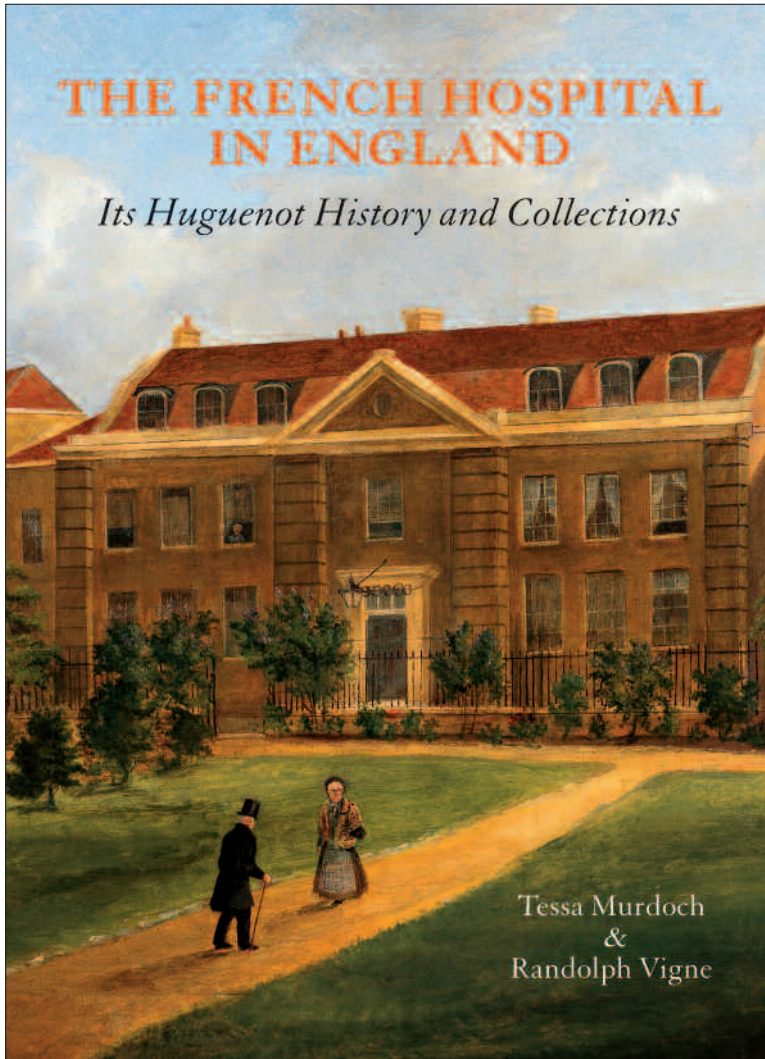




The Association of  
**FRIENDS OF LA PROVIDENCE**  
Annual Report 2009





*Lord Radnor with the sundial dedicated to the late Lady Radnor.*

**President**  
The Earl of Radnor

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S Ch de Crespigny Esq

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JA McGregor Esq

Registered Charity No: 219318

**Front Cover:** This magnificent volume is a 'must have' for all Huguenots. See enclosed order form.

# Foreword

I have been asked to continue the tradition of writing a foreword for the Association of Friends of 'La Providence' as my father did for many years, and this I am delighted to do.

Looking back on last year's report I have re-read what the Deputy Governor and Randolph Vigne wrote about my father, which highlights how much he is missed by those connected to 'La Providence', as well as by me and my family, and many others.

The French Hospital was near the top of his many varied interests, and all aspects of it gave him great enjoyment.

Firstly he was extremely proud of our Huguenot ancestry, and the long tradition of Governorship of 'La Providence' that has existed in our family. He was most interested in the residents and their problems, especially those connected to disability. Lastly he much enjoyed the company of the directors, and all those connected with 'La Providence'.

As I have said many times over the last year he is a hard act to follow, but I shall do my best within the constraints of having a large and relatively young family.

As well as looking back, we should look forward, and I am confident that the French Hospital will go from strength to strength in the future.

*Radnor*  
Governor

# Welcome

– to the following new Friends:

Mrs JV Berry

Mr AJ Gillett

Mr NJ Marchment (2008)

Mrs J Carroll

Mr H L Mallalieu

... and the following new residents:

Mrs J Carroll

Mr A McDonald

Mrs MF Forson

Ms LM Stamp

Mr A Hallam

Mrs RA Trinder

## **The Deputy Governor**

Since writing my report last year William, the 9th Earl of Radnor, has been elected Governor. Indeed his photograph was on the front of the last Friends' report which included a brief biography, and we are delighted that he has taken up the reins from his father. We wish him and all his family well, and look forward to a long and successful Governorship.

