

The Hospitaller

The journal of the British Association of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta

In this issue:

The wonders of Wardour
Holy places under threat
Hi-tech help in Oxford



www.orderofmalta.org.uk

Winter 2014

In brief...

JANUARY 2015

15 White Knights Ball London. Contact the BASMOM Secretariat in the first instance.

MARCH 2015

29 Knights of Malta Ball Edinburgh. The proceeds from the Ball will support the Order's work for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Contact the BASMOM Secretariat in the first instance.

MAY 2015

Lourdes Pilgrimage: Join the BASMOM pilgrimage next May. Places go fast for this perennially inspiring and popular pilgrimage. Contact: Eleanor Benson Eleanor.hospitallersec@gmail.com

Audio history

If you'd like to be a part of history, record your memories of your life in the Order and send the file to the BASMOM Secretariat, attention of the Communications Delegate.

Caroline de la Force

Our great thanks to Caroline de la Force, our 'Basmom Secretariat', are unclassifiable. She cares for the Association, its members and friends untiringly, with great devotion and unfailing cheer.

One year on

Companions President Paul Letman cut the cake at St James Spanish Place soup kitchen. Over 7000 meals have been provided for the homeless at the soup kitchen in St James' crypt in its first year. Members from the Order, the Companions of the Order and the Order of Malta Volunteers (OMV) meet shoulder to shoulder every week to bring food and cheer to their guests. Who has the best time? Hard to tell, as all the groups turn up faithfully each Thursday.



Christmas Carol Service

The Order celebrated Christmas at a wonderful service at St. James Spanish Place, London.



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First Mass

Newly appointed Cardinal Patron celebrates Mass at the Order's San Giovanni Battista hospital in Rome

The Order of Malta's Rome hospital was the setting for Cardinal Leo Raymond Burke's first Mass for the Order. In the presence of the Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing and members of the Sovereign Council, the patients and staff of the Hospital,

and many members and friends, the cardinal praised the Order for its untiring work to help those in need.

The Grand Master welcomed the new Cardinal Patron on behalf of all of the Orders' family around the world.

Dames' day

Celestria Hales reports on the annual reunion for the Dames of the Order on 13 November

Mass in the Little Oratory was followed by luncheon upstairs where florist Lalage Barron added to the convivial scene with pretty centre pieces for the tables – all offered for sale after lunch.

There was time for a catch up on Dames' activities for the Order's projects throughout the year. Some make regular visits to residents in the Order's Care Homes (OSJCT) for old people, some help in the London soup kitchens, others accompany the sick on pilgrimage, both abroad and at home. There was an excellent turnout of 25 dames with a wide age range and as the hostess our Vice President Lady Talbot remarked it was particularly good to welcome some new

recruits. Fr Ronald Creighton-Jobe said Mass and then gave a short and beautifully structured talk based on the beatitudes which was very much appreciated. It is always an occasion with a happy family atmosphere and many thanks are due to organiser Rosamond Poncia.



Fr. Ronald Creighton-Jobe – now at home again after an accident led to a spell in hospital. The British Association of the Order sends very best wishes for a swift recovery.

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From the President

Dear Members and Friends

We have had a busy year and I wish to congratulate all of the Order family in Britain for your sterling work in the service of those in need.

Our soup kitchens in London, Oxford and Glasgow have gone from strength to strength. Their services are now well established – the St James Spanish Place group even celebrating their first year last month with an anniversary cake – and much needed in the community of the homeless. This social drama which is now a feature across Europe – our members and volunteers in France, Italy and Spain are engaged in similar assistance – is a sign of our stressed times and the work we do is of great value.

Our Homes continue their excellent care for older people. A new Home was opened in Warminster in November, its programme for dementia sufferers drawing admiration for the thoughtful, innovative and thorough way it is caring for residents.

As well as many activities at home, this issue covers aspects of our work abroad – most particularly our action in the Middle East, which I saw for myself in Lebanon in November. And we include a special article on our humanitarian diplomatic network and explain how its work is a force for good.

We also warmly welcome our new Cardinal Patronus, recently appointed by Pope Francis.

May I take this opportunity to wish all of you a happy and serene Christmas and to thank you for your continuing commitment to the works of the Order to help those in need.

*Richard Fitzalan Howard
President, British Association of the Order of Malta*



Photographs:

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cover photo: Julian Andrews

Hi-tech caring in Oxford

Ancient religious Order adopts high tech solution to aiding homelessness in Oxford, a city with the fourth highest number of homelessness people in England. Peter Sefton-Williams investigates...

THE ORDER OF MALTA – one of the most ancient religious orders in the Roman Catholic Church – is using social networking to help the homeless and destitute in Oxford. Companions of the Order of Malta, mainly students, are running two major initiatives to help rough sleepers. The first, which operates three times a week during term time,

is a 'soup run' across the city centre, offering food and refreshments to the needy.

The second, every Saturday morning, takes place in a church hall in Woodstock Road, where the 30 or so guests are offered the opportunity to shower, change their clothes, eat a light lunch and read the papers.

