



## Message from the President

THIS LAST YEAR has seen many changes, in the Order, in the world. In February we marked the passing of our beloved 78th Grand Master, Fra' Andrew Bertie, who had led the Order for twenty years, the first Englishman ever to have been elected to that position. He oversaw many important developments: extending the diplomatic corps from 50 to over a hundred, modernising the Order's administrative machinery, increasing the number of national Associations to over 40, encouraging the many hospitaller and humanitarian initiatives which now means the Order has a presence in over 120 countries.

The Order, in seeking its 79th Grand Master, turned again to an Englishman, Benedictine educated, as had been his predecessor. Fra' Matthew Festing, our own Grand Prior, was elected to the Order's highest office in March. Since then, he has undertaken State and Official Visits, received Heads of State and diplomats, gone on pilgrimage, visited the sick, and found time to encourage more vocations in the Order. Most recently, he opened the Order's International Strategy Seminar in Venice, and listed the Order's main priorities for the next decade: to seek vocations, to support the Lourdes pilgrimage, the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, and the Order's worldwide relief service, Malteser International.

These three great foci will occupy us throughout 2009 and well beyond. I ask you all to respond to our Grand Master's call for your commitment to help in whatever ways you can - with your time, your energy, your funds, whatever way you can best be part of these international efforts. Here at home we continue apace in developing the Companions, in our Trust Homes, the hospital and hospice in London, the Dial-A-Journey in Scotland, some of which you will note in this publication. And of course the many nameless kindnesses and support you give to those in need throughout our land. The world is undergoing a time of great uncertainty. There was never more need to help our fellow man.

Charles Weld

President, British Association of the Order of Malta

IT WAS COLD AND WET, but enthusiasm remained undimmed as over 400 Order leaders from the five continents attended the Order's International Seminar in Venice mid January, entitled 'The Order Ten Years Ahead'. For three days they examined and defined the Order's future strategies.

Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing opened the meeting, remembering first of all the Cardinal Patronus of the Order, Pio Laghi, who had died just days before, and who, in the fading moments of his life, sent his message to the participants to honour their tasks, their commitment, the Church. Fra' Matthew stressed some of the Order's priorities: the encouragement of vocations, the extension and enhancement of health care and humanitarian operations, and the Order's emergency relief service, Malteser International.

After special meetings for the Professed knights, the Presidents, the Hospitallers and the Order's Diplomatic Corps, twelve working groups met and studied their own topics in detail. Some conclusions, already clear: priority for encouragement of vocations and new members; a retreat house for the Professed to be established in

## International Seminar in Venice

Order leaders look to the future in a changing world

Rome, 'virtual retreats' and a 'virtual seminary' to be developed; the Order to develop an important role in defending religious beliefs and practices in the face of secularist legislation and propaganda concerning abortion, euthanasia; the Order to bring the work of the International Association of Catholic Bioethicists into a core competency.

The reactions of one participant reflected the reactions of all: 'The Order of Malta worldwide is in good heart and very confident of addressing the very real challenges and opportunities the Venice Seminar has identified.'

The Seminar ended with a solemn High Mass in the splendour of St. Mark's Basilica, celebrated by the Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal

Angelo Scola, who outlined the Order's humanitarian and spiritual mission and emphasised the

importance of the Order's role as promoter of peace among nations, religions and societies.



## On assessing the Order's mission

The Venice international strategy seminar probed the Order's two-fold aims

From the Grand Prior, Fra' Fredrik Crichton-Stuart

IN JANUARY, representatives from every Grand Priory, Sub Priory and National Association gathered in Venice for a Strategy Seminar - a vital and hardworking group which examined the demands facing the Order over the coming years in our mission to remain faithful to our ideals and continue to serve our lords the sick. Its recommendations will be taken forward to the Order's Chapter General (election of senior office bearers) in June 2009.

### Spirituality in focus

The religious life of the Order was a central focus. There are still members who do not realise it is a religious Order of the Church, far older than the Dominicans or Jesuits. At its heart are the Professed, or Knights of Justice.