Sadly I have to report the death of one of our Directors, Geoffrey Larminie - elected in 1996. He was introduced to us by the late Governor - they were both keen fishermen - and since his election showed a lively interest in La Providence, even when unable to attend through illness in later years. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

As has become customary in the last few years I will keep my report short as everything will be covered in far greater detail by individual contributors.

Activities during the year have included the Christmas Lunch, the Anniversary, a visit to the French Church in Canterbury, and a most enjoyable musical evening presented to the Social Club by Jonathan and Marjorie Ouvry.

There have been many rumours circulating regarding 95 High Street. At the time of going to press I cannot say anything definitive, but I can say that we are actively pursuing the opportunity to purchase the building, and if successful it will enable us to provide a number of additional flats, together with maintaining the Tourist Office and other facilities. Watch this space!

I close with my personal thanks to all the Officers, Staff, Directors, Surveyors, Lawyers, Accountants, Clergy, husbands, wives and others - often unacknowledged – who help to make the wheels of La Providence run smoothly. To these and any others that I may have forgotten, my grateful thanks.

***Peter Duval***  
*Deputy Governor*

## **Profile of a resident – Miss Doreen Chaundy**

I remember my first meeting with Miss Chaundy at the Residents' Christmas Party in December 1998. It was our first event at La Providence before Hamish took up his appointment as Clerk in the New Year. Doreen, born in Glasgow, and very proud of her Scottish heritage told me in her soft Scottish accent that she was a keen traveller and had booked a passage on a container ship bound for China leaving Southampton on Boxing Day. What I didn't know was that five weeks earlier she had had a bad fall but all seemed to be well. However on the

the second night at sea she passed out in her cabin and was “unloaded” at the first port of call in Malta. She was not expected to survive but after two brain operations and four months care she was able to come home. Doreen made many friends there and many of them have been able to visit her in La Providence. She looks upon the island as her second home and has visited on many occasions in the last ten years.



*Miss Doreen Chaundy*

On leaving school, Doreen trained as a Secretary. Her first job was in an insurance office. She sat the examinations of the Chartered Insurance Institute and, in 1954 this enabled her to progress in the male oriented world of business and she reverted to secretarial work. In 1944 Doreen’s only brother was part of the crew of an RAF ‘plane which was returning from a leaflet dropping operation. When it was off the coast of Holland an SOS was received. No more was ever heard. He was nineteen. In 1959 Doreen bought a house in North Wembley and her father having retired, her parents came to live with her there and that was the beginning of thirty very happy years.

Doreen has been a resident of La Providence for over 20 years and her flat is part of the extension built at the rear of the Square. She told me how she had discovered the French Hospital on a visit to Rochester and although a member of the Huguenot Society she had never heard of La Providence. Two weeks later she returned to Rochester, coincidentally on the day of the Anniversary, and met a lady sitting outside No. 41 who was also a Fellow of the Huguenot Society. Doreen was invited to tea where she met some happy residents and several Directors. She returned to her home in Wembley that evening determined to apply for a flat for her retirement.

For the last eight years of her working life Doreen worked for the Church when she met many prominent people and had an invitation to attend one of the Queen’s Garden parties at Buckingham Palace. She retired early to care for her mother who died shortly after her 90th birthday followed two years later by her father who was in his 98th year. After his death she sold the house in Wembley, moved into the new flat in La Providence and decided to see something of the world. There is not space here to describe all the wonderful places she visited but they included Russia, The Holy land, Iceland and the Arctic, Canada and the USA. In 1991 she sailed round the world on “Canberra” (25 ports of call in 91 days).

In spite of several medical set backs Doreen has continued her busy life with travel, friends and her support of the Residents’ social club where she plays darts to exercise

her broken arm and shattered shoulder. Her only complaint is that she is not as active as she would like to be and her ambition is to live to be 100 and, if possible, still living in her own flat. I think that, God willing, she may well achieve it.

*Kate McGregor*

## **From the Hon. Treasurer**

It is often said 'I just do not quite know where to begin or what to include !' This is especially true for me this year as I compile this article. The year for The Hospital and its Friends seems to have been even busier than usual and yet I have often been at a loss to be able to report any good news at all ! However, having said that, we have managed to have our very special book 'The French Hospital in England –Its Huguenot History and Collections' published and now need to actively promote its sale. We have also replaced the CH Boiler and HW Tank at our 119, High Street block and hope that we have explained some burner high gas use problems with the main boilers.