But co-ordinating the 200 or so helpers in such a wide range of activities – and on four days a week – presents a huge organisational challenge.

To ensure all activities are sufficiently staffed, they have devised their own application using 'Google Poll' software.

Nathan Pinkoski, a doctoral student from St Edmund Hall who coordinates the Saturday Project, explains: “We send out emails to all participants asking their availabilities for the week. As their replies come in, they are automatically colour coded for the various activities. We can see at a glance if there are any gaps that need filling. It’s simple but very effective.”

The charitable activities of the Companions, which have been operating in the city since 2011, are continuing to grow, including a programme for students to make afternoon visits to care homes for the elderly in the city.

Max Lau, a doctoral student from Oriel College who co-ordinates this initiative, says: “There are currently around 10 volunteers. Normally we do very simple things, like chat and play board games, but we sometimes arrange special events, such as a visit by a college choir.

The Companions’ growing charitable activities in Oxford are overseen by Fra’ John Eidinow, Tutor in Classics at St Benet’s Hall and a professed member of the Order.

Started a thousand years ago...

“Our charitable activities in Oxford are in line with the Order’s mission from its very inception almost a thousand years ago,” says Fra’ John.

“The practical aim of the Order and of the Companions is to put themselves at the service of those who do not share their advantages.

“We appreciate that our charitable activities only provide a temporary sticking plaster. But where we hope to make a difference is that we do not see ourselves as helping ‘the homeless’ or ‘the poor’ but as helping individuals.

“The Companions appreciate that the people we encounter are in extreme circumstances and we try to normalise



their life in small ways, by listening to their jokes, talking about their dogs and by asking precisely how they like their toast done,” he said.

Though members of the Order of Malta and the Companions of the Order organise the activities, many students volunteer with the Companions on an informal basis. All funds for the Companions’ activities come from private donations.

Members of the University who are interested in taking part should email: blessed.gerard.opn@gmail.com



L to R: Dom Edward Corbould, OSB, the Very Rev’d Alec Knight, Mrs Sarah Troughton HM Lord Lieutenant for Wiltshire, Mrs Sarah Hall, Ashford Director, Mr Don Wood Chairman of the OSJCT Trust

Setting standards of excellence in dementia care

Latest OSJCT care home opens in Wiltshire

As she declared open the Orders of St John Care Trust (OSJCT) Ashwood Care Centre, Warminster on 25 November, HM Lord Lieutenant for Wiltshire, Mrs Sarah Troughton, paid tribute to

the care the Trust provides to older people and in particular to dementia sufferers. On her tour around the 82-bed Home, Mrs Troughton was intrigued with the special design elements created in the dementia care

programme: a fifties-style cinema, a sweet shop, even a hairdressing salon with an enormous hairdryer – all items from bygone days with which the residents feel at home.

The individual is at the centre of this innovative care programme and a stimulating development is the inclusion of an interior design team in the Home’s planning. Corporate Developments Manager Tim Plant explains: ‘We aim to give the residents a voice through design. This is their home and we want them to feel comfortable in it, with familiar colours and objects around them.’ Research has shown that appropriately designed environments make a huge difference to the serenity and contentment of residents.

For more information on the OSJCT Homes Care Trust: www.osjct.co.uk

Bringing out the best

Mark Brennikmeyer, Hospitaller, explains the appeal of the Lourdes Pilgrimage

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF THE ORDER OF MALTA (BASMOM) has been organising a pilgrimage to Lourdes annually for over 50 years, taking along those who could never go without help, accompanying them throughout and remaining friends afterwards.

That was the focus then and it still is now. We accompany our guests (famously formerly known as “Les Malades”) and share friendship with someone who is wheelchair-bound, blind or needs a hoist to get to bed. The experience never leaves you and you will react differently next time someone in a wheelchair needs help on the train!

Both spiritual and practical

We try to make our pilgrimage better each year, no two years are the same, each learns something from the last. Lourdes is a combination of spiritual pilgrimage and practical opportunity to help, share and learn. For example, there is the huge international Mass in the underground Basilica, with the whole Order of Malta celebrating together.

And there’s the annual special outing – a picnic in a nearby village or a ride up the funicular, helping our guests onto the cable car. Or alone in quiet reflection, yet surrounded by hundreds of other pilgrims.



Why does it work?

Why does it all work – and how? The difference is the people involved. Somehow Lourdes brings out the best in people. Of any nationality. Look at the German nuns helping to push the Spanish pilgrimage up some of the steep hills surrounding Lourdes, or Belgian knights offering their American confreres a special beer. And all organised by the French. So it works. Logically. How to get there? Each nationality does it differently. Some come by coach, some by train, some by plane, even three overnight Jumbo jets come from the USA. The BASMOM pilgrimage starts at Stansted, but that doesn't explain how everyone gets there on the first Friday of May each year...

