

CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF THE JERUSALEM HOSPITAL

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*Chair and CEO Update:
On track to surpass clinical records by end of 2025*



**St John of Jerusalem
Eye Hospital Group**

JERUSALEM SCENE

Autumn 2025
Treatment for all, regardless of
ethnicity, religion, or ability to pay



Dr Ahmad Ma'ali KStJ, CEO, SJEHG, on stage with Samira Ahmed at the Apothecaries' Hall, July 2025

CONTENTS

3	CHAIR AND CEO UPDATE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES	15	STAFF AND TRAINING NEWS
4	HOSPITALLER'S REPORT	17	IN CONVERSATION WITH OUR CEO IN LONDON
5	CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF THE JERUSALEM HOSPITAL	19	COMMUNITY NEWS
7	BUILDING THE FUTURE: THE 2030 VISION FOR ST. JOHN EYE HOSPITAL, JERUSALEM	21	LEGACIES AND OBITUARIES
8	GAZA: TWO YEARS IN CRISIS	23	CHRISTMAS APPEAL
11	ACROSS THE WEST BANK: NEWS FROM SJEHG HOSPITALS AND CENTRES	24	CHRISTMAS CARDS
13	PATIENT SUCCESS STORIES	25	STOCKING FILLERS (MERCHANDISE)
		26	ORDER FORM
		27	DONATION FORM



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

CHAIR AND CEO UPDATE: ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

**Sir Andrew Cash OBE KStJ CHAIR
and Dr Ahmad Ma'ali KStJ, PhD, MPH, BSN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**



Welcome to the Autumn edition of our Jerusalem Scene. Since our last update in June 2025, we have continued to prioritize the well-being and support of our staff both in Gaza and across the Group. In line with our commitment to strengthening our operational capacity, we have further enhanced our leadership team by appointing additional expertise.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Mohamad Khleif as the new Director of Operations and Transformation. Dr. Khleif will oversee the Nursing and Allied Health Departments, as well as the Information Technology Department, ensuring a coordinated approach to operational excellence and transformation across the organization.

As for our clinical achievements, we have continued to reach significant milestones across our Hospital Group.

The new Nablus Day Hospital, opened in March 2025, has already made a strong impact. In its first five months, the hospital treated more than 7,817 patients and carried out over 110 major sight-saving surgeries. To meet the growing demand for surgical care, we have expanded our operating sessions and continue to scale up capacity.

At the Kufr Aqab Centre, the demand for services remains extremely high. In response, we have expanded the facility to include additional subspecialty services. In just the first eight months of 2025, 7,439 patients received treatment there. Both our Hebron and Jerusalem Hospitals

have also recorded significant increases in outpatient and surgical activity this year.

In Gaza, our teams continue to serve those most in need – particularly communities displaced by war. Since the outbreak of hostilities, we have treated over 65,000 patients, while also prioritising the safety and wellbeing of our staff. We pray for peace so that we may resume the complex surgical treatments that remain suspended due to the ongoing conflict. Find out more about our response in Gaza on pp8-10.

Another remarkable achievement has been through our Child Vision Screening Programme, which has reached more than 30,000 children this year. Nearly 2,500 were referred to our hospitals for further treatment and medical management.

Our outreach teams have also remained active, bringing eye care to some of the most isolated communities in the West Bank, particularly in refugee camps. In 2025 alone, they have already treated over 12,000 patients, many of whom required referral for advanced surgical care. To further address access challenges, we have secured funding for a new outreach service that will begin in October 2025, focusing on the southern districts of Hebron and Bethlehem. You can read more about this, and other updates from across the Group, on pp11-12.

We anticipate that by the end of 2025, we will surpass last year's clinical record and provide treatment to more than 200,000 patients – a remarkable achievement in the face of the immense challenges posed by

ongoing hostilities in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication and resilience of our teams, and above all, to the unwavering support of our global partners, friends, and donors who continue to believe in our mission and vision. For this, we remain deeply grateful.

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

**The new Nablus Day
Hospital treated more than**

7,817

patients in its first five months

We have treated over

65,000

**patients since the
outbreak of hostilities**

Over

12,000

**patients treated by our
outreach teams in 2025 alone**

HOSPITALLER'S REPORT

SIGHT LOSS AND THE CHALLENGE OF OPHTHALMOLOGY IN THE PALESTINIAN POPULATION

Prof David H. Verity, KStJ MD MA FRCOphth
Order Hospitaller
Consultant Ophthalmic Reconstructive and Orbital Surgeon



The Rapid Assessment of Avoidable Blindness (RAAB) study in the Palestinian population, co-published in 2024 by SJEHG and The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, identified a prevalence of blindness of 2.6%, being more than twice that of neighbouring Jordan (1.2%). This figure was obtained from a cross-sectional survey in the Gaza Strip and West Bank between 2018 and 2019, at times of relative peace.

For all degrees of sight loss, including blindness, 80-90% of causes are avoidable with screening and management. The chief causes are diabetic eye disease, the need for glasses, and cataract. Whilst the latter can profoundly degrade vision and quality of life, delayed surgery does not jeopardise sight in the long term. This cannot be said for refractive error (the need for glasses), or for diabetic eye disease. Without glasses in the formative years, children can suffer squint and amblyopia ('lazy eye'), in which neural signals from the eye are no longer accurately interpreted by the brain, and for which there is no cure. For diabetics, whose endocrine control is more difficult or absent at times of hostility, the development of macular oedema (fluid) in the retina, or growth of fragile new vessels in the eye ('neovascularisation'), can lead to devastating and irreversible effects on sight.

For these conditions, and many others such as glaucoma and intraocular inflammations, there is an increasing urgency for screening and management with glasses, topical drugs, intraocular injections, and lasers to save vision and prevent irreversible sight loss and blindness among the 5 million patients in Gaza and the West Bank.

St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group is grateful to every supporter to help us meet these challenges. Thank you.

In 1023 AD traders from the Italian Amalfi coast took charge of a hospice in Jerusalem. Through their work and service they laid the foundations for the Johannine Orders which grew and now flourish, providing hope and care to countless millions of people across the world.

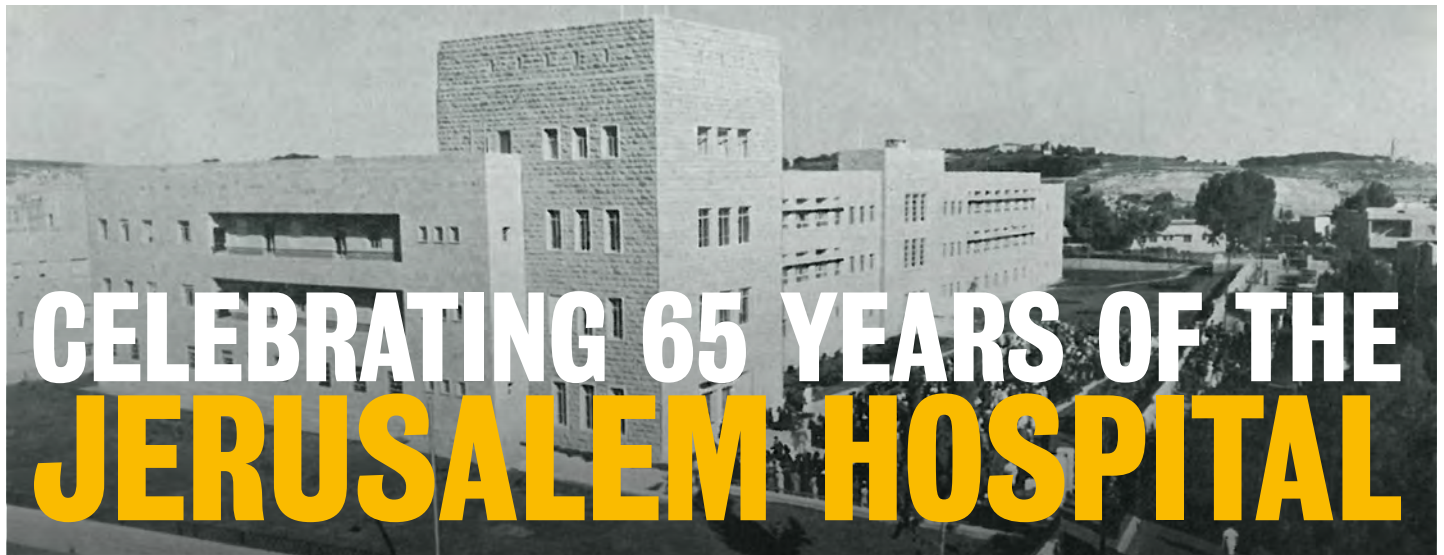
A thousand years later, we reflect on an ethos which lies at the very heart of the Orders of St John.

