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Julian Allason was a talented journalist, businessman and socio-psychologist in cognitive behaviour therapy, a deeply religious man and a deeply committed member of the Order. He was a former Vice Chancellor of the British Association, a member of the Grand Priory in Obedience, and the editor of the Order’s first prayer book in English, so popular that it is now in its third edition. More recently, he was a valued member of the Order’s Board of Communications in Rome and of the British Association Communications Committee. Julian was a source of great encouragement for the works of the Order, a wise counsellor and excellent collaborator and his wide knowledge of the Order’s history and of genealogy were much consulted. He had troops of friends, to whom he was unfailingly kind and generous, and in whom he delighted. His sense of humour – very British – was famed among them. For them, and for the Order, it has been a privilege for many to have known him, worked with him, loved him. He leaves his wife, Sarah, two young sons and three adult children.

JULIAN ALLASON, former Vice Chancellor of the British Association

Since the spring of 2015, an enterprising group of the Companions of the Order has been welcoming up to twenty guests every Wednesday lunchtime at Cardinal Bourne Hall in Colchester. ‘We researched local needs,’ explains Order of Malta organiser, Georgina Holt-Evans, ‘and found that there are arrangements around town for homeless people in the evenings, but nothing at lunchtime. So when it’s very hot or very cold, our homeless had nowhere to go, relax, and eat a healthy meal.’

The guests are all English, all regulars, mostly men and aged mostly over forty. One is a tent dweller with three dogs. They come for about an hour and a half, enjoy a chat, and often depart with takeaways packed for them, as well as clothing and books.

Each week, Adrian Rowley, an ex-policeman, runs the day, buys the food, with many of the volunteers adding to it, cooking and bringing hot food from home. In summer, the offering is sandwiches, biscuits, crisps, fruit, tea, coffee and juice. Winter fare is lasagne or shepherd’s pie, and sometimes a fry-up, all made by the volunteers.

Georgina and Adrian are agreed that the service, which is funded by the Companions, and fully staffed by volunteers, fills a niche in the lonely day of the homeless.
Dear Members and Friends

The year has kept us all very busy as we continue to expand our care for those in need and to involve more of our members in these endeavours.

We have added another soup kitchen to the line-up – to the two in London and one in Oxford, we now offer a service in Colchester. It is heartening to see these projects continue to grow and note that so many members, friends and volunteers are on hand to serve our guests. Well done, all!

The Orders of St John Care (OSJCT) continue to provide the residents of the 73 care homes with high standards of professional care as well as warmth and companionship, vital components in their well being. The 3500 residents are looked after by 4000 dedicated staff and receive regular visits from many members and Companions of the Order.

On the local front, we have had a very successful fundraising year, from the Basmom Dinner, to the Foreign Aid Service (FAS) Dinner, to the heroic efforts by the OMV and some of our younger supporters, as you will read in these pages. Our newly elected Council members assume their responsibilities in January and I wish them well and look forward to working with them as we take our projects forward into 2016.

And we have moved house! The Order said a sad farewell to 58 Grove End Road last month, but a happy salute to our new home in Deodar Road, Putney. Our great thanks to Caroline de la Force who held the whole project together with consummate skill and tireless dedication.

Internationally, may I especially take this opportunity to congratulate Ordre de Malte France, who responded immediately to the urgent call of the Prefecture of Paris and sent 40 volunteers, 5 ambulances and 3 light vehicles to provide first aid and assistance at the Bataclan siege in November. This was a commitment in which all of the Order can take pride.

We also cordially welcome our new Prelate of the Order, Monsignor Jean Lafitte (a Frenchman who also spent time studying at Cambridge), recently appointed by Pope Francis. I wish you a blessed Christmas and I thank you for your continuing hard work – keep it up! We are in good heart.

