In this issue:
Refugee crisis
Chabrouh, Lebanon
Protecting religious freedom

www.orderofmalta.org.uk

Winter 2016
In brief…

KEY DATES
7 January 2017
Order of Malta Volunteers’ 40th White Knights Ball
Grosvenor House Hotel, London, 7pm for 8pm.
Tickets on sale until 31 December: £125.
www.omv.org.uk
Email: william.mcdonald@oriel.ox.ac.uk

5-11 May 2017
59th Lourdes International Pilgrimage

15-17 September 2017
Walsingham
Please keep Mgr John Armitage in your prayers for all the incredible work he is doing at England’s Nazareth.

11-18 August 2018
Summer Camp
Trelour’s School, Alton, Hampshire. 450 partipants; 300 volunteers & 150 guests expected. Donations (monetary, food, medical supplies, drink) most welcome. Organised by the OMV
More information from Anton de Piro, 2018 Fundraising Team, Email: anton@depiro.net; t: 07748

New BASMOM offices
The new BASMOM offices at Craigmyle House have been officially inaugurated by Fr.David Irwin, the Association’s Principal Chaplain, and are fully up and running. Design consultants were the Grand Prior and Anthony de la Rue, ably supported by willing volunteers in setting the new space to rights, as well as the invaluable help of Caroline de la Force and Stephanie Pisarro. All members are welcome to visit Craigmyle House at any time, where our indefatigable Secretariat, Caroline de la Force (pictured), assures a warm reception.

VALE
JONATHAN RILEY-SMITH, distinguished historian of the Crusades and member of the British Association and the Venerable Order of St John

Jonathan Riley-Smith, who died on 13 September after a long illness borne with great courage, was one of the world’s greatest historians of the medieval crusades, a prodigious writer on the subject, whose seminal works energised interest in the crusades over a period of fifty years. He was educated at Eton College and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took his BA (1960), MA (1964), PhD (1964), and LittD (2001).

His many academic concerns included an abiding interest in chivalric orders. He was a member of both Orders of St John in Britain – a Knight Grand Cross of Grace and Devotion of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and a Bailiff Grand Cross of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem - and on the Board of the Alliance Orders for many years. Board member Franz Harnoncourt recalls his devotion and commitment at all times, particularly during the Iceland volcano crisis. Both were determined to attend the annual Alliance meeting, held that year in the Hague, and arrived by air. But next day international air traffic closed. Trains were packed. It took Jonathan two days to get home by ferry, but, Franz notes, his mettle and humour were undimmed.

A convert to Catholicism while at Cambridge, his faith was of deep importance to him. He wrote movingly of his attitude to dying and religion, an article published just two days before his death. A bonviveur, splendid company, trenchant wit, fierce intelligence and with an unstoppable joie de vivre, he is remembered with deep affection by colleagues and friends alike.

He leaves his wife, Louise, an artist, three children and five grandchildren.

Grand Master honoured, House of Lords

Recognition of distinguished service in the charitable field

The President of the League of Mercy, Lord Lingfield, invested the Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, Fra’ Matthew Festing, with the Grand Cross of the League of Mercy at the House of Lords, London, on 12 July. Trustees and members of the Order of Malta were in attendance.

The League of Mercy was established by Royal Charter on 30th March 1899. It rewards distinguished voluntary service in the charitable field. Other distinguished recipients of the Grand Cross include HRH Princess Michael of Kent, HRH Prince David of Georgia, the Rt Hon the Baroness Boothroyd OM and Dame Norma Major DBE.

Lord Lingfield, President, League of Mercy with Fra’ Matthew Festing, Grand Master of the Order of Malta
Dear Members and Friends

2016 has seen great activity from our members and volunteers here in Britain and a great concern to help those beyond our borders who need our support.

The record is considerable, and growing. At home, we have expanded our soup kitchen projects, and increased the number of homeless we are able to offer food and company: we now have soup kitchens in London, Oxford and Colchester serving in excess of 10,000 meals a year. We have set up a ‘tea and company’ programme for elderly lonely in London and Northumberland. We have fledgling operations at Cambridge and St Andrews Universities. We have opened two residential homes for the elderly this year, in Old Sarum, Salisbury, and most recently, in Henley on Thames. The latter is our 73rd OSJCT home. Our work in caring for dementia patients goes from strength to strength and is a special vocation in itself. And our main project in Scotland – Dial-a-Journey – is now in its thirtieth proud year, providing transport for the elderly housebound, amounting to 17,000 regular journeys in the last year alone.

