

# The Hospitallers' Club

Founded 1920

*Patron: The Hospitaller of the Priory of England*

*And the Islands Order of St John*



**Newsletter**

January, February, March 2023

Welcome to the first Newsletter for 2023.

## Club Meetings and Our Speakers

### January 2022

As you know, January traditionally sees us holding our AGM. This year was no different and although we had an issue with the venue initially, we were able to go ahead with the meeting at the Royal National Hotel, just up the road from the Bedford Hotel.

All went as planned and the following is the list of Club appointments for 2023:-

President – Gill Hodgekinson-Price

Vice President – Jani Levanen

Immediate Past President – Richard Webber

Honorary Treasurer – Angela O’Beirne

Honorary Secretary – there is no full role holder for this but the following roles are being undertaken:- Administration – Life Member Seamus Kelly; Minute Secretary – Past President Angela Reed; New Members – Committee Member John Pullen; Emails – President Gill Hodgekison-Price

Honorary Social Secretary – Past President Geoff Jackson

Honorary Almoner – Life Member Cliff Bishop

Honorary Archivist – Life Member Barry Theobald-Hicks

Patron – Past President and Deputy Lieutenant Paul Herbage

Committee Members – Maureen Fenton, Kirstie Girling, Sheila Jackson,  
Maggie Proctor, John Pullen and Pam West

A vote of thanks was given to Life Member Derek Rudge who has had to stand down from the role of Almoner due to personal circumstances.

The amended dates for 2023 were re-published and are as follow:

## Hospitallers' Club Dates 2022

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Club Night (Friday)</u>
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	1830	Zoom – Pre AGM	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	13 <sup>th</sup> January <b>AGM</b>
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> February	1720	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row – pre Club Meeting	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> February
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> March
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> April	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> April
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> May	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> May
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> or 21st September	1830	TBC	
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> October	1830	(if needed) Zoom	
<b>Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>Dinner and Dance Royal National Hotel</b>	
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Venue TBC	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> November
Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> November	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Venue TBC	Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> December

## February 2023

We once again met at the Bedford Hotel, both face-to-face and online.

The President, Gill Hodgekinson-Price was unwell and unable to attend the Meeting, so the Vice President Jani Levanen stepped in and opened the Meeting and welcomed everyone.

Gill had been planning to bring the speaker with her and was unable, so our own Member, Carol Jamieson (previously Lock) filled the gap and gave a wonderful talk on her experience as a VSO worker in India.

Carol was a St. John Ambulance volunteer for 24 years and also worked as a trainer at York Street before becoming a National Training Officer at St John Ambulance NHQ in Clerkenwell.

At the end of 2001 she left St John and headed off to India to undertake a 2 year stint as a VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) volunteer in a small village outside of Calcutta (now Kolkata).

Carol worked at CINI – the Child in Need Institute - from December 2001 to November 2003 but there was a 3 month break in the first year due to the rising tensions between India and Pakistan. The volunteers were all evacuated at short notice and many did not return.

Carol chose to go back, and went on to also do 6 months in Delhi at the end of her time in Calcutta, working as the VSO Office volunteer specifically looking at the training given to new volunteers arriving in country.

Carol described the training she undertook and gave an entertaining talk about the different aspects of her life in India, including telling us about the journey from Delhi to Calcutta on the Rajdhani Express, the forms of transport she used, the small self-contained accommodation she lived in and the work that she did at CINI. The talk was accompanied by slides showing all aspects of her life.

A vote of thanks was given to Carol along with the usual paperweight.

## March 2023

The March Meeting was well attended with 34 people being present and 6 people online.

The speaker for March was Baiju McCubbins from the Medical Detection Dogs. She gave us a great talk, explaining that she would cover three things...the how and why of the Charity; how the dogs are trained to sniff out human diseases and how the dogs can save and enhance lives.

The charity is a fairly new one, being only 5 years old, but they have done a lot of work and they have the Queen Consort, Camilla, as their patron.

