

**DONATE TO  
OUR COVID  
RECOVERY  
APPEAL ON  
PAGE 4**

Tear off the donation form at the back  
of this newsletter or online at  
[stjohnseyehospital.org/covidrecovery](https://stjohnseyehospital.org/covidrecovery)

*Donor in focus:* The Knights Templar  
Our 6 funding priorities



St John of Jerusalem  
Eye Hospital Group

# JERUSALEM SCENE

Winter 2020  
Treatment for all regardless of  
ethnicity, religion, or ability to pay



Your support  
has never been  
more vital

**COVID-19 RECOVERY APPEAL ON PAGE 4**

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19



## Saving sight in the Holy Land

I hope this issue of Jerusalem Scene finds you and your loved ones safe and well. In less than a year the entire world has changed. We are all experiencing a new normal on a personal and global level, but despite all the challenges this pandemic has created it has also reminded us of how the Eye Hospital is most beloved in the St John family.

The COVID-19 pandemic has primarily affected the Eye Hospital's finances. As the only charitable Eye Hospital in the region we rely heavily on our supporters who enable us to provide sight saving surgeries and treatments to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged patients. We have also worked tirelessly to lessen the burden placed upon our supporters by raising funds ourselves by increasing our treatment to those patients who can afford to pay. Any monies generated

by our medical intervention is put right back into our charitable work, and we are proud that 92p of every pound raised goes directly to our life-changing work.

When Israel and the Palestinian territories issued a state of emergency in March this year, a regional lockdown began and we were unable to receive patients, with the exception of emergency cases. As a result, our East Jerusalem hospital and West Bank clinics worked at a capacity of 30% and 20% respectively. Our Gaza hospital had been reduced to function at 50%. In June we were delighted to resume working at a 100% capacity once the lockdown had eased, however, sadly this did not last long. As the second surge in infections began, we were unable to treat all those who needed us, and once again we had to reduce our capacity. Of most concern is Gaza, which as of August has seen a spike in COVID-19

cases, resulting in a lockdown. Despite only three hours of electricity a day and the lack of fuel transported to Gaza, the hospital was still treating patients and working at nearly 100% capacity. Unfortunately, the local lockdown has meant we can no longer see patients except for emergency cases. Our primary concern is the well-being and health of the people of Gaza who live in unique circumstances. We hope the lockdown will be effective and cease the spread within Gaza, as the alternative will be devastating.

In recent months the political situation has added to the uncertainty bringing additional challenges to our finances and the communities we serve as the relationship with Israel and the Palestinian Authority becomes more strained. We hope that next year will bring some calm to the region and ultimately local people who need our help can access it with relative ease.

The pandemic has also meant we have a significant backlog of patients who need our help, and for many a delay or missed opportunity for our intervention will result in permanent damage to their vision. Thank you to all our supporters who have helped us during this most challenging year in the Eye Hospital's recent history. With your support and good wishes we can continue to save sight and continue to bring hope to the people in the Holy Land.



Our talented young trainee  
Dr Hisham (far left).



Dr Khalil Deeb, Consultant Anaesthetist, and Dr Maged Abu Ramadan, Consultant Surgeon and Trustee, SJEHG, are preparing a young child to undergo surgery to raise a droopy eyelid.



On the way to our Gaza Hospital with Professor Lyndon da Cruz (far left), a specialist vitreo-retinal surgeon from Moorfields, London.

## COVID-19 Your support makes all of the difference

The COVID-19 pandemic – caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV - 2) – presents an unprecedented public health challenge. The profound effects of this variant of Coronavirus have been acutely felt in all countries, including Israel where a second 'lock-down' has been imposed at the time of writing.

Whilst the immediate risks of delayed treatment of eye conditions can include irreversible sight loss, the delayed effects of a six-month bottleneck on services are more profound. Social distancing within hospitals and staggered outpatient and surgical times reduce the patient 'footprint' in hospital, but also delay the delivery of care, this often compounded by pre-surgical antigen testing. Less appreciated is the longer-term ability of the medical and nursing professions to train their staff in an environment with reduced patient contact but with a pressing need to deliver services as swiftly as possible.

Ophthalmologists and anaesthetists are exposed to higher (and more frequent) viral loads, and consequently ophthalmic services have been particularly affected. The St. John Eye Hospital Group has not been spared, but has assiduously adhered to regional regulations to protect our

staff and patients. The Group has fared better than many in Western Europe, with a loss of outpatient capacity of only a fifth (with a much smaller surgical contracture) over the period January to July 2020 compared to the previous year. Mercifully, our services in Gaza have been relatively unaffected, presumably due to its isolated position in the region, and the use of our second theatre during this period. Whether this situation will change is cause for concern, and there has been a concerted effort by IMET 2000 and other NGOs to get ventilators into Gaza and train local authorities in the management of COVID. 2

Our staff have responded to this unprecedented threat with remarkable courage and efficiency, but they need our financial and moral support now more than ever before. Necessary restrictions in working patterns, and, in some cases, salaries, inevitably affect their training and morale, and it is only due to their constant dedication that the Group has continued to provide sight-saving care.

