



Pro Utilitate

Preserving and promoting the St John heritage.

Newsletter of The St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia

Issue 2024/3

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From the Editor

So much to reflect on as we approach the end of another very busy year in the operations of the Historical Society. During this year we have seen big events and the important results of the work of individuals. Matthew Glozier launched his book *Symbols of Hope* on the world stage at the Grand Council meetings in Cardiff, Wales in July. This was another example of how Australian historians are contributing enormously to the body of knowledge about, in this instance the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem, but also important aspects of our global history.

Our Seminar in November, demonstrated the work of many individuals working alone or in pairs, on topics of national interest and celebrating men and women in our history who have contributed so much to the health and welfare of so many Australians. It was also significant that four books were presented at this meeting. It was exciting to honour the high level of literary and historical work which our members accomplish.

Thank you.

Editor



VALE

Mrs Debbie Jane Nilsson OAM DStJ

The following are extracts from a very personal eulogy delivered by Professor Mark Compton AM GCStJ Lord Prior, Order of St John at St John's Anglican Church, Glebe NSW 30 July, 2024.

We gather today to pay tribute and say farewell to our much-loved Debbie. All of us hope that by being together we bring support to Sven, Sarah, Jessica, Karen and all of Debbie's family, friends and colleagues. When I heard from Sven that you (and he) would like me to speak at this Service of Thanksgiving, the harsh reality of what was finally unfolding hit hard, as it did for everyone. We have seen your strong and valiant fight against your illness for some time now and no one really contemplated that you would not win. But cancer finally won and we all lost.

As a tribute, your detailed service record has been laid out in recent days in a communication from St John (NSW), so I won't reprise that to the same detail. However, it should be noted for the wider gathering today that you gave service to St John continuously and with great distinction since joining as a Cadet in 1968 at Balmain. That length of service is in itself a record of which to be enormously proud and for which St John and the community are hugely, deeply thankful. However, it is not long service alone that distinguishes you. At every step, at every opportunity, you stepped forward to bring skill and leadership to our organisation and to its members. Your leadership was strong, principled and values-driven, delivered with care and compassion at its heart and always with the best interests of the community, St John and its members at the core.

Debbie, your career in St John was a standout. So many distinguished leadership roles, both formal and informal. Youth leader, regional leader, state leader, board member, council member, trainer, operational leader, ceremonial leader and the list goes on. How can this long list of

roles and the impact you had be summarised in this letter? Maybe we can highlight some key roles and some 'firsts'?

- A State Champion in Cadet First Aid competitions.
- First woman to hold the roles of District (State) Communications Officer.
- First woman to be appointed as District (State) Operations Officer.

This role was a particularly huge job. Coordinating, planning, resourcing and executing major events at which St John provided first aid, medical, nursing and paramedical care, including the annual City to Surf; New Year's Eve celebrations around Sydney; myriad music festivals and other major events; annual Royal Easter Show and so on.

Sydney 2000 Olympics saw you take on the very significant role as Commander of the Sydney Olympic Stadium venue—the centrepiece of the Sydney 2000 Games. Needless to say the St John operations at the Stadium went off without a hitch.

Working with Sven and the team at the University of Sydney Division to make it one of the most, if not the most successful St John university-style division, not just in Australia but probably globally.

The records say you contributed over 16,000 hours of voluntary service, but you and I know that's massively underestimated. Not every hour gets recorded; and there is the huge amount of 'offline' work in planning, organising, training, endless phone calls and emails (even faxes and letter writing in the early days!).



Vale Mrs Debbie Nilsson

The Order of St John, St John Ambulance, government and the Order of Australia all gave you recognition through many awards, including: admitting and promoting you in the Order of St John, ultimately to the high and very distinguished Grade of Dame of Justice in the Order; you were awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community particularly through St John Ambulance Australia; the Centenary Medal of the Commonwealth of Australia; the National Emergency Medal for sustained and significant service during the Black Summer 2019/2020 bushfires; a NSW Premier's Citation in 2021 for service during the Black Summer bushfires. And the list of awards, certificates of recognition etc. go on. Our organisation can never say 'thank you' enough to you for your service and your impact over a long period.

You planned and conducted many Order of St John Investitures and other ceremonies

and many Order dinners to make sure St John people could be properly recognised and their contributions celebrated. You perfectly curated these special occasions for them and for their loved ones, each small detail and personal touch thought of, because you just know how important these milestone events are to say thank you, and to encourage and inspire St John people everywhere.

