A CENTURY FOR AUSTRALIA

IAN HOWIE-WILLIS

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St John Ambulance in Australia 1883–1983

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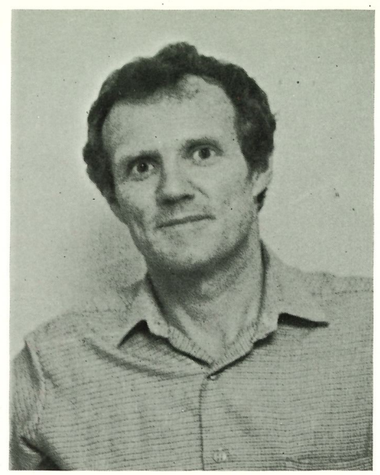
The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem sponsors the St John Ambulance organization. The Order traces its ancestry to the Eleventh Century, to the period before the first of the Great Crusades.

The modern Order developed from an English branch of the ancient Order of Knights Hospitaller during the Nineteenth Century. From the 1880s its work began spreading far and fast throughout the British Empire. Its success resulted from a popular wish to acquire basic medical knowledge and skills in a world undergoing rapid industrial development, one of the costs of which was an increase in accidents on the streets, in the work-place and in the home. In such a world the First Aid principles it promoted were something of which the community had increasing need.

The Order and its St John Ambulance bodies arrived in Australia during the 1880s. Since then its enterprises have flourished and over the past century the Order has become one of the nation's foremost charitable and health training organizations.

The Order's modern teaching foundation, the St John Ambulance Association, annually trains more than a hundred thousand Australians in its various First Aid and Home Nursing programmes. The 14,000 uniformed members of the St John Ambulance Brigade annually perform over a million hours of unpaid service wherever crowds gather and there is a need for a First Aider to be present. In addition, the Order operates the ambulance transport systems of three of Australia's States and Territories.

In this book, which marks the Centenary of the Order's activities in Australia, Dr Howie-Willis traces the evolution of the Order from the Middle Ages to the present. His story spans a millenium, and shows how an institution with roots in the chivalric and monastic life of mediaeval Europe has developed into a vital, modern organization serving the health and welfare of Australians.



Ian Howie-Willis was born and grew up in Melbourne, where he once nearly joined the St John Ambulance Brigade cadets. That was his only connection with St John Ambulance before he began work on this book. He completed his postgraduate training as an historian at universities in the United Kingdom, Papua New Guinea and Canberra, where he now lives. He has three teenage children, and both he and his wife teach in government schools in Canberra. This is Dr Willis's third book, the previous two having covered aspects of the history of Papua New Guinea, where he lived for ten years before arriving in Canberra. He plans to continue his association with St John Ambulance by enrolling in his second St John first aid course, which he hopes to follow up with a St John certificate in home nursing.

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IAN HOWIE-WILLIS

Priory of the Order of St John
in Australia
1983

The Order of St John in Australia
Canberra Avenue, Canberra 2603

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Foreword

The Orders of St John had their origins in the great Crusades. The full name of the present English Order is *The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem* but for brevity it is styled 'The Order of St John'. The Order has three Foundations which carry out its charitable work, the Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem, the St John Ambulance Association and the St John Ambulance Brigade. It is just one hundred years ago that the first steps were taken to establish one of these Foundations in Australia. The Foundation so established was the St John Ambulance Association, which is the teaching Foundation of the Order. The St John Ambulance Brigade, whose uniform is familiar to the public, was established in Australia a little later.

Although a hundred years is not a very long time in the history of the Orders of St John, it is a long time in the history of European Settlement in Australia and the celebration of a centenary is a suitable occasion to examine what the organization has achieved and to re-assess its plans for the future in the light of its past performance. As part of this process it is necessary, or at any rate desirable, to record the organization's history. Hitherto, apart from several short monographs, there has been no comprehensive history of the Order of St John in Australia. The most authoritative of these monographs was written in 1918 by Thomas Storie Dixson who, as this book shows, guided the first faltering steps of St John in Australia towards national unity.

In 1979 the idea of commissioning a history in time for the centenary in 1983 was conceived and by the end of that year this work had been commissioned. It was decided that an author with appropriate academic qualifications and experience, but who was not connected with St John, should be sought. We wanted someone who could take a dispassionate and objective view of the organization and who would write the history in his own way. Inevitably some of those involved in the work of St John will not agree with the author's assessment of the past, but it was important for the organization to subject itself to independent scrutiny, so that it might more accurately measure its own worth.

The project has been a large one. Dr Willis has had to visit every State to examine the records. In some States, comprehensive catalogued records existed, in other States records were sketchy or disordered. The fact that Dr Willis has been able to weave a coherent account from all

these sources, to form his own convincing and comprehensive view of the organization, whilst still pursuing his vocation as a school teacher is a tribute both to his ability and to his dedication.

The Order of St John and its Foundations form a complex organization. Those who work for it are motivated by distinctive and diverse influences and ideals and I hope that this history will make the nature of the organization apparent not only to those who work within it but also to those outside St John who wish to know more about it.

J. McI. Young,
Chancellor.

July 1983

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Glossary

TERMS USED IN RELATION TO ST JOHN AMBULANCE

Ambulance Division: see under *Division.*

The Association: The St John Ambulance Association, the foundation of the Order of St John responsible for education and training in first aid, home nursing and allied subjects.

The Brigade: The St John Ambulance Brigade, the foundation of the Order of St John, the members of which wear uniforms and provide a first aid service at public gatherings.

Cadet Division: see under *Division.*

Centre: a Regional Branch of the Association. In Australia each State constitutes a region, and so the State Branch of the Association is a Centre.

Centre Chairman or Chairperson: the person appointed to head the committee that runs an Association Centre.

Chancellor: the chief executive officer of the Priory and the deputy of the Prior.

Chapter: see under *Priory Chapter.*

Chapter General: Subject to the powers of the Sovereign Head and the Grand Prior, Chapter General is the governing body of the Order of St John, with headquarters at St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London.

Chief Commissioner: head of the St John Ambulance Brigade within Australia, and a member of the Priory executive.

Combined Division: see under *Division.*

Commandery: an establishment of the Order of St John with a substantial degree of self-government, usually of a discrete territorial unit, e.g., the Western Australian branch, which constitutes a Commandery within the Priory of the Order in Australia.

Commandery Lieutenant: the chief executive officer of a Commandery and the deputy of the Knight Commander.

Commissioner: see under *District Commissioner.*

Council for St John or *St John Council:* responsible for policy and general administration within each Australian State St John branch.

Dame of Justice and *Dame of Grace:* see under *Knight of Justice* and *Knight of Grace.*

Deputy Prior: the Governors in each are Deputy Priors and act as deputies for the Prior within their States.

Director of Ambulance: the head of the St John Ambulance Association in Australia, and a member of the Priory executive; now called Director of the St John Ambulance Association.

District: the state organization of the St John Ambulance Brigade.

District Commissioner or *Commissioner:* the person appointed to head the Brigade in a District.

Division: the normal Unit of the Brigade, normally consisting of not less than twelve and not more than sixty members, and often named after the city, town or suburb where it is based; and is one of these types:

Ambulance Division: a Brigade division of men.

Nursing Division: a Brigade division of women.

Combined Division: a Brigade division of both men and women.

Cadet Division: a Brigade division of juniors, either Ambulance (for boys), Nursing (for girls) or Combined (for boys and girls).

Grand Prior: subject to direction by the Sovereign Head, the Grand Prior exercises supreme direction and executive control over the Order; the head of the Order worldwide, customarily a member of the British royal family and at present the Duke of Gloucester.

Hospitaller and Almoner: the member of the Priory executive responsible for maintaining contact with, and transmitting aid to, the Ophthalmic Hospital the Order conducts in Jerusalem, which together with the Association and the Brigade is one of the three foundations of Order sponsors.

Knight Commander: the Responsible Head of a Commandery; customarily the State Governor in the Commandery of Western Australia.

Knight or Dame of Grace: a person holding that high rank within the Order; 'of Grace' indicates that the Knight or Dame concerned has been admitted to the rank without 'proof of nobility'.

Knight or Dame of Justice: The second highest grade within the order; 'of Justice' indicates that the Knight or Dame concerned is entitled to bear Arms.

Lord Prior: deputy of the Grand Prior and the senior Great Officer of the Order of St. John.

The Most Venerable Order: see under *The Order.*

Nursing Division: see under *Division.*

The Ophthalmic Hospital: the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem, and the clinic and research projects connected to it maintained by the Order; one of the three foundations (with the Assocation and the Brigade) the Order sponsors.

The Order: a term used to denote *The Most Venerable Order of the*

Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, the charitable Order of chivalry with headquarters in St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London, which sponsors the St John Ambulance Association and the St John Ambulance Brigade. Membership of the Order proper, as distinct from either the Association or Brigade, is gained through prolonged and distinguished service to it, to the Association, or to the Brigade. The term is sometimes used to signify that membership.

The Order of St John: see *The Order* above.

Prior: the Responsible Head of the Priory, customarily the Governor General of Australia.

The Priory: The national autonomous organization of the Order in Australia, comprising all members of the Order resident in Australia, and responsible for the work of the Order within Australia.

Priory Chapter: Subject to the power of the Prior, Priory Chapter is the governing body of the Order within Australia. It is composed of all senior members of the Order in Australia, with representative officers from each State.

QATB: the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, the statewide organization responsible for conducting the ambulance transport services of that State.

Receiver General: the member of the Priory executive responsible for financial matters, that is the officer fulfilling the function of treasurer to Priory.

Secretary General: the principal of the secretariat maintained by the Chapter General of the Order of St John.

Sovereign Head: The reigning monarch of the United Kingdom is the Sovereign Head of the Order.

St John: a 'shorthand' term used to denote The Order of St John and its associated foundations.

St John Ambulance: has come to be a 'shorthand' term used for the same purpose as *St John* above.

St John Council: see *Council for St John.*

St John's Gate: the Clerkenwell, London, headquarters of the Order worldwide; also used as a 'shorthand' term to indicate the authority of the Order residing with the Great Officers of the Order.

Sub-Centre: a sub-regional branch of the Association.

Sub-Prior: the former name for the Chancellor of the Priory.

VAD: a Voluntary Aid Detachment, a wartime unit of mainly (though not exclusively) female membership recruited via St John Ambulance or the Red Cross Society to do charitable and patriotic duties.

To the voluntary workers of
the St John Ambulance organization of Australia,
especially those in St John uniform unobtrusively standing by
wherever crowds gather, ready to give first aid and comfort
without fear favour or financial reward.

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I have probably been more fortunate than most historians in having a particularly generous and understanding family. My parents, Jim and Mavis Willis, my parents-in-law, Bill and Sandy Vale, my children, Rosie, Tony and Katie, and especially my wife, Margaret, unstintingly gave their whole-hearted support. That incurs a heavy debt.

Ian Howie-Willis

Introduction

Few institutions have proved as durable as the Order of St John. Like the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and the monarchies of England and Japan, the Order is one of a small, select group of institutions and organizations which can boast a thousand years of more or less continuous history.

In the much briefer time span of Australian nationhood the Order in Australia has shown similar tenacious longevity. Like the federal movement which culminated in the union of the Australian colonies in 1901, the Order in Australia arose during the 1880s and 90s, and has steadily gathered strength ever since. From its modest début in Melbourne in 1883, its task has expanded until now, a century later, it annually trains about 80,000 people in all corners of the continent in life-sustaining first aid. Its 14,000 uniformed representatives provide some 1,150,000 man hours of voluntary first aid service across the nation, in the course of which they treat over 145,000 casualties. In three of the eight States and Territories it conducts the Statewide ambulance transport services. In every respect it has probably surpassed the most unrestrained hopes its colonial founding fathers might have entertained for it.

The historical tally sheet of the Order does not, however, present an unbroken record of attainment fortified by conviction in its ancient mottoes *Pro fide* (for the faith) and *Pro utilitate hominum* (for the service of humanity). Whether in the Mediterranean basin, where its pennants first flew before the Great Crusades, or in the United Kingdom, where its Australian Branch has its roots, or even in Australia, where its Branch is but one of numerous successful New World transplantings, its progress has been fitful. Indeed its very name is almost synonymous with tribulation. In its thousand-year career abroad, and even in its short and comparatively self-assured march down a century of Australian history, its step has often faltered. Great disjunctions, set-backs, losses of direction, and lassitude while new momentum and purpose were being sought are as notable a part of its narrative as are its achievements 'for the faith' and 'for humanity'.

It is more correct to speak in the plural, of *Orders* of St John, rather than in the singular. In the past two centuries the original institution has split and splintered, to the extent that numerous bodies now claim descent from the Knights Hospitaller, the Order of military monks who not

only fought the Moslems from bases in Palestine, Rhodes and Malta but also succoured pilgrims and established hospices and hospitals wherever they went.

Fraternal bonds do *not* exist between all those claiming legitimate descent. On the one hand are those recognising each other's claims, and on the other are those which the former group regard as bogus upstarts. This book is concerned with one of the former, that found in English-speaking countries and in present and past members of the Commonwealth of Nations. Its full title is *The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem*, but it is more commonly known simply as *The Order of St John*—the term this book will most frequently use in referring to it. In addition to this body there is the one now known as *The Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, called of Rhodes, called of Malta*, or more simply *The Sovereign Military Order of Malta*. This organization has the best claim to be the parent of all the others. Expelled from Malta in 1798 and based in Rome for the past 150 years, but with Chapters in countries abroad, including the United Kingdom and Australia, it is principally a Roman Catholic order. In northern Europe there are also the *Johanniterordern*, Protestant orders found mainly in countries where the Lutheran faith and Germanic languages hold sway—chiefly in West Germany, but with parallel though independent bodies in the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, Hungary and France.

These three major components—*The Most Venerable Order* of the English-speaking nations, *The Sovereign Military Order*, and the *Johanniterordern*, have descended from the Knights Hospitaller through indirect lineages, but all now share an amicable relationship, each warmly acknowledging the legitimacy of the others—through a Convention of Alliance between *The Most Venerable Order* and the *Johanniterordern* in 1961, and through a joint declaration of mutual esteem between the former and *The Sovereign Military Order* in 1963.

As well as these three alliance orders there are the so-called Shickshinny Orders, named after the town in Pennsylvania where one of them arose in the early years of this century. They trace their descent from Tsarist Russia of the late eighteenth century, where a party of the Knights Hospitaller expelled from Malta after its capture by Napolean in 1798 found protection under the Tsar Paul I, son and successor to Catherine the Great, who assumed first the title of Protector and later Grand Master of a newly formed Russian 'Grand Priory' of the Order. In 1913 his great-great-nephew, the Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, visited the United States and was elected Grand Master of a body calling itself 'The Knights of Malta', which had been formed in 1880 by a descendant of Russian immigrants. Since then the Shickshinny bodies have proved schismatic, and subsequently there have been several contenders for the right of true succession. Whatever their pretensions, however, the

'Alliance Orders' of St John – *The Most Venerable Order*, *The Sovereign Military Order* and the *Johanniterordern* – reject all Shickshinny claims as spurious.[1]

The claims to right of succession by *our* Order of St John, *The Most Venerable Order* of English-speaking nations, might be more valid than those of the Shickshinny orders, but the lineage is tortuous and the Order itself recognises this. Henry VIII dissolved the English Branch or 'Tongue' of the Knights Hospitaller in 1540 after its members had refused to swear allegiance to him when he usurped the authority of the Pope over the Church in England. Mary I restored the Order briefly in 1557, but when Elizabeth I succeeded her the following year she re-established the reforms of her father. The Order lapsed again, even though not formally extinguished. It remained dormant for almost three centuries, until prompting from a group of French Knights Hospitaller led to a revival of an English Tongue in 1831. In 1851 the Master of the Order, by then relocated in Rome, repudiated these developments, refusing to recognise a non-Roman Catholic branch of the Order. From then on the revived English Branch was an independent body, free to go its own way. It cultivated interests in nursing, ambulance transport, and first aid training and practice. These charitable endeavours earned it royal favour, and eventually in 1888, at the petition of the Prince of Wales, who became its Grand Prior, Queen Victoria granted it a Royal Charter, under which she became its Patron and Sovereign Head. As a royal order of chivalry it now became an Order of St John in its own right, even if it had not been that before. It was already spreading throughout the Empire enthusiastically, and so royal patronage could only add to its popularity. The Queen's endorsement of the hospitalling spirit and example it borrowed from the earlier Order brought it both legitimacy and new prestige; but not even the most ardent proponents of the charitable and chivalric legacy could claim it was the most rightful successor to the ancient Knights Hospitaller. There is, however, a continuous strand in the tangled coil and broken threads of these events. Under various guises and in diverse forms the ancient Order of Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem has survived to the present day. *The Most Venerable Order* is one of its filaments, and as such can rightfully claim to be tied into the thousand-year skein of the parent order.

The Orders of St John are remarkable for their incongruities. In a century when immense technological and social transformations have spawned a new science, futurology, to help humans understand that the changes still to come are not fantasies from science fiction, they remain steeped in time-honoured tradition. In struggling to keep their medical knowledge, their publications, computerized record systems, telecommunications, transport facilities and management practices abreast of the times they resemble any other organization endeavouring to keep up with the late twentieth century. Yet they cleave to feudal monastic forms

and chivalric ideals which to some outsiders may seem quaint in this post-industrial era.

