those trustees, drivers, and supporters who have suffered personal tragedy or ill health during the year. I have once again been proud to represent The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children during the past year in my capacity as Chairman and I thank my fellow trustees for their hard work over the last twelve months. I thank their wives and partners, without whose encouragement the Fund would not function so well, and as always, the trade press for their continued and loyal interest in reporting all the Fund activities.

It would be very wrong of me to state that 2009 was an anticlimax, following such an eventful and successful 80th Anniversary year in 2008, but as the saying goes – the show must go on! The annual party at The Grosvenor House, to whom so much is owed for their waiving of all costs, was in January and once again nearly 600 disadvantaged and 'special needs' children enjoyed a full afternoon of fun, food and entertainment. The presentation of an electric changing bench to Kisharon School also took place in January and I was invited in February to speak at the Highfield Womens Club. Press Officer Ray Levy and his wife Maureen were guests at the Bournemouth Carnival Band Dinner and Dance as a thank-you for allowing them to support a number of Fund events. The Fund has a flourishing website at www.thelondontaxidriverschildrenscharity.co.uk, where full reports of all the Fund's functions and events can be found and this is ably managed by Maureen, to whom I am sincerely grateful for all her hard work. I am also indebted to John Anderson and all at the Royal Oak for holding a very successful Easter raffle in favour of the Fund and wish them continued success when they move to their new premises.

The first outing of the year to Woburn Safari Park in May proved to be an unqualified success and even though some of the 100 plus drivers found alternative routes both to and from Woburn, everybody agreed that with the great weather and first class facilities, this venue made an excellent day out. One of the invited groups, Underhill School, later in the year welcomed



Mad Hatters 2009



Woburn outing



Hairspray trip

the committee at a special assembly where a generous cheque was given to the Fund. In June, the Hilton Foundation held a fund-raising cycle ride in the Euston Hilton and an extremely inappropriately dressed and unfit Yours Truly took part! Also in June, members of the committee were made welcome at the official opening of the Medical Room at Woodfield School, which had been fully stocked and furnished by the LTFUC. The regular outing to Southend-on-Sea took place in July and once again I have to thank the many sponsors who make this day possible, the countless army of drivers, helpers and others too numerous to mention who lend their support and the children who are our guests for the day.

The Fund has supported the Metropolitan Police Summer Camp Project (now known as 'Giving a Child a Break') for many years and their kind invitation to attend the Barbecue and Prize-giving on the last night was well attended by the Committee and their wives. Although the children's activities were severely curtailed this year, an invitation to visit a West End theatre to see 'Hairspray' was greeted with much enthusiasm. In August, I was honoured to represent the LTFUC, together with The Taxi Driver of the Year Charity Fund and The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled at a memorial presentation to the Marylebone Diabetic Clinic in memory of the late Doug Sherry, MBE. Following the success of last year's event, the Fund once again held an Open Day at Covent Garden in September and taxi-drivers and public alike were made aware of the Fund's activities. I am most grateful to Doug Cheshire of the LVTA and his 1934 Austin taxi for assisting with the fund-raising.

In conclusion, 2009 has been yet another tremendous year and I look forward to 2010 being equally successful. It must always be remembered that the trustees are working London taxi drivers who not only take no remuneration for their time, but restrict management and administration expenses to below 2% of total income! The London Taxidriers' Fund for Underprivileged Children is the broker between those who need and those who have and I am proud to join my fellow trustees and many of London's taxi drivers, in bringing a little happiness to so many disadvantaged children of London.

David S. Lessman (Hon. Chairman)

HON. TREASURER'S REPORT 2009

I would like to present my second Treasurer's Report by thanking my fellow committee members for their support and hard work in raising funds for the charity in a very difficult year. We also thank the many drivers and helpers without whom the outings would not be possible and also our many sponsors.

We started the year with our famous Mad Hatter's tea party at the Grosvenor House, which cost the fund nearly £4,000. Due to the fact that the entertainers gave their time freely and the gifts and toys were donated, we managed to keep our expenses very low on this event.

The outing to Woburn Safari Park for 300 hundred children cost the fund nearly £6,000, but when you see the smiling faces on these children it says it all - it was worth every penny! Our annual outing to Southend-on-Sea was as usual a great success, even though it rained

incessantly. The outing's expenditure was greater than usual due to the high cost of hiring the hall and catering needs and this was in excess of £12,000.

Other outings that the fund were involved in included taking children to see the show 'Hairspray' and taking part in the Lord Mayor's Parade. Our float was a huge taxi filled with children and two cabs, one dressed as a pink fur Rabbit and the other as a Bat mobile, which raised the fund's profile to the many millions of people lining the streets and watching the show on TV.

Many grants were made to worthwhile causes; equipment to the Kisharon 'special needs' school, the Police Summer Camp for underprivileged children (now known as 'Giving a Child a Break'), special computer equipment for a disabled child and Christmas vouchers for children of taxi drivers who have passed away. We

also made a donation towards a Diabetes machine in memory of the late Douglas Sherry MBE, who was a major benefactor to the fund and to the whole taxi industry and he will be sadly missed by us all.

I am very proud of the fact that we have kept our expenditure down to a very respectable 1.7% and in layman's terms for every pound we raised, 97.3 pence went back in to helping disabled and underprivileged children.

Finally I would like to thank those drivers who have taken a collection box to put in their taxis and if there are any other drivers who would like to help, please contact me on my mobile 07956 516325.

Simeos Demetrius Yiannikaris
(Hon. Treasurer to the Fund)