Abroad, our voice has been heard in the United Nations General Assembly, calling for more concerted efforts to resolve the migrant crisis; we have seen our confères’ immediate on-the-ground support for earthquake victims in central Italy; we sent first aid teams to the Jubilee Year of Mercy in Rome, and our young have volunteered in Lebanon, at the camp for young disabled in Chabrouh (with a few ‘oldies’ too!) and brought guests to the international youth summer camp in Poland. We continue to work with the Protestant Alliance orders to create even greater efficacy, and joint activities, in our humanitarian projects; and through our Foreign Aid Service we are supporting causes in a number of countries.

All this activity and all this commitment is inspired by our mission, to care for those in need, impartially, and prompted by our Christian love for fellow man. It is also exercised through our prayers and pilgrimages. This year many among us have attended the international pilgrimage to Lourdes, and pilgrimages to the special shrines at Walsingham, Holywell and now Dunfermline.

The coming year will see no let-up in our commitment to the Order and our works for those who need us. If we can all do as well in 2017 as we did in 2016, we can be proud, and think about how we can do even more, even better.

In wishing you a happy Christmas I wish also to thank you all, for all that you do in the name of the Order.

Richard Fitzalan Howard
President, British Association of the Order of Malta
“Together we must succeed...”

Responding to the migration challenge

The Order’s Grand Hospitaller addresses the United Nations on the important role of faith-based organisations in aid crises

At the High Level meeting on Migration, led by Ban Ki-moon at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September, and attended by leaders of States and international organisations, the Grand Hospitaller, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, called for the creation of development programmes over the long-term and adequate funding to respond to the greatest challenge of recent times: migration.

He emphasised the role that faith-based organisations and religious institutions play in humanitarian assistance, with their shared elements of respect for human dignity, the value of the family, the duty of care for fellow man, their networks of support and solidarity, and the trust their presence engenders in local populations.

To be successful in the tasks to support refugees and migrants, to offer them a better world, he said, “We must challenge global indifference, fear, and economic selfishness… Together we must succeed.”
Amatrice:
Earthquake in central Italy
Order aid teams on the ground

24 August. Amatrice, central Italy. 3.30 a.m. A violent earthquake of 6.5 magnitude hit this small town of just over 300 inhabitants.

Teams of doctors, nurses and rescue workers of the Italian Relief Corps of the Sovereign Order of Malta (CISOM) travelled immediately to the disaster areas. Setting up a logistics centre, the first aid teams plus sniffer dogs spread out across the fallen masonry of the town, working day and night. As the days unfolded, the extent of the damage became more apparent and the loss of life tragic.

In the following weeks, earth shocks have also been recorded in Norcia, Spoleto, Perugia and surrounding villages, bringing destruction, and rendering many homeless, leading the Order’s volunteers to augment their teams in the quake-hit areas.

The Order’s volunteer teams continue their aid work in Umbria and the Marche providing urgent support, and offering healthcare and psychological support to the local populations.

The Order of Malta’s Italian Relief Corps (CISOM), has 3500 volunteers (medical, paramedical and assistants) across Italy. Founded in 1970, it carries out rescue and assistance operations during natural disasters. Most recent: Amatrice earthquake, 2016; since 2008, rescue of refugees off the south Italian coast/Lampedusa, and in the Aegean Sea.

Papal Year of Mercy concludes
British Association sends volunteer first aid teams

The British Association sent three teams of doctors, nurses and first aid volunteers to Rome in August and October to provide medical assistance to the thousands of pilgrims who have travelled to the city for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy.

They were deployed in Rome’s four basilicas, in shifts which were organised three per day. To the slight disappointment of the eager helpers, no ailments were reported!

Over the 12 months, 2500 volunteers of the Order gave service, coming from Albania, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as well as from Cuba and the United States. The operational centre for the volunteers throughout the year has been the Order of Malta’s First-Aid Post in St Peter’s Square, which for 35 years has been offering healthcare to pilgrims 365 days a year.

The Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis concluded this November.
Helping the victims of Hurricane Matthew in Haiti

The Order of Malta’s aid efforts continue in stricken Haiti, a few weeks on from Hurricane Matthew’s devastating landfall. In the immediate aftermath of the hurricane the Order has distributed tools and equipment, and helped to clear streets and drainage channels in some of the most heavily affected areas.

The hurricane has left around 1.25 million people without clean drinking water; a severe cholera outbreak or an epidemic right now would be completely devastating.

With the help of several confreres, including The Hon Charles James and Peter McCann our appeal has raised over £40,000 so far.

Leprosy education in Cambodia for 1m people

Funds raised at the 2015 FAS dinner are paying for a project to educate one million people in Cambodia about leprosy: how not to get it, how to deal with it, and to promote social integration of those who are its victims. This is a major initiative for CIOMAL and we are excited to be funding it with EUR 15,000. The programme runs over two years and as it reaches its target of one million people that will be a cost of 1.5 EUR per person.

Hospital industrial washing machine, Bosnia

The Order’s Ambassador to Bosnia asked us to support the hospital in Nova Bila which has 145 beds and 275 staff. It provides 165,000 individual treatments annually. The cornerstone of an effective hospital is good hygiene and their industrial washing machine, which has been running 24 hours a day needed replacing. We contributed EUR 12,000 and if the washing machines lasts as long as the last one that is a cost of about two euros a day.

After school care for disadvantaged children in Lithuania

The local branch of Order volunteers in Lithuania has pioneered a programme of after school clubs for vulnerable children: children with difficult home environments (drugs/alcoholism/violence) stay at school, get a warm meal, help with homework, social time with other children, outings and the basis for an evening meal, plus social worker care. We donated EUR 16,000 to fund the programme for 20 children for the full school year – about EUR 20 per child per week.
A new and deadly wave of Islamist ‘hyper-extremism’ is undermining global peace and stability with an impact felt in the Middle East, Africa and the West, states the latest Aid to the Church in Need report. It calls for urgent action to protect religious diversity.

The report, Religious Freedom in the World 2016, says the kind of religiously motivated violence espoused by Islamic State has given rise to attacks in one in five countries over the past two years. In the period 2014-16 it finds that Christianity is the most persecuted faith around the world: more than 330 million Christians live in countries where they are persecuted and another 60 million Christians suffer various forms of discrimination.

Peter Sefton-Williams, former head of Aid to the Church in Need in Britain and newly inaugurated Papal Knight, reviews its latest report on “hyper-extremism”.

The emergence of this new phenomenon of religiously motivated violence can be described as Islamist hyper-extremism, a process of heightened radicalisation, unprecedented in its violent expression, with the Islamic State (ISIS) the prime example.

It is having a devastating impact around the world. The explosion of refugees, according to UN figures for 2015, went up by 5.8 million to 65.3 million refugees worldwide. In the West, this hyper-extremism is at risk of destabilising the socio-religious fabric.

By defining the phenomenon, the report supports widespread claims that, in targeting Christians, Yazidis, Mandeans and other minorities, ISIS and other jihadist group are in breach of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Father Jacques Mourad, a Syriac-Catholic priest whom ISIS held in Syria for five months last year, says in his foreword to the study: “... if religion teaches us anything, it is the value of the human person, the need to respect each other as a gift from God.”

*Aid to the Church in Need, which is directly under the Holy See, supports the faithful wherever they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need. ACN is a Catholic charity. For more information: www.religion-freedom-report.org*
Antonia Teixeira da Silva finds she has much to discover

“When love beckons to you, follow him. Though his ways are hard and steep. And when his wings enfold you, yield to him. Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you. And when he speaks to you believe in him.”

– The Prophet, Kahlil Gibran

“where love beckons”: CHABROUH!
When Khalil Gibran, one of Lebanon’s most revered poets, published his seminal work *The Prophet* in 1923, one cannot imagine that he foresaw the struggles which were to beset his beloved homeland and its children. Has this country all but forgotten Gibran’s vision of love today?

Not so, and one example of this abiding love lies in the heart of Mount Lebanon, 60 kilometres from Beirut, in Chabrouh, at the Order of Malta’s Al Fadi Centre.

Founded in 1998, this oasis of calm plays host for 15 weeks every year to over 200 volunteers from Britain, France, Germany, Holland, and Lebanon itself, who run summer camps for our Lebanese guests from specialised homes and psychiatric hospitals across the country.