To the extent that each of us are able, and recognizing the immense pressures facing all of our Priorities in maintaining their humanitarian services, **please continue to support the Eye Hospital Group** as generously as you can. As a doctor and a surgical trainer myself, I appreciate firsthand these pressures, and I also appreciate the value of your support as we strive against the odds to care for Palestinian men, women and children across East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank.

I finish with a note of thanks to our nurses, doctors, allied health professionals and administrators across SJEHG for the exemplary service they provide in such difficult times. Thank you to you All.

**Dr David H Verity, MD MA FRCOphth**



# POST COVID-19 RECOVERY APPEAL

The access to eye care in the region has been drastically affected by COVID-19. Help us raise £500,000.

**T**he situation here is extremely challenging. Can you imagine needing treatment for degenerating sight but unable to access it? This has been the reality facing our patients in the Palestinian territories since March 2020. Many suffer from eye conditions that require urgent treatment or risk the prospect of permanent sight loss. Due to the first lockdown, **18,000 patients have missed out on appointments and 1,200 major sight-saving surgeries have been cancelled. These people need your help like never before.**

"As restrictions are lifted, we are facing a race against time to deliver the eye care the Palestinian population relies on us for," says Dr. Bashar Jaber, Consultant Oculoplasty Specialist at the Eye Hospital in East Jerusalem. "We put ourselves at risk of COVID -19 infection every day. We are the only thing standing between them and permanent sight loss."

**A £1.5M DEFICIT IN 2020  
AND A GROWING FUNDING GAP**

There is another facet to this reduction in treatment. The funds received from patients and their insurers directly subsidizes vulnerable patients who cannot afford our life-changing treatments. We **have lost over £1.5m worth of much needed patient-income.** "We reduced our deficit significantly by having our workforce take unpaid leave in May of this year as well as implementing significant reductions in expenditure," says Finance Director Peter Khoury. We are still facing a **deficit of at least another £1.5million.** "This is not a sustainable long-term scenario - particularly as we prioritise our high-risk patients."

**£20  
COULD BUY  
4  
BOTTLES OF  
EYE DROPS**

**£2000  
WOULD PAY  
FOR A SET  
OF LENSES  
TO EXAMINE  
CHILDREN IN  
THE PEDIATRIC  
CLINIC OR A  
SPECIALIST  
PATIENT  
EXAMINATION  
STRETCHER IN  
OUR DIABETIC  
RETINOPATHY  
TREATMENT  
ROOM.**

**The potential second national lockdown in the region will increase our deficit for 2020.** Additionally, accessing patient insurance contributions from the Palestinian Ministry of Health has not been possible due to the twin factors of COVID-19 and the heightened political situation. With no immediate sign of change in sight, the Eye Hospital needs urgent funding to enable us to reach vulnerable patients like never before.

**YOUR SUPPORT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE VITAL**

More than 60% of our patients are from the most vulnerable groups of Palestinian society, including refugees who cannot meet the costs of treatment themselves. With our iron-clad commitment to never turn away vulnerable patients who need our help, we turn to you, our loyal supporters, to help us raise vital funds between now and the end of this year. It's an immense task, but we want to **raise a total of £500,000** to offset an anticipated £1.8 million deficit. Can you help?

By donating today, you will ensure our most urgent operational needs are funded, such as staff sponsorship, procurement of crucial medicines and medical supplies, and covering the cost of surgeries for our patients. Your donation will **enable us to continue treating patients regardless of ethnicity, religion or ability to pay.**

**WITH YOUR SUPPORT ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE**

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our supporters around the world who have already sent their good wishes and donations towards our life-changing work. We hope



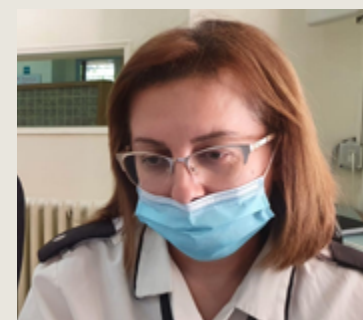
that reaching out to you today will help cover the funding gap and reach more patients in the coming months. We desperately don't want to turn any patient away in these challenging times. We also want to protect our staff and keep them employed during a time of both political change and uncertainty. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for being so generous and sharing kindness at a time when it is needed more than ever.

Any support, big or small, will make a massive difference to everyone benefiting from our life saving work. Thank you.

