



## **LONDON KT OUT AND ABOUT (LITERALLY) WITH THE EYE HOSPITAL**

The Provincial Prelate (also Deputy Great Almoner) and the Vice-Chancellor have just returned from a four-day visit to the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG). Whilst in the Holy Land, they visited the main site in East Jerusalem, Hebron Day Hospital, Kufor Aqab Outreach Clinic (above left) and accompanied staff on mobile outreach in the northern part of the West Bank and on a school vision-screening programme (above right) just outside Bethlehem.

The undoubted highlights of the trip were joining the mobile outreach team for a visit to Urif, a small village outside Nablus, and the school programme in Beit Sahour (the Shepherds' Fields). On both those visits, it was clear how valuable the outreach programme is in helping address preventable blindness; **over 70% of patients the hospital deals with can have their sight loss wholly or partially reversed.**



Patient registration during mobile Outreach at Urif

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London  
**SUPPORT**

# A trip to see the SJEHG in action

May 2024



The Outreach team (left)

Urif (below)



Meeting an elderly lady crying with joy as she was able to see her grandchildren for the first time having had a cataract removed and was back to see if the second one could also be removed was a delight. As was meeting four-year old Mohammed who appeared to have conjunctivitis. However, the medical team were able to identify a problem with his lachrymal glands that will require surgery. If it had been identified earlier, he could have been treated with simple medication.



Mohammed being checked by the medical team (far left) and leaving with his prescription (left)

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In Beit Sahour, lines of giggling first-year pupils eagerly awaited checks on their sight, whilst teachers and parents expressed gratitude for this preventive work provided without charge.



There was certainly more than a little amusement when the Prelate decided to join in the screening!



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At the Kufor Aqab Outreach Clinic, which is supported by the KT Province of Hampshire and Isle of Wight, they met five-year old Iyad for whom the gift of a simple antibiotic cream and eye-drops means the quick cessation of what could have been a lifelong problem.



Iyad at  
Kufor Aqab

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In Hebron, a very busy clinic meant trying not to get in the way as a full theatre list for day surgery competed with separate clinics for adults and children and a medical imagery session to utilise precious space.



Hebron Day Hospital (left)

It is on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
(bottom left)

Discussing the present  
difficulties (bottom right)

Surgeons looked forward to receiving additional life-changing surgical equipment next year as a result of a five-year appeal by the Province of Durham; and nurses spoke of their delight that the Province of Hertfordshire has agreed to sponsor a nurse in Gaza for the next 10 years.



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In the main Hospital complex, meetings with the CEO and other staff were interspersed with catch-ups with friends old and new from across the staff team, all of whom expressed appreciation for the support that they are given by Great Priory, Provinces, Preceptories and individual Knights.



Rest breaks were taken on benches provided by Preceptories from several Provinces; and meals from a food trolley that requires urgent replacement were sampled whilst the Facilities Manager and Executive Chef expressed their gratitude to the Province of Essex for agreeing to meet this need.



With David Dahdal - Communications Director (top left)

With Ammoon Alsheikh – Communications Officer (top right)

Catering Manager and Executive Chef (bottom right)

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As well as the Eye Hospital visits, the Prelate and Vice-Chancellor were able to join with Palestinian Christians for Sunday worship in Ramallah and had lunch with the local guide who has led recent KT pilgrimages to the Holy Land.



Meeting with Sam, our local guide (left)

The Prelate was asked to join in with the service (right)



The information that was gathered, along with photos and videos, will shortly be available on the web pages of **London Support**, which aims to promote, educate and disseminate information about the work of SJEHG around the Province, providing information that is correct, current and consistent. If you would like to learn more about the resources that London Support offers, all of which have been developed in conjunction with SJEHG, please go to:

<https://londonknightstemplar.com/sjehg-london-supporter-network/>

Overall, this was a superb opportunity to see the Eye Hospital team in action and to better understand the challenges that they face. We will be back in September 2024.

St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group is the only charitable provider of expert eye care in the Holy Land and has hospitals, clinics and outreach services in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem. For over 140 years they have been treating patients regardless of ethnicity, religion or the ability to pay.