

InFocus

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THE PRIOR'S PRIORITIES

A personal message from Mark Strudwick

In my first two months as Prior, Sue and I have been particularly touched by the welcome we have received and the great camaraderie of the Order's membership in Scotland.

I would like to highlight three major events that typify the ethos and the raison d'être of St John Scotland. Firstly, the Annual Service at Torphichen Parish Church: this was beautifully constructed by the Dean, the Very Reverend John Cairns, with a wonderful sermon by the Hospitaller, Mr. Ian Wallace, which guided us on the Christian roots and strengths of our charitable objectives. We are all most grateful to the West Lothian Chairman and the Committee for hosting the service so well.

Secondly, the Presentation of the Gold Lifesaving Award to Jessica Bradley of Shetland, in Edinburgh Castle: The Press coverage of this event was excellent and reflected Jessica's great bravery. Her example to others as an Instructor with the Army Cadet Force, and her modest approach to being recognised, is simply outstanding. We were fortunate that the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo recounted Jessica's brave deeds at the performance the night before the Award Presentation and put the spotlight on her as she sat with her family in the Guest Box.



PICTURE BY ANTONIA REEVES

Thirdly, the Ceremony for Families of Organ Donors: who have shown such courage and commitment in supporting the wishes of their loved ones to donate their bodies for the benefit of others; sharing a philosophy of caring for others and making a life-changing gift to those with challenging medical prospects.

When I took over as Prior I emphasised the need to Re-Staff, Re-Structure and Reach out. With Angus Loudon and Ingrid Palmer now on board, we have in Army parlance completed Phase 1. We have had a very thorough Governance Review and developed our

Strategy for 2020 under my predecessor's clear guidance. I can now readily identify my priorities for a deeper and more cohesive approach; they neatly fit into the word **Prior: Project Management, Risk Analysis, Information Exchange, Outreach and Membership, Reporting.**

I am most grateful to the Area Chairmen and their Committees for all they do to communicate the benefits of our work, deliver the projects and reach out to potential new members of all ages. This will underpin my brand of leadership and my desire to encourage and sustain the great work of St John Scotland. "Leaders don't create Followers – they create More Leaders!"

New faces at St John's House



As a soldier, Angus Loudon (left) saw service in the UK, Germany, Kenya, Northern

Ireland, Australia, Kosovo, Iraq, Bosnia, Afghanistan, the Netherlands and Cyprus. Now, after a military career spanning 34 years, he is taking on a new challenge, as Executive Director of St John Scotland.

Col. Loudon will be in charge of the day-to-day running of St John's House at an interesting time, with a new Prior in place, with his own ideas for taking St John Scotland forward.

His final posting before retirement from the Army was as Chief of Staff and Commander of the British Contingent of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

He is widowed with three children and divides his time between Edinburgh and his family home in Highland Perthshire. One of his many interests is raising funds for charity, a talent that will not go wrong at St John Scotland!



The other new face at St John's House is that of Ingrid Palmer (left), who is settling in to the new

role of Finance and Office Administrator. Born and educated in the Netherlands, Ingrid lived and worked in London for 25 years before moving to Edinburgh in 2000, where she has held two office manager posts.

Inside



Mountain Man: St John Scotland's safety instructor scales the heights p2



Golden Girl: Meet Jessica Bradley, holder of St John's highest bravery award . . p3



Proud Mum: Her caring, eight year-old son was an organ donor p3

Peak practice

Nick aims to keep novice climbers safe



A winter climb: Nick Carter tackles Beinn Eighe in Torridon.

St John Scotland's new Mountain Safety Instructor expects to confront a catalogue of potentially dangerous issues when he begins working with novice climbers over the coming winter season in the Scottish mountains.

Inverness-based Nick Carter will be teaming up with university mountaineering clubs to offer free training, specifically to "fresher" students who could be facing treacherous conditions almost as soon as they join a club at the start of the new university year in September.

Nick holds the highest mountaineering instructor qualifications and has climbed all over Europe, North and South America, New

Zealand and Asia. He says: "It's recognised that novices in university clubs are a high risk group. Some have little or no experience of the Scottish hills, even when the weather is favourable, yet they can join a club when they arrive to begin their course and within days be up there in conditions that would be challenging even for an experienced climber."

Appointed jointly by St John Scotland and the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCoFS), Nick has already been in touch with 13 of Scotland's 15 university clubs and intends to join many of them on weekend meets in the hills soon after courses resume, right through until March.

He says: "I think it's fair to say that novices

are prone to making a lot of mistakes, so I'll be dealing with a whole range of issues: Are they properly equipped for winter conditions; do they know how to use crampons and walking axes; do they lack navigation skills; can they read weather and avalanche forecasts properly; do they have the right level of fitness to tackle their planned route?

"Failure to plan a day taking into account their abilities, fitness and the conditions can lead to wrong decisions being made on the day and that's when incidents happen and they end up injured or in the wrong place in difficult terrain without the right skills to cope."