We start organising next year's pilgrimage in October. Some have been carrying out the same role for years and are experts but still aiming to improve. That's powerful. Some are taking on a role for the first time, coached by a predecessor – the best gift an outgoing member can give. That's beyond price.

How does it work?

The first order of business is always our guests. The guests' secretary contacts them all. Who came last year? Enjoy it? Any difficulties?

Anything we can improve? Who hasn't come but would like to? Then – travel issues. Getting our guests to Stansted: each year volunteers drive others or organise buses from Newcastle or Birmingham or accompany some on a connecting flight. What size plane? What type (ie one we can load easily)? These are issues for the Head of Logistics.

How many volunteers can we expect? We need three per guest; we have 60 guests. Each volunteer must provide a safeguarding certificate. This issue is for the Safeguarding Coordinator.

Running a smooth engine

We have three shifts between 0730 and 2200, plus the times we all come together – the daily Masses, the outings, the opportunities for private walks or trips to the café or shopping. We have three teams, three team leaders, three deputies, and so on, and the Chef d'Accueil runs the pilgrimage for the whole week. We have an MC when we go out, to get everyone to where they need to be without losing anyone en route! We have a housekeeper to organise supplies, a head of the kitchen team to serve three meals a day on the ward and, most importantly, our doctors and nurses. They have the final say in any situation. Each of

the above would say they are not the most important, but you need all the parts for a smooth running engine.

Meetings run throughout the year. Take-off is first Friday of May at Stansted. Old friends, new friends. Someone is late, someone has forgotten their passport, these things happen, everyone stays calm. You begin to realise that this trip is different from any other...

What really counts

Lourdes impressions? You soon ignore the shops selling plastic Madonnas at 10.30 at night. You may have sunshine or rain or snow. What really counts are the friendships and care and shared moments. And the sermons that are unlike your usual parish Mass – much more intimate as our chaplains know each of us by name after a few days. You may have done a night shift; you may have learnt to use a hoist. You will have certainly learnt how to pull the famous 'Voiture Bleu'. Did you find it suddenly getting lighter going uphill? Could be a Professed Knight lending a hand.

You should come home exhausted! That means you've had a good pilgrimage, and I won't be surprised if you decide to come again.

Requiem

Annual Requiem of the Delegation of Scotland and the Northern Marches: Grand Prior Ian Scott was there...

The Annual Requiem of the Delegation of Scotland and the Northern Marches was held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption on Thursday, 6th November. The celebrant was the Most Revd. Mario Conti, Archbishop Emeritus of Glasgow and Principal Chaplain of the Order, assisted by Mgr. Michael Regan.

At the conclusion of the Mass there was an Investiture in the Order *pro merito melitensi*. The two recipients were Mr James McGovern and Miss

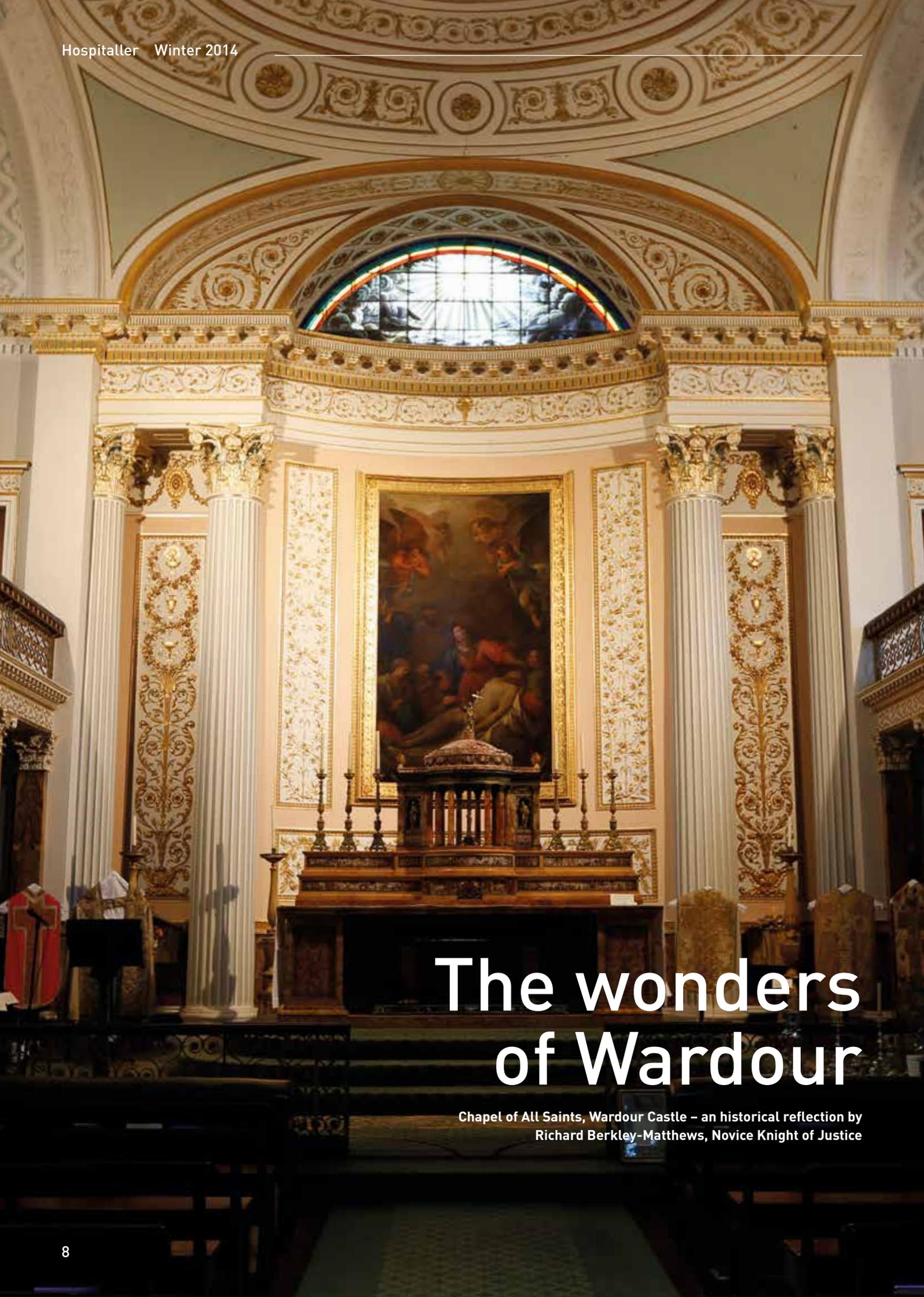
Lorraine Lapsley who were awarded the Silver Medal for their outstanding service to the Order's Dial-a-Journey service over many years. They received their medals from Lord Ralph Kerr, Provisional Delegate for Scotland, on behalf of the Grand Master, Fra' Matthew Festing.