Unfortunately the dreadful state of our country's indebtedness continues to depress the property market which in turn often affects when prospective new residents can actually move into the square. The volatility in the stock markets seems to continue though with some welcome rises since the lows of March 2009. With this rather depressing recessionary background it was good to hold a special Policy and Strategy meeting in early August 2009 to consider how the Hospital's future in the short, medium and longer term could be developed. Following from this, we have just appointed some professional fund raisers to report on how we might, via an appeal, be able to raise the funds to purchase from Medway Council No 95 High Street Rochester which is partly adjacent to the existing Hospital site. We have done much work on this during the year including looking at how we might use it and what would need to be adapted. We are hopeful that this exciting project can be made viable and successful for the future.

As mentioned in my report last year The Hospital remains closely in touch with the Huguenot Society over a possible new home for the Huguenot Library which houses all the French Hospital records and it is hoped that there will be a place for this in the 95 High Street project.

I also mentioned last year that my wife and I were just back from going to Berlin on a Huguenot Society study tour. As I said it was enormously enjoyable and educational from the Huguenot point of view. The fantastic journeys and contributions to town planning etc that the Huguenots made in the past were remarkable there as at home here. It included a visit to the Bad Karlshaven

Huguenot centre for all Germany. Would that we might one day be able to emulate this perhaps in Rochester !

Some comment about 'Balancing the Books' usually appears here and I report that we have nearly managed to achieve this this year though without a real positive margin between income and expenditure as we should like. The very low interest rates at present will impact negatively in this coming year on the Hospital's income from sources other than from residents' contributions. Regretably therefore, and in spite of low inflation, residents' contributions still have to rise. In fact the total net loss over the last 10 years amounted to £38,700 or put another way just less than £4,000 per year. The years in which we undertake external redecoration are always the most difficult and in those years we have to make use of reserves.

Measures have been taken to correct this and we continue to strive to reduce our running costs without reducing our level of 'service'. A significant element in the final figures is always the level of donations and legacies received in the year. I should like to add my thanks to those of the Hospital to all those who have given this year. Do please remember us when you are thinking on such things as the Directors believe that the need for our existence will surely only increase as these difficult worldwide financial times continue.

As usual, I end by saying a big thankyou to all our Staff, 'Servants' (including D & E Accountancy who have just taken over from Reeves and Neylan as our accountants) and my fellow Directors for all their help and dedication in running the Hospital throughout the year.

*James Cash*

*Treasurer*

## **The 2009 Anniversary Celebrations**

The 291st Anniversary Choral Evensong Service, now a tradition after 30 years, was celebrated on Saturday 13th June in Rochester Cathedral. It was attended by the Deputy Governor and Mrs Peter Duval, The Mayor of Medway, Councillor David Royle and his escort Mrs Karin Woolhouse. Other principal guests were the Dean of Rochester the Very Reverend Adrian Newman, the Very Reverend Henry Stapleton who had been a former Canon and Precentor of the Cathedral and a current Director of the French Hospital, with his wife Mary, Baron and Baroness Barth von Wehrenalp, Mr and Mrs Ian Beeby, Lord and Lady Monson together with Directors, Residents, Staff, Friends and Members of the Huguenot Society.

The first lesson was read by the Dean of Rochester and the second lesson by Jonathan Ouvry, a Director of the French Hospital and former President of the



*Boat Trip – July 2009*



*Tea in Canterbury – August 2009*



*Boat Trip – July 2009*



*A keen gardener*



*French Chapel, Canterbury Cathedral*



*Wedding of Mr & Mrs N Bird (née Dalziel)*

Huguenot Society. Henry Stapleton preached a moving and thought-provoking sermon. The music and singing by the choir was of the highest standard and the closing hymn "A Toi La Gloire" was delivered by choir and congregation with great enthusiasm.

At the end of the Service the congregation of about 160 filed down to the Crypt for strawberries, cream, scones and welcome cups of tea. After tea some of the guests went to visit La Providence where the Directors conducted small groups around to see the Court Room and the artefacts that were on show.

