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107th state opens diplomatic relations with the Sovereign Order

www.orderofmalta.org.uk
Winter 2017
In brief...

KEY DATES

2018
13 January: White Knights Ball
14 April: Scottish Ball
4-10 May: 60th International OMV Lourdes Pilgrimage
21 June: St John’s evening party for members
22 June: St John’s Day
11-18 August: Great Britain Order of Malta International Summer Camp for Disabled Young
For more information: www.maltacamp2018.co.uk

14-16 September: Walsingham pilgrimage
contact Secretariat basmom@btconnect.com
5 October: British Association Annual Dinner
contact the Basmom Secretariat
28 November: Annual Requiem Mass
contact the Basmom Secretariat

Carol Service
The Christmas Carol Service took place on Wednesday 6th December in St James’s Spanish Place, London, and was followed by a happy, rowdy party in the crypt! A great fundraiser for Companions projects in the coming year...

Foreign Aid Service
The Foreign Aid Service organised another very successful fundraiser in November, to raise £60,000, which will go to supporting Order projects in Africa and the Middle East.

Caroline de La Force
Our splendid Caroline continues to care for our needs and respond to our queries at all hours! We know her door is always open and a warm welcome awaits all members.

Caroline, after your difficult year we are filled with admiration and gratitude. The Order salutes you and our prayers are with you and the children.

The Knights Hospitaller in Great Britain in 1540

Michael Hodges

At the request of the Grand Prior, the Chancellor of the British Association, Michael Hodges, has been working on a book provisionally entitled “The Knights Hospitaller in Great Britain in 1540 - a survey of the Houses and Churches etc belonging to the Knights of St John including those earlier belonging to the Knights Templar”. A detailed record of what survives together with extensive photographs. Publication 2018.

The Hospitallers emerged in Jerusalem in the early 12th century and during the course of the century became increasingly militarised. Donations of lands were increasingly made in Western Europe to both the Hospitallers and the Templars to provide them with the necessary financial resources.

From 1140 until the passing of the Statute of Mortmain in 1279, which required a royal licence for grants to religious houses, some 2000 properties in England and Wales passed to the Hospitallers. Certain families such as the Clare Earls of Hertford and Pembroke were particularly generous. Revenues came from land, “confraria” (essentially collections) and the advowsons of parish churches where a vicar on a small stipend was introduced. In 1268 a magistral letter referred to England as amongst the most generous of countries with some 12.5% of the Order’s revenues coming from there.

In 1312 the Templars were dissolved by the Papal Bull Vox in Excelsro and their lands were transferred to the Hospitallers whose wealth as a consequence at least doubled.

The “extent” of 1338 prepared by Prior Philip Thames identified 42 Commanderies in England and Wales spread across the majority of English counties with a total annual income of £6,839 9s 9d of which £2,303 15s 2d was sent to Rhodes as “responsions”. The richest Commandery was the headquarters at Clerkenwell (£400 pa) followed by Sibech in Pembrokeshire (£307 pa). The poorest Commandery was Chibburn in Northumberland (£24 pa). Lincolnshire with five Commanderies contributed £783 pa and Yorkshire with four Commanderies £364 pa.

The Grand Priory continued as the largest ecclesiastical landlord until the Reformation. The Grand Priory was dissolved in 1540, the last religious order to be extinguished. The Commanderies themselves have suffered from the vicissitudes of time although the 200 plus churches whose advowsons belonged to the Hospitallers have fared better in Anglican hands.

Banners of the bold

A roll of banners and standards of the Order of Saint John in England
Peter Drummond-Murray of Mastrick and Anthony Lombardo Delarue
Based on a Tudor manuscript in the College of Arms in London, which contains many standards and banners connected with the Order of Saint John. A treasure trove of historical, genealogical and heraldic detail, it also illustrates the banners of over 100 contemporary members of the Order. The use of banners is not a historical curio, but, as with national flags, a living science.