The Order began as an arm of the Church when, in the West at least, there was but one 'Holy Catholic Church'; and the parent body, the Rome-based *Sovereign Military Order*, domiciled in Rome for the past century and a half, still exists under the aegis of the Church. But almost two centuries after it lost its home territory of Malta it still claims the rights of a sovereign State. Thus it exchanges diplomatic representatives with twenty-five nations which have a predominantly Roman Catholic tradition—Austria, the Argentine, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, Italy and the Vatican being the foremost—but its claims to sovereign statehood are seen as charmingly eccentric elsewhere. Its kindred Orders in the nations where Protestant tradition predominates have long since become the more vigorous upholders of the hospitalling tradition. In this secular age many of *their* most loyal workers have only a token concern 'for the faith', since their labours 'for the service of humanity' are what count the most for the field workers of the Order. If they do take both mottoes seriously, they are more likely to interpret these as does the charter of *The Most Venerable Order*: while *Pro utilitate hominum* is taken to mean 'the encouragement and promotion of all works of humanity and charity for the relief of persons in sickness, distress, suffering and danger without the distinction of race, class or creed', *Pro fide* is said to signify 'the encouragement of all that makes for the moral and spiritual strengthening of mankind'.[2] Formal institutional religion is no longer the central preoccupation of the Order, however important it may have been in the past.

A further paradox in the English-speaking nations where *The Most Venerable Order* holds sway is the dichotomy between the leadership and the mass of the followers. The British monarch is the sovereign head of *The Most Venerable Order*, and other members of the royal family occupy titular but influential portfolios. Its great officers, the most senior of its administrators are typically recruited from the British aristocracy or from the upper echelons of the United Kingdom diplomatic and armed services. Nevertheless the vitality of the organization derives from its virile plebeian grassroots—a vast world-wide company of commoners for many of whom the London leadership is remote. For those working in the field in Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, India, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Fiji, and elsewhere among the former British colonies where the Order now operates, the task in hand within their own local communities is the principal concern, not the structure and composition of their Order's London headquarters.

Perhaps it is also surprising that *The Most Venerable Order* remains strong in so many Commonwealth and former Commonwealth countries. The Order arrived in these countries during, and as a part of, the great burgeoning of the British Empire during the late nineteenth cen-

tury. But though the Empire has long since disappeared something of its legacy remains. Thus, the Queen is still the Sovereign Head of the Order, and her authority over it is acknowledged even in those countries which are now republics or have severed ties with the Commonwealth. Then, too, the London headquarters of the Grand Priory, the central administrative body of *The Most Venerable Order*, occupies St John's Gate at Clerkenwell. Originally a gatehouse, this remnant is all that is left of the mediaeval Order's principal English monastery. It remains both the administrative seat and spiritual home for the Order and its diverse branches throughout the English-speaking world.

A further part of the British legacy is the vice-regal representatives, the Governors and Governors-General. In many of the former colonies they are the heads of local Branches of the Order. In the parlance of the Order they are known variously as 'Priors', 'Deputy Priors' and 'Knight Commanders', and also as 'Patrons' or 'Presidents', according to the status of the Branch they lead. They have real power within their Branches, though most often they delegate this to the officials serving beneath them. Then there is the Order's system of honours and awards. The insignia of these, sanctioned by the Monarch and presented by her or his local delegate, are much prized by those on whom they are bestowed. To be admitted to full formal membership of the Order is to join the elect. Becoming a 'Serving Brother' or 'Sister', let alone rising through the grades of the Order to become a 'Knight' or 'Dame of Grace', for many of its workers is the pinnacle of achievement in a lifetime's devotion to the Order.

In Australia, if not elsewhere, there are further incongruities. Local conditions and the local population have had their effect, and this is apparent in many directions. For example, a quick reading of the *Royal Charter, Statutes and Regulations of the Order* leaves the impression that, with its royal leadership and monastic chain of command, the Order is highly autocratic. In Australia, if not in other countries, however, a sturdy egalitarianism suffuses the organization. Many of its practices may appear undemocratic. (Its officials, for instance, are appointed rather than elected.) Nevertheless a healthy democratic spirit pervades its Australian Branches, and among them gaining consensus is the accustomed means of arriving at decisions. In Australia the Branches are also highly self-sufficient, and this is evident in their relationship with the headquarters of the Order in London. Edicts from St John's Gate are given due consideration, but the Priory in Australia generally makes up its own mind on important issues. Dignitaries from Clerkenwell who visit Australia soon discover this. They receive the due amount of respect, are welcomed with the ceremony appropriate to their rank, and enjoy warm hospitality; but none is allowed to depart without the firm impression that the Australian organization is entirely self-sufficient. Its preoccupations, moreover, are with the Australian here and now. Issues of how best to improve and spread the quality of knowledge in, the practice of,

and training for first aid and home nursing, and the bringing of life-support services to all who need them are the focus of the Order's chief concern. Its monastic-chivalric heritage and time-honoured links with Britain are still greatly respected, particularly by the leadership of the Order, who recognize that the constitution of the Order under the monarchy and the tradition built up in the century and a half since the revival of the British Tongue comprise a set of moral imperatives central to its existence. But for the bulk of the membership of the St John organizations the compelling demands and the immensity of the modern, Australian hospitalling work are of more immediate concern.

In Australia the Order has been thoroughly Australianized. This has happened at all levels and in all directions. It is not just that the senior-most leadership, the Priors and Deputy Priors, are now all Australians. The Australianization has been more thoroughgoing than that. In one of its basic, staple activities, the teaching of first aid, for example, the Order has striven to adapt its practices to the local environment and to local needs. Its programme of instruction therefore emphasises peculiarly Australian contingencies, like the treatment of seawasp+stings and snakebite, which its standard syllabus in the United Kingdom would not stress.

A further instance of the Order's assimilation in Australia has been its adaptation of hospitalling to the great distances of the inland. In the Northern Territory, where the local St John Council conducts the Territory-wide ambulance transport service for the government, this adaptation strikes the visitor immediately. The person accustomed to the shorter distances of more densely populated regions is generally amazed to discover in Alice Springs just how far-flung is the telecommunications network which the communications officer of the local St John Ambulance centre superintends. The network integrates ambulance, police and flying doctor services to cover a sparsely populated area equivalent in size to that encompassed by a perimeter drawn from London through Marseilles and Zagreb to Berlin. At night, when the flying doctor cannot land on rough, unlit, remote airstrips, the communications officer routinely despatches St John ambulances on 300 to 400 kilometre treks over dirt tracks to bring in emergency cases. The remark of one Northern Territory ambulance officer Rod Bramley,

> Almost none of the Territory is fenced . . . Buffalo, donkeys, horses, cattle, camels, kangaroo, pigs and wallaby abound . . . and make night driving a hazardous undertaking. Damage to our vehicles is high despite the fact that all vehicles are fitted with bull-bars and 7-inch spotlights,[3]

conveys some sense of the unusual circumstances created by Australian distances and an unevenly spread population.

About 2000 kilometres to the south-east of Alice Springs, in populous Melbourne, the task is different. There, where the Order surrendered control of ambulance transport during the First World War, the public

+ Box Jellyfish .

duties of the Order's uniformed workers require attendance at the frequent gatherings of huge crowds that are a part of the life of any metropolis. In Melbourne some of the largest crowds congregate at that revered shrine of Australian sport, the Melbourne Cricket Ground, for the grand finals of the Victorian Football League. Only Anzac Day, in memory of the nation's war dead, and Melbourne Cup Day, when its best loved horse race is run, vie as national rites with this climactic celebration of Australia's own indigenous code of football. Around the M.C.G. the uniformed members of the St John Ambulance Brigade comprise a 'third team'; and as the excitement mounts, with 100,000 Melbournians roaring as the other two teams do battle, the men and women of the Brigade will administer life-sustaining first aid to perhaps a half-dozen victims of coronary attacks in addition to treating the more numerous cases of cuts and abrasions, fainting, sunstroke and alcoholic excess. In Sydney the cases and the crowds will be similar, whether at the Anzac Day parade, at the Royal Easter Agricultural Show, or a rock concert on the steps of the Opera House. There, and in any other Australian city where crowds gather, the Order's latter-day hospitallers find their work.

There are other facets to the development of the Order in Australia which reflect the unique experience of this country. There are so many analogies, indeed, between the major events of Australian history and the Order's own development in Australia that St John in this country is something of a microcosm of the wider society. Thus, in the same way that Western Australians' sense of detachment from the faraway 'T'othersiders' once hindered federation, and has since fed a secessionist sentiment that periodically re-emerges, the Western Australian Branch of the Order resisted absorption within a federal structure when that was created in the 1940s. Instead it held out for only partial union, with the result that today Western Australia, alone of all the States and Territories, has the status of a separate, autonomous 'Commandery' within the national body, the Priory. The Tasmanian Branch of the Order, too, reflects something of the special experience of that State. The rivalry between Hobart and Launceston might not be as notorious as that between mainland Sydney and Melbourne but has been equally intense. The intercity rivalry within the Order was such that, until the formation of the Priory forced an amalgamation upon them, Hobart and Launceston each prided itself on being the headquarters of a 'State' Branch of the Order, the one for southern Tasmania and the other for the island's northern half. Probably all State Branches regard the Priory headquarters in Canberra with a suspicion closely akin to that which State governments and politicians feel in relation to the Commonwealth government in the national capital.

How this process of Australianization has occurred is one of the themes this book traces. The book endeavours to follow the path of development along which grew an institution with roots in the religious

ferment of mediaeval Europe to the point where it had become acclimatized in Australia. In doing so the book tries to explain certain paradoxes—those implicit in a situation where an organization built around a mediaeval framework is tackling an expanding task as the twenty-first century draws near, in a nation that did not exist until the organization was nine centuries old. The book endeavours to show how a rank-conscious institution may prosper in a community where egalitarian rhetoric is strident. It seeks to explain how a body with strong English links might succeed in a cosmopolitan society whose British connections have weakened appreciably. But above all it tries to give an insight into the influences which have inspired several hundreds of thousands of Australians to promote an ancient ideal by voluntarily serving their countrymen through the vicissitudes of the past century.

1

The ancient Order of St John

1 *Before the First Crusade*

The early history of the Order of Hospitallers is tightly interwoven with that of the Great Crusades to wrest the Holy Land for Christendom from the Seljuk Turks and from Islam. Like the Crusades, the Order was a Christian and Western European venture into the Eastern Mediterranean, both of them a manifestation of the religious fervour sweeping Europe as the first millenium after Christ ended and the new millenium dawned. With the Crusaders the Hospitallers became part of the romantic mythology that continues to suffuse the Western imagination of the mediaeval era. Every generation produces its popular literature and film to enhance the lustrous reputation of the orders of chivalry of the Middle Ages.[1] And, as with the Crusades so with the Order, the romance obscures the awesome magnitude of the cruelty and suffering thrown up as two great but irreconcilable human tides, the one from the Christian West and the other from the Islamic East, swept against each other.

The Order of Hospitallers arose in the decades following the first Crusade, which culminated in the establishment of the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem on Christmas Day 1100. In the most strictly legalistic sense the Order dates from 15 February 1113, when Pope Paschal II formally acknowledged its existence in a Bull.[2] Its foundations, however, lie at least a century deeper than that. Paschal's Bull approved its constitution as a separate religious order, sanctioned its rules of government, bestowed upon it the privilege of electing its own Master or superior, granted it independence from the secular clergy, exempted it from tithes, confirmed its right to tenure of the estates it had acquired, and conferred upon it his protection, in return for which it would be directly obedient to him. But all this simply meant a constitutional recognition of the esteem it had earned in the preceding hundred years.

As a vital and functioning body the Order had by 1113 had a decade or more of healthy growth. Its founder, the Blessed Gerard, had arrived in Jerusalem about 1080 as one of the helpers in the hospital for pilgrims run there as a local charity by the Benedictine order of monks. He had been born about 1040, but exactly where he was from is uncertain: both Martigues in Provence and Amalfi near Naples claim him as their own. He was both rector and administrator of the hospital by the time the army of the First Crusade was besieging the city in June 1099. During the

siege he is reputed to have been imprisoned and tortured at the order of the city's Egyptian governor for having treated with the enemy—his co-religionists massed outside the city walls. He is said to have been among a party of citizens assigned to the task of tossing rocks down upon the Crusaders sapping the walls; but he was discovered throwing loaves of bread rather than stones to his needy fellow Christians below. Though later writers of the Order of St John have loved dwelling upon it, and upon Gerard's supposed torture, that particular story is probably legendary, since Iftikhar, the Egyptian governor, had expelled all Christians from the city before the siege began rather than run the risk of harbouring a Christian fifth-column while it lasted. Gerard, who possibly had been imprisoned before being expelled, was able to provide useful information about local conditions once the Crusaders arrived. After the city fell, on 15 July 1099, he certainly enjoyed the grateful support of no less than the conqueror himself, Godfrey de Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, who made over generous endowments to the hospitallers.[3]

In the years following the capture of Jerusalem Gerard reorganised the hospital and its workers into a community living under Augustinian rather than Benedictine rules and wearing a black habit adorned with an eight-pointed white cross. The exact year when this occurred is uncertain, though the Order's own antiquarians proudly proclaim the day the city fell to have been the birth date of the new order. The great historian of the revived British 'Tongue' of the Order, Sir Edwin King, its Chancellor during the mid-1930s, vaunts the entry of the Crusaders into Jerusalem as 'the true natal day of the Order of St John'.[4] That day and that hour have seemed appropriate for another reason: as King has noted, 'Men afterwards remarked with awe how the Holy City had fallen into Christian hands on a Friday at three o'clock, the very day and hour on which their Saviour had died'.[5] A more auspicious natal occasion than that could hardly be desired; nor, for that matter, may King's eagerness to add to the mythology of the Order be denied.

There are other legends surrounding the Order's foundations. One of the mediaeval legends of the Order had it that Gerard's hospital had been founded at the behest of the Syrian king Antiochus IV (175-167 B.C.), who, acting under divine guidance, had the hospital built for the use of pilgrims visiting the Temple of Solomon. He was said to have endowed it with 12,000 drachmae and to have appointed the high priest Melchior as its first governor. Another legend had the hospital being founded by the Jewish patriot Judas Maccabees after he had purified the Temple of Hellenic influences in 165 B.C. Still further legends maintained that Zacharias, father of St John the Baptist, from whom the Order takes its name, succeeded Melchior as hospital governor, and that the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist sheltered there after the Crucifixion; that it was there that Christ appeared to the disciples eight days after the resurrection and there, too, a week later to St Thomas, and that from

there as well St Stephen superintended the charitable works of the infant church. As there was no known high priest called Melchior, and no record either of Antiochus donating a fortune in drachmae or of Judas Maccabees catering to the sick and the poor, such tales are probably more than merely apocryphal. They seem to be part of a process of myth making by which some within the Order endeavoured to lend greater credence to its claims to ancient and sanctified origins.[6]

Gerard's hospital undoubtedly had venerable antecedents. It really did not need the patina of legends to enhance its ancient reputation, which was both honourable and of long standing. St Gregory—Pope Gregory the Great, Gregory I (590-604)—renowned among other virtues for his charity, is said to have sent the Abbot Probus to Jerusalem about the year 600, with generous funds for the establishment of a hospice for pilgrims, and this, supposedly, was duly built.[7]

The new hospice could not have lasted long, however, for in 614, as the eastern boundaries of the Roman Empire crumbled, the city was sacked by the Persians and all Christian buildings destroyed. Worse was to follow. The invaders, and the local Jewish population, who undoubtedly had old scores to settle, set about massacring the Christians. The carnage was frightful: when it was over some 62,000 bodies were counted for burial, among them a reputed 24,500 Christians herded together and killed near the Jaffa Gate and another 4200 killed within the Greek monastery of St John the Baptist. The Persian occupation continued for another fourteen years, until the Romans under the Emperor Heraclius re-took the city in 628. But within a decade the Arab bearers of the new religion, Islam, had overrun the territories of both Romans and Persians in the arc from Syria to Egypt. From then on for more than three centuries Jerusalem was under Saracen rule exercised by the Caliphs of Baghdad.[8]

During the period of Roman re-occupation St. Gregory's hospice was presumably reconstructed along with the other Christian buildings being replaced. And it probably continued on through the succeeding centuries of Arab rule, when Christian property, lives, freedom of worship and holy places remained safe under the guarantees given to the Christian community by the Caliph Omar, a personal friend of the prophet Mahomet himself, when he entered Jerusalem in February 638.[9] This climate of remarkable tolerance, contrasting so starkly with the recent persecutions and with the even worse intolerance still to come, was one that would seem to have allowed St Gregory's small plantation to flourish.

