

SJEHG's special edition for our Brother Knights of K.T.



**TOGETHER,
WE'RE
SAVING
SIGHT,
CHANGING
LIVES.**



**St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group**

A Thousand Years of Friendship: The Knights Templar and the SJEHG



Bronze Swift Tree in courtyard of SJEHG's Muristan Clinic, June 2024

The relationship between the Knights Templar and the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG) goes back over 100 years, to the early 20th century. Yet legend takes us even further back - in the Middle Ages, the Knights of St John established the first hospice for soldiers and pilgrims in Jerusalem. It is likely that many a Knight passed through the doors of the Hospice of St John, looking for remedy and respite.

The echoes of the Holy Land's past can still be felt in Jerusalem today. It is a place of great sanctity and significance to millions all over the world. You can still pray in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, bask in the gardens of Gethsemane, and bathe in one of the city's many natural springs. However, just like 1,000 years ago, there is great strife, suffering, and an urgent need for medical care.

Today, Palestinians are experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crises imaginable. As the war in Gaza continues and debilitating movement restrictions remain in place across the West Bank, it is easy to feel dismayed and even hopeless. The last 15 months have been some of the most challenging in the Hospital's history. Yet we are rising to this challenge.

In 2024, SJEHG continues to embody the spirit of care initiated by the Knights of St John. Against the current backdrop of war and political uncertainty, we continue to provide expert ophthalmic treatment to over 135,000 patients every year.

Despite the ongoing crisis , we are providing emergency eye care in Gaza (please see page 4) opening a new day hospital in Nablus (page 16), and expanding our services in the West Bank. It is thanks to your support that we continue to provide essential services - restoring sight even in the darkest of times.

It is safe to say that very few friendships share the depth, commitment and history of the Knights Templar and St John of Jerusalem. In 2023, the Knights Templar donated a quarter of a million pounds to support the SJEHG's critical work, saving sight and changing lives. With your support, we opened a new paediatric unit in Jerusalem last year. Members continue to donate to support staff salaries, equipment costs and to our Orthoptic Department.

As we fundraise for our Saving Sight in Gaza Appeal, we feel reassured knowing we have a firm friend in the Knights Templar. We are eternally grateful for your continued dedication to the SJEHG. We simply would not be able to deliver the expert care our patients desperately need without your support. It fills our hearts to know that the Knights Templar, our Brethren of 1000 years, are still by our side today.

Update from the London Office of SJEHG

If you have visited SJEHG's London Office recently, you may have spotted some new faces: we were delighted to welcome Julia Gilmore as our new Senior PR Officer (Fundraising) in October, and Saba Omran as Fundraising Officer in December. They both look forward to working closely with the K.T. and helping to strengthen the close bond between the K.T. and the Eye Hospital!



Julia (left) and Saba (right) in the SJEHG London Office



Gaza Emergency Appeal

The Israel-Hamas conflict has caused an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Some 43,000 people are reported to have been killed and more than 100,000 have been injured. It has also been reported that around 500 healthcare workers have been killed during the conflict.

As a result of the land incursion on Rafah City, the border crossing has remained closed for the past 5 months which has resulted in a worsening humanitarian situation due to severe shortages of food and medical supplies.

We have continued phases 01 and 02 of our medical intervention plans at 06 locations in the south, middle and north of the Gaza Strip. Since the launch of this initiative in late April, our staff in Gaza have tirelessly been working to screen patients, dress wounds, and provide essential treatment, delivering care to over 25,000 people, approximately 25% of whom are children.

We are currently in phase 02 of our 03 - phase emergency response plan in Gaza focussing on the treatment of Diabetic Retinopathy – the leading cause of blindness in Gaza. This condition affects 15% of Gaza's population, and of the patients we've treated so far, 25% have been diagnosed with this condition.

As for our staff, most are residing in Rafah and Deir El Balah (south of the Gaza Strip) and remain unharmed. 05 of our staff remain in Egypt and it is unlikely they will be able to come back to Gaza unless there is a proper and long-lasting ceasefire. Due to the increased workload, 24 staff members have been engaged in the medical response on both part- and full-time basis.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to reestablishing permanent services and developing infrastructure to support long-term patient care, surgeries, rehabilitation, and follow-up services.

