



Message from the President

Dear Members and Friends

At the end of a year which has witnessed devastating natural disasters as well as economic hardship and the growth in poverty and homelessness in many lands, we look again at our own actions to help those in need. There is a lot to praise but also a lot to be thankful for.

We are proud of the development in dementia care which our Orders of St John Care Trust homes (OSJCT) continues to develop so that it is now a leading therapy for sufferers of dementia in this country.

We are proud of our Foreign Aid Service, now celebrating ten years of unstinting work to serve the poor through financial support and local care – and reporting an astonishing fundraising total of over \$1,000,000.

We are proud of our young people – our Order of Malta Volunteers (OMV) who manage to make of their splendid projects both fun and effectiveness, and of the Companions of the Order of Malta, who go from strength to strength and work in all sorts of creative and caring projects around the country.

All of these activities you will read about in this newsletter, which gives at least a taste of some of the work carried out through the British Association of the Order of Malta to help the homeless, the suffering, the handicapped, the poor.

Last year was the European Year of Volunteering, and the contributions of our members, friends and volunteers to help those in need, whoever they are, is acknowledged with deep gratitude. To be a volunteer in the service of the works of the Order of Malta is a demonstration of Christian charity and of our personal experience of Christ.

We are proud, too, to continue our nine hundred year-old mission of the Order to care for the sick and the poor, no matter who they are.

Charles Weld, President of the British Association

Making an impact: the Foreign Aid Service celebrates ten effective years



Social care in Ukraine

successful appeal we have ever run, raising \$225,000 in total.

2011 projects

Money raised over the last year has already been deployed to support some really worthy projects:

A kindergarten for disabled children in Kluj, Romania

In Romania disabled children are such a drain on families that they are blighted by them, and sometimes even put them out on the streets. This work of the Order helps children and their families work on the physical and associated mental disabilities to allow them to integrate into society. The fantastic results this project achieves mean that a large number of these children develop successfully enough to pass into the normal school system after our care.

Homecare in Lithuania

In one of the forgotten countries of Eastern Europe which struggles with terrible poverty, the Order of Malta's embassy works very actively supporting many projects. A cornerstone project is a large (150 people) home care visiting service that brings food, medical and social care. Funds for this work had run out, and the project was on the edges of closing down when we funded them two years ago. We have funded them again for 2012, at the request of our Ambassador there.

Holy Family Hospital, Bethlehem

A few steps from the birthplace of Christ, the Order runs a 63 bed maternity hospital. The Order's medical team examine 22,000 expectant mothers annually, and since 1990 have delivered 54,000 babies without a single maternal death. About 3,400 babies are born annually. The care is for all, regardless of religion or nationality.

For more information:
www.orderofmaltafas.org

Nicolas Reuttner set up the Foreign Aid Service at the specific request of the Grand Master, to create a British Association focus on fundraising support for special needs around the world. Here he reviews a highly successful year for the FAS in challenging economic times and looks back at his favourite projects

THIS YEAR we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Foreign Aid Service (FAS). Its purpose: to raise money to support care projects of the Order worldwide. In total the FAS has raised about \$1.3m.

The Order is present in 120 countries around the globe and the FAS has benefited from using local expertise to identify some superb projects to support.

The FAS keeps close links with the works of the Order and has carefully selected projects which are in need of financial support, and where the small sums the FAS is able to give can really make an impact. To select a few projects from the many we have supported is a challenge, but some really stand out:

A look back at favourite projects

At a cost of \$5,000 we funded the training of first-aiders across a range

of isolated villages in Kosovo. Previously, the nearest medical care was three days' walk away, with people dying unnecessarily through lack of basic medical knowledge. Three months after implementation of the project, we received a note of thanks listing the 16 people whose lives had been saved so far.

A perennial project has been the soup kitchen in St Petersburg, where at a cost of about \$1.50 per family per day, the kitchen feeds some of the city's poorest.

In Africa, we have supported numerous projects; perhaps the most striking is the Brotherhood of Blessed Gerard, in South Africa, which runs a world class AIDS care centre, hospice and outreach facilities.