Christian-Moslem dealings were so amicable in this period that in 807 the Caliph Haroun El-Raschid—Haroun the Magnificent, the poet-scholar whose deeds are celebrated in tales of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*—and the newly created Roman Emperor in the West, Charlemagne, were able to reach a concord whereby the Emperor

through the Christian Patriarch of Jerusalem would exercise control over the Christian population, the Christian establishments and the Christian holy places. One of Charlemagne's concerns was the welfare of the 'Latin' (in contradistinction to the 'Greek', Eastern-rite) pilgrims. His good works on their behalf included the restoration of St Gregory's hospice and the building nearby of a church dedicated to St Mary and known as St Maria Latina, or St Mary of the 'Latins'. Both establishments were in the area known later as the Muristan, immediately to the south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (the purported site of the tomb of Christ, to reach which was the chief objective of most pilgrims), and both were entrusted to a local community of Benedictine monks.[10]

The harmonious relationship between Christians and Moslems lasted for another two centuries, until the reign of 'The Mad Caliph', El-Hakim, who ascended the throne in 996. The latest of the Fatimite Caliphs of Egypt (descendents of Fatima, daughter of Mahomet), who had wrenched control of Palestine from the rival Baghdad Caliphate in 969, El-Hakim was eventually assassinated, following his proclamation of his own divinity and after ruling for twenty-five years. During his erratic reign the persecutions of the Christians in his dominions steadily increased. His attempts to stamp out Christianity mounted from petty irritations—Christians were forced to wear heavy crosses at all times, even in the bath—through to the expulsion of Christians who refused conversion to Islam, and in the end to the systematic destruction of *all* Christian buildings save the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. In the period 1005-1012 some 30,000 church buildings are said to have been demolished, with them the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the restored hospice of St Gregory and Charlemagne's church of St Maria Latina.[11]

The lot of Christians in the Holy Land improved under the less fanatical rule of El-Hakim's successors. Both Latin- and Greek-rite denominations were allowed to return, and to restore their churches, shrines and buildings. The Christians most prominent in rejuvenating the 'Latin' establishments were mainly from the Republic of Amalfi, then a powerful maritime city state at the peak of its ascendency, during which its glory and political and military power rivalled that of Venice itself. The Amalfitans, sponsored by their wealthy and pious merchant princes, began restoring the Latin-rite sites in 1023. St Gregory's hospice was rebuilt and re-opened yet again, this time dedicated to the former patriarch of Alexandria, St John the Almoner, who had sheltered Christian refugees from the Persian massacres in Jerusalem four centuries before. Next door a new hospice, for female pilgrims, was built, with a chapel dedicated to St Mary Magdalene. The church of St Maria Latina was reconstructed, and with it a new monastery for the Benedictines. The latter most probably came from the famed Benedictine monastery of La Cava near Amalfi. Once more this order was entrusted with both church and hospices, the latter run with the assistance of a team of lay helpers.[12]

Warmed through sustained Amalfitan generosity, the hospitals—as well as being hospices for pilgrims they provided medical care—seem to have flourished over the next half-century. About 1050 they and their associated religious institutions were extended by one Mauro, an Amalfitan merchant prince who also established a similar set of institutions at Antioch. The expansion was probably made necessary through the influx of an ever swelling tide of pilgrims. The passing of one millenium and the arrival of the next had been feeding millenarian belief in Europe: the imminent return of Christ was eagerly awaited, and pilgrims had been pouring into Palestine in a mass movement of population which probably remained unequalled in scale for another millenium—until the 'budget' air-fares of the late twentieth century made possible a similar passage of tourists *en masse.*[13]

It was during these palmy years that the now-familiar eight-pointed Maltese cross of the Order of St John, which up till then had been more familiar as the State emblem of the Republic of Amalfi, became the badge of the hospitallers. During this time, too, word of the good works of the Amalfitan hospitallers spread far and wide throughout Europe as the 'palmers'—pilgrims returning home with *their* badge and souvenir of their experience, a palm branch—spoke well of the hospitality they had received. And it was towards the end of this period that the Blessed Gerard, soon to become the founder of the Order of Hospitallers, arrived in Jerusalem to work in the hospital.[14]

When Gerard arrived the period of Amalfitan influence was drawing to a close, both in Italy and in the Holy Land, and with this, too, ended the era of co-operative relations between Christian and Moslem in Palestine. Four and a half centuries of generally amicable dealings, which had been interrupted only by the twenty-five year aberration of El-Hakim's reign, abruptly concluded in 1071, as the Seljuk Turks overran Palestine in the course of their conquest of the empire of their more civilized Arabian co-religionists.

Under Turkish rule the Christians of Palestine experienced new humiliations. Returning pilgrims carried back to Europe tales of the cruelties inflicted on Christians, of the indignities being heaped upon Mother Church, and of the desecration of her shrines. The Pope, Urban II (1088-99), himself preached, and instructed the Bishops to do so too, that it was the duty of the Church and all Christians never to rest until the infidel was expelled and the Holy Land restored to Christ. 'God wills it' was the fervent response from across Europe as far away as Spain, Scotland and Denmark as the zealots rallied to the papal summons of 1095-96.[15]

The crusade about to be launched owed much to the widespread influence of an itinerant monk known as Peter the Hermit—an elderly and ascetic but charismatic native of Amiens who, it was said, had made the pilgrimage in 1094 and had been deeply angered by the Turkish pro-

fanities he had perceived. He thought he saw a vision while praying in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in which Christ appeared with the instruction, 'Go forth and tell of the tribulations of My people!' So successful was his personal witness for the crusade as he rode from town to town on the back of an ass that in several months of preaching through France and across the Rhine to Cologne he had gathered 15,000 French and German followers prepared to accompany him back to the Holy Land. Peter preached the Second Coming, which could not occur until the Holy Land had been won back for Christ. His message struck a sympathetic chord in a Europe depressed by economic stagnation and manacled by inflexible social conventions. As Runciman, the recent great chronicler of the Crusades has observed,

> to ignorant minds the distinction between Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem was not very clearly defined. Many of Peter's hearers believed that he was promising to lead them out of their present miseries to the land flowing with milk and honey of which the scriptures spoke.[16]

Peter the Hermit went on to lead his own crusade, the so-called People's or Peasants' Crusade, to a disastrous finale in October 1096 on the edge of Asia Minor opposite Constantinople, still some 1400 kilometres short of its destination. His ill-disciplined rabble had arrived in Constantinople at the beginning of August. The Byzantine Emperor, Alexius, though glad to see them safely across the Bosphorus, on Asian soil at last and well away from his capital, cautioned them to await the arrival of the main armies of the Crusade before venturing to attack the Moslems. By this stage, however, Peter had largely lost control of his horde. They began pillaging and killing, Christian and Moslem inhabitants alike, in the country around their encampment at Cibotus on the Sea of Marmora; and, impatient for further conquest, commenced skirmishing further afield and deeper into Turkish territory. On 21 October, just as the whole army of 20,000 was setting out for an attack against Nicaea about forty-five kilometres inland to the southeast, the Turks caught them in an ambush. Few escaped the slaughter that followed. A couple of thousand were able to flee back to Constantinople; and a few captives were spared but taken away into slavery. The only achievement, as Runciman observes, was to demonstrate 'that faith alone, without wisdom and discipline, would not open the road to Jerusalem'.[17]

Peter the Hermit was one of those spared: he had been in Constantinople meeting with Alexius the day his followers were massacred. He lived on to preach again. The following year, 1097, he and the remnant of his followers attached themselves to Godfrey de Bouillon's army. His preaching helped inspire Godfrey's knights during the final assault on Jerusalem, and he preached again to the victorious army from the Mount of Olives afterwards. Apart from the Egyptian governor and his bodyguard, who were given safe conduct out of the city on payment of a heavy ransom, virtually all the city's Moslem and Jewish inhabitants

were slain. The memory of the massacre lived on in Moslem minds to poison Christian-Moslem dealings for centuries. Pope Urban II who, with Peter, had helped inflame crusading hearts, was not so fortunate as the Hermit in being able to view their joint handiwork. He died two weeks after the capture of Jerusalem, before news of what had happened could reach Rome.[18]

With the city safe in Christian hands Gerard and his hospitallers were able to resume their charitable works. There was ample scope for hospitalling. In rising to their new task they won many friends among the Crusaders, a number of whom abandoned soldiering and joined the hospitaller ranks. Many of the pilgrims, who once again were free to enter the city in large numbers, also stayed on to join Gerard's growing band of helpers. There was by now a wider role for the Amalfitan hospice which had been first sponsored by St Gregory nearly five centuries before and which had been the long suffering endurer of mixed fortunes since. A great transformation, of which the Crusade had been the catalyst, was about to begin.[19]

2 *The Hospitallers become Knights Hospitallers*

In the decade after the capture of Jerusalem Gerard's community of hospitallers grew in fame and fortune. Now being regarded as a brotherhood, by themselves and others, and having earned the respect of Godfrey de Bouillon and his fellow crusading princes, lavish endowments and bequests came their way, both in the Holy Land and in Europe. Returning crusaders and pilgrims spread word of the obligation Christendom owed the hospitallers for their kindly ministrations. Donations of money and property followed, as wealthy benefactors attested their own piety while lending their material substance to a deserving and respectable charity. The hospitallers soon found themselves in possession of estates in Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and Germany. One of the richer estates conferred upon them was the manor of Montboise in the Brabant, a gift from the de Bouillon dynasty in the Duchy of Lorraine. And there were others as desirable.[20]

With this sudden improvement in fortune came other changes. In the turmoil following the capture of the city the hospitallers reoccupied not only their own buildings near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre but also the Greek monastery of St John the Baptist. What happened to the Greek monks and their rights to possession is unknown; but from now on the hospitallers began to regard the patron saint of the annexed Greek monastery as their own, rather than looking to St John the Almoner (or Almsgiver), who up till then had been their patron. The subtle substitution of a patron saint of one name for another of the same was perhaps an index of the hospitallers' newly enhanced status: for an establishment renowned throughout Christendom it seemed more fitting that the man

who was at once the herald, the cousin and the very baptiser of Christ, who had said of him that 'never has there appeared on earth a mother's son greater than John the Baptist',[21] should be their patron, rather than a humble, obscure Egyptian patriach.[22]

Another major change involved the organization of the brotherhood. A body of people like the hospitallers, who now possessed considerable wealth and property and carried out primarily pratical duties needed some more regular and formal constitutional basis than existed under their Benedictine tutelage. Even if wishing to retain sole control of the gifts they had accumulated was not a reason for shrugging off the Benedictine yoke, corporate pride alone would have been sufficient inducement.

Like the change in patron saints, the change from the Benedictine to the Augustinian rule suggests something about that pride and ambition. The Augustinian rule would have been less restrictive for an order having charitable interests like the hospitallers. The Benedictine rule requires monks to spend their waking hours divided almost equally between the three occupations of prayer in common, religious reading, and manual, craft-type work. Life for the Benedictine centres on the monastery, and no works, pursuits or ends outside it are contemplated. The Augustinian rule, however, stresses the injunction to 'love thy neighbour', and thus to engage in charitable works such as caring for the sick.[23] It was a rule which would have allowed the brotherhood greater flexibility in developing their task in Palestine and in Europe, where they were now acquiring bases for further expansion. References in Paschall II's Bull of 1113 also give clues to the hospitallers' aspirations. The Bull speaks of securing their 'revenues' to the brotherhood, 'all opposition on the part of the Bishops or the officials of the Bishops notwithstanding'. It also talks of preserving their possessions 'intact for the sole use and enjoyment' of the hospitallers,[24] and declares that the brotherhood shall elect their own leaders and that 'no man shall there be appointed by any underhand subtlety or violence' to preside over them.[25] Their wish to disburse their wealth as they saw fit, the jealousy the secular clergy felt for them, and the wish of the Benedictines to continue superintending their activities, were matters to be handled better by formal reconstitution as a separate order. Not surprisingly, then, that is what they sought.

The hospitaller most responsible for making this move seems to have been Gerard, who was already the rector and administrator of their hospital. Paschal's Bull accords him the titles of 'founder' and 'provost' of the new order which thus came into being at its own petition. By virtue of the Bull the hospitallers now comprised a separate order in its own right. The papal sanctioning of this institutional integrity, however, probably only confirmed the separate identity and *de facto* status the hospitallers had already attained, possibly as early as 1104. It was then that the first Latin King of Jerusalem, Baldwin I (1100-1118), seems to

have recognised their rights as a separate order within his domains.[26] (Baldwin I was the brother of Godfrey de Bouillon, who had died in July 1100. Though Godfrey had been elected king of the city by his fellow Crusader barons, he contented himself with the title 'Defender of the Holy Sepulchre' because he did not want to be called a king, or to wear a crown, in the city where Christ had worn a crown of thorns. Baldwin accepted the crown his brother had refused to wear and was crowned on Christmas day 1100).[27]

By this stage, too, the brotherhood had clearly begun a phase of expansion and consolidation that was to continue for the next four centuries at least. Paschal's Bull mentions five 'hospitals and poor houses' they were already conducting in southern France and Italy, presumably on property donated to them—St Gilles near Avignon, Asti near Turin, Pisa, Messina in northwestern Sicily, and Bari, Otranto and Taranto on Italy's 'heel'. These foundations were most likely run as refuges for pilgrims on their way to or from the Holy Land. Their acquisition meant that the brotherhood now had a wider, international scope, which would have strengthened their bid for recognition as a separate order.

By the time that recognition came, in 1113, Gerard was in his seventies. He died, revered by all within the new Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, aged about eighty in 1118, and was beatified shortly after as 'the Blessed' Gerard. The numerous 'internal' histories of the order he founded dutifully depict him in hagiographic terms—'gentle', 'kindly', 'charitable' and 'saintly'. He was possibly all of those, but he must also have been determined, forceful, persevering, shrewd, ambitious, resourceful, diplomatic, and tough. To have built up in scarcely more than a decade a prosperous, expansive, independent international enterprise from one small 'branch office' of another organization situated on the fringe of Christendom would have required considerable political skill. Gerard would seem to have been just the person to launch an organization to last another eight or nine hundred years. A measure of the reverence in which the Order he founded continued to hold him was the veneration of his remains: his bones travelled with the Order during its peregrinations westwards from Palestine following the resurgence of Islam and the loss of the Holy Land by the Crusaders in 1291. In the sixteenth century they were moved to Manosque near Marseilles but were scattered and nearly all lost during the French Revolution. Today only his skull, part of the bone of his upper right arm and six of his vertebrae remain. The skull has been with the Ursuline nuns at Valletta in Malta since 1798; the remaining bones are in ornate reliquaries in three of the churches of his purported birth place, Martigues, about thirty kilometres west of Marseilles.[28]

Gerard's successor as superior of the new order, Raymond du Puy, had even loftier ambitions for it, and the transformation he wrought upon it was revolutionary. He was a nobleman, member of a notable

family of the Languedoc, and aged about forty. He was to be Master of the Order, a title he affected shortly after succeeding Gerrard, whose second in command he had been, for the next forty years. He had possibly been one of a number of high-born Crusaders who had renounced the secular world to join the brotherhood of hospitallers after the capture of Jerusalem. If so he would have been thoroughly familiar with the organization he was about to transform.

One of Raymond's earliest acts as Master was the formulation of a set of Statutes for the government of the Order. These were based on the Augustinian rules adopted under Gerard, which they extended to include, in addition to the basic vows of chastity, obedience, poverty and charity, a further series of injunctions and prohibitions. Under pain of excommunication the brethren were permitted neither to acquire nor own personal property; they must conduct themselves with decorum; they were to eschew brightly coloured clothing and apparel made of fur; they were to eat only two meals a day and must fast regularly; they had to observe daily periods of silence; and, under penalty of severe fasting, must not quarrel with or strike one another.[29]

More significant than these rules, which might have been expected of any religious order, were those pertaining to the care of the poor and the ill. In that connection the statutes enjoined hospitallers to dress humbly, because 'our Lord's poor whose servants we profess to be go naked and miserably clad'; they required all members to 'go forth to seek alms for the holy poor'; and, when 'our Lords the sick' arrived on the doorsteps of the Order's houses, each should 'just as if he were the Lord be charitably entertained every day of the best the house can provide'.[30] The mode of referring to the poor and the ill—'our Lord's poor' and 'our Lords the sick'—emphasised the priorities of the hospitallers: charity was the overriding reason for the existence of their order. So important, indeed, was this 'work of our Lord' that all within the Order from the most high-born to the very lowliest must regard the subjects of their ministrations as 'our Lords' too. The Statutes thus enshrined the guiding charitable principle that has subsequently inspired succeeding generations of hospitallers down to the present day. That principle is the common thread which more than anything else ties the latterday offshoots of the Order to its ancient fabric: the organization exists not only for its members but also to alleviate human suffering, and in meeting that obligation all else is subsidiary.

The new Master did more than reaffirm this essential function of the Order. He gave it an additional function which dominated its subsequent history—a military role. This development, which necessitated further organizational changes, arose—like the dramatic improvement in the Order's fortunes—from the creation of a 'Latin' Kingdom of Jerusalem.

The hold the Frankish kings were able to exert on the kingdom they had hacked away from Islam was taken only painfully, and their grip was

1 The Blessed Gerard, founder of the Order of St John

never more than tenuous. It was not until twenty-five years after the capture of Jerusalem that a strip of coastline of roughly 300 kilometres, from Beirut in the north to Gaza in the south, was finally secured to the kingdom. Even at its zenith, during the reign of Baldwin II (nephew of Baldwin I), 1118-31, the Crusader kingdom held sway inland barely further than the eastern slopes of the great north-south rift valley of the Sea of Galilee-Jordan River-Dead Sea – that is, about 110 kilometres inland at its widest point.[31] The kingdom remained little more than a Christian toehold on the Moslem cliff face, and was only ever retained with difficulty: Turkey and Syria to the north, Jordan in the east and Egypt in the south, and amongst other threats its local dissident Moslem population always kept the kingdom more or less beleaguered.