**PLEASE SUPPORT  
OUR HOSPITAL STAFF  
BY HELPING OFFSET  
THE DEFICIT**

PHONE: +44 (0)20 7253 2582  
VISIT: [HTTPS://STJOHNEYEHOSPITAL.ORG/DONATE-NOW/](https://stjohnseyehospital.org/donate-now/)  
OR USE THE FORM ON THE BACK

**£15,000  
OR GREATER WOULD  
CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS  
A NURSE SALARY FOR A  
YEAR OR BUY ESSENTIAL  
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**



**£100  
WOULD FUND LASER  
TREATMENT FOR  
DIABETIC RETINOPATHY  
OR 1 BOX OF TEPHINES  
& PUNCHES,  
OPHTHALMIC SURGICAL  
INSTRUMENTS NEEDED  
TO PERFORM CORNEAL  
GRAPHS, CORNEAL  
TRANSPLANTS AND  
GLAUCOMA SURGERY.**



**£200  
WOULD BUY  
4**

**PHACO PACKS, WHICH  
ARE NECESSARY IN  
CATARACT OPERATIONS**

**£15  
COULD BUY 3  
BOTTLES OF POST  
OPERATIONAL DROPS**



**£50  
COULD BUY  
9  
BOTTLES OF  
LENSECTOMY**





"The hospital is my second home"

Staff case study  
Marlene I.B. Katanasho,  
Muristan's In-Charge Nurse  
Ophthalmic Nurse  
Practitioner

Born and raised in Jerusalem, Marlene joined St John Eye Hospital Group back in 1992 right after high school. Her interest and commitment to helping those visually impaired started in her childhood when she often helped her blind neighbour. She completed her studies in 1994 and is now the charge nurse at the Muristan Clinic in the Old City. Marlene is responsible for the admission and pre-assessment area, where they receive patients who will undergo surgeries. She liaises with the admissions doctor, surgeon, and anaesthetist regarding any issues concerning the patients' health checks. She enjoys being this first point of contact for the patients and excels in a job that requires both

leadership skills, as well as good teamwork. When the Covid-19 lockdown forced the closure of the Muristan clinic Marlene found herself on a two-month unpaid leave. It was a time of great anxiety, filled with worries about the health of loved ones, but isolation as well. For someone used to the hectic life of a clinic, often admitting patients as early as 7am, having to spend two months shielding at home, proved taxing. She passed her time staying up to the date with news and keeping in touch with friends and family through social media. Even Easter was celebrated mostly online, streaming masses, rather than attending them in person. Marlene cares deeply for St John Eye Hospital and thinks of it as her second home, so she always worries about its future, especially during these difficult times. She was warmed by the support it received from the St John family and supporters, as well as how much staff helped each other in that time. From that trying period Marlene will remember one patient in particular, a woman from Jordan, who was unable to go home due to lockdown and needed urgent treatment for diabetic retinopathy, but since she wasn't local she wasn't covered by health insurance. The staff managed to bring her in for treatment and it was covered by a special fund made available by generous donations. Seeing her happily recovering was one of the highlights of the last few trying months for Marlene.

*I'm always warmed by the support we receive from our supporters.*

MARLENE I.B. KATANASHO



SAVING SIGHT  
DURING THE PANDEMIC

Patient case study  
Najah Abed AL  
Fattah Muhisin

Najah is a 63-year-old widow who lives alone, as her 11 children are all married and living in their marital homes. Najah is a brave woman who continues to endure numerous health problems, such as diabetes, hypertension and has undergone a mastectomy due to breast cancer. Despite these challenges she stays independent and supports herself by working as a dressmaker. She was referred for phacoemulsification surgery for her cataracts, but the Covid-19 lockdown meant there were significant delays in her receiving the treatment, while her condition worsened. During the lockdown Najah lost her

income and like so many others, felt isolated. Her vision deteriorated affecting her ability to perform basic daily activities and work. Her family was only able to visit sporadically which meant she spent most of that time alone at home. Public transport was not fully operational, and she had to resort to hiring expensive taxis if she needed to get around. Her loneliness, together with a precarious financial situation as well as worsening health problems made her feel depressed. She was on the verge of losing her sight as the lockdown made travelling from the countryside to the city impossible. Luckily, once the lockdown eased the Eye Hospital was able and eager to treat Najah before any permanent loss of vision occurred. Najah is now enjoying improved vision again. She said she is grateful to St John Eye Hospital for saving her eyesight and thus saving her independence and livelihood as a dressmaker. It was thanks to the team at the hospital that she was made aware of the possible treatment for her cataracts, which she didn't know existed prior to her consultation. Furthermore, without the charitable subsidy towards Najah's treatment she would be unable to afford this costly surgery on her humble income. Despite the pandemic, Najah says she felt safe and well taken care of at the hospital, because of all the precautionary measures that were introduced on account of Covid-19, in addition to our warm and caring staff.