Find out more in the recently published *St John: Millennial Ethos of Care & the Enduring History of the Eye Hospital of Jerusalem*, prepared by Sir Andrew Cash KStJ, OBE, Chair, St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group, and David Verity KStJ, MD, MA, FRCOphth, Hospitaller, Order of St John.

Download the full book at
www.soa.global/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/St-John-1000-27-2.pdf

Or scan the QR code





CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF THE JERUSALEM HOSPITAL

The Jerusalem Hospital on Opening Day, 1960

October 11, 2025, marks 65 years since the opening of our Jerusalem Hospital, built to replace an earlier hospital which had been severely damaged during the 1948 Arab Israeli War and, following the redrawing of the boundaries, separated from its patients. The new hospital was hailed as 'bridge for peace in a world at war' and remains a much-loved institution in the region. In this issue of the Jerusalem Scene, we take a look back at some of the most important moments in the past 65 years of the Jerusalem Hospital and find out from facilities manager Ahmad Awadallah the exciting plans for the Hospital's future.

**We have seen over
7.5 MILLION
patients since 1960**

KEY MILESTONES IN THE HOSPITAL'S HISTORY

1955

Land purchased on Nablus Road in Sheikh Jarrah for site of proposed new Jerusalem Hospital, the project was spearheaded by Hospitaller Sir Stewart Duke Elder.

October 11, 1960

Hospital officially opens in a ceremony attended by local dignitaries. The 1960 Order of St John Annual Report stated that "On the morning [of] 11 October, the whole of Arab Jerusalem was en fête..."



1967

HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, tours the Jerusalem Hospital in a visit arranged by King Hussein of Jordan.

Image: Prince Philip visiting the Eye Hospital, February 1967

1986

The Hospital's Nursing School officially opens following an agreement with the Jordanian Ministry of Health to issue a Nursing Diploma, where nine months of general nursing training were combined with another nine months of specific ophthalmic nursing training. There were 80 applicants for the diploma in 1986; by 1992 this number had risen to 300, by which time the Nursing School had been renamed the Sir Stephen Miller School of Nursing.

1956-1960

Construction of the new Hospital takes place.

Image: Cornerstone of the Jerusalem Hospital, laid in 1959



1964

HM the late King Hussein of Jordan opens the Hospital's Eye Bank, enabling us to conduct corneal grafting for the first time. During the ceremony, King Hussein spontaneously bequeathed his eyes to the bank.

Image: Male Ward, 1st floor, 1965



1980

Mobile outreach services commence, echoing the original mission and purpose of the Knights Hospitaller in the Holy Land, actively searching for the 'sick poor' throughout the region.

Image: Bedouin children queuing for outreach services, 1980s



1993

Commencement of medical residency training.



2000

Advances in cataract surgery – the phacoemulsification technique was introduced by Dr. Chris Murphy. Hospital operating theatres were upgraded with state-of-the-art equipment to perform these surgeries.

Image: Specialist Ophthalmic Nursing Course graduating class of 2001 (Dr Ahmad Ma'ali far right)

1996

Commencement of postgraduate ophthalmic nurse training.

2003

The Outpatient Department is refurbished, making it the most modern clinic of its kind in the region.

2007

The Jerusalem Hospital hosts celebrations for the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the modern charity.

2010

50 years of continuous service at Skeikh Jarrah celebrated, with the anniversary fundraising appeal raising over £350,000 enabling the refurbishment of the front hall of the main hospital building.



Also in 2010

Day-case surgery established, and the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital as a charity was renamed the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG).

Image: Refurbished Jerusalem Entrance Hall, 2010

2013

The Hospital becomes the first hospital in East Jerusalem to receive the prestigious Joint Commission International accreditation, recognising our expertise worldwide.



2018

HRH the Duke of Cambridge (now William, Prince of Wales) visits the hospital in Jerusalem, the first official visit by a senior member of the British Royal Family to the region in many years. He said: ***"My message tonight is that you have not been forgotten...I hope that through my being here and understanding the challenges you face, the links of friendship and mutual respect between the Palestinian and British people will grow stronger."***

Image: Prince William visiting the Hospital, 2018

Also in 2018

The Refractive Surgery Unit is established.

2017

First Palestinian (interim) joint CEOs appointed – Dr Ahmad Ma'ali and Mr Peter Khoury (now Director of Finance).

Image: Dr Ahmad Ma'ali and Mr Peter Khoury, 2017



2019

Dr Ahmad Ma'ali is appointed the first permanent Palestinian CEO. ***"After almost 30 years of service at the Hospital, I feel both privileged and honoured to become the first local and home-grown CEO of this great organisation"***, he says.

Also in 2019

First retinal research laboratory at the Hospital is established.

2020

His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley, Governor-General of Australia, visits the Jerusalem Hospital.

Image: David Hurley visiting the Eye Hospital, 2020



2022

The Jerusalem Hospital hosts celebrations for the 140th anniversary of the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital.

To find out more about the enduring history of SJEHG, pick up a copy of A Beacon of Hope: 140 Years of Eye Care in the Holy Land, 1882-2022 by Matthew Glozier, Ian Howie-Willis and John Pearn from our online shop!



BUILDING THE FUTURE: THE 2030 VISION FOR ST. JOHN EYE HOSPITAL, JERUSALEM

By Ahmad Awadallah, Facilities Manager, SJEHG



Ahmad Awadallah

As we look to the future, St. John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem is setting its sights on a bold transformation – one that honours the past while embracing the promise of modernity. With the hospital's buildings now over 65 years old, it is time to reimagine and develop these iconic structures to meet the needs of both patients and staff now and into the future. The hospital's strategic master plan aims to create a state-of-the-art facility that blends classic design with cutting-edge technology, all while committing to sustainability and environmental responsibility.

A Vision for 2030

Our 2030 Vision is a clear roadmap to a greener, smarter, and more efficient St. John Eye Hospital. By then, we aim to have an upgraded, modernised facility powered by renewable energy sources, providing a more comfortable environment for both patients and staff. This ambitious vision includes a variety of projects that are designed to enhance every aspect of the hospital's operations.

Key initiatives include:

- Redesigning the main patient entrance with improved access, including ramps for patients with disabilities.
- Revamping the front garden and landscaping to increase parking capacity while preserving green spaces.
- Relocating and developing the Paediatric Clinic, including a new playground and specialised rooms for mothers and babies.
- Relocating the Retinal and Subspecialty Clinics, with full renovations to enhance patient care.

- Establishing a new, modern commercial pharmacy that not only serves patients but also generates income to support charitable initiatives.
- Upgrading the heating system by replacing outdated diesel-operated boilers with efficient, clean electrical heat pumps.
- Installing solar panels to harness renewable energy
- Enhancing IT infrastructure to support modern healthcare technologies.
- Improving security equipment, including better access control systems for added safety.
- Reviewing and improving residential buildings to increase energy efficiency and explore new revenue-generation opportunities.

Sustainability at the Core

At the heart of the 2030 Vision is a commitment to sustainability. The hospital's development will meet green building standards, and every effort will be made to ensure that the transformation reduces the facility's environmental impact. From energy-efficient heating systems and solar panels to the redesign of outdoor spaces, the hospital is committed to creating a more sustainable and environmentally conscious environment.