The precarious footing of the kingdom was evident in the risks pilgrims still had to run. Even on the customary and most direct route inland to Jerusalem, from Jaffa, a distance of about sixty kilometres, pilgrims had to run the gauntlet of marauding bands of Moslems. It was to safeguard such pilgrim trails that a group of eight Crusader knights led by Hugh de Payens, a knight from the Champagne, in 1118 formed the nucleus of a new order of armed monks who came to be known as the

Knights of the Temple of Solomon, or more simply the Knights Templar, after the section of Jerusalem where they were first quartered. From then on, until their order was suppressed two centuries later in 1312, the Templars' history paralleled that of the Hospitallers. The earlier relationship between the two great military orders was fraternal, but later they became jealous and acrimonious rivals; and in the end, the final bitter irony, the estates of the dispossessed Templars were made over to the Hospitallers. Perhaps the key to the Templars' ultimate failure was the loss of their early guiding principle: like the Hospitallers they became an élite corps among the kingdom's troops, fighting in all its campaigns but, unlike the Hospitallers, they lost sight of the paramountcy of their charitable duty towards pilgrims.[32]

The preservation of the kingdom was the motive for the Hospitallers taking on a military role. This seems to have happened early in the reign of Baldwin II, soon after the election of Raymond du Puy as their Master, and about the same time as the foundation of the Order of Knights Templar. The first appearance of a force of Hospitaller knights in battle seems to have been at Antioch in 1119; and the military reorganization of the Order was complete by 1128.[33] Raymond du Puy appears to have been the most responsible for the transition from charitable to military order. The Order's historians agree that

> he summoned his monks together, and proposed that they should take up in defence of their fellow Christians those swords, which they had flung aside when they had entered the service of the Hospital,[34]

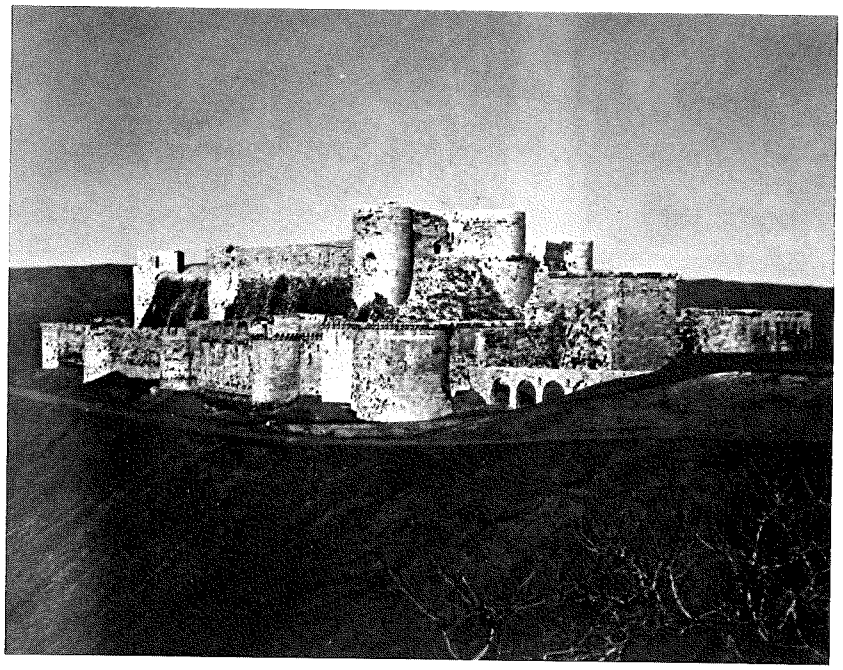
but are also at pains to emphasise the point that, while

> the brethren accepted with alacrity the proposals of their revered Master, . . . it was agreed that . . . they must in no way relinquish their original vows, or relax their care of the sick and the poor.[35]

With the Templars the Hospitallers now became the main military prop of the Crusaders' kingdom. They were well suited to do so, for as Runciman points out,

> the Military Orders, with their efficient organization and with their glamour and prestige spreading through western Christendom, could ensure a regular supply of devoted fighting-men who would not be distracted by thoughts of personal ambition and gain.[36]

From a string of walled towns and fortresses – the 'Crusader' castles built by successive 'Latin' kings throughout Palestine and along its frontiers – the Hospitallers with the Templars fought the battles of the kingdom until the fall of Acre, which marked its end, in 1291. As they did so, numerous fortifications, the remnants of which still exist, became associated with their name – Ascalon, Beauvoir, Belmont, Bethsour, Beit Jibrin, Fontenoid, Bethafara, Raphanée, Mont Ferrard, La Bouchée, Marqat, on the north coast between Tripoli and Latakia and, most famous of all, their great castles, 'Crac-des-Chevaliers', nowadays called Husn-el-Akrad, sixty kilometres north-east of Tripoli.[37]



2 Crac-des-Chevaliers (Husn-el-Akrad), the Hospitallers' great fortress, nowadays in Syria just north of the border with Lebanon

The military role which Raymond du Puy opened up to the Hospitallers was, as well shall see, one they retained until Napoleon expelled them from Malta over six and a half centuries later. It was also one which induced long-lasting internal changes to the composition of the Order. Even before their reconstitution under Raymond the Hospitallers, like any other religious order, had included two types of members—that is priests or 'chaplains', and 'serving brothers' or lay helpers. To these Raymond added a third—Knights. The three-fold division into 'knights', 'chaplains' and 'serving brothers' reflected the Order's tripartite functions—military, religious and charitable—though as occasion demanded all three classes of members were expected to give service in any capacity. The knight no less than the serving brother was bound by the Statutes to serve the sick and poor; the chaplains and serving brothers no less than the knights became 'servants at arms' in defence of the faith at times of crisis; and all must observe the moral and religious precepts of the Order.

The trisectional structure of membership also reflected the social divisions of feudal society. The knights formed an élite. Like the Master himself they were the scions of the feudal nobility, and like him they brought into the Order their own aristocratic concept of the proper ordering of society. To enter the Order as a knight, or to rise to

× Military. Monastic. Medical.

knighthood within it, one had to produce 'proof of nobility', that is to be of noble name and lineage. (This concept remains with the Order's twentieth century off-shoots, members of whose highest grades, the Knights and Dames 'of Justice', must produce heraldic evidence of their 'right to bear arms'). What the Order's lowlier, humbly-born members thought of the aristocratic system of ranking is not clear. Possibly they accepted it wholeheartedly, for, as one historian of the early Order argues, they were

> men of a lower class in life, who performed the duties of domestics within the convent and hospital. This class, though wanting the position and dignity of their nobler brethren, possessed numerous privileges and emoluments which rendered admission into the Order even in this grade very advantageous to men of the humbler ranks of society.[38]

The low-born members, on the other hand, might have resented the comparatively menial duties within the Order to which lowly station in life assigned them. This, however, is not altogether clear, since the Order has always proclaimed that, regardless of one's social position, contentment within the organization comes through the faithful fulfilment of duties ascribed to one by virtue of one's responsibilities. The Order also maintains that to be high-born implies no demeanour of hauteur: rather, a sense of *noblesse oblige*—a spirit of humble dedication 'to pure Christian charity' towards 'our Lords the sick'—suffuses the Order, and has been the special contribution of its aristocratic members through the ages.[39]

One aspect of the development of the military and chivalric structure of the Order which does perhaps hint at the seriousness of social divisions within Hospitaller ranks was the increasing importance of the part played by the distinctive badges and garb worn by the members. As under the Blessed Gerard, so under Master du Puy, all brethren continued wearing the black monastic habit with the white Amalfitan cross upon the left breast. In time the four arms of the cross came to represent the four Christian virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, while its eight points stood for the eight beatitudes—the blessedness of the merciful, the pure, the peacemakers, the persecuted, the humble, the comforters, the meek, and the righteous—and its whiteness was said to represent the purity of life required in those defending the faith and serving the needy.[40] The military banner the Order adopted, the flag of their patron saint John the Baptist, displayed a white cross on a red field—the reverse of the Templars' banner of red cross on while field. (These two emblems, the Amalfitan cross and the banner of St John the Baptist, have remained the principal devices of the Order and its various derivatives to the present day. The Most Venerable Order uses them together, the latter surmounted upon the former). The standard of St John became central to the military ethic of the Order: Knights Hospitaller could only draw their swords when the banner was displayed either in defence of the Kingdom of Jerusalem or in the siege of a pagan city. Their weapons were to be used for the faith alone.[41]

The monastic habit was worn by all classes of members, knights, chaplains and serving brothers alike, whether on the battlefield, in the monastery or in the hospital. The first modification of this practice came in 1248 when members of the Order successfully petitioned the Pope, Innocent IV (1243-54), for permission to wear a surcoat over their armour rather than the monastic habit, which hampered movement and made the wearer more vulnerable to the enemy.[42] Eleven years later a new Pope, Alexander IV (1254-61), gave knights of the Order alone the right to dispense with the habit off the battlefield. Instead they could wear a black mantle, while on active service they could wear a surcoat in the same colours as the banner, that is a white cross emblazoned on a red surcoat. The knights, whom Alexander IV flattered by addressing as 'the immovable pillar of the Church for the defence of the Holy Land, of which you are the renowned and stalwart champions, and the chosen protectors; . . . you are the elect people of God and a princely race',[43] had grown very resentful at having to wear the same garb as their humbler brethren[44].

3 *Twelfth century expansion*

Whatever the dynamics of their internal divisions, the Hospitallers prospered as an aristocratic military order as they never had previously. Indeed, their rise to affluence possibly resulted from their being aristocratic and thus, in feudal society, considered worthy of the respect and largesse heaped upon them. Donations and legacies, as one of their recent historians observed, 'showered upon Hospitallers and Templars alike in every country of Europe, and their wealth and importance annually revealed an almost incredible increase in these early years of their existence'.[45]

Among the more remarkable gifts was the entire Kingdom of Aragon. When its childless king, Alfonso the Fighter, died in 1134 he left his kingdom and also Navarre, over which he also ruled, to be divided equally between the Hospitallers, the Templars and the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre. A legacy such as this, involving not only the territory of two kingdoms but also their subjects, who would have had no small interest in the terms of their king's will, might have been well intended but could not be settled as written. Raymond du Puy accordingly journeyed to Aragon and Navarre in 1140, personally inspecting his Order's other holdings in southern Europe on the way, to negotiate with the dynasties upon whom the crowns of each kingdom had devolved. The highly favourable settlement he achieved with them indicates something of his diplomatic skills. Acting on behalf of all three orders – his own Hospitallers, the Templars and the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre – he secured extravagent concessions: in return for abandoning their claims to the two kingdoms the orders were granted privileges in the six most im-

portant towns of Aragon, a tenth of all taxes levied in the kingdom, a fifth share of the plunder won in the Moorish wars, and the control of various fiefdoms, whose tenants would be bound to serve under them in future wars against the Moslems.[46]

A further visit the Master made to Europe during 1157-58 left the Hospitallers in control of even greater wealth, demonstrating again du Puy's abilities as both statesman and diplomat. He met counts, princes and kings, bishops, archbishops and cardinals, and won concessions from them all. He gained new fiefdoms and estates for the Order, exemptions from tolls and taxes, and the revenues from numerous benefices. He met the Pope, Adrian IV (1154-59; formerly Nicholas Breakspear, the only English-born priest to become Pope), who reconfirmed the deal made over Aragon. And in Verona he met the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, who took the Hospitallers under his formal protection and confirmed all their rights and privileges throughout his vast domain.[47]

Raymond du Puy, now in his eighties, died a couple of years after this triumphant progress across Europe. At his death in 1160 the Order he had led for forty years had grown from little more than a local charity into being one of Europe's most powerful institutions, an immensely wealthy and powerful military force whose influence was ramified far and wide throughout Western Christendom, from Scotland to Hungary and from Scandinavia to Sicily as well as throughout the Holy Land.[48] A modern analogy for its wealth, power and influence is the multi-national business corporation, with its diverse interests in numerous nations and the pervasive presence it maintains regardless of their state boundaries.

It was this high degree of influence that made the most fitting memorial to Raymond. Like his predecessor Gerard, he was duly beatified as 'the Blessed Raymond'; and ranking him thus with Gerard was posthumous recognition that, in the view of his brethren and of the wider Church, he had been at least Gerard's equal. If the one had been founder then the other deserved acclaim for having been the maker, for Raymond had transmogrified the Order, shaping it into a form that would last for centuries. No cult developed around Raymond as had grown up around Gerard, however: his bones never found their way into ornate reliquaries in the parish churches of France and Malta. Perhaps that is a reward denied to the founders of armies and multi-nationals.

Among monuments to Raymond that have not survived as well as popular memory of the splendour of his Order are the buildings constructed under his Mastership. He had been builder as well as organiser, guide, promoter, diplomat and statesman for the Hospitallers, for during his long years of leadership the Order constructed the monasteries, convents, hospitals, churches and fortresses it was to occupy for centuries. Among the first of these were the Order's administrative headquarters in Jerusalem, known as the Convent. This was a huge building

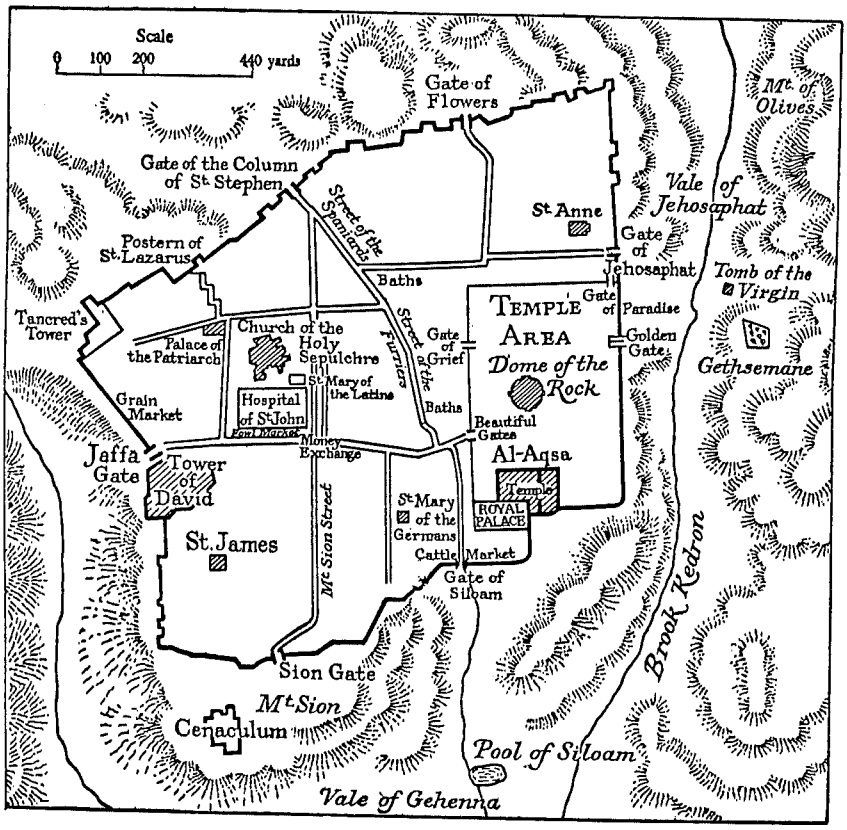
3 Raymond du Puy, first Grand Master of the Order of St John

built on piers with supporting arches and vaults and located in the centre of the city immediately south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in an area roughly 135 metres square known later as the Muristan, that is 'madhouse', because the great Saracen sultan Saladin is said to have used it for that purpose after his reconquest of the city for Islam in 1187. The Convent also incorporated the Knights' accommodation as well as the Master's palace, which occupied the former Greek monastery that had lent its name to the Order.[49]

Just to the north of the Convent was the other edifice from which the Order took its name—the Hospital which, like the Convent, was one of Raymond's buildings. It was a vast structure some seventy metres long and thirty-six metres wide with the roof supported over arches five and a half metres high. It was a hospital proper, not simply a hospice with an infirmary, as the original 'hospital' had been. The medical aspect of the Hospitallers' task had multiplied in proportion to their wealth. The Hospital therefore had to cater for an immense volume of the ill and the poor at any one time. A German pilgrim, John of Würzburg, who saw it in the year of Raymond du Puy's death reported that it contained beds for 2000 patients. It was thus a huge hospital by any standards, par-

ticularly by those now applying in Australia, where it is generally thought that 1000 beds should be the upper limit for a large metropolitan general hospital. (The Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney, for example has about 800, the Royal Melbourne Hospital about 700, and the Royal Canberra Hospital about 450.) The beds were usually fully occupied. What the standards of hygiene were, in what were obviously extremely cramped conditions by the modern understanding of that notion, is not hard to imagine. The German pilgrim said that on some days he saw fifty corpses being carried out, and their places immediately taken by the new cases that kept on arriving—despite this apparent horrendous daily mortality rate of 2.5 per cent! (The rate in Australia's large metropolitan general hospitals is about 0.6 per cent or less.) Another visitor to the Hospital shortly thereafter, a Jewish Rabbi, Benjamin of Navarre, commented that the hospital provided the sick 'with everything they may want, both during life and death', and that it 'also harbours and furnishes four hundred knights, who are ever ready to wage war'. A third visitor several years later, one Theodorich, observed in his book on his travels through Palestine that he had been much struck by the beauty of the Hospital and all its appointments, its generous provision for its inmates, and the devotion of its labours on their behalf.[50] To the observer of the twelfth century, if not to that of the twentieth, the Hospital was undoubtedly a superb institution, and brought much credit on those running it.

