

EYE CARE ON THE FRONTLINES - NAVIGATING WAR IN GAZA

Plus, West Bank update
and special festive
merchandise edition

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CEO Update:
Achievements and challenges in Gaza, West Bank, and Jerusalem



St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group

JERUSALEM SCENE

Autumn 2024 Treatment for all,
regardless of ethnicity, religion, or
ability to pay



SJEHG patient 2 year old Reem Abu Rawaa pictured with her father in Gaza – Read her story on page 5

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**YOUR SUPPORT
KEEPS OUR VITAL
SIGHT-SAVING
SERVICES RUNNING**

CEO UPDATE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

DR AHMAD MA'ALI KStJ, PhD, MPH, BSN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Welcome to the Autumn edition of our Jerusalem Scene. Since my last update in May, the St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group has made remarkable progress despite

ongoing conflicts in Gaza and the West Bank. The war in Gaza, now in its eleventh month, has created a devastating humanitarian crisis. Our dedicated teams of doctors and nurses have continued to provide essential eye care to displaced people, with over 17,000 people across Gaza treated so far. I am also pleased to announce the official launch of Stage 2 of our Emergency Response Plan, which includes providing laser treatments and Avastin injections for diabetic retinopathy - a crucial step in preventing blindness among diabetic patients.

Our commitment to patients in Gaza remains steadfast and we have plans to expand services as soon as the security situation permits.

In Jerusalem, our work has almost returned to pre-war levels, including the provision of sight-saving surgical interventions. However, since my last update, there have been some serious security developments in the West Bank and Jerusalem, with the Israeli army declaring the West Bank a military operation zone. Military actions in the northern governorates of Jenin, Tulkarem and Tubas have led to significant loss of life and restricted movement, disrupting services at our Anabta clinic. Additionally, escalating violence in the southern governorates of Hebron and Bethlehem has caused major disruptions to our operations in Hebron.

Although there have been sporadic episodes of violence in the West Bank for many months, these levels of violence and destruction are unprecedented. You can read more about the impacts for our hospitals and clinics in the West Bank on pages 6 to 9. We are relieved to report that our staff and their families remain unharmed, despite these challenging conditions. They have been instructed to take no risks and stay at home. On a positive note, the renovation of our new day hospital in Nablus is progressing on schedule and should be completed by November 2024. This new facility will expand access to eye care for those in impoverished areas, especially northern refugee camps. We have established outreach services to reach the most isolated regions of the northern West Bank, continuing our mission to bring eye care to those who need it most. Read more on page 6.

Despite these challenges, we have treated over 120,000 patients since January this year, and we anticipate reaching a new record of 155,000 by the year end. This achievement reflects the critical need for eye care in the Holy Land and is made possible by the unwavering support of our global partners. We are profoundly grateful for this generosity, which enables us to serve some of the most vulnerable people in one of the world's most troubled regions.

I look forward to sharing further updates in the next edition of the Jerusalem Scene.

120,000
patients treated so far this year across the region

Over
17,000
patients treated so far in Gaza

An anticipated
155,000
patients treated in 2024 - an unprecedented milestone

53% of the patients treated in Gaza are

female **25%** are children



EYE CARE ON THE FRONTLINES NAVIGATING WAR IN GAZA

2-year-old Reem, a patient in Gaza

“We’re doing all we can, but we need to expand our services to reach and help even more people in need.”
Suhad Abu Diab, an Optometrist at SJEHG in Deir al-Balah, Gaza.

Life in Gaza is unimaginable, with no end to the ongoing hostilities in sight, and scarce resources. Despite these immense

challenges, SJEHG’s team have been providing primary eye care to displaced people as part of its Emergency Response Plan since April.

Our dedicated teams face immense daily challenges as they continue to work tirelessly to treat patients at six locations across the north, centre and south of Gaza, partnering with agencies like the Benevolent Friends Association, Al-Awda Hospital, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, UNRWA and the Al-Amal Hospital. In August, a small breakthrough occurred when the team were able to start providing some laser treatment in one

location, after securing the necessary equipment, and more recently starting to administer Avastin injections. Additionally, the team successfully performed two procedures on children – one to remove sutures, and the other involving an incision. They were performed using surgical instruments from Al-Awda Hospital, which were sterilised off site. Arranging operations like these is extremely challenging. The suture removal requires general anaesthesia, which involves special preparations for both the patient and the hospital, often difficult to coordinate. Working in war conditions creates uncertainty and immense pressure. Even after all the necessary arrangements are made, patients may be unable to attend their surgery or follow up appointments due to the unstable security situation.

