



21 October 2016

Dear Companion,

AUTUMN 2016 NEWSLETTER

The Companions – Mercy in Action 2016

A touch earlier than usual, but there are lots of things to report from the Summer, as well as an amazing array of things coming up and many, many DATES for your diary. I do hope you can make them all (ok, some), and can lend a further hand with our Clothing Appeal, CoM Christmas Cards, and Homeless Parcels plans. Thank you so much for your prayers and continued support.

Summer Update

Thanks to the many brilliant Companions and volunteers who kept the soup runs and kitchens going throughout the Summer weeks, despite the inevitable absence of people on holiday. In London, we saw the CoM Café packed with guests, 70/80 per week, as many other facilities shut down over the holidays. Monday evenings were also hugely well attended, and additional seasonal supplies of fruit and water were laid on for our guests.

All has been going well too in Colchester. During August we opened our Lunchtime Café on Mondays and Fridays, which was very well received by our regulars. To fit in with other local services though we have now reverted to our usual Wednesday lunchtime slot (see Georgie's report below).

The G & W Companions have also, as always, been busy, with extra outings for residents of OSJ care homes, and a big coffee morning raising money for the local charity with whom we work caring for homeless in Cirencester. While other Companions were judging at both Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Harvest Festivals.



Companions Louise Smail and Margaret McDonald with Residents and volunteers of Paternoster House having won Best Gloucestershire Garden.

Meanwhile the wonderful Alice Murphy with help from Lillian Molloy and others has continued with our cherished monthly tea parties in Northumberland.

Companions were out in force too for another fantastic Walsingham pilgrimage. With the Chairman's Cycle from London to Walsingham (completed by the mad duo below after 7 hours in the pouring rain) this year raising £781 towards our Christmas



Parcels Appeal (Duncan McKechnie is the youthful one on the right). Many thanks indeed to all those who so generously contributed to the cause, especially Ann Tomlinson and Anna Zaloga.

Safeguarding

Just a quick word about this most important of topics - Our unified safeguarding policy has been finalised and will shortly be uploaded to our website. I am now working on the multiple different policies and protocols to accompany the same, and these will be rolled out as and when completed and approved by the Order.

In this regard, I recently met with Rachel Haynes (having missed each other in Walsingham) the new safeguarding consultant engaged by BASMOM to ensure we are on the right track in terms of policies and compliance. A meeting of all stakeholders is scheduled for 25 October 2016 for a full safeguarding review.

With Rachel in post, it should prove simpler to make progress with our aim of obtaining DBS certification for as many of us as possible and, in particular, all those who are able to volunteer on a regular basis (all activity leaders are already DBS'd as a matter of course).

CoM Organization & Expansion

In London, I am delighted to confirm that Kate McKenzie (nee Lomax) has agreed to become the London coordinator to replace Alice, with the full approval of our CoM Council. She is an ex-OMVer and, most weeks, you will find her at the CoM Café – although at the moment she is recovering from a knee op, but she will be back with us asap.

We are sad though to lose Alice, who is starting her teacher training, and thank her very much indeed for everything she has done to support the CoM over the last couple of years.

After many years of brilliant work in G & W, Sarah C deserves a break, and we need to find a worthy successor; it may make sense in fact to find 2, one for Wiltshire and the other for Gloucestershire. If you would like to step up to the plate (or know of the ideal candidate/s) do speak to Sarah or me.

Meanwhile, there have been exciting developments in Cambridge and Scotland as you will read below (under The Regions). In Scotland, thanks to Marc Morris with the support in particular of Liam, David MacLure, Angus Hay and Tim Hall, we have just launched our St. Andrew's CoM group. Thanks to Mathew Schellborn great progress is being made at Cambridge University, with the support of the Chaplaincy there.

Annie (our amazing secretary) is also working on our links with the OMV, including attending the OMV Alumni Reunion in September. The OMV Alumni intends to be a social network for ex-OMV. It will also introduce them to the work of the Companions and hopefully encourage as many of them as possible to volunteer and work with us.