A Roadmap to Success

Achieving this vision requires a thoughtful and strategic approach. The first step is to conduct a comprehensive architectural survey of the hospital's existing infrastructure. This will involve detailed assessments of the building's civil, mechanical, and electrical systems, creating a clear understanding of where improvements are needed.

Once this survey is completed, we'll prioritise projects, ensuring that our resources are allocated effectively. Crucial to this process is aligning our development goals with the fundraising strategy. Significant funds have already been secured, particularly through the Qatari Fund for Development, and these funds will provide the foundation for implementing the planned upgrades.

Getting Started

The first phase of this ambitious plan will involve a survey conducted by a qualified engineering firm to create as-built drawings of the hospital's infrastructure.

Looking Ahead

As we embark on this transformative journey, we remain committed to the values that have made St. John Eye Hospital a beacon of care in Jerusalem for over six decades. By 2030, we hope to have a hospital that is not only a place of healing but also a model of innovation, sustainability, and excellence in healthcare.

The road ahead is long, but with our dedicated team, generous supporters, and unwavering vision, we are confident that the St. John Eye Hospital of the future will be a shining example of progress, compassion, and care.

Share your memories of the Jerusalem Hospital with us!

Do you have any stories from your time visiting/working at the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem? We'd love to hear them! Email info@stjohnneyehospital.org or call us at **+44(0) 207 253 2582** to let us know, and for a chance to be featured in future newsletters.



GAZA: TWO YEARS IN CRISIS

Patients awaiting treatment in Deir Al Balah, in collaboration with Al-Noor Center for the Visually Impaired

When Mohammed Yaghi arrived at our hospital in Gaza City earlier this year, he had been enduring constant pain and discomfort in his right eye.

At only 12 years old, Mohammed has already lived through more upheaval than most adults. Displaced with his family from Tel Al-Hawa to the refugee camps of Al-Mawasi in Khan Yunis, the ongoing war has taken away his home, school and any sense of routine. The new problems with his eye only deepened his family's anxiety. Against this backdrop of uncertainty, Mohammed's parents turned to the St John Eye Hospital in Gaza which has been providing free eye care to Gazans for over 30 years.

Since the start of the hostilities, our Hospital in Gaza, which had to be abandoned at the outset of the conflict, has not been spared by the violence and remained out of use until May this year.

During the temporary ceasefire in January, after 15 months of displacement, our staff were able to return to the north and visit the building to properly assess its condition. While various bits of equipment had been destroyed, looted or taken for safekeeping, a structural survey revealed the foundations were intact and parts of the building could be repaired and reinstated.



Field clinic, Deir Al Balah



Gaza Hospital prior to recent evacuation, June 2025



Paediatric examination in collaboration with Al-Noor Center for the Visually Impaired



Mohammad Yaghi undergoing examination in Gaza

In the outpatient's clinic, shattered windows were patched with sheets of nylon when glass could not be found, and the reopening was delayed while staff struggled to secure a generator to restore electricity.

Despite considerable odds, the Hospital officially reopened on 10th May and over the course of the next few months welcomed thousands of patients. Among them, Mohammed, his father's hand clasped tightly in his own, arriving at the only place in Gaza still able to offer specialist eye care. Examined by Dr Fawzi Abu Jahloum, Mohammed was diagnosed with eye allergies brought on by dust. He was treated immediately and free of charge.

From children like Mohammed to adults with chronic conditions such as diabetic retinopathy, and those suffering with new eye injuries, thousands have walked through the doors of SJEH in Gaza seeking care. Each story is a reminder that, even amid immense challenges, every patient treated represents a life transformed. As one nurse reflects, "Seeing a child leave our clinic with a smile, or helping someone retain their sight, makes every struggle worth it. Even in the toughest moments, we know the work we do changes lives."

Another such case was a 25-year-old man who had already lost his left eye to a war-related injury. Under the leadership of Dr Mahmoud Ghoneim, Consultant Vitreoretinal Surgeon, the team performed complex retinal surgery combined with cataract removal to save the sight in his only remaining eye. Without this intervention, he would have been left completely blind.

In recent weeks, the ground incursion into Gaza City forced our staff to once again evacuate from the north, joining more than 1.2 million displaced Gazans in the south.

Under a contingency plan developed by the Hospital, we secured a plot of land in the south where, with support from the Emirates Red Crescent Authority, shelters were established for our staff and their families. Essential medical equipment was safely relocated to secure storage in Deir El Balah, allowing our teams to resume care as quickly as possible.

Despite the challenges, SJEHG staff established temporary field clinics and continued outreach services in Al Nuseirat in central Gaza, ensuring the continuation of urgent eye care for displaced communities. We are grateful that all of our staff in Gaza remain safe and unharmed.

Following the ceasefire announcement on 9 October 2025, staff have now begun returning to northern Gaza. Services will continue in central and southern Gaza while we carry out a full assessment of our hospital in the north.

SJEHG remains steadfast in its commitment to providing eye care for the people of Gaza. Over the coming weeks and months, and should the ceasefire hold, we plan to re-establish our hospital services in the north and begin addressing the massive backlog of patients in need of sight-saving treatment.

For Mohammed and thousands like him, the St John Eye Hospital remains a beacon of hope, and proof that even in the hardest of times, sight can be protected and futures restored.



Paediatric examination in Deir Al Balah



Tents in Deir Al Balah, used as field clinics and staff accommodation, October 2025



Paediatric examination, Deir Al Balah



Conducting eye tests at Deir Al Balah

TIMELINE OF SJEHG'S RESPONSE IN GAZA

October 2023

- 8th October: St John Eye Hospital in Gaza forced to close; staff displaced south.

September - December 2024

- Laser surgery and Avastin injections reintroduced at clinics, focussing on diabetic retinopathy treatment after Avastin injections arrive from Jerusalem.
- Equipment and other supplies sent via Jordan are delayed at the border; limited supplies sourced locally.
- Staffing levels increase as services expand.

March 2025

- 17th March: Ceasefire collapses, renewed incursions, border closures, no aid.
- Clinics across the Strip continue despite shortages.
- Avastin remains unavailable.
- Renovations begin on first floor of Hospital building.

May 2025

- 10th May: St John Eye Hospital in Gaza reopens after essential renovations while continuing to operate the clinics.

October 2025

- Staff relocate to the south of Gaza and start preparing for the establishment of field clinics.
- October 9th: Ceasefire announced. Staff slowly start returning to the north.

April 2024

- Launch of SJEHG's Medical Response Plan with the establishment of temporary semi-static eyecare clinics across Gaza.

January - February 2025

- 13th January: Avastin runs out.
- Shipment from Jordan remains blocked, limited sourcing locally.
- 19th January: Temporary ceasefire allows staff to return to Gaza City and begin cleaning the hospital building, while work at clinics continues.

April 2025

- First floor renovations completed; WHO provides fuel, UNICEF providing water.
- Clinics continue despite no Avastin.
- 30th April: SJEHG performs first major eye surgery since the war begins, with Al Quds Hospital.

June - September 2025

- Gaza Hospital open five days a week.
- Outpatient clinics continue; services expanded through outreach to refugee camps. An average of 1,000 patients treated weekly.
- Irregular fuel and water supplies provided by the WHO and the Community Training and Crisis Management Centre.
- Avastin remains out of stock.
- Food parcels distributed to support staff and their families.
- 14th September: All Gaza hospital work suspended; staff relocate south.

WHAT YOUR SUPPORT MAKES POSSIBLE

- ✓ Purchase of essential medicines and surgical equipment
- ✓ Safe spaces for children to receive treatment
- ✓ Staff salaries and training





Nablus Day Hospital reception desk



Kufr Aqab Centre

We have seen considerable progress at our Kufr Aqab Centre, particularly in addressing the challenges faced by patients unable to access the main hospital in Jerusalem. The deployment of additional staff has enhanced the centre's capacity to manage complex eye conditions.