The broader outlook remains bleak with dwindling medical supplies and ongoing border restrictions until recently, making it impossible to access the essential resources.

A few weeks ago, the slit lamp at Deir al-Balah broke down due to a faulty bulb. The team is still working to source a replacement. Among the most pressing need for SJEHG is a steady supply of medication, particularly Avastin which is critical for

patients with diabetic retinopathy who have not received treatment since the conflict began. Diabetic retinopathy could cause irreversible visual impairment or blindness if not treated on time. Currently, only a limited supply of general medications are available in Gaza, and the team distributes these based on need.

“For a long time, nothing was getting in,” says Walid T.H. Shaqura, Gaza Hospital Manager. “We desperately need to secure a steady supply of medication to treat our patients. Without it, they risk losing their sight.

“Of the ten types of medications we need, we’ve only managed to secure three. And we don’t know how long that supply will last.”

Dr Al Halimi, a key member of the medical team in Gaza, adds: “We already have a waitlist of over 200 for laser surgery.” The lack of medical infrastructure exacerbates the crisis. “We are the only ones doing eyecare in Gaza” he explains, underscoring the severe shortages of medical care in the region as the war rages on.

Dr Ma’ali, SJEHG’s CEO is actively following up on the supply chain issue but the outlook remains uncertain.

Daily Life in a Warzone

"No place is safe here," says Walid. "Only last week, we were told to evacuate with a moment's notice. We have been living like this for a year." Walid, displaced ten times already, is now living in a disused 16 square-metre shop in Deir al-Balah with 15 other adults and children. Unfortunately, these overcrowded conditions have become a grim norm for many. Other team members face similar hardships. Dr Al Halimi has been displaced twice, while Fadi T.S.Eljlleh, Head of Nursing in Gaza, has moved five times. Basic amenities like shoes and cleaning materials are impossible to buy.

Staff

The situation for staff remains precarious. "Staff safety is our top priority" says Walid, reflecting the direction given by SJEHG's leadership. Despite the overwhelming need for care, the safety of medical teams must come first in such a dangerous environment.

A glimmer of hope

Despite the chaos, the team is doing everything possible to keep hope alive. Plans to rebuild the hospital and potentially a mobile outreach clinic in southern Gaza are in progress. The team is also helping with other critical public health interventions, such as providing space at Deir al-Balah for polio vaccines and raising awareness among displaced communities. Walid and the entire SJEHG team continue to persevere. Their work brings comfort to many, and they draw strength from knowing that supporters around the world are doing everything they can to help.

"Thank you for your concern," Walid says. "It brings us comfort to know that we are not forgotten."

**DONATE NOW
TO HELP WALID
AND THE TEAM IN
GAZA:**



Meet the patients



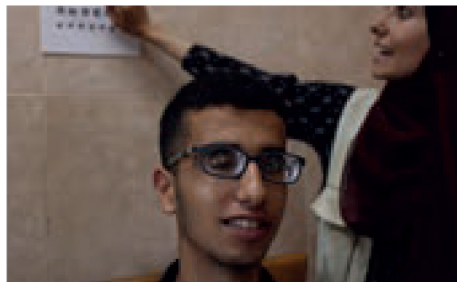
2-year-old Reem, a patient in Gaza

Reem Abu Rawaa, 2 years old, was brought to a SJEHG treatment centre by her father Abd Alrahman. She was suffering from an eyelid infection called Preseptal Cellulitis. Reem was treated by SJEHG teams in Deir al-Balah where, so far, they have treated 858 children like Reem.



8-year-old Amal, a patient in Gaza

On July 21st 2024, Amal Sami Sabbah, 8 years old, arrived at the SJEHG facilities in Deir al-Balah with allergies resulting from exposure to dust and sun. The doctor prescribed treatment and stressed the importance of avoiding further sun and dust to prevent her condition from worsening.



18-year-old Mazen, a patient in Gaza

Also, on July 21st 2024, 18-year old Mazen Eid Barakah visited the station in Deir al-Balah. He has an artificial left eye. Mazen was prescribed Timolin medication and advised to seek treatment for managing eye pressure. He has been under follow-up at SJEHG for glaucoma since the age of 12. In the photo Suhad Abu Diab, an optometrist at SJEHG, is administering a vision test to Mazen.