In the Middle East, the flagship work of the Holy Family Hospital is a beacon of the Order's work. Caring for all, regardless of race, religion or politics, its work is internationally

respected.

Around the world, the Order finds creative ways of serving local needs. For example, in Peru we funded a medical unit which takes a boat up-river into some of the remotest regions to offer medical care. The effort is amazingly cost effective, at about \$0.25 per intervention.

Another major area of FAS activity has been the running and coordination of appeals at times of emergency. It is a modern tragedy that these are so frequent and slip from the mind so fast, but over the years the FAS has run nine appeals and raised close to \$800,000. This also reflects on the generosity of our donors, who have supported these appeals.

Most notable in recent memory is the extraordinary work of the Order in Haiti, where we were well-placed to help. In addition to the diplomatic relations between the Sovereign Order and the country, we already had a medical presence on the island with a 70-bed hospital. This allowed us to act fast and help many. The British Appeal was the most

PM opens Trust home

THE PRIME MINISTER officially opened the Chipping Norton Care Campus for the Orders of St John Care Trust. Seen here greeting key catering staff, David Cameron noted that the hard work of creating the innovative Home – a combined venture with the NHS – had paid off. The NHS runs the Outpatients unit, clinics and services. The Trust provides the nursing in a 14-bed intermediate care unit plus a further 36-bed care home.

The Trust (see page 4) operates 73 homes in four counties – Lincolnshire (16 homes), Wiltshire (20 homes), Oxfordshire (18 Homes) and Gloucestershire (19 homes) – caring for c 3,300 residents and employing c 3,500 staff. OSJCT is the second largest not for profit care provider of care for older people in the UK and eighth largest overall. This year new homes will open in Bourton-on-the-Water, Cheltenham and Bicester. Readers are invited to pay them a visit.





St Peter at Bodrum

Julian Allason visits the site which secured a Christian presence in the Holy Land for over a century

A BUST OF HERODOTUS, the father of written history, stands at the entrance to the Hospitaller castle of St Peter at Bodrum in Aegean Turkey, a day's sail south of Ephesus. But the site was already ancient two millennia before the arrival of the Knights in 1402 on the orders of Grand Master Philibert de Naillac. For this craggy coast was the land of Homer's heroes, and it was overlooking the natural harbour of Halicarnassus that in 350 BC the Carian King Mausolus built the Great Mausoleum, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, as a memorial to himself and his wife. What remained would later be incorporated into the structure of the castle, more impregnable even than that at Byblos just north of Beirut.

A natural garrison

The purpose was similar: to provide armed shelter for the Order's galleys from the ravages of the Turks and a

refuge for all Christians in Asia Minor. The castle commands both inner and outer harbours with towers built by the English, French, German, Italian and Spanish *langues* comprising the Order's garrison. All stand to this day, the English or Lion



One of the coats of arms in the castle wall

Tower still bearing the arms of Henry IV. The identity of the knights and the bailiffs who commanded them is not in doubt – 249 coats of arms are still set into the walls.

Such was the ingenuity of the Knights' military engineering that despite Turkish attacks in 1453 and 1480 none breached the walls. The castle was only given up as part of the treaty negotiated with Suleiman the Magnificent upon the fall of Rhodes in 1522. Today's visitor will admire the restoration. The chapel, converted by Suleiman into a Mosque by the addition of a small minaret (destroyed in 1915 by expert gunnery from a French warship), now holds an exhibition of underwater archeology. One of the towers houses a superb exhibition of glass from the time of the Knight's occupation back to the Bronze Age.

The castle was later converted into a prison by the Ottomans. Today peacocks strut about a tranquil scene but one upon which the security of the Christian presence in the Holy Land depended for over a century.

Bodrum and the Turkish Riviera is an hour's flight from Istanbul, combining well with Ephesus where the Blessed Virgin is believed to have lived out her final years under the protection of St John.

