



21 February 2012

Dear Companion,

WINTER 2011/12 NEWSLETTER

‘By their fruits ye shall know them’ Mat 7:20

CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Before Christmas becomes too much of a distant memory, thank you to everyone who supported the Companions’ Carols in London and Conversazione in Scotland. Both events were a great success. In London we raised over £8k and in Scotland some £4k plus very substantial donation.

If I can speak for south of the border, thank you very much to my committee for the Carols: Marisa Brenninkmeyer, Paola Fudakowska, Helena Letman, Irina Liedekerke, Stefan Benardzyk, Philip Habsburg and James Pavey.

Special thanks of course to Stefan, our maestro and musical master of ceremonies. The service was wonderful, the singing fantastic, as were our guest readers including Sian Philips and Rupert Everett. All followed by a great fun Christmas drinks.

Of the money raised, £1,000 is going to the Order’s Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem and the remainder to covering the costs of feeding the homeless at St. Patrick’s, Soho Square (see below under London).

CHRISTMAS BOXES

Another great initiative over the festive season was the 50 Christmas boxes for the homeless. Full of brilliant stuff paid for and wrapped by us (and specially requested by the homeless when asked) these boxes included woolly scarves, hats and gloves, pocket sized wash kits, notebook and pen, chocolate bars (isn’t Poundland an amazing place?) and Oyster cards. Thanks for supporting this.

COMPANIONS DAY

I trust everyone received their CoM Poster and draft announcement etc, and was able to take up the cause with their local parish priest. Most importantly I hope that the many prayers said around the country for the CoM on Companions Day and for those we aim to help will advance our twin objects, ‘to practise our Faith, and to practise charity.’ Certainly, a number of potential new Companions have already been in touch.

If you have not received one of our wonderful promotional packages, or would like more posters to put up in your parish, workplace or elsewhere, do drop Lalla or me a line.

Around the UK things are happening too:-

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

Again congratulations to Adrian de Redman on his continuing efforts in Birmingham. Coinciding with Companions Day (and of course the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes) we have just had the Lourdes Birmingham Reunion, which I was delighted to be able to attend along with Adrian and other Companions.

Thanks to Adrian also for arranging his monthly meetings at the Birmingham Oratory (see the notice at the Church door), and to Birmingham Companions including Ann Tomlinson for their weekly prayer of the Rosary for our work.

Please be in touch with Adrian to obtain details of the next monthly meeting and other Birmingham activities.

Oxford University: John Eidinow OM [john.eidinow@stb.ox.ac.uk]

John Eidinow is working on the development of the Companions in Oxford University. We were delighted recently to welcome a contingent of OU Companions to Open House in London, so they could see the operation and look to roll out something along the same lines in Oxford. The plan presently is to join an existing 'soup run' in Oxford, with a view to developing their own project in due course.

John also has plans for a Lenten Retreat/Day of Recollection specifically for Companions before Easter in Merton College; details will be posted as soon as available (see also under Gloucestershire and Wiltshire below).

John is undoubtedly still keen to receive information from Companions about any sons, daughters, God-children, etc., and (ex-)OMV who are students at the University whom he might enlist.

Scotland: Liam Devlin [liamdevlin@musician.org – 07968 119 895]

The Companions in Scotland, particularly under the able direction of Liam Devlin, Glasgow coordinator, are also very busy,

As noted above, the Conversazione was a great success, and many thanks to all those who made it possible, particularly Lydia Stewart-Clark at Dundas Castle at South Queensferry. The main portion of the substantial sums of money raised are dedicated to the work of Malteser International and specifically the projects with which we are involved through Alice in Kenya, particularly supported by our Scottish Companions.

Indeed as I write Liam and a number of CoM including Companions from London are in Kenya, where they are due to link up with Alice. More on this next time.

As part of our commitment to regular prayer, at the request of the delegation chaplain, Monsignor Regan, the Companions in Scotland are organizing a small network of monthly Masses, in Glasgow, Edinburgh, East Lothian and Aberdeen.

Last but not least we are delighted to note that Henry Norreys has been appointed the Order Delegate in Scotland. He is a great supporter of the CoM and we look forward to working

with him and building on current successes going forward. First off, any Companions who would wish to attend the KoM Scottish Ball on 25 February 2012, should be in touch with Henry.

