

Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys

W Bro Chris Ames writes

“On 16th April, I attended a Special General Court of the RMTGB which was convened to inform the Masonic Community and the members of the RMTGB in particular about the forthcoming changes to our charities. The meeting took place at the Royal Masonic School for Girls in its beautiful and very spacious chapel. Approximately 150 delegates were present.



“Speakers included Mike Woodcock, President of the Trust, and Michael Codd, the Chair of Communications and Fund Raising. They briefly summarised the past and current work of the Trust giving us a brief glimpse of the historical aspects when Bartholomew Ruspini, an Italian dentist and a Freemason, set up the first Masonic School for Girls in 1788. The boys’ school followed ten years later.

“The boys’ school was sold in 1977, whilst the girls’ school was given

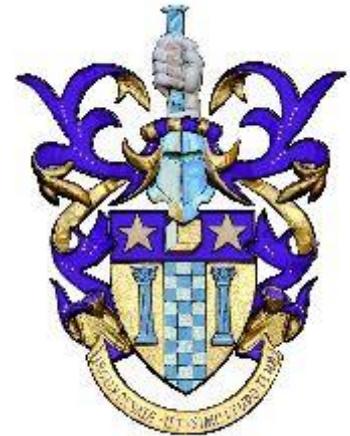
independent status some years later and still exists at Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire.

“This school now has some 700 girls most of whom are fee paying, but the RMTGB still supports about fifteen or so pupils at the school.

To be merged

“We all know by now that the four central Masonic Charities are to be merged. Indeed this has already started, in that a few years ago the administration of all four, previously dispersed over several buildings in London, is now contained at Freemasons Hall, Great Queen Street. This has enabled efficiencies and economies to take place and a better communication between the four charities.

“Other changes are taking place too. For example there is only one phone number to ring if a Mason has a query. This, together with the new “Freemasonry Cares” initiative, has streamlined the advice and support which, in the past, has presented Masons with difficulties in finding the right charity from which to gain support.



“Tony Harvey and Keith Emmerson, both Council Members of the Trust, also gave talks on other aspects of change. There is now a combined payroll for all four charities, a joint application form and other similar benefits. All of this, it is hoped, will be more relevant to our changing society and provide value for money for those who donate. Currently the Masonic charities use 10% of income for administration. They are working hard to reduce this still further.

Funding ring-fenced

“The current festival system will continue up to 2022. After that date all new Provincial festivals will be addressed to the new central charity and dispersed as the needs require. However, there are legal aspects to consider. The Charities Commission has stated quite rightly that any monies collected for a specific purpose can only be used for that purpose. So, for example, if an individual or Lodge has given money to the RMTGB specifically to be spent on the girls and boys of deserving Masons or their immediate families, then this cannot be redirected to the Royal Masonic Benevolent Institution (RMBI). The money is thus ‘ring-fenced’.

“The RMTGB is the wealthiest of the four charities, enjoying assets of approximately £150m. This is invested to give significant dividends which are used to provide some of the support to the needy girls and boys. If one looks at ‘Freemasonry Today’ magazine there are specific articles which give much more detail about the proposed changes.

“Consultation on these issues began on 16th April and will be finalised at the AGM on 5th October in Southampton. Further information can be found at www.rmtgb.org.”



THE ROYAL MASONIC SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

AT RICKMANSWORTH PARK SINCE 1934

W Bro Chris Ames is the Ambassador for the RMTGB in Gloucestershire, here displaying the report of the Special General Court.