Quantifying the financial need for Gaza remains a challenge. Initial estimates suggest £6m (see infographic on next page) but the widespread destruction means it could take decades and significantly more resources to rebuild Gaza fully.

With your support, we can save sight and change lives in Gaza. Please consider supporting this appeal as we aim to rebuild lives shattered by war, by restoring vision. After all, it is hard to look to a future when you cannot see.



Awaiting treatment in Khan Younis refugee camp



A BEACON OF HOPE

Rebuilding Gaza's shattered healthcare system



**St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group**



PHASE 1:

3 - 6 months

Mobile screening and primary eye care treatment

- Location: Nuseirat Camp, Rafah and Deir al Balah
- Partners: UNRWA, UK Meds, Palestinian Red Crescent Society
- Eye care needs assessment

Cost £530,000

**Gaza
Hospital**

**Nuseirat
Camp**

**Deir
al Balah**

Rafah

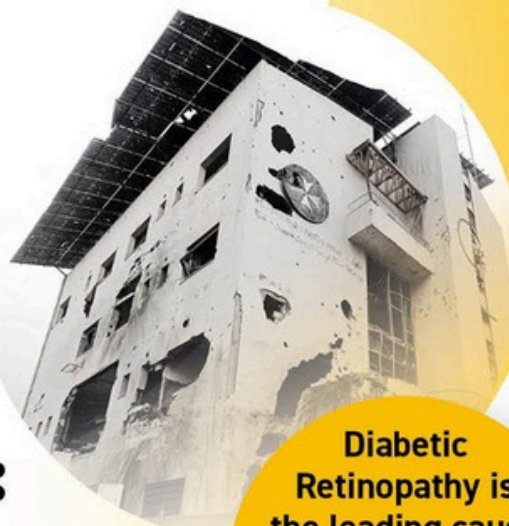
PHASE 2:

6 - 9 months

High-impact medical intervention focusing on treatment of diabetic retinopathy and preventable blindness

- Semi-static venues
- Partners: PRCS and International Medical Corps

Cost £495,000



PHASE 3:

12 months

Rehabilitation of SJHEG hospital and provision of surgical services

- Establish new supply chain
- Partners: Tilganga Institute of Ophthalmology, Nepal
- Obtain JCI accreditation standards