When the Order was founded by Blessed Gerard in the eleventh century, the members were monks; only after the fall of Malta and the loss of convent and priories did lay

members came to the fore. We examined how to encourage vocations, including reviewing our way of life and formation, from novitiate to final vows and thereafter, and also the purpose and formation of the Second Class (bound by a promise of Obedience) and the Third Class (committed by no formal promise, but in honour bound).

### Care is impartial and worldwide

As well as religious aspects, our care of our lords the sick was strongly emphasised - the work for which the Order was founded. Here too some members are unaware of our great international activities, in spite of the excellent Activity Report produced by the Grand Magistracy biannually. Just two examples from the many where help is given to all, impartially: our Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem is the only maternity hospital for the entire Palestinian West Bank, serving a mainly Moslem population, without preference for race or creed, and where annual running costs are over US\$3 million; and the Blessed Gerard Foundation in South Africa for HIV positive mothers and infants, which serves the Kwa-Zulu Natal region where over 80% of the population are HIV-positive. It receives no government aid. Patients are a mixture of different Christian and local religions and are treated totally impartially.

Whilst considering how to maintain and expand our international work, we must continue to develop local projects where our confreres can work directly with our lords the sick.

The Grand Prior, Fra' Fredrik Crichton-Stuart



**Lourdes Pilgrimage 2009**  
Friday 1 May -  
Friday 8 May

For more information or a booking form, contact:

Anthony Brown  
Hospitaller Ltd  
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# On life's pilgrimage

An open letter from BASMOM Vice President, Patricia Talbot

AS WE MOVE into another year perhaps some of us are thinking about our pilgrimage through life so far. Maybe the going is hard but as we are made for God, with His love and our perseverance we can enjoy all the wonderful rewards that He bestows on us.

## We all need to know that someone cares

There are many ways in which we can show Our Lord that we really love Him by how we conduct our lives and follow His will. As members of BASMOM we have many opportunities of being pilgrims, and of sharing our journey with others. On our annual Lourdes pilgrimage we can really commit to helping our sick pilgrims. For them it is a special time with all the loving kindness that is bestowed on them. They feel part of an extended family with whom they can share the joys, fears and worries of life. Many of these wonderful people return home restored and with a sense of God's compassion and healing. We must continue to keep in contact with them - some live by themselves, some are lonely, at times lost and bewildered by life's burdens. A simple telephone call can cheer, with the knowledge that someone is thinking of them. We all need a friend and to know that someone cares and is keeping in touch.



## A sense of purpose

Another aspect in our pilgrimage is to think more deeply about our prayer life. Our Grand Master is very keen for more members to consider becoming a Knight or Dame in Obedience. It is a commitment which reminds us daily of our resolve to pray. We need a sense of purpose in our lives, to know that we need God, that we must be humble and allow Him to walk with us along the way – on a journey that is sometimes hard and painful. We search and yearn to understand why we suffer pain, the loss of a friend or a close family member. We need Our

Vice President Patricia Talbot

Lord to guide us through these difficult times. He will help us if we put our trust in Him.

So as we continue our personal pilgrimage let us remember each other and our deceased members and let us pray that younger members of our families and friends may be encouraged to join our Order.

With best wishes for the coming year.

Patricia Talbot  
Vice President, BASMOM

# Brightening lives

John Joliffe joined the weekenders and was impressed by the Kielder Trust in action

FOR EIGHT YEARS NOW the Order's Scottish Delegation organises a highly popular weekend for a dozen handicapped visitors from the Glasgow area at the Calvert Trust's Centre, Kielder Water, a large reservoir in magnificent natural surroundings just over the border in Northumberland. The leading spirit in the project is Mrs. Cecilia McEwen, energetically supported by daughter Sophie who coordinates the Voluntary Helpers at the Hospital, when not herself at the wheel of an ambulance.

Some visitors are severely handicapped, but the outdoor activities organised by the Trust's highly professional staff are an inspiring example of ways to brighten their lives.

## Beaming faces and a great sense of achievement

The emphasis is on outdoor activities – archery, sailing, abseiling up an almost vertical rock face, and hurtling through the air on the King Swing, a spectacular facility which looks alarming enough even from the safety of the ground, but which children enjoy fearlessly! A wonderful display of falconry at the hawk and owl centre offers participants, including very eager children, a strong, protective gauntlet so that these huge, fascinating birds of prey can fly in and perch on visitors' wrists, lured by the handler

with morsels of meat.