The Benedictine abbey and church of St Maria Latina, with its hospice for male pilgrims, abutted the eastern wall of the great Hospital; and just across a narrow lane was the church of St Mary Magdalene and its adjacent hospice for female pilgrims. Working in the latter were the Sisters of St John—the nuns of the Order. From its earliest days the Order had always admitted women to its ranks, to work in its hospices and hospitals; and most of its houses had several Sisters attached for the care of female inmates. In the period before the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders, when Gerard was rector of the hospital, a Roman noblewoman, Agnes, had presided over the female helpers. When the hospitallers regrouped as a formal order the women became nuns, with Agnes as their abbess. Their garb was a red habit with the same eight-pointed white cross as the monks, though after the expulsion of the Order from Rhodes by Suleiman the Magnificant in 1522 they wore a black robe instead of red as a sign of mourning. Admission to the higher ranks of the order, for the nuns no less than the monks, required proof of nobility, and so the superiors of its female establishments were always from the aristocracy. Late in the twelfth century the Order began grouping its nuns together in separate convents of their own. The first of these, at Buckland in Somerset, opened in 1186 as a gift to the Order from the King of England, Henry II. Its first Prioress, the much respected Fina, achieved some distinction by ruling Buckland for sixty years. The most



MAP 1
Jerusalem under the Latin Kings

renowned of all the Order's establishments for women, however, was that at Sigena in Aragon, donated by Queen Sancha of Aragon in 1188. She was said to have been so distressed at the recapture of Jerusalem by Saladin the year before, and at what might befall the nuns expelled from the city, that she founded the Sigena convent for them and in memory of the Hospitallers killed in defence of the faith. Eight years later, on the death of her husband, she entered the convent herself as a nun, a step her daughters also took. Eventually she rose to become its Prioress.[51] The generosity of such donations as Buckland and Sigena was a measure of the favour the Order now enjoyed among the ruling dynasties of Europe, and of the continuing material success it was experiencing as a result.

The Hospitallers' expansion into the British Isles, and the foundation of an English Priory, were among the notable achievements under Raymond du Puy's leadership. They were perhaps no more signal a success than the establishment of the Priories of Portugal, Navarre and Aragon at much the same time; yet we must dwell upon them momentarily for it

was from the English Priory that the present St John Ambulance organizations in Australia are ultimately derived.

The exact date and place of the Hospitallers' arrival in Britain are unknown. Opinion differs between the Scottish and English historians of The Most Venerable Order as to which nation first introduced the Order into Britain. The Scottish posit an earlier date for first evidence of the Order in their country, so we will consider that first. According to Scottish opinion, they arrived in Scotland early in the reign King David I (1124-53). David I (Saint David of Scotland, the 'sair sanct'), said to have been one of the best of the Scottish kings, is believed by the Scots to have introduced the Order into Scotland himself, with the Templars, and to have made them the 'keepers of his morals by day and night'.[52] This, at least, would have been in character for David. He was son of the last great Celtic King of Scotland, Malcolm Canmore, and of Malcolm's second wife, St Margaret of Scotland, a princess of the Saxon dynasty of Wessex who strove with considerable success to supplant the ancient Celtic Church with that of Rome, and to impose Anglo-Norman customs on her husband's subjects. David, educated and thoroughly Normanized at the English court, enthusiastically continued his mother's work. He extended the Norman feudal and monastic systems and Norman manners; and it would have been consistent with this policy for him to have invited Norman-inspired Military Orders into his domains. According to Scottish tradition he did so in 1124, the first year of his reign, when the Hospitallers were invited to settle at Torphichen. There, about thirty-five kilometres west of Edinburgh near Linlithgow, they built a Preceptory, that is a Commandery or sub-regional headquarters, and a hospital. Their rights to Torphichen were subsequently confirmed in the year of David's death, 1153, by his successor, his grandson Malcolm IV. In time the Preceptory of Torphichen came to be known as the Priory of Scotland, though it seems to have remained subsidiary to the English Priory until the Reformation of the mid-sixteenth century effectively closed down both Scots and English branches of the Order.[53]

The earliest date for an English settlement of Hospitallers is about 1140, when property at Shingay in Cambridgeshire is said to have been granted to the English Prior, one Walter. Several years later, about 1144, Jordan of Bricett, a member of a Breton family that had taken up estates in Suffolk and Essex after the Norman conquest, granted the Hospitallers an acre of land at Clerkenwell, followed in 1148 by a further five acres. It was here that the Order established its English Priory, its regional headquarters for the British Isles. An extension into Ireland came in 1174, when Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke, granted the Hospitallers an estate at Kilmainham, then just outside Dublin. They quickly acquired other Irish possessions and by 1212 had no fewer than 142 properties in Ireland alone. So rapid was the growth in Ireland that a separate Priory of Ireland independent from the English Priory was established in

4 A nun of the Order of St John, Malta, 18th Century

1202, with Maurice de Prendergast, who was possibly Anglo-Norman-Welsh, as its Prior.[54] By this time there were Priories in St Gilles (its first known Prior appointed in 1118), Messina (1136), Portugal (1140), Navarre (1142), England (1145), Aragon (1157), Barletta (1169), Lombardy (1176), France (1179), Bohemia (1182), Germany (1187), Castile (1190), Venice (1198) and Ireland (1202). Seven more were established over the next half century: Rome (1215), Hungary (1217), Auvergne (1230), Pisa (1231), Dacia (1231), Poland (1252), and Capua (1255).[55]

In spite of these great strides the Hospitallers were taking across Europe, they were not universally admired. Indeed they had their virulent detractors. One of these was William of Tyre, a cleric of French extraction who was born in the Holy Land about 1130 and lived most of his life there under the reign of the 'Latin' kings of Jerusalem. He eventually became Chancellor of the Kingdom in 1170, Bishop of Bethlehem in 1174 and Archbishop of Tyre in 1175. He retired to Rome in 1183 and died there in 1187. William had thus been witness to the proliferation of the Order's wealth, power and influence during the Mastership of Raymond du Puy. He was also one of the greatest of the mediaeval historians, and at his death was still working on his mammoth *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum* (*History of things done in*

places overseas)—which remains one of the principal sources of information about the 'Latin' Kingdom of Jerusalem.[56]

William of Tyre had certain strong prejudices. One was the Military Orders, which he disliked passionately. In his *History* he took wicked delight in recounting incidents reflecting discredit upon them. He was pleased, for instance, that the mighty Hospitallers had had such 'petty' origins in an obscure and humble hospice for destitute pilgrims. Like his fellow Bishops in the Holy Land, who were remote from the bounteous patronage available in the Sees of Europe, he resented the high esteem they enjoyed in the eyes of popes and princes; he envied the lavish donations they attracted; and he begrudged them the privileges they enjoyed, such as freedom from episcopal control, the collection of alms, and exemption from tithes, all of which deprived the Bishops of revenues they might otherwise gather.[57]

The indignation of the Bishops over the privileges of the Hospitallers burned so fiercely and righteously by 1155 that they sent a deputation to Rome in that year to plead their complaints against the Order before the Pope and the College of Cardinals. Almost the entire hierarchy of the Church in Palestine—the Patriarch of Jerusalem (Archbishop Fulcher), then nearly 100, the Archbishops of Tyre and Caesarea, and the Bishops of Acre, Sidon, Lydda, Sebaste and Tiberias—joined the delegation. The Pope, Adrian IV, was unsympathetic. (William of Tyre later wrote that he received them like he would 'adulterine brethren'.) So too were the College of Cardinals. The Bishops' plea was dismissed, and they returned to the Holy Land still aggrieved. The Hospitallers, according to William, had got at the Holy Father and Cardinals first, intriguing and bribing their way to a favourable decision.[58]

The jealousy of the local hierarchy of the Church in the Hospitallers' home town is fairly easy to explain: the existence of an independent, wealthy, privileged and influential organization operating under papal protection was a threat to the authority any bishop exerted in his see. Not so easy to elucidate are the reasons why the Order so quickly grew to the extent that the hierarchy felt challenged. One of the reasons undoubtedly lay in its papal protection and the papal favour that added to its lustre. First as charitable hand-maiden to the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and later as its knight in armour sallying forth against Islam, the Order was probably seen by successive popes as the undaunted upholder of the Christian banner in the Holy Land. While the popes still regarded the retention of Palestine as one of the sacred duties of Christendom, as they did throughout the twelfth century, the Hospitallers could continue to bask in the warmth of papal favour.

The success of the Hospitallers can probably also be explained through the piety of the age. When the doing of good works, such as generously supporting the charities blessed by the Church, was believed by the wealthy feudal landed classes to earn merit in the sight of God then

charities like the Order of St John stood to profit. If they could be seen to be vigorously prosecuting the cause of the faith, as the Hospitallers were doing, the merit in aiding them would be the greater.

In addition to their vigour, the Hospitallers were highly visible. They *were* seen to be defending the faith with their own blood, and they *were* seen to be devotedly caring for the sick, giving alms to the needy, and safeguarding the pilgrim. All these they did very well, with wholehearted dedication to the ideals which had inspired their early members, people of total commitment like the Blessed Gerard and the Blessed Raymond.

The aristocratic framework the order moulded itself around probably also helped. In a feudal society it was able to attract into its ranks sufficient numbers of the feudal nobility to raise it high in the esteem of those well placed to reward it lavishly with property and land. Moreover it gave its noble recruits a sense of purpose that sent them crusading back across Europe spreading word of the nobility of its achievements, and thus promoting its cause to those who mattered the most.

Finally, the Order was perhaps fortunate in the quality of the two men who first led it. Both Gerard and Raymond were obviously far sighted, capable administrators, with the added advantage of having sufficient charisma to attract and retain followers and to make an indelible impression on those they dealt with. Their view of the direction the Order must take, their ability to mould it accordingly, and their skill and stamina in guiding it on its way were indispensable. Under such leadership the Hospitallers could take advantage of the coalition of other factors combining in their benefit.

By the end of its first century the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem had manifestly consolidated its position throughout Europe, even though it was on the retreat in the Holy Land. It was now a proud and powerful body, with an illustrious reputation for having defended the faith valiantly and unswervingly, and for having served the sick and poor with exemplary dedication. It had already been elevated to a position high in the rainbow of popular Western mythology that had begun to glow above the Crusades. By the end of its second century, as we will soon see, it was to lose its base in the Holy Land and would begin its long retreat westward through the Mediterranean, during which it would spend 200 years on Rhodes and 200 more on Malta before losing that too.

2

The loss of the Holy Land, Rhodes, and Malta

1 *The Islamic Recapture of Jerusalem*

The 'Latin' or Frankish Kingdom of Jerusalem tottered on for decade after decade, surviving one military crisis after another, until it finally lost effective control of the Holy Land after the Moslems retook Jerusalem in 1187. As the Kingdom slowly crumpled the Hospitallers took on an increasingly heavy burden in helping to uphold its defences, and their military mantle began to obscure the hospitaller's habit. More and more they became identified as the 'Knights Hospitallers' rather than simply as 'hospitallers'; and all the while their fanatical courage and dedication to their special causes fed the legends growing up around their name.

The ultimate fate of the Kingdom of Jerusalem was probably decided in mid-1175, when the Caliph confirmed a brilliant, sophisticated and civilized thirty-seven year old general, Saladin, as Sultan of Egypt and Syria. The new Sultan was as devout in his faith as any of the Hospitallers might have hoped to be in theirs, and his unswerving aim was the expulsion of the infidel from Palestine. He did not live to see the achievement of that goal, which came a century after his death; but he was able to take a consolation prize by driving the Crusaders from Jerusalem.

Saladin's quest began inauspiciously. In 1177 he made a bold thrust north from Egypt with an army of 26,000. His goal was Ascalon, a strongly fortified town on the coast fifty kilometres south of Jaffa. He found Ascalon being defended personally by the boy king, Baldwin IV, who was only seventeen and stricken badly with the leprosy that killed him by the age of twenty-five. From Ascalon Saladin deployed his troops in a series of raiding parties fanning out over a wide area. Baldwin, with a force of only 3000, left the town and fell upon Saladin's own party at Montgisard, about forty kilometres to the north-east. They cut the Moslem force to shreds. Saladin was lucky to escape alive, and owed his life chiefly to the swiftness of his camel. Few of his army got back to Egypt alive, for Baldwin's men had little trouble picking off its dispersed remnants. Montgisard was one of the greatest Christian victories to that time, but it was expensive. The new master of the Hospitallers, Roger des

Moulins, an Anglo-Norman who had been elected only that year, took part in the battle with a contingent of his knights. He later recorded the Christian losses: 1100 of their 3000 had been killed and another 750 had to be taken to the Hospital in Jerusalem afterwards.[1]

Saladin tried again in 1182. He marched his army north from Cairo, up the Jordan valley and towards Damascus. His army and the Christians skirmished at Belvoir (or Beauvoir), a fortress held by the Hospitallers thirteen kilometres south of the Sea of Galilee, before he withdrew across the Jordan. Several weeks later he was at Beirut to meet his fleet, which had been harrying the Christian coast. In June the following year he captured Aleppo in the far north seventy kilometres inland from Antioch. The next year, 1184, he had the castle of Krak (Crac-des-Chevaliers) under siege for a time. Eventually, however, his army wearied of these will-o'-the-wisp guerilla raids, and both Moslems and Christians were glad to reach a four-year truce that gave each side welcome breathing space.[2]

In March 1185 Baldwin IV finally died from the leprosy which had been gnawing at him since early childhood. His six year old nephew, Baldwin V, now ascended the throne, with Raymond, Count of Tripoli, cousin of the former king and uncle to the new, appointed regent. By now the Kingdom was in fast decline, and the Christian ranks suicidally divided. On the one hand were the Military Orders and the European-born Crusader barons, who believed that the Kingdom could only be held through armed might. On the other hand were a party of 'native-born' or second generation nobles, led by Raymond of Tripoli. The latter were 'easternized'—more conciliatory, more accommodating towards Islam, more inclined to seek peace with Saladin and to live in harmony with the Moslems, at least until the European nations were prepared to invest their strength whole-heartedly in the Kingdom once more. Intrigue abounded. Central to it were Gerard de Ridfort, a later Master of the Templars and sworn enemy of Raymond of Tripoli, and Guy de Lusignan, father of the infant king and brother-in-law to Baldwin IV, who aspired to the crown himself and was seeking to undermine the influence of the regent.[3]

Perturbed by their collective impotence amidst these circumstances, a council of the principal factions had undertaken to seek help from outside—from King Henry II of England, a grandson of Fulk of Anjou, who had been third King of Jerusalem (the successor to Baldwin II in 1131). The council decided to send a delegation to Henry consisting of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Heraclius, and the Masters of the Hospitallers and the Templars. The three-man deputation had departed in June 1184. The Master of the Templars died *en route*, at Verona, so Heraclius and the Master of the Hospitallers, des Moulins, pressed on together, reaching London in February 1185. They met Henry at Reading, and dramatically presented him with the keys to Jerusalem

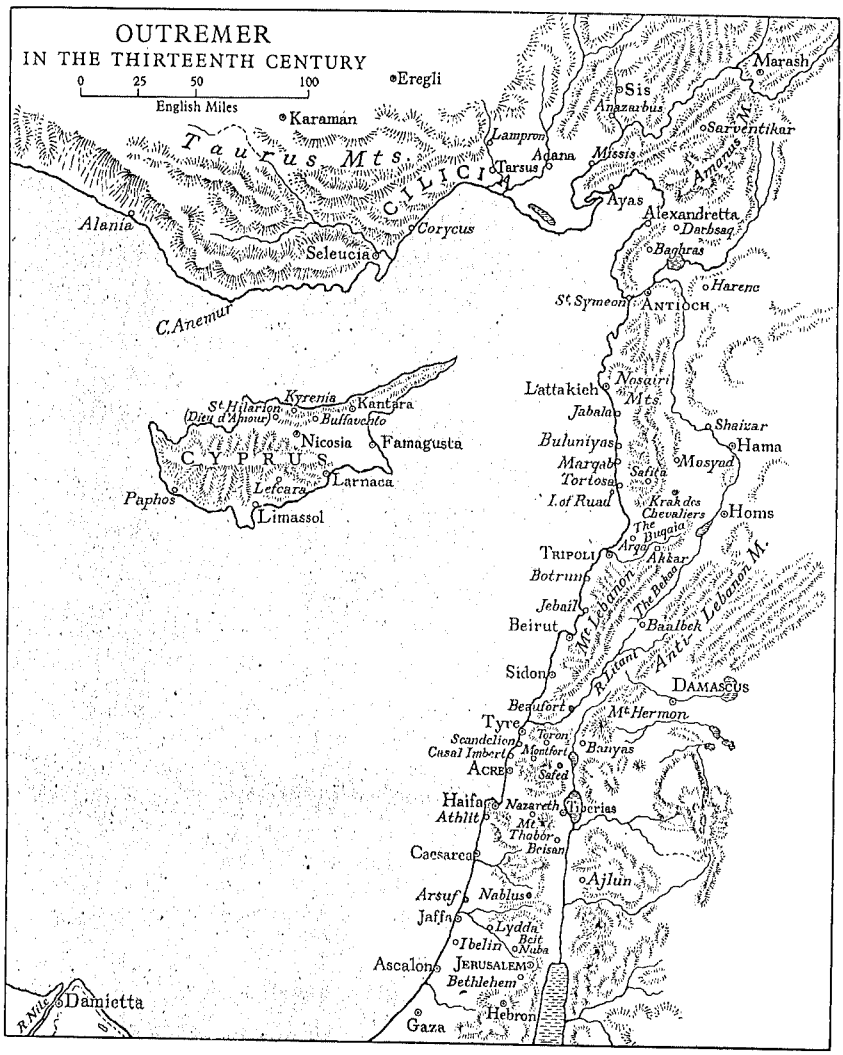
because he alone, after God, they assured him, could redeem the city from the unthinkable fate of dropping into Saladin's grasp. Henry promised to ponder the matter and to give an answer later.[4]