A record 65 people attended the Mass and Investiture and distinguished guests included the Lord Lyon, The Revd. Canon Dr Joseph Morrow, and Ormond Pursuivant, Mr Mark Dennis as well as representatives from the



Left to right: Lord Ralph Kerr, Duncan Hearsom, Archbishop Mario Conti, Miss Lorraine Lapsley, The Grand Prior Fra' Ian Scott, Jim McGovern, Mgr. Michael Regan, Herbert Coutts.

Holy Sepulchre and the Venerable Order of St John. A reception was held afterwards in the hall of the Cathedral.



The wonders of Wardour

Chapel of All Saints, Wardour Castle – an historical reflection by
Richard Berkley-Matthews, Novice Knight of Justice

NEW WARDOUR CASTLE, built for Henry, eighth Lord Arundell of Wardour to the designs of James Paine in the second half of the 18th century, is one of England's finest Palladian buildings. The Arundell family, originally from Lanherne in Cornwall, came to Wardour in the early 16th century, in the person of Thomas Arundell who was, among other things, secretary to Cardinal Wolsey. His close ties to Henry VIII (he was descended from Elizabeth Woodville, Edward IV's Queen, and was brother-in-law of Henry VIII's Queen Catherine née Howard), led him to be appointed one of the commissioners for the dissolution of the monasteries in the West Country, as a result of which he acquired a portion of the lands of Shaftesbury Abbey. Thomas nevertheless remained true to the old faith and Wardour became established as a centre of recusancy. He was executed on Tower Hill on 26th February 1552.

Old Wardour Castle was destroyed during the Civil War, after a heroic defence against Parliamentary forces by Blanche, Lady Arundell. Over the next century the family gradually rebuilt its fortunes. When the 8th Lord embarked upon the building of New Wardour Castle, he determined that it should include a fine chapel and, despite the fact that this predated the Catholic Relief Act, permission was granted – on condition that the chapel should not be visible from the exterior.

Thus it came to be the first Catholic place of worship to be built since the Reformation and was opened with great liturgical ceremony by Bishop Walmsley on the Feast of All Saints, 1 November, 1778. The bishop wore an embroidered chasuble, made for the occasion by the Queen's needlewomen. It is still in the collection at Wardour today.

Perfectly preserved as originally designed

Following the passage of the Catholic Relief Act, the chapel was extended in 1791. Sir John Soane was its architect, the High Altar was built in Rome to the designs of

Giacomo Quarenghi (who went on to design the Peterhof Palace in St Petersburg for Catherine the Great) and the chapel, never altered or reordered, is perfectly preserved as originally designed and furnished.

The altarpiece, painted for the chapel by Giuseppe Cades, hung briefly in the Pantheon in Rome; the 'Samaritan Woman at the Well' by Louis de Boulanger was rescued from Notre Dame in Paris; and the marble relief Madonna and Child by Monnot came from the private oratory of the Superior General of the Society of Jesus in Rome. The silver sanctuary lamps by Luigi Valadier are exceptionally fine, as are the Stations of the Cross (19th century Limoges enamels by Ernest Blancher). The sacristy contains an extraordinary collection of vestments, including stunning examples of English mediæval embroidery, as well as some very fine 18th and 19th century embroidery and lace. Many items are embroidered with Maltese Crosses. Several members of the Arundell family have been members of the Order of Malta. Thus the chapel has long-standing links with the Order and there is an annual Day of Recollection organised at Wardour by the Grand Priory of England.