Richard Fitzalan Howard
President, British Association of the Order of Malta
Doctor Janet Lim has tackled many major humanitarian crises. Singaporean, Swiss trained, 34 years in the humanitarian field, she counts herself fortunate “to have had the opportunity to be creative, operational, recycle my experience. I've worked in emergency, both in the field and HQ, building systems and policies. It is a very comprehensive spectrum of experience.”

In this interview with the Order of Malta, Dr Janet Lim, recently retired Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, describes the privilege of being able to contribute...
Why did the UNHCR come into being?
The UNHCR was founded after the Second World War when so many people were fleeing from persecution. These are war situations.

How does the UNHCR deal with the consequences of IDPs and refugee movements?
The UNHCR has a mandate to protect refugees and IDPs. These are large influxes of people, often at short notice. They only flee after all possibilities to stay safe have been exhausted. Often people move multiple times before reaching a safe area, fleeing only when there is no other choice, only because they have to.

What are the UNHCR’s first responses to these movements?
Our first response is to make sure they have the freedom to flee. They must be protected from returning against their will. If they are being turned back, the UNHCR will react and contact all relevant authorities. Once arrived in a place of safety (they have usually been moving around for months) they are in a bad state of health. Our response is to deliver a system. When refugees arrive in safe places, the essentials are food, water, sanitation, health. The UNHCR has a standard package – sheeting, plastics, mosquito nets, blankets, utensils. To improve the contents we called for suggestions. One is solar lanterns, now part of the UNHCR standard package – used for protection and so students can study at night, another, to put water in containers that are easy to roll along (instead of heavy ones hard for women to carry). These are now field testing.

People in these situations are very stressed, relationships get very strained, and the women and children are especially vulnerable. All these people need safety and protection. We plan for the fact that the refugees will be there for some time. The UNHCR buys in bulk, stock piles, and can cover over 700,000 people at any one time.

How do you make their existence sustainable?
There’s an impact on the host country and population. We take into account the needs of the local population, the infrastructure of, for example, villages, as these will be totally overwhelmed. First provisions are for local water, shelter, schools, etc., and the local population’s needs. In Lebanon, 25% are refugees. The country needs substantial development aid. There is an enormous range of needs.

We plan for the fact that the refugees will be there for some time. The UNHCR buys in bulk, stock piles, and can cover over 700,000 people at any one time.

What does working in the field entail?
There are local actors: we have partnerships. There are comparative advantages. For example, we may have difficulties with access. Local staff can get access and have a better knowledge of the local environment. It is less expensive, and helps in ensuring the operation is sustainable. At some point, the internationals withdraw and the locals can carry on.

How do you build experience to cope with these situations?
Our experience comes out of these crises, for example, six million IDPs in Syria, at least four million in neighbouring countries. Also, there are millions who cannot move, caught in the fighting areas.

Then there is external movement: crossing borders, so people are no longer in their home country, they are not citizens outside their own borders but are given asylum, which must be extended by the host country. What are their rights?

How do you operate in emergencies?
These are very difficult. We never have enough resources. The UNHCR has to balance the needs between one crisis and another, and also within the elements of a crisis. For example, how to balance between health needs or shelter needs.

We also receive donations. But many donors come with conditions. High profile situations attract donors. Less visible situations attract less money – although the needs are the same! Unrestricted donations are very helpful. We have to balance needs and decide who are the most vulnerable.

On the front line, what we deliver makes such a difference – in health, emotionally, mentally – for the refugees, for the individual. When you see the success stories – refugees who have made good, come back, contributed – that is progress. Helping mankind is a value in itself – it is the ability to empathise. My reward? Satisfaction, the privilege of being able to contribute.

“"We must invest in the young. We must not lose our human values. That is what binds us together as a human society.”

~ Dr Janet Lim
A visit to the Holy Land – an invitation out of the blue caught me up and caught my heart, too. To go to the Holy Land - to make a bow to the places where Jesus lived, taught, died, and rose from the dead. And as well to visit places where the Order of Malta began its great history and its works which continue today.

