

# The Hospitallers' Club

Founded 1920

*Patron: The Hospitaller of the Priory of England*

*And the Islands Order of St John*



**Newsletter**

January, February, March 2024

Welcome to the first Newsletter for 2024.

## Club Meetings and Our Speakers

### January 2024

As you know, January traditionally sees us holding our AGM. This year the AGM was held at the Bedford Hotel. We had out tea and the meeting in the Wendy House, which worked really well.

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

President – Jani Levanan

Vice President – Pam West

Immediate Past President – Gill Hodgekinson-Price

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 – Immediate Past President – Gill Hodgekinson-Price; Emails – President Jani Levanan for all correspondence & Immediate Past President Gill Hodgekinson-Price for emails dealing with Meetings and Committee arrangements

Honorary Social Secretary – Kirstie Girling

Honorary Almoner – Life Member Cliff Bishop

Honorary Archivist – Life Member Barry Theobald-Hicks

Patron – Past President and Deputy Lieutenant Paul Herbage

Committee Members – Mark Adhen, Maureen Fenton, Sheila Jackson,

Richard Salter, Roger Rixon and Mary Huntingford

A vote of thanks was given to Past President Geoff Jackson who stood down from the role of Honorary Social Secretary.

The dates for 2024 were re-published and are as follow:

## Hospitallers' Club Dates 2024

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Club Night (Friday)</u>
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	1830	Zoom – Pre AGM	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	12 <sup>th</sup> January <b>AGM</b>
Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> February	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> February
Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> February	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> March
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> April	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> April
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	1830	Zoom	
	1400	Spring Social Outing Chelsea Physic Garden Tour (see note at end)	Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> May
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	1830	Zoom	
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> October	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Bedford Hotel, Southampton Row	Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> October
Saturday 26 <sup>th</sup> October	TBC	Dinner and Dance Holiday Inn Hotel, Coram St (see note at end)	
Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> October	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Venue TBC	Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> November
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> December	1830	Zoom	
	1800	Venue TBC	Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> December

## February 2024

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

The President, Jani Levanan opened the Meeting and welcomed everyone.

The speakers for the evening, Stephen Wheatley and Al Kassim, were from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)

Stephen and Al are from the Tower Crew, based at the Tower Pier RNLI station close to the Tower of London. Stephen has been part of the crew for 19 years and Al has been there for 8 years. They were also joined by Al's daughter who wants to both join the RNLI and St John.

Al told us that he joined following what he described as 'being on the wrong end of the RNLI'. He had been out on a boat outside Chichester when the weather worsened and the tiller snapped, leaving them at the mercy of huge waves. A Mayday message was sent and just 8 minutes later the RNLI crew arrived and rescued them. Al was working near Blackfriars at the time and walking past Tower Pier one day, he decided to join.

Steve, who was already RNLI crew at the time also had a 'sea experience'. He was sailing to Cherbourg from Falmouth and in the ship separation scheme 30 miles from Alderney when the boat just stopped. Steve who had been asleep was woken up by the boat owner in a panic. Steve started all the RNLI protocols and noted the GPS location. He made a Pan-Pan message which is an internationally recognized message given over radio to signal distress. It's used by pilots and sailors and is broadcast to bring instant attention to an urgent need. There is no imminent danger like a Mayday call, but could develop into a Mayday if the situation becomes worse. A nearby boat called Miss Molly came to them, but they were unable to fix it. Brixham RNLI had already launched with the thought of rescuing a boat in daylight rather than having to look for people in the water if the situation got worse. When they arrived on scene, the boat owner told them that Steve was RNLI crew, so they just threw him the tow line and he had to tie it off himself. He admitted that it has been useful now to know what it is like to need rescue.

Basically the message from both of these incidents is to call the RNLI as soon as possible and not leave it until the situation is dire.



They went on to talk about the RNLI in general. It was 200 years old on 4<sup>th</sup> March and covers lifeguard services on beaches, flood calls, river and sea incidents, swim teaching and much more. There are 238 lifeboat stations

(8 of which are non coastal), with 441 boats, over 5,700 volunteers of which over 1,500 are lifeguards covering 248 beaches. In 2022, 389 lives were saved, there were 9,312 launches and 16,478 people aided. Life saved is defined as being that the person would have died without their intervention – their own 2 rescues above would be classed as aid given, not life saved.

Tower Pier is busiest station for the RNLI covering the River Thames. In 2022 they undertook 750 calls and saved 21 lives. A new pier was built in 2023 allowing them to work 12 hour shifts with 10 full time crew and 55 volunteers. 23% of all medical interventions within the RNLI happen out of Tower station. They use 3<sup>rd</sup> generation E class boats especially designed for river situations at a cost of £550,000. These types of boats work on the same principal as a jet ski using water to power it for safety in the river environment, unlike the insure lifeboats which have traditional boat mechanics. The river boats are 900hp and are limited to 40 knots on the Thames.



They aim to be out to a call from the pier in 90 seconds, with 45 seconds of that to get dressed. Steve gave a demonstration of dressing in full kit within that time (he just made it). Their full protective kit costs £2000. They own everything that comes into direct contact with their skin, but the rest is generic.

They are all trained to at least First Responder level and their calls range from people actually in the water, people threatening to jump in the river, broken down boats, medical emergencies on river boats, assisting the Police boat crews in searches, rescue from the mud and assisting people cut off by the tide.

The RNLI is a charity and relies on donations. In 2022 it needed (and got) £250 million pounds. Everyone who works or volunteers for the RNLI is very important as without that the funding would not be there and there wouldn't then be any training or kit.

At the end of the talk, a vote of thanks was given to Steve and Al and Al's daughter accepted the usual paperweight.

(All photos courtesy of the RNLI)

### March 2024

The March Meeting was well attended with Members both present and online.

The President had invited our Patron Paul Herbage to give an update on the situation in Jerusalem and the surrounding area with regard to the Eye Hospital and the current hostilities.



**St John of Jerusalem  
Eye Hospital Group**

A full synopsis of the current situation can be found on the Hospital website at [www.stjohnehospital.org](http://www.stjohnehospital.org)

A vote of thanks was given to Paul by the President.

### **Spring Social:**

This year we will once again have a Spring Social. This is taking the form of an outing on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May. We have booked a private guided 1 hour tour of the fabulous Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Rd, London SW3 4HS.

The cost of this is £13.50 per person and partners are of course invited. There is a café onsite so you can arrive early and treat yourself to a lunch or have tea and cake (or afternoon tea) after the tour if you wish which will be at additional cost to you.

If you wish to join us for this, please email the Honorary Social Secretary or the President on the usual email – please put Spring Social in the subject line of your email.

There will not be a regular Club Meeting in May.

### **Dinner and Dance:**

The 97<sup>th</sup> Hospitallers annual Dinner and Dance will be held this year on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at the Holiday Inn Bloomsbury Hotel. The cost of the dinner and dance is £62.50 per person.

Should you wish to join your President at this event, please reserve your place by email to the Honorary Social Secretary or the President on the usual email – please put Dinner & Dance in the subject line of your email.

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)

Until next time!

Gill Hodgekinson-Price