These facilities, which cater for mental and physical disabilities in Lebanon, receive minimal government support. This is slowly changing but as yet most funding is from private aid and donations, and it must meet all the needs of staff and patients, regardless of numbers or levels of care required.

The forgotten children

As a result, many patients, some of whom have been in care since childhood, have never had the opportunity of leaving their compounds, nor interacting with anyone outside their institutions, nor receiving the one-on-one dedicated care and attention the volunteers at Chabrouh provide. They are Lebanon’s forgotten children. As Harriet Sasada, UK camps coordinator says, this is the one week a year our guests dream about and it is up to us to make it count.

In late June this year I found myself headed for the camp, persuaded by William Ogilvie-Graham: “I can’t describe it; it’ll be tough but you’ll love it.” Never were truer words spoken!

The ailments and ages of our guests were wide ranging. From the youngest, aged twelve, to the oldest in his late thirties, our guests collectively suffered from autism, polyhandicap, Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and severe mental retardation. Some were able to communicate, but many had limited verbal skills, and most had developed abnormal patterns of behaviour due to their neglect. This meant that some had depression, or were prone to withdrawal, or were harmful both to themselves and others.


Every day the kitchen team would lovingly prepare delicious meals. The medical team never failed to smile, laugh off any difficulties and lend a hand with guests.

The cleaning team, aptly known as the “mummies”, turned around laundry with Olympian alacrity. Fr Gerard said Mass every day. His morning prayers started our day with hope and joy whilst his night prayers gave us the peace and succour needed before sleep.

Volunteers and team leaders showered their guests with love, kindness and generosity. They wiped mouths, changed diapers, stayed up for night duties, sang, clapped, played and performed until even the most reluctant of guests broke into a smile.

The guests, for their part, these forgotten children of Lebanon, who had at first been wary and apathetic, responded to the volunteers’ love in return.

The glimmer of light

Guests came to life with the activities. From fashion shows, to race and beach days, cake making and singsongs, each had their favourite, and even, albeit for a fleeting moment, their eyes would light up and you would see how much joy this camp was bringing to their lives. That glimmer of light, ignited by boundless love, is my abiding memory of the week.

On the last night of the camp, one volunteer asked another whether they thought it was worth it; one week, out of all of those in need across Lebanon, and whom we were returning to their suffering. The reply was unhesitating: if the memory of this week, this tiny light in the smallest corner of their minds, gave them hope and happiness for a single moment, then it was all worth it.

Gibran again: *When you love, you should not say, ‘God is in my heart,’ but rather, ‘I am in the heart of God.’ And think not you can direct the course of love, for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.*

For our guests in Chabrouh, and for all those who attend the other camps, I hope that they will find their course of love bringing them to the mountains of Lebanon and to its forgotten children.

“I can’t describe it; it’ll be tough but you’ll love it.” Never were truer words spoken!’
There is nothing that can prepare you for Chabrouh. I’m finding it impossible to describe. Breath-taking, heart-stopping, soul-searching, life-changing, it comes over like a corny mix between Pepsi poster and New Age babble. So when my son Jack came back from his first time, and we bombarded him with questions, he could only say, “You just have to go!”

Eventually I summoned the courage to apply. All I knew about the camp from the amazing people who had been there, is that it is a remarkable place made for the guests – men and women. They mostly speak only Arabic, if they speak at all, and their troubles are profound. Otherwise they live in homes in Beirut, which they barely leave save for the opportunity the camp gives them. This isn’t Lourdes, I thought, this is something else. I’m not equipped.

Harriet Sasada advised on travel and kit and set up a WhatsApp group. We joined in the workshops on CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), lifting, hoists, on communicating, on our roles and a typical day. Before long we were gathering at Heathrow, wide eyed and nervous. WhatsApp buzzed every 30 seconds, more people arrived, we drank coffee, we waited. Then family Sasada landed, trolleys piled high with donated clothes and paraphernalia; our suitcases spilled open cramming everything in. Nerves vanished. It had begun.