The chapel's Feast of Title in 2014 was celebrated by a visiting Bishop with an old link of friendship to the Arundell family, Mgr Geoffrey Jarrett, Bishop of Lismore in New South Wales. This was, as far as is known, the first episcopal celebration of the Feast of Title since the opening of the chapel by Bishop Walmsley, and Bishop Jarrett wore the same chasuble and used the same chalice.

On a personal note...

On a personal note, the chapel has played a central part in my life as a Catholic. I have known it since I first went there aged three in 1972, I have



served on the altar there on and off since the late 1970s, and it was as a boy at Wardour that I first came to love the richness of good Catholic liturgy. On 17th October 1983 I was confirmed in the chapel by Mgr Mervyn Alexander, Bishop of Clifton; and on 27th September 2014, at the beginning of Mass on the Order's Day of Recollection, I was clothed as a Novice Knight of Justice on the same spot, by Fra ' Ian Scott, Grand Prior of England. I have been privileged to serve Wardour as a trustee since 2009.

For many of us lucky enough to know it well, Wardour provides not only a powerful link with Catholic England, but is also one of the foundation stones of our faith – a place of beauty, tranquillity and peace, in which the Mass has been celebrated in unbroken tradition since before the Reformation.

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Holy places under threat

Many of the sites associated with the Order's history are now endangered, but others remain accessible and worth visiting says Julian Allason

For centuries the Krak des Chevaliers remained a picturesque survival of the crusading age. The great citadel of the Knights of St John was pressed into occasional ceremonial use by Ottoman governors, settled for a period, but otherwise abandoned.

Lawrence of Arabia described it as "perhaps the best preserved and most wholly admirable castle in the world." Visiting Krak in the province of Homs, western Syria in 2010, I had the place almost to myself except for a postcard seller and a few local children playing in the courtyards.

Today it is a different story, since the hilltop castle was first mortared and then occupied by rebels in 2012. In July and August 2013 plumes of smoke were seen rising from it – and videos circulated – as the fortress was subjected to attack by Assad government MiG jets. There were unconfirmed reports of damage to the Knights' chapel. Krak was finally retaken from the rebels in March 2014 after an old-fashioned siege. At time of writing the fifteen-foot thick ramparts shelter military vehicles, the knights' refectory again feeds soldiers, and the towers bristle with aerials. "We cannot imagine when it will be peaceful enough to return," says a Syrian friend from Homs who has now fled to Beirut.

Krak is just one of half a dozen sites that have played key parts in the Order's almost a thousand year history but which are now unsafe to visit, and at risk of destruction by iconoclastic

militants in whose minds the Crusades are a present reality. Syrian government forces have also shown little compunction in shelling historic sites. All sides stand accused of plundering precious artefacts.

Syria, Iraq, parts of Lebanon, and even the south-eastern border areas of Anatolian Turkey are now on the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's no-go list, meaning that reputable travel companies will not arrange visits nor insurers offer cover. Recent turbulence in Jerusalem has also discouraged visits there – a pity since excavation has uncovered the original hospital of Blessed Gerard which has lately been opened to inspection.

Many of the historic sites associated with the Knights of St. John remain accessible however, notably the walled city of Rhodes with the second hospital and Grand Master's palace, the Castle of St Peter at Bodrum in Aegean Turkey, and of course the Sacra Infermeria and Castel Sant'Angelo in Malta. All promise rewarding visits to anyone with an interest in the Order. For, as Desmond Seward concluded in his definitive study, *The Monks of War*, the history, spirituality and works of the Order are inseparable.



“I ARRIVED AT THE HFH in a bus from Emmaus. The trip took ages but the staff, who were expecting me in the morning, were still most kind and welcoming when I finally turned up many hours later. I received a very warm welcome. Stayed two days.

The Director showed me around the Hospital, which was all very inspiring. The Hospital is very well equipped, very clean, and offers its patients total care.

It is very popular with the locals! It has a beautiful chapel and the spiritual aspect is very important.

No-one is turned away

The hospital asks patients to give what they can for their treatment – some can give, some can't. No-one is ever turned away.

The hospital is close to the nativity site – a beam of hope in a divided world. But there is a problem for Christians in the region, as we know, and they don't want to talk about it. They feel brow-beaten and many are leaving.

Bethlehem is quite poor, overcrowded, and the high wall which divides Jerusalem is not far away. Getting around is quite challenging and it's difficult for women to get access to medical care.



Sir Edward Leigh, MP, visiting the Order's Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem

In the cradle of Christendom

The Order cares for mothers and infants – a beam of hope in a divided world

The Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem was recently visited by Sir Edward Leigh, MP for Gainsborough. Here he recounts his impressions

Staff have problems, too. A senior administrator tells me: 'Here I am, living just five miles from Jerusalem – and I can't go there! I could actually walk there, if it were not for the wall.' It is clearly a stressful situation.