Cost £4.7million

**Diabetic
Retinopathy is
the leading cause
of blindness in Gaza**

**15% of Gazans
have diabetes**

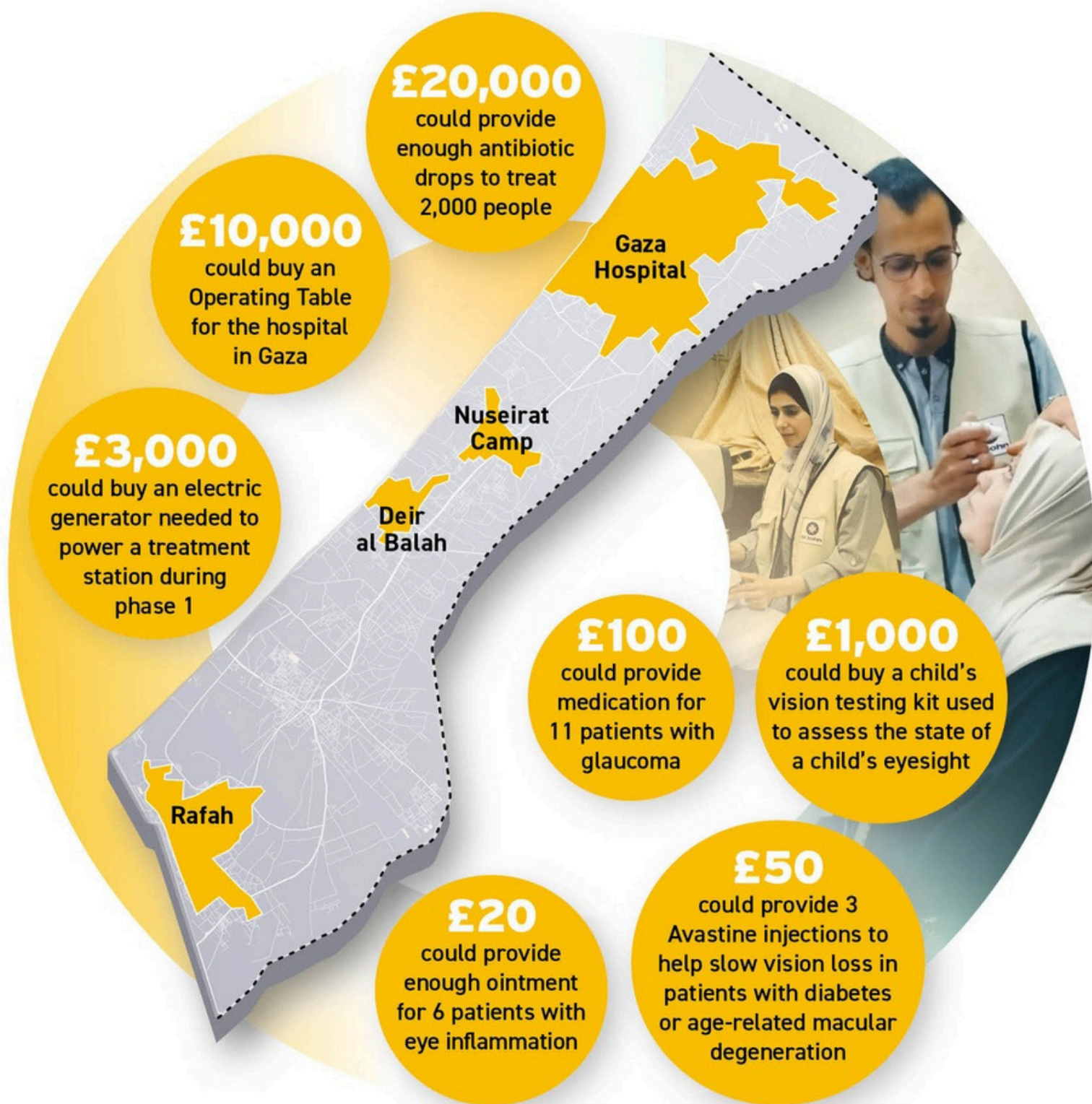
BUDGET

Gaza Emergency Response

Equipment	£2.1m
Medication & Surgical supplies for 1yr	£1.6m
Rebuild hospital	£1m
Staffing costs	£1.3m
Total	£6m



St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group





Grand Master's Address:

"That was a truly memorable Ceremony which I'm sure will leave a lasting impression on our 03 new Knights of Malta and indeed was something very special for all of us. My immediate thanks must go to the Great Prior of Malta and his team of Great Officers who have given us such treat this afternoon and have certainly reminded me how much I enjoy the Ceremony of installation of a Knight in this Order. It has been an inspiration to us all and I know we would all like to show our appreciation to all the officers who took part.

It has been a particular delight today to confer the Honour and Dignity of Knight Grand Cross and Knight Commander. R.E.Kt. Revd. Malcolm Lane was first appointed Deputy Great Almoner in 2007, Great Almoner in 2009 and has served as Great Prelate since 2012. I think you will agree that his promotion to Knight Grand Cross is well and truly deserved.

R.E.Kt. David Jordan was first appointed Great Captain of Guards in 2012, and made such an impression that he was promoted to Deputy Great Marshal in 2015. That was short-lived as in the same year he became the Provincial Prior for Kent and continues to do excellent work in that capacity, and I know we wish him well also. We broke with tradition a little this year as we had 03 Candidates for Installation as Knights of Malta as opposed to our usual 01.

