



History of the Mark Benevolent Fund

The Mark Benevolent Fund is a registered charity (No. 207610) came into existence in 1868 on the suggestion of the Reverend George Raymond Portal, Grand Master of the Mark. His views on charity were far more radical and progressive than the general thinking of the time. He felt that for charity to be effective it had to be disbursed swiftly and without the bureaucratic formalities of other Masonic charities. To him it was wrong for there to be any delay in providing assistance to those in need and his own Latin tag "Bis dat qui cito dat" – he gives twice who gives promptly – became, and still is, the principal guideline of the M.B.F.

The Fund has disbursed many millions to individual petitioners and an even greater sum in grants to charities within the wider community. A major grant of £1.6m has been made to the RNLI help fund a new life boat, Addenbrooke's Hospital Trust received over £2m for machines to help in the diagnosis of prostate cancer and a pledge of £2.6 million has been made to Hope for Tomorrow Cancer Charity for the purchase of mobile chemotherapy units throughout the UK. These projects can only be funded with your help and dedication to the fund. When it comes to individual Petitioners things are handled slightly differently. When a Lodge Almoner is made aware of a Brother or his family in distress he should immediately arrange a visit by himself or a visiting Brother to assess the circumstances and then complete a grant application form with as much information as possible.

This is then passed to the M.B.F. via the Provincial Almoner. The case is then reviewed, any further information deemed necessary asked for and then submitted to the next Petitions Committee. It is important for Lodge Almoners to be aware of Brethren not dining at the Festive Board, missing meetings or failing to pay annual fees. This may be a sign of distress and it is their role to try and assist if at all possible. Every year a different Province hosts the M.B.F. Festival. A Province will organise its own fund raising towards a target that it sets and concludes with a Festival Banquet when the final results are announced. Festival Stewardships are obtained by a brother and/or his Lady by paying a fee to the Stewards Fund for each hosting Festival. When the proceeds of each Festival are sent to the Mark Benevolent Fund the individual donations are set out in a list and those sums are credited towards honorifics in the fund as below.

Qualifications cannot be achieved or acknowledged until your funds have been transferred to the Mark Benevolent Fund. The income to the MBF is principally from individual and Lodge contributions which can be found in the MBF Honorifics Brochure in the forms download section.