Meet Suhad Abu Diab, an SJEHG Optometrist at Deir al-Balah.

"Hello, I am Suhad Abu Diab, an Optometrist at St. John's Eye Hospital in Deir al-Balah branch. We work under very difficult conditions with limited resources, yet we strive to provide patients with essential care, including vision examinations, children's refractive tests (cyclorefraction) and auto refractometer tests. We also assist with patient coordination and screenings. One of our patients, Mazen Barakah, suffers from high intraocular pressure (IOP). Tragically, he has lost his left eye and received an artificial implant 12 years ago, making it critical for him to follow up on his remaining eye to prevent further complications. While his condition is currently stable, the severe shortage of anti-glaucoma drops in Gaza is putting his only eye at serious risk. We are doing what we can, but the lack of resources and necessary medications is a constant challenge. Proper surgical intervention will only be possible when the war stops and our hospital is re-established."

We are profoundly grateful to our long-standing supporter Fred Hollow Foundation which has been highly supportive and closely aligned with our needs, even in helping to support our staff in Gaza before we launched our emergency response. Another key donor is the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), who in partnership with Johanniter International Assistance is significantly helping to fund phase 1 of our emergency response.



SJEHG's new outreach service in the northern West Bank

1 IN 2 of our patients are children

Despite months of ongoing challenges and a recent surge in violence in the West Bank, particularly in the north, our hospitals and clinics continue to

provide essential eye care to a population of 2.9 million people.

Indeed, the new child screening service introduced in the West Bank last year has contributed to a 35% increase in overall outpatient numbers compared to the same period last year. Since January, nearly 55% of those treated at SJEHG have been children.



Pictured, from left: Basil Shaqalousi, Senior Staff Nurse; Mohammad Ibrahim, Staff Nurse; Dr. Shaddad Nasser, Ophthalmologist; Salem Azaar, Driver; Bara' Jayousi, Optometrist



A young patient at Kofur Zeibad, a village near Tulkarm during an outreach visit on 4th September

Outreach in the West Bank

Despite ongoing violence in the region, a new outreach service was successfully launched in the north of the West Bank at the start of August. This service complements the existing programme in the West Bank, now focussing more on the central and southern parts of the region. Initially planned before the conflict, the new initiative spans the six northern governorates of Nablus, Salfit, Qalqiliya, Tulkarm, Jenin, Tubas, ensuring that people in these areas can access much-needed eye care.

The service operates five days a week, with sessions held at various locations such as Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) venues and schools. Volunteers assist in managing patients and providing refreshments.

The scheme has been welcomed by the local communities, with demand far exceeding expectations. For many, the mobile service – which offers free treatment and adapts as per the needs of each area – represents their only opportunity to access eye care.

“The outreach service arrived just in time,” says Talal, a patient at Old Asker camp in Nablus. “Many people here are in desperate need of help. It’s a relief to receive care on-site, so we don’t have to go through the checkpoints to reach Anabta. Most patients here are diabetic and in need of eye care services.”

“Many of us, myself included, can’t seek care in the private sector because it’s too expensive.”

“The outreach clinic is essential because it’s free and allows many people to get their eyes examined without financial burden.”

So far, 1,796 patients have been treated, many presenting with diabetes-related eye conditions and cataracts. Of these, 25% are children and over 50% are female.

Those requiring further treatment or follow up care, are referred to SJEHG's facilities in Anabta or Jerusalem. SJEHG's new hospital in Nablus will soon handle many patients currently referred to services elsewhere, ensuring comprehensive services for those living in the north of the West Bank.

This flagship scheme was developed in partnership with CARE International which provided both financial and technical support. Funded by both CARE International and the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), the programme is set to run for 18 months.

SJEHG's teams also continue to service the middle and south of the West Bank, treating more patients than ever. This year

alone, 10,265 people, mostly women and children, have been seen during 131 visits to some of the region's most isolated communities.

However, the recent surge in violence in the West Bank has made the programmes even more challenging to deliver. "It is a tense time" says Walid Khatib, Head of Nursing in Jerusalem. "The team frequently encounter roadblocks and must turn back when main routes are closed. We avoid areas that are inaccessible, and if they can't reach a village, they have no choice but to find another route or move on to the next. Our patients rely on us, but we won't jeopardise the team's safety."