Inspired to strive

The Grand Priory of England in the 21st century

AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HOSPITAL OF ST JOHN in Jerusalem in the 1070s, our founder, Blessed Gerard, guided its fortunes for over forty years. The Hospital became one of the first great centralised Orders of the Church, committed to the care of poor pilgrims when they were sick, to their burial when they died and to their armed defence. The Hospitallers of St John, who developed the radical notion that they were the 'serfs and slaves of their lords the sick', came to extend their care to all, irrespective of faith or sex, who were unwell or in need. The dynamic and ever-resourceful Gerard set up a vast network of support for pilgrims and the Holy Land, based on the establishment of commanderies, which were little religious communities. Some commanderies had hospitals attached to them, but the primary aim of most was the provision of material support for the Order's mission in the Levant. They were collected into Grand Priors, the earliest of which were functioning soon after Gerard's death.

The role of the Grand Prior was to oversee the organisation and administration of these properties and the efficiency with which each Grand Priory worked from the 12th century onwards was a remarkable achievement.

Regrettably, the Reformation in Britain put a stop to this charitable activity and 200 years later, one of the disastrous consequences of the French Revolution was that the majority of European Grand Priors were

abolished and their revenues confiscated.

The 19th century saw the establishment of Associations across Europe and, until fairly recently, the eclipse of some of the ideals that motivated the original Grand Priors.

Ideals based on spirituality and care of those in need

It is important to emphasise that the Order is fundamentally a religious Order with a hospitaller mission but it is not an NGO such as the Red Cross or Médecins sans Frontières.

The Grand Master has now asked for an increase in the number of committed men who are prepared to make the sacrifice to become Knights of Justice. We are looking for people who are well rounded, competent, open to growth, religious, caring and committed to active works of mercy. It could be that, inspired by our successful medieval forbears, we strive to establish more care homes, hospices, hostels and opportunities for the young, as well as lending our support to the great international charitable works being undertaken by the Order. To become a member of a Grand Priory only necessitates making a vow of Obedience and it is my earnest desire that the members of the Order of Malta in this country return to the ideals of our Blessed founder and work as one great united group *per obsequium pauperum*.

Ian Scott of Ardress
57th Grand Prior of England

I am grateful to Professor Jonathan Riley-Smith for his help in writing this article.

On becoming a Deacon in Spain

PHILIP OGILVIE was ordained a Deacon in the Diocese of Cadiz and Ceuta on 27 February 2011 in the Cathedral of Cadiz, and is currently attached to the Parish of Guadiaro, by Sotogrande where he lives with his wife Loreto and three sons.

He explains: "I started the degree course as a way of fulfilling the obligation of Knights in Obedience to devote time to spiritual reading. It was tougher than I had thought, but in the end the examiners were kind to me! I had been doing the course for two years when my parish priest found this out and suggested that I should become a deacon.

"Given the shortage of priests which affects Spain as well as other countries, I felt I had to respond to the call. Most of my liturgy is

conducted in Spanish and as I am not a native speaker, preaching presents some problems but I dare say I shall adapt! Also, we have a large English-speaking community here.

Getting over stage fright

"My diaconal activities are intensely rewarding, now that I have got over the initial stage fright of being in the sanctuary. And they are not so time consuming as to prevent me from driving up to Lourdes once a year and joining the Order's annual pilgrimage, which is like a second home for me."

Philip Ogilvie completed five years of distance study for the BA Divinity qualification at Maryvale Institute, the catechetical college of the Diocese of Birmingham founded by Archbishop Couve de Murville. The degree is issued under the auspices of the Pontifical University of Maynooth, Dublin.



A view across Sotogrande

Tuitio Fidei: the Christian tradition

by Peter Sefton-Williams

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE TO THE POOR – *obsequium pauperum* – are everywhere and the Order of Malta continues to respond with generosity. But opportunities for protecting the faith – *tuitio fidei* – are not so obvious, especially for Catholics living comfortably in Western democracies.

It surprises many to learn that Christians are now acknowledged to be the single most persecuted group on the planet – perhaps around 200 million individuals and growing – and even in the West a new and aggressive atheism is emerging which seeks to eject Christian morality from the public space. The need to focus on the Order's historic mission of *tuitio fidei* has arguably never been greater. An important initiative to promote this second plank of our work is currently underway.