After paying a tribute to Jesus in Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem it’s Order of Malta time. First, to touch base at the first hospital of the Order in Jerusalem, dating back 960 years. There is an Order flag and a remembrance book in the middle of downtown Jerusalem.

Hospitallers – is a term that means those who help the sick in hospitals. In our case, we came to offer our tribute at the places where Jesus lived in the Holy Land. Therefore, a sacred mission…

After these visits, next morning I took bus No 21 from the Damascus Gate in downtown Jerusalem. The passengers were locals going to Bethlehem, plus a priest with two pilgrims from Poland, and me. The priest was very kind and explained that there was no need for foreigners to get out of the bus on the border with Palestine, and that the bus stops next to Holy Family hospital in Bethlehem. He also explained that you buy your bus ticket from the driver. An easy way to reach my destination, even in Palestine.

The little miracle of the birth
The journey takes an hour to get to the hospital. When I arrived, I saw that there were many men in front of the main door. This surprised me, as it’s a maternity hospital. But I learned that many family members visit patients and also that these are the husbands waiting for the little miracle of the birth.

Now I meet the director and the project manager of the Holy Family hospital – very impressive professionals. They give me a presentation which covers the history, everyday challenges, cultural issues and new developments of the hospital. 140 highly educated professionals, mainly local, work there, and there are 3,200 births recorded every year.

Education and medical support is offered to local women, teaching them how to live a healthy life and to work after the age of 45 (in local society they are treated as unemployable). The dedicated staff give quality patient care to the poor and the sick, both in the hospital and in the local region. Every week their mobile medical teams travel into the desert to visit Bedouin villages. Patients are only asked to give what they can afford, but not more then fifty percent of the fee. The rest is covered by funds from the Order of Malta. This is the hospital's biggest problem: to have enough funds to support the very poor.

Good traditions continue
I am also lucky enough to be given a tour of the hospital, to meet the doctors, nurses with bright and smiling faces... And many of the large families sitting on the stairs....

The atmosphere is very relaxed and the hospital itself has a lovely 19th century central building with beautiful garden and a little chapel.

A wonderful surprise – even after all I had heard before, I didn't expect to find such a high grade hospital in Bethlehem. Indeed, I found the same sacred mission that started 960 years ago... good traditions continue.

I hope to be back with a pilgrimage of the Order of Malta from Lithuania to show the source of our faith, goodness and trust. My recommendation is to visit, to learn, to return. Yes, yes, yes!

Ruta Voveryte
Member, Presidium, Order of Malta Relief organisation in Lithuania

Modern equipment ensures high quality care at the Holy Family Hospital
My first visit to Chartres was at the age of five, before I ever visited St Patrick’s, the cathedral of New York, the city where I was born. So this year I jumped at the chance of joining a group of volunteers, friends and members of the Order of Malta for the annual Pentecost pilgrimage to Chartres.

Chartres was constructed in an astonishing fifty-four years, between 1194 and 1250, creating an unrivalled architectural unity. In medieval times it was one of the most popular pilgrimage shrines in Europe. But France’s civil wars and revolution ended its days as a pilgrim destination, until the poet Charles Péguy revived it before the First World War.
Chartres is famed for its exquisite stained glass and expressive sculptures.

The largest pilgrimage to Chartres happens during Pentecost weekend. Over 11,000 pilgrims walk from Notre Dame de Paris to Notre Dame de Chartres. Our twenty, mostly French and British, marched under the banner of Notre Dame de Philerme, patroness of the Order.