For more information: bannersofthebold@gmail.com
400 pp, 141 full colour plates. 2 editions: 1) leather bound @ £380; 2) standard cloth @ £30
To order online: www.bannersofthebold.co.uk
Publication date: February 2018
From the President

Dear Members and Friends

The year 2017 has presented many challenges to the Order. Now, under the leadership of the Lieutenant of the Grand Master, Fra’ Giacomo Dalla Torre, we are moving ahead in our response to the Holy Father’s request for the spiritual renewal of the Order. The process involves ten working groups, with participants representing our organisations around the world, who will meet in February to assess and put forward their proposals. There will also be another election at the end of April and subsequently a transition period for the reform proposals to be implemented. In this exercise, we are aware that the whole process is about spirituality and our vocation for service.

Our activities at home have gone from strength to strength – as you will read in these pages. To mention just two: the Breakfast Club in London’s Soho, our newest venture, is proving highly successful, caring for 30-40 guests every Wednesday morning. Not only is a ‘full English’ on offer, as well as a shower, and donations of warm clothes, but the day’s newspapers are to hand, and the room buzzes. In Colchester, guest numbers are up as word gets around and hot food cheers those who live on the streets in the chilly winter weather.

As we prepare solemn ceremonies and wonderful festivities for this season, we remember those whose lives are less fortunate. It is heartening to see how many projects to help those in need are expanding around the country – a testimony to our commitment to help society’s marginalised. The Companions have packed 600 Christmas parcels to be distributed, Christmas parties have been organised for our homeless guests in our soup kitchens and for our ‘golden oldies’ in our 73 residential homes in four counties, where we care for 4,000 elderly people. We do all this with the devotion and commitment of our Order members, Companions of the Order and volunteers. Together, you make up a formidable army of support!

At the end of his highly effective and roundly praised term as Hospitaller for the British Association, and on behalf of our very appreciative members, friends, Companions and volunteers I thank Mark Brenninkmeyer for his work, dedication and commitment to this very demanding role. Also retiring after his splendid work as Chairman for the Order’s Dial-a-Journey in Scotland, our thanks to Herbert Coutts, who has nurtured the Order’s most important Scottish project to a fine maturity.

As we move into important times for the Order in 2018, we can look back on work well done and forward to more to come. After a thousand years, we know how to do it!

A happy Christmas and New Year.

Richard Fitzalan Howard
President, British Association of the Order of Malta
The Brompton Oratory, St John’s Day 2012. Somewhat apprehensively I am sitting in the front row of this imposing church alongside other candidates for reception into the Order of Malta. I am pre-occupied with the reasons behind my peers’ coming here today. What are their stories? Here is mine.

A longstanding friend had been a knight for many years, yet I knew nothing of this. All I knew was that he was at the top of his profession yet he managed to find the time for a range of charitable work, including founding a well-known charity. His firm faith and his generosity were obvious to me, so when he suggested I might be of assistance in one of his charitable endeavours I had to respond.

He was a board member of the Orders of St John Care Trust which apparently needed a trustee with some knowledge of social housing - which had been my career. Thus began what has been ten years of involvement at board level with a remarkable organisation; for the last four years as its chairman. I soon became aware of the scale and ambition of the Trust – it now provides care in eighty locations, mostly residential and nursing care homes, but also supported housing schemes. It cares for 4,000 people, employs 4,700 staff, and is one of the largest non-profit providers of care for the elderly in the UK.

Quality of care is the key factor

Even more remarkable about the Trust than these statistics is the quality of the care it provides to...
residents, many of whom are living with dementia. The dedication of the staff to creating places where residents feel safe, looked after and loved is clear from the first acquaintance with one of our homes. They are helped by teams of volunteers who provide support in activities in the homes, arrange outings, maintain the gardens in good order – or just keep the residents company. Despite the challenges posed by dementia, residents experience individual and personalised care. The Trust’s homes and apartments are located across four English counties, in each of which it is one of the largest providers of care. It is, therefore, a major resource in these communities, and, working in close collaboration with local NHS care commissioning groups as well as local authorities, is a key factor in its operations. The Trust, in addition, offers day care, respite care, and what is called intermediate care – the service which helps reduce the amount of time elderly people have to stay in hospital.