Emphasising the importance of these schemes, Outreach Manager Khaled M.M. Zaiter says: "Movement restrictions make it especially hard to move between the villages and the cities, which are surrounded by checkpoints. Our service is the only way that people in these villages

receive treatment. We are the frontline, the last barrier between a person and blindness."

SJEHG operates its Mobile Outreach Programmes in alignment with the national humanitarian plan and mobile outreach working group, headed up by the United Nations. These programmes aim to serve the most vulnerable populations, particularly those affected by conflict, refugees and those living in certain areas of the West Bank. These regions lack the basic humanitarian services and are supported by various local and international NGOs.

The work of our Mobile Outreach Programmes would not have been possible without the support of the US and Scottish Priors and the Fred Hollows Foundation, which has been supporting our work for more than a decade.

Nablus Hospital

The hospital structure is taking shape, with two theatres established and utilities like electricity, fire safety, medical gases and water installed. Tenders for furniture, IT equipment and medical equipment are underway. Staff recruitment begins in October, aiming to start patient services by January next year.

The new day-care hospital will, for the first time, give patients in the northern West Bank access to surgery without the need to travel to Jerusalem, marking a significant milestone in SJEHG's mission to provide accessible eye care to all. It is expected this new facility will increase service capacity in this region by 50% in its first three years, treating over 16,000 outpatients in its first year, 5,000 of which being children, and perform 400 major eye surgeries, with 250 surgeries performed on children.



CEO Dr Ahmad Ma'ali and Facilities Manager Ahmad Awadallah pictured on site with the engineer overseeing the work



Inside SJEHG's new Nablus Hospital

Hebron Hospital

With violence escalating in the north, unrest has also spread to the south of the West Bank, with additional movement restrictions making it difficult for patients to access SJEHG's hospital in Hebron. At Hebron, our teams are seeing more patients overall. From January to July, there was a 6% increase in outpatient numbers compared to last year, with a slight rise in retinal surgery. This uptick is largely due to patients being unable to travel to access care in Jerusalem since the events of October 7th.

The hospital faced a 10-day closure in August and September when access to the city was completely blocked. Addressing the military presence, Alaa M.A. Altalbishi, Clinical Lead at SJEHG Hebron, says: "They enter the city day and night. It makes people afraid to come to the hospital." Hebron City has a population of nearly 250,000, with another 600,000 people living in surrounding cities, villages, and refugee camps who face challenges in reaching the hospital. The hospital also serves the Bethlehem area, where 30,000

depend on its services when travel to Jerusalem is not possible. Staff regularly face challenges such as strikes and road closures, which reduce operational capacity to about 20-30%. The drive from Bethlehem where many staff live usually takes 30 minutes, but delays are common. Subspecialty clinic staff travelling from Jerusalem are experiencing similar difficulties.

Alaa mentions, "Of the 12 entrances to Hebron, many have remained closed since October. Typically, only one or two are open unless there's an incident. A journey that normally takes ten minutes can take an hour and a half."

Retinal surgeries, which were introduced at Hebron two years ago, are increasing. Previously, it only handled a few cases while sending most patients to Jerusalem. Now, nearly half of the patients referred cannot travel to Jerusalem, so Hebron is taking on more of these surgeries.

There are ongoing challenges surrounding the planned introduction of general anaesthesia surgeries. During a visit in late August, the Palestinian

Minister of Health, pledged support for the hospital's development and emphasised that St John remains a crucial partner in the region.

Addressing the clinics immediate needs, Alaa says, "We need more space here to expand the scope of our surgical services and to enlarge the room around the operating theatre to enhance postoperative care. The Minister promised to help overcome these ~~challenges~~ operational state of both staff and patients fluctuates as they witness the situation in Gaza.

"The people in Gaza are our brothers and sisters," says Alaa. "The devastation affects us deeply, but we believe it is our mission to keep supporting them. We remain in close contact with our staff there, even amid the current mood in the West Bank where life is very hard. Every staff member and patient has been affected by this war."

With thanks to our supporters, the German Federal Foreign Office and Johanniter International Assistance for supporting our mission and work at Hebron in such difficult times.



Pictured, SJEHG's team at Hebron meeting the Palestinian Minister for Health and former SJEHG Trustee, Maged Abu Ramadan in September.