Plans & Projects

CoM Breakfast Club/Shower Project. Works are now scheduled to be completed in the basement parish centre at the Ordinariate Church by the end of this month, and we have committed to start our Breakfast Club for the homeless in November. You will recall we decided not to spend £25k for just 2 added showers, but have agreed to contribute £5,000 to complete the fit out with one shower and laundry facilities. We are now planning the detail (supply lines, timing etc, a rota for key volunteers) – many of you have already expressed an interest, but the more the merrier so do drop me a line if you would like to help.

Christmas Parcels for the Homeless, this year we are planning to provide 600 (up from 500 last year, and thanks to your generosity a long way from the 50/60 we first provided. We are ordering the kit now (thanks to Patrick), with packing at St. James's on Thursday evenings in November, and distribution from early December in London and elsewhere inc. Oxford, Cirencester, Colchester, and Scotland.

Cribs for Christmas, another brilliant idea from Sarah C, who noticed the lack of Cribs in OSJ Care Homes. We have proposed a budget of up to £1,000 for this initiative and are now liaising with the Homes and investigating supply (including making enquiries with other Order Associations around the world to see if they can help in providing these).

OSJCT Care Homes Funding, We have also received a series of requests for funding for specific projects from the Homes, and the following were approved at the recent Council meeting, I hope you approve too:-

- Athelstan House, Malmesbury £125 to take 10 of our OSJ residents out for tea at Highgrove in November including transport and entry fees,
- Paternoster House, Cirencester need money to hire a bus with a ramp for Christmas outings otherwise it was unlikely those in wheel chairs would get an outing, £200 approved,
- Jubilee House, Bourton on the Water are looking to raise money for a wheelchair accessible greenhouse and are having fund raising events, we have agreed to make a contribution of £200,
- Trevonne House Gloucester always struggles with its amenity funds, and we have agreed to provide £200 for Christmas outings for the residents,
- A donation of £250 was approved towards a Christmas lunch in December for the homeless and poor families in Cirencester hosted by the local charity with whom we work.

The Nehemiah Project, You will recall that this is an existing programme for the rehabilitation of young offenders, supported by the Bishop's Conference. If it can be arranged there will be a short presentation at our London get together on 09 November about this. Meanwhile, Bernard Dahdah is taking a lead on this for us, so if you would like to know more do please get in touch with him.

First Aid Training, We have been offered free CoM First Aid Training from CT Westway, and I am awaiting details from them about this. I hope that it will be possible for groups of us to take advantage of this opportunity. As well as being a good thing for our volunteers, it would be great if we could help run the first aid point in Walsingham next year for a couple of weekends (a la Rome this year).

World Youth Camp, the wheels are also starting in motion for the World Youth Camp in the UK in 2018. The CoM have been invited to be in charge of transport (meeting/greeting and logistics etc). At first blush it may not sound all that exciting but actually it will be a great way of getting ourselves involved in this amazing Camp for young disabled people.

The Regions

Birmingham & West Midlands: Adrian de Redman [blue.candle2@hotmail.com – 07799 188 628]

Our lovely BrumComs invite you to join them on **Saturday 5 November** for a mini-pilgrimage in honour of Bl. Karl of Austria to the national shrine at Bishton Hall, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford ST17 0XN (by courtesy of the Stafford Northcote family). The intentions will be, the canonisation of Bl.Karl, the Canonisation of Bl.John Henry Newman, the Conversion of England, the intentions of the Prince and Grand Master, the good of the Order and the Companions, Vocations to the Order. For further details do please be in touch with Adrian – and don't forget the monthly Masses too.

Gloucestershire & Wiltshire: Sarah Cornell [sarahcornell@sky.com – 07817 499 829]

Companions have been busy organising outings and tea parties over the summer which are so appreciated by residents of our OSJ Care Homes. September also was a busy time with Harvest Festivals and the Companions supported both the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire ones held in Devizes and Gloucester respectively. They found themselves tasting jam, sampling cakes, judging all sorts of craft and of course the vegetables..

Companions in Cirencester held a very successful coffee morning and were able to contribute nearly £900 to local homeless project, Signpost, to go towards the extra costs which will be incurred over the winter months. Thank you to all who cooked cakes, sent donations and came and spent money. One Companion drove from Bath, which was most noble and appreciated.