Through all of this service, your family has been crucial (as for all volunteers who give of their time) as a strong and reliable support. From the early days your wonderful mum and dad and Karen, and for much of the time of your service, Sven, Sarah and Jessica. Whilst each of them gave service to St John in their own ways, I want to thank them all on this occasion for the endless love and support they have given to you that enabled you to in turn give to community.

Coming events

Grand Council

Canberra is proud to have been chosen to host the next Grand Council meeting, **15–21 September 2025!**

History Seminar, Chapter Meeting and Church Service

The next History Seminar, Chapter Meeting and Church Service will be held in **Sydney, 15 November 2025.**

Webinars 2025

There are two webinars planned for 2025, in March and September. The first topic will be on how to prepare and present papers at conferences; the second, on preparing a paper for publication. We are hoping that these will help Youth and HS members develop the skills for presentation success. Details to follow.

Webinar with the Museum of the Order of St John

Abigale Cornick from the Museum at St John's Gate, has sent out the following information for their first FREE on-line session for 2025. **BOOK HERE →** [The Great Siege of Malta: Then and Now. Presented by Marcus Bull, Distinguished Professor of Medieval and Early Modern Studies. Wednesday 5 February 2025, 6.30 pm. https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/st-john-booking-for-talk-the-great-siege-of-malta-then-and-now-tickets-1079122748189?aff=oddtcreator](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/st-john-booking-for-talk-the-great-siege-of-malta-then-and-now-tickets-1079122748189?aff=oddtcreator)

Recent events

2024 Grand Council

This year's Grand Council was held in a very hospitable Cardiff, Wales in July. Of particular interest for us was the international launch of Matthew Glozier's second St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital (SJEHG) book *Symbols of Hope* (2024). It was a stirring occasion and, most importantly, all the Priory, Commandery, and Association representatives were there to hear the news and carry home enhanced enthusiasm for the work of the Hospital and its history.

The book is readily available from the 'Products' page on the SJEHG website. [Click here](https://shop.stjohnseyehospital.org/collections/all?page=4) (<https://shop.stjohnseyehospital.org/collections/all?page=4>)



The author, Matthew Glozier (2nd right) with (L-R): Jamie Ingham-Clark, Board member of SJEHG; Dr Ahmed Ma'ali, CEO, SJEHG; and Sir Andrew Cash, Chair, Board of SJEHG.



Matthew doing an excellent job signing *Symbols of Hope* for Rev. Neil Gardner and Prior Simon Mackintosh of the Priory of Scotland

50th Anniversary of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta Association in Australia

Our Lord Prior was a guest at the dinner to celebrate this Anniversary at the Australia Club in Sydney. Also attending this event whilst on a tour of Australia was His Most Eminent Highness Fra' John Dunlap Prince and Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta.

Those with eagle eyes will notice that the Grand Master is wearing his Venerable Order insignia to this special occasion in honour of our Lord Prior being present. This seems to be an extraordinary acknowledgement of the friendship and respect that has developed between the two Orders in recent times.



His Most Eminent Highness Fra' John Dunlap and Professor Mark Compton.

26th History Seminar

As you all know, we have just called a wrap on the 26th History Seminar which was held this past Saturday, 23 November. The St John Historical Society of Australia's annual seminar has never been short of presenters, and this year's was no different with stalwarts of the Society presenting another day of informative papers.



Val Dempsey spoke of the importance of nursing throughout our St John history; the Order's Librarian, Todd Skilton from the Priory in New Zealand explained the history of the Service Medal; and we revisited the extraordinary contributions of past Johnnies in papers on Ardill-Brice, John Springthorpe, Nellie Melba, Neville Howse and Isaacs Isaacs. David Fahey, our President, shocked and horrified us with the rather scary mechanical CPR devices developed over the years, and Fin Macneil's paper on tourniquets explained the to-ing and fro-ing of the use of this so-called villanous device over time. Bruce Caslake gave an indepth look at the consequences of the English Reformation on the Order, and Trevor Mayhew looked at the planes used by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and who could or could not have one of their first aid kits.

We celebrated the history of our Priory Librarians, which was a terrific segue for launching four new history publications—congratulations to all authors! Elizabeth Ellis' paper talked to 'the Other' – the foundations of Islamic medicine, healthcare and science from the 6th-12th centuries and the invaluable contribution they made to the evolution of medicine throughout the world, including their mission of serving the sick and the poor—centuries before that became our own familiar refrain!