*Without SJEH and the funds it has available I would've lost my sight and I wouldn't be able to take care of myself and live independently.*

NAJAH, CATARACTS PATIENT





**Staff case study**  
**Dr Bashar Jaber,**  
**Junior Consultant**  
**Oculoplasty specialist**

**D**r Jaber initially joined St John Eye Hospital Group in 2006 where he did his four-year residency programme, during which he developed a special interest in oculoplasty – a branch of ophthalmology that focuses on the structures around the eye, particularly the eyelids, the tear drainage, secretion system and the orbit. As there weren't any local specialists in the field, he did his fellowship in Hyderabad, India. He returned to St John Eye Hospital group in 2013 and is now the only fully-trained specialist in oculoplasty in West Bank and Gaza.

What Dr Jaber enjoys the most about his job is that the effects are immediately visible to both the patient and the doctor. Many of his surgeries are cosmetic, but some are life-saving when they deal with diagnosing and treating cancer.

He would normally spend his days consulting and operating on patients suffering from various problems from droopy eyelids or sticky eyes to those with tumours or needing surgeries to fit an artificial eye. The COVID-19 lockdown made this impossible, as like many of his

colleagues he had to take one month of unpaid leave during the first stage of the lockdown. His wife, an IT manager, worked from home and they both home-schooled their three children while their schools were closed.

After that first month, he gradually returned to work. He would often take alternative routes to the hospital due to local closures. Even though he took full precautions, he worried about exposing his family or his patients to the virus. This, together with the financial pressures caused by the lockdown made it a very stressful period for him and his family, although he tried to stay in good spirits. Ramadan felt very different in the lockdown and the family tradition of having Iftar with their extended family had to be foregone, as travelling bans made visiting his and his wife's parents impossible.

He recalls one particular case which had an impact on him during the COVID-19 lockdown. It was a seven-year-old boy who was referred to the hospital due to protrusion of his left eye. After looking at pictures and CT scans Dr Jaber suspected a malignant tumour, but it took a week before he was able to see the little patient, as his family had trouble getting to the hospital from Hebron. Luckily, there is a happy ending to this story. The boy had the surgery, followed by two courses of chemotherapy and his condition has improved drastically.

His main worry now is the second wave of the disease, the rapidly increasing number of infected people and what it might mean for the hospital; its staff and its patients. He is happy that the hospital has introduced a variety of tools and procedures to limit the risk of transmission, which made the staff feel safer in the knowledge that they can protect themselves, their colleagues and their patients as much as possible.



**Staff case study**  
**Sylvia Kirry,**  
**Admission and**  
**discharge coordinator**

**S**ylvia was born in Jerusalem but moved to the United States where she met her husband and got married. Whilst in the United States, Sylvia worked in a bank, where she gained valuable administrative experience. Sylvia and her family returned to Jerusalem in 1985, and she joined the team in St John Eye Hospital and has been working there ever since.

Sylvia is an all-round administrative hero, dealing with patient entry and exit transactions, following all types of health insurance (Palestinian, Israeli and international) to establish the cover limit, and helping patients who have been denied entry to Jerusalem. She is also the first contact with the Palestinian Ministry of Health, who update her on all matters concerning referrals. Sylvia offers support to the Gaza, Anabta and Hebron branches of the Eye Hospital. She does it all and more with an admirable efficiency and accuracy.

Since she is a very social person,

who loves visiting her siblings and their families, the lockdown felt like being put on house arrest. Sylvia felt anxious about the future and worried about her elderly sister whom she lives with who has a heart condition. She was also worried about her friends back in the States, some of whom became infected with Coronavirus.

Like other members of staff, Sylvia had to take two months unpaid leave. Luckily as a Jerusalemite the Israeli national insurance covered 65% of her lost income. Despite this support the unpaid leave still made for a difficult situation as Sylvia is the main breadwinner in the household.

As a long-standing member of staff committed to our patients, Sylvia felt sorry for all the people that missed their treatments or had them delayed. While she is worried about what the second wave of Covid-19 might bring, she has the full confidence in the management and the team to see the hospital through this difficult situation. She believes it's an institution that has built resilience over the decades and will withstand this crisis.

During the lockdown, Sylvia feels her most memorable achievement was securing treatment for an emergency trauma patient in the West Bank whom she arranged to pick up in a Red Crescent ambulance from the Ziyam check post. Successful events like this is what makes working for St John Eye Hospital so rewarding.

*I'm confident that the hospital management team will see us through this crisis as it has done with the crises in the past.*

**SYLIA KIRRY**



# HOW WE FUND OUR WORK

## OUR SIX PRIORITIES

### CHILDREN

For many eye conditions it is critical that we treat children before they reach the age of 7. If left untreated many conditions can cause permanent blindness. Blindness in Palestinian children means a lifetime of social isolation, no access to education, and the constant need to depend on their families for support and their livelihood.

Approximately 30% of our patients are children under the age of 18 years. We screen children throughout the region and our two paediatric specialists, and their teams provide a critical service to a population of over 2 million children.

In 2019 St John Eye Hospital treated over 16,000 children and conducted over 500 major surgeries. We need to raise £700,000 to fund our work with Children for 2020.