Muristan



Nurse in Charge Marlene I.B. Katanasho pictured at SJEHG's Muristan clinic

The clinic in the heart of Jerusalem's Old City has recently reopened and now operates one day a week, offering screening services every Wednesday. Marlene Katanasho, Nurse in Charge at Muristan, sees on average 15 patients each week. The service is designed primarily for residents of the Old City, particularly elderly individuals and local shop owners who would otherwise struggle to travel to the main hospital. The clinic's central and accessible location provides a more convenient option for these patients.

Before the war, the clinic operated five days a week. However, since reopening, it now operates just one day a week, aligned with current demand. Marlene has noted that many people are still unaware of our presence. She is actively working to spread the word, but as she says, "We are starting from scratch here. Despite the challenges, we are committed to reestablishing the clinic's presence in the community and gradually increasing services as demand grows."

Kufor Aqab Centre

Expansion plans are progressing well and include increasing the centre's space, which it is hoped will be achieved soon. Additional equipment, including lasers and visual field machines, have already been provided, and a slit lamp - thanks to the generous support of our UK donors - will be delivered shortly. All subspecialty clinics at Kufor Aqab are operational and it now has regular medical retina, Avastin, orthoptic, and paediatric services running at full capacity. Since January, there was an almost 97% increase in the number of patients seen as compared to last year. To support the growing demand, additional nursing staff have been deployed. With thanks to our supporters, the German Federal Foreign Office and Johanniter International Assistance for supporting our mission and work at Hebron in such difficult times. Reflecting on the provision of services in the West Bank, David Dahdal, Director of Development & Grants, says: "This expansion isn't new. The complex geography of the West Bank and East Jerusalem has driven SJEHG to continually enhance and expand its presence, ensuring equal access to comprehensive eye care to prevent avoidable blindness in a region affected by long-standing conflict."



Young patient attending an appointment at SJEHG in Kufor Aqab

In response to events of October 7th, SJEHG has reinforced its peripheral hospitals and clinics to meet the growing demand for our charitable services, especially given the restricted access to our main hospital in Jerusalem. We are deeply grateful to our donors for their flexible and prompt support.

DONATE NOW
TO SUPPORT SJEHG
SERVICES IN THE
WEST BANK





COMMUNITY NEWS

Guests at SJEHG's Saving Sight Drinks Reception, Guildhall

The SJEHG community has had a busy few months packed with events. Across the Priory of England and the Islands there have been several events,

from open gardens and cream teas to sponsored walks and church services.

Thank you to all the County Hospitaliers and Priory Groups who organised fundraising events for the SJEHG. To learn more about the SJEHG events happening in your area, contact the London Office via phone or email and we will be happy

to put you in touch with your local County Hospitalier.



Guests at the Guild's Gift of Sight Summer Concert and Reception, St John's Gate, Clerkenwell

On the 2nd of September the Guild of the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group held **A Gift of Sight Summer Concert and Reception**, in aid of Gaza Nurses. The concert was held at the St John Priory Church in Clerkenwell and was attended by over a hundred guests. A choir led by award-winning conductor Quintin Beer enchanted the audience with their ethereal performances of Bruckner, Elgar and Fauré, complemented by readings from Fr Paul Baggot and SJEHG Hospitalier David Verity KStJ. Following the recent concert, guests enjoyed champagne in the garden, which was beautifully lit with festive lights. Attendees mingled amidst the church's charming flower and herb garden, making it a truly delightful evening. All who went thoroughly enjoyed the event and eagerly anticipates the Guild's next gathering.

On the 5th of September, we held an **Interfaith Humanitarian Walk** to raise awareness of the SJEHG's critical blindness prevention work in the Holy Land. The event brought together representatives of the three Abrahamic faiths with visits to a mosque and a synagogue in central London, culminating at St John's Gate.



Pictured right to left: Iman, Ibrahim Mogra, Rabbi Morris, SJEHG Trustee Rev Paul Hackwood, and Dr Ed Kessler OBE Founder of the Woolf Institute, Cambridge, pictured outside Bevis Marks Synagogue.

The participants, blindfolded to simulate the experience of living with blindness, were guided by Harriet Wheeler, Executive Head of the UK Office, and trustee Rev Paul Hackwood. The walk was covered by Radio Four's Sunday Programme on September 8th which can be accessed by via BBC Sounds or the BBC Website. Jewish, Muslim and Christian participants found the experience deeply moving as they united in their shared belief in SJEHG's vital, sight-saving mission. We hope to hold more interfaith events in the future.