Finally, many thanks to Shay McAuley and his team for being present throughout the seminar, and recording the live-stream. An unedited version is available for viewing on <https://www.facebook.com/SJONELive>.

Gab Lhuede

History Seminar 2025 — 100 Years of St John Youth



In 2025, St John Ambulance Australia celebrates 100 years of empowering young people through the St John Youth program.

For a century, the program has built leaders, nurtured life-saving skills, and encouraged community spirit. It's a time to celebrate the legacy and inspire the next generation to lead with passion and purpose.

The St John Historical Society will reach out to the Program leaders to encourage and mentor Youth members to develop presentations for the 2025 History Seminar. Please consider mentoring a younger member for a paper for this exciting event and encourage younger members to attend.

New AO appointment—Teryn Edwards, Priory Administrator

Executive and Priory Manager of the Australia Office, Kylie Seidel, is delighted to introduce Teryn Edwards as our new Priory Administrator. Teryn tells us ...

I am the newest member of the St John Ambulance Australian Office team. I hold a fine arts degree majoring in creative and professional writing, and a minor in journalism: a background that has cultivated my passion for storytelling and communication. Over the years, I have dedicated myself to preserving local history, most notably through my volunteer work as a tour guide in my home city of Brisbane. In this role, I not only shared the rich narratives of our community but also developed a keen understanding of the importance of keeping these stories alive. This experience has solidified my belief that all aspects of history are important. From the big events and historical figures, to the small, easily forgotten stories that might not be written about in books but are passed down through generations.



I am eager to leverage my writing skills and experience in storytelling to contribute to the St John Historical Society. From updating the website to interviewing past Cadets, I've already learned how varied this role will be, and how important it is to preserve this history.

I'm also working on the electronic record of what items we hold here in the Australian Office. Our museums are full of amazing items with incredible stories, and I truly believe this rich history should be accessible, so you can look forward to some articles from me that will highlight some of the most interesting items from our museum collection.

I would also like to encourage readers to reach out with their own items and stories related to St John's history. Your contributions can help enrich our collective narrative and ensure that St John's heritage is celebrated and preserved.

We all in the Historical Society welcome and celebrate Teryn's arrival!

Australian heraldry

Rt Rev. Richard Hurford, OAM, KStJ former Bishop of Bathurst

Richard Warwick Hurford, continuing long-time volunteer, and:

- Sub-Prelate (now Dean), Australian Priory of the Order of St John (2009–)
- Anglican Bishop of Bathurst (2001–2012)
- Chaplain, St John Ambulance Australia (NSW.; 2006–2022)

Richard's personal Arms were granted 6 December 2004 through the College of Arms in London by Garter, Clarenceux and Norroy and Ulster Kings of Arms. The agent was Windsor Herald, Major William Hunt TD FCA.¹

In 2017, Bishop Hurford was promoted to Grade II of the Order of St John, becoming a Knight of Grace.² He was reclassified as a Knight of Justice in 2019 in acknowledgment of his armigerous status.



Richard's crest is not included in the arms because priests do not traditionally display a helmet above their shield (too warlike for religious people). His crest comprises a blue kookaburra (blue being the official

colour of NSW), holding under its wing a Pastoral Staff, and in its beak a sprig of golden wattle, the floral symbol of Australia. These symbols have obvious connections to Bishop Hurford's Australian identity and career in the Church.



Bishop Hurford's arms (above) focuses on a dragon, the County symbol for Somerset in England, the origin-point from whence the Hurford family came to Australia. The bells represent four generations of the family who have rung the carillon bells in Bathurst (aka Campanologists).

Formal description of Richard's Arms: Azure (meaning blue) background with a dragon rampant (meaning on the hind legs with the head in profile) with wings of six membranes, each charged on the underside with a mullet (meaning a star with straight sides) with the first adjacent to the body of five points, and each of the others of seven points. All Gules (meaning red, so here referring to the red talons of the forefeet) holding in each forefoot a bell Argent (meaning silver, so silver bells).