Funding our Children's services means we can expand our provision of screening, treatments and paediatric surgeries.

### OUTREACH

Our outreach work provides essential sight-saving and life-changing eye care to the most remote and impoverished communities in the region and including our clinics serve a total population of nearly 2.5 million people for free. By protecting sight, we are safeguarding the financial and social independence of people of all ages across the West Bank and Gaza.

The West Bank Mobile Outreach Programme includes 2 vans and costs £500,000/year to operate.

### STAFF SPONSORSHIP

Staff with specialist skill in Ophthalmology are in short supply in the Palestinian territories. Our staff are part of the wider communities that we serve and as a top employer in these communities we create stability, economic growth, and opportunity. Our staff and their families rely on the generosity of our supporters to keep their livelihood. As an Eye Hospital our staff range from cleaners, doctors, guards, nurses, to administrators. All are essential to our work and helping us reach patients most in need. The total annual cost for all our staff is £8.8 million, 5 million of this pays for our medical staff while the remainder pays for support staff.

Learning and professional development is key to

APPROXIMATELY  
**30%**  
OF OUR PATIENTS  
ARE CHILDREN  
UNDER THE AGE  
OF 18 YEARS

WE NEED TO RAISE  
**£700,000**  
TO FUND OUR  
WORK WITH  
CHILDREN THIS  
YEAR

*Staff with specialist skill in  
Ophthalmology are in short supply  
in the Palestinian territories.*

TWO VANS COST OVER  
**£500,000**  
PER YEAR TO  
OPERATE.

**£5MILLION**  
PAYS FOR OUR  
MEDICAL STAFF

maximising impact across all our services. We work closely with several hospitals and institutions in Israel and the UK and benefit from a cross-cultural exchange of skills and ideas which enhances our learning and teaching.

We are proud to have 273 total staff across the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group.

### PATIENT RELIEF

Palestinians are 10 times more likely to go blind than in the west. Access to eye care, poverty, and genetics all play factors in increasing the likelihood of preventable blindness in this group. Sadly 80% of blindness in this region is curable but most will not have access to eye care. We provide subsidies for refugees, marginalised people and those who cannot afford to pay the full cost of treatment. In 2019 we treated over 130,000 people. There is continual high demand for all our services and donations help us increase access to care for those who need it most.

In 2019 we reached almost 136,658 patients and performed over 5734 major surgeries.

### MEDICAL SUPPLIES

The continuous supply of medicine and disposables is essential to our work. From eye drops to surgical equipment our disposables and equipment continuously need replenishing and repairing.

Without these essential resources our work would come to a halt. Our medical supplies are one of our highest priorities and we continuously need funding to purchase necessary supplies and equipment.

It would cost £3.4 million to replace and purchase all our medical equipment needs.

SADLY  
**80%**  
OF BLINDNESS IN THIS  
REGION IS CURABLE

IN 2019 WE REACHED  
**136,658**  
PATIENTS AND  
PERFORMED  
**5734**  
MAJOR SURGERIES

### HERITAGE

We have been operating for nearly 140 years and are still the only charitable provider of eye care for Palestinians. Our Muristan Clinic stands on the original site of the eye hospital in Jerusalem. This particular part of the city has deep rooted historic significance as it is the area where the Christian, Jewish and Muslim quarters of the Old City meet. A such the clinic serves all the residents of the Old City providing walk-in access to eye care which can be crucial in saving sight.

The clinic's Peace Garden provides an oasis for patients and staff who need some respite from the bustling city. We hope that in time we can open the Peace Garden's to tourists to learn more about our life changing work in the Holy Land.

Our Jerusalem Hospital and Muristan Clinics are historic stone buildings with beautiful gardens that require preserving and maintaining to ensure we can keep our staff and patients safe.

For 2020 we need to raise £2,000,000 for our Jerusalem Hospital facilities.



FOR 2020, WE  
NEED TO RAISE  
**£2MILLION**  
FOR OUR JERUSALEM  
HOSPITAL FACILITIES





# Donor in Focus: The Knights Templar in England and Wales

For over a century, Members of the masonic Order of Knights Templar, (or "KT" as the organisation is affectionately known) in England and Wales, as well as some overseas branches, have chosen to make the Eye Hospital Group their chosen charity. The full title of the Order is "The Great Priory of The United Religious, Military and Masonic Orders of The Temple and of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta of England and Wales and its Provinces Overseas". Based on the Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller, modern masonic association with those medieval defenders of the Christian Holy places is linked by the Ceremony of Installation in which the candidate takes the part of a Pilgrim who, by symbolically embarking on a Crusade, is elevated to Knighthood. Subsequently, the Malta Degree is conferred on candidates who have already been Installed as Knights Templar and the ceremony is based on the movement of the Knights Hospitaller from their inception in Jerusalem, to their settling on the Island of Malta in 1522 (having travelled via Palestine and Rhodes). Generations of Knights have provided support to the Eye Hospital Group and its staff and are proud of their contribution to the Group's work.