He met them again the next month at the Hospitallers' Priory at Clerkenwell, the new church of which Heraclius had consecrated only eight days previously on 10 March. He offered them money but refused to go to Jerusalem personally because his ministers wanted him ruling from home instead of trying to do so while crusading off to distant parts. In an exasperated outburst of temper Heraclius abused him roundly, telling him his offer would neither save his soul nor Jerusalem. 'We come to seek a king, not money!' he shouted. He insulted Henry again before the mission departed, accusing him of the murder of St Thomas à Becket fifteen years previously. Neither diplomacy nor bombast could move Henry, though he did make generous contributions to the Kingdom of Jerusalem which helped it substantially but in vain in the debacle to come.[5]

Midway through the following year, 1186, the child King Baldwin V died, only eight years old. Again the Kingdom was consumed by intrigues as the factions manoeuvred for control. The dead boy's mother, Sibylla (sister of Baldwin IV), was crowned but immediately presented the crown to her husband, Guy de Lusignan, who accepted with alacrity. Amidst this administrative turmoil some of the nobles had reverted to type, becoming robber barons, blackmailing and plundering Moslem and Christian alike. Saladin protested that the truce was being infringed, and there were rumours of a Holy War that provided yet another volatile vapour in the explosive atmosphere.[6]

The spark was struck in April 1187 when Saladin's son, El-Afdal, requested permission under the terms of the truce to lead a party on reconnaissance across Christian territory adjoining his own in Galilee. Raymond of Tripoli, erstwhile regent and leader of the conciliatory faction, in whose domain the territory lay, gave permission. Hearing of this, and suspecting Raymond of treachery, his enemy Gerard de Ridfort, now Master of the Templars, prevailed upon des Moulins, Master of the Hospitallers, to join him in pushing the infidel son of the Sultan off Christian soil and punishing him for his impertinence. With forty knights and 400 other troops they indignantly set out in search of El-Afdal.

They found him at the Spring of Cresson near Nazareth. Seeing they were outnumbered, des Moulins urged a retreat, but the hot-headed Master of the Templars charged ahead, committing the Christians to an encounter. In the massacre that followed the Christians were almost annihilated, as Saracen reinforcements came in from over the border. de Ridfort and two of his Templars managed to escape, but des Moulins and many of his Hospitallers fell. Those not killed were taken away captive, to be sold no doubt in the slave markets of the Saracens. Roger des Moulins, hideously wounded by arrows before being eventually impaled



MAP 2

'Outremer'—Christendom 'beyond the seas'—in the thirteenth century

on a lance, salvaged at least one posthumous distinction from this his second great failure in two years: he was the only Master of his Order ever slain in battle in its eight centuries of warfare.[7] The spark lit, the conflagration of a Holy War would never be stifled now.

In expectation of the inevitable showdown, the Christians began assembling an army. By June 1187 the largest army the Kingdom of Jerusalem ever rallied—1200 knights, 1200 'turcopoles'* (light cavalry—

* From a Greek word meaning 'sons of Turks', a name originally applied to the sons of Christian men who had married Moslem women—those who once constituted the main body of the light cavalry.

mounted archers) and 18,000 infantrymen—were mustered under the new King, Guy de Lusignan, at Sephoria (Saffaria), six kilometres north of Nazareth and twenty-five kilometres west of Tiberias on the western shore of Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee).

Saladin was ready by the end of June, with 25,000 troops, including 12,000 Turkish mounted archers. He crossed the Jordan on the 26th, and captured Tiberias on 2 July.

The Christian host was still bitterly factionalized. In the recriminations following the recent debacle at the Spring of Cresson, for instance, Raymond of Tripoli was still being suspected of having 'set up' the two Masters of the Military Orders for their disaster. Divided by animosities like this, King Guy's army moved up across the scorched, treeless hills towards Tiberias the next morning, 3 July. Hot, waterless, suffering from thirst, and harassed by Saladin's mounted raiding parties, the King halted the army for the night, near a well that turned out to be dry, outside the village Lubieh, on a plateau above Tiberias and the lake sixteen kilometres ahead. Raymond of Tripoli, who had scouted ahead to within five kilometres of the lake, urged the King to march on to the water. Raymond, however, was suspect, and the King was persuaded to ignore his advice because the Templars said they could go no further. 'Ah, Lord God, the war is over. We are dead men. The Kingdom is finished!' Raymond cried, to no avail for the army stayed put. They spent a miserable night, tormented by thirst, their eyes smarting in the billowing smoke from the scrub fires the Moslems lit around them, and in their ears the sounds of the exultant prayers and songs of the Moslem horde below. Those who left the camp in search of water were quickly cut down by the Moslem force which moved up in the darkness to encircle the Christian camp.[8]

1187

King Guy decided that next morning the army would take a different route to the lake, via a northerly road past a twin-peaked hill known as the Horns of Hattin, said to have been the spot from where Christ had preached the Sermon on the Mount. The Moslems attacked at daybreak. In the bitter fighting which ensued some detachments managed to break through Saladin's lines, but most, including the King's party, were driven uphill by weight of Moslem numbers and by the scrub fires of the Moslems towards the Horns of Hattin above. Here they made their last stand, fighting so desperately that Saladin watching from below with El-Afdal could only marvel at their courage. The end came when the King's tent, now pitched at the summit, was toppled. Saladin came up to find Guy and his remaining barons collapsed from exhaustion. At his own tent, where he received their surrender, he treated them with kindness and dignity—passing the King a cup of rosewater chilled with snow from Mount Herman. The battle now over, the captives were marched off to Damascus. There the nobles were lodged comfortably while ransoms were negotiated, but the humbler prisoners were sold into slavery.[9]

Less fortunate were the Hospitallers and Templars who survived the Horns of Hattin—about 230 knights of the two orders in all. Saladin thought them too dangerous to be allowed to live to fight another day. As King observes,

> in the eyes of Saladin the Military Orders were the relentless enemies of his faith, savage and merciless fanatics who gave no quarter to their opponents and should receive none from him. As they had treated others, so should they also be treated.[10]

He handed them over for execution to a band of *Sufis*—Islamic fanatics. Only the Templars' Master, de Ridfort, whose rashness had lit the initial spark, was spared. Two days after the battle, on 6 July, the doomed Hospitallers and Templars were paraded and given the chance to save their lives by renouncing Christianity and embracing Islam. None accepted the taunting offer. Saladin's *Sufis* then set about their grisly task. In Runciman's words,

> they performed it with relish. When this was done Saladin moved his army away from Hattin; and the bodies on the battlefield were left to the jackals and the hyenas.[11]

No monument marks this place where the flower of the Christian army withered; but, as King remarks with some excusable hyperbole, 'there can be no spot in all the world more sacred to members of the Order of St John than the slopes of Kurn Hattin'.[12]

After Hattin the rest of the Kingdom of Jerusalem collapsed before Saladin like dominoes. On 8 July Acre opened its gates to him without resistance; other important towns—Haifa, Caesarea, Arsuf, Nazareth, Sephoria, Nablus, Sidon—followed. Some towns—Jaffa, Beirut, Ascalon—resisted for a few days then quickly gave in. Only Tyre, recently reinforced with fresh troops from Constantinople, held out and was bypassed. The Holy City itself was besieged on 20 September. It held out for a time, but as the inevitable collapse drew nigh it capitulated, since the commander of the city, Lord Balian of Ibelin, and the Patriarch Heraclius were anxious to avoid a similar spillage of blood to that which marked the Crusaders' entry eighty-eight years before. During the negotiations for the surrender Saladin asked Balian why, in view of *that* event, he should show forbearance. Balian replied that the defenders were desperate, and if not given honourable terms for surrender would destroy the city themselves and with it the shrines sacred to the Moslems.[13]

Saladin agreed to generous terms of surrender, then entered Jerusalem on 2 October. He had wanted a 100,000 dinar ransom for the entire Christian population of 20,000; but Balian argued that this amount could not be raised, and so he agreed instead to the latter's suggestion of 30,000 dinars for 7000 of the Christians. Balian emptied the city's treasuries to raise the latter sum, and was displeased to discover he must

force both Hospitallers and Templars to break open their well-stuffed treasure chests to make up the difference. The unfortunate 13,000 Christians not covered by the agreement had to find their own ransom. Most could not afford it. Saladin's brother, al-Adil, was moved to pity at the sight of the misery of Christians expecting to be sold into slavery. He asked his brother for 1000 Christians as slaves in reward for the services he had given; and the request granted, al-Adil liberated them on the spot. In the end Saladin released all the elderly and poor Christians without collecting any ransom. The ransoms finalized, the Christians were allowed to leave the city with all their movable goods. Their exodus from Jerusalem to the coastal cities from which they were to be repatriated to Christian ports elsewhere lasted forty days. They moved away in three main parties, the first conducted by the Templars, the second by the Hospitallers, and the third by Balian and Heraclius. Saladin's troops escorted them to the borders of Tripoli, a 'Latin' possession still in Crusader control. It was in Tripoli that the Hospitallers relocated their headquarters, or Convent, at the great coastal castle of Marqat (Margat, also called Marqab), the defence of which had been entrusted to them eighteen months earlier, in 1186. To Marqat they now brought their archives, equipment and treasures, which Saladin generously allowed them to remove from Jerusalem.[14]

Saladin also made a generous concession to the Hospitallers. He allowed ten of them to remain at their Hospital for the next year to finish nursing the serious cases who could not be evacuated with the other refugees. A legend of the Order gives one purported reason for his doing so. According to this legend, years before Saladin had crept into Acre to reconnoitre, disguised as a sick beggar seeking help. He was ushered to the hospital run by the Order, where he was treated kindly. To the distress of the hospitallers he showed no signs of recovery from whatever was afflicting him. In the end he told them only one thing could save his life—to be fed the heart (one version of the legend says it was the foot) of the Master's horse. Informed of this the Master gave the command for his steed to be killed. 'Better my horse die than one of our patients,' he is supposed to have said. Saladin, convinced now that Hospitallers put their patients' welfare before all else, then changed his mind about the food he wanted, thus sparing the unwitting sacrifice to the principle of charity. He then asked for a private audience with the Master, to whom he revealed his identity with these words before he slipped away:

> 'Know, O Master of the Knights Hospitallers, that I am none other than Saladin. We stand here alone, face to face. I am unarmed and at your mercy. But I know that I am in no danger. Men, even though Christians and Unbelievers, who can care for the sick and wounded so tenderly do not have as their leader one who could harm a guest within their gates. I shall know how to respect your Order henceforth'.[15]

The Hospitallers subsequently enjoyed relating this tale to each other in

self-congratulation. The honour, however, was rightfully Saladin's, despite his delivery of the survivors of Hattin into the eager hands of the *Sufis*. As Runciman concludes, 'at the Horns of Hattin and the gates of Jerusalem he had avenged the humiliation of the First Crusade, and he had shown how a man of honour celebrates his victory'.[16] His concession to the Hospitallers was consistent with that honour, and was the act of a reasonable, compassionate man.

The Crusader Kingdom had collapsed before Saladin, but his task was not yet complete. A few strongpoints still held out against him—Tyre and six frontier castles. In the north were the Templar strongholds Belfort (also called Beaufort) and Safad, and Chateauneuf and Belvoir (Beauvoir) held by Hospitallers. In the far southeast the two great desert castles, the Krak of the Hospitallers and Montreal of the Templars, also defied him. He besieged Tyre at the end of November 1187 but it resisted so spiritedly that at the end of December he withdrew to concentrate his energies against the remaining 'Latin' states centred on Tripoli and Antioch to the north. He failed in subduing them entirely, and withdrew again to the south to capture the remaining castles. One by one they fell to him: Chateauneuf had surrendered in December 1187; the Krak held out for fifteen months until October 1188; Safad gave in in December 1188; Belvoir in January and Montreal in May 1189; while Belfort, toughest nut of all to crack (significantly, it was still redoubtable enough to serve as a Palestine Liberation Organization centre of resistance to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in early June 1982), only surrendered in April 1190—over twenty-one months after the disaster at Hattin.[17] In each case Saladin acted with accustomed restraint and magnanimity, allowing the defenders to withdraw in honour and dignity to Tyre or Tripoli.

Now, by mid-1190, only Tyre stood against Saladin. He was fated not to see it fall, for it was to remain in Christian hands until 1243. In the meantime Saladin, who was to die fifty years before then, in 1193, had other preoccupations. He had to prepare himself for the Christian backlash from Europe.

2 *The Fall of Acre and the Loss of the Holy Land*

After their loss of Jerusalem in 1187 the Crusaders hung on until they were driven from the Holy Land after the fall of Acre in 1291. In that time their degree of control waxed and waned as successive crusades—nine in all from the First of 1096-99 to the Ninth of 1271-73—endeavoured to re-establish European dominance over Palestine. All the repeated effort was ultimately in vain, however; and for all their energy the Crusaders never succeeded in wielding their power over more than a few coastal cities once they had lost Jerusalem. 1291.

Any gains the Crusaders made in nudging their toehold further afield

than their coastal cities were costly. And nowhere was this more obvious than at Acre, which, as we have seen, had let Saladin in without a struggle when he appeared before its wall on 8 July 1187. When the Christian backlash from Europe which Saladin was expecting finally struck, Acre was hit first. King Guy, on his release from captivity following his disaster at the Horns of Hattin, had gone to Tripoli and had there raised a force of 700 knights and 9000 infantry. He commenced his quest to recapture his kingdom's territory at Acre, which he laid under siege in August 1189. The siege was to last for almost two years, and might never had succeeded in grinding down the Moslem garrison's will to resist but for the arrival of the Third Crusade under King Philip II of France and King Richard I (*'Coeur-de-lion'*—the Lion-Hearted') of England.