In the first six months of this year, the centre served a total of 5,928 patients, including 1,836 children. In addition, 313 patients were referred for surgeries and 426 patients were referred to subspecialty clinics at the main hospital in Jerusalem. The centre has seen a marked increase in the treatment of retinal diseases, with more intravitreal injections performed, resulting in improved visual outcomes for many patients.

The expansion plan, completed in July 2025, included increasing available space, acquiring new equipment, launching additional subspecialty clinics, and recruiting more staff. These developments align with the centre's growing needs and reflect a strong commitment to improving access to high-quality eye care.

Hebron Hospital

Since the beginning of 2025, 10,349 patients have received service at our Hebron Hospital, with 474 patients undergoing major surgeries within the same period (January to August 2025).

We were thrilled to announce in June that, after a week of rigorous assessment, the Hebron Hospital was granted JCI (Joint Commission International) accreditation for the first time. The JCI is a US-based organisation that sets rigorous global standards for patient safety and service quality in healthcare facilities worldwide, and the accreditation demonstrates SJEHG's ongoing commitment to patient safety and providing high-quality, world-class eye care.

The Chair and the CEO visited Hebron on the 21st of August to approve the changes needed to launch a general anaesthesia service; engineers are now working on a new design that meets the Palestinian Ministry of Health criteria for the licensing of general anaesthesia. General anaesthesia capability will allow us to perform more cataract and vitreoretinal surgeries, as well as paediatric squint surgery.



Nablus Hospital

Since our new Nablus Hospital opened to patients in March 2025, our weekly numbers have been steadily increasing, now reaching around 400 patients per week. The location of the new hospital has been life-changing for patients in the northern West Bank who are unable to, or struggle to, reach our main Jerusalem Hospital due to travel issues and checkpoints.

In the first month of opening, we began performing surgeries once a week at Nablus. Due to increased demand, we now have a large waiting list, and in September alone we scheduled 20 operation lists. Surgical volume has grown significantly from 20 operations in June to 55 operations in August.

The future is looking bright for the Nablus Hospital, with our teams continuing to deliver a high quality of care in the northern West Bank with a focus on surgical services. The team is implementing plans to upgrade and expand the surgical unit to accommodate a wider range of procedures.



West Bank Outreach

Our mobile outreach services have continued their commitment to providing essential eye care to underserved and remote communities. Despite the challenges posed by political and social unrest, we made significant strides in expanding our reach, improving patient outcomes, and building relationships with more local communities.

Between January and August 2025, our mobile outreach teams were able to reach 179 communities throughout the West Bank, with a total of 10,258 patients screened and 638 patients referred to hospitals and satellite clinics for further advanced care.

The child vision screening programme continues to be a fantastic success, with 49 school visits conducted between January and August. A total of 4,016 students have been screened, with 223 referred for further investigation and treatment.

Early detection of eye problems like refractive errors, lazy eye, and strabismus ensures better treatment outcomes and supports academic and social development. School screenings are cost-effective, prevent long-term issues and promote eye health awareness – making them a high-impact, low-cost solution for young patients.

Over the next year, our plans include extending our outreach services to additional remote areas, increasing community health education initiatives, strengthening partnerships with local organisations, and expanding the school screening programme to include preschool-age children.

Hebron Outreach Update

In October 2025 we will be expanding our outreach services to include the areas surrounding Hebron, making it the third outreach service in Jerusalem and the West Bank.. We have recruited five members of staff – three nurses, one optometrist, and one doctor – to cover the service.

We're very proud that all three nurses were trained at SJEHG and will now bring their expertise to communities in the region. A mobile outreach van and necessary equipment have been secured, including a portable slit lamp, corneal topography machine, and laptops to enable our teams to work remotely.

The new service will run five days a week and is expected to reach a population of around 1 million people. Between our existing outreach services in the West Bank and our Child Vision Screening Programme, we now cover the entire geographic area from north to south. The new Hebron outreach service is particularly important for the southern West Bank, which has many remote villages and extra checkpoints.

Muristan Clinic

Our clinic in Jerusalem's Old City continues to offer weekly screening services to local residents under the stewardship of Nurse Practitioner Marlene Katanasho. The service is a lifeline for elderly residents and those who may struggle to get to the main hospital.



Ameer Faraj is a graduate from our Sir Stephen Miller School of Nursing and will be leading the new Hebron outreach team. He tells us why it's such an important service:

"Stepping into the outreach nurse role opens new horizons not only for patients we serve, but for me as a nurse. Reaching people in their own communities allows us to detect problems earlier, provide education where it's needed most and build trust with families who might otherwise go without care."

"Serving these communities gives me a profound sense of purpose and drives me to keep learning and refining my practice."

"Ultimately being an outreach nurse is not just about providing treatment. It's about building hope and empowering people's knowledge and ensuring that no one is left behind when it comes to eye health."

PATIENT SUCCESS STORIES

"Now I can see clearly again. I feel more comfortable and confident in my daily life."



Yousef at our new Nablus Hospital

MEET YOUSEF SHOURBAJI

Yousef Shourbaji, a retiree from Tulkarem in the northern West Bank, had been struggling with his vision for some time. He noticed increasing blurriness in both eyes and reading, watching TV, and getting about had become daily challenges.

"I couldn't see the television clearly, and even walking around felt unsafe," he said. "It was like looking through a constant fog."

Yousef was diagnosed with bilateral cataracts. He was referred to SJEHG's main hospital in Jerusalem, where he underwent cataract removal surgery on his right eye. The operation went smoothly, and his vision significantly improved.

At his follow-up appointment at the SJEHG Nablus Hospital, Yousef shared, "Now I can see clearly again. I feel more comfortable and confident in my daily life."

What brought him even more relief, however, was the location of his next treatment. "I am relieved to take the follow-up appointment in Nablus, which is near to me in the northern West Bank," he said. "Now I'll be scheduled for the left eye surgery, which will take place in the new Nablus Hospital."

For Yousef, the new hospital in Nablus means much more than convenience. "I'm grateful for this. It saves us the long journey and the difficulties of reaching Jerusalem through checkpoints. I believe this will help many other patients like me from the northern West Bank to seek eye treatment and surgeries in a place that is experienced, trusted, and close to where we live."



Najah undergoing examination at the Kufr Aqab Clinic

MEET NAJAH ZUBAEDI

For Najah Zubaedi, a 59-year-old mother from Al Jalazon Refugee Camp near Ramallah, life took a difficult turn when her vision started to blur. A year ago, she began experiencing cloudy vision and discomfort, making even the simplest tasks challenging.

Concerned about her worsening eyesight, Najah visited the Jalazon camp UNRWA clinic, where she was referred to SJEHG's Kufr Aqab clinic. There, the doctor diagnosed her with a cataract in her right eye. As her condition deteriorated, she found herself struggling more each day, to the point where she cried over the fear of her loss of vision.

Najah's husband, a low-wage laborer in Israel, was their family's primary provider. However, after the war broke out, he lost his job, leaving the family in financial distress. They simply could not afford the cataract surgery that Najah desperately needed.

Thankfully, SJEHG, with the support of the European Society Of Cataract & Refractive Surgeons (ESCRS), covered the cost of Najah's surgery. She underwent Phacoemulsification with Intraocular Lens (IOL) implantation, a procedure that restored clarity to her vision.

Now, with her right eye treated, Najah's world is no longer clouded. She can see better, take care of her children, and handle her daily activities with ease.

MEET AMRO AND DUHA

Amro Shouli, aged 29, and Duha Shouli, aged 27, from Asira Al Shamalia near Nablus, have been long-term patients at SJEHG, after both being diagnosed with congenital glaucoma as babies.