Following the Order’s original traditions
In setting up the Trust over thirty years ago, the Order of Malta has thus created something which follows the original traditions of the Order – offering the highest standard of service to people in great need. That is why I feel privileged to represent the Order as one of its nominated Trustees, whose prime aim is to uphold the Order’s values and ensure that offering the best possible care is the Trust’s top priority. And it is why – having joined the Order five years ago – I am delighted to return to the Brompton Oratory each St John’s Day to cheer on the best of our staff as they go up – nervously, as I had done in 2012 – to receive ‘pro merito melitensi’ awards from our President.

So a story which began with the inspiration and example of the goodness and service of a committed knight continues with working amongst the saintly and dedicated trustees, staff and volunteers who embody the values of the Order in their daily lives and work in OSJCT.

FIND OUT MORE
To know more about OSJCT, or how to get involved, please email Don at wood.don6@gmail.com
The Colchester soup kitchen runs on Wednesday lunchtimes in the Cardinal Bourne Hall in Priory Street in Colchester, headed up by Adrian Rowley and Georgie Holt-Evans. It continues to go from strength to strength.

Hot meals are a great draw
Georgie: We have recently experienced a huge surge in the number of guests attending due to the hot meals we have been offering since the summer. We are now hosting approximately 20 guests every week (an increase on last year due to word of mouth). We try to serve something different each week – all made by our wonderful group of volunteers.

As well as a hot meal in the winter months, every week our guests also receive food parcels to take home with them [sandwiches, crisps, biscuits, fruit etc.] so that none of the food we buy is wasted. During the summer months they receive sandwiches (plain or toasted) with an array of fillings, a salad and a pudding and fruit and biscuits. For drinks, our guests will have at least two or three cups of tea or coffee or juice – about 2000 drinks prepared each year.

The wonderful volunteers make it all work!
This could not be done or be such a success without our wonderful volunteer helpers – Caroline, Margaret, Sally, Elizabeth, Gemma, Nick, Jane and more recently Veniana and Fatima. Occasionally we also get a visit from Father Alex and a student, Pasquale, who is studying for the priesthood.

From time to time we have a table filled with clothes and books kindly donated by volunteers or friends of volunteers. This is very popular and warm jumpers are particular favourites! Our Christmas lunch caters for at least 30 guests. We serve a full Christmas lunch of roast turkey and all the trimmings, roast potatoes, roast parsnips and Brussels sprouts and a Christmas pudding with mince pies and cream. The Order of Malta always donates fabulous goody bags which every guest receives and is very grateful for and delighted by. They would not miss this for the world. This is their Christmas. It is difficult to calculate our weekly costs as it varies from summer to winter but on average it is approximately £25 to £45 a week. We also incur a weekly charge of £12 to hire the Hall.

A variety of healthy options
Georgie Holt Evans, organiser and coordinator of the Colchester soup kitchen, explains how it is going from strength to strength

The dishes range from shepherd’s pie to lasagne to sausages and mash to a pasta dish. A pudding is also served which can vary from jelly and custard to cheesecake, meringues with strawberries and cream, or a cake. During the last year we prepared around 850 meals.

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The breakfast club
Helena Letman on the best two hours of the week in London’s Soho

The scenario: Wednesdays, 6 a.m., the Presbytery, Golden Square, Soho, London. Order members and Companions of the Order open its doors to greet their homeless guests.

Before the action kicks off, the volunteers will have brought in 36 eggs, toasting muffins, bread, milk, tea, coffee, fruit – and the daily newspapers. ‘We have around 30 guests each week,’ Helena explains, ‘and usually 10-12 of these take showers. Some of our guests help to do drying up, tidying, mopping, watch my car. So they are involved in the process.’

Overheard from Gus – one of the regulars, a vegan, who gets special porridge with his hot breakfast: “Helena, I wouldn’t miss Wednesday. Ever. We all think they are the two best hours of our week. It is not what you serve but how you serve it. It is wonderful.”
Not just soup!

Thursday evenings offer a great deal more
One of our fabulous volunteers from the Thursday soup kitchen announced to me that a family member works for Associated British Foods, who own Primark. So with a couple of phone calls and meetings we have now commenced a wonderful relationship with our local Primark store who give us unwanted clothes.