The arduous first day started in the centre of Paris with Mass at Notre Dame: pilgrims filling the nave, transepts and aisles of the great medieval cathedral. After Mass, the Abbot of Le Barroux, Dom Louis-Marie, cheerfully exhorted us to offer our thoughts, fatigue, anguish, and suffering over the next few days up to God for the salvation of the world. His encouragement was needed: this pilgrimage is not for the faint hearted! While it began on the tarmacked roads of Paris, it moved quickly into suburbs, then countryside, then up and down muddy hill paths - to the point of near-exhaustion - all the while being outdone by energetic, smartly dressed young French scouts and guides. The intensity of the pilgrimage is matched by its exceptional organisation: the Order of Malta provides medical assistance all along the route, and the Association Notre-Dame de Chrétienté, which runs the pilgrimage, arranges stopping points where the tired or elderly can rest and then be ferried along or, towards the end of the day, taken to the bivouac site.

Walking from the early hours of morning to past eight in the evening with just a few stops, there was no sweeter sight to the weary pilgrim’s eye than the entrance to the bivouac, and the welcoming greeting by Fra’ Matthew, the Grand Master, and the effusive hospitality of Armand-Louis. On the second day, Pentecost, the going was slightly easier, the distance slightly shorter. Mass was offered by Bishop Athanasius Schneider of Astana, Kazakhstan, who encouraged us not to be afraid of any ridicule or marginalisation we might face for living our lives as Christians.

The joy of day three! Nothing could compare to the joy of day three! Having walked over sixty difficult miles, leaving Paris what seemed like weeks ago, the two towers of the cathedral rose into view, and struggling on, we at last arrived in Chartres itself to be greeted warmly by the Bishop. At the final Mass the vast scale of the pilgrimage was evident. Banners and flags from different countries, regions, dioceses, scout troops and many others, processed into the cathedral through the great crowd: girl guides, shaggy-bearded students, middle-aged women, elderly gentlemen. We were all hobbling, after three difficult but cheerful days; arriving with reverence, exhaustion, joy. What had started out as “the” pilgrimage became “our” pilgrimage, and while the physical effort was great I left feeling it was the most beautiful thing I have ever done.
The seed that leads to peace

The role of faith-based institutions in humanitarian action

Order of Malta outlines concerns in key symposium ahead of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit

The Sovereign Order of Malta hosted a keynote symposium at the United Nations Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 27 May 2015. Panelists from across the spectrum of faith-based organisations, diplomacy and humanitarian aid discussed: ‘Religions together for humanitarian action: Reaching out to victims of armed conflicts – the special role of faith-based actors.’ The symposium was a preparatory stage in the build-up to the World Humanitarian Summit, launched by the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, for May 2016 in Istanbul.

In addressing participants from the worlds of diplomacy, non-governmental organisations, actors in the field of humanitarian assistance and academics, Grand Chancellor Albrecht Boeselager said faith-based organisations can play a crucial multi-faceted role in armed conflict situations: in the protection of civilians, in mediation, in supporting and working for reconciliation, protecting the victims, promoting peace and emphasising a common understanding of human rights.

Cooperation between faith based organisations is the seed that leads to peace

Discussions highlighted that faith-based organisations share values of humanity and dignity, but a common ground to counteract the instrumentalisation of religion must be found; religious power cannot be evoked to justify violence; dialogue is always essential; peace-building initiatives are effective through faith-based organisations; trust between faith-based organisations and local communities is key in the resolution stages of conflicts. It is cooperation between these organisations that is the seed that leads to peace.

Operationally, the panel identified a need for a concrete Code of Conduct/Practice; called for more involvement from the private sector and a sympathetic approach to local communities, their traditions and culture.

The Grand Hospitaller, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, emphasised that efforts to build closer partnerships among faith-based organisations for effective support for victims of conflict situations must be strengthened, as well as the pooling of resources to carry this forward, together with sympathetic support for local communities in helping them return to normal life and the creation of the widest campaign for public awareness of the human rights due to the affected populations.
Hospitaller Winter 2015

Around the world

Supporting the Order’s works: How fundraising found a new face

ORDER PROJECTS IN NEPAL
Hugo Bertie, 14, (pictured) seeing the plight of the Nepalese children caught by two terrible earthquakes in April which brought chaos to their lives and country, added his own efforts to help them. As a budding bagpiper, he set up himself and his appeal outside Harrods one Saturday morning. And played to help, raising over £600.00 for the Order of Malta Nepalese appeal.