Home soil for the Prior

Torphichen is home to the new Prior, Major General Mark Strudwick, but even so attending the annual St John Scotland service in the nearby Parish Church was one of many "Firsts" he is likely to experience.

The Church was packed for the service, conducted by the Dean, the Very Rev John Cairns, but for once there was a break with tradition when, instead of a sermon, there was an address – based on the Parable of the Good Samaritan – delivered by

the Hospitaller, Ian Wallace.

Otherwise events went as they have always done: The Prior's Procession from the ancient Preceptory (pictured above) and the guard of honour provided by local air cadets.

The lessons were read by Keith Stirling, the chairman of St John West Lothian, and by the Prior. The offering, in aid of the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem, raised £555 and was "topped up" by the local Area committee to £1,000.

Clubs take up life-saving offer

By the end of September 18 of Scotland's leading golf clubs will have accepted the gift of a life-saving defibrillator from St John Scotland, as part of a project organised jointly with the Scottish Golf Union and the Scottish Ladies' Golfing Union – which are about to amalgamate.

The £1,500 machines, which are vital in the few minutes after someone suffers a heart attack, are being offered to the venues of every SGU and SLGA competition from 2015 to 2017. Training is also on offer to key staff at each of the clubs and neighbouring clubs, which can buy the units at a discount.

Among the clubs to benefit is Gullane in East Lothian, which received two of the machines just ahead of the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open in July.



The Lord Lieutenant of Moray, Lt-Col. Grenville Johnston OBE OSTJ (right) handing over a defibrillator to John Thomson, club captain at Old Moray GC during the Scottish Stroke Play competition in May.



Jessica receives her Gold Lifesaving Medal from General Mark Strudwick, as her partner Ryan Laurenson looks on.



Glittering: Jessica with her Gold medal on the ramparts of Edinburgh Castle.

Jessica is our golden girl

Twenty two-year old Jessica Bradley from Lerwick on Shetland became the first person in Scotland to receive the Order of St John's highest award for bravery – the Gold Lifesaving Medal – and captured the hearts of everyone who met her at the ceremony at Edinburgh Castle.

The Prior, General Mark Strudwick, has already recorded his admiration in his personal message on Page 1 of this issue of InFocus and she has become a heroine in the

Highlands and Islands. An editorial in her local newspaper, the Shetland Times, has hailed her "selfless bravery" when she forced her way into a known drugs den in her home town and saved a young man who was bleeding to death from a self-inflicted neck wound. A comment in the Aberdeen-based Press and Journal described the award ceremony as "a special day for a special woman and her proud family."

Jessica admits in her own quiet way that

she is also proud: not of risking her own life when she faced alcohol and drug-fuelled violence to save another, but because her training as an army cadet and First Responder had kicked in, allowing her to stay calm and cope.

Her greatest satisfaction comes however, from the fact that the young man she saved has since turned his life around and two years on has a good job in the North Sea oil industry.



Eight year-old Finlay Bennett

Giving the gift of life

Sixty-eight grieving Scottish families, who gave permission for their loved ones' organs to be used for life saving or life enhancing transplant in the last year, have received the Order of St John Award, the small medal which carries a big message: "Add Life: Give Hope".

A hundred and twenty family members and friends were at the Royal Botanic Garden in



Edinburgh to see the Prior of St John Scotland, Major General Mark Strudwick, present the award to the representatives of 38 of the donors. The others opted to accept the award by post.

The Prior said: "The courage of the families to make a decision about donation at a time of

great loss is both humbling and inspiring. Their pride in their loved one and what they have done for others is amazing."

Dave and Jenny Bennett from Dunfermline gave permission for organs from their eight year-old son Finlay to be used for transplant when he died

suddenly of meningitis. They are seen here with their other son, seven year-old Frasier and Finlay's gran, Chris McIntosh.

■ To join the NHS Organ Donor Register visit www.organdonation.nhs.uk, call 0300123 2323 or text SAVE to 62323.

A MOMENTOUS YEAR captured on camera

MAY: International delegates to the Grand Council arrive in Edinburgh for a week of deliberations...



The focus was on the plight of Mothers and Babies in Sub-Saharan Africa and a new campaign of support is launched at a reception in a city hotel...



Sir Malcolm Ross, pledges support, building on existing projects in Malawi.



The incoming Prior, Gen. Mark Strudwick, supported by his new wife, Sue, is invested as a Knight of St John.



The ceremony is led by the Lord Prior, Dr Neil Conn, and watched by delegates from the Grand Council...

JUNE: The annual Festival is held in Glasgow. Rain and roadworks disrupt plans for the traditional outdoor procession, so it takes place inside Wellington Church.



Postulants take their place as they wait to be admitted to or promoted within the Order of St John...



The Prior's procession never fails to impress, inside or out



The ladies raise their voices in celebration.



Waiting to receive a long service award is clearly a serious moment...

AND FINALLY, to the Festival Lunch and the official handover from Sir Malcolm Ross to his successor as Prior, Maj-Gen. Mark Strudwick.



So it's hello from him....



...and it's goodbye from him.