Motto: FIDELIS ET VERUS — Loyalty and Truth).³

1. College of Arms Newsletter, No. 5 (June 2005) @ <C:\Users\MRG\Downloads\2005 College of Arms Newsletter.html>.

2. Matthew Glozier, *The Premier Response: St John Ambulance in New South Wales, 1881-2021: An Official History* (Macquarie Park, NSW: St John Ambulance (NSW) [Publication pending, 2024]), p. 257.

3. College of Arms Newsletter, No. 5 (June 2005), p. 1 @ <https://www.college-of-arms.gov.uk/news-grants/newsletter/2005/item/59-june-2005-newsletter-no-5> (accessed 27 December 2021).

For those interested in the heraldry of the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital, you can purchase a copy of Matthew Glozier's new book, *Symbols of Hope*, or [read this article](#) that highlights some interest from the Israeli Antiquities Authority in the carvings at the old Eye Hospital.

Behind the scenes at the Museum

Historical Society of St John Tasmania Museum

In 2022 the Historical Society of St John Tasmania was established. At the time, an executive committee was established with Jon Cooper, President; Damian Bester, Vice President; Scott McCarthy, Treasurer; and Phil Blackwell as Secretary. The Society had a membership of 10 and all were very keen to work on establishing their historical society in Tasmania. The Historical Society was formed after Phil Blackwell proposed the idea and established the first meeting early in 2022. We also welcomed Steve Smith (immediate Past Chair of the St John Tasmania Board) as our patron. Since then, we have welcomed a few more members who have become involved in the activities of the Society. Together, we have collected, moved, collated, sorted and displayed numerous St John memorabilia, and have developed plans, guides and supporting documentation for the Historical Society to operate in various parts of the state. We have overcome storage issues, flooding and more copies of first aid books than we actually need!

We have a presence in the North West and North with Kieran Brown and Vanessa Henry working together to establish collections for display in those regions. Vanessa, Kieran and Damian Bester have also been tasked with interviewing and recording some of our elder members in relation to the early days of St John in Tasmania. This process has proved to be positive and we will continue to conduct more interviews in the future. The audio recordings will form part of our future displays. Damian has also developed our very own Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SJATHS>) and we have just reached 200 followers. Damian quite often asks for the identity of people in pictures and your viewing and response would be greatly appreciated.

Over the past year we have had the opportunity to engage the services of Stefan Petrow who is well regarded in relation to exploring, collating and documenting the history of organisations. More recently, Stefan published the history of 'Legacy' in Tasmania and we are very grateful that he has now embarked on writing the History of St John in Tasmania. We look forward to receiving the final product sometime later in 2025–2026.

Finally, I ask all of you, if you have the opportunity, to visit our Museum in Hobart. You'll find us just to the side of the Reception area at the Moonah Headquarters.

Jon Cooper, President, Historical Society of St John Tasmania



On Friday 11 November 2024, the St John Historical museum in Hobart was officially opened by Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, DStJ Governor of Tasmania and Deputy Prior.

Behind the scenes at the Museum continued

The Knights of Malta: A unique legacy of craftsmanship and history

In our museum, we are proud to showcase two striking figures that combine history, artistry, and a poignant story of resilience. These two late 19th or early 20th-century knights, crafted from rolled metal, bear the arms of two prominent knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem: Claude de la Sengle and Ramon Perrellos. Known as Figures A and B, they are not merely decorative pieces, but a testament to a unique chapter of history.

The knights were likely crafted by a convalescent Australian soldier around the time of the First World War. It is believed they were created as part of occupational therapy during the soldier's recovery on the island of Malta, a strategic British naval base at the time. Recycled materials, particularly cigarette tins, were used to create the metal components, giving the figures a distinct, almost whimsical quality. The use of such materials underscores the resourcefulness and ingenuity required for their creation in the midst of war and limited resources.

The story behind these figures speaks to the therapeutic practices employed during the war, where soldiers, many of whom had experienced trauma, were encouraged to engage in creative activities as part of their healing process. The figures stand as a symbol not only of the Knights of St. John but also of the quiet strength and perseverance of the soldiers who lived through such challenging times.

The pieces were donated to the museum by Charles A Campbell, GCStJ (1937–2011) who held the position of Priory Secretary for a record 22 years, 1975–1997. His generosity ensures this unique piece of history will be preserved for future generations. We are deeply grateful for his contribution, as these figures offer an intimate glimpse into a time of war, healing, and the enduring legacy of the Order of St John.