There are engrossing indoor activities too – table tennis, pool, bar billiards and scrabble, and a large chess board on the terrace, its pieces three feet high. The indoor facilities are ideal in wet weather, though when I visited heavy rain hardly seemed to hamper outdoor activities at all, proving that there is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothes. Beaming faces came in out of the pouring rain, to dry off and start something else. The sense of achievement which all these strenuous activities provide is beyond price, and is reflected in the cheerful grins of those who have mastered them.

Archbishop Mario Conti came from Glasgow to preside and say Mass, a tribute to this great project. As at Lourdes pilgrimages, 24-hour care is required, with little time off for the carers. But the visitors' enjoyment and the high-spirited atmosphere are a great boost through long hours.

The Kielder Trust operates two other centres: in the Lake District near Keswick, and on Exmoor in North Devon. Weekends can be organised there, too, and interested members should in the first instance contact the BASMOM Secretariat (020 7286 1414).

John Joliffe



# Right royal occasions:

Residents and staff of the Orders of St John Homes Care Trust greet two princes

Peter Loyd reports on happy events and ever busier times

THE 201 RESIDENTS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS at Athelston House welcomed two princes to their new home in Malmesbury last autumn. On 30 September the Prince and Grand Master of the Order, Fra' Matthew Festing, conducted the Service of Dedication and on 21 November the Prince of Wales unveiled a memorial plaque.

Residents and staff gathered with Fra' Matthew for the inauguration – his first major ceremony since his accession. The Right Rev Aidan

Bellenger represented the Sovereign Order and the Rev Colin Fox, the Venerable Order. Following lunch and a tour of the 80-bed home, he was presented with a memento by Mr James Clark on behalf of the residents.

Eight weeks later, Prince Charles, having expressed an interest in visiting, well surpassed his allotted time chatting to as many residents and staff as he could. It was a close run thing as to which Prince raised the most laughter during these happy visits!



The Grand Master, Fra' Matthew Festing in conversation with a resident; The Prince of Wales, greeted by Trust Chairman, Peter Loyd

## Trust projects go from strength to strength

Elsewhere in the Trust the redevelopment programme proceeds apace. In Gloucester, construction of two more 80-bed homes nears completion. Foundation stones were laid last July for the specialist dementia home next to Woolstrop House, Quedgeley and Millbrook Lodge, adjacent to Horsbere House, Brockworth. The Woolstrop residents moved in this January and both homes will be completed

before year end.

In Oxfordshire our new 71-bed home in Thame, Meadowcroft, is nearing completion, with another grand opening this autumn, whilst in Bicester, Banbury and Chipping Norton sites are being prepared for Turf cutting ceremonies before summer, with three more openings already planned for 2010.

Peter Loyd  
Chairman

## Orders of St John Trust Care Homes statistics for 2008

Number of Homes	75
Total staff	3757
Qualified nurses	153
Residents	3144
In Day Care	1162
Volunteer visitors	192
Financial turnover	£82m



## The view on the ground

Malteser International in Africa

Hatty Loyd went to see and to help

**LIFE IN AFRICA:** I was woken one night by the sound of scuttling across my floor. Picking up my torch, I pointed it through my mosquito net, only to discover a termite's nest forming in the corner of my Tuckul (mud hut), two feet high and growing! But this is part and parcel of working with an aid agency in the field...

My time with the Order of Malta Volunteers (OMV) first attracted me to aid work and my International Business degree gave the possibility of spending six months with the Order of Malta in Honduras. After graduation I applied to Malteser International's head office in Cologne for a graduate position in their

Africa department.

Nairobi, Kenya: After six months I was posted to Nairobi, where Malteser International run their Regional Finance Coordination Office for Africa, as well as 16 Health clinics in the slums and outskirts of Nairobi. There are 455 national and 35 international staff like me working in Africa. My I was accountant for all seven locations across South Sudan and Dafur, including their many small outstations.