*Stephen Ch de Crespigny*  
*Secretary*

## **A Former Resident's New Life...**

It was with great excitement that John and I set off for our new home in Nazaré, Portugal, at the end of April 2008. We had only been married for 11 days and a whole new life was waiting for us. Many will know that our first two weeks were pretty uncomfortable as we waited for our furniture, including our beds, to arrive but the newness of it all helped us see the funny side of having to sleep on a blow-up mattress that kept going down again during the night. Once everything was here and unpacked we began to get down to the nitty-gritty of settling into a new country where only a handful of people could speak English.



*A relaxed Colleen and John*

We soon learned that everything in Portugal moves at a snail's pace, which we love until we need something to be done. Punctuality does not have the same meaning in Portugal. Arranging to meet someone at a given time means that

you must add “-ish” to the time, i.e. two-ish for 2 pm and that might turn out to be three-ish or four-ish if you are lucky. We have also experienced people not turning up until a day or two later with only a mild apology. But it's more than a year now and we've got water, lights, gas, a phone line with a broadband connection to the Internet, as well as TV with a few English news programmes. We were the pioneers in many instances and it took a lot of patience but we are now enjoying the fruits of our efforts.

There is so much to see and enjoy in and around Nazaré, a lovely fishing village with its own fresh food market and traditional way of living. Everyone is always taken by the Nazarene ladies in their seven skirts, selling their nuts and after a lovely typical Portuguese dinner at one of our favourite restaurants, we like nothing more than to promenade along the sea front and watch the sun go down on a hot summer's day.

Friends and family have been to visit both last year and this year and we've enjoyed having them all. They in turn have loved their brief stays and I'm sure we'll see some of them return. The photo shows John and me in relaxed mood on one of our many visits to Obidos, an old medieval village within the old castle walls, reminiscent of Rochester. Obidos is just one of many interesting places we take our visitors to see.

We regularly have Portuguese lessons with our pastor's wife but it is not an easy language to learn and so, as with everything in Nazaré, it is coming along slowly. The little community in our church have welcomed us into their midst and we are often the recipients of produce from their gardens, which is sometimes far too much for just two people. However, there is nothing to beat the wonderful flavours of sun-ripened apples, pears, plums, etc., and John has become a whizz at stewing fruit and making chutney.

I have joined an International Club for ladies who meet twice a month for a coffee afternoon. Many of the ladies are English speaking but there are also ladies from Portugal, Holland, Germany, France and Switzerland. Events are then organised at which we try to raise funds for charity. Through them I have also joined a walking group and once a week someone leads us on a short walk. All of which has helped us discover and learn more about the area in which we now live. Everyone is so friendly and helpful and we can honestly say that for us life is sweet in Nazaré.

*Mrs Colleen Crosby (formerly Admiraal)*  
*(Resident 2003-2008)*

# The French Hospital in England

*Its Huguenot History and Collections by Tessa Murdoch and Randolph Vigne*

On the evening of May 19th 2009 more than 150 guests gathered in the appropriately Georgian setting of the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art in London's Bedford Square to launch the history of the French Hospital published to mark the tercentenary of the founding bequest, and dedicated to the late Governor, Jacob, 8th Earl of Radnor. Although the new Governor, William, the 9th Earl, was not able to be present, he had generously made a donation towards the cost of the refreshments. The Deputy Governor, Peter Duval, welcomed the guests and thanked those who had given grants towards the cost of publication, including our hosts Dr. Brian Allen and Dr. Martin Postle of the Mellon Centre, and representatives of the Marc Fitch Fund and the Idlewild Trust. The photograph shows the two authors with the publisher John Adamson. Mrs. Susan Cash kindly took charge of the catering and delicious home made refreshments helped to sell more than 40 signed copies of the book. Those present included Friends of the French Hospital, officers of the Huguenot Society, historians and members of the museum community.

Judging by reviews and other feedback the book has been well received in America, Australia and Britain. A review by new French Hospital Director Richard Garnier in the British magazine of the Georgian Group was appropriately entitled "the Fruits of a Thousand Pounds" and mentions new insights into the history of the collections at the French Hospital and the fascinating series of tradesmen's receipts for oil, sugar, linen, pewter and ironware illustrated in the book and preserved in the Huguenot Library. "A worthy addition to the literature on the assimilation and achievements of the Huguenot citizens of Britain", Mr. Garnier concluded. Huon Mallalieu in Country Life commented on the "scholarly yet readable" text. Family History Review noted the "beautifully produced book" and the Huguenot Society of Australia commended the history for showing how the Hospital has changed and reinvented itself throughout its long history. Reviews are expected in the Proceedings of the Huguenot Society, the British Art journal, the Cockney Ancestor and Family History Monthly as well as in the American Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina and the New York based Huguenot Heritage newsletter.

