

## Charity Information Day 2004

The Parsonage Hotel at Escrick near York was once again the venue for what is now considered the essential day for the development and education of our Lodge Almoners and Charity Stewards. The validity of this can be monitored in the attendance record.

This year 90 Lodge Almoners and Charity Stewards attended plus 13 representatives from Royal Arch Chapters, the presence of the Chapter delegates reflecting the enlightened appointment of these Officers into the Royal Arch Chapters in the Province. The overall attendance being a slight increase over the meeting in 2003. Clive Gregory the Chairman of the Provincial Grand Charity welcomed the visitors and representatives and our Deputy Provincial Grand Master Jeffrey Gillyon gave an opening introduction.

To lead the morning forum the President of the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution John Moore gave an address entitled “ A look at the future for an Old Institution”. This was an uninhibited look into the administration and management of what must be considered to be a large business, including the ever present scrutiny of the wider world, the impact of decisions made to benefit those in its protection and stability for growth and prosperity in the future.

Our local R.M.B.I. home is Connaught Court in York and the home manager Nancy Gray followed the opening presentation with her perceptions of the duties of a home manager working under the direction of the Institution. She also described the admissions policy, long term and respite care, and the welfare duties of her team. Her dedication to the persons in her care and her humour, essential qualities, shone through and delighted the meeting.

Thus concluded the morning and the delegates enjoyed a good lunch with the opportunity to visit the Charity information desk staffed by members of the Provincial Grand Charity committee, meet and discuss their work with brethren from all over the Province.

To open the afternoon, Brother Douglas Wood a case Almoner for The Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys, gave a presentation “No Longer Treading Water”. A case Almoner is an experienced mason usually an Almoner or Charity Steward working under the most stringent terms of confidentiality and trust, who acts as the link between the R.M.T.G.B. and a child or the family of a child whom the Trust takes into its protection.

Within the constraints of confidentiality, Douglas described the quite harrowing situation which affected the children of a family who had come to the notice of the Trust. The Trust had immediately taken action to relieve the necessity of the family pending a successful petition ( note, pending ) and he was able to complete the petition and administer it to the welfare and benefit of the children and family. He described the subsequent improvement and noticeable development of the children and family once in the protection of the R.M.T.G.B. and with a little emotion, the humility of the duties he continues administer on behalf of the Trust.

The next speaker was the Treasurer of our Festival 2006 Brother Mike Roberts. He had little to do in encouraging the delegates to further effort on behalf of the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys, it was evident that no one in the room had been untouched by the sincerity and benefit described by the previous speaker.

He did however portray the positive, innovative and enjoyable ways in which the members of the Province are raising funds for Festival 2006 and all with the bye words of “ family fun and friendship”.

He also emphasised that the Provincial Grand Master and the Festival Committee were confident the Brethren of the Province would make every effort to raise £2 million by May 2006, thereby making a most significant contribution to the welfare of children who are and who in the future may be in the protection of the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys.

The Provincial Grand Charity Steward Terry Crossley addressed the duties of newly appointed Charity Stewards, with particular reference to ensuring the development of information for new brethren so that none can claim ignorance of the benefits that are available, or of their responsibility to contribute within their Lodge.

Terry Crossley had produced a model guide for new Charity Stewards and he outlined the improvement that could be derived from applying some of the principles for administering Charity funds. A copy of the model guide is available by contacting Terry Crossley at the Provincial Charity Office.

The final speakers of the day were Brother Gordon Wiles, a name well known in the Charity Office for his unstinting work as an Almoner in the Hull area, and Sue Pallister of the Hull and East Riding Institute for the Blind (HERIB).

Gordon had arranged for the representatives of "HERIB" to bring along their resource bus which was displayed in the hotel forecourt. It was coincidental that it was also "National Sight Day"

Gordon Wiles spoke about his considerations when working as a Lodge Almoner, and his involvement with "HERIB".

Sue Pallister of course spoke of the work of the Institute and its services to Hull and the wider community of that area. The resource bus being an integral part of the work, as the Institute does not have to wait for people in need to come them, but can take the resources skill and knowledge of a well organised unit to the homes, work places or other locations to suit those in need.

So concluded another successful day. However, it is unfortunate that not all of our Lodges and Chapters were represented. Is it that the work is duplicated from Lodge to Chapter, or that through some oversight the date was not communicated to the Lodge members so that a representative could attend in the stead of an otherwise committed Almoner or Charity Steward?

With that in mind, if every one was to be represented it would task the Provincial Charity committee with finding a larger venue.

That would be a good problem!!!.

TGB 28.11.04