My first experience of Great Priory was in 1985, standing in as Great Organist, before the Province of London was constituted, and there were in the region of 40 Candidates. The sad thing in those days was that very few of the recipients of Great Rank came for the Malta meeting, and I must say what a pleasure it has been today to invest so many Brother Knights with their new Malta ranks in person. I congratulate you all and wish you well. You are a credit to your Priories and to your Preceptories.

We are the custodians of a Ritual which was sanctioned for use by the Grand Master at a meeting of the Grand Conclave in 1863. A few weeks ago I was sent a copy of this ritual dated 1866 and on reading through it, I can tell you that, apart from one former Great Mareschal who, about 15 years ago, inserted a paragraph into the Address (he shall remain nameless) it has changed hardly at all.

As always, I bring you greetings and the latest news from our friends at the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group. In May I'm sure we all hoped that by now we would have seen a ceasefire in place, but that has not come to fruition. They have however been able to build a service in Gaza in spite of all the hurdles put in their way and have, since April, been able to treat 25,000 patients there, albeit in considerably less than ideal conditions. They also continue to provide a full service in the West Bank, but the working days are much longer due to the number of checkpoints and this has an accretive demoralising effect on the already hard worked staff.

The new Hospital in Nablus is also on track to see its first patients before the year is out and this is a major step forward in their policy to bring services to where our patients are.

It is still not fully known what the recent ban on the United Nations Works and Relief Agency will mean for them, but they were a key commissioner of the services throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Time will tell as to how these pieces will be picked up. I know you would wish me to assure them of our ongoing and continuing support and that they are all in our thoughts and Prayers at this troubled time.

Since we last met in May, I have installed 05 Provincial Priors and I would now welcome four of them for the first time at Great Priory in their new capacity.

On 25 May, I travelled to Sindlesham to install R.E.Kt. Dean White for Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. 15 June saw us installing R.E.Kt. David Handley for Warwickshire.

The one who can't be with us today is R.E.Kt. Lesley Martin who on 15 July was installed as Provincial Prior for South Africa Cape, but I know we all wish him well. We had a break until 05 October when we travelled to Lincoln to install R.E.Kt. Martin Levick for Lincolnshire, and at the end of October we went back to King's Heath, this time to install R.E.Kt. Michael Hadden in charge of Worcestershire. Provincial Priors are such an important part of our Order for many reasons, and I'm sure you would wish to show your support to these Brother Knights.

We don't always get the pleasure of welcoming distinguished visitors from Sister Great Priories at this meeting as we do in May, but this year is quite the exception, we also have Brother Knights from our own Constitution from Provinces and Preceptories Overseas and Rulers of other Masonic Orders and I am delighted to welcome them all and would suggest that you withhold your enthusiastic applause until I have completed the rather long list.

Now, let's show all these distinguished Brother Knights how much we appreciated their attendance today.

Brother Knights, I know we are all aware of the strategies in place in United Grand Lodge and Supreme Grand Chapter to support and encourage membership of the Royal Arch. It is so important that we all play our part in ensuring the success of our own Royal Arch Chapters. Our future in this Order depends solely on the Royal Arch, let us not be seen wanting in our support of it.

I want to offer my personal thanks to the Great Vice-Chancellor and his team at the Chancery for all they have done for the well-being of the Order and in making arrangements for today's meeting. The same applies to the Great Mareschal and his team and, of course, the Grand Master's Body Guard, who add so much to our proceedings at Great Priory.

As Christmas approaches, we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord, as we were reminded today by the Banner of Palestine. Please remember your Brother Knights at home and around the world at 5.00 o'clock on Christmas Day. Some may not be as fortunate as us. Christmas can be a joyous time for some and a lonely time for others.

There may well be a Brother Knight in your own Preceptory who would welcome a call on Christmas Day.

In the meantime, I wish you, your families and loved ones, every possible blessing for the Festive Season and I trust a Happy and Healthy New Year will bring us together again for our next muster in May. I look forward to your company on that occasion and I thank you for your support and your attention."

M.E. & S.Kt. Paul R. Clement, G.C.M.