You need to go there and see for yourselves how the Palestinians live and suffer. I stayed there. I saw real

life! The Director tells me: 'Every time I go out, I see a new settlement on the hill...'

I loved my stay and would very much like to go back.

The Holy Family Hospital is run by the Order of Malta. Since the 1990s over 50,000 babies have been born there. For more information: www.holyfamilyhospital-bethlehem.org



Grand Chancellor of the Order, Albrecht Boeselager voices grave concern

An unfolding tragedy

In a hard-hitting interview*, Albrecht Boeselager, recently appointed to the Grand Chancellor role in the Sovereign Order of Malta, emphasised his concerns for Christians in the Middle East. 'In Iraq and Syria there are so many different interests and the enemy of my enemy is not necessarily my friend,' he says. The conflict has put at risk the future of Christian minorities. 'That is the real tragedy, to see that centuries, if not a thousand years, of culture

in this area can be destroyed within two years forever.' The Order of Malta is currently working in the region, caring for thousands of the refugees, in northern Iraq, the Lebanon, Turkey. Boeselager emphasises: 'The Order is independent and neutral. We are only there to help.'

“It's a tragedy that thousands of years of Christian culture are being destroyed”

**the full article, by Paul Betts and published in the Catholic Herald on 17 October, can be found on the British Association website: www.orderofmalta.org.uk News section for 17 October.*



At the service of the needy

The Order of Malta's role in Humanitarian Diplomacy

Ambassador Marie-Thérèse Pictet Althann, Order ambassador to the United Nations, Geneva, explains her key role

THE SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA'S INCREASINGLY GLOBAL NATURE, both in its geographical reach and its humanitarian goals, explains the growing importance of its diplomatic service. Today the Order is extended across the world as never before, carrying out its humanitarian activities in some 120 countries. This development can partly be attributed to the Order's response to

the multiple complex emergencies caused by political upheavals, armed conflicts and natural disasters which have resulted in an exponential increase in humanitarian needs.

A unique diplomatic network

The sovereignty of the Order was recognised by the Papal Bull of Pascal II in 1113 and has been maintained ever since. As a subject

of international law, the Order has diplomatic relations with 105 states, a Permanent Mission to the European Union, Permanent Observer Missions to the United Nations and its specialised agencies, to the African Union and to several other intergovernmental organisations dealing with issues related to the Order's action. This unique diplomatic network is both a demonstration of its sovereignty and an operational instrument for its service to the poor and the sick, the refugees, migrants and displaced, the disabled and persecuted.

Distinct from that of nation states, the Order's diplomacy is based on its specific characteristics as an independent sovereign entity and a religious-lay order with a humanitarian mission. The Diplomatic Corps is appointed by the Grand Master and the Sovereign Council of the Order. The role of the ambassadors is a combination of traditional diplomacy, negotiation

skills and the ability to develop humanitarian activities. Their missions are strictly humanitarian and totally voluntary. The Order's impartial, neutral and apolitical character determines that the priorities of its diplomacy are at the service of its spiritual and charitable goals in accordance with its motto *Tuitio Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum*.

The Order's bilateral and multilateral diplomatic activities create a considerable advantage in carrying out its mission around the world. They are the framework that enables it to organise its humanitarian works, co-ordinate emergency relief, increase its visibility and implement long-term projects. The diplomatic dimension of the Order should therefore be regarded as complementary to its humanitarian action.

The role of bilateral diplomacy

The main role of bilateral diplomacy is to facilitate the Order's global humanitarian action and strengthen its relationships with the governments of the countries in which it operates. Ambassadors help to ensure that aid can be delivered promptly and effectively. In countries without a national Association, they are also responsible for co-ordinating hospitaller and relief work. Whenever appropriate, Cooperation Agreements are signed between the government and the Order, providing an operating framework that favours the efficacy and the durability of its actions. This allows it to be integrated into national and regional healthcare systems and to obtain customs facilities for importing medical and relief equipment. Moreover, the diplomatic relations offer stronger protection for humanitarian personnel in the field.

The task of multilateral diplomacy

The principal task of multilateral diplomacy is to develop and strengthen the Order's relations, promote cooperation and forge partnerships with the United Nations and other international organisations, to inform the community of nations on its actions worldwide, as well as to



Ambassador Pictet-Althann receives an award from the Papal Nuncio in recognition of her work for those in need, Geneva, 2014

promote its ideals which are closely linked to the UN Charter's principles and the goals expressed in the UN Millennium Declaration signed by Member States at the Summit meeting in 2000.