Reporting on attitudes to religious freedom

This autumn the Catholic charity 'Aid to the Church in Need' publishes its 'International Religious Freedom Report 2012'. Available in six languages and the fruit of 18

months' investigation, this seminal work is being produced by a small army of researchers assessing the situation in 195 countries. It aims to document, accurately and without bias, where religious freedoms are being violated. It records oppression and persecution not just against Christians but covers, so far as possible, all faiths and religious minorities.

In late 2011 the Congregation for the Clergy – the Vatican body to which Aid to the Church in Need reports – announced that the Charity is to be elevated to the status of a Pontifical Foundation and that its first Executive President is Johannes Heereman von Zuydtwyck, the long-serving President of Malteser Hilfsdienst in Germany.

A second Order involvement is through the author of this article, Peter Sefton-Williams, a member of the British Association and Chairman of Aid to the Church in Need UK. He oversees the international Editorial Committee that approves the content of the Report.

The research phase is still underway, but it is clear that the trend towards an intensification of religious persecution – noted in the 2010 report – is continuing, with a wide range of persecuting regimes and groups.

Though the Report does not propose political solutions, it is

hoped that by highlighting and recording injustices, politicians will act decisively and courageously to defend religious freedom. Just as the Order helps the poor of all nations, races and creeds equally, so the Religious Freedom Reports seek to highlight oppression and persecution to whomsoever they are directed.

A fundamental right

Such equality of treatment is part of our Catholic world-view. As Pope Benedict XVI said on the 44th World Day of Peace: "It could be said that among the fundamental rights and freedoms rooted in the dignity of the person, religious freedom enjoys a special status... When religious freedom is acknowledged, the dignity of the human person is respected at its root and the ethos and institutions of peoples are strengthened."

It is hoped that by reporting on the plight of persecuted religious minorities, those involved in the project – including Aid to the Church in Need's benefactors who have generously paid for it – will have contributed in a small way to what Pope Benedict calls "the dignity of the human person".

(The 'International Religious Freedom Report' will be published by Aid to the Church in Need in October 2012.) Peter Sefton-Williams is the Chairman of Aid to the Church in Need UK

Malteser International

Worldwide relief for people in need

Ingo Radtke, Secretary General, on disaster preparedness

2011 was marked by major disasters which brought great human suffering and unforgettable images: mothers in East Africa struggling to find food for their children, families in Pakistan homeless through devastating floods, children in Japan traumatised by the March earthquake.

Malteser International, the worldwide relief agency of the Order of Malta for humanitarian aid, faces great challenges. Our mission is to support the vulnerable and marginalised to live a healthy life with dignity. Global developments are complicating the work significantly.

After the disaster is before the disaster: climate change and its consequences

The effects of climate change become increasingly dangerous. While we deal always more with heavy rain and flooding in some regions, others are threatened by drought. Crops are destroyed, land becomes barren, livestock perish. Extreme weather conditions endanger the existence of millions of people.

Immediately after a disaster, first priority is emergency aid for survival. But with a rising number of natural disasters, emergency aid is not enough. Protecting mechanisms must be established. The key is disaster preparedness. Prevention and disaster risk management are increasingly important for Malteser

International. We are implementing measures to prevent natural phenomena from turning into major disasters and to mitigate their impact by helping communities be better prepared.

In practice, even simple measures can save thousands of lives. In response to the heavy floods in Pakistan, we supported the population with medical assistance and distributed clean drinking water, at the same time implementing preventive measures: first aid training, early warning systems or emergency plans to protect against future disasters. In countries regularly affected by severe natural phenomena these instruments are vital.

In Kenya – different disaster, same mechanism. To prevent starvation, in a first phase Malteser International distributed food items to 73,000 people plus nutritional supplements to the most vulnerable. In a second phase, to help the population cope with future droughts, relief activities must be followed by preventive measures like setting-up local silos.

