

St John History



**Proceedings of the St John Ambulance
Historical Society of Australia** Volume 7 2007-08



The St John Ambulance
Historical Society of Australia



*"Preserving and promoting
the St John heritage"*

Front cover: The official portrait of Professor Villis Marshall, AC, GCStJ as seventh Chancellor of the Priory in Australia of the Order of St John 2000–2007. Professor Marshall is the Patron of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia and since 2007 has been the Sub-Prior of the Order of St John internationally. The 2007 painting, by the portraitist Evert Ploeg, hangs in the Priory Headquarters (Australian Office) building, Canberra Avenue, Forrest, Australian Capital Territory. The portrait depicts Professor Marshall with his robes of office before him and a group of St John Ambulance Cadets in the background. On the chair in the foreground is his ceremonial mantle and the broad-brimmed 'Akubra'-style hat of the St John Ambulance Operations Branch, which he introduced while Chief Commissioner 1990–99. The Cadets signify the special interest in the St John Ambulance youth movement that Professor Marshall has always taken since he entered the St John Ambulance Brigade as a Probationary Surgeon in 1960.



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INTRODUCTION

St John History: the 7th edition

VOLUME 7 of *St John History*, otherwise known as the *Proceedings* or *Journal* of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia, covers the year 2007–2008. The Journal appears annually and aims to cover the Society's important developments and events. The Society's principal publication, it is distributed to all financial members. Included in each edition are the papers delivered to the Society's most recent annual history seminar, in this case the papers from the ninth annual seminar, which took place in the Australian Capital Territory on 20 June 2007.

PAPERS OF THE SOCIETY'S 2007 CANBERRA HISTORY SEMINAR

THE SOCIETY'S ninth annual history seminar in 2007 took place in Canberra at the Rydges Lakeside Hotel Conference Centre on London Circuit on Thursday 20th June. In opening the seminar, the Society's President, Dr Harry Oxer KStJ, observed that it was the first occasion the Society had met in the Australian Capital Territory. By coming to the national capital, the Society had completed a cycle because it had previously conducted its meetings in all six State capital cities and also in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory.

The ninth seminar maintained the very high standard of content and delivery achieved in the previous eight. As in 2006 in Perth there were so many papers on offer that the program had to occupy a whole day, with the Society's annual general meeting being conducted on another day. There were three chairpersons: Loredana Criniti of New South Wales, Edith Khangure of Western Australia and Betty Stirton of New South Wales, who took turns to chair successive seminar sessions. They did a great job of keeping the program moving throughout the day without delays, thus demonstrating that a successful seminar is a combination of good chairpersonship, good presentations and good organisation in a rough ratio of 3:2:1.

The range of topics was broad and varied, with something of interest for the audiences attending each session. During the course of the day the following nine papers were delivered:

- Richard Caesar-Thwaytes: 'The History of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch in the Australian Capital Territory' (joint keynote paper)
- Ross McConnell: 'Key commemorative dates for St John Ambulance Australia' (joint keynote paper)
- James Cheshire: 'Origins and continuity: how the Most Venerable Order developed in the period before the 1888 Royal Charter'
- Alan Caust: 'Too young to die: The sad story of a young doctor and his wife who perished on an errand of mercy in Central Australia in 1942'
- Allan Mawdsley: 'Colonel John Arthur Sherwin: Commandant of Heidelberg Military Hospital and third Victorian St John Ambulance Commissioner'
- Vince Little: 'The Australian first aid organisations 1940–45 — precursors of the national emergency services'
- John Pearn: 'Crosses — Symbolism and heritage: Emblematic cruciform metonymy'
- David Fahey: 'Liston's splint: a forgotten first aid technique'
- Ian Howie-Willis: "'Almost a Royal Tour": Lady Mountbatten's inspection of Australian St John establishments in 1946'

These papers now follow, in the above order. Where appropriate and feasible, selected images from the authors' 'PowerPoint' presentation are included. Unfortunately, however, not all images were available and some could not be used because of difficulties in translating them into a print format.

The History of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch in the Australian Capital Territory

by Richard Caesar-Thwaytes

THE AUTHOR: Richard Caesar-Thwaytes has a military background. A graduate of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the UK, he served for 12 years in, successively, the British and Australian Armies and the Royal Australian Air Force. After his military career he continued as a civilian administrative officer in the Commonwealth Department of Defence for 28 years until his retirement. In the meantime he completed an honours degree in Asian Studies at the Australian National University. He first came into St John Ambulance in 1978 as a member of the Weston Creek–Woden Valley Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Canberra. In 1984 he was appointed a Corps Superintendent and eventually District Superintendent and then Deputy Commissioner. More recently, since 2005, he has been engaged in researching and writing the history of the Brigade and Operations Branch in the ACT. He is an Officer in the Most Venerable Order of St John and a Knight of Magistral Grace within the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. Away from St John, he has been a fixed wing and glider pilot, a parachutist and a SCUBA diver. A keen student of history, especially of the Orders of St John, he is perhaps the only person who has ever read his way through the entire Priory Library of St John Ambulance Australia. He is also a committee member for the ACT of the Historical Society.

INTRODUCTION

THE ST JOHN AMBULANCE BRIGADE IN CANBERRA

As the Australian Capital Territory of 1911 was a sort of afterthought to the serious business of forging the Australian Nation of 1901, the Brigade was late (if not quite last) in becoming established on the Limestone Plains of what is now Canberra.

MAJOR CHRONOLOGICAL PERIODS

The history of the St John Ambulance Brigade in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) falls naturally into these seven chronological periods:

1. Preliminary Period 1927 — Public Duty at Opening of the Provisional Parliament House.
2. First Raising of Divisions in the 1940s — and their de-registration.
3. Revival of the ACT Divisions in the 1950s — Ambulance and Nursing.
4. Consolidation in the 1960s to 1973 — 3 extra Divisions and the National Headquarters.
5. The ACT Corps of NSW District 1973 to 1979 — rapid expansion and retraction.
6. The ACT Sub-District 1979 to 1988 — progress through difficulties.
7. The ACT District (or Territory) 1988 to the present day — we persevere ever onwards.

PRINCIPAL ONGOING CHANGES

I will deal with each period in chronological order, but we need to recognise that there are several themes that weave in amongst them all, (although they are equally going on in every other State or Territory in Australia in accordance with general social changes, and the Brigade's national policies):

1. The changing status of women members in relation to males.
2. The steady lessening of the para-military nature of the Brigade/Operations Branch.
3. The greater effectiveness of first aid after 1960 — after introduction of CPR.

FOUNDING OF THE CANBERRA BRANCH OF THE ST JOHN AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION 1927

The earliest St John Ambulance activity in Canberra seems to have occurred in the months before the transfer from Melbourne to Canberra of the Commonwealth Parliament in 1927. The *Canberra Times* of 27 January 1927 recorded the details of the inaugural meeting of the Canberra Branch of the St John Ambulance Association, which planned to hold first aid classes, including those for women, and intended to provide first aiders for duty at the opening of the provisional Parliament House in May 1927. The Canberra Branch of the Association still existed in 1939 and the early 1940s, but it had ceased to function at some time before 1952. It was re-founded by the **1st Canberra Ambulance Division** in 1952 and has then continued ever since.

PUBLIC DUTY AT THE OPENING OF THE PROVISIONAL PARLIAMENT HOUSE, MAY 1927

On 6 May 1927 the *Canberra Times* showed a sketch map indicating with a Maltese Cross the position of each of the four "First Aid Stations": one in Griffith, two near the provisional Parliament House, and one in Civic. I have not yet found any details of the first aid activities, other than the listing by Dr Ian Howie-Willis in the *Zambuks*, on page 37, of the nine man Brigade contingent from Sydney, led by Corporal Luke Gallard of Epping Ambulance Division. There were three Privates from Glebe Ambulance Division, and one Private each from the Ambulance Divisions of Marrickville, North Sydney, Mosman-Willoughby, and Paddington. The Australian Federal Territory had been carved out of the Premier State in 1911, mainly to provide a location for the Commonwealth Parliament, so it was very appropriate that Brigade members from NSW District should do the public duty when the first Parliament in Canberra was opened by HRH the Duke of York.

FIRST RAISING OF DIVISIONS IN THE 1940S – AND THEIR DE-REGISTRATION

1st Canberra Nursing Division (1940-1942): The *Canberra Times* records the tentative beginnings of the Nursing Division on 5 July 1939. The main source is a plethora of *Canberra Times* references and a scrappy manuscript Minute Book covering later 1939 to the end of 1941. The Division was registered from 1 January 1940 and was de-registered on 18 September 1942. Why did it collapse, after a three year existence, in the middle of Australia's darkest period of the Second World War? I believe there were two causes. **Firstly**, although well-meaning ladies, they seemed to lack experience in the essential purpose of the Brigade, which should be directed towards providing effective first aid duties. Too much energy was expended on trivial matters, especially raffle tickets, and holding meetings about meetings; their training was uninspiring, they did very few duties, and the leadership seemed to lack direction. **Secondly**, there was the competition from Mr Percy Fraser Douglas, the Association Instructor and salaried Chief ACT Ambulance Officer, who conducted much more interesting training from his Fire and Ambulance Station at Forrest, and I believe attracted many potential Brigade members, especially younger women, to his VAD Division, which he also led. But let us not forget the member from this 1st Canberra Nursing Division who went to the 2nd AIF as a VAD, or the fact that a few of their members did public duty at the opening of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in 1941.

1st Canberra Ambulance Division (1940-1950): This Division began with a rush of enthusiasm on 9 May 1940, filling the Muster Roll of the Registration of Division form with eager names. The ACT Brigade Archives has all the Annual Returns for this Division from 1940 to 1948 inclusive. The Division was fortunate at its commencement in having a good proportion of more experienced members, either with Brigade or former Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, or VAD service. At least 5 of the 25 names listed had related experience. The main problem was that the exigencies of the Second World War manpower shortage, and Government control of employment, ensured that good members were always being called up for military service, Police service or other civil employment for the War effort. The Division's known effective strength in these years declined, as follows, regrettably not compensated by any significant recruitment of new members:

<u>1940</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>1942</u>	<u>1943</u>	<u>1944</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>1948</u>
21	17	20	15	16	17	8	7	6

During the War, the Division was allowed to keep on the Annual Return members serving with the military or the one full-time in the Police. Those members returned at the end of the War and either resigned or did not attend, and were therefore discharged. The Division seems to have been an effective one, in difficult wartime circumstances, but bled to death due to lack of recruitment. Headquarters in Sydney de-registered the Division in 1950.

Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) led by Mr Percy F. Douglas of the Association: This unit, which commenced in 1940, was called a St John Detachment at least once, and the numerous references in the *Canberra Times* indicate that it was dynamically led by this highly respected Association Instructor and experienced Chief Ambulance Officer, Percy F. Douglas. I am gathering more information in the *Canberra Times* before ruling out its relevance to the Brigade in the ACT, although I must admit that the Detachment was never mentioned in the *NSW District Annual Reports*.

REVIVAL OF THE ACT DIVISIONS IN THE 1950S — AMBULANCE AND NURSING

1st Canberra Ambulance Division/1st ACT Ambulance Division (1952-1955): The revival of the male Division came first; the *Canberra Times* first mentioned the re-forming of the Canberra Ambulance Division on 16 July 1952. This was only two years after the de-registration of the previous Ambulance Division, leading to the only surviving Divisional record: the 24 September 1952 *Registration of Division form*. None of the twelve original members had served in the previous Canberra Ambulance Division, but the first leader, Wallace F.G. Lovett had been a Divisional Officer in Marrickville Division, while the first Hon. Secretary, Sergeant George R. Wells had been a returned serviceman from the Second World War, with the

Pacific Star and the Defence Medal. These two provided good energetic leadership, until the Headquarters decided to replace them in these two key positions. The many references in the *Canberra Times* show that the Division was most active in duties at both sporting events and at the Cotter recreational area. Due to administrative incompetence by the new Divisional management, and inadequate leadership by the Headquarters in Sydney, the Division was de-registered in July 1955, while the hard-core enthusiastic members were still doing duties. Matters came to a head when the Headquarters in Sydney saw a photograph of two Divisional members doing duty at a football match at Manuka Oval, carrying a stretcher with an injured French player, and complained that the members should not have worn Brigade uniform, because their Division had been de-registered. The half dozen active members had not been informed by their dozy management. The Divisional management had created the crisis by their failure to keep proper audited accounts – a storm in a Bank Book, which the staff in Sydney were unable to sort out. (In later periods the leadership from the Sydney Headquarters or National Headquarters was usually excellent.) We must also applaud the earlier leadership of this Division for reviving the **Canberra Branch of the Association in 1952**, and the **ACT No.1 Nursing Division in 1953**.

Canberra-Reid Ambulance Division (1959 to its amalgamation in 1978): This fiasco of bad leadership in 1955 did not deter former Sergeant George Wells who, as Divisional Superintendent, revived the Division four years later in mid-1959, and several other former members who rejoined him. Wells was a keen Association Instructor, both he and his wife being on the Association's Canberra Branch Committee during the period before the definitive revival which he led in 1959. This revival was totally successful, and it is I believe legitimate to recognise a partial historical continuity with the 1952 Ambulance Division over a gap of four years, because several members, including the management, came from the earlier Division. One of the first acts was to raise the affiliated **Canberra-Reid Ambulance Cadet Division** in 1960. (It amalgamated in 1978).



Dr David Henschman, Mrs Wells, the Hon. Mr J.R. Fraser MHR, Mrs Henschman and Divisional Superintendent George Wells attending a Dinner at the Hotel Civic held by the Canberra-Reid Ambulance Division on 2 August 1962.

ACT No. 1 Nursing Division (1953 to its amalgamation in 1978): The revival of this Division in 1953 was brought about by the initiative of the above *Canberra Ambulance Division* in 1953, and led by Divisional Superintendent Mrs Lois Bellingham, the wife of the official Divisional Superintendent of the contemporary Ambulance Division. In 1960 she became the President and was succeeded as Divisional Superintendent by Mrs Thelma Hollier (the 1940-1941 Divisional Superintendent) who had rejoined as a Nursing Member in 1957 and soon been promoted to Divisional Officer in 1959. The Division revived in 1960 and 1961, but there were two dissenting resignations in 1962, followed by others in 1963. In that year the Sydney Headquarters encouraged the dissenting members to form the *ACT No. 2 Nursing Division* under Mrs Madeline Grannall in October 1963, who continued to lead the amalgamated *ACT Nursing Division* until her elevation to the Sub-District Staff in 1976. This Division and the *Canberra-Reid Ambulance Division* were the two principal adult Divisions in ACT until the significant expansion of 1973 caused two important additional and lasting Divisions to be formed.

Inspection of the ACT Corps by the Corps President, Major-General Colin Gurner in late 1973. He is talking to Sister Jean Sheraton SRN the Divisional Nursing Officer of the ACT Nursing Division. The Divisional Superintendent, Mrs Madeline Grannall is at left. Between her and the President is Corps Superintendent Frank Thorogood, wearing Vietnam medals and the Service Medal of the Order with one bar (= at least 17 years efficient Brigade service) and SO Grade II Dr David Henschman, wearing a suit. The Grade I Officer is likely to be the NSW District Superintendent (Administration) Mr Les Carrington KStJ.





"Personalities of ACT Corps", an Army Public Relations photograph probably taken at the National Headquarters in late 1973: Major-General Colin Gurner (President ACT Corps), Mrs Gurner, Police Commissioner J.M. Davis (President of ACT No.1 Division), Mrs Clark, Major Rex Clark (Staff Officer Grade III Training), Mrs Walliker, and Police Inspector Arthur Walliker (Superintendent ACT No.1 Division - notice his Rescue Squad flash on the left sleeve).

CONSOLIDATION IN THE 1960S TO 1973 – THREE EXTRA DIVISIONS AND THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Canberra-Reid Ambulance Cadet Division (1960 to its amalgamation 1978): It was officially amalgamated with the two above adult Divisions in 1978, after having been a viable Division.

Canberra-Lynham Nursing Cadet Division (1960 to de-registration 1972): Conscientiously led by a small team of adults from the ACT Nursing Division, it nevertheless declined by 1972.

Canberra-Griffith Ambulance Division (1961 to de-registration 1965): A dissident offshoot from *Canberra-Reid Division* which was never well-led by its very literary founder.

OPENING OF THE NEW NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN FORREST ACT IN MID-1967



It looks to me as if the Priory Conference held in Canberra in 1963 encouraged the Chancellor, Colonel George Stening, to lead the next Priory in Brisbane in 1964 to decide to build their National Headquarters in the National Capital. This was build rapidly and officially opened by the Prior, Governor General HE Lord Casey in 1968, during the second of the Priory Weeks to be held in ACT.

Parade of the ACT Sub-District at the National Headquarters, probably in 1984.

THE ACT CORPS OF NSW DISTRICT 1973 TO 1979 – RAPID EXPANSION AND CONTRACTION

The Drive for Expansion: Numerous references in the *Canberra Times* of 1973 and advice from Mr Charles Campbell (who began as acting Priory Secretary in the middle of that year) convinces me that the drive for expansion in mid-1973 of the Brigade in ACT came from a relatively small group of Australian Regular Army officers, recently arrived in Canberra, who endeavoured to raise five new Rescue Divisions, clearly inspired by the example of the successful Rescue Squads in Victoria District from 1962 to 1975. Another strand in this texture is that the long-serving Senior Brigade Staff Officer in Canberra, Dr David Henschman OSTJ, whose speech to the Red Cross on 17 June 1968 enthusiastically recommended the founding of Rescue Squads in ACT, was later promoted on 12 December 1972 (notice: on the very eve of the expansion) from SO Grade III to SO Grade II. The crown and star on his epaulettes would have increased his influence with the military minded.

The New Divisions: Evidently ignoring the two long-standing adult Divisions of *Canberra-Reid Ambulance* and *ACT Nursing Divisions*, but displaying great energy, leadership and drive, they raised the following new Divisions (the date in brackets being that of raising the Registration Form BF/RS). The original Unit name is crossed out, but significant of the intentions of this military faction.

1. ~~[1st Rescue Division]~~ **ACT No. 1 Ambulance/ soon (Ginninderra) Combined Division:** (13 June 1973). Renamed Belconnen in 1978 and still exists. In the 1974 Annual Return there are 32 members. If I ever find the green form, I bet it has the crossed-out title.
2. ~~2nd Rescue Division~~ **ACT No. 2 Ambulance Division:** (26 June 1973). **Corps ACT Rescue.** In the 1973 Annual Return there are 26 male members, but then it discontinued soon after, being omitted from the *NSW District Report 1976*.
3. **ACT No. 3 (Combined) Rescue Division:** (29 June 1973). There were 49 names enrolled on the two green Forms BF/RS. In 1976, District Headquarters approved the members' requested change of name to **Weston Creek/Woden Valley Division**. The four existing descendents are: **Woden, Namadgi, Namadgi Cadet** and **Canberra Youth Divisions**.
4. **No. 9 Telopea Park High School Combined Division:** (3 August 1973). There were 31 names enrolled on the Form BF/RS. Registered on 8 February 1974, the Division lasted probably only to the end of 1975.
5. ~~No. 5 (Underwater Confederation-Closed) Combined Division:~~ (29 August 1973). There were 19 names enrolled on the Registration of Division Form BF/RS, in 1973. It was then called **No. 5 Special and Sub-Aqua Emergency Service Division** with 37 members, and in 1976 called **No. 5 Sub-Aqua Combined Division** with 36 members. In 1976 the Division requested a change of name to **Water Safety Division**, but the old name was used when it was de-registered in January 1979, on the 1978 recommendation of the ACT Corps Superintendent, Hugh Gordon. I think the Division was stronger on paper than **under** water, or even **above** water for that matter.

CONTRACTION – RAPID DECLINE OF THE MILITARY FACTION

During the early 1970s the Brigade in the ACT came under the influence of a small group of former and serving army officers, commonly known as 'the military faction'. The leader of the military faction, Major Frank Thorogood, was promoted to ACT Corps Superintendent on 18 October 1973, and his Staff Officer Grade III (Training), Major Rex Clark, who was probably the driving force, was promoted in the Order to OStJ on 4 March 1974. Although they had been successful in gaining the approval of District Headquarters for the raising of the five new Divisions, and their collective elevation to Corps Status, they then quarrelled with the Headquarters, often in intemperate written correspondence. I suspect that the disagreements may have been due to a lack of support from Sydney for all of their Rescue Squad pretensions. The new Commissioner, Dr Peter Grieve, disciplined Major Thorogood in late 1974 and put him on 6 months probation. Major Rex Clark resigned, as requested. Major Thorogood left in 1975 to take up a senior salaried position in Victoria with the Red Cross. Major Clark committed suicide in October 1978, apparently in connection with an Australian Federal Police investigation of a trade in military medals that was not related to his former Brigade service.

Mr Lionel Davies, Divisional Superintendent of Canberra-Reid Division, was promoted in 1975 to Corps Superintendent. The dispersion of the Rescue Squad euphoria of 1973 led to a serious decline of numbers, and three of the five new Divisions soon disappeared. But the whole saga had some benefit, because two new Divisions survived the crisis to augment the two older adult Divisions; thus finally in the Corps period the total Divisions was 4, because on 27 January 1978, **McGregor Primary School Combined Cadet Division** was registered, and lasted until 1984; **Canberra-Reid Ambulance Cadet Division** disappeared in October 1978 when officially amalgamated with **Canberra Combined Division**.

THE ACT SUB-DISTRICT 1979 TO 1988 – PROGRESS THROUGH DIFFICULTIES

Motivation for an ACT Sub-District. I believe that there are clues about the motivation in the *Priory Annual Report 1978*. When the Annual Priory took place in Canberra for the first time in ten years (since 1968) the delegates would have been impressed by the considerable developments to the National Capital which had taken place; they may have looked favourably on the parade of the ACT Brigade, which had the Divisions listed above. The ACT Corps was led, as President, by the impressive medical officer, Major-General Colin Gurner AO, CBE, OStJ, ED, OHP, Director General of Army Medical Services. Moreover, the impressive work of the Canberra Branch of the Association had been very successful. The mood was favourable for the Chancellor, Sir George Stening, to carry a decision in 1979 for the formation of the **ACT Brigade Sub-District, the Association Sub-Centre**, and the establishment of the **ACT St John Council** to govern these Foundations.

THE ACT ST JOHN COUNCIL

The ACT St John Council was formed in 1983 under the very effective Chairmanship (for twelve years) of former Police Deputy Commissioner, Mr Allan Watt LVO, QPM and future KStJ, who later was appointed Priory Director of Ceremonies. With a team of high calibre people, he set the objective of being financially strong, and achieving their own building for St John in the ACT.

INCREASE OF DIVISIONS

In 1979 the **Weston Creek/Woden Valley Combined Quadrilateral Division** split into the two Divisions of **Woden Combined and Woden Combined Cadet Division**. Also in 1979, **Scullin Combined Cadet Division** started, being renamed **Belconnen Cadet Division** in 1998 (but ceased operating in late 2002). **Evatt Combined Cadet Division** began in 1980, was registered in January 1981, and was renamed in 1992 **Canberra Central Cadet Division**. The **Ginninderra Crusader Division** for young adults began in 1984, but only lasted for two years.

OVERALL ACT OPERATIONS BRANCH STRENGTH OF SUB-DISTRICT

The following table demonstrates the fluctuations in Sub-District strength during the 1980s:

<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>
143	116	181	158	207	191	175	186	157

THE TWO CORPS STRUCTURE JULY 1984 TO NOVEMBER 1986

Mainly because the overall strength had increased to over 200 in 1983, permission to form two Corps, a Northern and a Southern Corps either side of Lake Burley Griffin, was granted with effect from July 1984. Then the numbers went down, which caused concern in Brigade [National] Headquarters. This ACT two Corps structure was discontinued in November 1986.

MALaise LEADING TO THE SPENCER VISITATION OF 1986

The fall in numbers was not I believe the main concern of Brigade Headquarters, which led to the Visitation by Chief Superintendent John Spencer KStJ (future Bailif Grand Cross), but the bad relationship between the Sub-District Headquarters and some of its more critical subordinates. The Visitation resulted in a Staff Meeting, a General Meeting and the very detailed "Spencer Report" – a penetrating analysis with recommendations.

INTRODUCTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF SPENCER REPORT

The Sub-District Headquarters was prompt and active in introducing all the recommendations of the Spencer Report which lay within its jurisdiction. There were now three Committees of members to deal with major ongoing tasks: Training, Duties and Recruiting. Things settled down more amicably. Nobody was sacked. The Commissioner, Dr Gerry Murphy, and Madeline Grannall were promoted to OStJ, as they well deserved, and the next **Priory Report 1986** did not even mention that anything had been amiss. (However, the matter has not sunk without trace into the mists of time, since all the details and my comments may be read in the voluminous History which I am writing.)

NEW ACT ST JOHN CENTRE BUILDING IN GEILS COURT, DEAKIN, OPENED NOVEMBER 1986

The very active Council had brought about their objective of building their own St John Centre building in remarkably short time, mainly by car raffles, and the new building in Geils Court, Deakin, was officially opened by the Governor General HE Sir Ninian Stephen in November 1986.

THE ACT DISTRICT (OR TERRITORY) 1988 TO THE PRESENT DAY – WE PERSEVERE EVER ONWARDS

Reason for the Elevation of ACT to District Status: Unlike the euphoria of 1979, the elevation of ACT to District status hardly rated a mention. Commissioner Peter Tedder informed a meeting of staff officers that the Headquarters had decided that now Canberra was self-governing, it would be appropriate for ACT to be a District. The only mention in the Priory Annual Report was in the wording of the heading above the Operations Branch list of appointments. Of course all senior officers in ACT were promoted one grade.

OVERALL ACT OPERATIONS BRANCH STRENGTH OF DISTRICT 1988-2006

As with the old Sub-District, the Strength figures went up and down, often below 200, although the National Capital had grown into one of the World's great capital cities.

<u>1988</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>
174	153	140	179	197	205	203	193	234	236
<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
207	245	183	213	184	174	220	143	150	?