Of interest to the work of our Order are organisations with which our institutions work on the ground, i.e. those active in the fields of emergency relief and recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation, health care, nutrition, water sanitation and hygiene, livelihood measures and social programmes, as well as the promotion of disaster risk reduction. (UN Offices of the High Commissioner for Refugees and for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Health Organization, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the UN Human Rights Council, the European Union, etc.) In these organisations the daily diplomatic work is carried out through involvement in the decision making process. Important elements of this procedure are dialogue, personal contacts, exchange of information, participation in a variety of meetings which go from official board, council and executive committee meetings of governing

bodies to specialised institutes and think tanks, official briefings and informal consultations.

Today's massive challenges

Given the present context of crises, the global humanitarian community faces massive unprecedented challenges which call for a truly universal approach. In addition to manmade and natural disasters, a number of global trends, such as population growth, urbanisation, poverty, food security, water scarcity and climate change trigger major population movements leading to new crisis situations which can only be addressed successfully by all actors working together in a spirit of solidarity, cooperation and burden-sharing. Through its vocation to alleviate suffering, the Order of Malta is committed to peace among people, factions, ethnic groups and religions. By promoting better mutual understanding within the community of nations its diplomatic network contributes to the common good of all humankind.

Ambassador Pictet has strong links with Britain: her mother was English, she spent a year in London as a student and returned with her Swiss husband, François, who was ambassador to the Court of St. James from 1984 to 1989.



Crisis in Iraq

Doctors join the wave of refugees from ISIS-controlled areas of the north

Together with their families, two medicos have arrived in Erbil from Bakhdida, and now live with other IDPs (internally displaced persons). Their shelter is safe, but the large influx has sent rents soaring in the city and the overcrowded buildings have poor sanitation and bathing facilities. Health is at risk – gastroenteritis, respiratory tract infections, chicken pox, lice infestations, and even scabies are rife.

The doctors now work in the mobile clinic run by Malteser International, the Order of Malta’s worldwide relief agency, and its local partner TCCF to bring health care to the displaced throughout the region. They are much sought after, as their own

situation is the same as those of their patients and their sympathy is rooted in their own experience.

They say: ‘Our team consists of us plus two medical assistants. Every day, we choose a different area to visit where the displaced families are concentrated. We also seek out those who need psychological support after their traumatic experiences. Our team treats around a hundred patients every working day.’

As winter draws in, the suffering of the displaced will increase and their health problems will compound.

For more information: www.malteser-international.org

“A right for all”

Peter Sefton-Williams highlights a new report that finds religious freedom is now compromised in nearly 60 percent of countries worldwide.

SURVEYING ALL RELIGIOUS GROUPS in 196 countries from autumn 2012 to summer 2014, the findings of the Report, produced by Aid to the Church in Need and compiled by journalists, academics and commentators, reveal global religious freedom has entered a period of serious decline. It notes that many figures in authority –

governments and religious leaders – have continually failed to stand up for religious freedom and that this is an issue that can no longer be ignored.

Writing in the Report’s introduction, Dr Paul Bhatti, brother of Shahbaz, the murdered Pakistan Federal Minister for Minorities, declares: ‘Religious freedom is by its nature a right for all.’ On the positive side, the report found a number of examples of religious co-operation; however these were often the result of local initiatives rather than progress at the level of national governments. Peter Sefton-Williams, Chairman of the report’s Editorial Committee, summarises: “The clear lesson from

this research is that the urgent call to reverse the violence and oppression directed towards religious minorities must come, first and foremost, from within religious communities themselves.”

For more information: The Religious Freedom in the World 2014 Report, launched in November by Aid to the Church in Need offices around the world, is available online at www.religion-freedom-report.org

Directly under the Holy See, Aid to the Church in Need supports the faithful wherever they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need. ACN is a Catholic charity.

THE ORDER OF MALTA'S ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham ran over the weekend 12-14 September. 30 guests and 150 volunteers came from the Order's family around Britain: the Orders of St John Care Trust (OSJCT) Homes, Order of Malta Volunteers (OMV), British Association, Grand Priory of England, Companions of the Order of Malta - a great turnout! And Father David Irwin's greeting "It is good to welcome the whole Order of Malta family who in a unique way at Walsingham come together." We were particularly happy to welcome Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing as one of our helpers.

On Friday evening everyone congregated in the Village Hall, squeezing in together to eat fish 'n' chips. When our seemingly mammoth order was placed, the manager expressed no surprise; a recent order for six hundred meals had met with similar composure, so our little gathering was really just small fry (so to speak). Afterwards, our chaplains led us in a candlelit procession back to Elmham House, some guests and volunteers stopping off for a nightcap or two along the way...

Saturday kicked off with a hearty English breakfast, and some spare time to wander round the village in

So news about other activities gets around – for example, BASMOM's Lourdes pilgrimage (1-8 May 2015), the OMV's White Knights Ball (10 January 2015), the Companions' Soup Kitchens in London, Oxford and Glasgow, and the Order's OSJCT Homes around the country.

A great turnout

Walsingham brings pilgrims from the Order family around Britain notes Jack Straker

the sunshine. The main morning event was the Opening Mass and the Blessing of Hands. After lunch we moved to the Anglican Shrine for the Sprinkling of Water and the Stations of the Cross and then walked the Via Crucis around the ruins of Walsingham Abbey. Our brilliant catering team served up tea in the picturesque surroundings – with enough scones and cakes to feed an army.

