

Report Of The Province Of Devonshire Benevolent Fund 2010

This is my sixth report as Secretary of the Benevolent Fund. W. Bro. John Shepherd continues with the day to day running of the Benevolent Office, assisted admirably by Mrs Angela Pulman. We thank Angela and John for all the hard work they do on behalf of the Benevolent Fund and the Province of Devonshire in general.

The total Benevolent Funds for 2009 were £1,644,493 and at 2008 were £1,465,313. The William Alexander Kneel Endowment (WAKE) Fund accounts for approximately 80% of the Fund and for 2009 is worth £1,403,017. It continues to be of huge value to Devon people and charitable associations of a non Masonic nature, requiring help in some small way in the form of donations. These donations range from £250 to a maximum of £1,500 all payable from the interest accrued by the WAKE Fund, which in turn is managed by the Benevolent Fund Committee. I must continue to thank R.W. Bro. William Alexander Kneel for his insight in conceiving such a Fund of 1 million pounds and the disbursement of the interest. R.W. Bro. Robin Osborn and you the Brethren of the Province for raising the fund from some £800,000 to over the £1,000,000. With sound investments this is now around £1.4 million. I know that the two Annual disbursements to local and deserving causes are two of the most enjoyable meetings of the Devonshire Masonic Year. The losses incurred in 2008 of £211,945 are almost recovered in 2009 with a gain of £183,799. The Provincial Fund in 2008 was £214,090 against £236,888 in 2009. The Total income from the Fund was only £50,977 against £110,298 in 2008 due to most of the donations going direct to the RMTGB. In 2007 the income was almost £200,000. The Investment Income in 2009 was £49,997 against £52,799 in 2008. The Fund is in a very sound state in view of the Financial Markets. I welcome W. Bro. Mike Walker onto the WAKE fund team assisting W. Bro. Conrad Donaldson Provincial Grand Charity Steward as the co-ordinator of the Annual disbursements and I look forward to a long and happy relationship.

The 2009 annual disbursement from the WAKE Fund took place on Friday 29th May at the Mount Edgcombe Masonic Hall and on the 18th September at the Masonic Hall Crediton. At the first disbursement at Mount Edgcombe there were 40 recipients who received a total of £27,750 from R.W. Bro. Michael T. Penny the Provincial Grand Master. At the second disbursement at Crediton there were 22 and the Provincial Grand Master gave out disbursements to the value of £18,000, in addition a further £4,250 has been donated to other worthy causes during the year, making a total of £50,000.

The total success of these evenings was due to the help and support I received from both the Mount Edgcombe Hall Committee and the Crediton Masonic Hall Committee. My grateful thanks must also go to W. Bro. John Smerdon and W. Bro. Mike Roscoe for the superb photographs they took to mark the very happy occasions. The enjoyment and happiness of all present was a delight to witness, Freemasonry at its best. The disbursement evenings are known to be the highlights of R.W. Bro. Michael Penny and his wife Lynn's Masonic year.

The Trustees hold quarterly meetings and direct the activities of the Fund. W. Bro. P. Galt, W. Bro. C. Turner, W. Bro. J. Shepherd (Benevolent Fund Treasurer), W. Bro. J. Mullins, W. Bro. W. Daw and are the appointed Trustees of the Benevolent Fund. The long-term investment aim of the portfolio of investments is based on a low to medium risk with a potential for some capital growth. Brewin and Dolphin Securities are the brokers and advisers to the Fund. The Trustees deal directly with our investment advisors and are responsible for the Investments.

I must thank all the Presiding Officers and the Provincial Wardens at the various Installations for the way that they have promoted the WAKE Fund by encouraging Lodges and Charity Stewards to make requests to the Fund for assistance to local non-Masonic charities and organisations within the Province and to maintain most importantly the connection with the requester. Priority is always given to applications from Lodges and the WAKE Fund will endeavour to match any individual donation from a Lodge up to a maximum of £1,500.

Brethren, we are still faced with an even bigger challenge in the shape of the 2012 Festival for the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys for which the organising committee under the Chairmanship of W. Bro. W. Daw and the Secretary W. Bro. C. Donaldson will be encouraging still bigger efforts from us all. This is a five year festival and we are already well into our five year term... I ask you all to support the Province as you have done so well in the past, to help the Provincial Grand Master R.W. Bro. Michael T. Penny to raise a magnificent sum that this Province of ours can be justly proud of, but to keep in mind the WAKE fund. Since 2001, some £236,000 has been distributed to local charities and organisations within the county of Devon. This is tangible proof of "Freemasonry in the Community".

I must thank W. Bro. Conrad Donaldson Provincial Grand Charity Steward, W. Bro. John Shepherd Treasurer and W. Bro. Michael Walker for all the help that they have extended me during this year.

Brethren most of all I must thank you for your continued generosity as without it the Benevolent Fund would not survive.

F. Handscombe PAGDC
Secretary
Date 31st January 2010