Yei, Sudan: In July I was posted to Yei in South Sudan where Malteser International run two large hospitals and a laboratory for TB, HIV, leprosy, malaria and sleeping

Hatty and friends

sickness, and outreach programmes to the most remote locations in the region. South Sudan is extremely green and fertile, a different world from the Sudan we see on the news. It has a hot climate and during the rainy season all the roads get washed away and have to be re-built again in the dry months.

Every week teams of trained medical staff are sent out to the field from each location to reach patients in the most remote areas, to treat them and assess for TB, HIV, leprosy and sleeping sickness. Throughout Africa, five million people receive assistance from Malteser International.

In Yei I looked after everything from finance to HR and logistics. During my time, Martin Nolan (a BASMOM member of Malteser International's Rapid Deployment Unit) paid a visit and together we flew two hours north to another Malteser International location, in Rumbek. Here we set about re-organising their store system and logistics.

The patients were always grateful for whatever we could do for them: I was thanked daily for how well we treated them and how much hope we had given.

Before Christmas I returned to England, but the lives I saw helped by Malteser International in Africa have left their indelible mark. I look forward to returning to work further for the Order of Malta worldwide relief.

Hattie Loyd

For more information on Malteser International and its work, see: [www.malteser-international.org](http://www.malteser-international.org)

## Vital support abroad

BASMOM's Foreign Aid Service (FAS)

Nicolas Reuttner summarises FAS actions in 2008

**F**AS' work continued to expand through 2008. The hugely successful appeal for Myanmar (Burma) in May raised £100,000, the second biggest donation from the Order for Malteser International's work.

**Burma: care for 65,000 in the first, tense days continues**

The work in Myanmar is a showcase of our work, because when other charities were struggling to gain access to the region, Malteser International already had an established presence. So within hours of the storms, the Order's teams were out protecting water supplies, and preparing emergency medical centres. Within a few days, we had 65,000 people in our care and we continue to follow our mission of support there.

**Africa: support for thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs)**

We have also supported Malteser International in Minova, on the border between North and South Kivu in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo, distributing around 1,000 tons of food to over 6,000 families who had fled because of the conflict in North Kivu and are now IDPs. We expect to

continue our work well into this year.

Elsewhere in Africa, we have been supporting Malteser International's ongoing programmes in the slums of Nairobi, with projects fighting TB and AIDS. Hatty Loyd and Martin Nolan have spent time working on site (see Hatty's article in this newsletter). And we continue to support Blessed Gerard's Care Centre in South Africa and the Soup Kitchen in St Petersburg, where hundreds of hot meals are provided for the elderly poor every week.

**A much deserved recognition**

At the International Hospitallers' meeting in Malta last year, Peter Loyd, the retiring Hospitaller was awarded the Malteser International medal of Merit for his work. Congratulations to him for all he has done!

The year's FAS dinner was held at Inner Temple in October, with the new location deemed a great success. We raised over £23,000 and continue to look for good projects to support with these funds.

Nicolas Reuttner  
Vice-Hospitaller

## In search of the Baptist

Julian Allason follows Fra' Matthew Festing in a journey of discovery to the Hospitaller's greatest stronghold – and finds the burial place of their patron – in the heart of Syria

**I**T IS OCTOBER 2007 and two British knights are picking their way through the Old City in Damascus, following in the steps of Saul of Tarsus, blinded after his vision on the road here. Fra' Matthew Festing and Ian Scott are traversing Via Recta, 'The Street called Straight' from the Book of Acts, to the site of the house of Judas in which the persecutor of Christians underwent healing and conversion to become the great apostle Paul. Seven of the eight city gates erected by the Romans still stand, including the one from which St Paul was lowered in a basket to effect a midnight escape from capture.

**The splendour of the Omayyad Mosque and its relic**

Unexpectedly it is to the magnificent Omayyad Mosque that the knights are headed, the fourth holiest place in Islam, and, somewhat surprisingly, reputed repository of the head of St. John the Baptist. Emerging from the labyrinthine souq beneath an arch that once formed the entrance to the Roman temple of Jupiter, the massive building can be seen to retain much of the cloistered structure of the Byzantine basilica it replaced. Indeed for half a century it was happily shared by Christians and Moslems. One of the minarets looks as if it has

been added to the top of a *campanile*.

