



25 March 2014

Dear Companion,

SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER

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

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Congratulations. Thanks to your subscriptions and support since our last newsletter (dated 13 January 2014) just a few weeks ago we have amongst other things:

- **Provided an estimated 1000 (yes one thousand) meals to the homeless** on the streets of London via our Monday 'sandwich run' to Lincoln's Inn Fields. You can see the video on the BASMOM website. This costs us some **£450pcm** to meet van hire, petrol, insurance, food and fruit purchases and could not happen without your contribution.
- **Fed and cared for another 300+ homeless folk in the warmth of St. James's** church hall at our Companions Café on Thursday evenings. This is costing us about **£400pcm** and again could not happen without you.
- **Fixed 12-16 May 2014 for the annual activity holiday funded by us in the sum of £1,775** for the disabled youngsters and their carers of the St. Rose School at the Calvert Trust on Exmoor.
- **Agreed to contribute £2,500** towards heating, lighting and insurance costs for the year we were running our soup kitchen for the Eastern European homeless at St. Patrick's, Soho Square.
- **Committed £2,000 to the Chabrouh Summer Camp in the Lebanon** for 25-30 disabled young people that will be staffed by OMV and Companions in July/August.
- **Continued to receive heartfelt letters of thanks for the £5,743 donated by us at Christmas** to meet the costs of Christmas parties and entertainments in our OSJCT homes.

You will find more news of the work we are doing and the real difference your subscription is making below. For the latest information just visit the website www.orderofmalta.org.uk/companions/: key dates (see below) include the Order's Charity Ball in Scotland on 29 March 2014 to raise money for Global Fund for Forgotten People supporting Syrian refugees in the Lebanon, and our **AGM in Lourdes on Monday 05 April 2014**.

Thank you for your continuing support and prayers.

OSJCT Homes

A warm welcome to Mr Lee Palmer, recently appointed as the new head of volunteering at the OSJCT. Lee and I met last week and identified lots of ways in which we can forge closer links and extend the role of the CoM and the numbers of Companions volunteering in the care homes.

Our ideas range from activities such as Easter Party plans, joint training initiatives, music projects, pilgrimages and home meetings hosted by Companions, to capital project funding by the CoM such as added minibus provision or operational improvements in homes from murals and redecoration to added specialist equipment.

Most immediately though following up on our commitment to the OSJCT homes over the Christmas season, we are looking to provide further assistance with Easter entertainments and celebrations. We are also seeking to continue our support for the planting out and development of the OSJCT homes' gardens.

Attached to this newsletter you will find a complete list of the OSJCT homes, so that you can see which home is the nearest to you. Just as some Companions have done in London with our little Bridge group, it would be great if you could check out the list and 'adopt' your local care home. Please also speak to your regional leader so they can team you up with others who can help and know what you are doing. Certainly there is no shortage of demand in the Homes for listeners, readers, chatters, as well as for help with events and visits.

Companions Day & Companions Car Club

Thank you for taking part in the Companions Day activities, Masses and prayers on 11 February 2014 (the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes). I hope you received our new poster and membership application forms. As mentioned the aim is that each of us recruits one more Companion, so please do get the posters up and the word out.

It would also be good to persevere with our Companions Car Club, to provide transport to Mass. If you are a Companion who needs a lift to Mass of a Sunday - or any other day for that matter - please let your regional leader know and they should be able to find a Companion who can help. Equally, if you have a car and can offer a lift to Mass then please speak to your Parish Priest and see if there is someone in your parish you can help, or speak to your regional leader who may be able to put you in touch with a local care home resident you can help.

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

On 05 April 2014 the BrumCoM's mini-pilgrimage in honour of Blessed Karl of Austria is taking place at Bishton Hall, Wolseley Bride, Stafford ST17 0XN (kindly hosted by Mr & Mrs Hugh Stafford Northcote). The programme comprises 10am Mass, 11.15 Talk on the Bl. Karl and Bl. John Henry Newman, the Order and Companions, 1pm Lunch, 2.30pm Benediction. The cost is approx. £15 per head. Please be in touch with Adrian on or before 29 March to book in for the event.

The BrumCoMs are also planning their third mini-pilgrimage in honour of Bl. John Henry Newman in June 2014. There will be Mass at 11am followed by a celebration lunch afterwards at the neighbouring Plough & Harrow. Adrian is also planning a half-day visit to Peterborough Cathedral on 05 July 2014 to pray at the grave of Katharine of Aragon for the sanctity of marriage, again all are welcome.