To fight worldwide poverty with a long-term comprehensive approach

Disasters have become more frequent and increasingly complex. Global warming reduces agricultural productivity with devastating effects on worldwide hunger. Global economic developments and the financial crisis intensify the problem. Although economic growth helps



Haiti: This girl will soon be able to play again thanks to the treatment she receives from Malteser International; Philippines: Food preparation at the evacuation centre Tabanga Gym.



many in developing countries to escape poverty, development is very unequal. Rising food prices and declining direct investments and remittance push more and more people into poverty. Malteser International takes an integrated approach: linking relief, rehabilitation and sustainable development is crucial for creating better living conditions. The programmes we are implementing in more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia and America are: a functioning healthcare system, improved social infrastructure and secure access to drinking water and hygiene. To

guarantee sustainability, income generating measures as well as participation and local capacity building are essential.

A strong basis for a strong impact

These global developments call for effective and need-based aid. Coordination and cooperation are essential, national and international

networks are increasingly important. So as well as reacting at project level, Malteser International responds with structural developments. A close association with the worldwide network of the Order of Malta is part of strengthening the fundamentals for efficient support to people in need.

For more information: www.malteser-international.org

Far and wide

The Order of Malta's unique humanitarian diplomatic network: Ambassador Alan Furness, Order Ambassador to Senegal, sheds light on the role of an ambassador of the Order

THE ORDER has diplomatic relations with many traditionally Catholic countries, such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland and a number of Latin American countries. Others with diplomatic relations are largely in the Third World. I was the only British Ambassador out of the hundred-plus ambassadors of the Order around the world.

In 2011 I retired as the Order of Malta's Ambassador to Senegal, a post I had served for eleven years. I had previously been British Ambassador to Senegal from 1993 to 1997, and we returned to live there in 1998 after retirement.

In Senegal the Order maintains a hospital which provides key services of remedial surgery and medical care for leprosy victims – and, more recently, for victims of other diseases, such as polio.

What do Ambassadors of the Order do?

Much the same as any other ambassadors, except that their services are voluntary. For example, in 2001 I negotiated a new Convention with the Senegalese Government, to facilitate the Order's activities in the

country. This enabled medical supplies (including equipment for the hospital) to be imported duty-free and without bureaucratic hassle and the need to make personal appeals to the authorities for every single item imported.

In 2003 I negotiated a formal Exchange of Letters with the Senegalese authorities, to permit patients other than lepers to be admitted to the Order's Leprosy Institute in Dakar. With the declining number of new cases of leprosy the Institute changed focus and expanded to cover leprosy patients and others with similar needs, such as polio. The Senegalese authorities agreed to contribute, mainly medical personnel.

I negotiated a further Exchange of Letters with the Senegalese authorities to provide a legal basis for the newly enlarged hospital. The Foreign Minister (who had signed the 2001 Convention) also signed this new Exchange of Letters in 2009.

Representing the Grand Master of the Order of Malta

Representing the Grand Master involves the Ambassador's presence at major occasions such as the

annual Senegalese Independence Day parade. I was also present at the requiem Mass in Dakar Cathedral in 2001 for President Senghor – a Catholic President in a largely Muslim country.