At present the boxes consist of T-shirts, boxer shorts, pants, socks and pyjama bottoms. Patrick Knollys picks them up every two weeks, and they are then sorted by our volunteers into sizes and type before they are handed out or stored – ready to be put into the Christmas parcels. To date we have had in the region of 34 large boxes as we started this process in October and they keep coming!

From sun cream to shaving cream
In the last six months we have massively increased the supplies that we give to the guests. It used to be mainly rucksacks, sleeping bags, gilets, woolly hats and socks. However, this has now become more diverse, depending on the season. During the summer we stocked sun hats, sun cream and lipsalve. We have built on this and now supply an enormous array of toiletries for men and women. The razors and shaving cream continue to be popular – but the socks and underwear are still the most sought after. We have initiated giving out washbags which keeps everything together. They have increased the longevity of some of the supplies so they do not get lost or damaged in the guests’ bags.

The innovative volunteers have brought different supplies from their work places and homes. Amongst other things, we have had books arriving by taxi, over forty one-litre cartons of oat, almond and hazelnut milk by courier, samples of hand cream and moisturiser from a well known British department store, and sewing kits from volunteers’ trips to hotels abroad.

Enhancing the quality of life
Over the summer we changed our supply of T-shirts to a thinner soft cotton in a variety of colours – these flew out of the door and were particularly welcome after a shower at the breakfast club. The socks and underwear are given out freely but the sleeping bags and rucksacks are still restricted to about 5 – 7 a week, under the watchful eye of Paul Letman. The guests’ quality of life has been enhanced by these small but important supplies.

In Lincoln’s Inn Fields on a Monday night, the guest numbers remain fairly constant between 70 and 90. Eat Sandwich shops still supply most of the sandwiches, salads, pastries and cakes but a few other food outlets have been added to the pick-up route. The Companions give out approximately 200 sandwiches most Mondays, making around 9,000 per year – equating to about 3,500 people fed over the year from the Monday soup run.

Companions in action around the country...

Christmas Countdown
Organising the Companions’ Christmas party
Three Thursday evenings beforehand: volunteers collect, organise and pack up 600 Christmas parcels to be distributed to homeless guests in London and around the country. Kate advises helpers: ‘Guests each receive a present from the Companions – (thermal mug with Companions logo) plus small donated gifts. Most of our guests are men – so toiletries donations reflect this. Other gifts are soap, shower gel, chocolate – bars of chocolate, gloves, box of biscuits, scarves.’

5pm Set up – helpers arrive early, to assist with picking up food, decorating the room and the tree, and piling the presents under it. 7.30pm The guests arrive – usually 90-100, mostly men. Entertainment, food as usual, both hot and cold: soup, pasta, sandwiches, salads, mince pies, cakes, fruit, tea and coffee – followed by a lucky dip. (Guests stay an extra half hour.)
9.30pm Guests leave. All (volunteer) hands to brooms, dishcloths, mops…
Kate MacKenzie, London Companions of the Order of Malta Coordinator

Tea parties and singalongs
Company for the lonely elderly
Order members and volunteers, together with members of the Companions of the Order, arrange around 4 to 5 teas a year and have between 15-20 guests attending from St Wilfrid’s Home and the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. They are held at St Joseph’s Hall at the London Oratory. There’s a sing along and then tea is served. Everyone brings some goodies, so there is always enough to eat. The organisers try to have a theme every time. The idea is that everyone sits together and has fun. They do!

Cambridge snapshot
Building the presence of the Order
New: an agreement with Addenbrooke’s hospital volunteering programme – student volunteers
Companions of the Order of Malta, will work on the wards on Saturdays, keeping patients company and attending to their needs. Also:

- 15 students packed and distributed 50 parcels to the homeless in the city (working in partnership with a well known clothing chain);
- Coming up: visits to two local residential care homes to start in 2018;
- Funding appeal: for the new CPR and defibrillation project;
- Terryl Mass at Fisher House.

Matthew Schellhorn, Coordinator, Cambridge Companions of the Order of Malta (and with special thanks to the student representatives – whom he calls ‘the ‘sine qua non’).
Cooking up a storm...