ORDER PROJECTS IN BRITAIN
The British Association Dinner, held in September, was a worthy fundraiser for Order projects in Britain: the Orders of St John Homes Care Trust (73 homes in four counties), two soup kitchens in London, one in Oxford and one in Colchester. The Companions Carol Concert on 9 November, was another very successful fundraiser for these Order projects.

ORDER PROJECTS ABROAD
The Foreign Aid Service (FAS) raised enough funds at their annual dinner in November to support a new initiative, a school for 750 Syrian refugee children on the Syria-Turkey border.

Edinburgh Mass

The annual Mass for deceased members took place at St Mary’s Metropolitan Cathedral, Edinburgh, on Thursday 5 November, celebrated by Archbishop Cushley. It was attended by many members and guests including representatives from the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and the Venerable Order of St John (St John Scotland).

Pictured, from back left: Michael Hutchinson, Grand Prior Ian Scott, Basmom President Richard Fitzalan Howard, Archbishop Leo Cushley, Monsignor Patrick Burke (Celebrant), Angus Hay. Front from left: Lynn Wright, Ian Southward, Patricia Amis, Basmom Chancellor Michael Hodges, David Maclure.
The week-long holiday camp brings together around 500 participants from 24 countries. The emphasis is on promoting integration between countries and is a great opportunity for guests and helpers to form lifelong friendships. And no physical disability should prevent any guest joining in the fun activities on offer.

The entertainment continues in the evening – with an almost nightly disco! For many guests this is the highlight of the week, something we perhaps take for granted but may be a novelty for many less physically able or socially isolated. On two evenings we have an ‘International Night’ where the different nationalities can showcase their culinary specialties.

This year the camp took place on a naval base in Brittany, so a nautical theme pervaded. Highpoints included a beach party of epic proportions, a visit to an aquarium, sand yachting, light aircraft flying and a cruise on a tall ship where we had a close encounter with the local dolphins.

There was time for quiet reflection, the opportunity to share our faith by celebrating Mass together, and a wonderful Marian procession which took place close to the seashore.

The huge success of this year’s camp in France has set the bar high for us Brits when we host another camp in the UK. However, for the time being we look forward to next year when the camp will be held in Poland.
The Order of Malta

Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham took place this year from the 11-13 September. Fra’ Matthew Festing was sadly missed due to illness, but we were very pleased to welcome Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, Fra’ Emmanuel Rousseau and Fra’ Duncan Gallie from the Sovereign Council of the Order. I am particularly grateful to Dominique and Fra’ Emmanuel for crossing the Channel to come on pilgrimage with us.

The first event in the Blue Book was fish ’n’ chips in the Village Hall and a torchlit Rosary Procession back to Elmham House. Thanks to James Pavey and his team of fluorescent ushers, and Mgr John Armitage’s gentle coaxing (“slowness does not equal holiness”), we managed to avoid being run over and we settled in to the Black Lion for a pre-bed natter.

The weekend was a very happy one, and thanks to Our Lady putting in a good word for us we mostly enjoyed delightful sunshine, in spite of at least five more pessimistic weather forecasts I had seen. Saturday was a delightful day, with a variety of spiritual activities under the guidance of Fr. David Irwin, the Pilgrimage Chaplain. Mass in the morning, Stations of the Cross in the Priory Grounds in the afternoon, and Holy Hour in the evening were laid on. In addition, Lauds and Vespers sated many guests’ and helpers’ thirst for sung Latin, and the sprinkling at the Anglican Shrine proved a delightful ecumenical adventure. Mgr John gave a Recollection as entertaining as it was engaging in the very pretty Methodist chapel, speaking to us about the upcoming year of Mercy.