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

Despite recent reverses, efforts continue to get the St. Anne's Day Care Centre project underway. In the meantime Fred is working on pulling together the Companions and the Members of the Order in his area and pursuing other initiatives. He will be helping me on Companions (see below).

Please be in touch with Fred and give him all the support you can. In particular if you have any friends, relatives or contacts in the Newcastle area whom you think may be interested in getting involved point them in Fred's direction.

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

Sarah continues her great efforts. Outings and visits have continued over the Winter, though slightly curtailed in the coldest weather.

The next key event is the day of recollection on **29 March 2012** in preparation for Easter organised by Sarah at Owlpen Manor (please see the attached form and programme).

Please be in touch with Sarah to support this wonderful event and with regard to any other upcoming activities. Further, meetings are planned as well as a CoM Mass in the next few weeks that I hope many of us will be able to attend.

We will obviously be making particular efforts to look after residents in our OSJ Care Homes over the Christmas period.

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

Jamie O'Meara is looking to develop links with the OSJ Care Homes Trust in Arundel. Please be in touch with him if you are living or working on his patch. As you know it is very much one of my objectives for the Companions that in the parishes and care homes we should be quietly but determinedly developing our work.

As they say 'from small acorns..', and I am confident that under Jamie's guidance we will be growing our presence in the South East.

London: Peter Allingham, [peter@ancient.co.uk– 07973 550 319]

As noted above we have launched our Tuesday evenings at St. Patrick's helping to feed the homeless and hungry on our streets.

Support continues to be fantastic, with large groups of volunteers turning up every week now, providing at least 60 hot meals a week to the destitute and marginalised, particularly those Eastern Europeans living rough. On top of this we provide many take-away meals.

You are all very welcome to come along. The more the merrier; and it helps with the prayers and hymn singing that top and tails the evening. (Enter St. P's from the Tottenham Court access to the parish centre, from 16.00hrs to help with the cooking through to the floor mopping at 20.30hrs).

Although it costs only between £1.60-£2.50 per week per cover, there are some concerns about the costs of this operation overall in its current form, and we are looking at the options. Certainly, we need to look at a lower cost, more scaleable model that we can start up in other locations, and I am working on this with Peter A and Tatty D.

Well done and thank you to everybody who comes along or cooks from home or supports us in other ways.

The next Mass for London Companions will be on **21 March 2012** at 18.30hrs at St. Mary's Cadogan; many thanks to Fr. Stuart.

South West: Duncan McKechnie,

Bravely Duncan McKechnie (aided by Dominique) has agreed to take up the baton from Michael Festing in the South West. A huge thank you to Michael, therefore, who has been a great standard bearer for the CoM in the region, particularly in organising the holiday for disabled youngsters and their carers from the St. Rose RC School at the Calvert Trust.

Duncan has already got on with arranging the camp for Summer 2012. So can I put out an early warning to younger Companions or children or god-children of CoM, to put themselves forward to help this year. Anna and Emma had a great week last year.

Kenya (not strictly a region of course)

As referred to above, the CoM continues to support and provide financial assistance to the community health centre project in the Nairobi slums and the Lamu Hospital, particularly via our Scottish contingent, and not least through the efforts of Liam Devlin and Jan Bruntisfield.

I will annex Alice's latest Newsletter next time around.

Comcompanions.com

Given the huge success of social media and sites, I would like to look at the options for the CoM to establish a companions network, whereby all those who would wish and can't always make visits can nonetheless establish contact and befriend a Care Home resident or other elderly, infirm or less able person.

I would like to establish a working party on this to develop the model. I think we need to put together a group with computer skills and personnel from the Care Homes. If you would like to get involved in this contact me (pletman@3harecourt.com or hletman@aol.com).

KEY DATES

25 February 2012 KoM Ball, Edinburgh

29 February 2012 Order Monthly Mass at Spanish Place, 1845hrs
21 March 2012 London Companions Mass
29 March 2012 G&W Companions Day of Recollection at Owlpen
04-11 May 2012 Lourdes Pilgrimage
Every Tuesday Evening at St.Patrick's Soho Square

Website

To find this Newsletter and keep in touch with the activities of the CoM online please go to www.basmom-hospitaller.org and click on Companions. You can also join (closed) Facebook groups in London and Scotland.

Yours as ever,

Paul Letman
CHAIR CoM