A Senegalese National Association

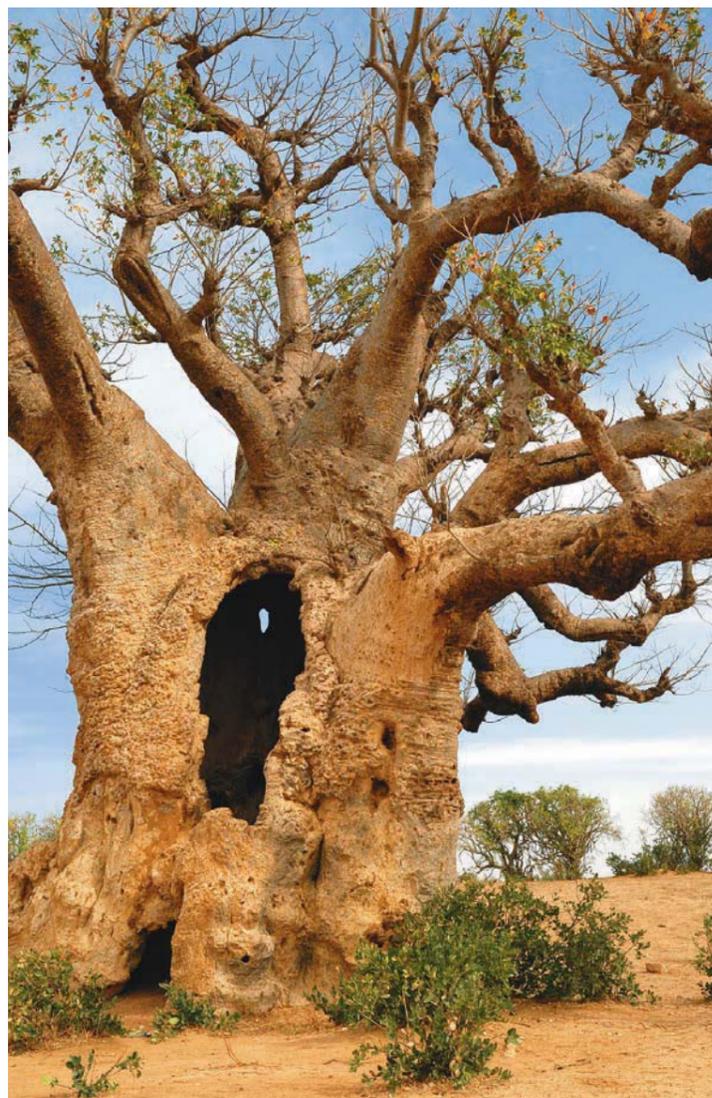
In addition, I was able to encourage the formation in 2010 of a Senegalese National Association of the Order of Malta, with 17 Senegalese Knights and Dames. This now finances some of the humanitarian activities in Senegal, previously supported by the Order's French Association – although the French Association still pays for the hospital.

Handing over

In 2008, I returned to London and became a non-resident Ambassador. Many of the Order's Ambassadors are non-resident; but after 11 years, I felt it was time to give way to a new ambassador, and my successor is now in post.

The present Grand Master, Fra' Matthew Festing, would be delighted if any former members of the British Diplomatic Service would be willing to take on this role. Their diplomatic experience would help to sustain the Order of Malta's humanitarian efforts throughout the world.

Baobab tree in Senegal – a symbol of healing and dialogue



Doing great things

Companions have been doing great things around the country, says Chairman Paul Letman

THROUGHOUT 2011 the Companions (CoM) have been very busy, volunteering in the Order's care homes, supporting the Lourdes and Walsingham pilgrimages, fundraising, feeding the homeless and pursuing the Companions' mission 'to practise our faith and to practise charity.'

Homeless project in London

In London, the CoM launched Tuesday evenings at St. Patrick's, Soho Square, feeding the homeless. The CoM contributed kit, utensils and tables. There was cooking training, CRB checks, food hygiene courses, volunteer training and the housing justice course. We now provide upwards of 200 meals a week, aided by welcome OMV members.

With a pool of 120 volunteers, 30 arrive every Tuesday to cook, serve, clean and chat to our guests.

The Companions Carol Concert in December fundraised for this project. Guest readers at the packed service included Sian Phillips and Rupert Everett; we raised over £10k and hope to make this an annual event.

Initiatives around the country

- **In London:** 50 Christmas boxes for the homeless; £1,000 to the Order's Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem.
- **In Gloucestershire & Wiltshire:** events for residents of local OSJCT Care Homes – tea parties, coffee mornings, local trips.
- **Birmingham & West Midlands:** monthly meetings at Birmingham Oratory; a weekly prayer group.
- **Oxford:** development of the Companions in Oxford University, and in the Northern Marches and the South East.
- **The South West:** an adventure holiday for disabled youngsters at Calvert Trust, Exmoor. Dom Berringer, Abbot of Downside, kindly said Mass – and already on the first morning the young, some still in their wheelchairs, were abseiling from 30ft up on a very realistic climbing wall (*disappointingly the Abbot declined this part of the programme*). We plan a repeat this year.
- **Scotland:** help at a Wayside Centre, riding for the disabled, fundraising for the Lamu Hospital, Kenya, organisation of monthly Masses in Glasgow, Edinburgh, East Lothian, Aberdeen.