Jack Straker shares his own unique cookbook

**INGREDIENTS:**

* One regular-sized Organising Committee
* Large numbers of volunteers, equal parts young and old
* 86 scones
* Lashings of patience
* 2 processions
* 156 bottles of wine
* Sunday lunch to feed 180
* 35 letters of invitation to BASMOM guests
* 117 beds in Elmham House
* 30 bottles of Order prosecco from Clarion
* An almost fanatical devotion to 10 raffle prizes
* An overworked resident Monsignor
* 200 sandwiches – egg mayonnaise/cucumber
* Vats of Archangel Gin from the Black Lion
* 300 canapés ready made
* An almost fanatical devotion to

Directions

First, take the Organising Committee left over from the previous pilgrimage and marinate in red wine. Ensure it is saturated with plans, resolutions and good intentions before proceeding.

Next, leave everything for four or five months so all knowledge gained from previous experiences evaporates.

Take the pilgrimage director and whip up into a frenzy of excitement that nothing is booked, and add a large telephone bill for the month of April.

When settled, roll into a long email, dividing tasks among the Organising Committee. Leave to soak in, to become almost unrecognisable from its original form.

Note: Throughout the preparation maintain a high temperature or the pilgrimage’s flavour will suffer.

Start to tenderise potential volunteers with emails, Facebook posts, text messages. Take a large spreadsheet and insert applications from well-organised people, Walsingham regulars, BASMOM guests and about half of the Organising Committee. The mixture should now be taking shape, but do not add any young volunteers until they have stewed long in nostalgia for the OMV summer activities.

Now simmer the pilgrimage director in repeated requests for applications. Alongside, prepare a hot pot of Excel spreadsheets involving accommodation, travel arrangements, financials, name badges and team lists.

Take the Organising Committee and beat into a recruitment drive. Fold in begging emotional blackmail, false promises, bribery and/or tears. Remove the first false deadline for applications.

Increase the heat, and bring the pilgrimage director to the boil. Note that OMV guests should only be added at the very last minute, with half the young volunteers.

Remove all remaining deadlines for applications, and spread the head of logistics very thinly over several tasks. When the OMV guests have been safely added to the spreadsheet, remove pilgrimage director from the heat and add a false sense of calm. As soon as the pilgrimage director has settled, sprinkle in the remembrance of forgotten tasks, to taste.

Take the head of catering out of the nearby pressure cooker, and flash-fry in panic. Switch on the extractor fan to disperse the large amounts of resulting smoke. Remove any residual sleep and reason, then pour in the catering team. Put this mixture on maximum heat and allow to bubble away. Do not stir.

At this point the pilgrimage is ready to be served. Scramble two coaches of pilgrims, and leave to sit for several hours in bad traffic before squeezing into Elmham House. Add various forms of religious spice: Mass, Lauds, Vespers, reflections, sprinklings, Stations of the Cross, candlelit processions. The pilgrimage is best appreciated with all its spiritual, social and charitable sides well-balanced; in addition, the young and old elements mix well and complement each other. If the texture is too smooth, add rain showers and lost room keys.

Infuse with happiness, turn out, and enjoy.

When the weekend is over, pickle what is left of the pilgrimage organiser and save for next year.
“Follow me” said Jesus to each of his disciples. “Follow me” says Jesus to me. Yup, it is terrifyingly personal. We are not just members of a tribe, or team, or people who are collectively called to get behind Jesus, but like each of the original twelve, Jesus actually wants me – and you – to get stuck behind Him.

Fr James doesn’t mince his words making this point at Mass when I arrive (a bit late) for yet another camp in Lebanon. I nearly did not come, I am very busy at work, and really don’t have the time, but my bother bullied me into it and I find myself half way up a dusty mountain about to embark on significant personal care for a group of mentally and physically disabled people. A week of yells and smells is ahead of me.

Blessed Cardinal Newman tells us that we might never know what definite service God wants from us, but I dare to suppose that he wants some people to help our disabled Lebanese friends, and I further dare to presume (as I am here now!) that maybe He may want me to lend a hand.