With exception to the Order of St John, the Knights Templar are our longest continuous donor. This remarkable relationship began during the first World War, when the original Eye Hospital was closed by the Turkish Army. The Eye Hospital was severely damaged and needed a considerable amount of money to reopen its doors. The Knights Templar were already committed supporters to the hospital and chose to generously become major donors to re-establish our most beloved Eye Hospital. We, in no small part, owe our continued existence to donors such as the Knights Templar who support us through various fund-raising initiatives. Thank you on behalf of all of those you have helped through supporting us. What an incredible legacy to change millions of lives through our sight saving work across two centuries.

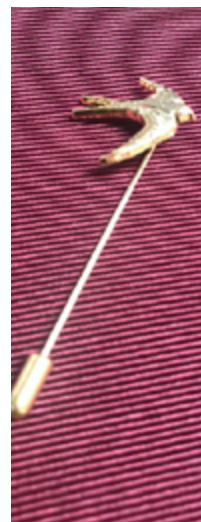
In addition to their recent funding for the newly refurbished Paediatric Ward and the Refractive Laser Surgery Suite, the Knights Templar have generously pledged to support our Mobile Outreach Programme for the next three years. This programme allows the Eye Hospital to reach the most remote areas of the West Bank and ensure we can follow up on patients within a year to monitor their treatment. In light of the pandemic, this will secure our work to the increased number of patients who can no longer travel outside the West Bank and the backlog of



Helping fund the Outreach programme



KT group visit with our CEO Dr Ahmad Ma'ali (3rd from right), Jan 2020.



patients our Outreach Programme is now experiencing.

Generations of Brother Knights have provided support to the Eye Hospital and we are eternally grateful for their deep sense of commitment to the hospital, its staff and life-changing work. Thanks to the Knights Templar the Eye Hospital can continue to make a real difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable inhabitants of the Holy Land.

As is their kind way, the Knights Templar continue to raise funds for the Eye Hospital in addition to their generous annual donation. This year's appeal is one that needs special mention. The £20 for 2020 Campaign in aid of the Eye Hospital has a specially made Swift pin badge (photo) which is gifted to the donor who gives £20 or more towards this appeal. Don't miss this rare opportunity to get this beautiful pin badge in this year of vision, 2020!

**To donate, please visit: <http://everydayhero.co.uk/event/KT2042020>**

## MY VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

**JANET COLEMAN-BELIN**



Everyone working at St. John Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG) – doctors, nurses, guards, drivers, cleaners, cooks, HR, accountants, administration and many more, are well-trained and do their jobs professionally and skilfully. They seem to genuinely enjoy their work. There is laughter, shared breakfast breaks, salted tomatoes, chopped cucumbers and hummus drizzled artfully with olive oil. There is an immense sense of family and everyone's role is considered vital to the success of the hospital. I was immediately welcomed to the St. John family.

During my rotation at the in-patient wards, I became friends with two adorable schoolgirls slated for squint surgery. One of them grabbed my hand as she headed down to the operating theatre. I was permitted to secure sterile outfitting, lead her to the theatre and introduce her to the surgeon. I held her hand as she fell asleep and observed the procedure.

I was by her side when she awoke and later joined her and her mother upstairs in the ward. Her mother uploaded a pre-operation picture on social media, saying that she almost cried when she discovered someone was with her daughter throughout the surgery. She thanked me profusely for following her daughter through the whole process. It was truly an honour, and wouldn't have been possible without the amazing SJEHG staff who prioritize each patient's overall wellness.

As I rotated through the Outpatient Department, Outreach Department, Operating Theatre, In-patient Wards and the clinics in Anabta, Hebron, and Muristan; I truly felt at home. I had some wonderful experiences, including teaming up with Orthoptist Younis to write a research paper, witnessing Jerusalem through the eyes of nursing staff, hearing Dr. Iyad's daughter perform Tchaikovsky with the Palestinian Youth Orchestra and enjoying dinner with renowned oculoplastic surgeons Dr. Richard Collins and SJEHG Hospitaller Dr. David Verity. I was then seen off to the airport on my last night by Nurse Nadia and her children who drove to the hospital specifically to say goodbye.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to volunteer at St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group, and I can't wait to return. Thank you all for a phenomenal experience. I hope to be back soon!



## THANK YOU

*On behalf of the team at SJEHG we would like to thank Janet for her kind words and working alongside us in the Holy Land. We would also like to make special mention of Dr Anne Coleman, Janet's mother, who has been a Trustee and advocate to the St John Eye Hospital Group since June 2014.*



# THANK YOU FROM THE GUILD

*The Guild has organised a wonderful array of events and occasions to support the Eye Hospital.*

**M**any Guild Members and Associates began 2019 with a chance to brush up on their First Aid skills with St. John Ambulance's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Margaret Austin. This was followed by a sparkling Summer Soirée held in the beautiful offices of Sarasin and Partners overlooking St Paul's Cathedral, kindly hosted by Sarasin for which the Guild is most grateful.