In addition, there are the monthly meetings on the first Saturday of each month (except August) after the 11.00am Pilgrims Mass at the Birmingham Oratory. All are very welcome so do get along if you can and of course contact Adrian if you need help getting there. Thanks as always to our BrumCoMs, for their continuing efforts, Masses, meetings and prayers.

Scotland (and Dial a Journey): Liam Devlin [liam@liamdevlin.co.uk – 07968 119 895]

As mentioned in my last newsletter, following the September 2013 opening of our Companions Community Centre in Glasgow, the project is developing well. Please visit our website to see just what marvellous work is being done, thanks to all those working on the ground and to all CoM whose subscriptions are making this possible.

Monday and Thursday evenings are becoming quite busy in the Centre with two groups of children receiving music lessons whilst their parents are taught English as a Second Language by Companions Anne and Sangeeta. In addition to our job-seekers club, lunches and cyber-café activities, the Centre is also used by 3 community groups, which is exactly the sort of local outreach activity we want to foster. Plenty of opportunities exist to get involved here so if you can lend a hand do please be in touch with Liam.

Importantly also in Scotland the Order runs a very successful **Dial a Journey** service (last year - 19,150 journeys to and from school for children with mobility difficulties, 22,861 trips for door-to-door services, and much more). An appeal has just been launched for the purchase of 3 new mini buses for the service to replace the now ageing fleet. Each new mini-bus fitted out with the necessary specialist equipment costs approx. £55,000, and it would be great if we could play our part in helping to buy these. This will be on the agenda for the AGM (05 May 2014), but in the meantime please do let me have your views.

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

I know that there are many Companions and members of the Association keen to get involved in the North East. Fred and I will be working on kick starting some new projects. Indeed it may be that a delegation from the NE would be keen to pick up and run with our Companions to Compostela plan (see below).

Presently though the St. Anne's Alms Houses offers perhaps the best opportunity to get involved, but if you have any other specific ideas do please get in touch with Fred. I hope also all Companions in the NE will be able to participate in our pilgrimages and key events during the year, and I hope that many of you will be attending the Edinburgh Ball to raise money for the Order's work with Syrian refugees.

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

A huge thank you again to our G&W Companions for their work over the festive season in the OSJCT homes, and in organising the many donations we were able to make to help with their celebrations and for their on going work in the Homes.

Don't miss the G&W annual Day of Recollection on Thursday 03 April 2014 at Chavenage House, Nr Tetbury. Already numbers look good with some 30 people signed up to attend (I will join you if I can). The day has been a great success in previous years and promises to be so again; let Sarah know if you can make it.

Please be in touch with Sarah if you want to volunteer or support the wonderful work of our G&W's still further, I know they would be delighted to see you.

Oxford University CoM: Michael Brendan Brett [Michael.brett@some.ox.ac.uk] or John Eidinow OM [john.eidinow@stb.ox.ac.uk]

What a great crowd of enthusiastic Companions and friends greeted the Grand Master's talk on the work of the Order the other day. The President of the OU Companions also gave a brilliant impromptu summary of all the work they are now doing. To give you a flavour, please see the OU CoM Term Card attached.

As you will see they are very busy providing soup and sandwiches to the homeless three times a week, running a drop-in session on Saturday lunchtime for the homeless, and increasing visits to the elderly at the OSJCT Isis House Care home. There are also regular Masses and social events including a Termly Dinner. The dinner at the White Hart this term was great I hear, so any CoM or Members of the Order in the vicinity make a note for next term.

Anyone who has any sons, daughters, nieces, nephews, Godchildren going up, or knows of any OMV arriving in Oxford do point them in Brendan's direction so that they too can get involved.

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

We are still committed to establishing a small team to take on a soup run for the homeless in the SE region (Rome wasn't built in a day!), so if you want to help in this do give Jamie a call. Following the example set by London, Oxford and Scotland it would be fantastic if we could develop this. Specifically we are looking to tie up with the Venerable Order in the region, particularly in the Brighton area.

In addition we are committed to continuing our links with St. Wilfrid's OSJCT Home in Arundel. This year we would particularly like to support their different social activities, and support residents, their relatives and staff. If you live in the South East and would like to get involved in any way do give Jamie a call.

London: Peter Allingham, [peter@ancient.co.uk– 07973 550 319] & Patrick Knollys [patrick@knollys.co.uk]

Every Monday evening a team of Companions is collecting sandwiches, salads and desserts from our partners EAT, and distributing these together with lots of fruit and biscuit bars purchased by us, to lines and lines of London's homeless and poor at Lincoln's Inn Fields. Please be in touch with Patrick Knollys if you can help with driving the van, or just meet at 7.30pm on the NE corner of the square to RV with the van and help with distribution.