The beauty of innocence

The German theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote: ‘We no longer dare to believe in beauty and we make of it a mere appearance in order the more easily to dispose of it.’ As a rule our guests do not meet current criteria for beauty, but so many of them have a beauty of innocence and joy. Nicolas often hits and pinches the volunteers, (you should see Jack’s arms) but there is not a morsel of malice in his friendly ferocity. Many may see our disabled guests as disposable, but a bit of one-to-one time shows how special they are, and that the heart can shine through an ugly body, and despite a troubled mind.

The Christian culture, in which all of us live, even if it is often quite superficial, maintains that helping those who are less fortunate than one’s self is good. We praise and admire people who are not selfish, but selfless. But why is it good to help? When we help each other we recognise and accept the truth that the person we help is of enormous value, indeed of infinite value. God did His very best when creating each and every one – both able bodied and disabled, so if we are of such importance to God, surely we should be of importance to each other.

Heart speaks to heart

I continue to be dumbfounded by how our disabled friends can have such a powerful impact on us volunteers. Most guests can’t string a sentence together, let alone have a conversation, but as the week progresses heart begins to speak unto heart. And indeed I really think that God goes out of His way to communicate with us in a way we can understand. Isn’t it funny, isn’t it awesome, that our all powerful God breaks our hardened hearts through the weakest members of our society, and communicates with us through those who can’t speak?

Now our 30 disabled friends have gone back to their basic homes, where there is little one-to-one care and love, and I am back at my desk in London. Dare I hope that as God used them to speak to me, maybe as I halfheartedly followed Him up a mountain in Lebanon, He used me to speak to them, to let them know that they are loved?

International Holiday Camp, August 11-18, 2018

Plans are moving at a fast and efficient pace to host the 2018 Order of Malta International Holiday Camp for Young Disabled. 450 young, disabled and volunteers, arriving from 26 countries, will gather in Hampshire in August 2018 for an unforgettable week of fun, companionship, laughter, prayer.

For more information: www.maltacamp2018.co.uk
The Order and the Czar

Grand Prior Fra’ Ian Scott recalls a Russian interlude in the history of the Order
On Thursday, 3rd August I went with two other members of the Grand Priory of England to visit the Palace of the Grand Prior at Gatchina, near St Petersburg, where there is a small permanent exhibition about the Order’s time in Russia. There is also display of photographs of Grand Master Matthew Festing’s State Visit in 2015.

The Priory Palace was built by Nicholas Lvov for the Prince de Condé, Grand Prior of the Russian Catholic Grand Priory of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta during the reign of Czar Paul I. It stands in grounds overlooking a lake, and like so many of the buildings in the grounds of the great imperial estates, the word ‘palace’ hardly fits what is a modest house, which could easily be mistaken for a farm or hunting lodge. Nevertheless the ground floor has a small hall with a coffered wooden roof in which assemblies were held; it is now used as a music room. There is a much larger hall in the main Palace at Gatchina, a mile away, where investitures were held in great state, and it is significant that this hall directly adjoined the Czar’s private apartments. The Palace is now being restored after having been severely damaged in the German retreat during the last war.

Czar Paul I and the Order of Malta

Despite not being professed, nor celibate, nor a Catholic, the eccentric Czar Paul was enthroned as Grand Master in November 1798 after the French army under Napoleon Bonaparte had occupied Malta and expelled the knights residing there. The Czar founded an Orthodox Grand Priory with his eldest son, the Czarevich Alexander, as its Grand Prior. He also gave the Order the Woronzov House in St Petersburg as their headquarters, with two beautiful chapels, one Catholic and the other Orthodox, which were designed by Giacomo Quarenghi, considered the ‘last of the great architects of Italy’ and the foremost practitioner of Palladian architecture in Imperial Russia. Although recognised by many of the European sovereigns, Pope Pius VI, himself a prisoner of the French, could not bring himself to recognise a schismatic as head of a Catholic religious order. Nevertheless, the Czar’s infatuation with the Order led him to shower the cross of the Order on all his favourites, including his mistress Madame Laphoukine. Having received a petition from Lord Nelson, he sent a cross to Lady Hamilton who is shown wearing it in a portrait by J H Schmidt.