Teryn Edwards, Priory Administrator

Want to know more? [Click here](https://history.stjohn.org.au/the-knights-of-malta/) (https://history.stjohn.org.au/the-knights-of-malta/)



<https://museumstjohn.org.uk/off-the-shelves-at-st-johns-gate-a-podcast-series/>

Behind the scenes at the Museum continued

Early First Aid manuals now online!

The project to digitise the earliest of the St John First Aid manuals, *First Aid to the Injured*, made possible by a grant from the Museum of the Order of St John's Historical Society (UK), has been completed. Forty editions were published between 1878–1953, with each edition having many reprints—millions of copies were printed during this span of time. The Museum chose to digitise one copy of each edition and some examples of the earlier Handbook, giving us a digital resource of 45 historical first aid manuals. The manuals can be viewed online, [here](#).

The Museum's Archivist, Sophie Denman, has written an interesting blog post about the digitisation and its significance to researchers. You can read that article, [here](https://issuu.com/museumoftheorderofstjohn/stacks/9b00a071f1cc41df921d94990b6c1146) (https://issuu.com/museumoftheorderofstjohn/stacks/9b00a071f1cc41df921d94990b6c1146)



Research opportunity from the International Office — The Sr Agnes Prize, 2025

Following last year's competition, won by the late Dr David Berezan (Dr David Berezan wins the inaugural Sister Agnes Essay Prize | St John International) I am pleased to announce the opening of the second year of the Sister Agnes Prize, and to share with you the entry details, in the attached notice.

This year there will be two separate categories:

1. Prize for an original essay or piece of research work on women in the Ancient Order of St John and its significance for St John today. Entries to this award of sufficient academic standard will be published in the next *One St John* publication.
2. A profile piece on women who have made a contribution to the modern Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem. As well as a prize for the winner, we will look to collect all of these profiles together in a compilation to show the variety of women who have contributed to the development of the modern Order.

Deadline for entries is Monday 24 February 2025—so you have plenty of time! Please contact jenny.wilcox@orderofstjohn.org for more details

Susan le Jeune d'Allegeershecque, Secretary General



Hospitaller Digital Preservation and Education at the Malta Study Centre

Dr Valeria Vanesio and Dr Emanuel Buttigieg of the Malta Study Centre visited the Library of the Priory of Scotland in July 2019. They delivered this online seminar explaining the work of the Centre which extends to international seminars, teaching workshops, and exhibitions. To learn more about the cultural heritage preservation work of the Malta Study Centre, [click here](#) to watch the seminar.

The challenges



Matthew Glozier has offered this rather elaborate cross (left) for your investigations, and your Editor, a simpler challenge in the form of a coin (below).



An unknown St John medal (below) has been donated to the St John Museum in Victoria. It is of much thinner silvery metal compared to usual medals. Allan Mawdsley is asking the St John community if any member knows what the medal represents.



Unfortunately, no luck with finding the individuals who authored this recipe book or the publication date ...

But we're eager to find out, so appreciate the ongoing hunt for information!

The Brown Nuns of Inniskea



Alan Sharkey sent in this photograph of the 'Brown Nuns of Inniskea', Dublin, who 'fought the typhus fever outbreak on the Island of Inniskea in 1897. Each were bestowed as Serving Sisters in the Order of St John—amongst the earliest recorded.

This newspaper clipping summarises the work they were recognised for. Flora Fitzmaurice's medal (6th in the list) was sold by Noonans Auction House earlier this year for £1,000 hammer price.

a brief summary of their work:—

Miss Florence Dorothy M'Allister: Seven years' service; spent three years nursing typhus epidemic at Inniskea, and five weeks in hospital there; now on the staff of the Royal Scottish Nursing Institute, Edinburgh.

Miss Honoria Kenny: Four years' duty, nursing all over the kingdom; three weeks' duty in Inniskea, and five weeks ill in hospital on the island.

Miss Katherine E. Carson: Now on the staff of the Royal Scottish Nursing Institute, Edinburgh; had five weeks' duty at Inniskea and five weeks in hospital.

Miss Mary Simpson: Ten years' experience; on duty at Inniskea for eleven weeks.

Miss Elizabeth Doyle: Seven years' experience; five weeks' nursing and five weeks down with fever at Inniskea.

Miss Flora K. Fitzmaurice: Two years' work; ten weeks' nursing and four weeks ill with fever on the island.

Miss Margaret McMunn: Two years' work; nearly four months' duty on the island; did not take the fever.