- **Other fundraisers:** an African Fayre in Glasgow, providing £400 for Marsabit Famine relief; well-attended evenings in Banchory; in Duns Castle; a Christmas Conversazione at Dundas Castle, South Queensferry.
- **And further afield:** We donated £3,000 to Malteser International for the Horn of Africa crisis, and mean to continue our support. In Kenya, we provide financial help to the community health centre in the Nairobi slums and the Lamu Hospital; a group go to Kenya shortly to work in schools and a community health unit. The Companions were very well represented on the International Order of Malta Pilgrimage in May – a wonderful opportunity to work alongside the Order, pursuing our shared purpose as part of the 'Maltese family.'

All this represents a fantastic effort by those with time to give, but also those who have little time but contribute through their subscription and their prayers. As the year unfolds, we will do even more, slowly building another force for good across the UK.

The Companions of the Order of Malta is open to all who wish to support the Order of Malta in its work. For more information and how to join: secretary@companions-orderofmalta.org

Specialist care for dementia

Peter Loyd, Trust Chairman, outlines the specialist care of the Orders of St John Care Trust dementia care services

THE ORDERS OF ST JOHN CARE TRUST (OSJCT) has, over the past few years, focused on the care we provide to the increasing number of our residents with dementia. Public awareness of dementia, the number of people affected, and a greater willingness to discuss the subject, have all grown. OSJCT aims to deliver the highest quality of care to our residents with dementia. This is our approach:

We invest in specialist training for ALL our staff

We run Alzheimer's Society accredited training courses for care and non-care staff, to equip them to deliver high quality care to people with dementia. Our Trainings are Gold Accredited by the Alzheimer's Society.

We are proud to be one of only two care providers with its own Admiral Nurse – Angie Williams. Dementia UK provides the specialist mental health nurses who offer support to staff and families caring for dementia sufferers. Her specialist knowledge has given us the opportunity to offer services such as Memory Cafes and other support group forums to enable relatives, friends and members of staff to share experiences. Angie was recently invited to talk about her role at OSJCT at a European conference on dementia.

Dr Simon Manchip, a leading consultant in old age psychiatry and Trust adviser on dementia care, has helped us achieve significant reductions in the prescription of anti-psychotic drugs in our homes.

We learn from others

We have formed relationships with other organisations, both clinical and academic, to share expertise (eg

Parkinson's UK, The Stroke Association, the Universities of Worcester and Bradford, National Activities Providers Association). We have also joined the Dementia Action Alliance, an umbrella organisation of leading care providers committed to improving quality of life for people with dementia. We are adapting existing facilities (eg reminiscence rooms) and incorporating appropriate design features into our new homes. And right now we are working on a new dementia audit tool to benchmark our dementia care service to encourage and maintain standards of excellence.

About the Trust

The steady redevelopment of the Trust's properties continues apace and 2011 centred on Oxfordshire. In May the Chipping Norton Care Campus was officially opened by the Prime Minister. It has taken many years of negotiations with the local council and the NHS to allow OSJCT to create this innovative building. The NHS runs the Outpatients unit, consultant clinics, district nurses and community services plus a small Maternity unit. The Trust oversees cleaning and maintenance and provides the nursing in our 14-bed intermediate care unit plus a further 36-bed care home.

In October 2003 HRH Princess Alexandra opened our first Oxfordshire home, Westgate House, Wallingford. In October 2011 she returned to open Orchard Meadows Extra Care Apartments and Larkrise Care Centre, Banbury. So impressed was the Princess by the staff and facilities that she asked her Lady-in-Waiting to book her a room.