The Guild and Eye Hospital supporters enjoyed a conducted tour of Colesbourne Park, to see Britain's largest Snowdrop Garden, by kind permission of Sir Henry and Lady Elwes in February of 2019. The tour was organised by Lady Corinna Hamilton of Dalzell DL, Guild Member.

In October, the Guild was honoured that The Right Reverend Richard Chartres, former Bishop of London, gave an enthralling address at our annual Brompton Oratory Lecture. A highlight of 2019 was a tour of Crosby Hall by kind permission of Dr Christopher Moran. A tour of the Hall, which

is not normally open to the public, was a fascinating experience for all attendees. This was followed by afternoon tea at the home of our longest-standing Guild Member Lady Ursula Westbury. To top off the year, the Gift of Sight Fair 2019 was another roaring success.

We are grateful to all involved for making these events possible and to our attendees. Together we raised £73,000 in 2019 to support the St John Eye Hospital Mobile Outreach Programme. Thank you to all hosts, sponsors and supporters.

## NOT EVEN A PANDEMIC HAS STOPPED THE GUILD TEAM FUNDRAISING IN 2020

Although quite a transition, the Guild went fully digital with events this year, with a series of on-line talks from some incredible guest speakers.

We hosted celebrated film-makers Carlo Nero and Vanessa Redgrave, who produced an award-winning documentary of the Eye Hospital's work, Eyes of St John,

in 2015. This was followed by a fascinating talk from broadcaster Jon Snow, who had visited the Eye Hospital in Gaza in 2014.

Guild supporters also heard from two Eye Hospital stalwarts - Ahmad Ma'ali, the first Palestinian to take on the role of CEO and Denise Magauran, former Chief Medical Officer of the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. These talks can be viewed on the St John Eye Hospital YouTube channel and on the Eye Hospital website [www.stjohnseyehospital.org/guild/events](http://www.stjohnseyehospital.org/guild/events).

A consequence of these 'virtual' events has been that the Guild guestlist, which is generally limited to London and surrounding areas, has gone truly global! We would like to express our gratitude to all who have kindly adapted and joined us online from the US to Jerusalem, from Sao Paulo to Australia and beyond.

Finally in September, award winning artist Arabella Dorman hosted an online talk about her journey as a war artist across the Middle East. All proceeds went towards the Mobile Outreach work of the hospital.



Below is a Guild event to which you are warmly invited. Please also note the Gift of Sight 2020 Online Silent Auction and Fair invitation and raffle tickets which are enclosed within this issue of Jerusalem Scene.

## GIFT OF SIGHT 2020 - ONLINE FAIR, AUCTION AND RAFFLE 2ND-15TH NOVEMBER 2020



The Guild is bringing its very popular annual Gift Fair on-line! Please do 'pop-in' to the Fair at [www.brilliantlittlebrands.com/giftofsight](http://www.brilliantlittlebrands.com/giftofsight) at any time between 2nd and 15th November. All your favourite stalls plus many more will be on-line and a percentage of all sales will go directly to the Eye Hospital.

The Guild is holding an online Auction alongside our Fair, 2nd to 15th November.

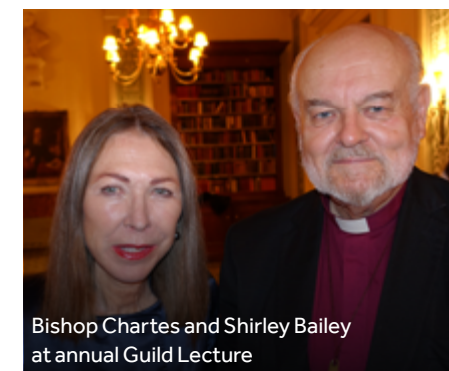
Please join us at [www.givegy.uk/stjohnnauction](http://www.givegy.uk/stjohnnauction) where you will find a fabulous selection of donated auction lots as well as the opportunity to sponsor projects for the Eye Hospital including the Mobile Outreach Programme.

You can enjoy Christmas shopping and support the Hospital from the comfort of your armchair.

For more information on Guild events go to [www.stjohnseyehospital.org/guild/events](http://www.stjohnseyehospital.org/guild/events)



(Left to right) Guild members Julia Corkey and Ursula Westbury with Guild volunteer Lizzie Grumbach at Sarasin, London



Bishop Chartres and Shirley Bailey at annual Guild Lecture



Enjoying Colesbourne Park



Gift of Sight Fair 2019, Della Tamari, Tamari Foundation Fair Sponsor, Guy Morton, Eye Hospital Board Member and Georgie Brooks, Guild Chair



SJEHG Tour of Crosby Hall





# JAMES NASH OBITUARY

Confrères will be sad to hear of the death of James Nash KStJ who died suddenly on 24 August.