Richard I might have been less interested in ruling England than in waging war abroad, but he was, in Runciman's words, 'a gallant and splendid soldier'.[18] He was also a splendid military engineer, and his deployment of the besiegers' catapaults, grappling ladders, and scaling towers after he arrived on the scene at Acre in June 1191 was so effective that within a month the Moslem garrison was bargaining for a surrender. The capitulation of the city came on 12 July. The three Christian kings, Guy, Richard and Philip, and Duke Leopold of Austria (head of the army of the German Crusaders) occupied Acre that day. By this time some 124,000 Christian lives had been expended in regaining it. These were apart from the lives of the Moslem captives, which were still forfeit. *Their* fate was sealed when Saladin proved difficult in the bargaining over the final terms of surrender. Richard had them led out on 20 August to within sight of the Saracen front lines. There they were killed, 2700 men, women and children, by Richard's own English soldiers who are said to have enjoyed their job of butchering, thanking God for this chance of avenging comrades fallen in the siege. Saladin, characteristically, took no reprisals against the 1600 or so prisoners he still held who had been taken after the Horns of Hattin.[19]

Richard by now was in command of all the Christian forces. His bitter rival, Philip II, had returned home, leaving the Duke of Burgundy as his representative. The Christian and Saracen armies skirmished around Palestine for the next fifteen months, with the troops under Richard's personal leadership inflicting signal damage which showed that Saladin *could* be beaten. One of his most notable successes was at the battle of Arsuf on 7 September 1191. Here his knights put Saladin's army to flight after the Hospitallers, who acted in defiance of his orders—they charged before he gave the command—led the charge against the Saracen cavalry. Arsuf was a morale-booster for the Christian forces as it was the first defeat they had inflicted on Saladin in the field since Montgisard, fourteen years before.[20]

Throughout Richard's Palestine campaigns the Master of the Hospitallers, Garnier de Nablus, seems to have been his confidant, ad-

viser and unofficial chief-of-staff. De Nablus, from a Crusader family of Flemish origin, was formally an English subject and the third Anglo-Norman Master of the Order (after Gilbert d'Assailly and Roger des Moulins). He was one of the most outstanding knights within the Order. After having served terms as Castellan of Jibelin, Bailiff of Syria and Grand Preceptor of the Hospital in Jerusalem, he had been appointed Prior of England in 1184. His elevation to Master followed the resignation of the previous Master, an unpopular figure with insufficient Palestine experience, and came about because his brethren wanted a superior thoroughly familiar with the Holy Land. As soon as he was elected he departed for the Holy Land, accompanying Richard from Marseilles as his adviser on oriental matters. He was with Richard at Acre; and at the battle of Arsuf he had vigorously protested to the King for holding back the cavalry charge that the Hospitallers broke ranks to lead. Garnier de Nablus died the following year, shortly before Richard quit the Holy Land. Historians of the English Priory have customarily vaunted the English Masters of the Order, particularly de Nablus, the 'only Prior of England who was ever elected to be Master of the Hospital'.[21] However, like his two Anglo-Norman Predecessors, he could only have been nominally English: they were from Norman families whose main interests remained in France, they possibly did not speak the English vernacular of the day, and they spent little time in England. Living most of their lives in the service of the Order elsewhere, their allegiances were to the Order and to the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Richard's military successes against Saladin notwithstanding, the English warrior king never really came near to the goal he yearned to reach—the recapture of the Holy City. The nearest he ever got to the walls of the city was in January 1192, when his army camped at Beit Nuba, about twenty kilometres to the northwest. He was all for pressing on and laying siege, but wiser counsel prevailed:

> The knights that knew the country, the Hospitallers, the Templars, the native-born barons, took a wiser and a sadder view. They told King Richard that even if he penetrated over the muddy hills through the storms to Jerusalem and even if he could contain Saladin's army there, there was a Saracen army from Egypt encamped on the hills outside. He would be caught between the two. And if he captured Jerusalem, they added, what then? The visiting Crusaders when they had paid their pilgrimage would all return home to Europe; and the native soldiery was not numerous enough to hold it against the forces of united Islam. Richard was convinced. After five days' hesitation he sounded the retreat.[22]

It was obvious that for all Richard's tactical skill, his personal courage and inspiring generalship in the field, and the high admiration he evoked from Saladin, he would never recapture Jerusalem let alone the rest of Palestine. He sued for peace instead, and began negotiating with Saladin for some settlement that might satisfy both Christians and Moslems. One of his more fanciful suggestions was that al-Adil, Saladin's brother,

whom the Crusaders liked and who had been merciful in securing the release of a thousand Christians of Jerusalem, should marry Richard's sister, Joanna of Sicily, and that the couple should then jointly preside over Jerusalem, with Christians having full right of entry. These propositions came to naught when Joanna refused to contemplate the idea of marrying a Moslem—whether or not a special papal dispensation to do so could be arranged. In the end a concord *was* reached: the coastal cities as far south as Jaffa would be given to the Christians; Christian pilgrims were to be given access to Jerusalem to visit their holy places; and Moslems and Christians were to be allowed to pass through each other's lands. The treaty was signed on 2 September 1192; and afterwards parties of the Crusaders were allowed into the Holy City to pay homage at the Christian sacred sites. Richard himself declined this privilege: if he could not control the city, presumably, he had no wish to enter it. He left the Holy Land soon after, leaving most of it as it had been when he had arrived sixteen months previously—securely in Moslem hands.[23]

As the fortunes of the Christian armies alternately ebbed and flowed during the century of the first three crusades, the duties of the Hospitallers had grown increasingly more military; and all the while their knightly role developed to the diminution of their hospitalling. As early as 1177 Pope Alexander III had seen fit to point out clearly to the incoming Master, Roger des Moulins, that the primary purpose of the Order was to dispense charity. He reminded him of the salutary principle his illustrious antecedent in office, Raymond du Puy, had observed—that knights of the Order would draw their swords only when their standard was raised in defence of the Kingdom or in the siege of a pagan city. But the drift from charitable to military preoccupations had continued, and quickened with the loss of Jerusalem. On their expulsion from the city, the Hospitallers lost their principal medical institution. They established another hospital after the Convent was reorganized at Marqat in 1187-88, but in the meantime they were without their main charity. In that interval they existed, like their Templar rivals, as a military order. Thereafter the balance between charitable and armed service was never restored.[24]

The change in emphasis was perhaps exemplified by the choice of Garnier de Nablus as Master in 1191. Garnier's life was an indication that the Order of the Hospital of St John was now overwhelmingly preoccupied with soldiering. His whole career had been military and administrative: as Castellan commanding various desert outposts for the Order and as Prior in England he was known for knightly deeds rather than for ministering to the sick and poor. The Master's position among the fighting barons who accompanied King Richard, his campaigning with the King, and his command of the King's most impatient warriors—the knights of his Order—were all symptoms of a shift that had been steadily going on since the Hospitallers had adopted their military role.

The Order had risen to prominence because of the Crusades and the need to uphold the Kingdom of Jerusalem. As its duties became more and more enmeshed with the twin tasks of assisting successive crusades and shoring up the Kingdom, its military role had overshadowed its charitable and religious roles. Yet the Order never entirely lost sight of the latter. Its cloisters in monasteries across Europe never ceased echoing to the tread of devout feet. And wherever its fortunes found it fighting—Jerusalem, Tripoli, Tyre, Acre—its aid to the sick and the poor continued to exercise its energies, in the Holy Land no less than in the Priories and Commanderies of Europe.

The hospices and infirmaries the Hospitallers continued to run were many. Hume, the American historian of the Order, whose chief interest was its medical work, described a score of them as far apart as Portugal and Poland, all dating from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Some were shelters built for pilgrims along roads across mountains wildernesses; others were at river crossings. Some were infirmaries for the needy poor set up by town corporations or individual benefactors, who then entrusted their running to the Order. Some were general hospitals like that in Jerusalem, others were more specialized institutions for lepers. And even where the Order maintained a monastery or castle, part would be set aside for the reception of the sick and poor. Whatever the nature of these establishments, they would all be called on from time to time to provide medical care: 'when epidemics visited Europe their victims were admitted . . . and were nursed and treated according to the medical lights of the time'.[25] Hume also points out that a hint of the extent of the early charitable work of the Hospitallers can be gained through the names that have stuck to the places where they maintained their establishments. Across Europe place names like 'spital', 'spitell', 'infirmier', 'ospidale', 'ospedaletto' and 'ospizio' abound, no less than the more familiar variations on 'St John' itself—San Juan, Saint Jean, San Giovanni—which suggest some earlier association with the ministrations of the Hospitallers.

The military emphasis continued during the six crusades that followed Richard *Coeur-de-lion's*. None of the later crusades came anywhere as near to success as his, and so without the infusion of victories that previous crusades had provided the subsequent history of the 'Latin' Kingdom was 'one long tragedy until the final crash came just a hundred years afterwards'.[26] In the meantime the Kingdom was doomed through the combination of the absenteeism of the kings, who spent their time in their realms elsewhere, their diminished authority—they had little left to rule—and the perennial internecine quarrels of the local Christian barons. More and more the maintenance of the Kingdom rested on the Hospitallers, the Templars and the Teutonic Knights (established as an independent order in 1198), until they and the Kingdom were almost indistinguishable.

The only halt to the downward slide of the Kingdom came in 1228-29 with the Sixth Crusade, mounted by the Emperor Frederick II. At the end of his crusade Frederick, by taking advantage of the prevailing factionalism among the Saracens, was able to bring off an astounding diplomatic coup—nothing less than the recovery of the Holy City for Christendom, together with a corridor of land through to the coast. It seems remarkable that such an outcome could be obtained diplomatically rather than through the accustomed means of costly battles followed by massacres. Even more amazing is that Frederick was excommunicated at the time. In the final analysis that possibly worked to his favour, since the Military orders would have little truck with him, leaving him free to manoeuvre in his own eccentric way among the shoals of competing Moslem interests. He ended by negotiating a ten year truce with al-Kamil, the Sultan of Egypt then in control of Jerusalem. Surprisingly their arrangement for the city lasted longer than that, until 1244, when another set of great disasters again removed Jerusalem from Christian control. Another seven centuries were to pass before the next Christian army would enter the city.[27]

The decade and a half of harmony lingering on from the concord of Frederick and al-Kamil ended, staccatissimo, in July 1244 when a horde of Khwarismian Turks broke into Jerusalem. Numbering perhaps 10,000, they sacked the city, desecrated the Christian holy places, killed a couple of thousand Christians, and drove out those they did not kill. They were storming their way south through Palestine at the invitation of the Sultan Ayub of Egypt. He had sought them out as allies in his own dynastic struggles, and they were to serve him again within several months.[28]

1244. In October 1244 Ayub sent an army of 5000 élite Egyptian troops, together with the Khwarismian horde, against a Christian army at Gaza. The Sultan's force was under the command of a young emir, Rukn ad-Din Baibars, a Mameluke (that is, belonging to a dynasty descended from white slaves brought into Egypt by the Arabs) and himself a former slave who had risen because he was immensely strong, shrewd, able and ruthless. As we will see, he eventually became Sultan himself. The Christian force at Gaza was the largest fielded since the Horns of Hattin. It contained 1200 horsemen, half of them provided by the Hospitallers and Templars, with perhaps another 6000 troops; and, irony of ironies, the Christians were supported by a further contingent of 2000 Syrian Moslems, who had their own reasons for joining Christians against the Sultan. Like Hattin it was a disaster. Almost the whole Christian army was destroyed. The slain amounted to 5000, including the Master of the Templars, the Archbishop of Tyre, 325 knights and 200 turcopoles of the Hospitallers. The Syrians fared no better from their co-religionists: their tally of dead was 1700. Another 800, including the Master of the Hospitallers, were taken captive. Only the patriarch of Jerusalem, thirty-

three Templars, twenty-six Hospitallers, three Teutonic Knights and a handful of others managed to scramble back to safety at Ascalon.[29] From now on the downhill slide of the Kingdom of Jerusalem could not be arrested.

There were still some disasters to come. One was in the far north at Antioch, which had long been the commercial centre of the 'Latin' possessions in the East. In early 1268 the Sultan Baibars, who as a young emir twenty-four years previously had exemplarily crushed the Christians at Gaza, rampaged north out of Egypt. By 14 May he was over 800 kilometres away from home and before the gates of Antioch. On 18 May his siege weapons breached the walls, and his men poured into the unfortunate city. As Runciman observes, 'even the Moslem chroniclers were shocked by the carnage that followed'.[30] The city gates were shut so none might escape; then the killing started. How many died in this city of 100,000 is not clear; but those who were not killed were sold into slavery. So plentiful were slaves as a result that the going price for a boy fell to twelve dirhem (a small silver coin of low denomination) and for a girl to five. Every soldier in the invading army acquired at least one.[31]

As in all such misfortunes, the Hospitallers had their share of the suffering. In Antioch it was the turn of the nuns of the Order. A convent of them had been established there in 1260. As Baibars' men approached the convent in their systematic search of the city, the Mother Superior is said to have called the Sisters together to warn them of what they might expect from their captors. Suicide, she said, was an unforgiveable alternative to what would inevitably follow, so she invited them to mutilate themselves so hideously that the soldiers would kill them outright rather than rape them first. They then followed her example by cutting off their noses and shredding their cheeks with their scissors. They now sat and 'awaited the glorious crown of martyrdom', which, a seventeenth century French historian of the Order assures us, 'mercifully was not long delayed to them'.[32] With grisly deeds like that inflicted on them over the centuries, it is scarcely surprising that the Order cherished its dead.

What the Mameluke Baibars left incomplete was finished off by his successors. In 1285 the Sultan Qalawun laid under siege the great coastal castle of the Hospitallers, Marqat, under siege. Since the loss of Jerusalem to Saladin ninety-eight years before, Marqat had periodically been the seat of government of the Order, sharing this honour with Acre. Hospitallers wherever they were, in the Holy Land or the Priories of Europe, had looked towards Marqat with great respect, and with pride in its stately Chapter House, or meeting hall of the Convent, in its church and hospital, in its imposing outline and impressive dimensions, and in its strategic location and solid defences at the end of a rocky peninsula. Now its 200 knights and 'serjeants' (fighting brothers) had to fight for it with their lives. They withstood the siege for five weeks before the undermined walls collapsed. The few Hospitallers left by this time were allow-

ed to leave honourably for Tripoli, which itself fell in 1289. The Sultan died the next year, and so his son Khalil inherited the task of administering the *coup de grâce* to the 'Latin' Kingdom by smashing its last stronghold—Acre.[33]

1291

Acre, as well as being the final base of the Kingdom, had been the Convent of the Order for the past six years, since the fall of Marqat. So prominent was this function that the city of over 30,000 inhabitants was now most often referred to as 'St John of Acre'. On 5 April 1291 Khalil arrived to invest its walls with his siege machines. It had a garrison of 700 knights and 14,000 infantry under the command of the Master of the Templars, William de Beaujeu. Included in this number were 240 Knights Templars and 140 Knights of the Hospitallers under their Master, John de Villiers, the former Prior of France. All available knights had been summoned from Europe to assist, including a contingent of English knights under their Prior, William de Henley. Outside the city were Khalil's 100,000-strong army and ninety-two battering engines. The walls began crumbling on 4 May, but that day King Henry de Lusignan, jointly King of both Jerusalem and Cyprus, arrived from Cyprus with 200 knights and 500 infantry. On 15 May the Saracens burnt the props in one of their mines beneath the walls, and a portion of wall collapsed. Over the next two days the defenders managed to keep the invaders from flooding through the gap, while inflicting heavy losses on the invaders. The cost was great, however—2000 Christian soldiers killed.[34]

Early next morning the garrison was dismayed to see King Henry and his troops out on the harbour, setting sail for Cyprus. The last ruling head of the 'Latin' Kingdom was abandoning what was left of it to its fate. That came the next day. The Saracen horde broke through the gap soon after dawn. The defenders retreated towards the harbour fighting all the way.[35] Few Hospitallers survived, and none of the English contingent. The Master of the Hospitallers, de Villiers, was one of the more fortunate: his manservant saw him fall and dragged him out of the mêlée and aboard one of the boats before returning to help another six knights of the Order aboard. They were the only Hospitallers to survive the fall of Acre. Some 10,000 inhabitants of the city survived to be made prisoners, but a familiar ritual now unfolded: the Sultan ordered all the men among the captives to be slain and the women and children sold into slavery.[36]

With Acre gone, the remaining Christian towns and strongholds surrendered or were abandoned soon after. Within weeks Tyre, Tripoli, Sidon, Beirut and several lesser fortifications were within Khalil's hands. There was no more crusading, and no more Kingdom of Jerusalem (though Henry de Lusignan's successors as Kings of Cyprus continued styling themselves as 'Kings of Jerusalem' as well). Nor for that matter was there any more 'Hospital of Jerusalem'. As the Master de Villiers sailed away the military Hospitallers were leaving their birthplace forever.

After two centuries of fighting, during which the blood of thousands of Hospitallers and thousands of their foes was shed from one end of the Holy Land to the other, something was wrong. Why had all the prayers, the gallantry, the self-sacrifice, the dedication to principle, the devotion to duty, and the certitude of doing God's will achieved nothing?

Historians of the Crusades, and of the Latin Kingdom and the Military Orders which were outgrowths from them, have various answers. From a military standpoint the Crusades were never thorough enough: they captured the coastal cities but left the equally important line of cities in the interior—Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Baalbek and Damascus—with the Moslems, thus allowing them to maintain launching pads for repeated forays into the Kingdom.

Then there is the explanation give by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who see the Crusades as a failed European colonial adventure. 'The stirring march of knights' and Pope Urban II's offer of 'remission of sins for all those who enlisted in the holy war' were not, according to this view, simply religious phenomena. Behind them were practical materialistic imperatives—land hunger, crop failures and famines in Europe—which drove Europeans overseas to Palestine, where they hoped their economic wants would be appeased. In this, the first of Europe's numerous colonial outpourings of its people, religion was both the rationalization and the gloss for what was done. Unfortunately for the colonisers, however, they found a people too numerous, too vigorous and too dedicated to their own causes to be subdued for long, especially by colonisers so far away from their sources of nourishment in Europe. As a solution to Europe's economic ills the Crusades were therefore misconceived. 'In fact,' Engels facetiously argues, 'if Richard Coeur-de-Lion and Phillip Augustus had introduced free trade instead of getting mixed up in the Crusades we should have been spared five hundred years of misery and stupidity'.[37]

Another explanation lies in the Crusaders themselves. They came from many national and ethnic backgrounds, and so it was to be expected that divisions between them would become more pronounced under stress. But these were not the only divisions. Serious splits also developed between the newly arrived Crusaders and the second-generation, acclimatized, Latin population. Then there were the perennial rifts within the feudal baronage who provided the leadership of the Crusaders. Independent, egotistical, arrogant, self-seeking and fractious, they only united under pressure of crises that threatened them all. Nor are the Military Orders blameless in this respect, for they were as often bitterly antagonistic towards each other as they were towards the Moslems.[38]

Other practical considerations compounded these problems. The financial cost of mounting crusades was so crippling there could be little hope of return even if plunder was to be permitted. Few kings or princes therefore were prepared to sponsor them. Leadership was also a problem. Successful crusades needed to be led by successful monarchs, like

Richard of England and Philip Augustus of France; but their countries were loth to let them go for long, and in any case they knew that prolonged absence encouraged usurpers. In view of such difficulties, then, it is surprising that the crusading movement and the Kingdom it fostered should have survived so long.[39]

In addition to contemplating the reasons why the Crusades failed it is salutary to consider some of their ill effects. Among these were their consequences for the Arab world and for Islam. The intrusion of the Crusaders upset the equilibrium of the Middle East. They weakened the Arab Caliphate, making it more susceptible to incursions by Turkish and Mongol invaders. Furthermore, they seemed to foster a spirit of intolerance in what had previously been a tolerant faith. The fanaticism of the Crusaders evoked a response in kind. Then, too, there were the effects on Eastern Christendom. The Crusades succeeded in driving a wedge further into the cleft between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity, and between Western Europe and Byzantium. And in the end they succeeded in leaving much of the latter as it had *not* previously been, under Moslem domination.[40]

Clearly, it is insufficient to talk of the Crusades and the Military Orders solely in laudatory terms. Unfortunately that is what histories of the Order of St John have customarily done. While it is perhaps understandable that the inheritors of long and ancient lineages should look back at their progenitors with pride and admiration, it is to obscure and misrepresent the past if this is done uncritically. Notions like 'valour', 'courage', 'gallantry', 'dedication', 'faith' and 'sacrifice' may well be fine terms with which to inspire each new generation towards idealism; but whether it is most fitting to cite the Crusades in exemplification of these virtues is arguable.