On 17th September, our **Saving Sight Drinks Reception** at Guildhall was a resounding success! 175 guests gathered in the Guildhall Crypts to hear from Sir Andrew Cash, Chair of SJEHG and CEO Dr Ahmad Ma'ali, who both spoke about our mission, legacy, work in Gaza and upcoming fundraising banquet at the Mansion House on February 5, 2025. Our host, Chris Hayward, Chair of the City Policy & Resources Committee highlighted the longstanding relationship between the City and the Order of St John, while Prof. Mark Compton, Lord Prior, emphasised SJEHG's special place within the Order and its ongoing contribution to its mission. Special thanks to all who came, including representatives from the City of London and the London Livery Companies, the St John Establishments, the Champalimaud Vision Award, the Fred Hollows Foundation, and many others. We look forward to seeing you at our fundraising event in February. Stay tuned for more details!



Right to left: SJEHG Chair Sir Andrew Cash OBE, Chris Hayward, Chair of City Policy & Resources Committee, Prof. Mark Compton, Lord Prior, pictured at London's Guildhall.



SJEHG's Executive Head of UK Office Harriet Wheeler pictured with Dr Andre Valente of Champalimaud Vision Award at London's Guildhall

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bridge in Wonderful Places

16th October 2024

St Cuthbert's Church, Earls Court SW5 9EB, 1:30pm – 5:30pm

Join the Guild for a delightful afternoon of bridge, raffle prizes and champagne at the glorious St Cuthbert's Church, in aid of Gaza nurses. Players will make up their table of 4 and play 9 hands. We will use the Chicago scoring method. The Guild is also happy to help you make up a table if needed.

Tickets:

£40 per person or £150 for a table

'Tea Only' Ticket (Non-playing guests): £30

We look forward to seeing you there. To RSVP and book your tickets please email guildstjohn@gmail.com.

Saving Sight Banquet

5th February 2025

Mansion House, City of London, EC4N 8BH, 6:30pm to 10:00pm

SJEHG Chair Sir Andrew Cash and the Lord Mayor of London are delighted to present the Saving Sight Banquet and charity auction in aid of our sight-saving work in Gaza.

Join us for an evening of celebration, enjoying a four-course meal accompanied by a performance from the The Central Band of the Royal Air Force, followed by a live auction with all proceeds supporting blindness prevention efforts in Gaza.

We are honoured to have SJEHG CEO Dr Ahmad Ma'ali and other members of the SJEHG team with us to share updates on their indispensable work on the ground.

Tickets cost £350 which includes a donation to SJEHG and will be on sale soon.

For enquiries, please email events@sjeh.org.

The 9th Jerusalem Ball

12 October 2024

Gladstone Library, One Whitehall Place, from 6.30pm

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, Lieutenancy of England and Wales, invites you to the 9th Jerusalem Ball.

The evening includes a Chapel Down Brut reception, three-course dinner, live music and a charity auction featuring items such as a shoe signed by Usain Bolt, a lavish wine package featuring rare Burgundies, a unique dining experience at Akub Restaurant in Notting Hill, and a specially commissioned Icon of Our Lady, Queen of Palestine and all the Holy Land. **Tickets are £175 and can be purchased at <https://jerusalemball.org.uk/tickets-2/> with all proceeds supporting the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem's vital work in the Holy Land.**



PATIENT SUCCESS STORIES



Leen Ahmad Al Kurd during a visit to our Jerusalem Hospital

Meet Leen Ahmad Al Kurd, a 5-year-old patient at Jerusalem

Leen Ahmad Al Kurd, a bright and determined 5-year-old from Bethlehem in the southern West Bank, has faced significant challenges from a very young age. When she was just 9 months old, her mother, Enas, noticed that one of Leen's eyes would drift in a different direction from the other. Concerned, Enas sought medical advice, marking the beginning of their journey with the SJEHG.

Leen was diagnosed with intermittent alternating exotropia, a condition causing her eyes to misalign. The doctors prescribed glasses and recommended eye patching – a common technique to strengthen the weaker eye by covering the stronger one. This method requires dedication, starting with a few hours each day and gradually increasing the duration over time.

Despite adhering to the prescribed treatment, Leen's condition led to social

challenges. Over the years, she endured bullying from classmates and intrusive comments from adults who often asked, "What's wrong with your eye?" These comments were hurtful, especially as Leen, now finishing Kindergarten 3, prepares to start first grade in September.