Afternoon tea – and the Holy Year in Rome

Saturday also bore witness to the return of cucumber and marmite sandwiches to the fabled post-Stations afternoon tea. Rodrica Straker and her catering team’s meticulous preparation (e.g. drying out cucumber slices on kitchen roll before putting them in sandwiches) needs to be seen to be believed, but the proof of the pudding was certainly in the eating, as it were. Before the barbecue supper provided by Elmham House, we enjoyed a drinks party laid on by the saintly caterers, fresh from clearing up the delicious tea. In the mood-lit and jolly atmosphere, after the Loyal Toast proposed by Danny Cook, Dominique put on his Grand Hospitaller hat and spoke brilliantly about the Holy Year of Mercy in Rome and the volunteering opportunities with the Order there. This, along with Eddie Pease and Michelle McGuinn’s rendition of ‘Baby it’s cold outside’ at the pilgrimage party later in the evening, was the centre of much conversation late into the night.

The final day of the Pilgrimage was a Procession to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and Holy Mass in the Chapel of Reconciliation. During Mass Peter Allingham was clothed as a Novice Knight of Justice. The whole pilgrimage celebrated in style with a tremendous buffet lunch in the grounds of the Shrine. After lunch the pilgrims dragged themselves back to the car park, and went their separate ways, guests and helpers having enjoyed a very spiritual and sociable weekend with participants from the Grand Priory, the Association, the Companions and the O.M.V.

Save the date: Next year’s pilgrimage will be 9-11 September – we would be delighted if you could join us.

Walsingham

Fish ’n chips, torchlight procession, cucumber sandwiches, spiritual renewal

The Walsingham pilgrimage goes from strength to strength observes Jack Straker
ROMA, ITALY
Refugee crisis: the Order of Malta’s involvement in many parts of the world strengthens. A conference in Rome highlights the need to cement action plans to help those in need. Grand Chancellor Albrecht von Boeselager: ‘Our judgment of the situation is that the crises will not be solved in the short term. We may see a variation in figures but we must prepared to deal with this situation for the coming years and … to cope with such a humanitarian emergency.’ The Order in Europe is involved in refugee aid in Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, Serbia. And in Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey.

MADRID, SPAIN
Grand Master inaugurates Spanish Association’s new soup kitchen, bringing the total to three.

BEREGOVO, UKRAINE
The cold winter threatens survival in an area where there is already the drama of food deprivation: the Order brings a daily hot meal to forty elderly housebound poor by bicycle – a 35 km journey, supports a kindergarten for thirty five undernourished children, and aids the very poor with a special discount pharmacy card for medicines – literally, a lifeline.

PARIS, FRANCE
Grand Master Fra’ Matthew Festing sends President Hollande a message of condolence after the Paris attacks on 13th November which left 130 dead and many injured.

VATICAN, HOLY SEE
The Jubilee year opens, and 2500 Order of Malta trained first aid volunteers from around the world will provide medical assistance during the 12 months at the four Roman basilicas: St Peter’s, St John Lateran, St Paul Outside the Wall and St Mary Major.

LONDON, UK
The Companions of the Order organise a Carol Service fundraiser each December – this year a large turnout lifted the rafters of St James’s Spanish Place. The Companions throw their annual Christmas party for their many homeless guests there too. Christmas treats, goody bags and entertainment have been prepared for all comers. Christmas parcels have also been sent for distribution by our Companions north of the border to our homeless friends in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

ROME, ITALY
Toward the World Humanitarian Summit – the Order of Malta organises a press conference to highlight the conditions of hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war, civil conflict, poverty.

VILNIUS, LITHUANIA
The Order’s Lithuanian Association organises celebrations for the Tenth Anniversary of the ‘Maltesers Soup’ campaign, a country-wide fundraiser which supports their projects throughout each year to aid 2300 elderly poor and bring them hot meals (95,000 per annum).