Grand Master, Malta Great Priory, 19 November 2024

Saving Sight Drinks Reception



Sir Andrew Cash OBE KStJ, Chair SJEHG, addresses guests at the Saving Sight drinks reception at the Guildhall

More than 150 leading figures from the City gathered at Guildhall for the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group's drinks reception—a special preview event ahead of our fundraising banquet in February 2025 at Mansion House.

We were honoured to have a distinguished guest list, including Sir Andrew Cash OBE, Chair of SJEHG, who delivered a moving keynote speech. He reflected on the hospital's nearly thousand-year history, from its origins with the Knights Hospitallers in 1098, to our current mission of providing vital eye care in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. Guests were also treated to a video address from SJEHG CEO, Dr Ahmad Ma'ali, who gave an on-the-ground perspective of the current successes and challenges faced by the Eye Hospital.

A special thanks to Chris Hayward, Chair of the City Policy & Resources Committee, for hosting the event at this iconic venue. Our enduring partnership with the City of London continues to be a cornerstone of our support.

We were delighted to welcome Dr Andre Valente, representing the Champalimaud Vision Award, which SJEHG was honoured to receive last year. Dr Valente travelled from Lisbon, Portugal to join us for the evening. We were also pleased to host representatives from one of our longstanding supporters, the Fred Hollows Foundation.

Members of the City's Livery Companies, whose generous support has been integral to our mission since our founding in 1882, were also in attendance.

During his speech, Sir Andrew shed light on the pressing challenges we face in Gaza, where the ongoing conflict has severely disrupted our services. "Our hospital, one of the few major buildings left standing in Gaza City, has remained closed since events of 07 October. A facility that once treated 40,000 patients annually, preventing blindness and alleviating suffering, has been unable to treat a single one of them. Tens of thousands of people are now at risk of losing their sight."

Sir Andrew's message was clear: our work is more critical than ever, and our resolve to end avoidable blindness in the region remains unwavering.

Harriet Wheeler, Executive Head of UK Office says "Thank you to everyone who attended. It was wonderful to see so many new faces as well as familiar ones. The challenges are immense, but so too is the power of collective compassion. Together, we are building a future where sight is restored, and lives are transformed."

We are deeply grateful for your continued support and look forward to welcoming many of you to our main event in February at Mansion House.

Together, we can continue to save sight and transform lives in one of the world's most challenging regions.



[Click here to see Dr Ahmad Ma'ali's address](#)



Tickets Available Now: Saving Sight Banquet



Tickets are available now to purchase for the Saving Sight Banquet on Wednesday 05 February 2025 at London's historic Mansion House (pictured), an evening of great food, entertainment, and live and silent auctions in aid of the Eye Hospital's sight-saving work in Gaza and the Holy Land.

We are honoured to announce the banquet will be held in the presence of The Grand Prior of the Order of St John, His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester KG, GCVO, GCStJ, and hosted by The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of London Alderman Alastair King MStJ DL alongside The Chairman of SJEHG Sir Andrew Cash OBE KStJ.

All proceeds from the event will go directly to saving sight and transforming lives in Gaza and the Holy Land. We look forward to welcoming you!

Dress code: Black tie and decorations

Event timings:

6.30pm Drinks Reception

7.15pm Dinner

10.30 Carriages

Tickets: £350 individual
£3,500 for a table of 10

[Purchase](#)
[Tickets Here](#)

Treating Diabetic Retinopathy in Gaza



It's important to draw attention to how diabetes can affect eyesight, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). 01 in 03 people in the OPT have diabetes, and diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of preventable blindness in Gaza.

This video, shared by our team in Gaza, shows the vital work they are doing to combat the effects of diabetic retinopathy, a complication of diabetes, caused by high blood sugar levels damaging the back of the eye (retina), which can lead to blindness if left undiagnosed and untreated.