CO-LOCATING OF WODEN AND BELCONNEN DIVISIONS WITH CANBERRA DIVISION 1991 & 1992

The membership numbers of Woden and Belconnen Divisions became critical in 1991 so they were co-located with Canberra Division for the Wednesday evening training meetings. At the end of 1992 they were re-commenced as separate Divisions, both led by former NCOs of those Divisions (Sergeants John Zmood, Cheryl Bollard, Member Jutta Stone and Sergeant Greg Lowe and Corporal Wanda Mundy) but Woden was renamed Namadgi, after the large National Park. The latter had a Cadet Section which became the separate Namadgi Cadet Division in 1994. In 1996 Woden Cadet Division recruited an adult Section and thus became Combined (now meaning adults and Cadets).

PREVIOUS ANNUAL INSPECTION PARADE REPLACED BY A SPEECH NIGHT 1995

During the second Triennium of Commissioner, Brigadier Peter Evans, and the first Triennium of District Superintendent Jeff Bollard, it was decided, instead of the Annual Inspection parade, to hold an evening meeting style Awards Night, but with some ceremonial with the Colour Party and Cadet Flag Party, followed by supper. This was successful, and has been practiced ever since with only minor differences.

ACT OPERATIONS BRANCH MOVES TO FRANKLIN ST ANNEX OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS 1996

After having the Operations Branch sharing Geils Court, Deakin, for 10 years, we moved in 1996 to the Franklin Street Annex of the National Headquarters. This gave us more room.

ACT DISTRICT ORGANISES THE CADET CAMP AND CADET NATIONAL COMPETITIONS AT ANU 2001

After several years of careful preparation with a dedicated committee, District Staff Officer (Cadets) Grade II Rocky O'Brien planned and successfully implemented the 2001 National Cadet Camp at the Australian National University campus, where also took place the National Cadet Competitions, which were very successfully organised and managed by Staff Officer Grade II Jeff Bollard. (These successes may have redeemed the ACT Brigade from the criticism from NSW District of not having done enough at the same events at ANU in January 1987.)

MORE SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC DUTIES

Some of the more significant Public Duties have been:

- 1985 – World Cup Athletics at Bruce Stadium
- 1986 – Papal Mass of Pope John Paul II at EPIC (Exhibition Park in North Canberra)
- 1988 – opening of new Parliament House
- 1995 – Forestry Industry protracted demonstrations at Parliament House
- 1997 – Deaf Games, Masters' Games, Police Games – latter two with assistance from Operations Branch Victoria and NSW
- 2000 – Olympic Games. ACT Torch Relay & Football at Bruce; 4 members to Sydney
- 2000, 2001 & 2002 – Canberra GMC 400 V8 Supercars (assisted by Victoria and NSW)
- 2002 – Commonwealth Games in Manchester UK; Greg Millgate and Judith Guthrie
- 2006 – Commonwealth Games in Melbourne; a dozen members from the ACT.

MOVE OF ACT ST JOHN CENTRE TO THESIGER COURT, DEAKIN, 1999

In 1999 the Council could afford to sell the old building in Geils Court and move to the nearby Thesiger Court, Deakin, where they had purchased a much more impressive and larger building. Nine years after moving to the Annex, in 2005, the Operations Branch moved to this new St John Centre, when the improved financial position of St John in ACT caused the Council to decide that further letting of the top floor was not necessary. The One St John ideal has thus been reinforced.

THE BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY 2003

As our former Territory Professional Officer, Mr Jamie Ranse SRN has summarised: "From Saturday 18 January 2003 until Monday 27 January 2003, St John Ambulance Australia provided continuous first aid coverage to the residents of Canberra through evacuation centres located throughout the ACT and provided support to ACT Emergency Services through the establishment of a first aid post at the North Curtin District Fields. During the period in which St John Ambulance Australia had established first aid posts, sixty-two members of St John Ambulance treated over two-hundred bushfire related injuries and illnesses and volunteered over one thousand three hundred hours." In December 2004, Jamie Ranse very efficiently organised the official presentation in the National Headquarters of the ACT Emergency Medal to 62 persons, mainly ACT Operations Branch (one from SA and one from NSW Districts) including a few Cadets, and some ACT Training Branch Instructors.

COMPETITIONS

From 1980, when the newly formed ACT Sub-District sent a team to Adelaide, ACT has always competed in the National First Aid adult and Cadet Championships and Competitions. The more significant results were these:

1996 – Cadet Team **First** in National Competitions in Hobart, and Kristen Storey won Peter Falkland Trophy.

2001 – Gemma Kelly **First** in the Cadet Leader National Competition in January at ANU.

2004 – Team came Second in June National Competitions at Alice Springs: Jamie Ranse, Kristen Ranse and Steve van Gerwen.

2005 – Team came **First** at National Competitions in Melbourne: Jamie Ranse, Kristen Ranse and Brandon Burke. Individual Second: Sam Kirchner. Overall ACT placing Second.

2006 – Cadet Team **First** in National Cadet Competitions in Sydney: Veronica Harms, Emma Johnson and Jack Boessler, and Emma Cunningham **First** in Cadet Leader Competition.



Chief Professional Officer Finlay Mcneil awarding the Trophy to ACT winning Team: Jamie Ranse, Brandon Burke and Kristen Ranse at Melbourne in June 2005.

CONCLUSION – HOPE IN THE FUTURE

The ACT Operations Branch Firmly Established in the Twenty First Century: The Operations Branch has by now (in mid-2007) already experienced 28 years as an autonomous Sub-District or District. In spite of the inevitable, ongoing, day-to-day difficulties, the ACT Operations Branch has been well and firmly established in the National Capital; we have served the Order for more than 60 years with a Brigade presence in ACT since 1940, except for the three years 1949 to 1951. We advance hopefully into the future.

Key commemorative dates for St John Ambulance Australia

by Ross McConnell

THE AUTHOR: Ross McConnell is a relative newcomer to St John Ambulance although he started trainer training with us in the early 1980s. Ross was the ACT Commissioner for Community Affairs with the Scouts when the January 2003 Canberra bushfires occurred and the Scouts with all their skills could not get engaged. He approached St John to see if the Scouts' 400 first-aid qualified leaders could act as a reserve for St John. After the Commissioner, Dr David Rossi, had suggested that he should join to understand the ethos, Dr Rossi retired and the Commissioner's position became vacant; he applied and was appointed Commissioner. Professionally, Mr McConnell is a Computer Solutions Architect with CA, working on major government projects such as the Customs Cargo Project and Access Card tenders. Although pressure of work has recently forced him to recently step down as Commissioner, delays in the Access Card project gave him some time to prepare and present the paper below. St John in the ACT has benefited greatly from the analytical and problem-solving skills that he brought with him from his professional life. He is also a great 'ideas' man, with many fresh perspectives on the ways and means through which the St John Ambulance organisation can lift its performance. At his first Priory Conference in Melbourne, he wandered into the Historical Society seminar, enjoyed the atmosphere and content, and signed up on the spot. We are therefore fortunate that Ross McConnell has chosen to remain as a rank-and-file St John member who recently joined the committee of this Historical Society to help initiate the formation of the ACT St John Historical Society.

Introduction

Mr McConnell introduced his topic by explaining that long-established organisations like the Order of St John and its Foundations (in Australia referred to as 'Branches') regularly reach historic 'milestones' as they pass successive anniversaries. These events may be the occasion for major celebrations, as for example was the centenary of St John activity in Australia in 1983 and again in 2002, when the St John Ambulance Briage/Operations Branch chose to commemorate the centenary of its establishment in Australia. He also argued that as well as celebrating achievement, the 'milestones' could be advantageously used for promotional, recruiting and marketing purposes. He therefore urged St John Ambulance Australia generally and the various fractions of which it is compsed to become more proactive in using their anniversaries strategically. To illustrate this point he displayed a list of 'milestone' anniversaries that will occur over the next three or four years. The following are the events he used to argue his case.

Year	Event	Anniversary year	Anniversary number	Anniversary for
1831	'Revival' of the Order of St John in England after a lapse of more than 270 years following its suppression during the religious reformation of the mid-16 th century.	2011	180	World St John
1831	Dr Mayor of Lausanne devised the triangular Bandgage.	2011	110	
1863	Sir John Furley began representing England at Red Cross Conferences; continued doing so till 1869.	2008	145	
1870	4 th August: British National Aid Society for Aid to Sick and Wounded formed (forerunner to St John Ambulance Association).	2010	140	
1874	The English <i>langue</i> (revived Priory of England of ancient Order of Knights Hospitaller) became known as the "Order of St John of Jerusalem in England" and established an Ambulance Department to promote efficient ambulance work. St John's Gate, the former Hospitallers' headquarters in Clerkenwell, London was acquired as the new Order's headquarters.	2009	135	World St John
1877	The Ambulance Department of the Order of St John in England founded the St John Ambulance Association (now called Training Branch in Australia).	2007	130	World St John
1877	Sir John Furley created St John Ambulance Litter, wins Silver Medal at Brussels International Exhibition.	2007	130	
1877	First Chief Secretary of St John Ambulance Association Appointed — Colonel Sir Herbert Perrott (in office till 1914).	2007	130	

1878	<i>Aids for Cases of Injuries or Sudden Illness</i> by Peter Shepherd published; republished 1881 and 1885 (as <i>Shepherds First Aid to the Injured</i>): the precursor of 'the little black book' St John Ambulance first aid manual.	2008	130	World St John
1879	The 'First Aid' title is first mentioned (a shortening of The National Society for Aid and Sick to the Wounded)	2009	130	
1879	4 th April: the first Enrolled Corps established at Ashford, Kent, a precursor to the St John Ambulance Brigade division.	2009	130	Brigade & Ops. Branch
1882	The Order of St John of in England founded the St John Ophthalmic in Jerusalem (now the St John Eye Hospital).	2007	125	World St John
1882	First overseas branch established on Malta.	2007	125	
1882	St Andrews' Ambulance Association formed in Glasgow.	2007	125	
1883	First Australian St John Ambulance Association centre established in Melbourne.	2008	125	Australia
1887	The Ambulance Department of the order of St John of Jerusalem ', in England founded the St John Ambulance Brigade (now called.	2007	120	Australia
1887	Brigade's first Public Duty — Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.	2007	120	
1888	Queen Victoria granted the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England a Royal Charter, making it an official British Order of Chivalry with the Queen as its Sovereign Head and a Grand Chapter governing it. The name is changed to "The Grand Priory in the British realm of the Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John in Jerusalem".	2008	120	World St John
1893	First Brigade Commissioner appointed in England.	2008	115	
1895	Service Medal of the Order of St John authorised; instituted 1898	2010	115	
1896	Sir William McCormac appointed first Medical Officer in Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade.	2011	115	
1897	St John Ambulance Brigade passes 8000 by 10 th anniversary — 7783 men, 1197 women	2007	110	
1897	Queens Diamond Jubilee: Brigade on duty with 803 members at 95 ambulance stations.	2007	110	
1899	First Fatal Car accident in Harrow; A St John Ambulance wheeled litter is used.	2009	110	
1899	Brigade volunteers from the UK sent to the Boer War.	2009	110	
1900	UK St John Ambulance Brigade volunteers sent to Boxer Rebellion in China.	2010	110	
1901	First (unofficial) Australian St John Ambulance Brigade public duty for the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia. The first Brigade officers were appointed shortly afterward.	2011	110	NSW & Australia
1903	First Australian Brigade Divisions registered in Sydney- Glebe Ambulance (men's) and Glebe Nursing (women's) Divisions.	2008	105	NSW
1905	17 th July: British Red Cross Society formed (major input from St John Ambulance)	2010	105	
1915	Total of 66 St John Auxiliary Hospitals set up during War War I by the UK St John Ambulance organisation.	2010	95	
1918	The Order of St John and British Red Cross Act; surplus war funds used for relief of suffering.	2008	90	

1919	Death of Sir John Furley (at age 83), the last of the founders of St John Ambulance.	2009	90	
1922	First Australian Cadet Division forms in Sydney- Glebe CadetAmbulance Division.	2007	85	NSW
1927	9 th May, 8 St John Members travelled from Sydney to support the opening of the New Parliament House.	2007	80	ACT
1930	First Australian Cadet Nursing Division forms in North Sydney.	2010	80	NSW & Cadets
1933	First Australian Grand Prior Badge awarded to Marion Higgins of Marrickville, Sydney, one of the first three Grand Prior Badge recipients in the world awarded the Badge that year.	2008	75	Cadets
1936	10 th October: First Brigade Surgeons' Conference (UK).	2011	75	
1941	The Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia of the Order of St John was established, consisting of News South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. (Western Australia refused to affiliate.)	2011	70	Australia
1946	The Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia was upgraded in status, becoming the Priory in Australia of the Order of St John. Western Australia became a Commandery of the Order within the Australian Priory.	2011	70	Australia & Western Australia
1955	A revised Royal Charter changes the name to "The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem".	2010	55	World St John
1956	Melbourne Olympic Games, one of the largest public duties ever of the Brigade in Australia.	2011	55	Australia
1960	First 'national' cadet camp - New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria attended.	2010	25	Australia & Cadets
1968	First national Cadet Competitions held for male cadets in Melbourne.	2008	40	Cadets
1968	28 th February, merging of Association and Brigade into St John Ambulance in the UK.	2008	40	UK
1969	Publication of the first Australian edition of the St John Ambulance Association first aid manual.	2009	40	Australia
1969	First national Cadet Home Nursing Competitions held for female cadets in Melbourne.	2009	40	Cadets
1971	Cadet Camp and Competitions held together for the first time in Hobart.	2011	40	Cadets
1985	Community Care Branch started in Australia.	2010	25	Australia
1985	4 th -6 th October: World Cup Athletics, held at Bruce Stadium, Canberra (major Brigade duty).	2010	25	ACT
1986	24 th November, Papal Mass, National Exhibition Centre.	2007	21	ACT
1987	The Brigade became Operations Branch and The Association became Training Branch.	2007	20	Ops. Branch
1997	Australian Youth Council formed.	2007	10	Cadets
1999	The Grand Council of the Order is formed to replace the 111 year old Grand Chapter of the Order. Australia is one of eight Priories whose Prior and Chancellor make up Grand Council.	2009	10	World St John
2000	Operations Branch provided volunteer first aid to the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.	2007	7	Australia

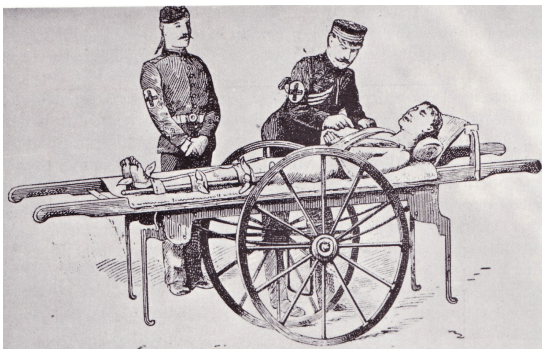
2000	14 th June: V8 Supercars (Major Operations Branch duty)	2010	10	ACT
2000	Sydney Olympics (largest Brigade/Ops. Branch duty in modern times).	2010	10	Australia
2006	Commonwealth Games, Melbourne	2011	5	Australia



Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd (1841-79), the author of the first St John Ambulance first aid manual, Aids for Cases of Injuries and Sudden Illness, which was published in 1878, the year before Shepherd was killed in the Battle of Isandlwana in South Africa.



The present St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem, founded in 1882.



The original patented 'St John Ambulance' of 1875—a stretcher on cart wheels known as an 'Ashford Litter', possibly because its designer, Sir John Furley, was from Ashford, Kent, and had it manufactured there.

Origins and continuity: how the Most Venerable Order developed in the period before the 1888 Royal Charter

by James Cheshire

THE AUTHOR: Mr James Cheshire was a member of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch in Victoria for many years and from time to time still helps the Branch there with advice. His wife, Cherie, is a current Operations Branch member, who, having a particular interest in the Cadet movement, led a contingent of Australian Cadets to an international Cadet camp and first aid competition in Malaysia in 2001. Cherie is also a Representative Officer in the Order. Away from St John, Mr Cheshire is a member of the Australian Federal Police, in which he is a Federal Agent in the Joint Counter Terrorism Team in Melbourne. At the time of delivering the following paper, he had just returned from Samoa, the government and police of which he had been advising in their preparations for the South Pacific Games to be held there

later in 2007. Mr Cheshire's paper is attributable to his enquiring mind. Perhaps unwisely, in mid-2006 he contacted the Historical Society's Secretary with a question about the origins of the Most Venerable Order of St John in the 1820s–30s. Having received an answer, he came back at the Secretary with more questions, and after that still more questions. It soon became apparent that Mr Cheshire had learnt more about the Order's early history in the space of several weeks than the Secretary had in the previous 27 years. His paper is the result of his answering his own questions.

INTRODUCTION

Allow me to place before you, for your judicious consideration, a set of circumstances of times of yore. In the year 1826 a Frenchman arrives in England and accepts the assistance of a native Scot. Both men claim noble antecedents to which they are not entitled. The two principals seek others to join their cartel on the basis that they have been empowered by a council in France to raise a mercenary force to support the Hellenic armies in their ongoing war against the Ottoman Empire.

Any man who volunteers to serve as an Officer in this militia or makes a financial contribution to the subscription scheme that funds the force will be rewarded with admission to the Order of St John as a Knight, no women need apply. The Frenchman asserts that this is the same Order that has not been recognised as existing in the British Isles since it had all its assets seized by the Crown some 272 years earlier.

It is from these events that in 1831 a group of men is formally established calling itself the "Council for the English Langue" and utilises the Old Jerusalem Tavern, a public house at St John's Gate Clerkenwell as its headquarters. The group is subject to a deal of instability and the next year fatally splinters.

1834 saw one of the splinter groups assert a claim of rightful authority under Letters Patent granted by Queen Mary I in 1557 and has its leader, a former Chaplain to the Prince Regent, take the oath of office as prescribed by those Letters Patent before the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of the King's Bench. This group thus claim to be the true, just and incontrovertible link to the ancient English Langue and to the origins of the Order dating back to 1113.

Of course these statements belie a more complex machination of deals, falsehoods, high politics and the Crown. What it does bring to greater scrutiny is a dark, devious and indeed possibly illicit fragment in the history of our great organisation.

Since the establishment in 1888 by Royal Charter of "The Grand Priory of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England" there has been varying levels of debate as to the bone fides of claims to the ancient heritage of the Order of St John. As an organisation we have laid claim that St John have a 900 year history. Surely a British organisation established in the eighteen hundreds has a high bar to cross in order to establish with some legitimacy a genuine claim to the works and heritage of an organisation in the Middle East in the early part of the twelfth century.

During the course of this paper I hope to provide an overview of the Order of St John, provide some forensic examination of the strategic events in the nineteenth century revival of the English Langue, their claims to the heritage of the ancient Order of St John, and whether the works of the Order since 1888 are in fact a more appropriate and proud tradition upon which to draw inspiration and authority than those of the ancient Order.

THE ANCIENT ORDER IN BRITAIN

It was primarily during the time of the first three Christian Crusades, that is between 1095 and 1192, that affluent pilgrims and crusader knights from Britain returned home and were moved to support the works of the Order of St John and indeed provide for their fellow pilgrims returning to the Holy Lands. Many of these brethren bequeathed property and funds to the Order from all over Europe.¹ These knights formed the first English *Langue* (French: 'tongue' or 'language') which included knights from England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

With this growth in support for the Order amongst knights and pilgrims returning to their homelands the Order instituted a formal administrative system. The operations of the Order were divided into language groups known as tongues or Langues. There was an English Langue controlled by an English Bailiff who administered parts of the Order such as its finances.²

¹ E D Renwick & I M Williams, *A Short History of the Order of St John (Sixth Edition)*, Order of St John, London, United Kingdom, 1971, p. 43.

² J S C Riley-Smith, *Hospitaller. The History of the Order of St John*, The Hambledon press, London, United Kingdom 1999, p. 79.

As early as 1144 two Priors had been established in Britain. One for England, Wales and Scotland while the other was responsible for Ireland.³ As an aside, note should also be taken at this point that although most historical texts make reference to the Order in England as one can see that the Order was represented and represents greater parts of Britain and care need be taken not to limit ones view of these reports. The Priory for England, Wales and Scotland established a centre for its operations at Clerkenwell which was at that time located just outside the City of London. From this base the Prior administered Commanderies spread over most of the Kingdom.⁴

The Irish Prior had his Grand Commandry located at Kilmainham in County Dublin, now a suburb of the Irish Republic capital. Both the Irish and Scottish Prior, whose Commandry lay at Torphichen, in Midlothian were subordinate to the Prior at Clerkenwell.⁵ These arrangements did not always prove as effective and efficient as it might have been. The brethren in Ireland often became intertwined in their homeland's struggles for independence from the British Crown.

The Order was considered a foundation of some standing in the Kingdom and the Prior of England was given precedence at court before all lay barons. In Scotland the Commander of Torphichen sat in Parliament until 1563, indeed the heir of the last commander maintains a seat⁶ in Parliament as Lord Torphichen.

In 1312 the Grand Priory of England received many of the properties and asset of the Knights Templar when they were suppressed.⁷ Then between 1330 and 1358 the Grand Prior for England Philip de Thame sort to formally acquire all estates donated or otherwise bequeathed to the English Langu. The Order increased its political power in the life of medieval England with the Priors advising the monarch and often appointed to hold high government positions. By the end of the 14th century the Order rated as one of the greatest ecclesiastical landowners in the Kingdom.⁸

The Prior of England Robert Hales in 1380 became the Treasurer to King Richard II. Unfortunately the taxes he introduced were incredibly unpopular and lead to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381⁹ in which Clerkenwell was burned and Robert was executed with the Archbishop of Canterbury by an angry mob.

Notwithstanding such events in the life of the Order it continued to consolidate its position at court and within England. The Priory in England also maintained its support for its parent Order now in Rhodes. Such was the amity between the Crown, the nobility and the Order King Henry VII was named as 'Protector of the Religion'¹⁰ and in 1517 Thomas Stanley, 2nd Earl of Derby, and Charles Somerset, 1st Earl of Worcester, were received into the Order as 'Knights of Honour'. This was a grade within the Order that required no vow of profession.

Early in the reign of King Henry VIII the previously excellent relationship between the Order and the Crown continued. Henry VIII also took on the title of 'Protector of the Religion' as was previously held by his predecessor Henry VII.¹¹ Unfortunately not the most excellent of relationships could have survived Henry's demand for supremacy and his dispute with Pope (Paul III) Paulus Tertius over the dissolution of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon.¹²

As part of his political machinations of the time Henry VIII had the English Parliament pass a number of pieces of legislation. The first of which was the Act of (Henry VIII) Supremacy 1534 (ENG) which placed the King as the supreme power in England as well as placing Henry as head of the Church of England.¹³ Between 1539 and 1541 several prominent Knights of the Order were executed for denying the Royal Supremacy. These included Thomas Dingley, Adrian Fortescue, David Gunston, William Salisbury and John Forest.¹⁴

Henry VIII also gave assent to legislation that seized all assets and properties from Roman Catholic Orders which had the effect of dissolving or suppressing these entities. This legislation included the *Dissolution of the lesser Monasteries Act 1536 (ENG)*¹⁵, the *Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries Act 1539 (ENG)*¹⁶, the *Suppression of Monasteries Act 1540 (ENG)*¹⁷

³ Renwick & Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁴ Riley-Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80

⁵ Renwick & Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 43

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 47.

⁸ Riley-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁹ Renwick & Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 52.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 52.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 53.

¹³ Parliament of England, *Act of (Henry VIII) Supremacy 1534 (ENG)*, English Statue Book 1534.

¹⁴ Renwick & Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

¹⁵ Parliament of England, *The Dissolution of the Lesser Monasteries Act 1536 (ENG)*, English Statue Book 1536.

and finally a specific piece of legislation in relation to the assets of the Order of St John, the *Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem (Possessions, etc.) Act 1540 (ENG)*.¹⁸



Henry VIII (1491-1547), 'Protector of the Order', about 1545, five years after he had dissolved the Langue of England of the ancient Order of St John. (The portrait is attributed to Hans Eworth.)

This final Act of the Parliament at Westminster on 2 April 1540 by His Majesty's command and by the rule of law within His Majesty's Kingdoms and Dominions provided, inter alia, that the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England "...by whatsoever name or names they be founded, incorporated or known, shall be utterly dissolved and void to all intents and purposes." All property of the Order was sequestered and membership of the Order was forbidden within the realm.¹⁹

Although Henry VIII was not King of Scotland, the two Crowns not unified formally until the *First Act of Uniformity 1549 (ENG)*,²⁰ the actions in the south had a significant effect on the functions of the Order at Torphichen as the activities of the English Langue had ceased.

Mary I (1516-58), who in her short reign tried to restore Catholicism in England, in connection with which in 1557 she issued Letters Patent for the restoration of the Order of St John. The 'revived' Priory of England relied on this document for its legitimacy. (The 1554 portrait is by Anthonis Mor.)



Reports continued of the English Langue operating underground for a period until the succession of Queen Mary I, also known as 'Bloody Mary' who professed Roman Catholic faith. In 1557, some seventeen years since the *Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem (Possessions, etc.) Act 1540 (ENG)* and without repealing this legislation, Queen Mary I issued under her hand Letters Patent²¹ that incorporated an Order of St John in England. Clerkenwell was restored as the Priory and Thomas Tresham installed as Grand Prior of the Order in England.

However less than two years later in 1559 her half-sister Queen Elizabeth I ordered the enforcement of the previous legislation and Royal Decrees, the dismemberment of the Priory and the seizing of its land and assets.²² Again the Order ceased to exist in England. In 1564, now as part of the United Kingdom the Prior in Scotland 'surrendered' all of its property and assets to the Crown.²³ The Order then formally ceased to exist in any form in the British Isles.

¹⁶ Parliament of England, *The Dissolution of the Greater Monasteries Act 1539 (ENG)*, English Statue Book 1539.

¹⁷ Parliament of England, *The Suppression of Monasteries Act 1540 (ENG)*, English Statue Book 1540.

¹⁸ Parliament of England, *The Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem (Possessions, etc.) Act 1540 (ENG)*, English Statue Book 1540.

¹⁹ Parliament of England, *The Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem (Possessions, etc.) Act 1540 (ENG)*, English Statue Book 1540.

²⁰ Parliament of England, *The First Act of Uniformity 1549 (ENG)*, English Statue Book 1549

²¹ Riley-Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

²² Renwick & Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

²³ D Seward, *The Monks of War. The Military Religious Orders*, Penguin Books, London, United Kingdom 1995, pp. 336-7.