Conspiracy and a murder

By the early months of 1801 Paul was leading a life of fearful isolation in his moated St Michael’s Castle, not far from the centre of St Petersburg. His ministers plotted to dethrone him and the Czar’s Prime Minister, Count Peter von der Pahlen, Grand Chancellor of the Order of Malta, was at the head of the conspirators. On the 12th March the Czar was murdered by a group of his inebriated courtiers, amongst whom were four of his own Knights of Malta.

His successor, Czar Alexander 1st had no part in his father’s mania for the Order of Malta and divested himself of its government. In 1802 the Treaty of Amiens provided for the return of Malta to the Knights of St John but as we know, the British, having ousted the French invaders, refused to relinquish the island.

As Henry Sire writes in his masterly book, ‘The Knights of Malta’, ‘We ought to consider what Paul I’s seizure of power meant in practical terms, and from that point of view we may judge that he saved the Order in the hardest predicament of its history.’
LIEUTENANT OF THE GRAND MASTER ADDRESSES THE YOUNG

The Lieutenant addressed the international group of young members at the 11th Blessed Gerard Retreat in the Magistral Villa, Rome, in early December. He said: “Each of us in our different roles, all equally important, plays a part in the construction of peace. In the Order, all can find a place to play their part – the high offices in the government of the Order, our chaplains in the spiritual accompaniment of members and volunteers, our ambassadors in bringing a message of peace free of any political influence, and you also in performing the Order’s works. As in a puzzle, the parts have different shapes and colours: if taken individually it is often difficult to understand their significance, but taken as a whole they create a great design, a design of peace”.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHED WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

The announcement of the establishment of official diplomatic relations was made during the official visit of the German Foreign Minister, Sigmar Gabriel, to the Magistral Villa in November, where he was welcomed by the Order’s Grand Chancellor, Albrecht Boeselager.

Minister Gabriel said: “The Order of Malta is one of the most stable institutions of German civil society with its hospitals, social and rescue services.” In his reply, the Grand Chancellor said: “I would like to express my deep gratitude for the great work of the Federal Republic of Germany in relieving human suffering, particularly in helping migrants and refugees. An ambitious commitment that fully reflects the principles and values that inspire the activity of the Order of Malta.”

This makes Germany the 107th State with which the Sovereign Order has diplomatic relations.

LIAM DEVLIN APPOINTED UNICORN PURSUIVANT

Scottish appointment to the Heraldic Court of the Lord Lyon: Liam Devlin MA, BMus, MSciIT, LRAM, ARCM, FRSA, FSA Scot

Liam Devlin was appointed Unicorn Pursuivant on 6 January, 2016, having previously been Linlithgow Pursuivant Extraordinary since 2014. He holds masters degrees in Music and in IT from the Universities of Glasgow and Durham and studied piano and organ with Michael Matthews, Moura Lympany and Odile Pierre.

He is a professional musician and teacher, sometime Director of Music at St Aloysius’ College, Glasgow, and a lecturer at the Royal Scottish Conservatoire and currently teaches adult classes on the Music and Art of Venice for Glasgow University. He is a former Visiting Fellow at Trinity College, Oxford (2001), Pembroke College, Oxford (2002) and New Hall, Cambridge (2003). A burgess of the City of Glasgow, having been Deacon of the Incorporation of Cordiners 2015-2016, he is a Knight of Magistral Grace of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and a member of the Board of the Children’s Music Foundation of Scotland and a trustee of Scotland’s Churches Trust. He has a special interest in ecclesiastical and Italian heraldry and gives organ recitals and adjudicates music festivals throughout the British Isles and in Italy.

The title was created after 1381. The appointed officer is advisory in the Court of the Lord Lyon, the heraldic authority for Scotland. It deals with all matters relating to Scottish Heraldry and Coats of Arms and maintains the Scottish Public Registers of Arms and Genealogies. It is the oldest heraldic court in the world still in daily operation.

ALBANIAN CHARITY SERVICE OF THE ORDER OF MALTA OPENS PLAYGROUND FOR YOUNG ROMA

A playground for young Roma and children with special needs was inaugurated in Lezha, northeast Albania, in November, by Malteser Albania. Attending the ceremony with the local mayor was the Sovereign Order’s Ambassador to the Roma, Franz Salm.

The organisation has extensive experience in assistance programmes for the Roma people to help them integrate into society.