

Masonic Benevolent Institutions

MASONIC GIRLS BENEFIT FUND – MASONIC BOYS BENEFIT FUND – VICTORIA JUBILEE MASONIC BENEVOLENT FUND – MASONIC WELFARE FUND

NEWSLETTER

FOR PATRONS OF THE

MASONIC WELFARE FUND

CHAIRMAN – M.W. THE GRAND MASTER

Welcome to our third Newsletter and a special welcome if you became a Patron in 2006.

As a Patron you have shown your support for a unique Fund and although it is by far the smallest of our Charities it is establishing a very big reputation.

The aim of this Newsletter is to update and inform you of work and progress in the past year. In so doing it is worth restating our primary objective. It enables us to work in areas outside the scope of our other Charities and is as follows:-

- **To relieve cases of poverty, hardship, sickness and distress amongst members of the Fraternity of Freemasons whether situate in Ireland or overseas and the wives, widows, children and other more remote issue and dependants of such members and necessitous persons.**

The Management Board of the Fund is made up of Masons with vast experience and is drawn from all over Ireland with changes at the end of 2006 and start of 2007

The following left at the end of 2006:-

**John Hadden – Tyrone and Fermanagh
Brian O’Byrne – Metropolitan Area
William Shortland – South Connaught**

We acknowledge their commitment, work, energy and interest which assisted with the smooth running, growth and progress of the Fund over several years.

As new Members of the Board we welcome the following:-

**Brendan Corcoran – South Connaught
Selwyn Davies – Metropolitan Area
John D. Nesbitt – Tyrone and Fermanagh**

Continuing for another year on the Board for 2007 will be the following:-

**Denis Atkinson - Antrim
Dennis R. Millen – Antrim
Alan R.G.R. Patterson – Antrim
Eric Mackarel – Armagh
James I.A. Davison – Down
Brian Eve - Down
Charles Ruttle – Down
John Strong – North Connaught
William J. Johnston – Londonderry & Donegal
John Ramsay - Meath
Edward Brownell – Metropolitan Area
Samuel J. Holt – Midland Counties
Jack Crowley – Munster
Donald C. Webster – North Munster
Ian McCullagh – South Eastern
John Hobson – Wicklow & Wexford**

Each Application placed before the Board requires individual attention and no two are alike. It is therefore essential that a wide ranging appreciation of needs and how best to provide assistance is applied. In almost all cases there is a compelling urgency to provide assistance in a flexible and speedy manner.

Here are a few of the actual cases dealt with in 2006, to preserve confidentiality the beneficiaries and locations are not given. They illustrate the very diverse nature of applications to the Board –

- The infant daughter of a Mason was found to have stem cell cancer. The sudden impact of this terrible news on the young Mason, his wife and other young children caused great distress. The Mason had to take unpaid time from his employment thus causing further hardship to the family. In a speedy and compassionate response an emergency grant was given within days followed by further assistance.**
- The young wife of a Mason was found to be suffering from severe Post Natal Depression requiring 24 hour attention. A grant was paid toward the cost of providing this care.**

- **An appeal was received from one of our Lodges in Sri Lanka to pay for urgent medical treatment for a prostrate problem. All documentation was in order and a grant was paid as there is no N.H.S. or Social Security in Sri Lanka.**
- **A mature daughter of a Mason required specialised medical treatment for Breast Cancer and made an Application for assistance in early 2006. Due to the nature of the particular cancer she required immediate treatment not available on the N.H.S. A grant was made right away, the treatment was successful and she is in remission.**
- **A Mason suffered a major stroke which left him totally incapacitated and is in a Nursing Home. His wife is not of pensionable age and has only a very small income. In spite of such restricted circumstances she has to contribute towards the Nursing Home fees. An emergency grant was made to her and she receives an Annuity.**
- **An Application was received from a widow already on the V.J.M.B.F. for help to pay a relatively small amount for Respite Care. The V.J.M.B.F. could not provide payment due to legal restraints. We paid and this is an example of the co-operation that exists between us and our other Charities.**

You will realise that the cases as described caused distress, uncertainty, anxiety and even fear in those concerned. The relief provided was crucial for them and in that you played an important part by giving your support. Wear your Patron's Jewel with pride and proudly give publicity to the Fund.

Last October for the fourth consecutive year we joined with the V.J.M.B.F. to send the "care package" to widows of deceased Masons. Almost 5,500 were sent a greetings card, the front illustration shown on the card was provided by Mrs. Patsy Pomeroy a very talented artist of Limerick. She is an Annuitant on the V.J.M.B.F. and her husband John was for many years a member of Lodge No. 73 Limerick. With the card went a letter from Janice Griffin and Rosemary Black together with a booklet about "Keeping Warm this Winter. The many letters, card and telephone calls received by Janice and Rosemary show that "care contact" is welcomed and appreciated. A widow from Armagh wrote "Thank you for the lovely card and enclosures. You brought back many happy memories of when Jack used to take me to social events at his Lodge.

Janice and Rosemary continue to provide all our clerical and administrative support. Their unfailing dedication and hard work ensures the efficient running of our Fund and the V.J.M.B.F. They deserve great praise.

You may recall that two years ago we, together with the V.J.M.B.F. arranged for distribution of a new type of mains operated Smoke Alarm to our widows. That was a very successful venture and soon will be followed by

distribution of a small sophisticated personal alarm. It can be worn as a bracelet or pendant and will emit a sound of 130 decibels at the touch of a button. Ideal for security and peace of mind inside and outside the home. Relief can be provided in many forms and the latest in Technology!

2006 saw an increase in our income to €151,000 (Stg£99,000). This was an increase of 21.6 per cent over 2005 and is very welcome. We are now working to consolidate and provide a base from which to operate in the future as demand increases for our type of wide ranging and compassionate response.

Our Deputy Chairman, R.W. Brother Dennis R. Millen, will continue in office for another year. His great knowledge and experience is invaluable as we develop. He is also Chairman of the Masonic Benevolent Institutions Liaison Committee. In that forum we, together with the Masonic Girls Benefit Fund, The Masonic Boys Benefit Fund and the Victoria Jubilee Masonic Benevolent Fund meet together in a spirit of co-operation. In so doing it is often possible to maximise assistance to those in distress and need. The flexibility of our Fund enables us to play an important part in many cases.

In our last Newsletter we gave you a Mission Statement, we think it is worth repeating for the benefit of our new Patrons.

As a Patron you probably have views and maybe suggestions about how to improve and enhance the workings of your Fund. If so please let your Provincial Grand Lodge Representative be aware of them. You are the eyes and ears of the Fund in your Lodge, with your special knowledge of how the Fund works you are ideally placed to detect distress and need. If you have a potential application in mind discuss the situation with your Lodge Almoner or for guidance call

Please encourage members of your Lodge to become Patrons of the Fund so that the work of the Fund may continue.

Janice Griffin on 01 – 679 6799	or	Rosemary Black on 028-90-451 020
at		at
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Dublin, 2.		Belfast,
		BT5 4ND

Thank you for being a Patron.