The Biblical beauty of the valley
From Beirut we drove up out of the hot busy city into the cool black velvet of the hills. Eventually we stopped climbing and came to a sleek white modern building, where we were met with a spread of food, Lebanese bread & hummus, and a bear-like welcome from Peter, Jude and Robert who had come out earlier to buy the provisions. The morning was numbing: the raw Biblical beauty of the valley which Chabrouh overlooks. We spent the day acclimatising, Mass at the monastery below, the day in and around Beirut, unpacking the bulging suitcases, preparing for the guests. Peter’s kitchen team, Jude, Robert and Sonia, swung into action. Sharon Jennings and I were to be the “Mummies” (loose definition for laundry, general housework, guest minding, caring for the carers – anything, really). On Monday our guests arrived, men of different ages and two teenage boys, who knew each other but of course not us. Each was assigned his own helper for the week. From the first second of their meeting, every single helper gave unconditional love; they soothed, cajoled, followed, shared, hugged, fed, played or simply sat with their guest, and as the day developed so did a trust and a bond I will never forget. Ten words between them, yet an unfathomable depth of understanding. If the guests were bewildered on that first day, by day three they were happily into activities, games, dressing up, going to the beach, eating and praying together. It was noisy and madcap, unrestricted yet safe, fun and strangely restful.

All the week was holy
Father’s daily Mass overlooking the breathtaking valley was the only real time of silence, yet all the week was Holy. By Friday, when the guests went home, an empty sadness settled on us all, so we bustled about for most of the day preparing for the next week’s group. That night we went out in Byblos, the truly beautiful ancient city, and met up with helpers coming for the second week. If ever I wished I could have stayed on anywhere, it was then and there.

I think I learned more from the young that week than a lifetime on civvy street. And yet more from their guests. I would urge anyone I love to go.

Rodrica Straker learns “more in a week...than a lifetime on civvy street”
Chabrouh: a source of pride for the Order – is an international flagship project, with our volunteers from further afield than the Lebanon: Germany, Great Britain, France, Austria, Holland and the United States. Spain and Italy are gearing up to take part, too.

Over 1000 guests each year
In 2012, over 200 Order volunteers went to Chabrouh for at least a week-long camp (some as many as 6), and over 400 guests from 6 different care homes and psychiatric hospitals were cared for. Nowadays the Al Fadi Centre, with its multi-million-dollar facelift, welcomes over 1,000 guests each year, and still has only just scratched the surface of its potential reach for both guests and volunteers.

Bond between guest and helper
However, what is difficult to advertise is what Chabrouh means to the volunteers who take part. The format of the week is that each volunteer has a disabled “guest” to look after and entertain (you are only limited by your imagination) for the week. We can take one volunteer per guest from their homes/hospitals (where unfortunately they received only the minimum in terms of care) to Chabrouh. The bond between guest and helper is almost unfailingly incredibly powerful.

In the first few days they get to know each other, get used to each other’s routines and find out what makes each other laugh. By week’s end, guest and helper are each other’s best friend, they have laughed until their sides ached, and loved each other without limit.

Whether it is the squeals of delight from a guest bursting balloons, a satisfied nod of approval from a guest having completed the washing up together, or the enchantment of a guest’s first experience of the sea and learning to swim, the moments of pure undiluted joy that punctuate the week of the camp are the reason volunteers go back and are so keen to talk about Lebanon.

It also provides great spiritual nourishment to our Faith. Volunteers and guests attend Mass every day, where we are reminded that the camp is one way of living out the Gospel, and we are strengthened in our efforts to live as Christians in our everyday lives after the camp. The silent evangelisation of Chabrouh, serving Our Lords the Sick, has converted many volunteers as they see Christ in the faces of the guests.

Success depends on you!
Some say the Brits are known (don’t tell the Germans!) as the best volunteers around – the success of our camps depends entirely on you. Helpers are of all ages, and from all branches of the Order in the UK. The British camps are usually in the first two weeks of July: please come to one, or both. ‘Flagship’ doesn’t even come close... it will change your life, and the life of a guest.