Most recently Companions had a great afternoon with Paternoster House residents at their 60's afternoon. All did well with the dressing up and they were completely unrecognisable.

This is all such marvellous work, thank you for your continued support.

The OSJ Christmas Party dates are: 13th December, Didcot, Oxfordshire and 19th December Wiltshire in Devizes.

Also for Christmas, Sarah has proposed that we send **Christmas Cards to residents**, or otherwise to some of our Lourdes pilgrims (Annie can let you have the addresses); this is a brilliant way of staying in touch and would be a great kindness if you can.

East Anglia: Georgie Holt- Evans (georgie@holtevens.plus.com)

We are now feeding 10-20 people each week (15 last week), drawn from the local homeless and marginalised. Hot food recommences in two weeks' time. Helpers now are principally

Nick, Marie, Sally, Ellen, and new to the team is Gemma who has become very quickly a wonderful addition to our group. Christmas lunch scheduled at the moment for 21 December 2016. Do come and join us if you can.

Scotland (and Dial a Ride): Liam Devlin [liam@liamdevlin.co.uk – 07968 119 895] and Marc Morris [marc_morris@outlook.com] (who writes below).

The new Companions group at the University of St Andrews is now up and running with over 60 volunteers and a growing number of subscribed Companions. Opening Drinks took place on 26 September and served as the official launch of the group. The evening was extremely successful, with forty people in attendance. Students were delighted to meet several Knights, Dames, and Companions, and we thank many who travelled a large distance to join us. Father Michael John Galbraith, the Catholic Chaplain, was also present.

Significant progress is being made towards starting a hospitaller project in Dundee. Specifically, we are in discussions to join an existing project with the homeless in the Parish of Lochee on a Saturday afternoon.

The first Companions Dinner was held on 1 October 2016. Furthermore, Compline is now hosted every Saturday at 10pm at St Leonard's University Chapel with thanks to Companion Francois Chatton and the University Chaplain the Reverend Dr Donald McEwan.

On 1 November 2016 Angus Hay has kindly agreed to give a lecture in St Andrews on the history of the Order, any Companions or Members of the Order in the vicinity are welcome to attend. Please contact Marc if you would like any further details.

Also in Scotland, Liam Hackett is looking into the potential for another project in Glasgow, perhaps working with the refugee communities there.

Oxford University CoM: Daniel Mullens [Daniel.mullens@st-hughs.ox.ac.uk]

Following on the great growth in the Oxford Companions' activities in the academic year 2015/6, the Autumn is set to see further expansion. Last year a new 'Companions' Café' was set up at the Marston care-home, in addition to the existing café at Isis House, and soup runs began to take place six days a week, out of Blackfriars as well as St. Benet's Hall. In addition serving lunch to the homeless on a Sunday in conjunction with Oxford Homeless Pathways ('OxHoP') has allowed volunteers to offer their time in a further way. This term, work with children with special educational needs has also re-commenced after a brief hiatus. Dan reports that to top off the term's activities, OU CoM will be holding a Christmas lunch for the homeless on Saturday, 17th December.

Cambridge University CoM [mathewschellhorn@me.com]

In Cambridge, wonderfully, Mathew Schellhorn has taken up where Johanna left off, and is in touch with a number of undergraduates to develop our CU CoM. It was great to see a group from Cambridge at the Order Mass on 8/9. We plan to work with the Chaplaincy and alongside the SVP, publicizing CoM activities and getting the CU group involved for example in distributing our Christmas Parcels and hopefully continuing our local care home visits.

If you are in the Region Mathew would be only too pleased to hear from you.

South East: Jamie O'Meara [jamie.omeara@btinternet.com – 07771 566 100]

After the great success of the 40th anniversary celebrations for St. Wilfrid's OSJCT Home, Arundel, and rekindling our relationship with them, we are looking to assist with their Christmas festivities and in particular contribute to the Christmas party. Please be in touch with Jamie to help on this, we'll post the date shortly.

