

InFocus



St John

www.stjohnscotland.org.uk

Summer 2011

Relief fund helps thousands

Some 15,000 patients who attended the St John Eye Hospital Group's hospitals and clinics in 2010 benefitted from subsidies amounting to over £500,000 for their medical care.

The people who receive free treatment are from the poorest and most disadvantaged communities and families in occupied Palestine. A social worker assesses the needs of each patient claiming financial hardship and those with genuine problems do not have to pay.

Without the availability of the St John Eye Hospital Group's Patient Relief Fund for

financial help, many would not even seek treatment, possibly resulting in irreparable damage to their sight.

The Relief Fund is for people who do not have access to other financial support from sources such as the Palestinian Authority (PA) Insurance, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees and the Israeli Sick Funds.

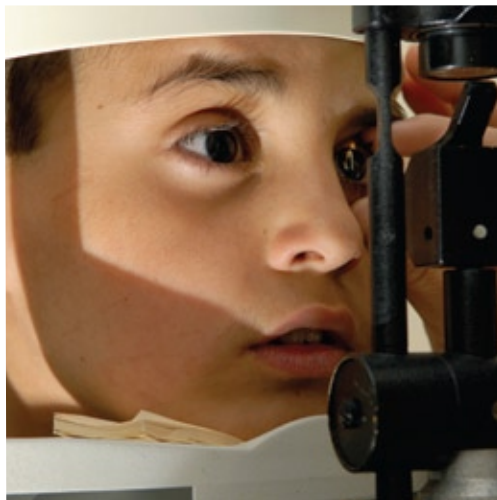
It was set up in response to the drop in numbers of people going to the hospital for surgical treatment after the Second Intifada – or Palestinian uprising – a period of intensified conflict in the region, between

2000 and 2006. The resulting poverty of the people of the West Bank and Gaza meant hospital treatment was beyond the means of many families.

More about the Patient Relief Fund is on www.stjohneyehospital.org and donations can be made online or by post (cheque payable to St John Eye Hospital Group):

St John Scotland, 21 St John Street, Edinburgh EH8 8DG

Please include your name and address so we can acknowledge receipt.



AROUND HALF OF ALL THE CHILDREN IN THE AREA ARE AFFECTED WITH EYE PROBLEMS AND THE AVERAGE AGE OF THE PATIENTS IN PALESTINE IS 19 YEARS AND IN GAZA 16 YEARS.

The main reason for eye ailments being common in young people is consanguinity – children born to related parents – which is common in the Middle East. Offspring from these marriages run an increased risk of congenital abnormality and the eye is particularly susceptible to congenital disease.

80% of patients at the Orthoptic Department in Jerusalem, which deals with conditions such as squints, amblyopia (lazy eye), defective binocular vision and diplopia (double vision), are under 18.

Hospitaller, Ian Wallace writes:

The Jerusalem Ophthalmic Hospital continues to deliver excellent eye care services to a steadily increasing number of Palestinian patients. It is experiencing real financial problems due to withdrawal of EU funding, a significant fall in the pound/shekel exchange rate, and erratic payment of fees by the Palestinian Authority. On a recent visit to the Hospital the Priory Hospitaller was told that for the first time a member of staff had had to be made redundant.



Editorial

Area members are gearing up for a busy season of fundraising events and other plans in the pipeline. We are keen to boost the photography library both as a record of your activities and of the charities and people who benefit. Please let us know of any projects, events and presentations which would possibly be good opportunities for a professional photographer to attend.

Each area has a stock of the new Join Us leaflets to give to potential new members and a pop-up banner which is especially useful at talks and press photo calls. In Focus can also be a useful handout to the public as it is up-to-date and easy to digest.

Sadly, after exhaustive efforts to find a new charitable use for Thornhill, the building was sold in March to a private buyer. This marked the end of an era of high quality and caring accommodation being provided to people in need. St John Glasgow members dedicated a great deal of hard work to Thornhill.

Carolyne Nurse

Communications Officer

Festival heads west

This year's festival is being held on Friday 24 June in the Auld Kirk of Ayr. It is being organised by St John Ayrshire and Arran. The lunch is being held in the Princess Royal Suite of Ayr Racecourse.