We learn from Dr Ahmad Al Halimi, SJEHG's Gaza Medical Lead, and Walid Shaqoura, SJEHG's Gaza Hospital Manager, about the need for Avastin injections to combat diabetic retinopathy. Since the start of the war, Avastin treatment has not been available for most Gazans, and there is a huge need and demand as the longer treatment is delayed, the worse the condition becomes. We also hear from displaced patients in Gaza about the essential need for these injections, such as Mahmoud, who was struggling to read and write before his first dose of Avastin. Phase 2 of our ongoing Saving Sight in Gaza Appeal is focused on high-impact medical intervention for the treatment of diabetic retinopathy and preventable blindness, with an estimated cost of £495,000.

In total, we need to raise £6 million over the next 12 months to re-establish eye care facilities in conflict-torn Gaza, and we can't do it without your help. Your donations have a profound impact on saving sight and transforming lives in one of the world's most challenging regions.

Expanding Outreach Services

In August, we launched a new outreach service focussing on the towns and villages in the north of the West Bank. This service complements the existing outreach programme in the West Bank, which now primarily serves central and southern areas. Since 07 October, demand for these services has surged, with more patients being treated than ever before.

Initially planned before the recent conflict, the new outreach service covers the 06 northern governates, ensuring that communities in these areas have access to much-needed eye care. For many, our mobile services – which offer free treatment – represent their only opportunity to access eye care.



Outreach service in the West Bank, 2024

Outreach is particularly impactful, with approximately 25% of patients being children and over 50% female. By the end of this year, we expect to have treated 18,000 patients through our outreach programmes, contributing to a total of 173,000 patients treated across the Group.

Patients requiring further treatment or follow-up care are referred to SJEHG facilities in Anabta or Jerusalem, with the new hospital in Nablus set to handle many of these cases in the near future.

Nablus Hospital Update

Scheduled to open to patients in February 2025, our new Day Hospital in Nablus marks a transformative step forward for eye care in the northern West Bank. For the first time, patients in this region will no longer need to travel to Jerusalem for surgical treatment, significantly improving access to high-quality eye care.

This new facility is expected to increase service capacity by 50% within its first 03 years, treating over 16,000 outpatients in its first year alone – including 5,000 children. It is also anticipated that the hospital will perform 400 major eye surgeries in its first year, 250 of which will be for children.



