

MALDON WELCOMES EAST LONDON CABBIES OUTING *By Sandie Goodwin and Bob Fisher*

This year's annual outing to Maldon took place on 7th July. Back in 1952, cab driver Charles Albert Flemwell started the first ELCO with 8 taxis, taking children with special needs from the East End to Maldon. This year the convoy was 87 cabs! The trip has gone from strength to strength since it began. Today Mr Flemwell's son, Kenny, known to many in the trade as "Spanners", heads the committee who organise the event. Drivers had collected children and their carers from several different schools in the East End before heading out to Maldon with a City of London Police escort. More unusual was the presence of

police officers from Poland, who were here on a visit to the City of London force. The London Ambulance Service provided medical back up and once in Essex the Blue Knights on their motorbikes also join the convoy. T&J Rescue accompany the outing to ensure that any poorly cabs soon feel better.

A comfort stop is made at The George and Dragon pub in Mountnessing. A couple who had arrived at the pub just before the convoy had stopped off on their journey for a quiet drink – little did they realise the number of people who would shortly be arriving. Then it was off to Maldon.

The town was brightly decorated and the streets lined with people waving, from small children outside their nursery school to more elderly citizens outside their care homes.

Kenny Flemwell was at the front of the convoy, with air horns blaring to announce the arrival of the taxis, which then made their way into The Plume School for Performing Arts where the students were waiting outside, dressed up with a pirate theme. The Mayor of Maldon, Ken Smith, along with his Mayoress and staff from the school were waiting to receive the visitors. Food was served for the children as well as entertainers being on hand to make the day even more special. Drivers were also given a hot lunch and then it was time for the convoy to parade through the High Street, led by pupils from The Plume School. The Town Mayor, dressed in his robes, together with the Mayoress, Deputy Mayor and Councillors welcomed the taxis from outside the Moot Hall in his robes, with the Macebearer in attendance. The convoy made its way to Promenade Park on the river estuary. Once parked there, the guests all enjoyed an afternoon of fun and entertainment. At the end of the afternoon a prize was given to the best dressed cab, which was an amazing Buzz Lightyear entry.

All too soon it was time for home and the cabs left the park with local people waving them off. For anyone making this trip for the first time, the welcome given to the taxis and their passengers in the lovely town of Maldon is an amazing experience which they will remember for a long time.

CHARITY AWARD



Each year, The Worshipful Company of Hackney Carriage Drivers make a Charity Award. This year the Award has been given to the town of Maldon for all their input into the annual ELCO Taxi Day. A presentation was made to the Mayor during the visit to The Plume School, when a crystal taxi on an engraved plinth was given to the townspeople. One particular person has helped the ELCO outing in the town. This lady is Jean Ingram and she is the liaison between the committee and the town. Jean was given The Friend of the Cab Trade Award. The Master of WCHCD, Michael Davies and the Awards Committee Chairman, Alan Parker, made both these presentations on behalf of the Company.