A year ago, the decision was made for Leen to undergo squint correction surgery. However, due to other health issues and multiple hospital admissions, the surgery was postponed until August this year, when it finally took place at the main hospital in Jerusalem.

Speaking the day before the surgery, as Leen coloured and drew, Enas shared her hopes for the procedure: "I hope this surgery will be life-changing for Leen. She's a top student and has strong social relationships, but the negative comments and bullying still affect her." Enas also praised the hospital team for their professionalism and support throughout the treatment journey. "They guided us every step of the way and helped with the cost of the surgery, which was a tremendous support given our financial situation."

Leen dreams of becoming an eye doctor one day – someone who treats both children and adults, helping them with their vision and teaching them to love their eyes.



Baby Yamour receiving treatment in Hebron

Meet Yamour Musa Al Amleh

Yamour Musa Al Amleh, from the town of Beit Oula in Hebron, southern West Bank, was born prematurely and soon began a challenging journey with her vision. After undergoing a series of examinations by the SJEHG, Yamour was diagnosed with retinopathy of prematurity (ROP). Her initial evaluation on January 20th 2024, revealed incomplete retinal vascularization, prompting a follow up appointment 2 to 3 weeks later. The second examination on February 17th 2024, showed progression to stage 2 ROP

of the retina, and a few weeks later, her right eye had progressed to stage 3 alongside severe disease and retinal-vitreous haemorrhage, while her left eye remained at stage 2. After her third examination, her doctor, Medical Retinal Specialist & ROP Specialist, Dr. Waleed Abu Daya administered an Avastin injection in Yamour's right eye. This treatment, along with ongoing monitoring, reflects the comprehensive care provided to manage the complexities of ROP and protects Yamour's vision.



Raghad Braiwish, pictured before treatment



Raghad pictured, after treatment

Meet 6-year old Raghad Braiwish, a patient at Anabta

Raghad, from the city of Dura in Hebron, southern West Bank, was born with a drooping eyelid. Her family initially thought it was something that might improve on its own. However, when the condition persisted, they sought specialist care at SJEHG Hebron when Raghad was just 3 months old. She was diagnosed with ptosis, a condition that, if untreated, could lead to amblyopia (lazy eye) or astigmatism.

At 18 months old, Raghad underwent her first corrective surgery, where a silicone sling was inserted to support her eyelid and prevent further complications. When she turned 6, her doctor decided it was time for a more advanced corrective procedure. This procedure, using the Crawford Method, involved using a tendon from her thigh to provide better support for her eyelid.

Weeks after the surgery, Raghad's mother expressed their happiness with the successful outcome. Raghad, who had endured bullying and unpleasant comments from her classmates because of her condition, can now see clearly without having to constantly tilt her head. She dreams of becoming a doctor one day.

DONATE HERE TO
**HELP MORE PATIENTS LIKE LEEN,
RAGHAD AND YAMOUR:**



LEGACIES

In this section we honour the lives of just some of the individuals who left a generous gift in their will or whose loved ones made donations in their memory. Their lasting contributions reflect the impact they continue to make, even beyond their lifetime.

Mr Arthur March

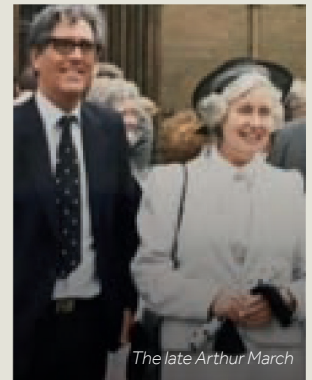
15th December 1925 – 11th December 2023

Arthur passed away just four days short of his 98th birthday, having remained in good health until the last eight months of his life. A bright young man with a keen interest in learning, Arthur initially had dreams of studying medicine. However, when the Second World War broke out, he made the decision to join the navy. By the time the war ended, he found it challenging to return to formal studies and instead committed himself to the family printing business. A proud D-Day veteran and dedicated Freemason for nearly 60 years, he championed charitable causes, especially his lodge's support for the SJEHG – a cause he championed for over four decades organising collections.

In November 2018, Arthur fulfilled a personal dream of visiting the hospital in Jerusalem with the help of friends in his lodge, who came together to cover his travel costs. During his visit, he was warmly welcomed, enjoyed lunch with the CEO and hospital directors, and even presented another cheque for the hospital's efforts. The experience moved him deeply, and he decided that future collections should continue supporting the eye hospital.