Also now every Thursday evening at 7.30pm at the parish hall of St. James's, Spanish Place the doors open on our Companions Café. Numbers of homeless have gradually built up, so we now have some 30-35 guests each week. Starting at 6.00pm the tables and chairs are set, sandwiches, fruit and biscuits collected and laid out, soups teas and coffee provided, and a warm friendly space created to welcome and chat with our guests for an hour or so.

If you would like to join in do drop me a line. If you cannot attend but would still like to get involved, you can help by making soup or baking a cake or pudding to enhance our offering for the evening.

I am also delighted to say that a small group of Companions are continuing once a week to play bridge with residents in a Central London care home. There is always demand though for further players, so if you can play to any standard please call Helena on 07798 558 109.

South West: Duncan McKechnie, [dajmck@tiscali.co.uk- 07990 594 441]

Thanks to your support we have been able to ensure that the disabled youngsters at the St. Rose School, will be heading to the Calvert Trust on Exmoor again this year.

The dates are now confirmed as 12-16 May 2014. There will be Mass at the beginning of the week, to which all are welcome. It would be great if, as we have done in previous years, we could field some volunteers (gap year children & Godchildren are ideal) to help with the fun and games at the camp.

Please contact Duncan directly if you would like to assist, or if you have any other particular requests or enquiries. Again, thank you for your support in the SW.

Overseas

Detailed plans are now being put together to repeat the very successful Chabrouh summer camp for 25-30 disabled young adults in Lebanon (held last year and again this year at Sourat whilst Chabrouh is being renovated). We are in contact with the Lebanese Association to see what help we can provide with the renovation of the camp itself (as referred to our previous newsletter).

But in the meantime we are contributing £2,000 to the running costs of the 2 week camp which amount to about £14-15k, including a £2k contribution to the Lebanese Association for using their premises. The camp will be staffed by CoM and OMV, and the OMV are

meeting the balance of the costs. If you are interested in joining up please speak to Ellie Coward (elliecoward@yahoo.co.uk). Please note also the London drinks in aid of the Order of Malta Lebanese projects on 04 April 2014 (see key date below).

We are also now in direct touch with Regina Palestinae working in Palestine and will be working with them in 2014 to provide dedicated funding for specific supplies, from medicines to food.

Please also support the Order's Ball to raise money for The Global Fund for Forgotten People supporting the Syrian refugees in the Lebanon; ticket are still available and you can still take part by bidding on the silent auction page at <http://orderofmaltaball.auction-bid.org/micro2.php>

Please let me know any further thoughts you have on this or any other of the overseas projects we are supporting.

Companions to Compostela

Finally, I would love us to organise a weekend mini-pilgrimage for Companions to Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. I have in mind this could happen in October or February to fit in with other main events like Lourdes and Walsingham.

If you are interested and would like to take up the cause so to speak, do give me a call. This is another item which will also be up for discussion at the AGM.

KEY DATES

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| 26 March 2014 | OMV – Theatre Production on living with disability – contact Anton (anton@depiro.net) |
| 29 March 2014 | Syria Ball – Edinburgh, contact Alice 07968 396938 |
| 03 April 2014 | Day of Recollection at Chavenage House, Nr Tetbury – contact Sarah (G&W) 07817 499 829 |
| 04 April 2014 | Charity drinks party in aid of the Order of Malta Lebanon projects – contact Bernard at bernard.eldahdah@gmail.com |
| 05 April 2014 | Birmingham Mini-Pilgrimage – contact Adrian 07799 188 628 |
| 02-09 May 2014 | Lourdes Pilgrimage 2014 - contact Alice 07968 396938 |
| 05 May 2014 | AGM in Lourdes (by popular demand again, see Red Book for details, the agenda, annual accounts and report to be presented to follow) |

12-16 May 2014

St. Rose School, Activity Holiday to Calvert Trust – contact Duncan
07990 594 441

Mondays and Thursdays in London, and every day in Scotland, Oxford etc... keep up the good work!

Our Website

www.orderofmalta.org.uk/companions/

Please visit it as often as you can. Our regional leaders are continually posting dates and events; so do check regularly so as not to miss something near you! There are also (closed) Facebook groups in London and Scotland that are live and Companions in those areas are welcome to join. Any queries about membership please contact Alice Murphy our new and super efficient secretary on 01434 689387 and 07968 396938.

Yours as ever,



Paul Letman
CHAIR CoM

PS. If, as I hope, you can make it this year, see you in Lourdes!