Still open to all faiths the Omayyad mosque is entered from the western door. A third of the way down its carpeted length – women roped off to the right, men to the left – is a marble mausoleum of Moorish aspect, the tomb of the Baptist. Gathered around it, praying earnestly, are pilgrims, mainly but not exclusively Moslem, for like the prophets of the Old Testament John is honoured in Islam, although strictly speaking not venerated. This does not prevent petitions, sometimes accompanied by an encouraging banknote, being slipped under the door of the shrine.

Following John's beheading at the behest of Salome the Gospel records only that John's body was buried in a tomb. The earliest tradition locates this at Sebaste in Samaria to which the remains may well have been carried from Herod Anita's fortress at Machaerus in present day Jordan, identified by the Romano-Jewish historian Josephus, as the site of execution.

In the time of Julian the Apostate this tomb was desecrated and part of his bones were burned, the rest being saved by Christians who placed them in the safekeeping of Abbot Philip of Jerusalem. Thereafter St Jerome recorded miracles in

Sebaste, and there are records of relics being interred in Alexandria.

An incorrupt hand in an early jewelled reliquary with credible provenance continues to be exhibited at the Topkapi palace in Istanbul. Beyond Damascus, relics attributed to the Baptist are venerated in Amiens, Nemours and Rome, though scholars ascribe their multiplicity to a confusion with other saints John.

**The incomparable vast Krak des Chevaliers**

Two days later, driving west from Homs, midway between Damascus and Aleppo, the two knights are arrested by a timeless sight. For atop the hill guarding the pass to the Mediterranean is the great Crusader castle of Krak des Chevaliers. All but intact after seven centuries the great bastion commands the landscape, almost unimaginably vast in scale. From within its curtain wall – a hundred feet thick in places – the garrison of two thousand Knights Hospitaller and men-at-arms had repulsed Saladin and his Saracen armies in the wars to protect the Holy Land.

Perhaps the citadel still exerts a certain spiritual power, for as Fra' Matthew Festing, then one of a number of professed knights (monks) of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, wanders through the gothic cloisters he pauses to pray in the Knights' chapel. Six months later he will, somewhat unexpectedly, be elected 79th Grand Master of the 12,500 strong Catholic religious Order, whose activities are now concentrated on medical care of the

needy of all faiths. The symmetry might have appealed to T.E. Lawrence, a frequent visitor, to whom Krak des Chevaliers was simply "the best preserved and most wholly admirable castle in the world." Certainly it never fell to force of arms.

On their road back to Damascus a third language appears on the signposts; to Arabic and French is added Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus. Ma'lula, to which they point, and two neighbouring villages are the last places on earth in which the tongue is still spoken. At an altitude of almost 5000 feet tiny

houses cling to the face of the mountain, harbouring a way of life little altered since Biblical times.

In the monasteries of St Sergius and St Taqla the liturgy of the Mass replicates the Last Supper down to the original words of consecration of bread and wine. At a time when religious persecution prevails throughout much of the region, the toleration of minorities speaks persuasively in Syrian favour. For members and those whose lives have been touched by the Order of St John it remains a special place of pilgrimage.

Julian Allason



The marble mausoleum tomb of the Baptist, Omayyad Mosque, Damascus

## The Order of Malta: **Statistics**

### Who the Order is

- The most ancient religious charitable order of lay people in the Roman Catholic Church, founded in 1048
- A subject of international law which exercises sovereign functions
- Has 12,500 members on all continents
- Is independent and politically neutral
- Has its central extraterritorial government in Rome
- Maintains bilateral diplomatic relations with 102 States at the level of Ambassador
- Enjoys the status of Permanent Observer to the United Nations and the European Commission
- Has 18 Permanent Observer missions, including to the United Nations and other main international agencies:
  - The United Nations: New York, Geneva, Vienna, and also Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) / World Food Programme (WFP); World Health Organization (WHO); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);

### UNESCO.

- The European Commission.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
- The Organization of American States (OAS).
- The Council of Europe.

### What the Order does worldwide

- Provides humanitarian assistance and carries out charitable work in over 120 countries to the poor, the needy and those marginalised by society
- Volunteer corps in 15 countries
- Ambulance services in 30 countries
- 20,000 employed personnel: medical and social assistants, paramedics
- 80,000 permanent volunteers
- 40 Hospitals: Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, Benin, Cameroon, Togo, Cambodia, Haiti
- 110 Homes for the elderly
- Numerous dispensaries and first aid posts on the five continents: eg, in Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal, Sudan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Brazil, El Salvador, Haiti as well as in the Western world.