At the Anniversary Service one purchaser asked the authors to dedicate her copy to the memory of her late mother, who ended her days at La Providence. If any reader of the Annual Report would similarly like to commemorate a family member who lived at La Providence, or would like to buy copies for Christmas presents,

they can be collected from the French Hospital, Rochester, or ordered from the publisher, John Adamson, 90 Hertford Street, Cambridge, CB4 3AQ Tel: 01223 313717 or on line at [jpap@netcomuk.co.uk](mailto:jpap@netcomuk.co.uk). I'm told that as the edition is limited you should hurry while stocks last!

***Jonathan Ouvry***

*Director*

## **The Social Club**

The Social Club continues to thrive and provide a centre for varied activities throughout the year. The new committee was voted in during May 2009 and several well attended events have taken place since. A coffee morning and an afternoon tea party, which included a raffle, have been held during the summer and the darts and games clubs have met each week whilst the bingo evenings are still proving to be popular.

On a very hot day in July, twenty one residents ventured down the Medway on the paddle steamer the "Kingswear Castle" which turned out to be a most enjoyable way to relax on the river. In August our Chaplain, Revd Howard Daubney took a party to Canterbury Cathedral for the afternoon service at the French Chapel followed by a delicious tea with cream cakes.

In October twenty five residents travelled by coach to Sheffield Park for a fish and chip lunch and then the round trip on the Bluebell Line railway. In spite of the financial constraints of the Club, more activities are in the pipeline and several others are planned. It is very heartening to see that a good proportion of the residents participate in the Social Club's activities and we continue to seek new ways to promote interest and entice even greater numbers to take part. We are very grateful to all of those who run the Club and to those who support it.

***Christopher Prevost***

*Chairman – The Social Club*

## The Chaplain

“Dieu tout-puissant et Père miséricordieux, qui es le consolateur des affligés, le nourricier des pauvres, et le salut de ceux qui mettent leur confiance en Toi. Regard en tes compassions infinies tous ceux qui se trouvent dans l’affliction, dans la calamité, et dans la misère; et particulièrement ceux qui ont été requits pour la cause de ton St. Evangile..”

It is with these words from the Huguenot prayer that each session of the General Court of the Directors of the French Hospital is opened. The English translation reads: “Almighty God and most merciful Father, thou that comfortest the afflicted, that providest for the poor and needy, and art the salvation of them that put their trust in thee. Look down, we beseech thee, with thine infinite mercy, upon all those who are in any way afflicted or distressed, especially on those who suffer for the sake of thy Holy Gospel”.

But the prayer is not only used once every three months at the Court. It is also used every week at the service of Holy Communion held for residents in the Common Room at La Providence on Wednesday morning. Although the size of the congregation is small, it is quite large as a percentage of those living at La Providence. 100 years ago every resident had to attend the daily service. How things have changed! But of course the Chaplain is on hand for all residents and staff when needed. I became Chaplain in 1993 and Eileen Leggett was one of the congregation. Sadly she had to go into a nursing home a few years ago but I was privileged to take her funeral earlier this year when she died aged 101.

I was also honoured to be asked to preach at the French Protestant Church in Canterbury when I took a group of residents to the weekly Sunday afternoon service in the crypt of the Cathedral. I was relieved that I didn’t have to preach in French. This important link between Rochester and Canterbury will hopefully continue with an annual visit by those residents who wish to go.

*Revd Howard Daubney*  
Chaplain

## **A Nixon Picture: lost and found**

In the mid 1970s the late Charles Marmoy, librarian at the Huguenot Library, asked the French Hospital to house a collection of books and pictures with no Huguenot content. Paul Minet found among them a large number of watercolours and pen-and-ink sketches by John Colley Nixon. They had been given to the French Hospital by the widow of Henry Rosselloty Haines who was elected a Director in 1860 and died in 1890.

We kept only two with a Huguenot connection, a watercolour of Dieppe Harbour in 1802 and a drawing of a preacher at the French Church, Threadneedle Street. As arranged by Paul Minet, the rest were sold by Christies over a period of years in the late 1970s and fetched a total of about £150,000. This money helped to finance extensions to the French Hospital, particularly the Common Room, and also provided a maintenance fund for the Huguenot Library.