For many years subsequent to the formal cessation of activities of the Order in England there were still Englishmen, Scots and Irishmen who became Knights of the Order and maintained a presence in Rhodes and Malta.²⁴ Until the end of the eighteenth century, most of the Englishmen and Irishmen tended to join the Italian Langue, while Scots usually joined the French Langues. Titular Grand Priors were appointed, together with titular Priors of Ireland and Bailiffs of Egle. The Order was not without recusant knights, but the last titular Grand Prior of England, Girolamo Laparelli, died in 1815.

THE MOST VENERABLE ORDER

The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem was originally created as "The Grand Priory of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England" by Her Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria by Royal Charter on 14 May 1888²⁵. This was formal recognition by the British Crown of a group that had been fostered in the early 1800s by Frenchmen. There then poses the question of how it is that this group claims a more rich history back to the first crusades in Palestine around the year 1100. One must first have an understanding of the initial operations of the Order of St John in Britain in the early 1800s.

A revival of the Order of Malta in the French Republic calling itself the Commission of French Langues had originally been established in 1814 with the objective to recover the assets of the Order confiscated during the French Revolution. This revival had received a 'brief' or Papal Letter of Blessing dated 10 August 1814 from Pope Pius (VII) Septus²⁶. In December 1814 King Louis XVIII of France approved the return of properties to Order upon the Order acquiring an independent state as was previously held in Rhodes and Malta. This obviously did not occur. However the French Government did formally recognise new Knights created by the Order.²⁷

Since 1821 the Order in France had been lead by the Commission Secretary Chevalier Marquis de Sainte-Croix-Molay who had taken the title of Chancellor by 1823. It is interesting to note that de Sainte-Croix-Molay is not recorded in the French authority as officially holding the title of Marquis and is also known to have used several aliases including Duc de Santo-Germanie and Sante Germiny. His true identity remains unknown²⁸.

Sainte-Croix-Molay was a fantastic character who sort to raise significant funds by the sale of knighthoods. Between the years 1814 and 1825 the Order in France had admitted 700 new knights with each new knight contributing 6,000 gold francs.

In 1823 Sainte-Croix-Molay planned and lobbied for a naval expedition to regain control of the island of Rhodes in the name of the Order. To this end he claimed to have the backing of the French Government including the use of ships, men and material.²⁹ An agreement had been sort with the revolutionary Hellenic armies who had been engaged in battle with the Ottoman Empire. By July 1823 arrangements had been made with the Greek leader of the revolt Alexander Mavrokordatos for the Order to provide troops and 10,000,000 francs for the war in exchange for the Greek authority recognising the Order's sovereignty over Rhodes and the secession of two islands.³⁰

To progress the funding of this campaign in November 1823 Sainte-Croix-Molay directed that an attempt to raise funds on the London money market be made. The venture was coordinated by a Scotsman living in England by the name of Donald Currie and one of the French Knights who went by the name of Chevalier Philippe de Castelain. Together they attempted to raised the £640,000³¹ required. Currie and Castelain sought also to raise a force of men, a mercenary army for the Order from British soldiers who had seen action with the British army in the colonies. They also sort to and make use of war surplus material available in Britain at the time³². The venture failed mainly due to the reaction of the Governments of England, Austria and Russia. These powers instituted various measures including exercising their influence in Diplomatic circles³³

²⁴ Renwick & Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

²⁵ W K R Bedford & R Holbeche, *The Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, being a history of the English Hospitallers of St John, their rise and progress*, F E Robinson and Company, London, United Kingdom 1902, p. 207.

²⁶ D Seward, *The Monks of War. The Military Religious Orders*, Penguin Books, London, United Kingdom 1995, p. 342.

²⁷ Seward, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-338.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 338.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 339.

³⁰ J S C Riley-Smith, *The Order of St John in England, 1827-1858* in M Barber (ed), *The Military Orders: Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick*, Variorum Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Aldershot, United Kingdom, 1994, p. 122

³¹ Seward, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

³² J S C Riley-Smith, *Hospitaller. The History of the Order of St John*, The Hambledon press, London, United Kingdom 1999, pp. 128-129.

³³ Riley-Smith (1994) *op. cit.*, p. 123.

The Council of French Langues was now not recognised as being an approved administrative authority for the Order by the Holy See or by the French Government. The Lieutenancy had sent a number of items of correspondence stating that the Commission did not have authority to act in the manner in which it had. Indeed the Lieutenant Master in December 1823 formally published his disavowal of the London based loan scheme.³⁴ (No Grand Masters were appointed to head the Order between 1798 and 1879. This was the period between the fall of Malta and the reestablishment of the Order in Rome.³⁵) Finally the Lieutenancy in 1824 withdrew any formal recognition or authority previously given to the Commission, although this had only been a Papal Blessing, and forbid it to reassemble or reconstitute in any form.³⁶ The French Government also withdrew the recognition it had given the Commission and no longer recognised any knights admitted under the Commission unless they were able to produce diplomas issued by the Lieutenancy.³⁷

Despite this lack of formal recognition or mandate from the governing authority Sainte-Croix-Molay and his confreres continued with their plans for expansion of the Order undeterred. In June 1826 Sainte-Croix-Molay authorised Currie and Castelain to make another attempt to raise funds for the Mediterranean expedition.³⁸

The French believed Currie to be a Scottish gentleman of some standing and property. This was not the case. Currie, variously described as a military accoutrement maker³⁹ and a 'Colonial and General Outfitter'⁴⁰, lived at his place of business in Regent Street, London. It is probable that it was due to this profession that he was able to maintain a series of respectable connections with persons of note in England. Currie was also personally known to Sainte-Croix-Molay through his business as well as his visits to France.⁴¹

Little is known of the self styled French Knight Count Chevalier Philippe de Castelain. Castelain is described as a 'shady character' by Riley-Smith⁴² and had to be rescued from Debtors Prison by Currie. Castelain is known to died in the 1870s in Scotland while employed as 'Professor of the French Language and Drawing in all its departments in Edinburgh and Peebles'.⁴³

Currie entered into an arrangement with the representatives of the French Langue who in August 1827 signed Instruments of Convention in which Currie was empowered to raised the sum of £240,000 by private subscription and that he would be paid a commission on the money he raised. Currie did not raise much money. He did however manage to recruit a number of Hospitallers although it would appear from reports that he was none too particular in the person he enrolled.⁴⁴

In February 1830, with new grandiose plans to headquarter the Order in Algeria, Sainte-Croix-Molay authorised Currie and Castelain to form a committee to revive the English Langue. Again it should be noted that the French Langue had been given no authority from the Lieutenancy to pursue such a scheme. Indeed the Lieutenancy had formally disband the French Commission in 1824.⁴⁵

This new 'Council of the English Langue' was inaugurated on 12 January 1831. The executive power as well as the office of President of the Council was given to a person who styled himself 'Count' Alexander Mortara. The address for the Council was the "Auberge of St John, St John's Gate, St John's Square, Clerkenwell". This was a public house "The Old Jerusalem Tavern", which occupied what had been the Gatehouse to the medieval English Grand Priory for a number of years. Mortara is described by Riley-Smith as a 'charlatan'. Mortara claimed in early correspondence to have established a hospital.⁴⁶ A claim that was clearly baseless.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 123.

³⁵ Seward, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-313.

³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 338-341.

³⁷ Riley-Smith (1999) *op. cit.*, p. 129.

³⁸ Seward, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

³⁹ Riley-Smith (1994) *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁴⁰ Seward, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

⁴¹ Riley-Smith (1994) *op. cit.*, p. 123.

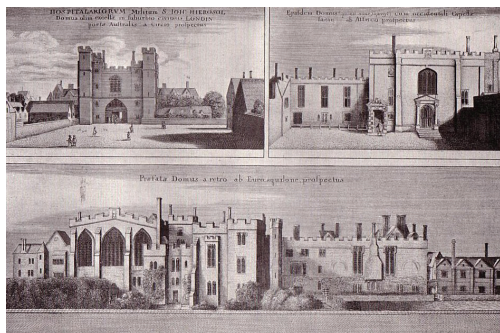
⁴² *ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴⁴ Riley-Smith (1999) *op. cit.*, p. 129.

⁴⁵ Riley-Smith (1994) *op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 124-125.



The buildings of the former Priory of England in Clerkenwell, London, as they were in 1656, a century after the Priory's suppression by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. The 1504 gateway, now known as St John's Gate, is the structure in the upper left corner. (The 1656 engraving is by Wenceslaus Hollar.)



St John's Gate, Clerkenwell: remnant of the once palatial Priory of England of the ancient Order of St John and nowadays the spiritual home of the worldwide Most Venerable Order of St John.

In the winter of 1830/31 Currie recruited perhaps the most significant character in the establishment of the Order in England, I refer to The Reverend Sir Robert Peat the Vicar of the Parish of New Brentford, Middlesex.⁴⁷ We know more about Peat than most of the other characters in the formative years of the Order. Peat was born about 1775 in County Durham as was the son of a watchmaker and silversmith from the Hamsterley area. Peat attended Trinity College Cambridge as had been what is known as a 'Ten Year Man'. This meant that Peat acquired his degree on payment of a some of money rather than having to study for the qualification. Peat is also known to have served as a military Chaplain during the Peninsular War and, though never presented to him, he had been appointed as one of about 100 chaplains to the Prince Regent, the future King George IV. Peat took the accolade 'Sir' as a result of his admission to the Polish Order of St Stanislas. A dubious use of the title.⁴⁸

Some of the authorities contribute some additional comments in relation to Peat's character. Seward suggests that Peat was a heavy gambler and a fortune hunter. An obituary for Peat in *Gentleman's Magazine* for October 1837 stated that he had married and abandoned a very rich lady twenty-five years his senior. This lady was, as described in Seward, the grotesque and half crazy Miss Jane Smith of Herrington House, County Durham whom he had married in 1815. It is also reported that Peat had made a prenuptial agreement with Smith for an annuity of £1,000. An interesting character by any measure.⁴⁹

Peat claimed the leadership of the Order in England and sort about to establish a legal authority for the 'revival' of the Order. To this end he is said to have invoked the provisions of Letters Patent issued by King Philip and Queen Mary of 1557. The records of the Order state that Peat presented himself before the Lord Chief Justice of England Sir Thomas, later Lord Denman of the King's Bench seeking to be qualified for appointment and then took the oath as Prior on 24 February 1834 at Guildhall in the City of London.⁵⁰

The oath of office taken by Peat included a statement that he would "...faithfully truly carefully and strictly perform fulfil keep and obey the ancient Statutes of the said Order..." and made a commitment before God to govern the Order under the provisions of "... the Statute of the 4th and 5th of Philip and Mary..."⁵¹. Unfortunately on a cursory examinations of the fact on point Peat fails to meet the requirements of the Statutes of the Order as he, one assumes given he was an ordained gentleman of the Church of England, a protestant. Further any reference to 'statutes' or legislation assented to by King Philip and/or Queen Mary are erroneous as there was no such legislation in existence.⁵²

Very early on in Peat's involvement in the activities of the Order a rift developed between him and his supporters and Mortara and his supporters. Peat with other British members of the Langue accused Mortara, with some justification, of the sale of knightoods. Peat and his supporters succeeded in having Mortara expelled from the Order. The Council of the

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 125.

⁴⁸ Seward, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 341-342.

⁵⁰ Bedford & Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.

⁵² Seward, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-344.

French Langues backed Mortara, and so from early 1832, there were two competing English Langues, the Langue led by Peat, being the unofficial English Langue and the one led by Mortara and supported by the French. The rival organisations existed in parallel for five years, until the disappearance of Mortara early in 1837, when his organisation also disappeared.⁵³



Commemorative wall panel in the Chapter Room at St John's Gate for Rev. 'Sir' Robert Peat, first Prior of the purportedly 'revived Langue of England' of the ancient Order of St John. Peat's arms boldly display the cross of St John the Baptist, patron saint of the ancient Order. The knighthood that Peat claimed was not one awarded through the British honours system.

Following Peat's death in April 1837, Sir Henry Dymoke succeeded him as Grand Prior, and under his leadership, contact was re-established with the Knights in France and Germany. There were now the additional complications in relation to Sainte-Croix-Molay as he had also passed away, the Commission finally ceased its activities and the French knights returned to the fold of the recognised administrative authority of the Order in Rome.⁵⁴ The British Order sought official recognition from the Roman Catholic Headquarters of the Order of Malta. Contact between the two had been very cordial for several years. The Grand Bailiff of the Order Cristoforo Ferretti visited London in 1843 and received a delegation from the Langue. Ferretti dutifully reported the supplication of the English Langue to the Lieutenant Master Carlo Candida. Candida replied to the English Langue that the statutes of the Order forbade the admission of Protestants.⁵⁵

The Englishmen continued their mission to be recognised by the Magistracy in Rome. In 1858 one of the Roman Catholic members of the Langue John James Watts visited Rome and met with the Secretary of the Order Count Gozze. As a result of these meetings Watts and Gozze developed a scheme of arrangement whereby a Catholic Priory of the Order would be established in England which would then try and incorporate the existing predominately Protestants Langue as a Branch of the new Catholic Order. This project was progressed until two existing Catholic members of the Langue, George Bowyer and Edmund Waterton, made representations to Gozze that a number of their fellow members of the English Langue were not worthy and indeed inappropriate persons to be members of the Order. They variously described these inappropriate persons as 'impostors', 'swindlers', 'revolutionaries', and, perhaps at the time the worst of all charges, 'freemasons'. Howie-Willis attributes Bowyer and Waterton's motives to that of wanting to restrict membership of the Order to Catholics. These actions ended any likelihood that there would be a formal acknowledgement and connections between the two groups.⁵⁶

Then in December 1858 the negotiations to have a recognised English Langue where sharply ended when the then Grand Master Commander Philippe de Colloredo-Mansfeld (1845-1864) repudiated the actions of the French Commissioner in sponsoring the establishment of the Order in England and refused to recognise a Protestant branch of the Order.⁵⁷ The Magistracy also made formal approaches to the British Crown in order to complain of the activities of the English Langue.⁵⁸

⁵³ J S C Riley-Smith & A R Mellows, 'Historical Antecedents', *The Grand Council of the Order of St John*, March 2002, p.8

⁵⁴ I Howie-Willis, *A Century for Australia, St John Ambulance in Australia 1883-1983*, Priory of the Order of St John in Australia, 1983, p. 103.

⁵⁵ I Howie-Willis, *The Modern Orders of St John: Making Sense of Who's Who*, Paper delivered to the Priory History Group, Adelaide Australia, June 2000, p. 8.

⁵⁶ Howie-Willis, (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁵⁷ E D Renwick & I M Williams, *A Short History of the Order of St John (Sixth Edition)*, Order of St John, London, United Kingdom, 1971, p. 57.

⁵⁸ Howie-Willis, (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

These events however had a far less catastrophic impact on the parent Order and indeed for Bowyer himself. Bowyer who was a lawyer of some standing and Member of Parliament was admitted to the Order by Rome and went on in 1875 to establish and be the Founding President of the Sovereign Military Order Association in Britain.⁵⁹

Up to this point, the English organisation had only considered itself to be a Grand Priory and a Langue of the Order. In response to the Roman Catholic Order's refusal of recognition, the English Priory declared itself to be the Sovereign Order in England, under the title "The Sovereign and Illustrious Order of St John of Jerusalem, Anglia".⁶⁰ This was a new Order with no connection with the Order in Rome.⁶¹

The English Order continued in its growth, and had been able to recruit the 7th Duke of Manchester, who became their Grand Prior in 1861. The beginnings of well-established national Hospitaller organisation began when the Order created a corps of ambulances in the 1860s. In 1871 a new Constitution brought about a further change of name offering a more modest identity; "Order of Saint John of Jerusalem in England". In 1876, the Princess of Wales was recruited into membership, followed by the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. In 1877 the British Priory of the Order established St John Ambulance Associations in large railway centres and mining districts so that railway men and colliers might learn how to treat victims of accidents. This was followed up in 1887 with the creation of the St John Ambulance Brigade. In 1882 the British Grand Priory founded a Hospice and Ophthalmic Dispensary in Jerusalem.⁶²



William Drogo Montagu, 7th Duke of Manchester (1823-90), Grand Prior of the 'revived' Priory of England of the Order of St John 1861-88. Under his 27-year rule as Grand Prior, he turned around the fortunes of an organisation of dubious origins, making it such a greatly respected institution that Queen Victoria granted it the Royal Charter that established it as a British royal order of chivalry. The key to his success was that he had brought into the Order the energetic men who gave it new direction by making first aid its primary activity.

It is now clear that the organisation in the British Isles was to their credit very practical in the life saving work undertaken by both the Brigade and the Association. In terms of status, the biggest leap forward was the official recognition conveyed on 14 May 1888 by way of the granting of a Royal Charter by Queen Victoria, under the title "The Grand Priory of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England". The most recent Charter is dated 1955, with a supplemental charter in 1974. The 1974 Charter recognised the world-wide scope of the order by setting its current name and short title. The reigning monarch, at this time Queen Elizabeth II, serves as the Sovereign Head of the Order.⁶³



Queen Victoria (1811-1901), who in 1888 granted a Royal Charter to the Venerable Order of St John, of which she became Sovereign Head. In this portrait she is wearing her Sovereign Head's badge, which is at the top right of her row of decorations.

The Venerable Order although it is identified with the reformed tradition it is ecumenical in its membership and from its early days counted Roman Catholics as members. The reigning Monarch has served as the Order's Sovereign Head, who is also Supreme Governor of the Church of England. In 1963 the Venerable Order and the Sovereign Military Order of Malta agreed

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶⁰ Howie-Willis (1983), *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁶¹ Howie-Willis, (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁶² Renwick & Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60.

⁶³ Riley-Smith & Mellows, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

to jointly recognise each other formally.⁶⁴ It is then interesting to note, with the benefit of this additional background, the Official Summary of the History of the Order;

*"In the 19th century, around 400 years after Henry VIII had ended the medieval Priory, there were moves to revive the Order of St. John in England. Revival required the consent of the Pope, but as Anglicans as well as Catholics were involved, it was not given. Despite this a determined group set up the British Order of St. John to care for the sick in the Hospitaller tradition and the suffering of workers was one of their main concerns."*⁶⁵

CONCLUSION AND COMMENTS

I have stated from the outset it is not my intention or desire to try and demean or lessen the standing of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem; quite the opposite indeed. Since the establishment of the great Foundations of the Order, Association in 1877, the Hospital in 1882 and the Brigade in 1887, the service provided to the community internationally is unequalled. It is the outstanding works of the members of St John since 1877 that has established it the reputation of a worldwide organisation which is a leader in the care of the community with an exemplary ethic and commitment to task.

Today all over the globe members of St John Ambulance are providing support and assistance to the sick and injured in war and in peace, in harsh and unforgiving environments, in modern cities and in comfortable homes, in schools, in aged care facilities and on the streets. In the last year St John Ambulance in Australia alone had in excess of 10,000 volunteer first aiders and health care professionals providing world leading pre-hospital care to the Australian community. An additional 2,000 volunteers provided comfort and support through programmes in Community Care. The Annual Report for Victoria details that members within Volunteer First Aid Services contributed more than 154,000 duty hours and treated over 23,100 people. This is not the work of a callow and self serving cartel.

The catalyst for the research leading to the preparation of this paper was a lack of clarity in my mind about the anomalies surrounding the connections drawn in the course of explaining the history of the Ancient Order and the relations it has to the Venerable Order. Some may even question why it is that the Venerable Order wishes to claim an ancient heritage of wars and invasion, of sacking cities and towns and of religious zealots. Surely the actions of members of St John Ambulance post 1877 are of a far better character and a greater example moral and ethical behaviour than is contained within this ancient past. The past is not something to be ashamed of, but we should acknowledge it and accept greater and more worthy deeds done as a result of it.

I am now left at the end of this paper with possibly more questions than when I commenced my research. The events and conduct of those in positions of authority within the various groups in London in the early 1800s is a matter for a personal assessment and not for an arbitrary conclusion to be drawn from nearly two hundred years away. Can the claims to an ancient heritage stand scrutiny in 2007? A matter for you to decide.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to formally recognise and sincerely thank Professor Jonathan Riley-Smith KStJ KSJ, the former Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Cambridge and Honorary Librarian of the Order for his insight and contribution to the issues surrounding the events touched on in this paper.

I would also like to thank a number of individuals who have provided valuable assistance in research, provision of various historical records and documents as well as with legal advice, research and other support;

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Most importantly I wish to publicly acknowledge the tremendous assistance provided to me in the preparation of this paper by the Historian to the Priory in Australia and Secretary of the Historical Society Dr Ian Howie-Willis OAM KStJ. I thank Ian very much indeed for his considerable support and unwavering encouragement without which it would have been impossible to complete this project.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁶⁵ St John Ambulance (UK) Website, *"Our History"*, viewed on 12 October 2006, <http://www.sja.org.uk/history/victorian_britain.asp>.

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Too young to die: The sad story of a young doctor and his wife whp perished on an errand of mercy in Central Australia in 1942

by Alan Caust

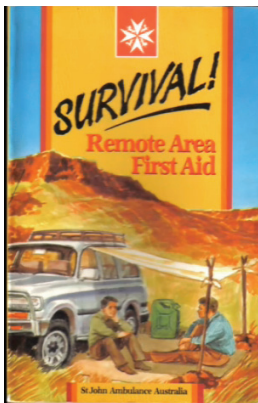
THE AUTHOR: Alan Caust has been a St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch member for much of his life. His St John career began in South Australia but more recently has been in Queensland and later the Northern Territory, in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, where he currently lives. Mr Caust is a trained nurse who has also worked as an ambulance officer with the St John-run Northern Territory Ambulance Service. In more recent years he has worked as a nurse educator among Aboriginal communities but for the last year has been a lecturer in the nurse education program at the Northern Territory University. In St John circles he is best known as being the instigator of the Remote Area First Aid Manual. His paper deals with a topic that captured his interest during his years in Tennant Creek, when he came across the sad story of the death of a young medical practitioner and his wife, who were buried in the local cemetery. He followed the story up and discovered that it has a St John Ambulance connection, which his paper explains.

Because of difficulties with travel arrangements, Alan Caust was unable to deliver this paper in person to the Historical Society's History Seminar in Canberra on 21 June 2007. Instead he produced a DVD presentation which was played to the audience. He later rewrote his DVD presentation as a feature article for the Tennant & District Times newspaper, which published it more or less as he wrote it on 21 December 2007. (By editing sections of the article, the newspaper managed to garble at least one important point made by the author.) The article below is as Mr Caust originally wrote it.

'Tennant Creek doctor and Wife perish in the Northern Territory Outback on Errand of Mercy!'

Newspaper headlines like these appeared in most of Australia's eastern-seaboard dailies during March 1942. The 'tragedy' they reported kept the unfamiliar name 'Tennant Creek' before the public for over a week, at a time of course when both newspapers and public were preoccupied with the threat of an imminent Japanese invasion. Most of the major newspapers ran 'exclusive' reports by 'their' Northern Territory correspondent who allegedly 'knew' the whole story. Much of what appeared in print, however, was conjecture and some of what was reported was plain incorrect. Recent research now reveals a rather different story.

The story begins on Saturday 7 March 1942. The temperature in Tennant Creek that day was a hot 40.6C as recorded by the local Post Office. At 5pm the town's only doctor and his wife, a nursing sister newly qualified, set off from the Hospital located on Patterson Street (where the present primary school now stands) on an urgent errand of mercy to Rockhampton Downs Station. At 3.30pm on the following Wednesday, just four days later, the young couple were buried in the Tennant Creek cemetery. A shocked and disbelieving local community gathered at their lonely graveside in the dusty cemetery on the outskirts of our outback town to mourn their loss.



The Remote Area First Aid manual inspired by the deaths of Walter and Vivien Straede five hours' drive east of Tennant Creek.

In the 65 years since then, speculation has been rife in Tennant Creek over the as to what actually happened. Rumours flourished even as late as 1978, when Alan Caust first saw the graves. Mr Caust was the third ambulance officer appointed to the new Tennant Creek St John Ambulance Service and was here when their new building officially opened on 10 November 1980. He wrote a national St John Ambulance manual entitled *Survival! Remote Area First Aid*, first published in 1990, which he attributes directly to having read the lone headstone at the gravesite.

'I was amazed that a local doctor and his wife perished out in the same country where we were traveling. It hit me when I realized that some 40 years ago at that time; people died like these two did in a remote area. It especially affected me as to why two medically-trained people could have perished on a reasonably short trip out to Rockhampton Downs Station.'

He went on to add that,

'We were conducting city-based first aid courses to remote area cattle stations and settlements and I decided there and then to embark on writing a text that dealt specifically with first aid in remote areas. Today, our national St John Ambulance headquarters in Canberra have improved on my early attempt and today we offer national courses specifically in remote area first aid right across Australia.'

Alan had joined the local National Trust where Mrs Hilda Tuxworth MBE was the President. Alan remembers the meetings he attended in Tennant Creek back in the late 1970's.

'Mrs Tuxworth was a retired nursing sister who had worked out at the Warrego Mines. Hilda, or 'Biddy' as she was affectionally known, was quite a formidable figure as any will attest who knew her. Her son Ian Tuxworth was the then Minister of Health. Later he became the Chief Minister.

Mrs Tuxworth was instrumental in preserving some of Tennant Creek's history and even published a short history of our outback town. I clearly remember speaking with Mrs Tuxworth in relation to seeing the gravesite. It was Mrs Tuxworth who first intrigued me when she told me that (back then) there were still rumours of foul play, that the radiator was full of water and that people still speculated about the tragedy'.

So what really happened on that fateful evening back in early March 1942?

Due to Alan's research as an amateur historian over the past 2 years, we may indeed have some answers to a tragedy that occurred some 65 years ago.

Walter Straede was a newly graduated medical practitioner.* He was an outstanding scholar and up to 1940 had been the youngest ever to graduate from the Melbourne University Medical School. He married Vivien Cousins, who had just completed her four-year nursing certificate. Walter then took up an appointment at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1940.

Dr Straede and his new bride arrived in Tennant Creek in early 1941 and records show that he was duly registered as a medical practitioner in the Northern Territory on 4 August 1941. He was only 22 and Vivien was just 19. His appointment was as medical superintendent to the Tennant Creek Hospital on the princely salary of some 400 pounds or so a year.