Artist's impressions of new Nablus Hospital

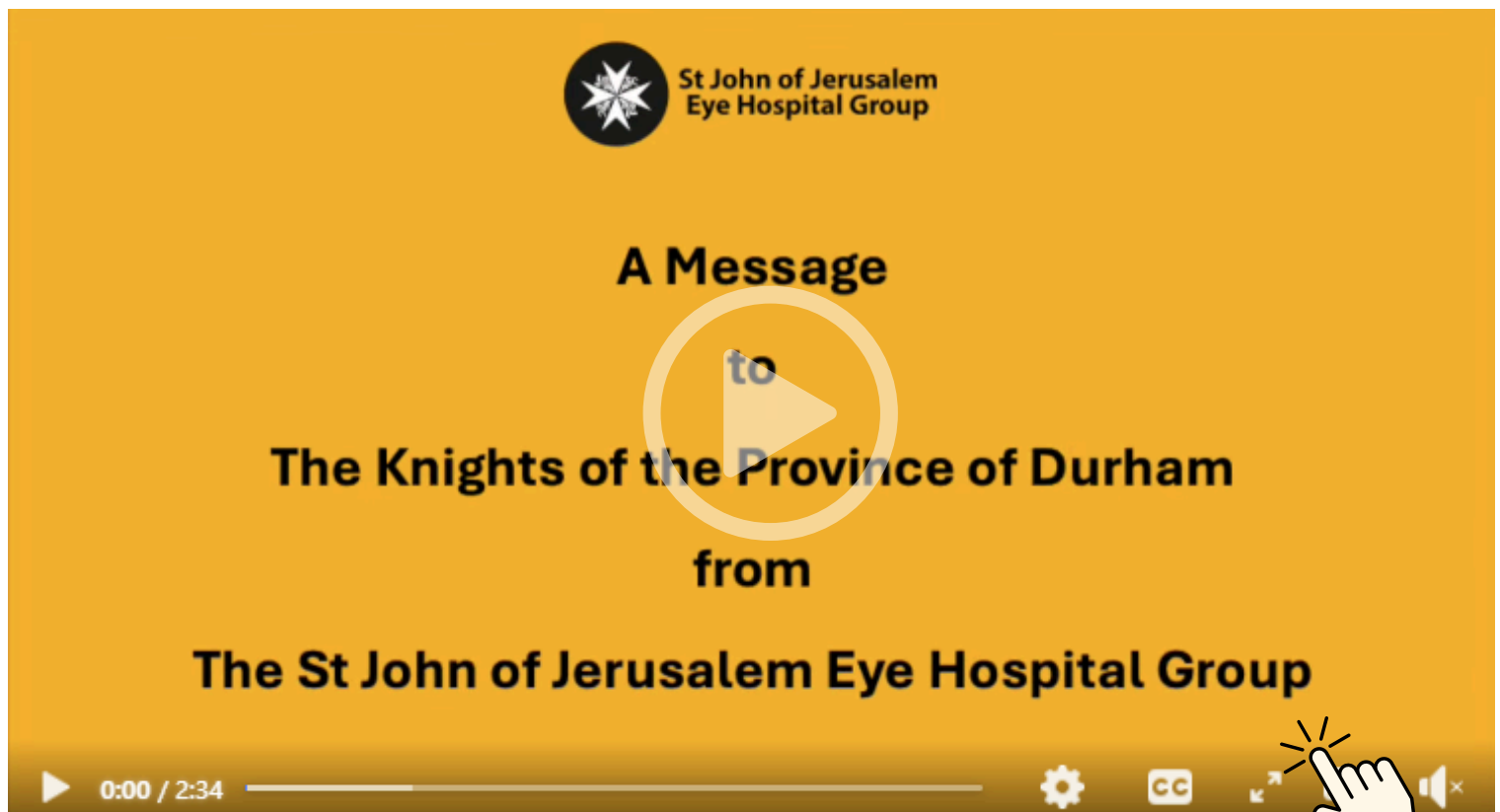


Provincial Fundraising Spotlight

The Provincial Priory of Durham held its Malta Meeting on Thursday, 11 July to a full room at Gateshead Masonic Hall. The Provincial Prior gave a warm welcome to those present. The Priory was opened by the Provincial Sub-Prior E.Kt. Steve Allen.

Then followed an installation ceremony of a new Knight of Malta, which was conducted by the Provincial Sub-Prior E.Kt. Steve Allen, ably assisted by the Provincial Officers. The Provincial Prior then appointed the Provincial Officers for the year 2024/2025, along with those appointed to past rank and promoted to past rank. The installation ceremony then continued. Following which the Provincial Prior delivered his address, which included welcoming the distinguished guests from other Orders and the Past Sub-Priors of the Province. He then went on to congratulate the candidates for the evening and the officers that he had appointed, looking forward to their company at future meetings in the coming year. There was also an update on the 2025 fundraising appeal started in 2021 for the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital.

On Friday of the previous week he was made aware of an emergency situation, where the water filtration system at the main hospital had broken down and was in urgent need of replacement at a cost of **£5,500**. He continued by informing those present that we had stepped in and had offered to pay for the new filtration system to get them back up and running, whilst they found funds from another source. Rt.E.Kt. Richard finished by saying thank you to everyone for their enthusiasm and devotion to this Order. The Provincial Sub-Prior E.Kt. Steve Allen then closed the Priory and the members retired to the festive board. A sumptuous festive meal was enjoyed by all, with new friendships made and old ones renewed.



Merchandise

Accessories



SJEHG Pen (£5.50).