When he was born, Amro's mother, Khalia (a Nurse Tutor at the Eye Hospital), and his grandmother noticed immediately that there was something wrong with this eye. This was highly stressful and upsetting for Khalia as she was unable to take her first-born son home straight away. As a baby, Amro required eye drops every two hours, which made up a big part of the family's everyday life. Duha was similarly affected by her glaucoma, and other children would ask what was wrong with the siblings' eyes.

Both Amro and Duha have remained patients at the hospital, receiving regular check-ups. Amro is now an imam and has been married for two years. Duha has been working in HR for five years in a role requiring a lot of reading and writing, so good eye health is essential.

The family are incredibly grateful for all the support they have received from SJEHG throughout Amro and Duha's lives and are thrilled about the opening of our new Nablus Hospital, as it is closer to where they live and makes it easier for them to access care.

Duha is "grateful for all the staff who were and still are part of my journey. They assisted me through being a patient with my constant enquiries and concerns. The reassurance they gave me is all I need."

Khalia echoes Duha's praise for SJEHG, stating:

"Their treatment meant that my children could live normal lives, work, and get married. Without it, they risked blindness."



Amro now (left), Amro as a baby (right)



Duha now (left), Duha as a baby (right)

TRAINING NEWS:

THE SIR STEPHEN MILLER SCHOOL OF NURSING

The Sir Stephen Miller School of Nursing at St John Eye Hospital remains the oldest and the only provider of expert Ophthalmic Nursing Training in the Middle East. Since the introduction of postgraduate training courses in 1998, over 185 specialist ophthalmic nurses have graduated from the school.

Training nurses is a vital part of SJEHG's mission to develop professional expertise. All graduates of our nursing programme contribute to eliminating blindness across the region and are committed to our mission of providing expert eye care to patients regardless of ethnicity, age, sex, religion or the ability to pay.

Building sustainable and qualified ophthalmic nursing teams is essential to provide high quality eye care services in one of the most economically and socially complex places in the world.

In 2022, the School of Nursing established a partnership with Al-Quds University to provide a nine -month high diploma in ophthalmic nursing. This important partnership allows our graduates to be formally recognised by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education and therefore internationally acknowledged.

Since the establishment of the Nursing School, SJEHG has offered a full scholarship to students. The scholarship covers the university fees, stipends, accommodation, food, stationery and textbooks.

In early June 2025, seven students from various Palestinian areas graduated from the School of Nursing. Recently, five of them were employed at St John Eye Hospital Group. We recently recruited eight students who commenced their Diploma in Ophthalmic Nursing in mid-September 2025.

MEDICAL RESIDENCY TRAINING

We currently have eight doctors undertaking medical residency training at the Eye Hospital, two of whom will graduate in the next two months. The 4-year residency programme is generously sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Meet some of our recent nursing school graduates:



AMEER FARAJ

Student Ameer and School Lecturer Nasrallah

My name is Ameer Faraj, and I am a registered nurse with a deep commitment to the field of nursing. The High Diploma in Ophthalmic Nursing has opened new doors for my professional growth and development. My ultimate goal is to continually improve the quality of eye care and contribute meaningfully to the elimination of preventable blindness in Palestine.

During my studies at St. John Eye Hospital, I received exceptional support, both academically and personally. I was provided with pocket money, meals, and stationery, which helped me focus entirely on my education. Moreover, my teachers and mentors offered constant guidance and encouragement, enabling me to successfully complete the course and grow both professionally and personally.



AREEJ MFAREH

Areej Mfareh with Helen Winterton, His Majesty's Consul-General to Jerusalem and SJEHG trustee

My name is Areej Mfareh, and I have been inspired by my parents' commitment to providing a brighter future for their children. Although they were unable to complete their own education due to difficult circumstances, they instilled in me a deep respect for learning and the power it holds to change lives.

I chose to study nursing out of a strong desire to make a positive impact on both my community and my family. Today, I take great pride in caring for ophthalmic patients with compassion and dedication. The Postgraduate Diploma in Ophthalmic Nursing at St. John Eye Hospital has been a life-changing experience. It not only advanced my professional skills but also deepened my commitment to serving those in need – people who could see the world more clearly if given proper eye care.

I am sincerely grateful for the scholarship provided by St. John Eye Hospital, which has played a vital role in my personal and professional development.

ENGLISH PRIORY RE-ENERGISES STAFF SUPPORT

We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support of the English County Priory Groups (CPGs), whose support for the Hospital through contributions towards staff costs has been a vital commitment since the 1990s.

Recent developments within the unified Priory and St John Ambulance have created a welcome opportunity to renew and strengthen these valued connections. We are delighted to share that a refreshed allocation has now been established, and on these pages, we are pleased to introduce the staff members sponsored by the CPGs.

We extend our thanks, as always, to England Hospitaller Paul Herbage MBE KStJ DL for his steadfast dedication and continuing service to the Eye Hospital.

ENGLISH PRIORY – SPONSORED STAFF



Saleh A.S. Al-Qadi
Head Optometrist
Coventry & Warwickshire



Nader Hjouj
Head Chef, Jerusalem Hospital
Devon & Cornwall



Nadia Abdel Jawwad
Licensed Practical Nurse
East Anglia (Essex & Suffolk)



Khitam Al-Hasanat
Ophthalmic Staff Nurse
East Midlands (Lincolnshire & Nottinghamshire)



Osama Jarrah
Head of Infection
Control Department
Greater London



Omayma Abdel Ghani
Licensed Practical Nurse
Guernsey & Isle of Man



Huda Abu Aleis
Orthoptist
Hampshire & Isle of Wight



Muyassar Ghanem
Head of Retinal Diagnostics
Jersey



Fathi Qaisi
Medical Engineer
Kent



Ahmad Yahia Qaraqe
Ophthalmic Staff Nurse
Mercia (Herefordshire,
Worcestershire, Shropshire,
Staffordshire & Wolverhampton)



Saeda Qawwas
Senior Ophthalmic Nurse
Midland Shires (Leicestershire
& Rutland, Northamptonshire)



Marlene Katanasho
Nurse Practitioner
Muristan Norfolk



Vernice Bannourah
Staff Nurse/CSSD Supervisor
North East England (Durham,
Northumberland, North
Yorkshire & Teesside)



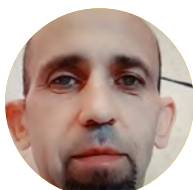
Rula Khader
Senior Staff Nurse
North West England (Cheshire,
Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater
Manchester & Merseyside)



Khawla Gheith
Staff Nurse
South West Yorkshire
& Derbyshire



**Cassandra Fuad
Mustafa Ali**
Staff Nurse
Surrey & Sussex (Surrey, East
Sussex & West Sussex)



**Younis Mohammed
Jawwad**
Certified Orthoptist
Thames Valley (Berkshire,
Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire)



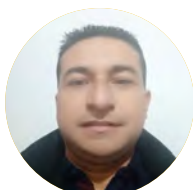
Ahmad Hasan Rizqallah
Senior Staff Nurse
The Cotswolds & Western
England (Gloucestershire, Bristol
& Avon, Somerset)



**Hani Saleh A'Hadi
Abualhaija**
Nurse Manager
Wessex (Dorset & Wiltshire)



**Baha Eddein H.
Qawasmi**
Staff Nurse
West Anglia (Cambridgeshire,
Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire)



**Malek Hussein
Breitom**
Charge Nurse
West Midlands



The Great Hall at the Apothecaries'

On Wednesday 16th July we hosted a very special event at London's Apothecaries' Hall, 'In Conversation with Dr Ahmad Ma'ali', where our CEO spoke to award-winning BBC journalist Samira Ahmed about his career and the fantastic work of the Eye Hospital in the Holy Land. The evening was hosted in collaboration with three of our biggest supporter groups: the Guild of St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital, iYouth, and the Guild of Young Freemen.

Guests were welcomed to the beautiful and historic Apothecaries' Hall by Professor David Ross, Dean of the Centre for Health Studies at the Society of Apothecaries, who gave a short history of the Apothecaries and their medical prestige, including training in disaster and conflict medicine – something particularly relevant to the work of SJEHG.