Dr Walter Straede, who died on the road from Tennant Creek to Rockhampton Downs Station, Northern Territory, during an emergency call in March 1942.



Mrs Vivien Straede, who died with her husband after driving out from Tennant Creek in 1942.



The memorial plaque over the grave of Walter and Vivien Straede in the Tennant Creek Cemetery.

Dr Straede was the sole doctor in Tennant Creek and had the assistance of just one nursing sister or registered Nurse. It appears that a registered nurse was employed at the small Tennant Creek Hospital and so Vivien was most probably not active officially as a trained nurse. One however can speculate that she worked closely with her new husband when the opportunity arose.

The young doctor would most probably have been known to other early medical officers who now feature prominently within our Northern Territory history such as Doctors Kirkland, Catalano and Fenton. Later on, Dr Fenton (ex- RAAF) landed his aeroplane from Katherine in front of what is now our existing hospital in Schmidt Street to attend a case of a young man who was in need of urgent medical care.

Fenton literally forced open the locked doors to the new out-patient department building (built by the Army in 1942), which now houses the Tennant Creek National Trust archives repository. He sent a telegram to the then Chief Medical Officer, Dr Kirkland in Darwin, gleefully saying he had opened the new hospital with a crowbar! And indeed he had.

* Dr Walter Straede is not to be confused with his younger brother, Dr William (Bill) Straede, also a medical practitioner who graduated from the University of Melbourne. Dr Bill Straede was for many years a surgeon with the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch in Victoria. Dr Bill Straede, a general practitioner in Bendigo before his retirement, died aged 91 in September 2007. Before his death he had been a major informant of Alan Caust in researching this article.

Had Dr Straede lived longer he would have without doubt probably also featured in Northern Territory medical history, along with our other medical doctors, as his own exploits, although brief, showed tremendous nerve and daring for one so young.

It was war-time in 1941 and large convoys of both troops and war materials were continually passing through Tennant Creek on their way to Darwin.

Politically, the civil medical authority, the then Commonwealth Department of Health, was concerned that the small Tennant Creek hospital might succumb as did the Alice Springs hospital later, to Defence Force control.

The Director-General of the Commonwealth Department of Health, Dr Cumpston controlled all such civilian postings of Medical Officers such as Dr Straede in Tennant Creek. Indeed, Cumpston personally signed his letter of engagement. In 1941, Dr Cumpston visited Dr Straede in Tennant Creek and some early correspondence from Walter to his superior gives us an insight into the life of a lone young doctor in such an isolated medical post.

Dr Straede wrote the following letter dated 11 July 1941 to Dr Cumpston on his arrival in Tennant Creek:

'My wife and I arrived last Wednesday and had a very enjoyable trip. So far we have found the Territory a very delightful place, the people very charming and hospitable, the climate (in my short experience) perfect which all contrast with some of the disquieting rumours which we heard in Melbourne just before we left. The house is very nice and situation perfect, the lighting service is now working in the evenings, and we can find no complaints even if we would so.'

Cumpston's later telegram dated 11 March 1942 to Colonel Southwood, Deputy Director Medical Services at Army headquarters in Adelaide, shows clearly only just days after Walter's death, his own concern:

'Owing accidental death doctor Straede last Monday Tennant Creek now without civil doctor as Northern Territory is under army control will be difficult to send civil doctor STOP could you arrange medical attendance for civil cases Tennant also inform whether army is now controlling hospital there no departmental advices have reached me. Cumpston. 11.3.42.'

Of only three relevant letters still extant, the above also stands out in particular when Dr Straede again writes to Dr Cumpston within weeks of his first letter, dated 29 August 1941, detailing some of his major concerns with the then ill-equipped Tennant Creek Hospital.

It includes references to the lack of a reliable lighting plant (a generator these days) and where a severe case of appendicitis could have been disastrous had the lighting plant not functioned when needed. The appendix was distended and about to burst – and the 22 year old Dr Straede operated immediately. He had just one nurse to assist him; and most probably his wife Vivien would have attended also. It was night time and had the lighting plant failed again, during the operation – he felt it would have been a disaster. He concluded that the operation time-wise was equal to that of any (1940s) city hospital. He was obviously pleased that his surgery was both successful and equaled the usual time required to perform an appendectomy.

His other concerns included the need for a larger sterilizer due to the fact that obstetric cases were 'coming on' and most certainly may require surgical intervention. Dr Straede most probably was referring to cesarean sections where he might need to operate.

He also mentions the need for an X-Ray plant as a serious head injury had arrived from the Banka Banka Army Staging Camp. Banka Banka station is still today hours away from Tennant Creek. Research shows that a young soldier died after being nursed for some seven days by Dr Straede and his small team. He was considered too serious to fly out to the Alice Springs Hospital.

Dr Straede also wrote a communication to Dr Cumpston about the need for a Government motor car. He had been using his own car, which he himself had purchased locally with his limited salary. It soon died a natural death and he then had no official transport as enjoyed by others in similar remote postings.

His request for a Commonwealth vehicle unfortunately was never approved. Dr Straede eventually had to rely on borrowed vehicles with minimal monetary assistance from the Commonwealth Department of Health. This is an important aspect that has a direct bearing in relation to his death – the reliance on borrowed vehicles for bush trips.

Research shows that the young doctor travelled south down the Stuart Highway to what is now known as Ali Curung. In the 1970s this community was known as Warrabri. He was also very frustrated that he could not always meet his desire to

attend to patients in regard to remote Aboriginal communities. He was a very dedicated young doctor and research tells us of his keenness to visit such remote communities. Vivien's own family photographs of her husband show the young doctor with Aboriginal people.

In early 1942, just prior to the first Japanese bombing of Darwin the small settlement on Channel Island out from the Darwin Harbour was evacuated by the authorities. Sister Elsie Jones, the matron of the then leprosarium on being forcibly evacuated from the island, decided to travel south to meet with friends and family at Rockhampton Downs Station out from Tennant Creek. Sister Elsie Jones was an experienced Nursing Sister (RN) and was one of the many nurses that formed a part of the nursing cadre with the Rev John Flynn's ideals of outback nursing. Flynn of course was the founder of the Royal Flying doctor Service as we know it today. She would almost certainly have been known to him.

Indeed, Sister Elsie Jones MBE had considerable experience and is much renowned in books written last century in regard to her wonderful nursing abilities particularly in the Victoria River District (VRD) in the Northern Territory. She is attributed to saving countless lives as a fore-runner of today's Remote Area Nurse in the Northern Territory. A photograph of her stands in a glass cabinet in the Charles Darwin University foyer in the School of Nursing. She proudly wears her MBE Award.



Sister Elsie Jones, whose illness at Rockhampton Downs Station led to Walter and Vivien Straede becoming lost and then dying.

Unfortunately, Sister Elsie was not a well lady when she arrived in 1942 at Rockhampton Downs Station. She had been plagued by gastric concerns for ages – and things flared up necessitating Mr Easy (the owner of Rockhampton Downs Station) placing a radio-telegram call to the Cloncurry (Queensland) Flying doctor for a plane to bring the doctor to her aid and for her medical evacuation. Research reveals that the request may have involved the need for a blood transfusion. She may have been vomiting blood.

It is poignant to mention here that the very organisation that Sister Jones had been involved in with the Rev John Flynn, was unable to come to her aid at that time through circumstances beyond its control. The 'flying' doctor at the Cloncurry Base in Queensland had no aircraft.

His plane had been seconded to the Defence Force and was being used for coastal aerial surveillance. Instead, the doctor in Cloncurry sent an appropriate radio-telegram to the Alice Springs Hospital to request aid. It was received by a young Dr Kewish, who for some reason did not immediately act upon the request. A few days later Kewish received further notice from the station via the Cloncurry Flying doctor that things were quite urgent and the patient's condition had now seriously deteriorated.

Finally, Dr Kewish who was also a lone medical superintendent in the Alice Springs Hospital, but with a larger nursing staff, sent a telegram to his medical colleague in Tennant Creek, requesting him to attend the case at Rockhampton Downs Station. His later correspondence reveals perhaps a sincere lack of knowledge of the distances involved. This may have influenced him in his hesitation to address the medical emergency as 'dire' on receipt of the first telegram.

After Dr Straede's death, his father kept up an amazing barrage of letters and visits that spanned three Prime Ministers from the war-time Prime Minister John Curtin to Sir Robert Menzies. It makes tragic reading spanning over many years where his father simply wanted answers from the Commonwealth government as to why and how his son had died.

On Saturday, 7 March 1942 at around midday, the fated telegram from Dr Kewish was received at the Tennant Creek Post Office. It was to seal the fates of these two young, unsuspecting and dedicated medical and nursing professionals forever. The events that followed closely and rapidly, were now unstoppable, and would lead to their suffering dreadful deaths in total isolation far from any help.

It is now known, that the young Dr Straede by now aged 23 years, was to soon witness helplessly as his young wife Vivien, now 20, died before his own eyes. On her death, he removed her wedding ring and placed it on his own finger, prior to his own lonely death so very far from civilization. A search party was to eventually find them too late and allegedly, just some hours after his own death.

On receipt of the telegram from Dr Kewish, the next few hours in Tennant Creek saw a flurry of activity that involved Sergeant Smyth, the then officer in charge of the Tennant Creek police station and others making hurried preparations to respond to the medical emergency.

It is clear however, that Dr Straede and Sergeant Smyth were not on good terms. According to Dr Straede's brother Bill (also a Dr Straede), Walter Straede had joined the Communist Party during his university days. Meanwhile, however, he had relinquished membership. It was war time and this may account for the rumours about foul play that circulated in Tennant Creek at the time.



The Hospital ship 'Manunda', on which Walter Straede's brother Dr Bill Straede was serving when it was bombed near Darwin about the time that Walter and his wife perished near Tennant Creek.

Nothing in subsequent research substantiates anything untoward in this regard and Sergeant Smyth as a respected police officer of the time, worked very hard in ensuring everything possible that could be done was actually done.

If any criticism could be made of Sergeant Smyth today, it would only be the fact that the superintendent of police in Alice Springs firmly disallowed his official request to be reimbursed for the liquor that he supplied to the search party on their return to Tennant Creek. Smyth spent two pounds of his own money and unsuccessfully attempted to claim it back from the Government coffers.

A local vehicle was borrowed for the medical emergency and a driver, 'Curly' Cooper, was enlisted to drive the doctor and his wife out to Rockhampton Downs station. Dr Straede refused this offer, saying he was taking his wife along and there was no need to have a guide. It is important to note that Dr Straede had obviously never attended this station. Sergeant Smyth was to later report this to his superior, the superintendent of police in Alice Springs. In hindsight, it is perhaps tempting today to make judgments and criticisms about the events that now followed closely. This would be perhaps most unfair because today, no one is alive that witnessed the events that now start to unfold in this tragedy. What we do have however are the witness statements of the eventual search party members and communications from Sgt Smyth himself.

By sticking to the known facts of the time, a brief synopsis of the tragedy can be relayed some 65 years after the events now described.

The borrowed vehicle arrived at the Tennant Creek Hospital on Saturday 7th March and Dr Straede, his wife and their dog were ready to leave. A police constable noted that there was insufficient water on-board – and further supplies were brought out by Vivien from the hospital to the car. Research suggests that they now had some 30 litres of water on board along with foodstuffs such as canned meat and some lemonade.

Meantime, Dr Straede was informed that the vehicle could break down. He was accordingly shown how to fix the fuel-line if this occurred. The Straedes were warned that on reaching Number 3 Bore on Rockhampton Downs station they should be very careful because the track leading to the homestead could be churned up by cattle coming in to drink. He was to wait for Mr Easy to meet him. In the event of the car breaking down, they were to stay with it.



Travelling dirt roads like this led to the Straedes' losing their way after their five-hour drive east of Tennant Creek.

The Straedes drove out of Tennant Creek at 5pm on 7th March. They were just missed by Sergeant Smyth, who had just sent a telegram to Mr Easy via the Tennant Creek Post Office that the doctor was on his way. They arrived at Number 3 Bore at or before midnight on that Saturday evening. This was on the old highway to Mount Isa, an all-dirt road like all the others in the district. Research shows that they camped at Number 3 Bore, most certainly Saturday evening, and perhaps all day Sunday – doing just as instructed to wait for Mr Easy.

When Mr Easy failed to appear as arranged, it is most probable that during Sunday 8th March the Straedes decided to leave the Number 3 Bore and travel on to the station. It was after all an urgent medical case.



The scrubby semi-desert country near Tennant Creek in which Walter and Vivien Straede lost their way.

Things soon went wrong as they obviously missed the road to the station. Instead, they travelled for some miles in a north-westerly direction, almost parallel but away from the road to the station. Eventually their vehicle broke down, exactly as warned. Research shows it wasn't repaired and there is evidence that they camped by the car on the side away from the sun and therefore in its shade. Food and water were shared. An area of grass measuring about two metres square was found burnt near the car.

It is reasonable to presume that the Straedes started walking back to Number 3 Bore on Monday 9th March. Strangely, however, they were closer to Number 7 Bore, which was only two miles away and much closer than Number 3 Bore, their original point of departure. Ironically, both the bores and their mountings could be seen from their location before the early morning haze made them invisible to the naked eye. They were only a few miles also from the dirt track that led to Rockhampton Downs station, which was still some 25 miles away.

The Straedes filled two water bags and took tinned tobacco, powdered milk, tea and other things, and with their dog set off following their tracks back to Number 3 Bore. They left other foodstuffs and a small amount of water in their stranded vehicle.

At about midday on Monday 9th March, Mr Easy opened up his pedal-wireless to receive his telegrams and was immediately alarmed to receive the telegram sent by Sergeant Smyth the previous Saturday evening at 5pm saying that the doctor was on his way to the station. Dr Straede had obviously not arrived as it was now some 43 hours later and no sign of him had been seen. Mr Easy sent an urgent telegram back to Sergeant Smyth about this and advised he was going out with a party to look for the Straedes. Meantime, on receipt of this urgent telegram Sergeant Smyth quickly organised a search party. This comprised the Rev. McTaggart, 'Snowy' Renfrey and Constable Wardby.

The search party eventually left Tennant Creek at 3pm on Monday 9th March, almost two full days after the Straedes had departed. Some five hours later the search party arrived at Number 3 Bore at about 8pm. After a short respite, they continued on the road to the station and met Mr Easy on the track. It was late, all were very tired and Mr Easy advised them he had located the Straedes' vehicle earlier that afternoon. They went in convoy to the station homestead for a meal. All must have been very worried for the Straedes as they made their plans for the search.

Mr Easy then led the convoy of three vehicles out to where he had earlier that afternoon located the Straedes' abandoned vehicle. By now it was midnight, and so they camped for the night because tracks could not be followed.

On Tuesday 10th March and at first light, they all awoke and the motor car was quickly fixed and also tracks were found. The tracks were followed by one party as they split up. A signal – probably a gun-shot – was used to bring the other party to a grisly find. The doctor, his wife and dog were found dead at around 10am about six miles back towards the Number 3 Bore. Both their water bags were empty. The odd thing was that despite the heat both the Straedes were heavily dressed. 'Snowy' Renfrey, an experienced bushman, had never seen anything like it. He attested in his witness statement that he believed the deceased couple had probably not died from thirst and exposure. His experience 'in such matters' told him otherwise. He was surprised that anyone might think thirst or exposure had been the cause of death.

If thirst was not chiefly to blame, what was? One possibility is food poisoning, for instance botulism. Was the Straedes' canned food contaminated? Such possibilities were not investigated. Some 65 years later, we are tempted to conclude that food poisoning and over-heating rather than thirst were the culprits. Vivien Straede was fully dressed and not long before she and her husband stopped for the last time on their trek to Number 3 Bore she had discarded a heavy red overcoat. Walter Straede when found was dressed fully in a waterproof overcoat, hat, khaki shorts, long socks and shoes. Why were they so attired in a region where daytime temperatures can soar above 40 degrees? We are tempted to conclude that they were not thinking rationally, perhaps because of food poisoning. Their heavy clothing suggests that they were in a confused state. Such clothing, moreover, would have caused them to sweat more heavily and consequently lose both water and mineral salts more rapidly. In walking heavily clad in the heat for six miles they had probably brought on an attack of heatstroke. They also seem to have been carrying their dog, which would have debilitated them further while accelerating the onset of heatstroke. We can only wonder what a present-day Coroner might make of these circumstances.

In 1942, however, there was no legally and medically trained coroner. Local Justices of the Peace in the Northern Territory in those days were empowered to act as coroners without any requirement that they have even basic medical knowledge. The local Tennant Creek JP was a Mr James Maloney. Mr Maloney does seem to have sought medical opinion, because an Army doctor from Banka Banka had been called down to Tennant Creek to ascertain that the couple were indeed dead. By the time he arrived on the scene, however, the couple were clearly deceased and increasingly in need of urgent burial. For reasons known only to himself, Mr Maloney seems to have decided that there was no need for autopsies and so none was conducted. Instead he simply issued an order that the bodies be buried forthwith. Like the press of the day, he seems to have assumed that the Straedes must have died of thirst.

Present-day knowledge and research suggest that thirst was not necessarily what killed the Straedes. Finding other possible causes does not seem to have been an urgent priority in wartime Tennant Creek. With towns further north being bombed regularly, the cause of death of a couple of civilians who had died after straying from their broken down vehicle was not the most pressing of matters. Their deaths having been ascertained and dehydration deemed as the most likely cause, the legal requirements for burial had been met. Walter and Vivien Straede were accordingly buried hastily. In the process, other possible and more likely causes of death remained uninvestigated. Today it is unlikely that such a cursory examination of the facts would occur. Instead, a coronial inquest into such a case would be certain.

One welcome outcome of this tragic case is that 65 years later present-day members of both the Straede and Cousins families have been reunited. Even more poignantly, another Vivien (née Cousins) a descendant of Vivien Straede's family plus her husband, Mr Bill Batton, have recently visited the graves of Walter and Vivien Straede in the Tennant Creek cemetery.

Vivien Batton is the very first direct relative of Vivien Straede ever to have visited the grave. The Cousins family has now arranged for a commemorative plaque to be placed over the grave, which had previously remained unmarked. There has long been a plaque over Walter Straede's grave because his brother, Dr Bill Straede, had one placed there just after World War II. (As mentioned in a footnote above, Bill Straede, a friend and informant of Alan Caust, passed away in Victoria during September 2007 at the age of 91.)

The story of how Walter and Vivien Straede met their deaths is truly remarkable. Though they were recent arrivals in Tennant Creek and lived here for only a short time, their forlorn graves remind us that through their sad, avoidable deaths and swift burial here they became a permanent part of the town and its history.

Colonel John Arthur Sherwin: Commandant of Heidelberg Military Hospital and third Victorian St John Ambulance Commissioner

by J. Allan Mawdsley

THE AUTHOR: *Dr J. Allan Mawdsley, KStJ has spent most of his life in St John Ambulance. He joined the Malvern Cadet Division in Melbourne in 1949 aged 11. In his 58 years in the organisation he has held nearly every position available to a volunteer, including three years as Commissioner in Victoria and more recently as Deputy Chairman of the State St John Council and as a committee member of this Historical Society. He is also a Knight of the Order. Away from St John, Dr Mawdsley has spent his professional career as a psychiatrist but has always been interested in history. He is prominent among the group who have developed the Victorian St John Museum at Williamstown; and he was the person who brought Miss Millie Field's centenary history of St John in Victoria through its final furlongs to publication in 2004. Dr Mawdsley's particular historical interest is the people who have served as Victoria's St John Ambulance Commissioners. His paper below is one of a continuing series of biographical studies of the Victorian Commissioners, his previous papers at our seminars having been on Colonel George Horne and Major General Rupert Downes.*

Colonel John Arthur Hopkins Sherwin (1881-1961) was born on 14th December 1881 at Forbes in NSW, and died in Melbourne on 14th August 1961 at the age of 79 years. The roots of his family lie deep in the history of early Tasmania. His paternal grandfather Sherwin was a landowner near Bothwell in the Clyde Valley, and his maternal great-grandfather Henry Hopkins, originally from London, was a successful Hobart wool merchant, who soon after the settlement of the western district of Victoria acquired the rich grazing properties of Wormbete, Mount Hesse and Murdedirke near Winchelsea. Henry Hopkins was a man of substance and importance. His benefactions both in Tasmania and in Victoria were mainly to the church, and on September 3, 1839, it was he who laid the foundation stone of the original Independent Church in Collins Street, Melbourne, the first permanent building for divine service erected in Victoria. The Reverend William Waterfield was the minister, and John Pascoe Fawkner its treasurer. When this church was rebuilt in its present form in 1866, Henry Hopkins was again present to lay the memorial stone. ¹

Arthur Sherwin was born on a pastoral property near Forbes, the son of John Sherwin and Agnes Mary, daughter of Arthur Hopkins. A few months later, John Sherwin was thrown from a horse and killed.¹ Arthur first attended Kyneton Grammar School, passing on to Geelong Church of England Grammar School where he was a prefect and a keen sportsman.¹ Having matriculated, he entered Melbourne University as a resident student at Trinity College, and although he was not a top level student, he took a prominent part in college and university life. He represented his college in rowing, football and athletics, and in his final year was president of the Trinity College Students' Club. He rowed in four consecutive years, 1902 to 1905, in intervarsity contests.¹ He graduated MB,ChB in 1908.



The graduating class of medical Students, University of Melbourne, 1907. A.J.H. Sherwin's is the lower inset portrait at the top right hand corner of the page. (The inset is enlarged at the right.) Rupert Downes, his close friend and predecessor as St John Ambulance Commissioner in Victoria, is fifth from left in the second back row.



Sherwin (back left) as a resident (intern) at the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, 1908, the year after graduating in medicine.

He was appointed a resident medical officer at the Alfred Hospital, which then maintained 180 beds. There was no superintendent or registrar, and four residents were considered capable of coping with the work. The appointment was for two years and the duties were divided into four equal sections: (i) in charge of the casualty, control of sepsis, isolation and refractory wards, X-ray assistant, and reliever in the out-patient department in the absence of the honorary medical officer; (ii) in charge of the children's ward, resident anaesthetist, and to do such pathological and bacteriological work as was possible in any spare time available; (iii) in charge of 60 to 70 surgical patients; (iv) in charge of an equal number of medical patients. ^{1,2}

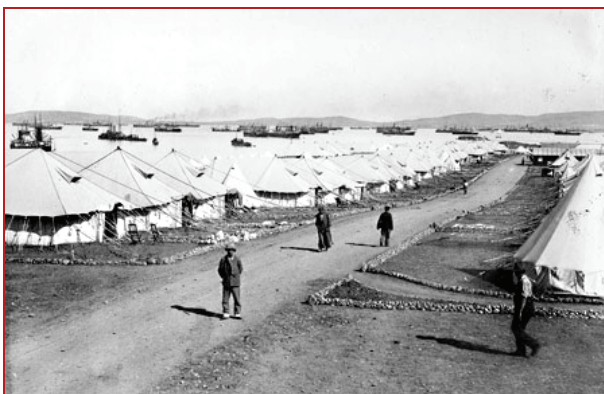
Though the work was hard and constantly challenging, there were compensations such as working under the incomparable Hamilton Russell, who had been Lord Lister's last House Surgeon at King's College Hospital. A member of the Melbourne Hunt Club, he occasionally managed to slip away from his duties to take part in an early-morning run with the hounds, or to a drag hunt with the Oaklands Club followed by breakfast at the home of one of the members. The following quote from the obituary written by Dr Ivon Hayes sums up the inter-connectedness of the medical practitioners of the day.¹

"As a lover of horses, it was natural for him to join a field ambulance, of which there were then only two in the Commonwealth, No. 1 in New South Wales and No. 2 in Victoria. Dr. George Horne was in command of the Victorian unit, and, besides Sherwin, he had as officers J. H. Nattrass and R. Tate Sutherland—these three being colleagues at the Women's Hospital—and R. M. Downes, who later in Palestine in the war of 1914-1918 became the Director- of Medical Services of perhaps the greatest cavalry force ever assembled."

At the end of his time at the Alfred Hospital, Arthur Sherwin went overseas to follow his interest in gynaecology and obstetrics. He obtained a position on the resident staff of Queen Charlotte's Hospital. He then visited clinics in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paris, Berlin and Vienna, in those days the *grande tour* of the gynaecologically minded, and on his return to London he spent a period in research with Sir Charles Martin at the Lister Institute. In between these medical activities he attended a course of training with the Royal Army Medical Corps at Aldershot, and on another occasion participated in autumn manoeuvres with the army, at which King George V and General Sir John French, who later led the Expeditionary Force to France in 1914, were present.¹

As Sherwin was about to return home war broke out in the Balkans in 1912. Turkey went to war against Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro. The British Red Cross organized and dispatched medical field units to all five belligerents. This war came to an uneasy truce with the initial defeat of Turks and the carving up of the Ottoman territory but dissolved into a further war as the victors squabbled between themselves about inequities in the treaty, such as the future of Macedonia. Dr. Sherwin was attached to the Montenegrin unit, whose activities were directed around Lake Sentari. and northern Albania. In this mountainous terrain the fighting was essentially guerilla warfare, and medical field work entailed walking long distances, applying first aid and arranging for the more seriously injured to be transported by barge to the head of Lake Sentari, thence to the hospital at Cettinge.¹ Whilst Britain and Europe generally were not directly involved in the conflict they contributed humanitarian aid and watched with concern as events inexorably led towards World War I.³

Now, after more than four years of resident appointments, post-graduate work and travels Sherwin returned home. In 1914 he married Florence Gertrude Jackson, daughter of Richard and Elizabeth Jackson. They were later to have two children, a daughter Mrs A.L. Harwood (mentioned in despatches for work with Australian Red Cross Society during WW II) and a son, Dr Russell Sherwin (also a gynaecologist).⁴ That year he gained his MD degree, using his research work on eclampsia undertaken at the Lister Institute in London, as the topic for his thesis, which also gained him the Dublin Prize.⁴ He also had a hospital appointment, for in 1914 the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, had expanded their honorary staff, and Sherwin had secured one of the six new positions.¹



The 3rd Australian General Hospital, Lemnos, where Sherwin served as a major during the Gallipoli campaign in 1915.