St John Eye Hospital
Silk Tie (£25)



Tabard
(Orange) (£5)



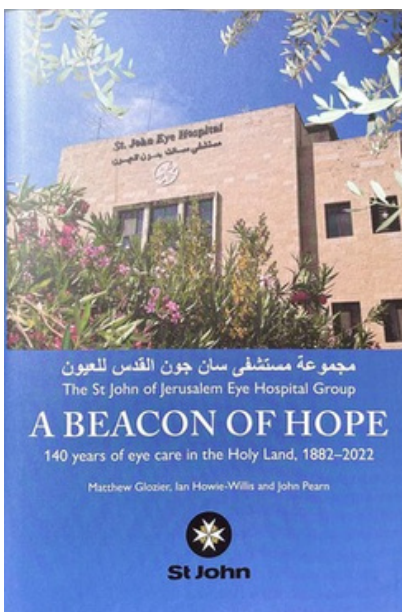
NEW

Unisex Short
Sleeved T-
Shirt (Gold)

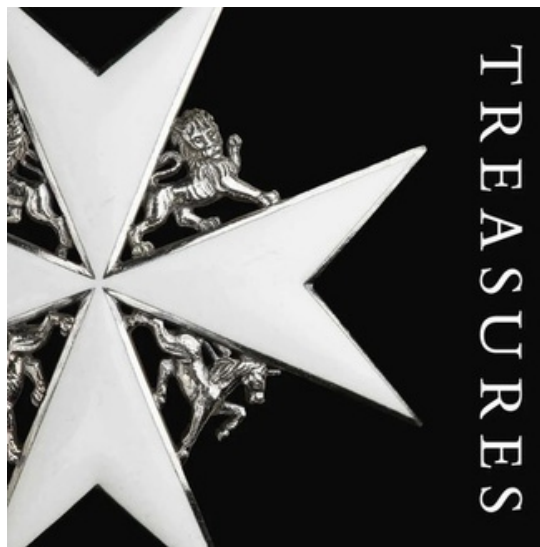


SHOP NOW

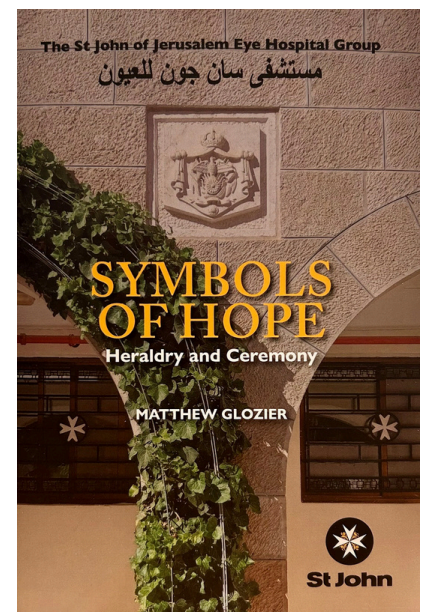
Books/videos



'A Beacon of Hope: 140
years of eye care in the
Holy Land, 1882-2022'
(Paperback) £36



'Treasures' by Tom Foakes
(Hardback) £50



'Symbols of Hope:
Heraldry and Ceremony'
(Hardback) £30



Knights Templar Swift Pins



Knights Templar
Swift Pins

£20 each

Gift aid can be applied to the donations.

Provinces can order in bulk, or individuals can purchase single pins, by contacting our charities team at charitiesfinance@mmh.org.uk
Funds raised will go to the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group.



Young patient receiving an eye test at Deir Al Balah Station

All of this can only be achieved through your continued support for our shared vision to provide expert ophthalmic care in this region.

Donate to our emergency appeal today.



To donate: Open the camera on your smartphone and point it at the QR code below. It'll take you directly to our appeal page.

Or visit:

www.stjohnseyehospital.org/donate-now/emergency-appeal/



Other Ways To Get Involved



If you would like to fundraise for us, please get in touch. We have many fundraising resources available to download from our website, including how-to guides, posters, and leaflets.

[Click here](#)

We also have a number of resources available for loan in our office:

· Pop up banners ·
Collection boxes · Collection
buckets · Tabards



0207 553 6963



Subscribe our Jerusalem Scene newsletter



info@stjohnneyehospital.org

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TOGETHER, WE'RE SAVING SIGHT, CHANGING LIVES.



**St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group**

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