Valiant service acknowledged

At the later drinks party, British Association President Richard Fitzalan Howard made a short speech to thank Joe Daley, Pilgrimage organiser for the last four years. Joe, a modest soul, probably thought he'd got away with a brief cameo in the morning's Homily as his only public mention, but here (trapped!) he was rewarded with a medal for his valiant services to the Order.

Elmham House provided a barbecue on Saturday evening, devoured by guests and helpers, before we headed to candlelit Night Prayers, where together we offered up prayers for friends, family and others at home and abroad. And then a nightcap,

to draw a wonderful day to a close in friendship, with guests and volunteers catching up with old mates and making new ones.

On Sunday, a Rosary Procession was followed by Parish Mass in the Chapel of Reconciliation; during the Mass, Father John Armitage was installed as a Chaplain of the Order. The grand finale of the catering team was to greet the pilgrims coming out of Mass with a truly spectacular picnic lunch, good cheer and a raffle kindly coordinated by Ben Jennings and Bea McKechnie.

Full of joy

James Pavey was the marvellous MC for the weekend, even arranging for a microphone for the Rosary Procession so everyone could hear perfectly. This came in very useful for Ben's raffle announcements. However in the latest example foretelling the rise of machines against humankind, the microphone cut out every time he mentioned a number – to the amusement of all. Full of joy – and very full of food – our pilgrims set out for home after lunch, with everyone looking forward to next year's Walsingham.

SAVE THE DATE!

Special thanks go to the three organisers stepping down this year: Joe Daley (Head Organiser), James Hall (Head of Catering) and Anton Borg (Head Medic). It is their invaluable work which has made the Walsingham pilgrimage so successful. One of its great aspects is its diversity: pilgrims from different backgrounds and groups have one thing in common – the Order. Next year's Walsingham Pilgrimage is 11-13 September 2015 – save the date!



DECEMBER 2014

LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND THE ORDER WORLD



SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA

Grand Master Fra' Matthew Festing writes to all members, acknowledges the invaluable work carried out by the Order, especially in the troubled Middle East; notes that Lebanon has a strong cooperation with the Muslim community and that it has contributed enormously to the development of humanitarian projects across the region.



AFRICA

SOUTH SUDAN: South Sudan is the youngest African state but its short history is marred by conflicts and violence that have caused a serious food crisis. The Sovereign Order of Malta has been active in the South Sudan region for almost 20 years with numerous projects in the healthcare sector. Its humanitarian work can now be further strengthened by signing of the opening of diplomatic relations in the United Nations headquarters in New York..



EUROPE

ITALY: His Eminence Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke celebrates his first Mass for the Order of Malta in the Order's San Giovanni Hospital, Rome, 2 December.

HOLY SEE: Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke is appointed Cardinalis Patronus of the Sovereign Order of Malta by His Holiness Pope Francis. He succeeds Cardinal Paolo Sardi who was appointed Patron of the Sovereign Order of Malta in 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI. 8 November.

ROMANIA: 'Education is for everyone' – new project gives Roma children access to education. The Order of Malta's volunteer corps project (Serviciul de Ajutor Maltez în România – SAMR) currently involves 30 children in Satu-Mare, northern Romania. After school each day they go to the Order of Malta centre where a team – coordinator, two social workers, four volunteers and teachers – help the children to do their homework, read, write and do arithmetic. There's also recreation and a hot meal. The project also provides free dental care for the children with paediatric dermatology soon to be available. The aim: stop the dropout rate among young Roma and integrate them into society.

MIDDLE EAST

Current activities stretch from Lebanon to Iraq to Syria, where Malteser International – the Order of Malta's worldwide relief agency – is assisting thousands of refugees. In Bethlehem, the Order maternity hospital – the Holy Family Hospital – is expanding its activities and continues to be a haven of peace and hope in a land of conflict and despair.



AMERICAS

NEW YORK, UN: "As the Millennium Development Goals' mandate comes to an end, there is still much to be done with regard to the fight against AIDS, maternal health and the empowerment of women. We need to continue to work towards their ultimate completion" declares Permanent Observer of the Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations in New York, Robert L. Shafer, addressing the Third Committee of the UN held in New York.



ASIA

HONG KONG: Order of Malta's fourth regional Asia-Pacific meeting. Albrecht Boeselager, Grand Chancellor and Dominique de La Rochefaucauld-Montbel, Grand Hospitaller participated with the heads of the Australian, Philippine and Singapore Associations and representatives of the Order of Malta's units in Hong Kong, Thailand, Cambodia and East Timor. Also taking part: representatives of the Order's specialised agencies – Malteser International, the global relief agency developing projects in 15 Asian countries, Ordre de Malte France, operating mainly in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and CIOMAL, treating leprosy patients in its specialist facilities particularly in Cambodia.