However, his objective of working in this field had to be deferred, for on the outbreak of World War I he volunteered and left Australia as a Major with the 3rd Australian General Hospital to serve with that unit at Lemnos and Egypt. In early 1916 he was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel in charge of No.4 Auxiliary Hospital at Abassieh, near Cairo.¹ In mid-1916 he contracted mumps, which can be a serious illness in adults, and was sent back to Australia as Medical Officer on a ship.³ He was awarded the Victory medal, the 1914-1915 star³, and also held the Volunteer Decoration.⁵

In 1917, on return to Australia, he commenced general practice in Elsternwick and as a specialist obstetrician and gynaecologist in Collins Street. From 1927 he confined his work to that of a consultant gynaecologist. He resumed his post at the Womens Hospital, a post he held until 1946, a long period of 32 years. He gained his FRACS in 1935 and FRCOG in 1937.¹

Besides his activities with the Australian Army Medical Corps, in which he served from 1908 to 1948, Arthur Sherwin's other great interest was the St. John Ambulance Brigade. He had been made an Honorary Life Member of St John Ambulance Association from 1917 to acknowledge his honorary teaching of public first aid classes. It is not clear exactly when he first joined the Brigade, but he certainly would have been recruited by his colleagues George Home and Rupert Downes. He would have had a major influence on the Victorian role of St John in the Voluntary Aid Detachments.

The British War Office in 1909 established Voluntary Aid Detachments of men and women to assist the military medical services. The responsibility for organizing these rested initially with the British Red Cross Society but amendments to the VAD regulations in 1910 recognized a Brigade or County Company of the St John Ambulance Association as equivalent to a Voluntary Aid Detachment. There were strict guidelines as to the composition and training of Detachments.⁶

Nine days after the outbreak of WW I, the Australian Red Cross was established as a Branch of the British Red Cross Society following a meeting called at Government House, Melbourne by Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson, wife of the Governor-General. Arthur Sherwin was at that meeting.⁷ Almost immediately, approval was given for the establishment of Voluntary Aid Detachments.

As in Great Britain, the VAD organization was administered by a Joint Central Council at Commonwealth level, with Joint State Councils comprising representatives of the Navy, Army and Air Force, the Red Cross Society, St John Ambulance and other relevant organizations. The Commonwealth appointed a Chief Controller, each State Council a State Controller, with Commandants in charge of detachments.⁶ St John Ambulance Association in Victoria had a heavy involvement in VAD work during WW I and many members continued with St John after the war. This slide shows the St John City of Melbourne Division in 1917.

Sherwin joined the Victorian Division of the Red Cross Society in 1916. From 1930 he was Member of Divisional Council and was Chair of several committees including Handicraft since its inception 1943 until his retirement in 1950. He was one of the medical profession who helped set up the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service in 1929, and planning of Red Cross Emergency Service Companies 1938-39. For this contribution he was made an Honorary Life Member in 1951.⁷

It was hard going for the VAD movement in the 1920's and early 1930's. Only a few dedicated, hard working officers and administrators kept the framework of the organization alive.⁶ For sixteen years from 1926 to 1943 Dr Sherwin was honorary organiser of the Voluntary Aid Detachment Services.⁵ The program for the 1936 inspection lists him as State Comptroller.⁶

Those Detachments which survived were still strongly supported by VAD's from WW I, encouraged by the sporadic enlistment of young people from a new generation. There was not, however, any spontaneous movement in the community at large to join Detachments until the clouds of war began to gather in the late thirties. Nevertheless, from time to time there were official parades and inspections.⁶ Miss Edith Wells was Commandant of the No.301 Melbourne Detachment. This photo shows the Governor, Lord Huntingfield and Colonel Rupert Downes inspecting the VAD, with Sherwin immediately behind Downes.

In 1928 Sherwin was appointed to the Council of St John Ambulance Association. He remained on the Council of the Association, which from 1954 became the St John Council, until his death.⁸ During the years 1929 and 1930 he personally typed the Annual report because the Great Depression had so reduced the income of the Association that it could not afford to have them printed.^{9,10} In 1931 he was elected President of Council and served in this capacity for one year. He was Acting President for half of 1933 whilst Rupert Downes was overseas, President again in 1938-1939, Chairman of Council 1947-48 and after his retirement was Vice-President 1954-58.⁸ He was also on the Council of the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service for twenty years.^{4,5}

In 1932 he instigated the 'Sherwin Cup', initially for the winning women's team in the Victoria District First Aid Competitions, later for teams including either men or women.⁹ Shown here is Miss Marie Henderson (first on left) with her team which won the Sherwin Cup and the Herald Cup in open competition with the men in 1936 and 1937. Miss Henderson, a Serving Sister of the Order, died early in 2006 at the age of 107. In 1936 Dr Sherwin was promoted to the rank of Colonel in the Army, became an Officer Brother of the Order of St John, and was appointed District Surgeon of the Brigade in Victoria. In 1937 he was promoted to Commander Brother.

War again intervened. Sherwin enlisted on 15th October 1940 at Malvern³, and was appointed commanding officer of the AGH 115 Heidelberg Military Hospital from 1940 to 1944.⁵ This was a tremendous undertaking, since the hospital had to be built, equipped, staffed, organized and administered. Rupert Downes had won the political battle for the money but Sherwin had to make it a reality. Arthur Sherwin's task at Heidelberg has never been fully appreciated, but this hospital is a memorial to his ability, his untiring effort, his tact and his persistence in overcoming the many obstacles and difficulties that were encountered.



Sherwin as the Commandant of the 115th Australian General Hospital (the Heidelberg Military Hospital).



The Plastic Surgery unit of the Heidelberg Military Hospital, with one of Sherwin's protégés, Major B.V. (later Sir Benjamin) Rank, operating. Rank later served terms as Chair and President of the St John Council for Victoria.

During World War II there was a considerable revival of VAD's. Red Cross and St John continued their joint effort in promoting Civil Defence. Historic restrictions on the involvement of volunteers, particularly women, in military activities led to the creation of the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS) which enabled active military service both at home and abroad. This photo of the VAD's marching in St Kilda Road, led by Frederick Raven (District Superintendent of St John and Deputy State Comptroller of VAD) was taken shortly before they left for service in the Pacific.

After the visit in 1936 of the Commissioner-in-Chief, Colonel Sir James Sleeman, to see if Australian St John would be capable of self-government, in 1941 Australia, with the exception of Western Australia, became a Commandery of St John. Lord Gowrie, the Knight Commander of the Commandery, called on the States to nominate representatives to the new Commandery Council. Major-General Rupert Downes and Colonel Sherwin represented the Victorian St John Ambulance Association on the Executive of the national body, whilst Frederick Raven (District Superintendent) and Miss Edith Wells (Lady Superintendent) represented Victoria District St John Ambulance Brigade.¹¹

Heidelberg hospital was actively involved in the definitive treatment of injured soldiers who were transported there from overseas.. The hospital developed a renowned reconstructive plastic surgery unit shown here with Major BK Rank operating (later Sir Benjamin Rank who became Chair and President of St John Council for Victoria).It was also well known for rehabilitation and prosthetics in conjunction with Caulfield Hospital.



Sherwin inspecting his Australian Army Medical Corps staff at the Heidelberg Military Hospital, early 1940s.



Ex-prisoners of war of the Japanese arriving at the Heidelberg Military Hospital. Their influx swelled the number of patients to 3000.

As a special war effort St John ran its first public appeal to raise money to build a recreation hall at Heidelberg Hospital. The appeal was successful and the hall was opened by the Governor, Sir Winston Dugan, in 1942. It accommodated over 400 people. It was used for church services, recitals, concerts and films, and became a reception center when convoys of anything up to 350 servicemen arrived for admission to hospital such as these returning ex-prisoners of war. As the hospital population swelled to over 3000 patients and staff, St John held a further public appeal supported by "The Argus" newspaper to raise money for enlarging the hall to seat 800 people. The extension was opened by Sir Winston Dugan in 1944.¹² At about the same time the hospital graduated the first nurses from its newly-developed School of Nursing. The Hospital was visited by Countess Edwina Mountbatten, who was heavily involved not only with the military and VAD's but also with St John. In this photo she is seen at Heidelberg with St John members.

A.J.H. Sherwin as St John Ambulance Brigade District Commissioner in Victoria.



Dr Sherwin was discharged from service on 21st January 1944 at the age of 62 years³ He returned to private practice. With the death of Major-General Rupert Downes in an aircraft crash in 1945, Sherwin became Commissioner until his retirement in 1951. He had been a member of St John for 25 years. He rose through the lesser grades of the Order of St John to become a Knight of Grace in 1944, the insignia of which was bestowed on him at Buckingham Palace by King George VI after his coronation.¹



A.J.H. Sherwin (centre, front row) as Chairman of the St John Ambulance Council in Victoria, 1947. He served continuously on the council for 33 years, from 1928 until his death in 1961.

He was a member of the original examining board under the *Midwives Act* with Felix Meyer, George Horne and Miss Anderson, and was a member of the Medical Board of Victoria from 1933 to 1945.¹⁴

In 1947 the Commandery became the Priory in Australia. Colonel Sherwin continued as a Victorian representative and member of Priory Chapter. Early in 1951 Dr Sherwin proposed a reorganization of the Brigade in Victoria which involved closure of Divisions that were too small to be effective, a retirement age of 65 years, abolition of the post of Lady Superintendent and substitution of a position of Lady District Officer. The changes were approved by the Chief Commissioner, Sir Samuel Burston. Dr Sherwin informed the Lady Superintendent, Miss Edith Wells, that he proposed to retire at the end of his current term and that it would be appropriate for her to retire at the same time. She indicated that she had no intention of doing so, and Dr Sherwin told her that he did not propose to recommend her reappointment as she was beyond retiring age. Miss Wells wrote to the Chief Commissioner with her objections. In response Dr Sherwin wrote, "There has been a deterioration in the strength and effectiveness of Nursing Divisions. She has failed to cooperate in our endeavour to restore the position and appeared content to allow the Organization to drift, and has apparently been unable to appreciate the fact that her advancing age has affected her efficiency. I do not propose to recommend extension of appointment".¹³

He and Miss Wells both retired in June 1951, with the appointment of Brigadier Sir William Johnston as Commissioner. Dr Sherwin died early on Monday 14th August 1961 after a long illness.⁵

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The Australian first aid organisations 1940–45: precursors of the national emergency services'

by Vince Little

THE AUTHOR: Mr Vince Little, KStJ, who lives in Toowoomba, Queensland, has worn many St John hats. Within the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch he rose to be Deputy Commissioner in Queensland, having started his St John career many years earlier in New South Wales. Mr Little has spent much of his professional career both as an ambulance officer and a part-time member of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps. This has not only benefited St John Ambulance but has brought benefits to places beyond Australia. And here one of Australia's nearest neighbours, East Timor, must be mentioned. After the Indonesian withdrawal in 1999 Mr Little made herculean effort to establish an ambulance transport service there. The service he established with assistance from his ambulance officer colleagues in Australia continues in that troubled new nation. Vince Little has many other accomplishments, however. He has university degrees in teaching and psychology. Most recently he has graduated with a Master's Degree in Counselling from the Queensland University of Technology; and a fortnight before he presented the following paper to the Historical Society's ninth annual History Seminar he was invested as a Knight of the Order of St John. He is also a St John historian and one of the few with an ongoing research and writing program. His speciality is St John 'collectibles', especially the many early editions of first aid text books and manuals are prized by collectors.

ABSTRACT

In time of war when there is a direct threat of invasion and attack from the air and sea, nations can expect to incur casualties in great numbers. Preparation for such occurrences involves civilian agencies who have to be prepared to care for their own, while the armed services get on with the business of defence and counter invasion. Government bears the responsibility of managing the home front just as it also bears the responsibility of mobilization of the armed services. Managing the home front includes preparing for wartime civil emergencies, such as mass casualties from air raids, naval bombardment and invasion by the enemy.

In the initial stages of World War II the major threat to Britain was seen as coming from air raids, and in 1940 the bombing of cities in England began in earnest. According to the Official Story of the Civil Defence of London (HMSO, 1942), information on what could be expected in time of war was being gathered in 1937. Observations of the Spanish Civil War, as well intelligence gathered on suggested German air strategies were providing statistics on civilian casualties, numbers and types. The experience of the Poles under air attack also underpinned Civil Defence planning. The ARP (Air Raid Precautions) organization was born, and in Australia the model of Civil Defence in Britain was followed.

The aim of this paper is simply to examine the effect that World War Two had on first aid agencies and how they rallied and organized themselves to cope with expected destruction and casualties. The legacy of the wartime development of Australia's Civil Defence organisations is probably to days well known State Emergency Services.

WORLD WAR II

The invasion of Poland by Germany on the 1st of September 1939 is well documented and needs no expansion in this paper. This event is deemed by historians to be the final factor that precipitated Britain's declaration of war against the German invaders on the 3rd September 1939. Later that evening the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr Robert Menzies announced that as a result of Great Britain declaring war on Germany, Australia was also now at war (Long, 1952). Germany seemed a long way off, but there was another more direct threat to Australians looming in the north. This threat was to come from the Japanese, and their rapid advance through the Pacific Islands, the surprise attack on the US at Pearl Harbour, and the taking of Singapore in February 1942. Then with the occupation of parts of New Guinea, the war was now on Australia's doorstep. The immediate threat to Australia crossed the threshold with the bombing of Darwin on Thursday, the 19th February, 1942.

In the meantime, as result of preparations in Britain as early as 1937, the state of New South Wales government established the Department of National Emergency Services on 1st February, 1939, attached to the Ministry of Transport. The formation of this department provided for the setting up of a Civil Defence Organization based on the boundaries of the various shires and municipalities. On the 20th March 1941 The National Emergency Act was assented to, and it remained in force until 1946.

Preparation for Civil Defence was underway in Queensland, with the establishment of Air Raid Precautions (ARP) committees in 27 centres along the coastal areas of the state. The Commonwealth Government had defined the role of the state governments as being:

To maintain the activities of the community during the emergency and to provide for the safety and care of the civilian population and the protection of property.

The relative functions of the Commonwealth and State Governments in the event of war emergency were defined by the Commonwealth Government to be as follows:

- (a) That of the Commonwealth (Defence) to prevent and combat enemy attacks in any form;
- (b) That of the State (and Civil) Government to maintain the activities of the community during the emergency and to provide for the safety and care of the civilian population and the protection of property.

In the various states that translated into government sponsored agencies for civil Defence and utilizing the volunteers of existing organizations such as St John Ambulance, The Australian Red Cross and the Voluntary Aid Detachments, doing what they always did, but doing it under wartime conditions. The other Organisations such as Fire Brigades and Ambulance Services were also included in Civil Defence planning. Under the Civil Defence proposals the ARP and National Emergency Services (NES) came into being. The St John Ambulance Association was very much immersed in providing first aid training for the ARP and the NES, and had to cater for an increased civilian demand, for their training services. The ARP organization and the NES issued pamphlets and booklets on advice for householders on what to do in case of an air raid, and included information about types of bombing attacks such as the use of gas and chemicals and incendiaries. Publications from His Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) were also used. Publications on the training and work of first aid parties and an Australian ARP manual of general training were also issued. These publications dealt with the topics of gas

masks, building of bomb shelters and what could be expected from aerial machine gunning. In the meantime the St John Ambulance first aid manual contained only basic first aid information. This was most likely because of the plethora of government publications on topics of wartime necessity.



The St John Ambulance-Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) Medal awarded to VAD members in Australia for service during World War I. During World War II St John and the Red Cross again cooperated in providing a voluntary medical ancillary service for the military forces in Australia through the VAD organisation. Many St John Ambulance Brigade divisions registered as VAD units and many VAD leaders held senior rank in the Brigade in the post-war era.

Ian Howie-Willis (1983) reports that with the outbreak of World War II the St John Ambulance Brigade expanded rapidly and the Association did record business in first aid classes. The Association Centre in each state became the first aid teaching agency for ARP wardens, and the brigade helped the ARP authorities by manning ARP first aid posts (FAP). As well as its ARP commitment, the St John Ambulance Brigade was also involved with the VAD movement.

The VADs served in hospitals set up for the armed services, and served on a fulltime basis, with the Army Medical Services, some of which were sent overseas. St John Ambulance Brigade women made a significant contribution to filling the ranks of the VADs. Howie-Willis provides a more detailed description of the activities of St John and its links with the VAD movement in *A Century for Australia* (1983). Goodman (1991) gives a very detailed account of The VAD movement in Australia during WW2. He describes the links between the VADs, St John and the Red Cross, as well as how the VADs were utilized in the Army Medical services in Australia and overseas. They (the VADs) also performed duties with the ARP organization. According to Goodman, in 1942 Major General Burston, who was Deputy Chairman of the Joint Central VAD Council, made it quite clear that despite the multifaceted duties performed by VAD members, the VAD movement was a self-governing, self-contained organization

Research has not revealed a great deal of information about the role of the State Ambulance Services, during the 1939-1945 period. (Deeth, 1976), indicated that in the period 1939-1940 a number of ambulance officers in NSW qualified as instructors in First Aid and Air Raid Precautions, and lectured members of the NES. He makes no further reference to any involvement with the war effort. It should be noted that the history of Australia's ambulance services is not well documented and probably deserves further attention by historians. Some of this history involving the Australian war effort of 1939-1945, can be gleaned from the National Archives.



Sir Winston Duggan, the Governor of Victoria, reviews female members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD) in Melbourne in June 1942. Immediately behind him is Major-General Rupert Downes, the Director of Medical Services for the Second Australian Army and Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Victoria.



Women of the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) organisation 'comfort distressed women and children' in a training exercise in Melbourne in 1941. (A State Library of Victoria photograph.)



Major-General Rupert Downes (left) chats with VAD nurses at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, 1942. Downes, then Director of Medical Services for the Second Australian Army and Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Victoria, had earlier been the Commandant of the VADs in Victoria.

Air Raid Precautions (ARP) wardens in Adelaide demonstrate first aid techniques they had learnt from St John Ambulance. (A State Library of South Australia photograph.) Such ARP women provided the kind of services nowadays provided by the St John Ambulance Community Care Branch.



In the time available to present this paper it has only been possible to present an overview of the organisations mentioned. No doubt some members of the audience will have had some experience with these organisations and may have had some wartime recollections of them. In conclusion, it is appropriate to mention the current global situation involving terrorist acts.

In contemporary times the world is seen to be facing a threat from global terrorism. Terrorism defies what we had come to know as conventional warfare. Mass casualties in a civilian environment can be produced, mainly from explosive devices, in any place at any time. The materials used are commonly used substances, which have until now been non suspicious and readily available. One terrorist can detonate an explosive device carried on their person or in a vehicle and decimate entire buildings, producing hundreds of dead and injured on a scale comparable to a load of bombs dropped from a world war two aircraft. Terrorism has been accepted as a global threat, but there has not been an overwhelming demand from the general public for first aid training, nor are people swelling the ranks of St John Ambulance divisions.

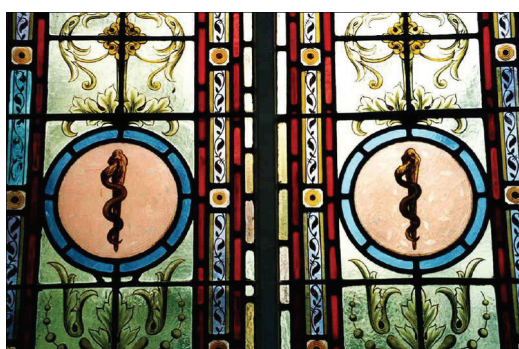
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Crosses: Symbolism and Heritage

by John Pearn

THE AUTHOR: Major General John Pearn is the President of St John Ambulance Australia (Queensland), and a Member of the national Professional Standards Committee of St John Ambulance Australia. For more than twenty years he has also served as a senior editorial consultant for the textbooks of St John Ambulance Australia, containing the technical doctrine of resuscitation, accident-site control, pre-hospital care and the drills and skills of first aid. He served in the uniformed branch of St John, the St John Ambulance Brigade (later renamed the Operations Branch of St John Ambulance Australia) from 1967, initially as Divisional Surgeon, then Corps Surgeon and finally as the District Surgeon for St John Ambulance Australia in Queensland. He served for ten years as the national Director of Training for St John Ambulance in Australia (1990–99). Professor Pearn has completed major research studies in accident prevention; and optimal methods of pre-hospital care, particularly of poisoned, envenomed and near-drowned victims. For three decades, he was the national Medical Adviser for the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia, of which he was a co-founder.



A metonymic symbol: the Aesculapian Staff, an ancient emblem of the medical profession, in a stained glass window at the University of Sydney.



A variation on the Aesculapian staff: the serpent entwined around a sword, the emblem of the Singapore Army Medical Service.

ABSTRACT

Men and women use symbols to enrich life; and to give life extra dimensions of meaning. The cross, in any one of its several hundred derivative forms, is one of the commonest symbols which for millennia has been used by many cultures in different continents. The simple form of two crossed lines, rendered in wood or stone or in pictorial art, represents ideals and concepts, often of great profundity, which have special and distinct meanings to different people in differing times and place.

The use of the cross as a symbol of Christendom dates from its early form as a tau cross, “T”; and later as a chi-ro “✠” symbol from the time of the Roman Emperor, Constantine I (The Great: 280 – 377 A.D.); and later still as the Latin Cross of *Crux immissa*. Crosses as symbols are used in two particular themes today. The first of these relates to its use as the primary metonymic emblem for Christendom. In this way it is used both ecclesiastically and heraldically in more than 300 modified forms, each denoting a particular sect or identity or individual. Crosses are also used as a secular symbol denoting *caritas* — that concept of care and charity with medical overtones of rescue, transport, safety and sanctuary; and the medical care of living things, both human and animal.



The Chi Rho Cross: in Greek the letters Chi (X) and Rho (P) are the first two letters of *XPICTOC* (*Christos: Christ*). Superimposed upon each other they form a cross that.

The eight-pointed Maltese or Crusader Cross, sometimes also called the St John Cross, bridges these two themes. It has its paradoxical origin in the eleventh century as a symbol of Crusader knights who were both healers and warriors. Since the late nineteenth century, the Maltese Cross has also become a secular symbol of charitable and volunteer medical care. Whatever its form, the simple symbol of the cross carries in its crossed arms, both in its secular and religious message, that most important altruistic trait of humankind, the preservation of life and the comfort of the acutely sick and injured.

INTRODUCTION

The history and heritage of St John is identified with and symbolised by its central emblem — the Maltese, St John or Crusader Cross. Its origins can be traced to the eleventh century Kingdom of Amalfi, a small but prosperous republic situated on the Gulf of Salerno, south-east of Naples. This paper explores, further and wider, the development and use of crosses as symbols; and endeavours to place the Maltese Cross in a broader perspective of time and place.

We adopt symbols to give our lives extra dimensions of meaning. The creation of symbols and sacred objects is one of the unique characteristics which distinguishes humankind from other animals. In both oral history and living practices of hunter-gatherer peoples, certain rocks and trees, rivers and mountains have held and continue to hold special and often deified meanings quite different from their simple physical form.

Today, in the twenty-first century, the simplest form of a cross is used in two contexts. The first entails its use as the central emblem of Christendom. The second is its secular use to symbolise *caritas* — that concept of care and charity with medical overtones of rescue, transport, safety and sanctuary, and the medical care of living things, both human and animal. This second metonymic use derives from the primary connotations of charity, the care of the sick, and the Good Samaritan ethic as central tenets of Christendom. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the *Encyclopaedia Heraldica* had listed 76 varieties of Christian cross used in heraldry alone. Today almost 300 varieties are known and named ^{1,2}. The number and variety of modified crosses are constantly growing, as individuals and groups endeavour to create their distinct place in the society of humankind; and to stamp and signal such identity with a unique symbol.

The Maltese or Crusader Cross is one of these. This paper is a review of the use of crosses as metonymic symbols; and paints a perspective of this central emblem of St John Ambulance and what it represents in its work of charity and volunteer care of the acutely sick and injured in contemporary life.

THE TAU



The Tau or T-shaped cross

The simplest form of the cross, “T”, the tau, is one of the most ancient forms of emblematic metonymy. In several disparate cultures it symbolised life itself ³. The tau was used to represent a god of the ancient Britons; and was the emblem of the hammer of Thor, the Norse equivalent of the Greek Zeus or the Roman Jupiter.

The tau was also one of the earliest, perhaps the earliest symbolic form of the Christian cross. It was adopted as his personal emblem by the anchorite, St Anthony of Egypt (c. 250 – 355), who administered to the outcast lepers between the Nile and the Red Sea. The tau’s symbolism of simplicity and service was adopted 900 years later by St Francis of Assisi (c. 1181 – 1226) ⁴, as his personal symbol to represent his interpretation of Christ’s life of poverty and charity.

THE SWASTIKA

The fylfot cross, also called a gammadion or swastika, has a history of more than two millennia. It was and remains an honoured symbol of prosperity and good fortune, particularly in parts of the Indian subcontinent. It is derived from Sanskrit, the word “swastika” deriving from the Sanskrit “svasti”, meaning good fortune ⁵. The swastika takes two forms. The original and honourable post-Sanskrit form has the secondary lines (attached to the basic cross) pointing in an anticlockwise direction. This symbol was occasionally identified with Vishnu, a central Hindu deity worshipped as the protector and preserver of the world and restorer of “dharma”, or moral order. The swastika was used as a metonymic symbol in other parts of the world as well. On ancient coins of Thrace (modern-day Bulgaria, Macedonia and parts of north-eastern Greece) the swastika was a symbol of the sun. It was used on coinage as the civic emblem of the city of Mesembria, “the city of Mid-day” ⁶.

The debasement of the symbol of the swastika cross began with Hitler’s use of it, initially as an emblem of the German Baltic Corps, who wore it on their helmets after their occupation of Finland. The Nazi swastika, with its secondary lines running in a clockwise (as opposed to the Sanskrit anticlockwise) direction, became associated with infamy and atrocity; and remains one of the most powerful symbols of odium today. Its first major national displays were in Germany in 1934 and it was a powerful emblem extensively flown on flagstaves and worn by stormtroopers at the Nuremberg Congress of 1935. It featured on German postage stamps from that year. The connotations of the swastika, of cruelty and infamy, remains one of the most powerful metonyms today.

THE CHRISTIAN CROSS

The Latin cross, *Crux immissa*, as a simple emblem of two crossed bars with the vertical relatively elongated, is featured extensively in Christian heraldic and numismatic art. It denotes faith, courage-in-suffering, high ideals and redemption.

