

## **Address of the Provincial Grand President to Provincial Grand Charity AGM 17 May 2008**

Brethren you will all remember, I feel sure, 2006 when we concluded our Festival for the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys in the staggering amount of £2,325,736. You perhaps, like me, also experienced the relief that the Festival was over and we all took a year off to recharge our batteries and enjoy the sweet smell of success.

A year ago I spoke of the need to maintain, where possible, the habit of regular giving among the Brethren of our Lodges and Chapters and that gift aided standing orders in favour of Provincial Grand Charity would be gratefully received and faithfully applied. (this applies as much today as a year ago.)

At the same time, I said that when running events and social activities to support local good causes, to keep in mind our own in-house Charity which if generously funded would be able to support bigger projects than could be supported at single Lodge level. I have been delighted with the response to that idea and at the March meeting of the Charity which I attended, many of the petitions on the Agenda that had been put forward by Lodges were supported in sums varying from £350 to £5,000. Nearly £30,000 was paid out in 2007.

Today we lose Terry Crossley who has been a dedicated and efficient Charity Steward for four years – thank you Terry for your hard work.

Brethren, we do not get many opportunities to express our thanks to our Charity Team, but having seen them at work and knowing of the success they achieve in so many fields of endeavour including the Charity Day, in a new format a year ago, which is so very successful and so well supported, I am sure that you would want to express your appreciation to the whole team with acclamation.

Exactly a year ago I announced, I have to say with some trepidation, the appeal which was to raise in ONE YEAR the sum of £75,000 for the Air Ambulance Service. Because of the size of our Province stretching from the Humber to the Tees we are dependent for Air Ambulance cover on two separate and independent Services, although of course we realised that they did not have strict demarcation in crisis situations. It was therefore decided to make a decision to divide the appeal on the basis of one third £25,000 to Great North covering the top end of the patch and two thirds £50,000 to Yorkshire covering the middle and bottom part of the Province. This was also necessary so that Lodges and Chapters could if they wanted designate a recipient, although I am pleased to report that this was only done by very few contributors.

I can now tell you that the appeal has been a success. It has been a great success. Indeed it has been an astounding success.

At Christmas there had been a steady flow of funds which had allowed us to think that with a bit of a push in the last four months left to us, we could perhaps achieve the target I had set. I can report that since the start of the New Year whenever I, or one of my fellow Rulers, or my Representatives visited a Lodge or a Chapter inevitably there was a cheque presented for the Appeal. I regularly got e-mails and late night text messages telling me about the monies that had been handed over, usually with no previous indication or expectation. I can tell you that even now there are one or two Lodges where they have given the members notice of motion to support the appeal, but will not be voting until next week. We have taken account as best we can of these, I will call them pledges, so please continue to send your money.

So what you want to know is how successful is an astounding success?

Brethren – let's find out

Peter Sunderland representing Yorkshire Air Ambulance and Barbara Walton representing Great North Air Ambulance were then invited to join the Grand President on the floor of the Hall, together with four Stewards carrying two cheques.



**Barry Ward [Eboracum]; Keith Bell [Minster]; Peter Sunderland [YAA]; Provincial Grand Master; Barbara Walton [GNAA]; David Millard [Anchor]; Ray Theakston [Alcuin]**

The Grand President then invited Barbara to accept something rather more than the project target amount and the Stewards revealed a cheque for £50,000. Barbara expressed the thanks of her team and service and said that this huge amount would provide support in the saving of many lives.

The Grand President then invited Peter to accept the balance of the funds collected and was pleased to tell him that it was quite a lot more than the planned Appeal. The Stewards revealed a cheque for £101,000. Peter expressed his thanks with the word “phenomenal” and said that the amount would be gratefully received and faithfully applied.