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First church of the Order consecrated in Lebanon since 12th century
The chapel of St Jean Baptist at Chabrouh, Farayah, designed by internationally acclaimed architect Fra Jean-Louis Mainguy, was consecrated by Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation of Eastern Churches at the Roman Curia of the Vatican, on 16 October. The beauty of the chapel is in its simplicity and its precious reliquary of seven saints. It is the first church of the Sovereign Order to be consecrated in the Holy Land of Lebanon since the 12th century. In witnessing the works of the young volunteers with the disabled, the Cardinal told them: “You are the crusaders of Love”. Fra Jean-Louis Mainguy explains that the dedication ceremony “transforms a stone edifice into a dwelling inhabited by God.”
T
de 2016 Order of Malta Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham pilgrimage was another great success. We took 36 guests (more than ever before) and were over 150 pilgrims, in spite of various weddings and events that conspired to clash with the date. In case anyone is thinking of organising a marriage or holding any parties next autumn – please try and avoid the Walsingham date: 15-17 September 2017!

From the perspective of the pilgrimage planner, part of its success was precisely how most things did not go to plan. Joe Daley once told me that when the pilgrimage starts it’s all really in the hands of Our Lady of Walsingham and all will be well. This year was no exception. The departure of the coach from London proved quite complicated. Thank God, efficient Freddie Stourton was on hand. He coolly and efficiently resolved all issues and our arrival was less delayed than it might have been. Fortunately, by the time we finished the welcome drink party, we had caught up with the programme. Or we thought we had, which is just as good.

We had (due to drizzle) to curtail the route of the Candlelit Procession, ably helped by Fra’ Max Rumney, whippets in tow, standing in for Director of Ceremonies James Pavey. Unfortunately the rain had not stopped by morning, so we were forced to consult the legendary “wet weather plan” which has by some miracle remained entirely academic for years. The pilgrimage is a weekend based on prayer and service, but the prominence of the former in the makeup of the wet weather plan meant that the necessity to change Saturday afternoon’s programme was a bit of a fast-ball.

Rain, rain, go away…

We pressed on with our morning activities – Mass and a wonderful reflection by Mgr John Armitage on (amongst other things) prayer, pilgrimage and the Divine Presence. These were no trouble, but the afternoon’s outdoor events – Stations of the Cross and Afternoon Tea in the Abbey Grounds – were rendered impossible by the potential quagmire of the grounds. And the “sprinkling” in the Anglican Shrine, whilst usually extremely popular, seemed a little superfluous to most of our damp pilgrims.

However, Our Lady was looking out for us – we changed location to the Parish Church, where Fr. David Irwin took us for the Stations of the Cross and we heard the reflection by Fr. Anthony on the chivalric tradition of the Order – the duty of the strong to serve the weak. The reflection went down extremely well, dare I say almost as well as the post-lunch siesta we were able to squeeze in due to the reduced movement in our itinerary.

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Jack Straker reviews…

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The ‘glorious 15’ catering team!

Rodrica Straker and the ‘Glorious 15’ of the Catering Team, in addition to cooking like crazy before the weekend and barely standing still during it, moved mountains to host Afternoon Tea in the Parish Hall rather than the Abbey Grounds. It was a triumph as well as the delicious food with which we are always so spoiled, the ad hoc decorations made the place look fantastic. Everything ran so smoothly (knowing the work that goes into the Tea, I cannot remotely say ‘effortlessly’) that it seemed to all as if this was where we have always held tea. Perhaps Our Lady had planned this all along.

Mirabile dictu

On Sunday we were blessed with beautiful weather, and so our usual Procession/picnic routine was undisturbed, and we enjoyed a delicious ‘Glorious 15’ lunch basking in much appreciated sunshine.

Inevitably a slight problem arose: a misunderstanding with the coach company, resulting in having luggage at the Procession when it should have been at the Shrine and pilgrims at the Shrine when they should have been at the Procession. A glorious muddle, and yet people rose to the occasion magnificently. Andrew Cusack scrambled a new ‘Logistics support squad’ – Maggie Hood, Michael Rous and Fra’ Julian Chadwick – who saved the day, ferrying bags and pilgrims to and from the Shrine/Procession.

All in all, a testimony to the patience of the guests, the devotion of the helpers from every branch of the Order in Britain, and the fact that Our Lady looks after us: a huge success in spite of all! The Pilgrimage Organising Committee have since had a very productive meeting to ensure that we are prepared for every eventuality next year.
Lourdes
A retail first...

The British Association was the first to set up shop and start selling items during the Order’s Lourdes International Pilgrimage week. It has since been replicated by all the other Associations – a great compliment! Believe it or not, for over 25 years our Shop Ladies have been selling high quality items which recall our eight-pointed cross. The indefatigable team of Victoria, Mary, Tot and Maggie has always donated all their profits to the Association, going towards the running costs of the pilgrimage. The total in the last five years alone has come to over £40,000.