When they first started their work, the medical sector was very sceptical about whether a dog could actually detect an illness. One of the first things that persuaded them was a family dog which persistently nudged a 19 year old in a specific area where she had a mole. She eventually went to the GP and found that it was a malignant melanoma.

Dr John Church, who incidentally introduced maggots and leeches to the NHS after witnessing the use of them in Rwanda, was convinced that dogs could detect illness. There wasn't however any science or protocol around this, so Dr Claire Guest from Medical Detection Dogs designed a protocol.

She worked on bladder cancer first. In 2004 a dog that she had kept signalling on what was considered to be a 'negative sample'. It turned out that the owner of the sample did actually have renal cancer.

In 2008 the charity was founded after Dr Claire's own dog Daisy detected Claire's own deep seated early breast cancer.

The charity describes the dogs as 'bio sensors with fluffy coats and waggy tails.' In order to understand this, we need to know that the human nose might be able to detect one teaspoon of sugar in a cup of water, but a dog's nose can detect one teaspoon in water the size of 2 Olympic swimming pools.

The dogs that the charity use were initially donated, with some being rescue dogs, or purchased. When Covid struck, there was a scarcity of dogs, so they started their own breeding programme. It costs £29,000 to train one dog and no particular breed of dog is preferred over the other.

The charity employs 35 people supported by 650 volunteers. Some of these volunteers foster the dogs in the same way the Guide Dogs are fostered. When they are of suitable age, the dogs are assessed and then the decision is made as to which of the two arms of the charity they will go to.

The first of the two arms is the Medical Detection side – those who sniff out disease. The second arm is Medical Alert Assistance – those who help people who have a known illness and are able to predict an episode of this.

The detection dogs work on Prostate Cancer – in conjunction with Milton Keynes NHS; Colo-Rectal Cancer - in conjunction with Hull and Yorkshire NHS; Parkinsons Disease - in conjunction with the University of Manchester (interestingly, there is a lady who can detect this too!); Urinary Tract Infections and Septicaemia – in conjunction with UCH NHS; Malaria – in conjunction with the Gates Foundation, Durham NHS and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine; and then Covid - in conjunction with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

When the dogs are chosen, they look to see how keen and accurate they are and then they enhance the training using two to three 20 minute sessions per day, positive reinforcement and of course rewards when they get it right.

Covid was an interesting one, and has now subsided somewhat, but they found that 2 Medical Detection Dogs could cover a whole plane of people in about one hour; a task that would have taken the conventional testing several days to do.

Dr Claire worked with one dog called Asher, who was hyperactive and had been rehomed a total of seven times. This dog however completely changed when trained to detect Covid.

Obviously the charity is aware that in order to supply enough dogs and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are working on an electronic sniffer to detect prostate cancer. They are trying to isolate what it is that the dogs detect and are using a process of elimination to find this and train artificial intelligence to do it, so that it would be usable on items such as mobile phones. That said, the accuracy of dog detection is not in doubt with a rate 96.7% for POTS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome - a condition where the heart rate increases on changing the posture, such as lying to sitting up or standing, or even just walking around. This then causes dizziness or fainting).

Baiju concluded saying that the charity needs to raise £2.5 million pounds per year to continue it's work.

There weren't any actual questions from the audience, but several observations were made about allergies, other animals such as cats being known to signal to their owners too and general comments about how good this was.

A vote of thanks was given to Baiju along with the usual paperweight by Mark Adhen.

Please don't forget...*This is your newsletter.* We will always give you the information from the Meetings, but it would be lovely to have some things from you, so *if you would like to see something else, or you have something to add to this please let me know. Please address any items for this or any queries via the usual email address but **FAO Gill.***

### **Contact Details**

If you need to contact the Club or you know of someone who would like to apply to join either as an Ordinary Member or a Provincial Member if they meet the requirement, please email [hospitallers1920@outlook.com](mailto:hospitallers1920@outlook.com)

Don't forget to look at the new Club meeting dates in this newsletter as they have changed slightly due to the move from May to October for the Dinner and Dance.

Gill Hodgekinson-Price