The Christian symbolic use of the cross dates from 312 A.D. when Constantine I (280-377 A.D.), the Roman Emperor, saw a cross-shaped vision in the clouds which he subsequently identified with victory in battle. He converted to Christianity following this revelatory vision. Legend has it that the form of the cross was the chi-ro symbol, "P", the first two letters of Christ's name.

Many other varieties embody a basic Latin Cross (*Crux immissa*) with various decorative devices including extra bars such as those which designate the Patriarchal Cross. This latter cross is used as the international emblem of anti-tuberculosis associations in many parts of the world.



The 'Crux immissa' or Latin cross of the early Christian era on a Roman coin of the fifth century.

THE CRUSADER CROSS

In the Western World, the commonest representation of pre-hospital care is that of the Maltese Cross, sometimes called the Crusader Cross, which dates from the first aid and hospital work of the Knights of St John, the original order of which persists as the *Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, called of Rhodes, called of Malta*, and known more simply as the *Sovereign Military Order of Malta*.

The Amalfitan flag with its eight-pointed white cross, which today distinguishes the various Orders of St John, was adopted by the Benedictine monks and nuns who staffed the Jerusalem hospice. In 1070, a group of Benedictine nuns had for the first time been referred to as the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem. Subsequently, the Crusader knights of St John affixed the eight-pointed white cross to their ecclesiastical capes and as a fighting military Crusader order, they emblazoned the eight-pointed cross on their shields, the battlements of their castles and the sails of their warships.

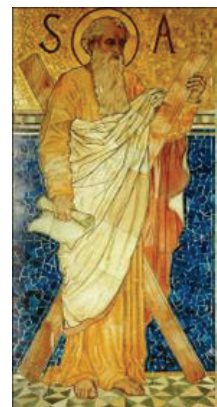
SECULAR CROSSES

Because of its charitable connotations, Queen Victoria adopted the Maltese Cross as her personal emblem. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it thus adorns the Australian Coat of Arms, many institutions within the State of Queensland, and many bodies whose terms of reference include rescue and resuscitation, first aid, pre-hospital ambulance and emergency care.

The most commonly used form of the cross is the Geneva Cross, sometimes called the Red Cross, or in heraldic terms the *Crux quadrata*. It has its origins as the Greek cross, later subsumed also as the Cross of St George, the Patron Saint of England. It has arms of equal lengths. From 1864, one form of the *Crux quadrata* was coloured red and placed against a white background — the symbolism being the flag of Switzerland with the colours reversed.

St Andrew's Cross: an X-shaped cross. As the 'Saltire', a white diagonal cross on a blue background, the cross has become a national emblem of Scotland.

The saltire, or St Andrew's Cross, is a simple "X". Legend has it that St Andrew felt he was not worthy to be crucified on the same shaped cross, by tradition the Latin cross, as Christ was so executed. As St Andrew is the Patron Saint of Scotland, the saltire is used as a metonymic device to portray Scotland and Scottish heritage.

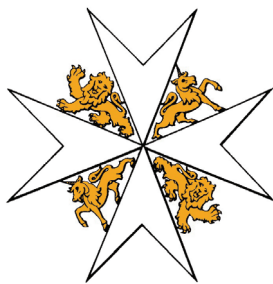


As angled beams, crossing at a focus, the saltire is a metonymic symbol also used to portray diagnostic radiology and radiotherapy. As such, the saltire features on the Armorial Bearings of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists. The crossed bars of the saltire can also be replaced by an almost infinite variety of other objects such as snakes, pestles, palm fronds and weapons. A number of societies use these cruciform symbols to preserve the concept of *caritas*; and at the same time portray the metonymic symbols specific to the society or association. Perhaps the best example is the elegant crossed boathook and oar which forms the centrum of the badge of the Royal Life Saving Society and its many national organisations throughout the world. Surrounded by a laurel wreath, this derivative saltire is the basis of the various emblems, logos, badges and medals bestowed for heroism and gallantry, for life saving and for service to the profession of first aid and pre-hospital care, promoted by that Society.

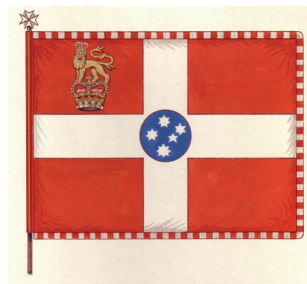
CROSSES AND PARADOX

The St John or Maltese Cross paradoxically also came to send a double message. Its original connotation was with the pious care of the sick. History now judges the Crusades as the perpetration of slaughter and atrocities, which was one cause of the thousand years of bloodshed which continues today. The emblem of the St John Cross came to be associated with the paradoxical role of both fighting and healing knights. Its portrayal on the great navy of St John, dominant in the Mediterranean for more than 200 years, also was a paradox which confounded the original origins of its symbolism.

The portrayal of the Maltese or Crusader cross today carries different messages to different viewers. To most, particularly those in the western Christian hemisphere, the St John Cross denotes *caritas*, charity and volunteer service. In some countries, however, it cannot be displayed on equipment or ambulance vehicles, because of its unfortunate historic Crusader connotations of conquest and slaughter.



The badge of the Most Venerable Order of St John, which consists of a plain white Maltese Cross with the 'royal beasts' (lion & unicorn rampant) between the four arms of cross.



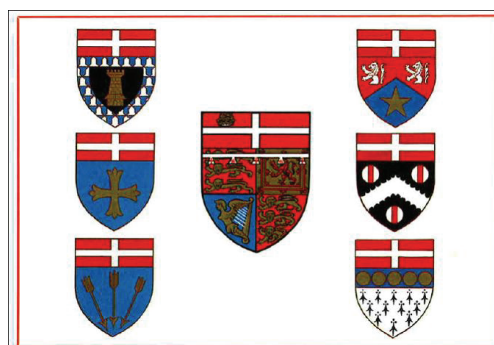
The banner of the Priory in Australia of the Order of St John, which displays two crosses: the white cross on red field of St John the Baptist, patron saint of the Order, and the stylised Southern Cross constellation signifying the Order in Australia..



Secular use of the Maltese Cross: the corporate logo of the Victorian Ambulance Service. The eight-pointed crosses of such organisations do not always adhere to the strict geometrical proportions of the Maltese Cross of the Orders of St John.



The use of the eight-pointed Amalfitan or Maltese Cross in a pendant badge by an organisation identifying itself only by its obscure acronym 'DTNS'.



The cross of St John the Baptist used as a heraldic device on the arms of members of the Order of St John.

A SECULAR SYMBOL OF CARE AND SAFETY

Today, the secular use of crosses denotes the sphere of human endeavour which involves outreach rescue, skilled paramedic transport, life saving resuscitation and care. The cross, in its Red Cross and informal derivatives denotes a place of sanctuary and safety. This simple symbol carries in its crossed arms perhaps that most important altruistic trait of humankind, the preservation of life itself.

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Liston's Splint: a forgotten first aid technique

THE AUTHOR: Dr David Fahey is a medical practitioner who has had a long time in the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch. He joined the Goulburn Division in New South Wales as a 13 year old Cadet in 1983 and was later a member of the Parramatta and Fairfield Divisions. He became a State Staff Officer in New South Wales in 1998, but the next year he moved to Brisbane, where he joined Brisbane Central No. 2 Division, of which he has been Divisional Medical Officer since 2003. As well as being a Divisional Medical Officer, Dr Fahey is the Regional Medical Officer for Brisbane Region of St John Operations Branch and a member of the Queensland State St John Council. He is also a Serving Brother of the Order. His daytime job is being an anaesthetics registrar at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane and he's also training for a Fellowship of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists. One of his hobbies is delving into the history of eponyms in pre-hospital medicine, that is medical devices named after people. It is this hobby that led him to write the following paper.

INTRODUCTION

This paper provides an overview of the life and work of Robert Liston (1794-1847), and examines the method of splinting femoral fractures which he devised. This splint was subsequently adapted for first aid and military use in the late 1800's, but has been lost from today's first aid doctrine. While Liston's splint has largely been superseded by more modern equipment, it still has a role in remote areas and in disaster situations. Its place in contemporary first aid practice should be reconsidered.

ROBERT LISTON (1794-1847)

Robert Liston was born in 1794, in the parish of Ecclesmachian, Scotland. His father was the minister there, and provided most of his early education. He entered the University of Edinburgh in 1808, and two years later commenced medical studies. Liston was appointed to the Royal Infirmary in 1814, and then worked in London from 1816, where he was admitted as a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons that same year. A year later, he gained Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. (1)



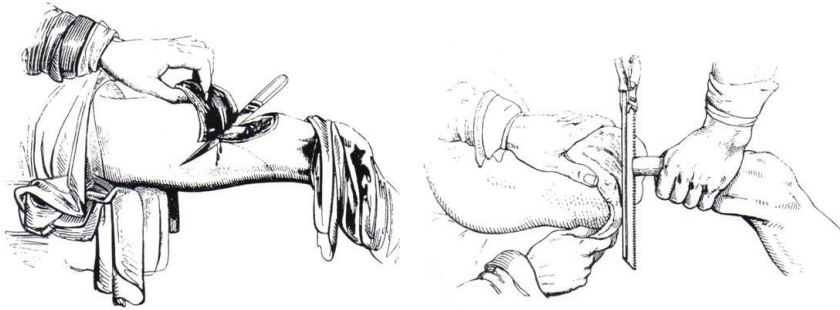
Liston worked and taught between Edinburgh and London. Although undoubtedly the best surgeon of his day, he was arrogant and had a furious temper, which at times caused conflict with his colleagues. When he was overlooked for the Chair of Surgery at the Royal Infirmary, he accepted the post at the University College Hospital, London. (1)

Marble bust of Robert Liston, who held the inaugural Chair of Surgery at the University College Hospital in London.



Robert Liston (1794-1847).

Liston was indeed a capable generalist surgeon, especially considering that he worked in the pre-anaesthetic era. At that time, speed was essential in an operation, and Liston could amputate a leg in under thirty seconds! However, he also recognised the importance of dexterity and a sound knowledge of anatomy, which enabled him to operate on patients who were considered inoperable by other surgeons. As a Professor of Surgery, he wrote several influential textbooks, and published many papers. (1, 2)



Liston was a practising surgeon of his times, the pre-anaesthetics era when surgery was a last resort because of the high rates of morbidity and mortality.

Liston died in 1847 at the age of 53, as a result of an aneurysm which ruptured into his trachea. Only one year before his death, he performed the first operation in Europe under ether anaesthesia – an above knee amputation. (1)

LISTON'S SPLINT

Although various forms of splinting have been known since antiquity, Liston devised an innovative approach to immobilising fractures of the femur. Liston's method attempted to overcome the problem of limb shortening, caused by overriding of the bone fragments. The technique was included in his textbook *Practical Surgery*, and is described as follows:

“The apparatus consists of a plain...board, of a hand's breadth for an adult...to extend from opposite the nipple, to...four inches beyond the sole of the foot. It is perforated at the other end by two large holes, and provided with two notches at the other...The perineal band is now placed under the patient...The splint is then laid along the outside of the limb, and...the roller [bandage] is carried repeatedly through the notches in the end of the splint, as it is crossed over the dorsum of the foot, and ultimately turned round the limb to near the groin...thus the apparatus is prevented from slipping upwards. The ends of the perineal band are passed through the perforations, drawn with moderate firmness, and...tied; a few turns of a broad bandage round the pelvis and chest complete the proceeding. The perineal band, by which the splint, and with it the limb, is pushed downwards, is attended to from day to day, and tightened as it becomes relaxed.” (3)

The splint is shown in Figure 1. At that time, such a splint would have been the definitive medical treatment, and the patient would have been nursed in their own home with the splint *insitu* for many weeks.

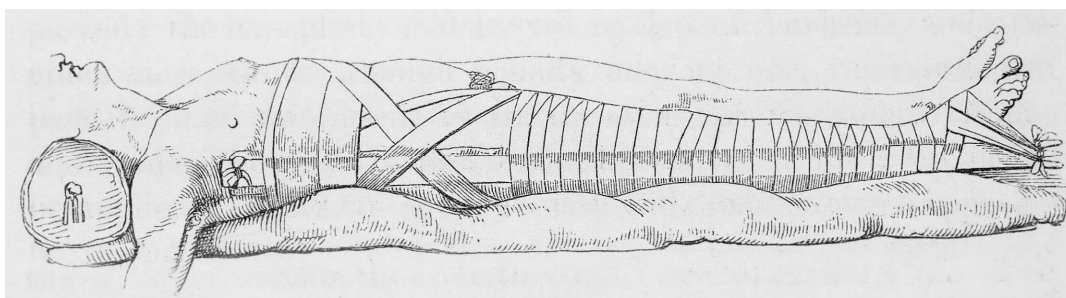


Figure 1
Liston's splint
reproduced from *Practical Surgery* (3)

USE BY ST JOHN AMBULANCE

The inaugural St John first aid textbook was written by Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd in 1878 (4). In this manual, Shepherd included a simplified version of Liston's splint, suitable for application by trained bystanders (5). Although this did not include the perineal band for exerting traction, the first aider was instructed to manually extend the limb before applying the splint. Thus it would have provided satisfactory immobilisation, and maintained a degree of traction, while the patient was moved on a makeshift stretcher or horse-drawn vehicle.

The importance of effective immobilisation of femoral fractures was highlighted by the initially high mortality rate from this injury during World War I. While Thomas' splint was the preferred method, the large numbers of casualties often meant that equipment ran short, and the "Long Liston" was certainly used. (6)

Liston's splint remained a part of the armamentarium of first aid for 100 years. Figure 2 shows how it appeared in the 1969 manual (7). However, in the early 1980's, Liston's splint was unfortunately deleted from the first aid curriculum altogether. Having appeared in every edition of the St John manual since 1878, it was omitted in 1982 (8).

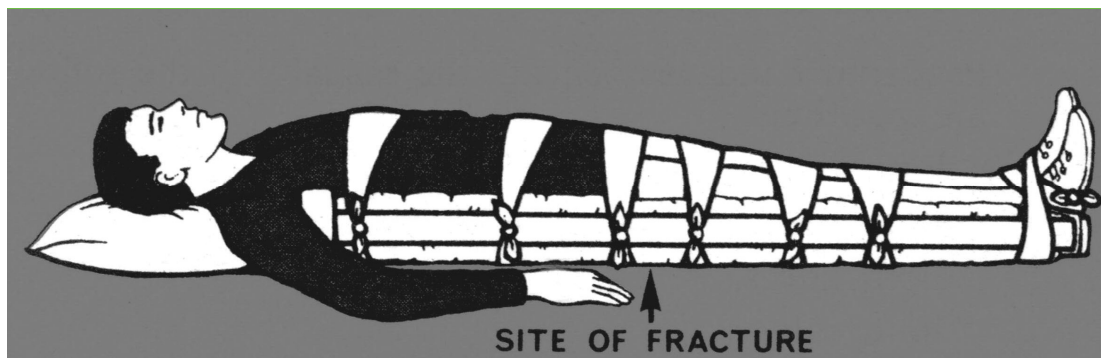


Figure 2
Liston's splint modified for first aid use (7)
reproduced with permission of St John Ambulance Australia

This omission probably occurred for two reasons. Firstly, there has been an increase in the range and availability of traction splints which are now universally carried by Australian ambulance services, thereby reducing the requirement to teach Liston's splint to ambulance officers – even though there are certain situations where it may still be useful. Secondly, there has been a major shift in public first aid courses away from injury management, towards resuscitation and medical emergencies (9). Even in the advanced first aid courses available today, very little instruction is given in methods of bandaging and splinting (9). The pendulum has swung too far in this regard, and it could be argued that advanced level first aiders are deficient in the skills needed to handle fractures efficiently, especially outside urban centres.

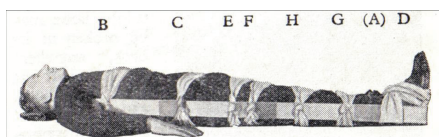
LISTON'S SPLINT IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE

Within the urban areas of a developed nation like Australia, perhaps it is unnecessary for bystanders to intervene with fractures. However, when one considers the situation in rural and remote Australia, the situation is entirely different. In the vast outback, there can be a delay of many hours or even days before medical help can reach a patient (10, 11). Road ambulances may respond over distances of several hundred kilometres, while the Royal Flying Doctor Service uses fixed wing aircraft to travel distances up to 1000 km (11). The first aiders managing a fractured femur in this isolated context need to have advanced splinting skills in order to effectively combat pain and shock. This is especially important if the patient has to be carried on an improvised stretcher, or in a makeshift vehicle. It is unfortunate that even a specialised textbook on remote area first aid contains no specific information on splinting fractures (12). Issues of remoteness, and delayed access to medical care are also encountered throughout the developing world.

Disaster situations may result in hundreds or even thousands of casualties. Supplies of medical equipment (such as traction splints) may be simply insufficient in quantity, requiring improvised methods to immobilise fractures (13). A similar scenario could be faced in a military combat zone, where Liston's splint could prove invaluable.

CONCLUSION

A femoral fracture is a serious injury, and is associated with significant morbidity. Liston's splint is an effective means of stabilising this injury, and formed part of the armamentarium of first aid practice from 1878 to 1982. Given that *Australian First Aid* is read by people in non-urban areas, and even in third world countries, perhaps it is time to re-think the way in which fracture management is taught. It may even be time for Liston's splint to take its place on the pages of our textbook once more.



The evolution of the Liston Splint: top to bottom from 1885, 1905, 1908, 1917 (male), 1917 (female), 1938.



The Liston Splint being demonstrated in 1957, 110 years after the death of its inventor.

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‘Almost a Royal Tour’: Lady Mountbatten’s inspection of Australian St John Ambulance establishments in 1946

by Ian Howie-Willis

THE AUTHOR: Dr Ian Howie-Willis is the Priory Librarian for the Order of St John in Australia. He is also the foundation secretary of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia and a Knight of the Order. A professional historian, he is the author of numerous articles and five books on St John history, including *The Zambuks, the St John Ambulance Operations Branch centenary history* published in 2002. His paper below, on Lady Mountbatten, was the ninth of the Society’s successive seminars at which he presented a research paper. Outside St John Ambulance Dr Howie-Willis practises as a commissioned historian. His latest book, *Surgeon and General: A Life of Major General Rupert Downes 1885–1945*, is currently in press and will be released by its publisher (Australian Military History Publications) during 2008. This latter book does, however, have St John Ambulance links because Major General Downes was the person most responsible for the State St John branches federating within a Commandery of the Order of St John in 1941. Dr Howie-Willis is currently working on a biography of Major General Sir Samuel Roy Burston, the inaugural St John Ambulance Priory Commissioner in Australia in 1947.

INTRODUCTION

Dame Edwina Mountbatten, the first Countess Mountbatten of Burma, was probably, with the exception of her husband and the late Princess Diana, the best known English aristocrat of the earlier twentieth century. ‘Lady Louis’ (as she was widely known) was a glittering star in British society, and perhaps the brightest ever admitted into the Order of St John. This paper will focus on a relatively minor episode of her stellar career: the three weeks she spent touring Australia during March–April–May 1946 in the months before her husband was appointed the last Viceroy of India.

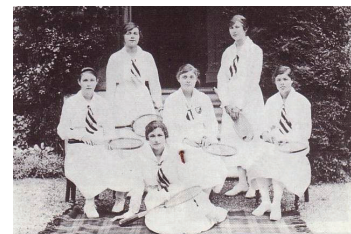
EDWINA’S LIFE BEFORE ENTERING ST JOHN AMBULANCE

Lady Mountbatten was born Edwina Cynthia Annette Ashley in London, on 28 November 1901. She was the older daughter of Wilfred William Ashley (1867–1939), the first Baron Mount Temple, a Grenadier Guards colonel turned Conservative parliamentarian. He was a grandson of Anthony Ashley Cooper, the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, the great social reformer of the early nineteenth century. Among numerous other famous ancestors on her father’s side was Pocahontas, the American Indian Princess. Another paternal ancestor was Lord Palmerston (1784–1865), who was British prime minister 1855–65. Edwina’s mother was Amalia Mary Maud (‘Maudie’) née Cassell (1879–1911), the only child of Sir Ernest Cassell, a German-born financier and philanthropist.



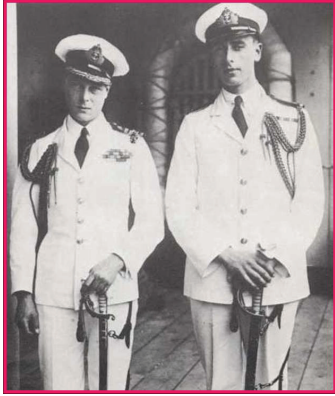
Edwina Ashley (right), aged about 9, with her lifelong best friend and second-cousin, Marjorie Jenkins (later Lady Brecknock), who succeeded her as Superintendent in Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade.

Edwina spent a generally unhappy childhood. Her ailing mother died before her tenth birthday; her father, always aloof and remote, remarried three years later. Edwina and her younger sister Mary were bundled off to boarding school at ‘The Links’, a very small private school in Eastbourne, after which she spent a year at Alde House, a private domestic science college in Suffolk. Her maternal grandfather, Sir Ernest Cassell then installed her as his hostess at his luxurious London mansion, ‘Brook House’ in Park Lane. During that time she ‘came out’ into ‘Society’ and soon afterwards she met Louis (‘Dickie’) Mountbatten at a ball at Claridge’s Hotel. He was minor royalty, being a great-grandson of Queen Victoria. He was already climbing his way up through the naval hierarchy and had just returned from a tour of Australia and New Zealand aboard the *Renown* with the Prince of Wales (his second-cousin, later Edward VIII). Edwina and Dickie became engaged in 1921 and married the next



year in St Margaret’s church, Westminster, in a lavish ‘Society’ wedding attended by the King and Queen with the Prince of Wales as best man. The honeymoon was a tour of the United States.

Edwina Ashley (standing left) as a member of the tennis team of The Links School at Eastbourne in her last year there, 1918.



Louis ('Dickie') Mountbatten (right) with his second-cousin, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) after their return from a tour of Australia and New Zealand aboard HMS Renown, 1920.



Edwina Ashley and Louis Mountbatten married in St Margaret's Church, Westminster, in 1922. The King and Queen were wedding guests and the prince of Wales was the best man.

By this stage of her life Edwina was already a wealthy woman. Sir Ernest Cassell had died shortly before her engagement, leaving her £2 million (about A\$110 million in present values). She also inherited 'Brook House'. Later inheritances from her father included the family seat, 'Broadlands' at Romsey in Hampshire and Classiebawn Castle, County Sligo, Ireland, where Lord Louis would eventually be killed by an IRA bomb in 1979. They lived at various London addresses, but their favourite residence was 'Broadlands'.



'Broadlands', the mansion near Romsey, Hampshire, the preferred home of the Mountbattens.



Edwina Mountbatten during a visit to Australia in 1935 after several months working aboard a copra lugger in the Pacific Islands.



Edwina Mountbatten in 1939, soon after the outbreak of World War II and after her dramatic 'conversion' to St John Ambulance.

Edwina and Dickie had two daughters, Patricia and Pamela, born in 1924 and 1929. They were devoted parents but were both often absent. As leading members of the fashionable 'Prince of Wales set', their life together was the continual social whirl of the London 'season': partying, it also became evident that Edwina had an insatiable wanderlust, which took her off annually, without her husband, on months-long expeditions into some of the most inaccessible and dangerous places on earth. The life that Edwina lived for the 18 years after her marriage was essentially indolent and shallow. But then in 1939 at the outbreak of World War II her life suddenly changed direction. With war looming, she discovered first aid and nursing and quickly became a St John Ambulance 'evangelist'.

EDWINA'S ST JOHN AMBULANCE CAREER

Edwina latent talents became evident early in her St John Ambulance career. Through ability and personality she rose rapidly through the Brigade hierarchy. Soon after joining the organisation she took charge of all its personnel in London. She was then appointed Deputy Superintendent-in-Chief of the Nursing Divisions and Corps in 1941 and then the next year the Superintendent-in-Chief of the wider Brigade, including both its 'At Home' [in the UK] and 'Overseas' fractions. During her time in this position Brigade strength grew from about 100,000 to 220,000.



Edwina Mountbatten (3rd from left) in 1941, after her first big promotion to Superintendent-in-Chief of Nursing Divisions and Corps of the St John Ambulance Brigade.



Edwina's natural talent for public speaking developed quickly, and she soon became a powerful orator in promoting the St John Ambulance and Red Cross causes.

But what were her special talents for such positions? It wasn't just that she had great personal magnetism and charm or driving ambition. While these were real enough, she had other gifts that quickly became apparent in, and were probably also developed through, her St John Ambulance work. She was a brilliant administrator, an inspirational leader, an exceptional organiser, a highly effective recruiter of voluntary personnel, and a gifted manager of staff. She also had a flair for publicity; she became a superb public speaker; and she brought these gifts to bear in promoting St John Ambulance. On top of all this, she drove herself relentlessly hard with little regard for her own health.

Any organisation fortunate enough to secure the commitment of such a person was bound to prosper. Exactly why she came into St John is uncertain, but whatever the reason, she found in the organisation a new and deeply meaningful crusade of her own to relieve human suffering. London during the Blitz provided ample scope for someone so motivated. She soon showed she was a 'hands-on' leader, always ready to take her turn at doing the dangerous public duties during the worst of the bombing. Her ability to cut corners successfully to get a job done became legendary as she badgered bureaucrats and politicians to get the best for her Corps and Divisions.

As the Brigade's Superintendent-in-Chief, Edwina lobbied, toured tirelessly, inspected, encouraged, inspired and promoted the Divisions and Corps within Britain and in most outposts of Empire. And eventually, 21 years after joining the Brigade, she died on the job, in Jesselton, North Borneo, in between engagements. She was in the midst of a typically arduous expedition, which she had begun unwell with the angina she had suffered for four years. Her trip had already taken her to Cyprus, Pakistan and India. Still ahead were Singapore and Hong Kong when she died in her sleep, probably of a heart attack, in the home of the acting local governor on 20 February 1960. Edwina herself would never know it, but Australians would play a part in her last journey home. Draped in a St John Ambulance flag, her coffin was flown from Jesselton to Singapore. From there it flew to London aboard a Qantas Boeing 707 aircraft. She was buried at sea off Portsmouth, the Archbishop of Canterbury himself reading the funeral service.

