

Dear Companion,

## SPRING 2011 NEWSLETTER

'By their fruits ye shall know them' Mat 7:20

### THANKS

Firstly, many thanks to all those who attended the annual Companions Day Mass on 11 February 2011. Thanks also to our celebrant and host Fr Alexander Sherbrooke. I am sure that this will become a key date in our diaries, both for Mass, meeting and our charitable work annually.

Particular thanks also, if I may, to John Tabor for stepping in to lead our deputation at the Westminster Cathedral Anointing of the Sick Service, which I was unable to attend because of a death in the family.

### CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES

As the recently appointed chairman of the Companions, I am very keen to ensure that we fulfil our role as a key vehicle for the charitable work of the British Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (BASMOM). Providing a place where people who uphold the ethos of the Order can find a variety of projects to support both in the UK and overseas, whether by volunteering and/or giving financial or spiritual support.

I would also like to see us establish ourselves, in terms of membership and the extent and reach of our charitable activities, as a leading Roman Catholic charity in the UK. Central to this mission should no doubt be core activities such as the following:

- (1) Supporting, both financially and through volunteering our time, the marvellous work of our Orders of St John Care Homes, as for example is already being done by Sarah and the Companions in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire (see below).
- (2) May I suggest also, visiting the house bound, elderly and infirm in our own parishes, something we can all do as Companions to support our parish priests across the country.
- (3) Overseas, our continued support for the TB Clinics in Nairobi and other local community health projects, through the offices of Alice Murphy, First Secretary at the Order's Embassy, and Malteser International. I should also like to see us involve ourselves in Malteser International's Caravan project in Lebanon (but more of that in due course).

However, I have been hugely impressed already by the energy and enthusiasm that is being shown by our regional co-ordinators and individual Companions around the country (see below), who are already engaged in a whole range of fantastic things:

**Gloucestershire & Wiltshire:** Sarah Cornell is taking the lead in hosting tea parties, coffee mornings, outings, home visits etc in conjunction with our local OSJ Care Homes. Please note in fact the following, upcoming event

- 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011, Easter Tea Party for the elderly at Winson, nr. Cirencester, the home of Tuft Dobson (Companion).

**The West Midlands & Birmingham:** the Companions, led by Adrian de Redman, are developing links with Selly Oak Hospital and arranging a number of meetings and events.

**London:** the Companions, led by Peter Allingham, are helping to serve huge cooked dinners to the homeless at the Open House project in Soho, every Thursday at St. Anne's, Dean Street from 17.30hrs (with plans to expand to 2 nights per week when Open House returns to St. Patrick's, and, amongst other things, to help in the Central London churches night shelter project).

**The South West:** presently with a lead from Michael Festing we are supporting financially and with volunteers the Outward Bound holiday for disabled youngsters at the Calvert Trust Centre on Exmoor this coming July (as mentioned in my last letter).

**Scotland:** now led by Liam, ably backed up by Gordon and Cameron, we have Companions working in a homeless shelter, with Riding for the Disabled and with two Disabled Scouts troupes amongst other activities. We are also

beginning to help Jan Bruntisfield in her marvellous work prison-visiting. I should also mention Liam's many fund raising activities, and the huge support that the Scottish Companions are continuing to give to Alice in Nairobi.

**Overseas:** Alice Murphy called this morning from the slums of Nairobi to report on the work of the 8 TB clinics we are helping to fund there and to thank the Companions for our support and prayers. The new branded T-shirts, purchased with funds raised for the purpose by Companions in Scotland, have proved a huge boost to the staff working in such difficult circumstances.

## **ORGANISATION UPDATE**

To promote our work, we are continuing to develop our activities on a regional basis, with now 8 regions, as follows (in no particular order):

Scotland: Henry Lorimer, who has been wonderful in pushing forward the work of the Companions, has handed over to 'Convener' Liam Devlin ([liamdevlin@musician.org](mailto:liamdevlin@musician.org)), assisted by Gordon Brankin and Cameron Sinclair-Parry.

North of England: Tot Wyrley-Birch ([totcharlton@aol.com](mailto:totcharlton@aol.com))

West Midlands & Birmingham: Adrian de Redman ([blue.candle2@hotmail.com](mailto:blue.candle2@hotmail.com))

Gloucestershire & Wiltshire: Sarah Cornell ([sarahcornell@sky.com](mailto:sarahcornell@sky.com))

London: Peter Allingham ([peter@ancient.co.uk](mailto:peter@ancient.co.uk))

Central & Oxford: John Eidinow ([john.eidinow@stb.ox.ac.uk](mailto:john.eidinow@stb.ox.ac.uk)). John, the Dean of Merton College, is promoting the work of the Companions in the University where an active student group is to be established.

The South East: Jamie O'Meara ([jamie.omeara@btinternet.com](mailto:jamie.omeara@btinternet.com)) has very kindly volunteered to head up the work of the Companions in this region. Sean Armstrong will be working with him.

Thus, as well as missives from me, you can expect to be contacted directly about particular events and activities in your region, and you are invited to contact your regional head about any ideas or initiatives you have for the Companions.

## **BASMOM**

Testimony to the undoubted support that Companions has from BASMOM, members of the Order are becoming increasingly active in their regions. Indeed new Knights and Dames are now expected by BASMOM to be active participants in the Companions, and to be at the forefront of the work of the Companions in their region.

## **LOURDES**

For Companions coming on the BASMOM pilgrimage to Lourdes: please note that there will be a reception hosted by the President/Chancellor of BASMOM. The details will be in the Red Book sent to all pilgrims.

## **RECRUITMENT**

Finally, for now, may I ask every Companion to recommend 1 friend please to be invited to join the Companions, someone you think could and would join us in our mission. If you could drop Lalla a line, I will write to each nominee personally inviting them to join our growing number.

Yours aye,

Paul

Paul Letman