The power of patronage

Be it belts, buttons, biros or bejewelled items, all is sold with a smile and many customers have become regulars over the years. Sales of belts increased dramatically after our Grand Master was seen wearing one of their stylish black leather belts with the Order of Malta buckle on.

Where to find it

The British Association Shop is to be found every Lourdes in the foyer of La Solitude Hotel, to the left of the Order’s pilgrimage office.

Holywell
Largest ever Order pilgrimage to historic site

The Order of Malta’s annual pilgrimage to this, the most visited historic shrine in Britain, saw a devoted gathering meet for the last weekend in July to pay their respects and pray at the site. The pilgrimage was noted for the encouraging presence of many different age groups, from the young to the very old, joining together for the ceremonies and prayers at St Winefride’s Well and at the tiny parish church at Bala.

Dunfermline
The revived St Margaret of Scotland Pilgrimage

Angus Hay describes the importance of one of the most significant figures in Scottish history

St Margaret of Scotland (1045-93) became Queen of Scots in 1070. She was renowned for her good influence on her husband, King Malcolm III, and also for her devout Christian piety and charitable works towards the sick and the poor, whilst raising seven children.

St Margaret was declared Patroness of Scotland in 1673. She is also the patron saint of mothers. She may be considered one of the most significant female figures in the history of Scotland.

The roots of the pilgrimage date back to 1250 when the relics of St Margaret were translated to a new shrine in Dunfermline Abbey, following her canonisation that year, by Pope Innocent IV.

An annual summer pilgrimage to Dunfermline developed, and continued until the 16th century. It was revived in 1899 and continued until 1974. It was again revived in 2015, when over 1,000 people took part in the procession through Dunfermline.

Great turnout included Order members, family and friends for the June event. Archbishop Leo Cushley, chaplain to the Order, is a supporter of the pilgrimage and attended it this June. Participants included members of the Order, Companions of the Order, and their families and friends.
In 1987, the Order of Malta set up a specialised transport service in central Scotland for people with mobility disabilities who could not use public transport: Malta Dial-a-Journey. The service has grown from a small organisation with two minibuses and drivers engaged under the Youth Opportunities Scheme, to one of Scotland’s leading community transport charities, with a fleet of 20 vehicles of different types and sizes, 90 items of Shopmobility equipment and 30 staff. Its headquarters building is located in a light industrial estate at the edge of Stirling. From the outset, it has been the Order’s chief work in Scotland. Among the range of services offered: door-to-door service throughout the year; schools transport for children unable to use conventional buses, a booking service for subsidised taxi journeys for people with less severe mobility difficulties, and many summer and autumn outings for the service users.

Dial-a-Journey chairs a remarkable thirty years of a leading community transport service in Scotland

Chairman Herbert Coutts traces a remarkable thirty years of a leading community transport service in Scotland.

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The service in numbers

In 2015-16, the service clocked up almost 17,000 door-to-doors, 22,800 journeys for the children and over 37,000 taxi journeys.

For more information:
www.dial-a-journey.org

BASCOM annual dinner

The British Association’s annual dinner took place on Friday 21 October 2016 at Boodles, central London, and was attended by over a hundred members and friends. The Grand Hospitaler, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld-Montbel, gave the after dinner address. He briefly outlined the Order’s most recent activities around the world, and emphasised the importance of local activities. In this, he was delighted to see the continuing development of projects in Britain. ‘This is what we are about,’ he said, ‘supporting those in need at the local level, where so much good work is carried out with our dedicated members and volunteers.’

Visitation

A ‘Visitation’ from the Grand Magistry – Fra Jean-Louis Mainguy and Ambassador Mauro Bertero – took place in October. All aspects of the life of the Order in this country were presented for review and comment. As well as meetings with those who run all Order activities, visits to the Order’s projects in London and Oxford were also on the schedule. An agreeable exercise all round.

FAS dinner

The Foreign Aid Service (FAS) dinner took place on Saturday 26 November at the Savile Club, central London. FAS fundraises to respond to disaster and emergency situations abroad, working with the international framework of the Order, and particularly Malteser International. This year a special appeal has been launched for victims of Hurricane Matthew in Haiti. For more information, see page 4.