EDWINA'S LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS AWAY FROM ST JOHN AMBULANCE

As well as her commitments to St John Ambulance, Edwina Mountbatten had many other charitable involvements. As her *Who's Who* entry put it, she was 'Patron, President and Chairman of many other organisations, committees etc'. The number of voluntary organisations with which she had such links was about a hundred. As a result of her good works, honours and awards were heaped upon her. The first was a Companion of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1943 followed in quick succession by promotion to Dame Grand Cross (GCStJ) in the Order of St John in 1945. Then came appointment as a Dame Grand Cross in the Royal Victorian Order (DCVO) and promotion to Dame Grand Cross in the Order of the British Empire (GBE). Edwina also received various Red Cross awards and other honours.

EDWINA'S 1946 TOUR OF AUSTRALIA

Let us now turn to the four-week tour of Australia that Edwina undertook in March, April and May 1946. She took the opportunity of a visit her husband was making to Australia to come with him to express her appreciation of the wartime effort made by the local St John Ambulance and Red Cross organisations. She came in the middle of her current major commitment, which was relief work among recently released prisoners of war in south-east Asia, including the Australians, and also among refugees in the region whom war had displaced. It was not her first visit to Australia: she had been here briefly in 1935 on her way home after working aboard a copra lugger among the Polynesian and Melanesian islands.



Lord Louis and Lady Mountbatten arrive in Canberra on 24 March 1946 at the beginning of their tour of Australia and New Zealand.

The relentless, frenetic pace of her four-week Australian tour was typical of dozens of similar tours she undertook during her two St John Ambulance decades. She arrived in Canberra direct from Singapore with Lord Louis on 24 March 1946. After two days there, they flew on to Melbourne for a couple more days and then to Sydney on 29 March for a couple more. From Sydney they flew to New Zealand, where Edwina spent a fortnight touring. During her first week in Australia she had accompanied Lord Louis as he went about

his military business; but on Monday 15 April 1946 she returned to Sydney from Auckland without him to do her own touring. She then spent the next three weeks making her inspections of Red Cross and St John Ambulance establishments, wearing her St John Ambulance uniform everywhere she went.



Michael Bourke, age 4, listens to Lady Mountbatten making a speech at a reception in her honour in Melbourne. (He'd now be 66. Does he remember this event?)



St John Ambulance Brigade Nursing Division members greet Edwina Mountbatten in Melbourne. Immediately left of her is Edith Wells, the District Superintendent (Nursing).

On her return to Sydney, Edwina was met by Sir John Newman-Morris, the president of Australian Red Cross and Receiver-General of the Australian Commandery of the Order of St John. She stayed at Admiralty House, Sydney, the local residence of the Governor General. The next morning, Tuesday, she flew to Albury in southern New South Wales then crossed the Murray River into Victoria to inspect the 106th Army General Hospital, the military hospital at Bonegilla (the later migrant

camp). She then flew on to Melbourne, where she stayed at Government House with the State governor, Sir Winston Duggan, who several months later became the inaugural Prior of the new Priory in Australia of the Order of St John. After reaching Melbourne she visited the Red Cross national headquarters and then the Heidelberg Military Hospital to meet senior officers of the Australian Army Nursing Service. The next day, Wednesday, she visited the University of Melbourne, three separate Red Cross convalescent homes; she attended a public meeting for the women of Melbourne in the Town Hall, recorded a radio broadcast for the women of the 'Outback', dined with the State council of the St John Ambulance Association at the Oriental Hotel and ended the evening by attending a reception for 200 rank-and-file St John Ambulance workers. The day after that, Thursday, she was shown over the Royal Melbourne Hospital, inspected the Red Cross blood transfusion service, Red Cross House (the national administrative headquarters), 'Welfare House' (a home for the children of hospitalised wives of servicemen), the Red Cross Library Service, the Handcraft Training School (a war widows' organisation, the precursor of the War Widows' Guild), the Red Cross Civilian Relief Depot and the YWCA State headquarters. In all of the places she visited she met the management and the workers and made speeches at most of them.



In Sydney Lady Mountbatten met officers of the Order of St John 'proto-Priory', the Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia. Left-right: Commander R. Griffiths Bowen (first Priory Military Secretary), [unknown], Sir Hugh Poate (first Chancellor), Edwina Mountbatten, Colonel Alex Christie (first Chief Superintendent), Dr Frances MacKay (first Chief Superintendent Nursing), [unknown]. They felt greatly encouraged by their discussions with her. Five months after her departure they inaugurated the Priory in Australia of the Order.

It was much the same routine in every State and Territory, so I won't repeat it all in detail. The print version of this presentation contains the detail, so if you're interested pick up a copy on your way out. After Melbourne, Edwina flew to Tasmania for a series of engagements in both Hobart and Launceston before flying north to Brisbane. Among those who met her were Sir Kenneth Fraser, the Queensland head of the army medical service (and later first Queensland St John Ambulance Commissioner); and Mrs Dorothy Davidson, at that time the Assistant State Controller of Voluntary Aid Detachments but soon, with Sir Kenneth, to be the co-founder of the Queensland District of the St John Ambulance Brigade.



Edwina chats to members of the large crowd waiting outside Lennon's Hotel to welcome her to Brisbane.

Edwina flew back to Sydney on Wednesday 24th April. The next day, 25th April, was Anzac Day, so of course she attended the service of commemoration in the Domain as the guest of the Returned Services League (RSL) president. On Saturday 27th April, she flew from Sydney to Adelaide, where she stayed at Government House and inspected a huge parade of the St John Ambulance Brigade, VADs and Red Cross companies.

On Monday 29th April, she flew to Perth with a stop at Kalgoorlie *en route*. On Wednesday evening 1st May she met 100 or more Red Cross and St John Ambulance workers at St John Ambulance headquarters in Wellington Street. For this particular event she had to request that more St John people be present because whoever had organised it had packed the invitation list with Red Cross representatives. On Thursday 2nd May she flew from Perth to Alice Springs to visit the Flying Doctor base. The next day she flew on to Darwin, where she visited the 107th Army General Hospital and attended a dinner for local Red Cross workers. She flew out of Darwin next morning, 4th May, for Balikpapan in Borneo.

Edwina's excursion across Australia had been almost a 'Royal Tour', a prelude to the greatest of them all — the one eight years later in 1954 by Edwina's niece and nephew by marriage, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. During her time among us she had stayed in all the State and Territory capital cities; and she had visited several regional centres. In all she had attended 101 engagements. (Her average of five engagements a day was the same as in the Royal Tour of 1954.) She had delivered 35 speeches, made four radio broadcasts and met the governors, premiers and lord mayors in most of the places where she had stayed. She had also met and had been seen by thousands of rank and file members of the institutions she was interested in: the VADs, Red Cross, St John Ambulance, YWCA and POW organisations. It had all been planned and carried out with the same degree of military precision for which Lord Louis Mountbatten was famous in his official itineraries. Accompanying her had been an entourage of about seven assistants. The membership changed during the tour but those who lasted the greatest distance were a pair known only as Commander Pitts and 2nd Officer Taylor. Does anyone know who they were?

What Edwina might actually have thought about the Australians she met is unknown. For their part, the Australians who met her remembered her with great affection. The fast dwindling number of St John Ambulance members introduced to her 61 years ago recall a woman of great vivacity, unaffected charm, unfeigned interest in the work they did, an evident real concern for the ill and disabled and an ability to put ordinary middle- and working-class St John workers at their ease. She won their hearts readily and perhaps that helped them to rededicate themselves to the St John cause.

CONTROVERSIES SURROUNDING THE MOUNTBATTENS

This paper will not attempt to examine the debates over Lord Mountbatten's military career, which culminated with five years as Chief of the Defence Staff. Nor will it examine his controversial career as the last viceroy in India, other than to note the criticism that in his eagerness to hasten Indian independence he had prompted the Partition into the separate hostile nations of India and Pakistan, followed by horrendous communal violence. This criticism did not apply to Edwina, who was widely praised for her heroic efforts in relieving the misery and bloodshed that accompanied Partition. In India she remains a heroine of the Partition period.



St John Ambulance Brigade Nursing Division members greet Edwina Mountbatten in Melbourne. Immediately left of her is Edith Wells, the District Superintendent (Nursing).

Edwina was, however, a contradictory character. There was little about her that was conventional. Despite her affection for her husband and her family, the marriage was stormy during its first 20 years, punctuated by long annual separations as she travelled incessantly and obsessively and had many extra-marital affairs, some long-running. Her close relationship with Nehru, the first prime minister of India, endured until her death and was the cause of much gossip. She was jealous of her husband's achievements and increasingly high status as he climbed the naval career ladder, earning honour after honour. She seemed driven to match his achievements, to out-compete him. She was a devoted mother but left her two little daughters with their nanny for months on end as she sought adventure in difficult and often dangerous travel in the most exotic and inaccessible parts of the globe. Although she seemed the classic aristocratic English rose of ancient noble lineage, she was a quarter Jewish by descent and was much influenced by her Jewish grandfather, Sir Ernest Cassell. She also had an affinity for the so-called coloured races. Indeed her friendship with the Afro-American singer Paul Robeson became such a scandal in the mid-1930s that she sued the magazine *People* for libel over an article about them which it had published. She won the action and claimed no damages, but denied ever having met Robeson.

And then, in one of the great ironies of her life, despite her great wealth and privilege she became and remained a socialist. She was also a great snob, most comfortable with others of the ruling class, into which she had been born. If ever anyone believed she had been born to rule it was Edwina. She professed a love for the toiling masses, and did indeed get on with them extremely well without appearing to patronise them; but she disliked the middle classes, whom she generally regarded as tiresome social climbers. Strangely, too, although she married into the Royal Family and was a personal friend of most of its members, she was almost instinctively a republican. She was the personal friend as well as cousin-in-law of the last three monarchs who reigned during her lifetime, but she had little admiration for the institution of the monarchy.

Not surprisingly for such a colourful character, Edwina has continued attracting the interest of biographers. At least five major biographies have been published. One worthy of special comment is *Edwina Mountbatten: Her Life in Pictures*,

published the year after Edwina's death by her best friend and second cousin, the Countess of Brecknock, the former Marjorie Jenkins, who had succeeded her as Superintendent-in-Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade. (In 1969 Lady Brecknock made her own tour of Australian St John Ambulance establishments. Her adverse comments about the old-fashioned, stodgy nature of the organisation in Australia raised a great controversy among the Order's loyal antipodean servants.)

The earlier biographies portrayed Edwina as a secular saint. They depicted her as a free spirit whom convention could not confine, but did not examine her faults and in particular shied away from her amatory adventures. It was the fourth biography, *Edwina: Countess Mountbatten of Burma*, published by Richard Hough in 1983, that lifted the carpet to see what the earlier biographers had swept beneath. Hough, an earlier biographer of Lord Louis Mountbatten, publicly aired Edwina's love life. He suggested that she might have been Paul Robeson's lover. Hough then went on to suggest that Edwina had maintained a long-running sexual relationship with Nehru. Whatever the truth of these stories, the Mountbattens lived in what is euphemistically called an 'open marriage'. That is, Edwina and 'Dickie' maintained a marriage which accepted frequent infidelities, semi-permanent extra-marital sexual relationships and long overseas vacations with particular lovers. Here they might have been before their time, but their amorous interludes with others were hardly those of the saintly couple depicted in the earlier biographies. Hough's book caused shock in Australian St John Ambulance circles if not elsewhere. I remember that the late Millie Field DStJ, historian of the Order in Victoria, who had seen Edwina in 1946, felt affronted at the slur she felt Hough had cast against the reputation of someone she regarded as a heroine. Sadly for the Edwina fan club, however, what Hough wrote was all true — as later biographies confirm.

EDWINA'S LEGACY

Assessing what long-term achievements might be attributed to Edwina Mountbatten through her fierce dedication to being a St John Ambulance ambassador-at-large is problematic. On the one hand there is no denying the importance of her role in rallying the St John Ambulance Brigade 'At Home' for its wartime role in Britain. Her practical relief work among ex-POWs and refugees in south-east Asia at the end of the war was of a similar kind. Nor can her later public relations value to the St John Ambulance organisation be gainsaid. Her incessant touring to wave the St John flag around the Empire raised the profile of the organisation wherever she went. To her might possibly be attributed a renewed commitment by its own members to the St John Ambulance Brigade, which continued growing in Australia until it reached its historical peak national strength of almost 15,000 in 1969–70.

On the other hand there is what I shall call the 'Princess Di factor' because in the modern era the celebrity who most closely approximated Edwina's commitment to charity was the self-proclaimed 'Queen of Hearts', the late Diana Princess of Wales. The 'Princess Di factor' is observed when the arrival of some celebrity committed to a particular charitable cause might focus public interest and attention on the plight of those whom the charity exists to serve. Once the celebrity has departed, however, the cause will be largely forgotten unless there is a well-organised, well-funded, highly-motivated local organisation to ensure that the work continues. And if such an organisation is present locally, then it does not really need a visiting celebrity to boost its stocks. This was the case with Edwina's Australian tour in 1946. The St John Ambulance Brigade was well established and thriving before she arrived. It enjoyed a high public profile and, relative to the growth of the national population, it had already reached its peak strength. It continued growing after her visit for structural and cultural reasons of its own. In any case the creation of independent overseas Priors of the Order in the year that Edwina had toured Australia had obviated the need for inspections like hers. The establishment of non-British Priors had been a vote of confidence by the St John's Gate hierarchy in the ability of the 'white' dominions to manage their own affairs. With or without Edwina, the Brigade would have continued its post-war expansion. The St John Ambulance workers that Edwina met loved her, but they didn't need her. That is not to say her arrival failed to provide a great boost for their morale.

Why, then, did she come? The answer would appear to have at least something to do with her own inner compulsions. She had a deep-seated lifelong need to travel abroad as frequently and for as long as possible. Travelling for St John Ambulance, Red Cross, Prisoners of War, Save the Children's Fund and her other charities possibly satisfied her wanderlust without making her peregrinations appear as self-indulgent as during her hedonistic decades in the 1920s and 30s. Perhaps, too, she needed the publicity and adulation of the adoring crowds she met, which no doubt affirmed her sense of self-worth. And perhaps her relentless driving of herself in the St John cause was also an atonement for her earlier hollow life of luxury. And, finally, her travels for her charities gave her meaningful, high-profile work to do.

All that having been said, I must admit a great liking for Edwina Mountbatten. I was only eight years old when she visited my home town, Melbourne; I'm a member of the middle classes she despised; and I'm frankly appalled by her promiscuity because if we all practised her brand of sexual morality the social fabric binding us together as a coherent society would disintegrate. There is nevertheless much I cannot help but applaud in such a glittering star. She had class, style, flair and panache in abundance. People like her happen by only once every few centuries. As St John Ambulance members, we can be proud that there was something about our organisation that attracted her. She found fulfilment among us; and we can be glad that she did.

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REPORTS

President's annual report for 2006–2007

by Dr Harry Oxe, ASM, KSTJ (President, St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia)

I begin this, my second Annual Report to you as your President, by acknowledging the city in which we meet. This year we are meeting in Canberra; and this will be our seventh Annual General Meeting (if you count the inaugural meeting in Brisbane in 2001 from which we date our inception). This is the first time we have met in Canberra because this is the first Priory Conference held in Canberra for 29 years, the last time having been in 1978, long before anyone ever thought of founding a society such as this. That we can meet here in the national capital is a measure of our increasing maturity as a part and indeed a *de facto* branch of St John Ambulance Australia.

I will begin by saying how symbolically significant it is for an Historical Society like this that we are meeting in this room, the "Elsa Albert Hall", rather than at the main Priory Conference venue. So, too, is the fact that I am delivering this report from the "Olga Cohen" table while sitting in the "Olga Cohen" ceremonial presidential chair. We have deliberately chosen this venue for our AGM because this building, the Priory Headquarters, is an emblematic architectural representation of our Order's history and heritage. As its design, layout, furnishings and décor demonstrate, we are part of a wider organisation that has ancient traditions. I therefore invite you to wander the corridors of this building during the breaks in this AGM because this National Headquarters building is itself a living, working exhibition of our Order's history and heritage.

And now to the substance of my report. For the second year in succession we have had to spread our meeting across two days, largely because of the success of our annual history seminars, which now require a day of their own to stage. Those of you who attended yesterday's seminar and heard the nine papers presented will agree with me that devoting a whole day to the seminar is most productive because we are attracting much interest among serious researchers into St John history, and the work that they produce is of high quality.

As a Society we have set ourselves a number of goals. These are set out as the "Purposes and Objects of the Society" in our Constitution. There are eleven of them but I will not enumerate them now because you can read them in the Constitution, copies of which will be available at the end of this meeting if you want one. In my report last year I drew attention to the second "Object", which requires us to "*perform an educational function by enhancing and disseminating knowledge of St John history among people affiliated with St John Ambulance Australia...*" In my 2005–06 report last year I drew attention to the inaugural awards to Cadets who had done project work towards their "Knowledge of the Order" (KOTO) proficiency badges. We sponsor these awards and we have called them the "Mark Compton KOTO Prizes" in acknowledgement of the generosity of the Priory's Receiver-General in personally donating the seed funds to make them possible. Those of you who attended last night's Chief Minister's Reception at the ACT Legislative Assembly saw the next round of KOTO Prizes awarded and will have realised that, as with all our other "Objects", we continue to fulfil our important second obligation of "performing an educational function".

The History Seminars and the KOTO Prizes are but two of our achievements. There have been other highlights during the past year. I will now refer specifically to seven of these, which have been as follows:

- 1) Publication of the sixth annual volume of *St John History*, the society's high-quality journal. Volume 6, the largest and most ambitious to date, contains a series of important research papers, 'history-heritage' reports from all eight States/Territories and many other items of historical interest. Special thanks go to our publications officer, Cheryl Langdon-Orr, for her superb work in producing and distributing it. Cheryl has done this work 'pro bono' at a time when she has had her share of health concerns; and so her achievement with the latest volume of the journal is especially creditable.
- 2) Our annual gathering in Perth last year, even though exactly a year ago deserves special comment. For the first time we had to spread our meetings across two days, with the annual general meeting and committee meeting on the first day and the annual history seminar on the second. As noted, we have had to do the same this year in Canberra except that this year our seminar yesterday preceded this AGM today.
- 3) The participation in the history seminar of Pamela Willis, the Curator of the Order of St John Museum at St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London, also deserves comment. Ms Willis was one of the two international guest speakers at the National Conference in Perth, the other being the Lord Prior, Eric Barry of Canada (who also attended our history seminar). Ms Willis's topic at the history seminar was the function of the heritage collections at 'The Gate' in promoting St John Ambulance to the public. After the conference Ms Willis visited St John Ambulance headquarters in Perth, Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne to advise on the development of the local heritage collections. Our special thanks go to Ian Kaye-Eddie, the former CEO of St John Ambulance (WA), now retired, and Len Fiori, the Priory Secretary, for making her visit possible.
- 4) The official opening by the Lord Prior of the 'Ian Kaye-Eddie Heritage Centre' within the redeveloped State headquarters of St John Ambulance (WA) at Belmont on 22 June was a very special event. The centre, which contains magnificent and tastefully displayed museum, library and archival collections with high-quality research facilities, sets a new benchmark for St John heritage collections. Congratulations to Edith Khangure, the museum curator, librarian and archivist to St John Ambulance (WA), for her achievement in developing this superb facility.
- 5) I have already mentioned the presentation of the inaugural 'Mark Compton "Knowledge of the Order" Prizes' in Perth on 22 June last year. We should note that the prizes are awarded by the Historical Society and named for the Receiver-General, whose generosity has made them possible. As seen, they are for the best historical projects completed by Cadets working towards the 'Knowledge of the Order' proficiency badge. They are consequently doing much to stimulate interest in the Order's history among younger St John members. Some of their projects are on display in the foyer; and I'm sure you will agree that their creative approach to presenting the Order's history validates our investment in the KOTO Prizes.
- 6) Outside in the foyer you will have noticed the display of historical and heritage items. I invite you to inspect this during morning tea and at the end of our meeting before you travel back to the main Priory Conference venue. The display will also continue tomorrow morning in association with the Priory Chapter Meeting. The display is, I believe, the very first time there has ever been such an *interstate* exhibition. At most recent Priory Conferences there have been displays of local State/Territory historical memorabilia, but we have notched up a "first" by mounting a nationwide exhibition. Congratulations to all those who have worked to make this possible.
- 7) The final point I wish to make is that during the year we made a substantial donation to the "Lynne Panayiotis Fund". We are fortunate that Lynne's parents, Max and Julie Penaluna, are present with us this morning and will be presenting a report on Lynne's progress with her rehabilitation after her horrific accident in Egypt 18 months ago. I will therefore take this opportunity of assuring them and Lynne that we admire them greatly for their fortitude in the face of great adversity. We will also continue to pray for Lynne's rehabilitation; and we want her family to know that they have our full support as Lynne continues through her long recovery process.

As the above points suggest, 2006–07 has been a productive year for the Historical Society. For this we thank our enthusiastic members, our office bearers and our committee members for their continuing dedication to the St John heritage cause. We also thank our generous donors, who make our achievements possible. And we thank Ms Kareen Brandt (our honorary auditor), Professor Villis Marshall (our Patron) and Mr Len Fiori (our Priory representative), whose continuing keen support is an important factor in our success.

Finally, I thank you, our members and friends, for your attendance today. I now move that you adopt my report.

The Australian Capital Territory and the Priory & Australian Office

by Ian Howie-Willis, OAM, KStJ (Priory Librarian)

This report covers both the Australian Office of St John Ambulance Australia and the local Australian Capital Territory (ACT) branch. With this particular report, and for the first time, it is appropriate to divide the report into two sections, one for the ACT and the other for the Australian Office and Priory.

THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

At the Territory level, in St John Ambulance (ACT), there are two most significant developments to report. These are as follows:

Official history of the Operations Branch in the ACT

Richard Caesar-Thwaytes, formerly the Deputy Commissioner in the ACT, has been commissioned to produce a history of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch, which now has a continuous record of some 67 years in the Canberra region. Richard has been working on this project for the past two years. He has now completed the first stage of the project, which has been to assemble, transcribe and comment upon the historical sources for the project in a series of chapters in a book-size manuscript. These chapters will form the framework of the history. Richard has painstakingly trawled through back numbers of the *Canberra Times* newspaper and the archival records of St John Ambulance (ACT), St John Ambulance (NSW) and the Priory. In doing so he has taken knowledge of St John history in the Canberra region far beyond the previously known facts. The history text that will follow on from the framework document will be a lively book showing the tentative steps and the setbacks that the ACT St John Ambulance organisation had to take before separating from the NSW organisation in 1979.

A St John Ambulance (ACT) historical society

We members of the St John Ambulance community are pleased to advise that we have instituted a process that we hope will lead to the formation of a historical society for St John Ambulance (ACT). Most other States/Territories have already introduced formal structures for ensuring that their heritage functions are adequately catered for. As Richard Caesar Thwaytes's research has shown, there has been a more or less continuous St John Ambulance presence in the ACT since 1940. We in the ACT accordingly wish to follow the interstate lead by establishing our own local St John history society. A small group of interested people has consequently made a submission to the Council of St John Ambulance (ACT) to establish one. The council has given approval-in-principle to the idea. At the time of writing we are still exploring ways and means of bringing the new society into being.

PRIORY AND AUSTRALIAN OFFICE

Since my last report, in Perth on 21 June 2006, my duties as Priory Librarian have continued as previously. They consist mainly of the following tasks.

- Providing advice to the Priory Secretary, and through him to the National Board of Directors and the Priory Chapter, on matters relating to the Order's history and heritage; this role includes the preparation of correspondence on these matters and liaison with individuals who contact the Australian Office about such issues.
- Generally fulfilling the function of custodian of the Order's history and heritage in Australia. (c) Maintaining the separate Library, Pictorial and Memorabilia databases.
- Keeping a watchful eye on the condition of the materials in the Library, Pictorial and Memorabilia collections, and being 'pro-active' in pursuing opportunities for further developing the collections.
- Making judicious purchases of items for the Priory Library, most notably new books on the history of the Order and St John Ambulance.
- Receiving materials donated to the Priory's Library, Memorabilia and Pictorial collections and liaising with the donors.
- Conducting and publishing historical research on topics relevant to the history of the Order and St John Ambulance, and facilitating the research of others.
- Liaising with other St John Ambulance historians and providing them with advice, assistance and encouragement.
- Establishing and maintaining contact with people in overseas Pories who have an interest in heritage matters.
- Continuing in the role of Historical Society Secretary, which meshes closely with the Priory Librarian's duties, especially the task of promoting interest in the Order's heritage.

As I reported fairly fully on these nine matters to last year's AGM in Perth, I won't do so again this year. Instead I'll report on these five other matters:

Occasional Address at the Chapter Meeting in Perth on 24 June 2006

At the invitation of the Priory Chancellor, I delivered the Occasional Address at last year's Chapter Meeting in Perth. This address, which took the form of a 'PowerPoint' presentation, had the title "What's in a Name?" — A Tale of Two Ancient Orders: the Hospitallers and the Templars'. The address consisted of a synoptical historical examination of the reasons why one of the mediaeval military monastic orders, the Hospitallers, survived whereas their comrades-in-arms and parallel military monastic order, the Templars did not. The paper was well received but so far has not been published. If members of the Historical Society would like copies the Priory Librarian can make these available.

Address to the meeting of the National Board of Directors commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of the Priory

Again at the Chancellor's invitation, I also delivered an oration to the meeting of the National Board of Directors making the 60th anniversary of the inauguration of the Priory in Australia of the Order of St John in Sydney in September 1946. This oration, which took the form of a 'PowerPoint' presentation, had the title "Let us now praise famous men" — The 60th Anniversary of the establishment of the Priory in Australia of the Order of St John (and why it is significant)'. The Board meeting took place on 9 September 2006 in the Chapter House of St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney. The date was the nearest feasible to the 60th anniversary of the Priory's inception on 18 September 1946; the venue was the same as for the Priory's inaugural Chapter Meeting, which took place in the Chapter House on Friday 6 March 1947. The oration traced, first, the course of the St John Ambulance federal movement in Australia, culminating in the establishment of the Priory; it then, second, considered some of the Priory's principal achievements over its 60-year history. The text of the oration has subsequently been published in the *Annual Report 2006* of St John Ambulance Australia.