The Northern Marches: Fred Wyrley-Birch [f.wyrley-birch@andersonandgarland.com – 07790 132 834]

Northumberland continue to hold their highly successful tea parties. Thank you especially to Alice for all her work in organizing these, and thanks to all of you who manage to help. This is a real highlight for our guests, with a sing-along, a very jolly game of bingo and other attractions. This is such a wonderful project, and has of course inspired the CoM in London to do the same. If you want to have a go in your area do give me, or Helena (07798 558109) or Alice a call.

London: Kate MacKenzie [katemackenzie@btconnect.com] & Patrick Knollys [7atrick@knollys.co.uk]



Our Autumn Oratory Tea Party last week was super fun, thank you so much to everyone who came along to set up and help for the afternoon. Particular thanks also to Chris Taylor, our pianist from the Oratory School, who is a charming entertainer. Thank you for supporting this event, which costs about £300 each time, to pay for the mini-bus, music, provisions and a little present for the guests to take away (this time £1.99 gift boxes of biscuits). Each time our numbers are increasing and there is no doubt our guests love coming together, and have a great afternoon with us.

Meanwhile, as ever our Monday soup run to LIF and Companions Café continue to serve the homeless and destitute (just come along at 7.45pm any Monday to the north east corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields or on a Thursday to the Companions Café, 6.30pm-9-pm at St.James's, Spanish Place).

As the weather is getting colder the demand for sleeping bags (so often lost or stolen in the streets) increases, along with requests of shoes, warm clothing, socks etc –

Please raid your wardrobe and let us have any suitable unwanted items you can – these can be dropped off or simply sent to me at 3 Hare Court, Temple EC4Y 7BJ and I will make sure they are handed out straightway.

South West: Duncan McKechnie,[dajmck@me.com- 07990 594 441]

Duncan reports that we are even now planning for the next St. Rose School holiday camp visit to the Calvert trust, Exmoor. As you know this was a huge success again this year and much appreciated by all the severely disabled young people from the school and their helpers. We should have the dates for the next visit shortly to add to your diary. Thank you for supporting this.

Overseas

Further to the decision at the last CoM Council meeting to continue our support for the Bethlehem Christian families, I have been in touch with our local contact Anton and promised our further financial support. Transferring the money has though proved difficult, but happily the Order Treasurer is travelling to the Holy Land shortly, and will be able to provide him directly with the next installment of \$1k. I will keep you updated on the distribution of these much needed funds.

We will also be supporting the Order's Holy Family Hospital, Bethlehem, through the proceeds of our Carol Service and Reception on 07/12/16.

Website

We need to work on our website I know, if anyone with the necessary skills can help on this I would be only too delighted. I can be reached as you know on 07730 070403 or at pletman@3harecourt.com or via Annie, our secretary on secretary.companions@gmail.com.

R.I.P.

Sadly this newsletter would not be complete without mention of the recent passing of John Grantham. John was known to many of us from the May Lourdes pilgrimages of the last 20 years and was recognizable to all from his appearance on the front of the CoM leaflet. He bore his MS with great fortitude and grace, wonderfully cared for by his wife, Alexis. He was dearly loved and will be greatly missed. We will remember him always in our prayers.

Dates

Monday	31 October 2016	OU CoM Mid term Mass
Tuesday	01 November 2016	St.Andrews CoM, Angus Hay Lecture
Wednesday	09 November 2016	London CoM Reception, Holy Redeemer Chelsea, 7.30pm
Monday	28 November 2016	OU CoM Michaelmas term Mass and dinner.
AND..		
Wednesday	07 December 2016	Carol Service 7.30pm (please book) CLICK HERE TO BUY TICKETS
Tuesday	13th December 2016	Oxfordshire OSJ Christmas party in Didcot
Thursday	15 December 2016	Homeless Christmas Party at St.J's
Monday	19th December 2016	Wiltshire OSJ Christmas Party in Devizes

And the dates for our next London Tea Parties are:

Wednesday	11 January 2017	(Epiphany party with gifts)
Wednesday	22 March 2017	(Easter party)
Wednesday	28 June 2017	(Summer party)

Thank you for all your support and prayers.



Paul Letman
CHAIR CoM