Samira Ahmed then expertly guided the conversation with Dr Ma'ali, who had flown to London from Jerusalem for the event. Their discussion covered a vast range of topics, starting with Dr Ma'ali's journey to CEO at SJEHG from initially working at the Eye Hospital aged 18.

The progress Dr Ma'ali has witnessed during his time at the Eye Hospital has

been remarkable - annual patient numbers have risen from around 70,000–80,000 a decade ago to more than 180,000 today. As Dr Ma'ali commented, this increase is inextricably tied to our mission of providing high-quality, charitable eye care: "Because if we don't give that care to the people, nobody else will do it."

The challenges of operating in such a complex region were also discussed, particularly in light of the current humanitarian situation in Gaza. The war has caused enormous disruption: evacuations, building damage, risks to staff, and severe supply chain interruptions. Yet, adaptation has been swift and determined. Dr Ma'ali praised the resilience of our staff in Gaza: "Almost everybody from our staff in Gaza has lost a family member... but these people are so determined to do more, to look after their people."

Dr Ma'ali also addressed the challenges faced by patients in the West Bank, such as difficulties accessing the Eye Hospital due to checkpoints, a problem that our new Nablus Hospital seeks to ameliorate. He also discussed the most common health conditions in the region, like diabetes and diabetic retinopathy, and how we work to ensure that everyone is able to access the care they need.

The collaborative nature of our work was reflected in speeches from Sarah-Jane Holden, Chair of the Guild of St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital, Guy Cabral of iYouth, and Reuben Braden Bell, Master of the Guild of Young Freemen, highlighting their relationships with SJEHG, and fundraising efforts. Partnerships, both local and international, remain vital in ensuring sight-saving treatment continues despite immense challenges. The message was clear: solidarity, support, and fundraising must continue so that our mission endures.

Former Warden of the Eye Hospital, Dr Alec Harden, perhaps summed up the importance of our work best in the audience Q&A session at the end of the talk: "St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group: Saving Sight, Changing Lives. That goes on. That cannot ever fail, because everybody needs that service."



Drinks reception in the Courtyard following the conversation

Thank you to everyone who attended, to Samira Ahmed for her insightful interviewing, and to our hosts, the Society of Apothecaries, for use of their wonderful venue.

Thank you also to iYouth for raising awareness and fundraising for the Eye Hospital through their iWalks; to the Guild of St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital for nearly 100 years of fundraising; and to our newest supporter group the Guild of Young Freemen for selecting us as their first permanently supported charity.

You can watch the full recording of the evening by scanning the QR code or visiting www.youtube.be/2ogtDL5VwB4



Dr Ahmad Ma'ali and Samira Ahmed on stage



Members of the Guild of St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital with Dr Ahmad Ma'ali



Centre for Health Studies
Apothecaries' Hall

Ready to embark on the next chapter of your lifelong learning journey?



The History of Medicine Course

A deep dive into the fascinating journey of medical practices from circa 1500 BCE to the present day. From ancient healing practices to modern healthcare systems, trace the evolution of medicine through time and across cultures.

“You cannot obtain this quality of academic teaching in the history of medicine anywhere else in the world”

Cindy,
Student 2023



The Ethics & Philosophy of Medicine Course

Covering the 'big questions' ranging from c.350 BCE to the present day from the unique view of moral philosophy, draw upon theory, clinical cases and seminal legal issues to demonstrate the live ethical challenges of modern medicine.

“The course should carry a health warning... addictive and will change your way of thinking”

Prof. D. Misselbrook
Lecturer



The Conflict and Catastrophe Medicine Course

Ready to embark on your humanitarian career? This course empowers the next generation of humanitarian medics, equipping you with the relevant knowledge and practical skills to work effectively in the disaster environment.

“In my view, the course is essential for anyone who is thinking of working in the humanitarian sector”

Prof. D Ross,
Dean



COMMUNITY NEWS

The last few months at the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG) have been filled with inspiring events, warm gatherings, and creative initiatives, all aimed at raising awareness and support for our life-changing work in the Holy Land. From cultural celebrations to historic tours, conversations with leaders, and exciting upcoming projects, our community of supporters continues to shine brightly in their commitment to our mission.

The Guild of St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group

Palestinian Fundraising Dinner for Nablus

On the 14th of June, the Guild of St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital hosted a remarkable Palestinian fundraising dinner at Our Lady of Victories Church in Kensington. The event raised over £16,000 for the new Hospital in Nablus; a project central to extending our reach to communities most in need.

Guests were treated to a buffet of Palestinian delicacies, reflecting the rich culinary heritage of the region. The evening's highlight came with a vibrant performance of Dabke dancers, whose energy and rhythm brought joy and spirit to the room.



CEO Dr Ahmad Ma'ali with Guild Chair Sarah-Jane Holden and fundraising dinner organiser Ahlam Akram

Support from the English Priory St John Somerset

We are very grateful to the members of the Bristol County Priory Group and especially to its Hospitaller, Dr Adrian Ailes and Marianne Ailes, for organising the Eucharist collection at their local Holy Trinity Church in support of SJEHG. Parishioners have chosen to support SJEHG as one of the church's core missions.

Trustee Revd Paul Hackwood and London team member Harriet Wheeler were delighted to attend, with Paul delivering part of the sermon. Our thanks go to all the volunteers and parishioners for their generosity and support, particularly during Mission Giving Sunday. Their support is a true testament to the spirit of mission and community.



L-R: Bristol Hospitaller Dr Adrian Ailes, SJEHG Trustee Revd Paul Hackwood, Executive Head of the UK Office of SJEHG Harriet Wheeler and Stuart Hadler, County President for Bristol, Avon & Somerset

St John Norfolk

We are very grateful to the St John Fellowship and St John Ambulance team in Norfolk, Sir David Ralli, Mr and Mrs Soames and the Trustees of the Great Walton Charitable Trust for the Great event at the Open Garden in Norfolk! Our thanks are also extended to the members of the public and visitors that attended the open garden. Our London team member Rick Warner was delighted to attend!



SJA Norfolk Fellowship - Open Gardens Tea Team at West Barsham Hall

A New Cookbook Project

Our English Priory and dedicated County Hospitaliers continue to show remarkable support. Among their many initiatives is an upcoming Palestinian recipe cookbook, lovingly curated to showcase the flavours of the region.

Led by Cheshire County Hospitaller, Lyn Hunter, the project brings together staff favourites and traditional dishes passed down through families. The cookbook will not only raise funds but also invite supporters to bring a taste of Palestine into their own homes, connecting hearts and kitchens across borders. We eagerly anticipate sharing this wonderful collection with you soon.

St John Across the World

Austria

We are forever grateful to St John Austria and its members for their recent public appeal raising funds for paediatric services. Your dedication and commitment to supporting children in need make a real difference. Thanks to everyone who kindly donated, and to all those involved in organising the appeal.

Malta

On Friday 6th June, St John Malta hosted "An Evening of Film Classics" at St Paul's Anglican Pro-Cathedral in Valletta in aid of the Eye Hospital (and the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem). It looks like it was a wonderful event raising essential funds and awareness, and we are so grateful for their support.



St John Malta fundraising concert in Valletta

New Zealand

We are incredibly grateful to the New Zealand Priory of St John for their dedicated and continued support for SJEHG, whose members have now come to refer to as "our hospital." At the end of their financial year in 2025, the New Zealand Priory submitted their annual donation of a staggering NZD\$291,815, a true testament to the commitment of their members to our work.

In a letter to Order Members for this year's Annual Appeal, New Zealand Chancellor John Whitehead KStJ shared this message: "I have been really moved by the way Eye Hospital staff have continued their work wherever and whenever they can, often at significant personal risk, to whomever needs their help. It's hard to imagine a better example of the values we stand for as an Order." We couldn't agree more, John!

