

WORTHING GREETS WAR VETS

by Derek Leone

On Tuesday 15th June 2010 The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled held their 62nd outing to Worthing. The taxis began to arrive at South Holmwood, where the veterans and drivers made their way into the village hall. There the local residents were, as always, very helpful in supplying tea, coffee and sandwiches. Cadets from The Habershers School assisted the veterans that needed help and Colonel Stuart Tootal D.S.O. OBE attended the gathering in the village and spoke with many of the veterans.



South Holmwood

At approximately 10-45 am the 118 taxis began to leave South Holmwood for the journey with all the residents waving and cheering as the taxis with their well fed and watered passengers made their way along the A24 to Worthing. Arriving at the Civic Centre the cadets helped the veterans into the reception hall which soon filled with the 440 guests that had come to Worthing for the day.

The Mayoress, Ann Sayers welcomed everyone to Worthing and hoped that they would have a pleasant day. During lunch the guests were entertained by Mr. Iain Flitcroft playing old favorites on the Worthing Wurlitzer, with thanks to Mr Jim Buckland of The Sussex Organ Trust.

The Master of Ceremonies, Mr. Melvyn Zeff, announced the Guest of Honour Colonel Stuart Tootal

DSO OBE who gave a very interesting speech which was greatly appreciated by the veterans. The Chairman of The London Taxi Benevolent Association for War Disabled, Mr. Richard Hudd, then made a speech in which he said it was 70 years since the evacuation



Kas joins the outing

from Dunkirk and how much we owed to the civilians who went over to France in their small craft to bring back the troops who were stranded on the beaches, and we must not forget the Royal Navy in this operation, also the 70th anniversary of The Battle of Britain, and also remember the crews of Bomber Command who lost over 55,000 airmen. He then went on to say that during the war any of the pilots that were in London were always able to get a taxi back to Biggin Hill, and the London Taxi Drivers built up a good relationship with them and later presented a steering wheel on a wooden plaque from a taxi which as far as we know is still at Biggin Hill. The Chairman thanked Audrey Sherry for the donation for the fuel for the drivers and thanked the drivers for giving up their time as without them this outing would not go ahead.



Doug Cheshire's vintage taxi attracted veterans attention

Following the speeches it was time for a walk down to the seafront where the veterans and the drivers enjoyed the sea air. When it was time to head back to the Assembly Rooms some of the drivers provided a shuttle service with their taxis which was appreciated by the veterans. The President Mr. Harry Joel MBE



Harry Joel and Dame Vera Lynn



thought it had been a fabulous day and a wonderful meal. He said: "After 62 years I never thought I would be standing here to see this all taking place. I would like to thank the two ladies from South Holmwood for all their help over the years, Jerry Cooper and myself are two of the original drivers of the charity God Bless you all may you be attending for many more years, thanks to the Committee for all their hard work with special thanks to The Secretary Mr Paul Davis who has the most demanding job of all."

In the Assembly Rooms tea, cakes and ice cream were served which was followed by the entertainment which was provided by KAS who attends our outing every year and during the entertainment she presented the charity with a large donation which we are very grateful. Last year we were pleased to have The Jive Aces in their yellow suits entertain us and so we invited them back again and as last year their performance was greatly appreciated by everybody.



Mayoress of Worthing with Dickie Hudd

All too soon it was time to leave Worthing, the cabs taking the veterans back to South Holmwood where more food and drink was available.

The President, Chairman, Officers and Committee would like to thank you the drivers. It has been said before but without you giving up your time this outing and many others like it could not take place. Also thanks to the villagers of South Holmwood for all their hard work, T and J services for assisting with the breakdowns, The St. Johns Ambulance Service, and all the drivers at City Airport, Heathrow, and Paddington who donated money in the collection buckets for the Worthing outing.

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