Arthur's later years were marked by failing eyesight, yet his spirit never dimmed. His connection to the Imperial Grand Lodge of England and the many friendships he forged throughout his life remained strong until the very end.

We are profoundly grateful to all those who donated in Arthur's memory.



The late Arthur March

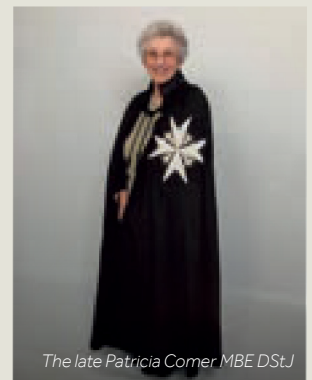
Patricia Comer MBE DStJ

27th June 1938 – 8th January 2024

Pat dedicated her life to service, re-embodiment of the values of St John with her decades-long commitment to St John Ambulance and her exceptional contributions to SJEHG. Serving the community for over 74 years, she rose through the ranks to become County Commissioner in Somerset, providing invaluable leadership and support to local divisions. Her achievements were recognized through her admission to the Order of St John as a Dame and receiving an MBE from Prince Charles, honouring her thousands of hours of voluntary work.

Pat's connection with the Order led her to travel the world, including memorable visits to historic St John sites such as Malta, Rhodes, Cyprus, and the Holy Land. These experiences deepened her commitment to the work of the Order, and she became a passionate supporter of the SJEHG. Even in retirement, Pat continued her involvement with St John through the Fellowship, staying active in regional activities and building friendships within the organization. Her support for the Hospital remained a priority, and she took pride in seeing its ongoing efforts to provide eye care to those in need in the Holy Land.

Pat's legacy within the SJEHG lives on through the generous gift in her will.



The late Patricia Comer MBE DStJ

Lt Col Leonard Murray MBE CStJ

5th November 1944 – 5th December 2022

Leonard's journey with the Order of St John began at the age of 10 when he joined the St John Ambulance Brigade as a Cadet. After a break to pursue a military career, he reconnected with the Brigade in 1993, serving as District Staff Officer Youth in Northern Ireland for three years, followed by his role as Area Commissioner for Eastern Area. In 2008, Leonard was appointed District Commissioner for Northern Ireland, and in 2012,

he assumed the position of Hospitaller focussing on raising awareness and support for the SJEHG. Leonard was appointed a Member of the Order of St John in 1997, promoted to Officer of the Order in 2001, and achieved the rank of Commander of the Order in 2012, marking his distinguished service and lasting commitment to the Order's humanitarian mission.

We are profoundly grateful to Leonard and his widow, Jean, for their generous gift left to us in Leonard's will.



The late Lt Col Leonard Murray

Leaving us a gift in your will or donating in memory of a loved one or to mark a special occasion, helps us to keep our doors open to those most in need and transform lives forever.

Find out more at www.stjohnehospital.org/get-involved/legacy/



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– Ros Pollock**
£20 incl. donation to SJEHG



**Bethlehem Bauble Peacelight –
Blue – Ros Pollock**
£25 incl. donation to SJEHG



**Nine Quarters of Jerusalem -
paperback - Matthew Teller**
£15 incl. donation to SJEHG



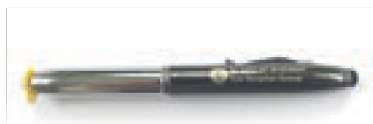
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(pack of 10)**
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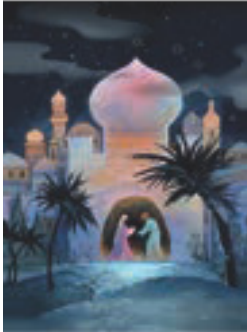
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All packs of 10
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Bethlehem Evening



Christmas Dove



Festive Robins



Golden Kings



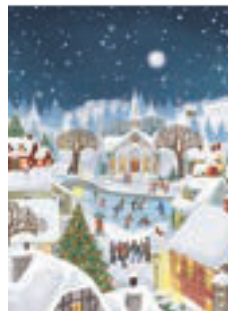
**Seasons' Greetings
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Stained Glass Windows



**We Three Kings
of Orient Are**



Winter Village



**We Wish You a Merry
Christmas (SJEHG
Original Design)**



Topiary Robins



Visiting the Newborn King

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**St John of Jerusalem
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