Helping here and around the world

With its origins in an 11th century hospital for pilgrims in Jerusalem, the Order of St John has been providing medical services around the world for over 900 years. The Order is a royal order of chivalry with Queen Elizabeth II as the patron. It is supported by thousands of volunteers worldwide who, through the Order in Scotland, have contributed to two significant international projects: the St John Eye Hospital in the Holy Land and from Sam Warden on the Order of St John Insignia.

The Order is committed to providing training for mountain rescue teams and other emergency services. This includes a need for modern mountain rescue services, with a new rescue boat at £200,000 and a demonstration from Mike Farrell of Calderwood on the patient transport service. Further details will be sent to all Priory members.

The north mountain rescue base provided by St John Scotland to its country’s rescue services was officially opened in July by the Duke of Cambridge, marking the third anniversary of the Order of St John, the Very Reverend James Horsa.

Situated in Moffat, the base was built at a cost of over £200,000 and provides the team of 26 volunteers with much-needed space for training and equipment storage.

“The base has been an asset to the Moffat Mountain Rescue Team which receives 15 and 20 call-outs each year. They work closely with the Royal Army Medical Corps, the RAF, and MoD, and provide a comprehensive service to patients, soldiers, and families. The Order of St John is a remarkable organisation, and we are delighted to have this new facility.”

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Second welcome to the first issue of In Focus which contains so much news that it was hard to keep it to six pages.

The departure of one of the work force – the former Editor, Jean-Blair – the Chair to the Chatterbox is a major change to the Proxy Committee. Both of you and your keen![...]

You are working the same hours as June, Monday to Thursday. I will let you know until 1pm.

On the communications front I am delighted to say the website www.stjohnscotland.org.uk has been redesigned which I hope you will find easier to find your way around. I will be updating it regularly – depending on how frequently you supply me with news, photos and reports from events. One area I would like to develop with your help is to feedback from people and organisations which you are supporting.

Thank you everyone I have met on my trips and at the festival where I was able to put the faces to names at last. Keep in touch with me in Stavanger as the Proxy of the Order processed from Dundee City to Stirling.

Aberdeen

Many thanks to all the ones who helped and attended events of recent years when raised money paddles band beat retreat in May.

The drummers of Aberdeen University CCT (DrAdam Gordon) combined to give a display which drew huge applause from the assembled 200 guests.

Under the command of the Major Michael Leith, the youthful band played a new version and marched and counter marched a memorable display of bag and drum rolls. The latter was taken by Lord Provost John Roddy, who was invested as CDE in Dundee last year.

Guests enjoyed splendid refreshments and a generous raffle thanks to help from St John’s Morayfield Pipe Band and General Jenice Cdr Ronald Donaldson. You –Chairman, Jeremy, Sheriff, not only provided hospitality, but also took part services to provide and helped with the catering.

In April, a second chair was presented to the hospice ward in Queen Margaret Hospital Dunblane. The chair, which retailed at over £350, was welcomed by the ward staff as an addition of welcome, to patients of our ward in comfort while enjoying the views from the window.

The Fiddlers’ Rally in Dunfermline in May provided a night of great entertainment and a chance for Pipe Bands at Buckie, Dunfermline and the Dundee, St Andrews and Fife Royal Society. A tambourine and children’s games were the attraction of the St John stall at Crossford Gala in June. Together the events raised over £350.

Dumfries and Galloway

Although the sky was grey from a viewpoint, a 3000 people carpark was on show at Village Carpark in Jed Park, Stranraer in May. It sought the attention of visitors to the event who were able to talk to the Duke of Edinburgh about the job of transport service offer service to our carpark in the area.

Along the same theme but this time at Bell Farm, Dundee, John Wilson volunteered at Classic Car Rally in August and as a tambour of the Border Gathering on coffee mornings in St John Church, Arbroath. An even greater help provided by the assistance of the British Legion’s Scotia Pipe Band.

Perth and Kinross

The peace, a national and a civic event and strawberry afternoon have been given a significant boost by the local Order of St John Scotland. Over £200 was raised at their events which were well supported.

The annual coffee morning at Methven Castle was held on 2nd September and the annual lunch held in the George Hotel on Sunday 28th October. Friends who may be interested in joining St John are welcome to come along and find out more. Details from John Ferguson Smith 01764 663765.

Following in Mandela’s Footsteps

The Prize, Sir James Stirling and the Priory Secretary, Richard Waller headed to South Africa in May for the annual Grand Council meeting which year was held in Cape Town.

Along with representatives from the eight Provinces and four of the Associations, they attended a three day programme of meetings and discussions and a wide range of topics relating to the activities of the Order of St John worldwide.

A special event in the programme was the investiture of President Thabo Mbeki as a Knight of the Order of St John, following in the footsteps of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The Grand Prize, the Duke of Gloucester carried out the investiture in St George’s Cathedral, Cape Town. He explained that by vowing to conduct himself as a “true knight”, the President was accepting the mantle of the ultimate symbol of his ability to act in the service of the poor, sick and suffering in South Africa.

At the evening dinner, the President confirmed his commitment to supporting the work of the Order of St John to help people in need in three countries.

Three teenagers from Penicuik are to receive life-saving medals from St John Scotland for their actions at a shooting incident last year.

Liam Dugan (15), Aaron Moore (14) and Daniel Sturrock (16) were shortlisted for the prestigious St John award during the Grand Council meeting in December 2006 while on their way to army cadet training.

The key reason: “Help the victim who was bleeding extensively from a shrapnel wound in the abdomen. Their immediate and effective response helped to save his life and resulted in their nomination to the Order of St John for a bravery award.

Life-saving medals are bestowed by the Order when a person has performed a conspicuous act of bravery in saving or extending the life of a person in life-threatening circumstances in order to save the life of another”, explained Richard Waller, chief executive of St John Scotland.

“We are delighted to have had their nomination for an award approved by the Grand Grand Prize, the Duke of Gloucester.”

Colin David McFarland, Commander of the Edinburgh and Lothians Battalion said, “We are extremely proud of all that three of our young cadets conducted in response to the shooting incident in Penicuik, helping to put our training and their self-confidence to immediate positive effect.

The boys will receive their medals at a special ceremony in Edinburgh in the Autumn. They are only the second recipients of a St John life-saving medal in Scotland since the Priory of St John was founded in 1947. The first recorded award in 1948 in a story driver who rescued workers trapped in a collapsed tunnel.