Knights Templar Support

Our relationship with the Knights Templar continues to strengthen. Their ongoing commitment has provided vital funds and awareness for our projects. We remain grateful for their solidarity and generosity, which allows us to sustain and expand our reach to communities most in need of eye care.

Durham Provincial Priory

On Saturday 19th July, the Knights Templar proudly marked the 50th anniversary of the separation of the Provinces of Durham and Northumberland, in a moving celebration of tradition, charity, and unwavering dedication.

Attended by our CEO, Dr Ahmad Ma'ali, the service and dinner reflected on an extraordinary journey of fellowship and fundraising.

The Provincial Priory of Durham have, to date, raised an outstanding £112,000 for SJEHG, enabling the purchase of a life-changing cataract surgery machine, replacing vital water filtration systems, and providing hope, sight, and dignity to those in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem.

We at SJEHG are deeply grateful to the support provided by the Provincial Priory of Durham and the Knights Templar.

In the words of the Provincial Prior, Richard Scott:

“To all who contributed, organised, and gave so generously – your support wasn’t just financial, it was transformational.”



E. Kt. Vernon King with Dr Ahmad Ma'ali in Durham

Northumberland Provincial Priory

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Brother Knights of the Provincial Priory of Northumberland for their extraordinary generosity in raising £120,000 in support of the Hospital. The Province, established in 1975, marked its Golden Jubilee with a special Church Service in Hexham, followed by a celebratory lunch.

FROM THE CEO, DR. AHMAD MA'ALI

“These are challenging times for the Hospital Group, as we continue to face numerous obstacles and uncertainties. Despite this, our dedicated teams remain steadfast in their mission, delivering high-quality and essential eye care services across all six of our sites.

Thanks to their unwavering commitment, we are on track to reach yet another milestone—providing care to over 210,000 patients by the end of the year.

None of this would have been possible without the heartfelt support of our St John Global family. Your continued encouragement and solidarity mean the world to us.”

The past months have been a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when compassion meets action. From cultural evenings and historic tours to new projects and conversations with leaders, every effort brings us closer to our goal: ensuring that no one in the Holy Land is left in the dark.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have supported us, whether by attending events, sharing in our cultural celebrations, or contributing behind the scenes. Your generosity, creativity, and dedication continue to bring sight and hope to countless lives.

Stay connected with us for more updates, upcoming events, and ways you can be part of this remarkable journey.

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Royal Experience – Tour of Windsor Castle

Monday, 24 November 2025, 18:00

The Guild of St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital is pleased to invite you to attend a private guided tour of Windsor Castle conducted by Dr Richard Williams, Learning Curator of the Royal Collection Trust. Go behind the ropes of the State Apartments and discover how William the Conqueror's wooden castle was rebuilt by Edward III and how Charles II set out to rival his cousin Louis XIV's Palace of Versailles, while George IV filled the rooms with works of art and gave Windsor its famous skyline. Groups will also learn how His Majesty and members of the Royal Family use the Castle today.

Date: Monday 24 November 2025

Time: 18:00 – 20:30

Ticket Price: £125 (including a £40 donation to the Eye Hospital)

Tickets available here:

www.stjohnseyehospital.org/events/guildwindsorcastletour/



GUILD CENTENARY

100 Years of the Guild

Next year, the Guild of St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital will celebrate their centenary year with a fantastic diary of events to commemorate 100 years of fundraising and dedication to the work of the Eye Hospital.

Sign up to become a Friend of SJEHG to keep up to date with the latest goings-on from

the Guild and hear about how you can get involved in this landmark year for the organisation!



LEGACIES & OBITUARIES



SYLVIA HOLMES

7 November 1948 – 10 May 2025

Sylvia Holmes passed away on 10 May in Kingston Hospital following complications after a sepsis infection. She was first diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2015 and fought a long battle against the debilitating illness.

Sylvia was born on 7 November 1948 in Oulton Broad, a small village near Lowestoft in Suffolk, and had two brothers, Colin and Gus. She married John in 1976, and they had two children: Tom, born in 1980, and Helen in 1982.

Shortly after leaving school, Sylvia took the decision to move to London and started work as a medical secretary at Moorfields Eye Hospital. Sylvia's boss at Moorfields, Stephen Miller, had a private practice at the London Clinic in Harley Street, and he asked her to join him as his private secretary.

During her time at the London Clinic, Stephen Miller was appointed as the Ophthalmologist to the Royal Household, and was subsequently knighted, so Sylvia met several members of the Royal Household including the late Queen Elizabeth, and several members of Middle East royalty, including the late King Hussein of Jordan.

When Sir Stephen retired from his practice in the London Clinic and became the Hospitalier to the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital, he asked Sylvia to join him as a fundraiser at the London offices in St John's Gate, where she worked until she retired. She had several trips to the Hospital in Jerusalem combined with sightseeing visits to places like Petra and Damascus. In 2007 Sylvia was honoured to be made a Commander Sister in the Order of St John.

Sylvia kept in regular contact with her nursing friends at the Hospital particularly Jackie, Ann and Jean, who kindly visited her at home during her illness. She would have been pleased to know that her friends at the hospital will be planting an olive tree in the grounds in her memory.



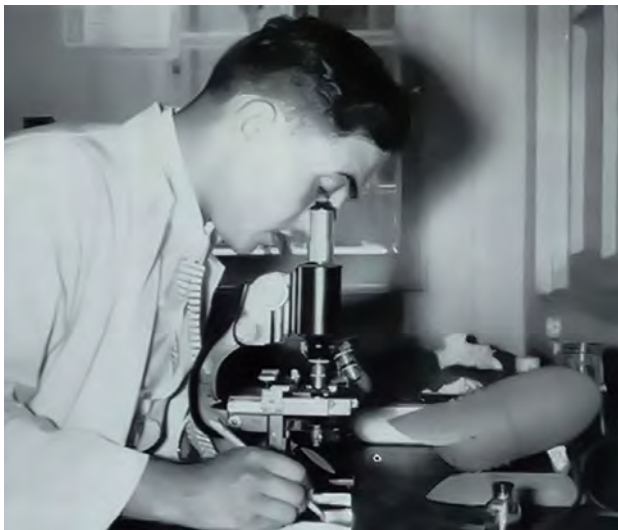
DENNIS PARKER

12 March 1928 – 16 August 2024

Dennis was a dedicated member of the St John family, starting as a cadet in 1941 and rising to become Commander of Essex in 1990 and a Knight of the Order in 1996. In 2002 he received his MBE for services to St John in Essex.

In retirement he continued to be active in the Fellowship and to raise large sums for the Eye Hospital. In 2008 he was presented with a statuette of a Knight of St John "for Outstanding Services" to the Hospital by the Priory Hospitalier, Gilbert Hinckley. He received the Long Service Medal in Gold with four gold bars (representing the maximum 70 years of service) from the Lord Lieutenant of Essex in 2021.

Dennis's wife Thelma who died in 2022 was also actively involved with St John and was a Serving Sister of the Order.



DR ABDUL-MUIZ YAHYA SHAWAR

10 June 1935 – 7 June 2025

Dr Abdul-Muiz Yahya Shawar was one of Jordan's first certified ophthalmologists and was foundational in bringing ophthalmic knowledge to the country. However, his path was shaped across the border in Jerusalem, at the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital.

From 1960 to 1962, Dr Shawar trained and practiced at SJEH, under the tutelage of Warden Dr Arthur Joseph Boase and Hospitalier Brigadier Sir William Stewart Duke-Elder, surgeon oculist to the British Royal Family. Dr Shawar estimated that during his time at the Eye Hospital, he attended to over 25,000 patients.

Dr Shawar requested Sir Duke-Elder to apply for a scholarship at London's Moorfield's Eye Hospital, provided by the British Council in Jordan, to develop his ophthalmic skills. This was in 1961 – Sir Duke-Elder stipulated that he would only provide the recommendation if Dr Shawar stayed at SJEH for another year!