Around the country

Working together on Order activities

One of the fleet of Order of Malta Dial-a-Journey minibuses
We are busy all around the country, visiting the elderly housebound as well as the residents in our OSJCT Homes, offering tea and company to the lonely, providing hot meals to the homeless, accompanying the disabled on pilgrimage. All these activities are organised locally through our regional groups. With Christmas coming up, plans for celebrating the festive season with our guests are well underway.

New initiatives: setting up a Companions group at St Andrews University, together with a pitch at the Freshers’ Fair, and another at Cambridge University, building on from last academic year, a breakfast club in central London.

The London Companions were treated to their annual ‘Companions Evening – thank you’ party in early November, organised by Patrick Knowles, Annie Eyre, Helena Letman, and a cast of willing helpers and excellent cooks!

The Companions of the Order of Malta is a key volunteer force for the charitable work of the Order of Malta in the UK.

For more information: www.orderofmalta.org.uk/companions

In Colchester, Georgie Holt-Evans reports that the addition of hot soup from mid-November at their Wednesday midday soup kitchen is aimed to draw in many who would otherwise spend the day cold and hungry. “We are also going to provide cereal as that has been requested. This will be lovely and filling and nourishing. We also serve toasted sandwiches, fruit, crisps and biscuits. When we can, we bring second hand clothes, shoes and books which we display on a table for them to take their pick. Whatever is not taken goes to a local overnight homeless centre.”

The Colchester project serves 500 meals annually.

All the soup kitchen projects are already planning special Christmas meals for their guests.

Hospitaller  Winter 2016
Hospitaller Winter 2016

SYRIA
Aleppo: The last remaining paediatric hospital was bombed in mid November, causing major damage. It has been supported by the Order’s international relief service, Malteser International, since July 2015 – paying staff salaries and financing the purchase of equipment including ventilators and incubators. Malteser International also provides medical care for around 300,000 people living near the Syrian-Turkish border at four basic health units operated by its partner organisation. More than half are internally displaced people living in camps.

ROMANIA
The Order of Malta Relief Service in Romania (SAMR) celebrated its 25th anniversary in October. Started in 1991 in Cluj-Napoca, the service has grown from a group of 25 to over 200 today, and works with Order partners in Germany, Austria and Hungary. Among the long-serving volunteers and members of the organisation who were honoured with decorations was Secretary General Zsuzsa Barla, who dedicated her life to serving the poor and the vulnerable. Extraordinary, deeply admired and loved by all she worked with and for, she died suddenly in November, but leaves behind an example of generosity and devotion that is hard to match.

VATICAN
The Vatican has honoured two British Association members with Papal knighthoods: Peter Sefton-Williams, for his extensive work for Aid to the Church in Need, and Simon Grenfell for services to the Church.

POLAND
The 33rd international summer camp for young disabled took place 13-20 August in a village outside Krakow. 500 young turned up, including 200 disabled, with the British contingent – OMV members, volunteers and guests – among the international lineup from Italy, France, Belgium, Ukraine, Hungary, Spain, Germany and Lebanon joining in the fun and festivities. This year’s motto was ‘One for All and All for One.’

ARMENIA
Grand Master Fra’ Matthew Festing paid a historic State Visit to Armenia, 22-26 October, the first by a Grand Master in over nine hundred years. In his welcome, President of the Republic, Serzh Sargsyan, said: “The links between the first Christian nation and one of the oldest Christian orders go back to medieval times. We share the same Christian values.”

The Order of Malta aided Armenian refugees after the First World War, and in December 1988, after the earthquake in the north of the country which killed 25,000 and left half a million homeless. Today, through the Order’s Embassy, programmes for orphans in Echmiadzin and Zvartontz are offered, and assistance to the medical centre in Dilijan and to the school for deaf and dumb children in Yerevan.

The most touching moment for the Grand Master was his visit to the Armenian genocide memorial, in Yerevan, where he paid homage to the victims of the genocide and to the courage of the Armenian people.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
USA Federal Association’s programme ‘Medicines for humanity’ targets impoverished children in remote communities of the Republic. Recently added mobile clinics help in the fight against malnutrition, as well as bringing programmes to educate mothers to prepare nourishing meals, and to teach them how to create home gardens. The project has also extended to Guatemala and Haiti.