Many will remember him from the time he was a member of the Order Ceremonial Staff where, for many years, he was the Order Cross Bearer. He was a keen supporter of both the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem and the St John Fellowship, for a while helping to edit the International Fellowship magazine. On retiring to Somerset he was elected as a member of the St John Council in the County to which he was appointed the County Hospitaller, a post he held until 2008.

After National Service, James joined the Colonial Service, finally moving to the Foreign Office. He held the post of Political Officer in Aden during the troubled final period before it was handed over, following which he spent some time in Cairo. He returned to London to train and take up a career in Commercial Property. He was extremely well-travelled and spoke both Arabic and Turkish.

He was devoted to the Eye Hospital for which he helped to raise large sums of money; especially when he rode a horse from Constantinople to Jerusalem, as well as driving a horse and cart from his home in Somerset to Santiago de Compostela. He wrote books about both journeys donating the proceeds to the Hospital in Jerusalem (copies are in



the St John Somerset archives) and was a prolific poet. He was dedicated to St John, attending many events and often helping in the Hospital Office with mailings. He will be much missed by all of us who knew him and our deepest sympathy goes to his widow Ann and his family.

# FIND US ONLINE

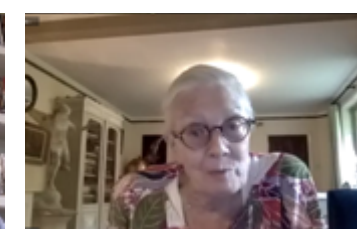


## A BRAND NEW WEBSITE!

Earlier this year we launched our brand-new website! This had given us a chance to present a more user-friendly format where users can clearly explore the work that we do as well as read some of our inspirational case studies. Visit us at <https://stjohneyehospital.org/>

## YOUTUBE

Our YouTube channel is packed with case studies and real-life accounts of patients and staff experiences at the Eye Hospital. Also look out for a Q & A session with 'Eyes of St John' producer Vanessa Redgrave as well as a fascinating account by Jon Snow of his experience as a journalist and advice on how to promote our humanitarian mission in the media. Find us at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbAIKKS2lu\\_ztXAmehvgilA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbAIKKS2lu_ztXAmehvgilA)



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Finally, please like our Facebook page or follow our LinkedIn and Twitter accounts for more great content that includes updates and inspirational stories about the life changing work that your support enables in the holy land.

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohneyehospital/>

<https://twitter.com/stjohneyehosp?lang=en>

## English priory appoints new hospitaller

St John's Day saw the appointment of a successor to Surgeon Captain James Walsh KStJ RN upon completion of his time as Priory Hospitaller for England & The Islands.

Paul Herbage MBE KStJ, a lifelong St John Ambulance volunteer and a regular supporter of the SJEHG took up the role. With over 50 years uniformed service culminating as Deputy Commissioner for London (Prince of Wales's) District until December 2012, from 2013 he has served on the Greater London County Priory Group, and since 2016 as its Chairman.

Paul (67) worked in senior management in the National Health Service for almost

30 years mainly in hospitals around West London. After early retirement he became fully involved in the Civic life of the City of London and had a successful second career as Clerk (CEO) to one of its Livery Companies.

Commenting upon his appointment, Paul said: "This is an exciting opportunity for me, although quite a challenging time to be taking up the role. Covid-19 has, of course, had a huge impact on the financial position of many Priors and their ability to continue to provide their traditional level of support to the SJEHG will be put under very great strain for the foreseeable future.

There is much to be done, however, just promoting the wonderful story of the good work undertaken by staff in Jerusalem and the Palestinian Territories. Even within the family of St John there are many who still only think of there being a single hospital in Jerusalem rather than a Group comprising 3 hospitals, 4 Clinics, and an Outreach Service supported by a first class postgraduate programme through the St John Ophthalmic Association.

With the hospital due to celebrate its 140th anniversary in 2022 there is much to be done informing people of its history. It was pleasing to note that all the articles in the 2020 issue of One St John Historical Journal published by St John International are about the Hospital's rich history.

The principal focus for the next few months will be about re-energising the network of local Hospital Representatives across England's 43 Counties, recruiting new ones where vacancies exist, and ensuring all have access to the most up to date information about the SJEHG so they can go about their vital ambassadorial and fundraising work"







**stjohneyehospital.org**

# TOGETHER WE'RE SAVING SIGHT AND CHANGING LIVES



Make a donation today  
to help thousands of  
people regain their sight.

Email

☐ I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years, to St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all of my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please be assured we will never share, swap or sell your details with another organisation. We may research individuals and organisations on occasion on our database, but this is to better tailor our communications and funding requests. Again, this information will not be shared externally. Consent for all or some forms of communication can be withdrawn at any point. For our full Privacy Policy, please contact the office, or view it on our website.

**stjohnseyehospital.org**

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