

2012/22.5.

FREEMASONRY IN THE COMMUNITY - SCOUTS & GUIDES IN HOSPITAL

1st Birmingham "Onaway" Scout and Guide Group.

The Scout and Guide group started in 2005 and meets in Birmingham Princess Diana Children's Hospital. It provides activities for any child who is a patient, and their siblings. Activities are today based on four wards, a General Ward, a Thoracic Ward, a Surgical Ward and Oncology, with the potential to expand as leaders become available. More recently it has also provided an opportunity for the development of young leaders as well.

The group has no permanent membership, or parental support, and exists through the sponsorship of Pathfinder Lodge No. 8596 in the Province of Worcestershire(*). A Past Master, Malcolm Bird is the Group Scout Leader, and what would normally be the Group Executive Committee is formed by the W.M. each year taking the role of Group Chairman, the Charity Steward as Treasurer and the Lodge Secretary is the Scout Group Secretary while the brethren form the committee membership. Annual meetings have been held in the Lodge Room attended by the County Commissioners for Scouts and Guides as well as the PGM, the DPGM and APGM's for Worcestershire.

As each weekly meeting in the hospital involves the use of materials, there is a regular cost for the group. This funding is raised by the members of Pathfinder Lodge as well as support from other Lodges and Chapters both in the Province and other Lodges in the Kindred Lodges Association, as well as donations from non-Masonic sources.

The Group "regalia" consists of a Green scarf which is pale blue (the colour of a Master Mason's Apron) with a perimeter stripe in Green for Scouts and Blue for Guides. The group badge consists of four emblems for the Hospital, Scouts, Guides and the Craft. A pin badge is worn by supporters and a special three dimensional, non-toxic, rubber badge with a clip is provided to children who take part in activities.

(* Pathfinder Lodge meets at Northfield Masonic Hall and is a member of the Kindred Lodges Association. It was founded for those who primarily have an affiliation with the Scout Association, but today has a wider membership.)

Further information can be obtained from Malcolm Bird (mhbird@blueyonder.co.uk)