Miss Grace Simpson: Three years' work; five weeks' nursing and six weeks ill with typhus at Inniskea.

Miss Sarah J. Caldwell: Seven years' experience; one month's duty and one month ill with typhus on the island.

Miss Kathleen Kinsella: Three years' experience; five weeks' duty at Inniskea.

Miss May Talbot: Seven years' work; arrived from nursing case in France and started same day for Inniskea, where she remained for three months nursing the islanders and the invalided nurses in the Fever Hospital.

Alan is wondering if anyone knows the whereabouts of any of the other nine medals? Also, any other examples of reverse engraving?



26th instalment from
Dr Ian Howie-Willis KStJ

Note from the Editor

Please write a letter to the Editor if you would like to contribute to this or any other discussion.

What is history?

Alternative history

'Alternative History' is the name applied to history that didn't happen but could easily have occurred if certain events had (or had not) taken place. It's also called 'Counterfactual History', 'Speculative History' and "'What If?' History'.

The last of these suggests how Alternative History proceeds. For instance, we can ask 'What If?' about both these events:

- **Germany in the European War of 1939–1945** 'What if Germany had won the European War by defeating both the Soviets in the east and Britain and her allies in the west?' In answering such a question, various scenarios suggest themselves. For instance, if Germany had won the war, these would have been likely outcomes: 1. there would now be a Nazi German empire in Europe instead of the European Union; 2. Hitler's Jewish holocaust would have been carried to its logical conclusion; 3. the Soviet Union would have been extinguished in 1945, and its peoples would have become slave labour in German industry; and 4. German would now be the *lingua franca* of Europe.
- **Australia in World War II** 'What if Japan had invaded and conquered Australia and had then gone on to victory in the Pacific War?' If that had happened, Australia would have become a Japanese colony; its resources would have been integrated within the Japanese economy to provide the raw materials for Japan's industrial expansion; we Australians would have been kept under tight control without the democratic freedoms we currently enjoy. Japanese immigration would have ensured that the Japanese would become the dominant ethnic-cultural community; all Australians would speak Japanese; and English would be a minority language.

We can also ask the 'What If?' question about various events in the history of the Order of St John. For example:

- 'What if King Henry VIII in 1539 had not dissolved the Grand Priory of England of the Knights Hospitaller?'
- 'What if Suleiman the Magnificent's Ottoman forces had succeeded in capturing Malta during the Great Siege of 1565?'
- 'What if Queen Victoria hadn't granted the Venerable Order a Royal Charter in 1888?'

I invite my readers to speculate over what the most likely scenarios are for each of these 'What Ifs?' There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers because we're dealing with hypotheticals. There are just scenarios that are more or less 'possible and likely' or 'improbable and far-fetched'. For what they're worth, here are my own 'Alternatives':

What is history? continued

Henry VIII didn't suppress the Knights Hospitaller in England but allowed the Order to continue

Many of the English Knights eventually joined the Church of England but continued paying their 'responsions' (financial contributions) to their Order's headquarters on Malta. Glad of their support, the Grand Masters tolerated them as an Anglican subsidiary of the parent Order, as they did the Lutheran *Johanniters* in Germany. In time, most Knights married and founded noble dynasties. Through arrangement with the Crown, many bought freehold title to the commanderies they occupied, and these then became their dynastic estates. The Grand Priory retained its headquarters in Clerkenwell, London. Always a strong supporter of the monarchy, it was rewarded for its loyalty in 1661, following the accession of Charles II in the post-Cromwell settlement of 1660. Granted a Royal Charter, it became and continued as an English Royal order of chivalry with the King as its Sovereign Protector. After the Order of the Garter, it is now the second oldest of such orders. It expressed its charitable Hospitaller ethos by subsidising the hospitals nearest its Clerkenwell headquarters. These now include the University College Hospital, St Bartholomew's Hospital and the Moorfields Eye Hospital. People admitted into its select membership enter as Chevaliers (i.e. knights) and Ladies (dames). By tradition, they are leading medical specialists, medical professors, hospital CEOs and matrons. They commonly use the titles 'Chevalier' and 'Lady'. Being an aristocratic organisation, it never involved itself in ambulance work. The term 'St John Ambulance' consequently does not exist.