### Emergency aid missions in recent years include:

- Relief for earthquake victims and support for reconstruction in India and El Salvador (from 2001)
- Assistance to refugees in Afghanistan (from 2001)
- Basic health care programmes in Myanmar (from 2001)
- Relief for refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2003)
- Relief for earthquake victims and support for reconstruction in Bam, Iran (2004)
- Assistance to refugees in Darfur, Sudan (2004)
- Aid and reconstruction after the tsunami in south-east Asia (2005)
- Relief in famine-struck Niger and Mali (2005)
- Assistance for Katrina hurricane victims in New Orleans, USA (2005)
- Relief for earthquake victims in Pakistan (2005)
- Medical aid for earthquake victims on the island of Java, Indonesia (2006)
- Relief for earthquake victims in Peru (2007)
- Emergency aid after the flooding in the Mexican state of Tabasco (2007)
- Humanitarian relief after the cyclone in Myanmar (2008).

## The credit crunch ...and what it may mean for charities

Stephen Macklow-Smith reviews the current position

THE EVENTS OF THE LAST YEAR and a half, scary as they have been for all of us, will have an especially negative impact on UK charities. I'm not talking here about those charities who, in attempting to maximise their investment returns, decided to deposit money in an Icelandic bank, or the American Foundations whose assets were managed by Bernie Madoff. I'm talking about the smaller charities, such as the religious orders with small endowments from which they draw financial income.

Even with a conservative investment policy, these charities are likely to have had an exposure to equities, and they will probably also have large cash balances. The interest paid on cash deposits has collapsed from around 5% to around 1%, so income from cash deposits will fall this year by 80%. In their equity portfolio they have seen a large fall in value, which they have to report in their statement of financial affairs, and the income from those equities will also have been hit by the reduction in dividend payments from companies whose profits have been hit by the recession, and most importantly from UK banks, who were an important component of the total income paid out by the UK stock market but who now seem to be being discouraged from paying by the UK government as a price for the emergency injections of capital which they received. One option open to companies is to pay

dividends in extra shares rather than cash, but again for the charity this reduces their financial income, unless they choose to sell the small extra allocation of shares they have received, which will mean that they incur costs in dealing charges and commissions.

Not only that, but the supporter base for many charities has been hit hard by the crisis, and fund-raising this year will no doubt be squeezed by the general downturn in disposable income. According to The Times, in December, Shelter, the homelessness charity, announced that it had lost £400,000 in six weeks as corporate sponsors cancelled contributions, and the Red Cross cancelled their Winter Gala because they were unable to find a corporate sponsor.

### How BASMOM is affected

From the point of view of BASMOM and its associated companies, we are affected by both of these factors, and our situation is further complicated by the fact that a lot of our annual outlay, on our Pilgrimages to Lourdes, and on the levy which we pay to the Grand Magistry in Rome, is in Euros, whereas our income is in Sterling. Our assets, however, have been conservatively managed, and we feel well-placed to ride out the storm, in particular because we have a very committed body of members and supporters. The next two years, however, will not be easy.

Stephen Macklow-Smith  
Treasurer, BASMOM

## Bringing like-minded people together

### The Companions of the Order of Malta

Henry Lorimer explains how it works and how to join

THE ORDER OF MALTA and its charitable activities are not so well known in Britain. If more people knew what we do at home and abroad, even more could be achieved. Knowing there were many generous-hearted people wanting to help, we considered how to bring them together under one banner, to form and develop an auxiliary organisation of supporters of the Order's work in principle, as well as those who would like to offer practical help.

### What's in a name

As such an organisation already existed in Scotland – the Companions of the Order of Malta – it was decided to transform the Companions into a nationwide movement (under the auspices of Hospitaller Ltd.), to embrace all who wish to support Order activities, work on its annual pilgrimages, attend its religious services and so on.