(It should be noted here that Mrs Betty Stirton of NSW also addressed the Diamond Jubilee meeting of the Board. She spoke on the photographic and documentary record of the foundation of the Priory. To illustrate her address, she and Ms Loredana Criniti had on display an exhibition of the key photographs and documents.)

Preparation of the first interstate exhibition of items of historical and heritage interest and value

In collaboration with particular interstate colleagues, I have helped prepare the exhibition of history and heritage items currently on display in the foyer. I gratefully acknowledge my appreciation of all those members who have contributed items to the display and/or who have worked to set it up.

National Conference 2007

As a Canberra resident, in August 2006 I joined the planning committee for the present Priory or National Conference, my specific task being the planning of the program of seminars and workshops that form a major part of the conference. Since then this task has taken up an increasingly large proportion of my waking hours.

Address to the St John Historical Society of the UK

I will be attending the monthly meeting of the St John Historical Society of the UK at St John's Gate on 24 October 2007, mainly in my capacity as an invited guest speaker. I will also bear greetings from our Historical Society to the UK one. I will be delivering a slightly adapted version of the paper on Lady Mountbatten that I presented at yesterday's History Seminar. This will be the second time I will have been guest speaker at a meeting of the UK society, the previous occasion having been in 2005, when I spoke on Lady Brassey's 1887 tour of Australia.

Archives Department, St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)

by Loredana Criniti, SSSStJ (Archivist and Librarian) and Betty Stirton, OAM DStJ & 9th bar to Service Medal (Honorary Archivist)

BROOCH, CUFFLINKS AND PENDANT



Brooch produced by the Friends of St John (UK) during the 1970s and 80s to promote and raise funds for the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem.

As a result of an enquiry to Archives from National Marketing re the history and value of the featured brooch, Pamela Willis the Curator of the St John Museum at St Johns Gate, gave us the answer. A brooch, cufflinks and pendant were issued and sold by the Friends of St John, (United Kingdom), in the late 70's and early 80's to support the St John Eye Hospital. The yellow blobs are meant to be lions and unicorns and the flower is meant to be the St John's Wort. In New South Wales we only have the brooch.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

When Douglas Kelson, Chief Commissioner and CEO from Papua New Guinea attended the National Conference in 2006 he sought information of the involvement from New South Wales in the teaching of First Aid in New Guinea. A file was prepared for Mr Kelson on his visit to Sydney shortly after the Conference. Pastor R.E. Hare, a member of the St John Ambulance Association (NSW) Executive, taught the majority of the classes in the Pacific Islands at the Seventh-Day Adventist Mission Schools, from 1953 to 1958. We were able to provide the names of the 165 recipients of the First Aid certificate issued. In 1963 National Headquarters then became responsible for Papua New Guinea.

60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRIORY IN AUSTRALIA

The National Board Meeting held on 9th September 2006 commemorated the 60th Anniversary of the Priory in Australia. The meeting was held at the Chapter House, St Andrew's Cathedral Sydney as this was the venue for the 1st meeting of the Priory. Both the Australian Priory and a separate Western Australian Commandery, within the Priory, came into official existence on 18th September 1946. Dr Ian Howie Willis gave a comprehensive history of the Commandery and Priory, and from our Archive we were able to give an historical background through photographs and descriptions. The family of the late Archdeacon S.M. Johnstone, a Chaplain of the Order at the time of the Commandery, gave negatives of photos taken in 1945 and 1947 to the late Dr Gordon Young who then passed them on to our Archive. They recorded the start of the Priory and the ceremonial events in those years.

FLORAL EMBLEMS OF AUSTRALIA

For members who are visiting the National Headquarters for the first time may not know the history of the stained glass windows. The idea came after a Christmas card was received from the Chancellor of the Order of St John in Canada. The card showed a splendid stained glass window from the Canadian Priory Headquarters. Many recipients of this card agreed that Canberra should have stained glass windows. The 6 windows were designed and created by Sydney Artist Pel Fesq. Pel was Australia's first qualified woman trade glazier and had many years experience in the creation of beautiful lead-lighting, with a particular interest in flowers. The 6 windows feature designs based on the State floral emblems and the national Golden Wattle, combined with the St John's Wort and the Darwinia Neildiana, named after Dr James Neild, one of the founders of St John Ambulance in Australia. In December 1992, during a colourful ceremony, the then Prior Mr Bill Hayden "Received the Stained Glass Windows".

CENTENARY OF WESTERN SUBURBS

From 1891 First Aid classes were held in the Sydney Western suburbs of Burwood, Petersham and Summer Hill. After gaining First Aid Certificates, groups were formed as "Practice Classes". The "Practice Class" at Summer Hill raised funds and built a First Aid Station (sometimes referred to as a shed) on railway property near the Summer Hill railway station. The Station was free of debt and was well equipped with a wheeled litter, stretcher, bandages, splints etc. In 1902 the hand-drawn litter was fitted with rubber tyres to aid the comfort of casualties. By 1910 the hand-drawn litter was replaced with a horse-drawn litter and the shed had to be extended to accommodate the horses and litter. By 1918 the wheeled and horse-

drawn litters had covered 3,691 miles. This was prior to the commencement of the New South Wales Ambulance Transport Service.



Early years of the Western Suburbs Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade, Sydney, the third Australian Division to pass its centenary. Behind the members is their horse-drawn ambulance van and at the right is their two-wheeled hand-drawn litter or 'St John ambulance'.

The Western Suburbs Ambulance Division was registered in 1903 and closed December 1927. The Division was re-registered in 1931. During the following years Nursing and Cadet Divisions were formed. The Western Suburbs Divisions have met for 76 years in the Burwood Council buildings.

In 1950 when St John built the training and recreation centre at Blaxland, the men, with the assistance of their wives, played a significant part in giving their time and energy with the clearing of the land and raising funds for the fencing to enclose the boundaries. Because of their efforts the members of Western Suburbs and their wives became known as "The Western Suburbs Division Blaxland Fencing Company". Seven years later a bushfire caused damage to the fencing and the men returned to not only repair the fencing but to install two sets of double gates at the entrance.

The Centenary was celebrated at a most enjoyable function on Friday 1st June. We produced a booklet for each guest giving a history of the Division. Photos showing the history were also on display.

History and Heritage Committee, St John Ambulance Australia (Qld.)

by Beth Dawson, AM, DStJ (Chair, Historian & Archivist)

Last year the History and Heritage Committee's report indicated each year provides more challenges. The most recent year, 2006-07, has been no exception.

The task of sorting, accessing and documenting the content of the numerous boxes has revealed very interesting items, including three scrap books kept by the late Dorothy Davidson. These commenced when she was the voluntary Assistant Controller, Queensland of VAD's during World War 11. One newspaper article reported that the Royal Naval Hospital opened at Ekibin, a Brisbane suburb, would be staffed by registered nurses of the Queen Alexandra Royal Naval Nursing Service and VAD's from the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance Brigade. There were fifteen St John VAD's attached to the hospital until the cessation of hostilities in the Pacific when these personnel returned to the United Kingdom. Many other significant documents have been found which is encouraging.

The committee's 2006 year planner was so successful a similar document has been prepared to guide the 2007 activities.



Part of the exhibition of memorabilia at the History and Heritage Committee's inaugural 'Open Day' at St John House, Brisbane, October 2006.

October 10th 2006 the committee's inaugural Open Day was held at St John House. The program included guest speakers, a selection of local and international videos about aspects of St John programs and an exhibition of displays from the archives relating to the Training, Community Care, Operations and Ophthalmic branches. An invitation was extended to the St John membership with approximately sixty people attending from 10.30am to 3 pm. Despite a busy time preparing, manning and hosting the day the committee enjoyed the challenge as well as

being delighted with the response. A copy of the Open Day's comprehensive report is included with the printed report.

During the year various members have represented the committee at Golden Jubilee celebrations of Maryborough Adult and Maryborough Cadet Divisions as well as Rockhampton Cadet Division. Ann Demaine and Gail Vann were members of the 2007 selection panel for the Knowledge of the Order, Mark Compton Award in Queensland.

The State Library, in Brisbane, has resumed a program of training sessions which included a conservation clinic held last February, this enabled three members to develop further understanding of conservation techniques. The committee appreciates the valuable assistance given by Betty Stirton and Loredana Criniti when the chairman visited the New South Wales archives in early September.

Funds and material resources are essential to maintain the collection. This year, although not successful with two grant applications three submissions are currently being prepared by Cecily Leaver a new staff member whose major responsibility is grant application preparation. Generous donations have been given by committee members and other St John members, such donations have enabled Priory Annual Reports, Queensland Annual Reports and the complete issues of "*St John News Centres*" from the mid 1970's to late 1980's, to be bound. Committee members sold 'Head and Heel Packs' at the 2006 Royal Queensland Show, the proceeds were supplemented by an equal donation from the Operations Branch, Brisbane Regional Divisions which was their share of the sales; these funds enabled the items presented by Miss Pamela Willis, Curator the Museum at St John Gate to be suitably framed.

Enquiries regarding St John members continue to be received as well as a variety of donations. The committee considers the most significant being two St John Ambulance Association publications "*First Aid to the Injured*" published in 1892 and "*Hints and Helps for Home Nursing and Hygiene*", donated by Rhonda Lang of Maryborough. The original owner John A. Fairlie, in 1911 was the chairman of the Maryborough Hospital Ambulance Transport Committee, this service was still functioning in 1956 when the first St John Ambulance Brigade division commenced in Maryborough, one of the members, Percy Aitcheson was the driver of the hospital ambulance. These donations are greatly treasured.

Last February, the committee decided to support the 125th anniversary year of the Order of St John's hospital in Jerusalem by conducting a raffle, the proceeds from which were presented to the Priory Hospitaller on Wednesday for 'The International Patient Relief Appeal'.

A month after the St John National Conference held in Perth, Norman Demaine one of the committee's staunch and devoted members died. Norman was one of the committee's contributors to the St John Queensland "*One St John*" newsletter. Early this year Rhonda Lang joined the committee as the corresponding member for the Maryborough area.

In June 2007 the members of the History and Heritage Committee of St John Ambulance Australia (Queensland) were as follows: Miss Beth Dawson (Chair/Historian/Archivist), Ms Sandra Bout, Mrs Vera Crook, Mrs Averil Chadwick (Corresponding member, North Queensland), Mrs Ann Demaine, Mr Brian Dunstan, Dr Murray Elliott, Mrs Gloria Fairfax, Brigadier Trevor Gibson, Dr Geoffrey Gray, Mr. Anthony Harrison, Mrs Margaret Hunt (Corresponding member, Rockhampton), Miss Rhonda Lang (Corresponding member, Maryborough), Mr Vince Little, Professor John Pearn (Consultant to Committee), Mr. Laurie Steinhardt, Miss Gail Vann and Mrs Margaret Wilkinson (Corresponding member, Bundaberg).

The St John Historical Society of South Australia

by Brian Fotheringham, AM, KStJ (Chairman)

The St John Historical Society in South Australia has continued with well-attended monthly meetings throughout the year. The meetings are held in the St John Museum in Arthur Street, Unley, only a short walk from St John Headquarters in South Australia.

Improvements to the Museum have included a new lockable, built-in wardrobe for our collection of St John uniforms, and the purchase of some mannequins to display some of those uniforms.

One of our members, Mr. Ben Hollister, has worked hard to bring us into the modern era. He initiated the introduction of a computer program to catalogue our collection and has now enlisted the aid of several Information Technology students or

recent IT graduates, I think the term is, "to input the data". Ben also entertained us at one meeting by introducing us to the marvels of the computer, including family history searches and the ubiquitous eBay.

We now have complete sets of several local St John Ambulance publications, for example Routine Orders, Spotlight and Open Airways, and have added some histories of individual Operations Branch Divisions. These may be useful for future historians.

Our Annual General Meeting is always a fun evening, with little of the stuffiness that may pervade AGM's in other organizations. At our latest AGM, Brian Fotheringham was elected as Chairman, Cliff Wright as Deputy Chairman, Lyn Dansie as Secretary and David Heard as Treasurer. We again acknowledge the support our Society receives from Mr. Peter Gill, CEO, and members of the State Board of St John Ambulance in South Australia.

There was a sad note during the year as our long-standing and respected member, Mrs. Jean Tonkin died. Many of you at this gathering may remember her with affection.

During the year we have developed and printed a coloured brochure on the Museum and this has been included in mail-outs to St John members in South Australia. Again there has been a pleasing number of visitors to the Museum, including cadets studying for the Grand Prior's Badge. One cadet wrote in our visitors' book that she found the Museum "morbidly interesting".

I trust that when you as members of the National St John Ambulance Historical Society visit Adelaide for the National Meetings next year you will find the emphasis not on "morbid", but very much on "interesting".

Library & Museum Committee of St John Ambulance Australia (Victoria)

by Jack Blackstock KStJ (Chairman, Library & Museum Committee)

FAREWELL TO MILLIE FIELD

Members were saddened to hear of the death of Amelia ('Millie') Frances Field DStJ, a Dame of the Order, member of the Historical Society, founder of our archival collection, and author of the book "The Order of St John in Victoria – Our first hundred years". Many were able to attend the remembrance service held on 4th December 2006.

GIFTS

A substantial collection of books and papers and other memorabilia has been donated to the St John Library from the Estate of the late Millie Field. Included are the framed parchments awarded to Millie and Thelma Peverill when they became Dames of the Order. These now have a prominent place in our display. The documents have taken a long time to process because they reflected a long and wide-ranging involvement in St John work.

Substantial numbers of books have also been donated by Mr Bill Foley, Jim Humphrey and Max and Julia Penaluna.

The Commissioner of London District, UK, Mr Seamus Kelly, donated a set of badges of all the UK Districts who sent volunteers to the recent Commonwealth Games which have been set on a framed display board presented to the Museum by our Commissioner, Dr Iain Nicolson. Other gifts included a Guernsey Cross-stich, a lacework Order device commemorating the UK Centenary of St John, a plaque of the St John Priory for Wales, and a miniature copper Guernsey milk can.

We have also been given a volume of papers from Seymour Division and old uniforms from Dr Alan Davis and Max and Julia Penaluna.

A small statue of the sixteenth century Grand Prior, Sir Thomas Dowcra, was donated by Daryl Hulls.

ARCHIVES

A complete listing has been completed of all First Aid and Nursing books, identifying gaps and duplications in our collection. The oldest book was published in 1878. The Committee has decided to communicate with other State Branches and with Mr Vince Little to exchange or acquire books to fill gaps in our collection.

We now have a complete listing of all members of St John Council from 1885, St John Ambulance Association Centre Committee (now called Training Branch) from 1954 and St John Ambulance Brigade District Staff (now called First Aid Services) from 1954 to the present. These are already proving quite valuable in answering questions about member involvement.

We have bound volumes in Headquarters Library of all Victorian and Priory Annual Reports from 1885 to 1999. Efforts are under way to have duplicate bound volumes and an unbound set at the Museum in Williamstown. We have managed to achieve this for the last 50 years but still lack most Victorian Reports prior to 1959 and Australian Reports from 1941 to 1968.

Accumulations are under way to extend our collection of bound volumes of Priory and Victorian Annual Reports and "White Cross" to cover the 2000-2005 period.

Extensive further cataloguing of archival documents has been undertaken. The indexing system has been revised to allow specific reserved space for Minutes and Reports of all Branches for all years from the 1970's onwards. The index highlights that we have many big gaps in our collection to date.

The CEO and Branch Heads have been sympathetic to our proposal about trying to fill the gaps in our archive of Minutes and reports of high level St John committees by approaching past members to enquire if they still hold copies not held by HQ. Specific gaps we are seeking to fill are St John Council Minutes 1987-1990, Training Branch Centre Committee 1981-1985 and 1995-2005, and First Aid Services Branch Senior Officers 1984-1990 and 1995-1996.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Our photograph albums are now all on one shelf and the alphabetical index has been upgraded. We now have well over 8000 photos in our collection, and 60% of them have identified persons in the index.

The magnificent photo of Footscray Division in 1914 has been restored, framed and hung on the south wall of the Museum. As the earliest known photo of the oldest surviving Division it will doubtless be an important image in the forthcoming celebration of the centenary of volunteer first-aiders in Victoria in 2010, and the Divisional centenary in 2014.

VISITS

Distinguished visitors in the last twelve months have included Ms Pamela Willis (Curator of the St John's Gate Museum at Clerkenwell), Dr Bill Straffon (former District Officer), Mr Piya Godellewatte (former Commander of St John in Sri Lanka), Seamus Kelly (Commissioner of London District who was a visitor during the Commonwealth Games), Major-General Colin Gurner (former Commissioner of ACT), former Commissioners Lawrie Newell and Frank Poke, the Priory Secretary Mr Len Fiori, and a group of 20 volunteer staff of Museums Melbourne (Science-Works).

DOUGLAS DONALD CAMP

A message of thanks has been received from District Officer (Cadets) Alistair Dunn for the donation by the Museum of the large prints of the Queen as Sovereign Head of the Order (identical with the one on the wall at the Museum) which was donated by Gary Edwards, and a matching-sized picture of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the Grand Prior.

MEETINGS

The quarterly meetings of the Library/Museum Committee have now been opened to all members of the St John Historical Society in Victoria and include at least one presentation of a historical topic at each meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Repairs of damage to the Museum walls, and installation of monitored smoke detectors was arranged through the Headquarters Property Manager, and the Committee wishes to thank HQ for this important help.

A submission has been made to the Local History Grants Program for financial assistance with data entry to computerize our old membership records. This would be a substantial step towards being able to confirm personal membership information and also that of the evolving pattern of service units.

Finally, I wish to thank all the members who assisted us during the year.

The Ian Kaye-Eddie Heritage Centre, St John Ambulance Australia (Western Australia Inc.)

by Dr Harry F Oxer, ASM, KStJ (State Councillor for Heritage) and Dr Edith Khangure, OStJ (Librarian and Archivist)

GENERAL STATUS

The general status of the museum and archives is satisfactory. The need for a major change to our cataloguing software has been accepted and is being implemented. Individual aspects of our work are described below and summarise the year's activities.

DONATIONS

Donations this year include:

- Photographs
- History documents •Bandages
- First Aid books and assorted SJAA manuals
- Uniform items
- St John Diplomas and Certificates
- Insignia
- Biographical details
- First aid and ambulance equipment
- Ties
- Miniature ambulance models
- Shields
- Ceramic bowl
- SJAA anatomy chart
- Air ambulance memorabilia
- Stamps
- Cash.

The museum donated a Cadet book of prayers to an elderly ex-Cadet who wished to use and study them as she did many decades ago.

ACQUISITIONS

There have been no memorabilia or book purchases in this financial year for either the museum or archival library. A new software program for the museum catalogue has been purchased.

LOANS

Photographs and copies of documents from the archives have been provided to Fremantle Cadets and 2 sub centres celebrating anniversaries. Equipment and uniforms from the museum were also loaned to 1 sub centre for a promotional display. All loaned material has been returned.

The Golden Swan Award which VFAS provided for display in June 2006 was returned to them in April 2007.

RESEARCH WORK

A number of requests for assistance have been received and answered. These have included: • Ambulance vehicles

- History of sub centres
- Past SJAA members
- First aid training pre 1914
- St John badges and insignia
- The order's mottoes
- The O St, J L.S.M.
- The Fellowship of St John in W.A.

CATALOGUING

We are currently in the process of changing the museum catalogue from our in house Macadair program to MOSAIC. MOSAIC is an Australian system designed for the management of historical collections made up of a combination of objects, photographs, documents, books, archives and artworks.

A demonstration database was assessed earlier in the year and subsequently we decided to purchase the software. In addition we arranged for Information Services and Technology to undertake the data migration from Macadair to MOSAIC. This has just been completed and we will commence using the new system in 2007 - 2008.
Restoration

Limited restoration work has been possible this year-primarily re-glazing one original framed piece of artwork and more extensive professional restoration and refraining of an original watercolour.

MUSEUM FITTINGS

Additional spot lights and an "Ian Kaye-Eddie Heritage Centre" sign have been installed.

MUSEUM DISPLAYS

Minimal changes to displays have been made this year. The same themes have continued with additional artifacts or minor adjustments.

One small display on new ambulance vehicles for 2007 - 2008 has been developed.

A display on the Edward Nicholls, O St J L.S.M. is currently on loan to Priory. Museum Volunteers

We have fewer volunteers than prior to relocating from Wellington Street, primarily because of transport issues. Those volunteers who have their own vehicles continue to work on specific projects. Much time this year has been given to our photographic collection and this work is ongoing.

SECURITY

The museum was the target of thieves in September 2006. The plasma TV screen was stolen. Apart from damage to the doors and broken glass no other items were touched. The incident occurred at a time when extensive remodeling of the Training Centre was underway. For a brief period the security system was incomplete and it was during this time that the theft occurred. More extensive security measures are now in place throughout the complex. The plasma screen was insured and subsequently replaced.

VISITORS

The centre has been delighted to received visitors from the UK, New Zealand, Jersey and Victoria as well as local members of the public and St John staff and volunteers - adults and cadets.

Group visits have included Fremantle cadets, Community Care volunteers, the Hill Side Community Group and Friends of St John.

We are preparing a self guided tour brochure of the Heritage Centre and are trialing it with selected visitors.

PROJECTS 2007–2008

- Introduce MOSAIC into service. This may include attending specific training programs if required.
- Restoration work as required and as funding permits.
- Meeting any reference questions received.
- Working with some heritage students from Curtin University on 2 themes; the SJAA Aerial Ambulance Service 1977 - 1980, and, a history of bandaging.
- Engaging a museum consultant to assist us in preparing a schools visit program.
- Changing one current museum theme.
- Complete the self guided tour brochure.
- Working with Betty Stirton and Beth Dawson to complete a Library and Museum Protocol for all Australian St John members with an interest in managing museums and archives.

SUMMARY

2006 - 2007 has been a quiet year in many respects. Planning for future directions has been undertaken and we hope to see some of these plans come to fruition in the next 12 months.

Priory Annual Report 2007

by Dr Ian Willis, OAM, KStJ (Priory Librarian)

For the past four years, the Historical Society has been given its own page in the 'Priory Annual Report' also known as the *Annual Report of St John Ambulance Australia*. As Priory Librarian and also Historical Society Secretary, one of my duties is to write this page, which I generally use to summarise the Society's significant developments. Unfortunately, not all Historical Society members receive this annual report, which is distributed to members of the Chapter of the Priory in Australia of our Order. As the Historical Society's page is of interest to all our members and not just those who are members of the Chapter, the contents of the page are reproduced below.

CONTENTS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S PAGE

Despite some difficulties in producing and distributing our annual journal, St John History, the Historical Society experienced its most successful yet in 2007. For the first and last time we were able to hold our annual general meeting (AGM) in the St John Ambulance national headquarters building on Canberra Avenue, Forrest, on 22 June some 40 years after the building was first occupied. As usual, the AGM was conducted as a part of the annual national conference of St John Ambulance Australia.

The AGM received the usual reports by State/Territory representatives on their activities to preserve and promote the St John heritage. The reports revealed some exciting developments, including the formation of two state/territory-level historical societies that wish to affiliate with us. This raised the issue of whether or not the Society's constitution could be revised to make the Society a federal organisation with state/territory branches. A constitutional subcommittee was appointed to investigate the matter and as a result of its activities the constitution was slightly amended to permit federalisation. The National Board of Directors endorsed the revised constitution at their December meeting. The constitutional revision will greatly facilitate the formation of new branches of the Society.



Two giants of St John Ambulance history in Australia

LEFT is Major-General Rupert Major Downes (1885-1945), St John Ambulance Commissioner in Victoria 1921-45 for an Australian record period of 25 years and the main instigator of the St John Ambulance federal movement leading to the formation of the Australian Priory of the Order of St John in 1946.

RIGHT is Major-General Sir Samuel Roy Burston (1888-1960), the inaugural Priory Commissioner (later called Chief Commissioner) 1947-57 and the second Receiver-General of the Priory 1957-60.

Both RM Downes and SR Burston served long terms as Director-General of Medical Services (DGMS) in the Australian Army, that is, as commanding officer of the Army Medical Corps; and each served with great distinction as DGMS during World War II. (Downes was DGMS 1934-41 and Burston 1942-48.) By becoming involved in St John and lending the organisation their prestige and talents as heads of the army's medical service, Downes and Burston greatly enhanced the worthiness of the St John Ambulance reputation among the Australian public.

A special feature of the AGM was the moving account by Lynne Panayiotis (née Penaluna), former Chief Officer Cadets, of her rehabilitation after being gravely injured in a disastrous bus accident while holidaying in Egypt in early 2006.

The day before the AGM we ran our ninth consecutive history seminar at the main national conference venue. Conducted over a whole day of the conference, the history seminar had a record of nine papers on the program. On a range of topics and based on solid research by accomplished historians, the presentations were of uniform high quality and were greatly enjoyed by an appreciative audience of St John history enthusiasts.

As well as our federalised constitution, another most significant development occurred during 2007. This was the acceptance by the Board of Directors of a proposal that the Historical Society should become a constituent part of St John Ambulance Australia. Previously the Society had been structurally and constitutionally separate from the rest of the St John 'family'. This has been a major step forward for the Society and so we thank the Board for agreeing that we should come 'within the fold'. The great advantage in our doing so is that we are no longer 'outsiders' but have now joined the St John mainstream.

In presenting this report I thank all our members who toiled to make 2007 such a successful year for us. I also thank our Patron (Professor Willis Marshall), the Chancellor (Dr Neil Conn), the Priory Secretary (Len Fiori), the Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Peter Le Cornu) and our President (Dr Harry Oxer) for their encouragement and wise counsel. We are most fortunate to have their continuing support.

Ian Howie-Willis
Priory Librarian
& Historical Society Secretary

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St John

The St John Ambulance
Historical Society of Australia



*"Preserving and promoting
the St John heritage"*

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St John History is the annual journal of the Historical Society, and is provided gratis to all financial members of the Society.

Correspondence about articles in the journal should be directed to the Editor, who is also the Secretary of the Society and whose contact details are listed above.

Queries about distribution of the journal should be sent to the **State/Territory Membership Liaison Officers**, whose contact details are set out on the inside of this cover.
