

BENEVOLENCE and CHARITY.

Whilst the injunction "to maintain in their fullest splendour those truly Masonic Ornaments" should be interpreted in its broadest sense, every earnest Mason will readily recognise his responsibility to those magnificent Masonic Institutions of which the Craft is so justly proud.

The Royal Masonic Institution for Girls was founded in 1798 in Buston Road, London. New premises were built in Westminster Bridge Road in 1798, and in 1851 the School was again moved to St. Johns Hill, Wandsworth. In 1918 the Junior School was established at Weybridge, with adjoining property known as "The Common", which has been adapted and fitted up as a Sanatorium and Convalescent Home. There are over 1,000 children receiving the benefits of the Institution, of whom 355 are in the Schools, whilst the remainder receive grants for out-education. The Secretary's Office is at 21, Great Queen Street, London, W.C.2.

The Royal Masonic Institution for Boys was founded in 1798 under the title of the "Masonic Charity for Clothing and Educating the Sons of Indigent Freemasons". The first permanent school was acquired in 1858 at Wood Green. The present title was adopted in 1868 and the growth of the Institution in the following years led to the building of the existing premises at Bushey, Herts, which were opened in 1903. There are 400 boys at present in the Schools and over 600 are receiving grants for out-education. The Secretary's Office is at 23, Great Queen Street, London, W.C.2.

The Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution for Aged Freemasons and Widows of Freemasons was founded in 1855 under the title of "The Asylum for Aged and Decayed Freemasons", but the foundation stone of the Asylum was not laid until 1849. In 1848 "The Royal Masonic Benevolent Annuity Fund" was established, to which was added a Widows Fund in 1849. In 1856 both these charities were united under the present title, and their joint

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home was dedicated at Crodon on August 1st of that year. At the present time 426 men and 1166 widows are annuitants. The Secretary's Office is at 80 Great Queen St., London, W.C.2.

In addition nearly every Province in England has its own local charities, which operate without aid from the central Institutions. Particulars of these can be obtained from the respective Provincial Grand Secretaries.

A worthy complement to these three great Institutions is the Freemasons Hospital and Nursing Home which was inaugurated in 1919 at Fulham Rd., W. This is not a benevolent institution in the sense of the other charities, but whilst it has a Samaritan Fund for those Brethren who are totally unable to pay fees, ordinary patients are asked to pay in proportion to their means. The scheme has proved a great success, and the demand on the accommodation has increased year by year necessitating the provision of larger and more up-to-date premises. These have been provided at Havenscourt Park on a site of about 5½ acres. The new Hospital, opened in 1935, has accommodation for 180 beds, its own X-Ray and electrical departments, Pathological Section, and all that is required for the needs of medical and surgical cases, and the latest forms of treatment.

Every Freemason should support one or more of these valuable institutions in proportion to his means, and he has the satisfaction of knowing that whatever he contributes "will be thankfully received and faithfully applied".



Refer "Things a Freemason should know" by F.J.W. Crowe
"The Master Masons Handbook" by F.J.W. Crowe

FESTIVAL STEWARDSHIPS.

Once in every year Festivals are held in respect of the Boys, Girls and Benevolent Institutions. On each occasion some distinguished Brother is asked to take the chair, and Brethren are expected to support him so far as lies in their power.

Brethren may volunteer their assistance as Stewards to any of these Festivals by a qualifying donation of ten guineas, in addition to the Stewards' Fee.

By this donation, a Brother becomes a Life Governor to the Institution with two votes, plus one extra vote for the first Stewardship, and two extra votes in respect of each subsequent Stewardship.

Ladies may also act as Stewards in this way, if they so desire, and may attend the Festivals. The qualifying donation for a Lady Steward is five guineas.

The Stewards' Fee, to which reference is made, is paid by every Steward into the Stewards' Fund, which is a fund quite distinct from the funds of the Institution.

The Stewards, so far as they have intimated their desire, of so serving, are called together at the Preliminary Meeting some months before the Festival, when they decide on the amount of their Stewards' Fee, which is usually one guinea for a Steward who does not intend to dine, and two guineas for a Steward who intends to dine at the Annual Festival (Ladies £1.5.0d.)

The purpose of the Fee is that the whole of the expenses of the Festival may be paid for by the Stewards themselves, and not form a burden on the General Funds of the Institution.

Badges are issued to the Stewards of each year by the respective Institutions, which may be worn during that year only, except in the rare event of permission being granted by Grand Lodge to call the jewel a "Permanent Jewel" and to allow it to be worn during the lifetime of its possessor.

The Grand Lodge Charity Jewel is a Permanent Jewel which may be worn on all Masonic occasions; permission to possess it

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is given by Grand Lodge only to that Brother who has served two stewardships, one to each of any two of the three Masonic Institutions, personally subscribing the sum of ten guineas in addition to his Stewards' Fee, at each time of so serving.

The Jewel is worn on the left breast suspended to a ribbon of the colours of the two or more Institutions to which the Stewardships have been served. Bars may be worn on the ribbon, if desired for subsequent Stewardships.

Further information as to votes to be secured by other donations can be obtained from the Secretary of the Institution concerned.

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