For more information: www.osjct.co.uk



Feeding the homeless in London

Peter Allingham, Companions London Coordinator: "More than one volunteer has commented that no matter how bad their working day has been, within five minutes of arriving, even if all they do is wash up, they feel uplifted, happy and very much at peace. Above all we truly are serving Christ in the persons of our homeless guests, some of whom are deeply troubled and for whom our service brings some peace and warmth into very difficult lives. Most are just very unlucky and find themselves on the streets through family or financial meltdown. It's not hard to see how any of us might end up in that position. The homeless are people, just like us."

The Caroline age
Keeping head down, but spirits up, Caroline de la Force continues her untiring devotion to the British Association, whose Secretariat she runs with distinction. We are truly grateful.

Spooky fun

Lejeune Clinic for Children with Down's Syndrome and Down Syndrome Education International

Claridges ballroom, Halloween decorations and food, spooky costumes and a glamorous lady magician: a great setting for a highly successful fundraiser for an important cause. Chaired by Caroline Armstrong-Jones and Meredith Shelton (both mothers of children with DS), the evening raised over £80k. Peregrine

Armstrong-Jones made a short speech about Down Syndrome. Lord Guthrie spoke on behalf of the Lejeune Clinic's work, which operates from the Order of Malta's Hospital of St John and St Elizabeth in London and Sue Buckley (Down Syndrome Education International) explained the work of her charity.

The Lejeune Clinic provides specialist assessment and advice for babies and children with Down Syndrome and their parents. For more information: www.lejeuneclinic.com

"Where everyone feels they have received far more than they have given"

Anton de Piro reviews the Order of Malta Volunteers year

OVER THE LAST YEAR the Order of Malta Volunteers (OMV) have accomplished an extraordinary amount. The 2011 White Knights Ball was a great success and despite the recession raised a record amount, which allowed us to commit to projects we were unsure would go ahead.

For the Easter Pilgrimage the OMV descended on Malta for the first time, with 10 disabled pilgrims and 20 assisting pilgrims. They found it warmly welcoming, and surrounded by Maltese crosses everyone felt very much at home.

Volunteering in the Lebanon

Twenty volunteers embarked on the first OMV trip to Lebanon. The project was hugely rewarding as we worked with disabled people in terrific need of attention. Verbal communication was limited because many had never learned to speak and most of us could not speak Arabic. We relied on facial expressions, gestures, holding hands, giving hugs. It was one of the more challenging

OMV activities for all, but the volunteers were left with a feeling of having really done some good. Later in the year Lord Guthrie represented the Order as Patron at the first OMV Lebanon Dinner which raised enough for us to commit to an OMV Lebanon Project for the coming years.

The OMV pilgrimage to Lourdes and the International Holiday Camp of the Order in Lignano, Italy, were in the same week, but we managed to send a full team to the Camp and a full pilgrimage to Lourdes. Both were rather wet: the former because of the rain, the latter because of the Mediterranean Sea! Both events were hugely enjoyable, spiritually uplifting, and quite exhausting! The joint BASMOM and OMV pilgrimage to Walsingham went fantastically well, and again provided interaction between members of the Order and the young volunteers and their guests. Everyone enjoyed the weekend thoroughly.

The OMV's trip to Mill-on-the-Brue, Christmas reunion at Worth, Easter Retreat at Downside, left the



Summer camp; OMV volunteers and guests

assisted, and the assisting, uplifted. OMV monthly Masses continue throughout the year at the Oratory – a wonderful opportunity for members to keep in touch.

The OMV has supplied many volunteers to Open House for the homeless in Soho on Tuesday evenings. The work of feeding the hungry is so basic and important and reminds us to help those we are so close to, but who can easily be forgotten.

The semi-autonomy the OMV has allows for great initiative in the running of their work with the Order. They are hugely grateful for the support, generosity, advice,

prayers and patience the British Association has with them!

Why volunteer?

Many ask why we do it – I do, frequently. I don't think I am buying my way into Heaven – nor do I think anyone else thinks that. I have asked a number of people why they take part in Order of Malta activities, why they give up their spare time, and I have been given too many answers to list. Maybe God has a different reason for each of us – but what is abundantly clear is that everyone feels that they have received far more than they have given.

More information: www.omv.org.uk