The principal guest is Professor John Stopford who is the independent member of the Order's steering group and has helped facilitate Grand Council meetings in recent years. A distinguished academic but also with broad practical experience, he is an Emeritus Professor of International Business at the London Business School.



Pictured are Bill Fleming (centre left) and David Waddell (centre right) who were invested as Knights in November at St John's Gate, London. They were joined by Margaret Balfour and John Ford. Also invested at the same ceremony but not pictured was Patricia Calvert.

Dundee Carers win a break

Around 100 charities and deserving groups were invited to enter a draw to win a free week's stay at Sir Andrew Murray House, St John Scotland's holiday home, in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

The lucky charity drawn from the hat was Dundee Carers Centre, an organisation which aims to improve the lives of carers and is part of the Princess Royal Trust for Carers network

A number of charities have booked the house this summer including the Mark Wright Project, Alzheimers Scotland, Enable (Helensburgh group) and Fife Action on Autism – a group which gave very positive feedback after using the property a few times last year.

Arthur Leask of St John Central continues to look after the house and oversaw the repairs needed after extensive flood damage over the winter. His daughter, Joanne, is taking care of the day-to-day running of the house and Audrey Leighton at Head Office is the contact for bookings and enquiries, so please direct any potential guests to 0131 556 8711.

Promotion continues to various charities in the hope that more people in need have the opportunity to use the house for a break in the beautiful and peaceful setting of Strathyre – so please keep spreading the word!



Around The Areas

EDINBURGH AND SOUTH-EAST

Seagull Trust Cruises have arranged a special trip for members of St John Scotland on the afternoon of Saturday 30 July. They will be providing afternoon tea for all the passengers. Departure from Ratho will be at 13.45, returning to Ratho at about 18.00.

The cost is £10 per person with all proceeds going to St John Edinburgh and South East. The trip is always very popular with nearly all tickets sold.



Top

Dennis McEwan receiving the Order Service Medal from The Prior, Sir Malcom Ross at the St John Edinburgh and the South East lunch at the Ellersley Hotel in Edinburgh in April. [Photo credit: William Hackett]

Bottom

Also awarded the Order Service Medal was Barrie Pendlebury pictured here with Rita Cormack and Aileen Robertson



HIGHLAND

Musical events kept the Highland Committee on their toes last year. In September, they held their first Scottish Musical Evening in the Town House featuring a band

from Crown Church, a Mod Gold medallist singer, a Gaelic quartet, an accordionist and a piper. The next event in October was a piping recital by the local cadet force pipe band. December saw the carol service in St Michael and All Saints' Church. Ian Wallace said a few words about the St John Eye Hospital which was the recipient of money raised on the evening.

Last year's giving tree in Inverness was yet again a great success with over seven hundred children receiving two gifts each thanks to the generosity of the public.

A donation was also made to Skye and Lochalsh Young Carers. Excerpts from the thank you letters are below:

"A lot of the young people were quite overwhelmed by the generosity of the gifts and stated that this had been their best Christmas ever."

"This is the best Christmas ever. I know I'll get nothing like this at home."

"I've got face ache from all this smiling tonight!"

"In one young carer who rarely expresses emotion we saw something quite wonderful. He had tears in eyes and gave each member of staff a big hug and thank you."



St John Fife, Vice-Chairman, George Donaldson (right) and Secretary, Jim Delaney, present a cheque to 'Fife Riding for the Disabled'

DUNBARTONSHIRE

The St Margaret of Scotland Hospice in Clydebank was one of six local charities to receive donations from St John Dunbartonshire at their open meeting in October which was held at the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club in Rhu. In the chair for the first time was the new chairman, Wing Commander George Campbell.

A cheque for £850 was presented to Administrator John McLintock. St John Dunbartonshire has been a long time financial supporter of the highly regarded East Barns Street Hospice.

It is a recognised charity that for some sixty years has offered compassion, dedicated commitment and excellent care to patients with advanced life-limiting illness and also to the older person with complex medical and nursing needs. It has a wide range of facilities for the local and wider community, including a day centre.



George Campbell (left) presents a cheque to John McLintock of St Margaret of Scotland [Photo credit: Donald Fullarton]

Mr McLintock, who has worked at the Hospice for twenty years, read a moving letter from grateful relatives of a patient who spent his final days there and died soon after his 90th birthday and said that their comments commending the quality of care, the positive atmosphere, and the dedication of staff summed up the work the Hospice does.