The Ottomans succeeded in capturing Malta from the Knights in 1565 during the Great Siege

Malta became a strategic outpost of the Ottoman Empire. The Knights who weren't

killed or impressed into slavery dispersed to their home Pories across Europe. Suleiman and his successors used Malta as a springboard for incursions into the heart of Christian Europe. Eventually former strategic Catholic cities such as Rome, Venice, Genoa and Marseilles fell to and were incorporated within the Ottoman Empire. In time, Ottoman forces advanced north across the Alps, incorporating Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, France and Poland within the Ummah or world of Islam. Western Christian Europe was consequently confined to a few mainly Protestant nations on Europe's north-western fringes, for instance Britain, the Netherlands, Prussia, Denmark and Sweden.

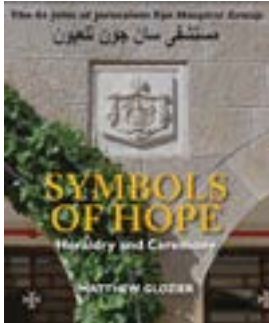
Queen Victoria didn't grant the Order of St John a Royal Charter or become its Sovereign Head

The self-styled Order of St John (Anglia) was founded in 1831 in an unsuccessful attempt to revive the English Priory of the ancient Knights Hospitaller. During the 1870s and 1880s it sought royal patronage; however, Queen Victoria politely declined to grant this. While she applauded the Order's work through its first aid teaching and delivery programs, representations from the Vatican persuaded her that the Order's origins were 'dubious'. She feared that her Royal House of Hanover and Saxe-Coburg-Gotha would be tarnished through association with such an organisation. The quaintly named Order of St John (Anglia) has continued into the present era in England as a fraternal and collegiate association; however, it is a relatively minor provider of first aid services because that is an endeavour dominated by the British Red Cross Society for the past 150 years.

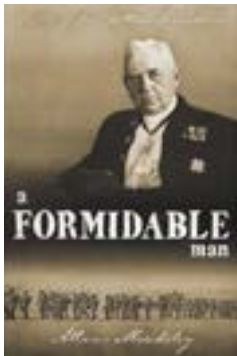
All these scenarios are 'feasibilities'. Each is a conceivable alternative to what happened. But for the 'roll of the cosmic dice', these rather than the events which actually occurred might have become history.

Recent publications

The following titles were proudly launched at the recent History Seminar in November. Congratulations to all authors for their work.



Glozier, (2024) *Symbols of Hope*. St John Ambulance Australia, Canberra. This book is available to purchase from the [St John Eye hospital website](https://www.stjohn.org.au) or it can be ordered by email at info@stjohneyehospital.org



Mawdsley, A (2024) *A Formidable Man. The life of John William Springthorpe*. Shawline Publishing Group, Australia.

Available from all good bookstores. ISBN 978 19231 01982



Ahern AJ, Kaye-Eddie IL, Khangure E & Oxer HF, (2023) *Order from Chaos: A Century of the St John Ambulance Service in Western Australia 1918-2018*. St John Ambulance WA Inc., Perth. For purchase, contact stjohn@stjohnwa.com.au ISBN 978 06453 09744



St John History. Journal of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia, Vol 21, 2024.

As well ... Matthew Glozier has been working on a complete bibliography of published international, national, state and local histories for the new official website of the Historical Society which will be made 'live' in the new year. With the aid of some of our volunteer members, Teryn Edwards is currently populating the site.

Membership for 2025

We remind you to renew your Historical Society membership subscription for 2025 if you wish to continue your benefits as a member. As a paid-up member, you receive 3 issues of *Pro Utilitate*, a copy of *St John History*, discounted attendance fee for the Seminar and, not to mention, access to a wealth of information on the ancient and modern history of our international organisation.

You will find the generic membership application/renewal form at <https://history.stjohn.org.au/membership/>

And finally ...

A huge and ongoing thank you to Gabrielle Lhuede for her voluntary assistance throughout 2024 with the copy-editing and formatting of this newsletter. Another to Kylie Seidel, Office Manager at the Australia Office for the accuracy of many of the items and the distribution of the *Pro Utilitate* to all our members.

Best wishes for a safe and healthy holiday season and many hours of happy reading and writing in 2025. The first 2025 issue (No. 2025-1) will be out by the end of April with a deadline for contributions by 10 April. Without your contributions of letters, articles, and historical ideas the PU would not be nearly as interesting as it is.

Thank you.

Editor, Pro Utilitate

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