### A tremendous start

The Companions was re-launched at the Order's pilgrimage to Lourdes in May 2008 as a British volunteer group. Already there are over 150 members, including the Grand Master, the officers of BASMOM and many other members, their families and friends. Thanks to their example, recruitment has got off to a tremendous start.

### Council

The Companions will be led by Millie Wentworth-Stanley and Henry

Lorimer, who may well be familiar to readers. A Council has been formed. A policy decision at its inaugural meeting: the practical charitable work of Companions will concentrate initially on care homes and hospices. This means Companions sitting with, chatting to (and, when requested, praying with) those in care. In time, other activities will be added – such as prison visiting, feeding the poor.

Additional ways of helping Companions will also support the Order's response to international emergencies (usually through its relief service, Malteser International), with donations going directly to these causes with very little spent on overheads.

### How to join

The Companions welcome new members from among the Order, their families and friends; former members of the OMV; friends of existing Companions; people recommended by the organisation's chaplains; staff and volunteers working with the Order's charities and members of the Catholic Union of Great Britain – bringing like-minded people together in support of a common cause.

For more information or how to join, email [secretary@companions-orderofmalta.org](mailto:secretary@companions-orderofmalta.org) or write to: The Secretary, The Companions of the Order of Malta, Shotley Hall, Shotley Bridge, Consett, Co Durham DH8 9TE.

Henry Lorimer, Convener

### Special beds needed for St John's Hospice

Anne Jaffray's 2009 appeal: an electrically equipped bed (£2000) for the sick and immobile. Plans are to be finalised, but all donations most gratefully received. Contact: BASMOM Secretariat 020 7286 1414, quoting Lady Jaffray, Hospice Fundraiser. *St. John's Hospice provides free care to the terminally ill across eight London boroughs at a cost of £2.4million p.a.*

### When Force becomes Fortitude

There are times in everyone's life when great courage and fortitude are required. Over and above the call of duty. Last year we admired such strength in Caroline de la Force, the mainstay of the BASMOM Secretariat. We salute her. And we thank her from our hearts for her care of all of us.

### Whisky in the jar

Torphichen, the Order's own Scotch Whisky now on sale @£15.67 per bottle (£94 case of six) plus delivery £10 per order. Torphichen: de luxe blend, high proportion of malt, aged in oak casks. 'Top notch,' says Charles Maclean, Scotland's foremost whisky writer. Bottling of The Grand Master 11 Year Old Single Malt is this summer. Orders: telephone 01972 500765.

### BASMOM 'new look' website

What we do: articles and photographs to [basmom@btinternet.com](mailto:basmom@btinternet.com) marked: For the WEBSITE  
The new look is at the same internet address: [www.orderofmalta.org.uk](http://www.orderofmalta.org.uk)



### International Children's Summer Camp: 10-17 July 2010

Contact the BASMOM Secretariat for latest information Tel: 020 7286 1414; Fax: 020 7286 3243; Email: [basmom@btconnect.com](mailto:basmom@btconnect.com)

## Dates For The Diary, 2009

March	September
2-5 Dames Retreat: Ampleforth	13 Victoria Mass
12 Lourdes Pilgrimage Training Day (North Of England)	18-20 Walsingham
19 Mid Lenten Recollection	24 Council Meeting
22 Council meeting	<b>October</b>
26-29 Association Retreat: Douai Abbey	10 Rosary Crusade Of Reparation
<b>April</b>	13 Feast Of Blessed Gerard
9-11 Solemn Easter Triduum	Fas Dinner – Tba
19 Lourdes Pilgrimage Training Day: London	Chaplains' Meeting – Tba
30 Council Meeting	Annual Dinner – Tba
<b>May</b>	<b>November</b>
1-8 The Order's Pilgrimage	12 Scottish Requiem Mass
<b>June</b>	22 South Western Day of Recollection
11 Corpus Christi	26 Formation Day
13 Castle Craig outing	26 Annual Requiem
19 Venerable Order Of St. John Service At St Paul's	29 Northern Day of Recollection
24 St. John's Day	29 Douai Day Of Recollection
<b>July</b>	<b>December</b>
18-25 OMV Pilgrimage	3 West Midlands Day of Recollection
<b>August</b>	9 Carol Service: Scotland
7-9 Holywell Pilgrimage	