Last year, out of the blue and after about some thirty years, the Clerk, Hamish McGregor, received a letter from Christies asking whether the French Hospital wanted to sell a watercolour picture and sketch of a water spout at Chichester Cathedral by John Nixon. Clearly this had been overlooked or mislaid when all the others were sold. It was brought to the French Hospital and Dr Tessa Murdoch contacted the Dean of Chichester who told her that the Cathedral would be interested in buying the picture. The purchase is still under discussion.

Then in July, a descendant of the Revd Robert Nixon, a brother of the artist, Mr Mack Cameron from Australia came to see our two pictures and the newly found Chichester Cathedral one. He told us that much of the collection of John Nixon's paintings was left to his older brother, Richard, who was a friend of the Haines family and Elizabeth Haines was his goddaughter. They must have been given by her to her brother Henry, of whom we have a plaster cast profile, hanging above the two pictures in the Court Room.

John Colley Nixon (ca 1759-1818) was a City of London merchant who, like his brother Robert and his friend Thomas Rowlandson, exhibited at the Royal Academy over many years and left behind many sketches and caricatures of Georgian life, highly valued today.

**Stephen Ch de Crespigny**  
*Secretary*



## Annual subscriptions

May we take this opportunity to thank everyone who pays their annual subscription whether by cheque or by Banker's Order for their kindness and generosity. Obviously it reduces the administration if payments are made by Banker's Order and we ask that members consider doing this by contacting the Clerk for the relevant form.

If you pay UK income and/or capital gains tax, **please also complete the Gift Aid Declaration form. This will allow The French Hospital to reclaim 25p for every £1 donated.** The Gift Aid procedure replaces the former Deed of Covenant. Additionally, older or retired people who may feel unable to make donations from current income or capital, may like to make provision in their wills for a legacy to The French Hospital. A husband or wife can, moreover, stipulate that the legacy will accrue to The French Hospital only after the death of the survivor. Similar provision can, of course, be made in both wills.

## GUIDELINES FOR GIFT AID DECLARATION

If your declaration covers donations you may make in the future, please notify The Clerk to The French Hospital if you change your name or address while the declaration is still in force. You can cancel the Declaration at any time by notifying The French Hospital. It will then not apply to donations you make on or after the date of the cancellation or such later date as you specify.

You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year (currently 25p for each £1 you give). If in the future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.

If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment tax return. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, ask The Clerk to The French Hospital, or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid.

# The Friends of La Providence

*'Bénis cette maison, que ta Providence  
a préparée pour nos affligés'*

**This plea lies at the heart of the prayer which has opened every meeting of the governing Court of The French Hospital since September 1718. It reads, 'Bless this habitation, which Thy good Providence hath prepared for those among us in distress'.**

**The French Hospital, 'La Providence',** founded in 1718 as a charity for poor Huguenot refugees, today provides over 60 flats for older or needy people of French Protestant descent who require accommodation, but with help always at hand in sickness or emergency.

**The Association of 'Friends of La Providence'** seeks to raise funds, allocated at the discretion of the Management Committee, for the benefit of La Providence and to serve as a link between the charity's well-wishers and its Directors and Residents. Friends with Huguenot descent can also keep in touch thereby with one of the major Huguenot charities remaining in this country.

**The Aims of the Association of Friends of La Providence,** then, are:

- To help publicise to both potential supporters and potential Residents what La Providence has to offer and what is needed to ensure its continued success
- To preserve in a practical way part of the history of the Huguenot contribution to British society
- To raise funds allocated at the discretion of the Management Committee which will help the Residents and Friends feel part of La Providence and its history

**Membership** is open to all subscribing not less than £10 per annum to The French Hospital, although we recommend a figure of £15 to non-pensioners, with Life Membership available for a payment of £150. All members will receive an Annual Report and an invitation to the celebration of the Anniversary of the Foundation in June each year, as well as other such occasions as may be organised for them.

If you would like to become a Friend of La Providence, or if you know of anyone of French Protestant descent who might like to be considered for accommodation at The French Hospital, please contact:

**The Clerk, The French Hospital, 41 La Providence, Rochester, Kent ME1 1NB.  
Tel: 01634 843107 Fax: 01634 406652, email: [theclerk@lineone.net](mailto:theclerk@lineone.net)**

**See our website at: [www.frenchhospital.org.uk](http://www.frenchhospital.org.uk)**