He said: *"We very much appreciate St John's continued support and interest – please continue to support us."*

Other beneficiaries to receive cheques for £850 were the Acorn Centre 'one stop shop' for children at Vale of Leven Hospital, the Mugdock Trust to enhance disabled access at Mugdock Country Park, Milngavie, the Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team, and the Luss-based Loch Lomond Rescue Boat. A further £600 went to the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

St John West Lothian provides custodians for Torphichen Preceptory on Saturdays and Sundays (1pm to 5pm) from April to September as a fundraising exercise.

If anyone is interested in joining the team, please contact Ian Wallace on: **01506 845700** or email: ianwallace.eh49@gmail.com

St John Scotland, St John House, 21 St John Street, Edinburgh EH8 8DG
www.stjohnscotland.org.uk • Tel: **0131 556 8711** • Scottish Charity SC000262

ACTION IN NEW ZEALAND

Following the devastating earthquake in February, St John ambulance officers and volunteers helped to support hundreds of homeless and displaced people at welfare centres in Christchurch and in outlying districts.

St John vehicles were assembled from neighbouring areas and at the height of activity there were twenty-five St John emergency vehicles operational in Christchurch, fourteen emergency ambulances, three rapid response vehicles and eight evacuation vehicles.

In addition, St John volunteers continued to provide Caring Caller – a free phone service offered nationwide to people in distress and in need of a regular telephone call. Volunteers ring at the same time everyday and catch up on clients' news while clients are able to take comfort in the fact there is someone out there interested in them.

“Our ambulance officers and community volunteers are providing care to people in need under very difficult circumstances and operating from temporary locations in the city. People anywhere can donate and help us to rebuild and continue to provide emergency medical care and other community services to Christchurch people,” said Gerry Fitzgerald, St John spokesperson.

Dust and falling debris were predominant hazards so masks and helmets were worn by the volunteers. Maintaining the fleet of vehicles was also a major task.

A new website www.donatechristchurch.co.nz was set up to enable people around the world to donate via the internet and mobile phone and to leave messages of goodwill and support on a community notice board.



TRIBUTE TO SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE

Left
Lord Wilson of Tillyorn KT GCMG KStJ, the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who gave a reception in May at the Palace of Holyroodhouse as a tribute to the mountain rescue teams of Scotland

Below
Guests from St John Scotland at the reception

[Photo credit: Antonia Reeve]



PIONEERING ABERDEEN

The latest milestone in the long relationship between the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland and St John Scotland is the provision of a new trailer. Designed to store training equipment, the trailer is taken around the country to support the delivery of Technical Rigging (ropework) courses to its volunteer teams; When not on the road, it will be used for storage and a drying room for the gear.



The roots of the relationship between St John and mountain rescue can be traced back many years to Aberdeen. Local man, Fenton Wyness, was a lifetime lover of the Cairngorms and a member of Chapter in the 1960s. Fenton foresaw a role for St John in supporting local mountain rescue based in

Aberdeen. Another local activist was Bill Marshall, then running the Aberdeen Adventure Club for youngsters aged 17–19. He and some dozen lads had established a lead when taking part in two early pioneer rescues, one of them on Lochnagar.

A move by John Mutch, secretary of St John in Aberdeen, led to a meeting in 1962 of Bill and John with Sir Andrew Murray, then Chancellor of the Order. Over dinner in Aberdeen, Bill sketched out on the back of the dinner menu an outline of organisation for mountain rescue. Sir Andrew returned to Edinburgh enthusiastic at the Aberdeen proposals; Bill spoke to informal mountain groups in Fort William, Aviemore, Assynt and Glencoe; while John engaged the continuing support of Cecil Murray of the youth education department of Aberdeen Corporation, and that of Tom Chasser, Chief Constable of Scottish North-Eastern Counties Constabulary.

The outcome was the formation of Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Association in 1964 and the use of a cramped garage in the grounds of the then St John Nursing Home in Albyn Place. St John Scotland replaced this with a purpose-built base in 1998.

Today the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland, the representative and liaison organisation for mountain rescue services in Scotland of which the Aberdeen team is a member, has a total of twenty-seven civilian voluntary organisations.

St John Scotland has contributed over £3million towards bases, vehicles and training over the last thirteen years.

Adapted from an article by **Gordon Casely**