He studied at Moorfields from 1962-1963, with guidance from Sir Duke-Elder, who continued to take an interest in the young doctor's achievements. Dr Shawar's experience gained at SJEH helped him work alongside the greats of ophthalmology, and in 1969, after a stint in the Jordanian military and government sector, he established the first ever ophthalmology clinic in Amman, Jordan.

Dr Shawar carried SJEH and Moorfield's legacy into an entirely new region, where he went on to transform lives and mentor generations of doctors, and serve as the Dean of Ophthalmologists in the Kingdom of Jordan. He worked consistently (waking up at 3am every morning) until 2024, when, at the age of 89, he finally retired. Less than a year later, Dr Shawar passed away, three days before his 90th birthday.

His family fondly remember his wisdom and guidance, his sense of humour, and his commitment to bettering the world around him. Though they lament his passing, they say he lived the perfect, complete life: working hard, nourishing his career, and building his family.

We are grateful to Dr Shawar's grandson, Mohammed Halawani, for sharing his grandfather's story with us.



We were saddened to hear of the passing of Corinna, Lady Hamilton of Dalzell DL DStJ on 7 July 2025, a long-time member of the St John family and supporter of the Eye Hospital. Full obituary to follow in the next Jerusalem Scene.

HELP OUR VITAL WORK BY LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

One of the most profound ways you can support the work of SJEHG long into the future is to consider leaving a gift to us in your Will. This is a very special way of giving and means that as well as looking after those closest to you, you can achieve some incredible things after you have gone. You don't need to leave a large amount to make a real difference, and we will be hugely grateful.

Last year, gifts in Wills made up 8% of all the voluntary donations given to SJEHG and formed a significant part of our overall income.

If you have any questions about leaving a gift in your Will to SJEHG, or making a gift in memory of a loved one, please email info@stjohnseyehospital.org or call **+44 (0)207 253 2582**.



Give the gift of sight
this Christmas



Ramzi and his mother in the Paediatric Ward, Jerusalem

This Christmas you can give a child the most precious gift of all – the gift of sight.

Every day at the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group, lives are being transformed thanks to people like you. In clinics, operating theatres and outreach vans across the Holy Land, our doctors and nurses are working tirelessly to save sight – often in extraordinary and uncertain circumstances. Their commitment, their courage, and their compassion shines like a beacon in a region too often overshadowed by conflict. But they can only continue this life-changing work with your support, and today our work has never been more vital.

In times of war, when so much energy goes into tearing down, this hospital quietly builds up. Where sight is lost, we restore it. Where vision fades, we help people to see again and reclaim their lives. Even in moments of great darkness, we bring hope. And when the future seems uncertain, we give clarity – and the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

This Christmas, you can help us give the gift of sight to the communities we serve, restoring vision and hope in the darkest of times.

Please consider a donation to SJEHG this Christmas to help us continue our sight-saving work in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza.

Meet Ramzi – now he can see his future

Ramzi, from Bethlehem, began his journey with the Eye Hospital at just six months old, when he was diagnosed with a squint and astigmatism, and as he grew, his eyesight deteriorated. Reading, writing and even playing with friends became a daily struggle.

At school, even though Ramzi was one of the top students in his class, he sometimes faced bullying because of how his eyes looked. He often asked his mother why his eyes were different from everyone else's.

Thanks to supporters like you, Ramzi received expert treatment at our Jerusalem hospital. Today, he's a happy, confident 10-year old who dreams of becoming a teacher one day.

Ramzi's story is just one example of how your generosity restores hope, independence, and sight.

YOUR GIFT WILL CHANGE LIVES

This year alone, our teams are set to treat over 200,000 patients across Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza – including tens of thousands of children like Ramzi.

£25 could provide vital antibiotic eye drops for three children

£50 could provide a month of glaucoma treatment for one patient

£100 could support sight-saving surgery

Any gift you give will help protect someone's sight

93p of every £1 donated goes directly to patient care

HOW TO DONATE:

You can donate to our Gift of Sight Christmas Appeal by visiting our website: www.stjohnseyehospital.org/give-the-gift-of-sight-this-christmas/

Or by scanning the QR code:



SEND A DIGITAL CARD FOR SJEHG

We've teamed up with **DontSendMeACard**, where you can support the Eye Hospital by sending e-cards, with a donation in lieu of postage costs (and it's better for the planet too!)

Browse our range of e-cards here: www.dontsendmeacard.com/ecards/charities/st-john-of-jerusalem-eye-hospital-group

Or by scanning the QR code:



Prefer traditional cards? We've got you covered! Our full range of paper cards is on the next page...

CARDS

All packs of 10
Priced at £10 each

Special offer:
5 packs of 10 for £45
10 packs of 10 for £90



A Child is Born



Bethlehem Evening



**Celebrating Christmas
at the Eye Hospital**



Christmas Dove



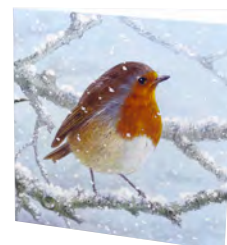
Festive Robins



Golden Kings



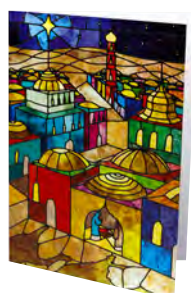
Mobile Outreach Van



Robin



Season's Greetings



Stained Glass Nativity



The Adoration



Stained Glass Window



Topiary Robin



**We Three Kings
of Orient Are**



**We Wish You a
Merry Christmas**



Winter Village

STOCKING FILLERS

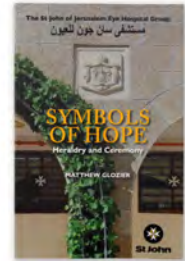
Shop now at shop.stjohneyehospital.org or use the order form on page 26.



SJEHG Silk Tie



Lapel Pin Badge



Symbols of Hope by Matthew Glozier (Paperback)



A Beacon of Hope by Matthew Glozier, Ian Howie-Willis & John Pearn (Paperback)



Mobile Outreach Van Model



Portable Charger



SJEHG Umbrella



Tote Bag (Black)



Tote Bag (Cream)



Flashlight Pen



SJEHG Pen



SJEHG Notebook

STOCKING FILLERS

Item	Cost Per Unit	Number of	Total (£)
A Beacon of Hope (Paperback)	£36		
Flashlight Pen	£5.50		
Lapel Pin Badge	£5		
Mobile Outreach Van [model]	£10		
Portable Charger	£10		
SJEHG Notebook	£10		
SJEHG Pen	£5.50		
SJEHG Silk Tie	£25		
Symbols of Hope (Paperback)	£25		
Tote Bag (Black)	£10		
Tote Bag (Cream)	£3.50		
Total			

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Item	Cost Per Unit	Number of	Total (£)
A Child is Born (10)	£10		
Bethlehem Evening (10)	£10		
Celebrating Christmas at the Hospital (10)	£10		
Christmas Dove (10)	£10		
Festive Robins (10)	£10		
Golden Kings (10)	£10		
Mobile Outreach Van [Card] (10)	£10		
Robin (10)	£10		
Season's Greetings (10)	£10		
Stained Glass Nativity (10)	£10		
Stained Glass Window (10)	£10		
The Adoration (10)	£10		
Topiary Robin (10)	£10		
We Three Kings of Orient Are (10)	£10		
We Wish You a Merry Christmas (10)	£10		
Winter Village (10)	£10		
Mix & Match (5 packs of 10)	£45		
Mix & Match (10 packs of 10)	£90		
Total			

Please consider adding a small donation to your order to cover the costs of postage.

Please return to: St John Eye Hospital Group, London Office, 4 Charterhouse Mews, London EC1M 6BB

Signed	Title Name
	Email
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TOGETHER WE'RE SAVING SIGHT AND CHANGING LIVES



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

1 Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms)

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Maestro only

Card number

Expiry Date

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Issue Number (Maestro only)

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4 Join us

Become part of the movement to end preventable blindness.

Would you like to hear from us by email? Yes ☐ No ☐

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