The Crusades are indeed useful reference points, but they have their limitations as a source of inspiration. Perhaps we should let Runciman, whose great three-volume history on the Crusaders treats them both sympathetically and objectively, have the final say:

> The triumphs of the Crusades were triumphs of faith. But faith without wisdom is a dangerous thing . . . The historian as he gazes back across the centuries at their gallant story must find his admiration overcast by sorrow at the witness that it bears to the limitations of human nature. There was so much courage and so little honour, so much devotion and so little understanding. High ideals were besmirched by cruelty and greed, enterprise and endurance by a blind and narrow self-righteousness; and the Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost.[41]

Perhaps the modern orders of St John would be as well advised to look to their own shorter but more honourable histories as to the Crusades for their source of inspiration.

3 *Cyprus and Rhodes*

When the Master, John de Villiers, and his six remaining knights sailed away from Acre, leaving behind them the numerous corpses of their brethren and the total annihilation of all they had lived and died for, they headed for Cyprus, about 260 kilometres to the north-west. Their Order, of course, had not lost everything, for in the nations of Europe it was now a major feudal landholder; its Priors and senior knights often held high State office in addition to their duties within the Order; they were at once ecclesiastical and secular princes, having both spiritual and territorial domains to superintend. In short the Order had become and would continue to be an institution comprising one of the major bulwarks of the feudal system. Although it might have lost its original *raison d'être* through being expelled from the Holy Land, it had in the meantime found other preoccupations to sustain it elsewhere. The fugitive Master did not therefore flee to Cyprus as a mere refugee; rather, he was more like a chairman of directors of a multi-national corporation in search of a new head office.

Cyprus had been a base for the Crusaders for the past century. Richard I had landed there with his fleet in May 1191, *en route* to Acre during the Third Crusade. He had received a hostile reception from its unpopular self-proclaimed 'emperor', Isaac Ducas Comnenus, who had separated the island from the Byzantine Empire. Richard therefore proceeded to subdue the 'empire', which he did in three weeks assisted by Isaac's grateful subjects. The booty he was subsequently able to expropriate from the treasury of the fallen 'emperor' was huge, and no doubt was of great service in the wars he was about to mount against Saladin. He sold off the administration of the island to the Templars, but after a time they no longer wanted it because of their troubles with its Greek inhabitants; and so in 1192 he solved two problems together by allowing the Templars to sell the island to the King of Jerusalem, Guy de Lusignan, who was proving to be an embarrassment to him at Acre. Guy thus became simultaneously the monarch of two kingdoms, Jerusalem and Cyprus, both of which subsequently passed to his brother Amalric. Thereafter members of the Lusignan dynasty were generally monarchs of both kingdoms. It was the latest of the dynasty, King Henry de Lusignan, who at Acre had abandoned what was left of the Kingdom of Jerusalem by fleeing back to Cyprus on 16 May 1291.[42] By following King Henry to Cyprus, then, the Hospitallers were retreating to but another of the Crusader states, the king of which was their own king wearing another crown, a monarch and ally for whom they had bled and their brethren died.

Henry could scarcely refuse to extend the hospitality the Master now sought from him. The Order already had a Commandery on the south of the island, ten kilometres west of Limassol, the chief port. This was the

castle of Colossi, presented to the Hospitallers by King Hugh I, Henry's great-grandfather. de Villiers now re-established the Convent of the Order, and immediately summoned a meeting of its Chapter General, or supreme council, to consider their future.[43]

The governmental structure of the Order was complex. The Master was the supreme executive officer. He had to be of noble birth, with exacting proof of nobility applied to both branches of his lineage. He had to be a knight and the son of a knight and born of legitimate marriage. He was elected for life through a complicated procedure designed to prevent multiple candidates and intrigue: a Chapter General summoned to elect a new Master chose first a 'Commander of Chapter'; he selected three brethren, one a knight, one a priest and one a serving brother; they selected a fourth, and the four then chose a fifth and so on until the number thirteen was reached—representing Christ and his twelve apostles; the thirteen then elected the new Master. He then had almost absolute power, but was ultimately answerable to the Chapter General, the supreme legislative authority of the Order.[44]

The Chapter General was summoned at the discretion of the Master. It consisted of the Bailiffs, the high officers of the Order in the Holy Land, and the Priors or heads of its provincial Branches—its bases in Europe. In this way it was intended to represent the general membership of the Order. It normally met every five years, though in emergencies it gathered more often. The meeting at Limassol was one of the latter. It agreed that the Convent should remain based on Cyprus for the time being, so as to be near Palestine and thus well placed to return there as soon as the opportunity arose. It resolved to establish a new hospital for the poor and for the pilgrims, who still travelled to the Holy Land despite the difficulties in doing so. And to protect the pilgrims from pirates and Moslem raiders it decided to provide a fleet of galleys.[45]

MARITIME MONASTIC MEDICAL.

This last decision led the Order to pursue a significant new vocation, as a naval power, and in the centuries ahead the Knights Hospitallers became as renowned as a Mediterranean naval force as they had once been as a military force in Palestine. The Order had been operating its own large vessels for well over a century, though these had probably been merchantmen and troop carriers rather than fighting ships. It seems to have assumed its new role as naval guardian of the Mediterranean soon after the transfer to Cyprus. Its first foes were the Barbary corsairs whose galleys preyed on the shipping of the eastern Mediterranean. Many a pilgrim ended his life chained to the oars of a pirate galley. The Order was proud that now the pirates were finding themselves hefting the oars of Christian galleys. Eventually the Order became as great a naval power as Venice, whose ships then ruled the Mediterranean. Its naval strength developed quickly after it moved to Rhodes in 1310, and it was soon powerful enough to engage the Moslem fleets as well as the pirate galleys. In 1334 its ten war galleys destroyed the Turkish fleet in the Aegean. In

1344 a naval force of the Order captured Smyrna (Izmir) on the central west coast of Turkey, and held on to it until 1402, when Tamerlaine took it from them. Then in 1440 they inflicted a crushing defeat on an Egyptian fleet sent against them.[46]

Cyprus presented various problems the Order had not had to face before, and so it had not long been settled there when it began looking round for a base of its own. One difficulty was that the Order was now no longer on a military frontier, and therefore lost the urgency of purpose that had driven it through the military crises of yesteryear. Fighting men needed more to sustain them than working among the sick, or contemplating the agenda for their next Chapter General. At the same time the recent defeats and losses in the Holy Land had brought in their wake a humiliating loss of prestige in the eyes of Europe. And that had other consequences:

> It was easy to say that the Order was no longer fulfilling the objects of its existence now that the Holy Land was lost, and their broad acres and great wealth were a temptation difficult for impecunious governments to resist.[47]

Not surprisingly, monarchs with large ambitions like Edward I of England, with his perennial campaigns against the Scots and the Welsh to fund, began casting covetous glances at the Order. Edward endeavoured to appropriate the funds of the English Priory, justifying himself by saying that moneys raised for the defence of the Holy Land would now be better employed maintaining the poor of England rather than keeping the knights in luxury in Cyprus. He only desisted after Pope Boniface VIII made veiled threats of excommunication by pointing out that the Hospitallers enjoyed his special protection.[48]

A further problem related to the independence of the Order. On Cyprus, or indeed in any State where its presence depended on the grace and favour of a secular government, it lacked the same freedom it had enjoyed previously, when it had loomed so large in the affairs of the 'Latin' States and had the one unambiguous task in upholding the Kingdom of Jerusalem. It became obvious that on Cyprus it was dealing with a different sort of state—an island kingdom with discrete territorial boundaries, a well-established, century-old ruling dynasty and a proprietorial attitude towards its domain. In such a state and with such rulers there was the danger that the Order would be unable to preserve the neutrality it customarily observed in the struggles between the European nations. There was the danger that the State would try to impose policies and priorities which the Order would find unacceptable. There was a danger that if the Order became too closely identified with one government its ability to assist other Christian governments against the Infidel would be impeded. There was also a danger that, having become too entangled in the affairs of one state, its properties and revenues in other and possibly rival states would be jeopardized.[49]

The solution to all these problems was for the Order to find its own territory over which it could exercise sole control. The occasion to do so arose in the years after the turn of the new century. A Genoese pirate, one Vignolo dei Vignoli, visited the new Master of the Order, Fulk de Villaret (the twenty-fifth Master, 1305-19), who had succeeded John de Villiers in 1293. He suggested that between them they could conquer the Dodecanese archipelago (between Crete and Turkey), of which Rhodes was the largest island. The island group at the time was within the domain of the Byzantine Empire, though local governors exercised a fair degree of autonomy. With the approval of Pope Clement V, de Villaret agreed to the scheme.[50]

A fleet of the Order's ships, supplemented by Genoese galleys invaded Rhodes in 1306. The Greek garrison put up a spirited defence, but, through treachery, their great castle at Philermo fell to the invaders in the November. The main city of the island, also called Rhodes, held out for another two years. It only then gave in because a relief party from Constantinople had been driven ashore on Cyprus during a storm and failed to arrive. The Rhodian commander had bargained for his life by agreeing to negotiate the surrender of the city. The Order now set up shop anew on the island, which, with its secure city, fine harbour and seven nearby islands (Karki, Alimnia, Symi, Episcopi, Nisyros, Kos, Kalimnos, Leros and Kasteloro), was one of the most advantageous strongpoints in the Levant. Now settled on Rhodes they quickly erected the buildings that had been their hallmark elsewhere. Prominent among these was their hospital. The first hospital they built eventually became too small and in 1440 was replaced with a larger institution. With its staff of specialist physicians, surgeons and nurses this became one of the most famous hospitals of the late Middle Ages.[51]

Historians of the Order have customarily ignored or glossed over the conquest of Rhodes, through which the Hospitallers became at once a territorial power and a sovereign State on top of their previous roles as a charitable military Order. The shyness of the historians is not hard to understand, for the episode was one of the Order's least honourable. Whitworth Porter, writing in 1871, endeavoured to justify it with the claim that the Byzantine governors of Rhodes had been allowing Ottoman traders and Barbary corsairs to operate from the island. It was, he assures us, 'to repel this noxious swarm and to destroy their nest . . . that the white cross banner of the order [was] waved over the ramparts of Rhodes'.[52] Sixty years later King, the most eminent of the Order's English historians, overlooked the acquisition of the island altogether, declaiming to the effect that 'the deeds of the Hospitallers at Rhodes form one of the noblest chapters in the glorious history of their Order'.[53] It apparently did not occur to him that the act of outright aggression by which they gained the island could be seen as ignoble. It was left to Runciman, thirty years later, to put the acquisition in its true perspective:

> The conquest, achieved at the expense of the Christian Greeks, was hailed in the West as a great Crusading triumph; and indeed it gave to the Hospital [lers] new vigour and the means to carry on [their] appointed task. But the wretched Rhodians had to wait for more than six centuries before they recovered their liberty.[54]

It was not until 1945, at the end of the Second World War, that Rhodes came under Greek rule again.

Rhodes was not the only gain the Order made at this time, for they suddenly found themselves to be masters of the estates of their rival order, the Templars, who were disbanded in 1312. The Templars, like the Hospitallers, had regrouped on Cyprus, but unlike the Hospitallers they could not adjust to the condition of warlessness. They were wealthier than the Hospitallers, having been the leading bankers and money-lenders of the East. As a purely military order they lacked the tradition and reputation for charity the Hospitallers had built up. Instead they had acquired a reputation for arrogance and selfishness. The haughty, cold and disdainful Templar, Brian de Bois-Gilbert, portrayed in Sir Walter Scott's novel, *Ivanhoe*, would have been a character easily recognised by Europeans of the Middle Ages. Deprived of their military function the Templars subsided into a life of luxury and indolence. The contemporary expression 'drunk like a Templar' was perhaps a popular way of saying the same thing. They were also rumoured to have developed heretical beliefs, and to be conducting blasphemous and obscene rites within their castle walls. Not surprisingly, their wealth made secular governments envious, and so it was only a matter of time before someone would attempt to dismember them.

The first concerted action against the Templars came in 1307, when Philip IV arrested all within the Order then in France, sequestered their French possessions, and with the connivance of the Pope, Clement V, had them tried for heresy. Under torture a number 'confessed', and 113 were burnt at the stake. Similar actions against the Templars proceeded in other countries over the next few years until 1312, when Pope Clement issued a decree abolishing the Order altogether and turning over their wealth and property to the Hospitallers for use in defending the faith in the East. The Templars' wretched Grand Master, James de Molay, after prolonged torture, numerous confessions and recantations, was finally roasted to death over a bed of charcoal in Paris in March 1314. By this time the Hospitallers were in possession of some but by no means all the Templar estates. They possibly only got a fraction of what was intended for them, for the rich spoils had proved too tempting to others. Great barons had quickly annexed many Templar estates; and the descendents of those who had donated to Templar property also wished to claim back what their ancestors had given. Then, too, the costs of trying and imprisoning the disgraced knigths could be recouped from their sequestered estates and so, not surprisingly, 'the kings throughout Europe found that

these costs had been remarkably high'.[55] The Hospitallers consequently had to spend several decades in protracted litigation to secure what was left of the Templar property.[56]

Having taken Rhodes, the Hospitallers, as we have seen, became a sovereign territorial state. Certain organizational changes now occurred, and the Order began taking on the forms that would distinguish it as a sovereign order for nearly five centuries.

The first change took account of a situation that had been in existence for some time—a restructuring of the Order according to national and ethnic divisions. The Hospitallers had always comprised a cosmopolitan body of people of diverse linguistic background. Those who served it in the East were generally sent out from Priories in their homelands, so they naturally grouped themselves in the Holy Land according to language and nationality. This grouping now received formal recognition through the division of the order into eight *Langues* (Tongues) or 'Languages'. Each *Langue* consisted of a number of Priories, which were divided into Bailiwicks (presided over by Bailiffs), which were in turn divided into Commanderies (presided over by Commanders and Preceptors). The eight *Langues* and the Priories they contained were:

(i) Provence—Priories of St Gilles and Toulouse;
(ii) Auvergne—Priory of Auvergne;
(iii) France—Priories of France, Aquitaine and Champagne;
(iv) Italy—Priories of Lombardy, Rome, Venice, Pisa, Capua and Messina;
(v) Aragon—Priories of Aragon, Catalonia and Navarre;
(vi) England—Priories of England, Scotland and Ireland (the Priory at Torphichen in Scotland was a subsidiary of the English Priory);
(vii) Germany—Priories of Germany (which embraced Switzerland, Alsace and the Netherlands as well as Germany), Bohemia (Austria), Hungary, Poland, and Dacia (embracing Norway, Sweden and Denmark)); and
(viii) Castile—Priories of Castile, Leon and Portugal.[57]

Related to the *Langues* were a new set of institutions called *Auberges* (inns, hostels), buildings which served not only as quarters for the knights of each *Langue* but also as places for training the novices sent to Rhodes by the home Priories, and as clubs and meeting places—as do the colleges of, say, Oxford University. Each *Langue* had its own *Auberge* on Rhodes and later on Malta, and each *Auberge* maintained rooms for visitors and pilgrims from the Priories of its *Langue*.[58] The *Auberges* of France, Spain, Provence, Italy and Auvergne still remain on Rhodes, and are a point of interest on the 'package tours' run by travel agencies specializing in 'Order of St John tours'.

Also related to the *Langues* was the division of labour between the high officials of the Order. Thus, the head of the *Langue* of Provence

5 The *Auberge* of the English *Langue*, Rhodes

bore the title 'Grand Preceptor' and had responsibility for the financial affairs of the Order. Control of its military affairs was with the 'Grand Marshall', who was head of the *Langue* of Auvergne. Similarly, the head of the *Langue* of France was the 'Hospitaller', in charge of the central infirmary. Italy provided the 'Admiral', responsible for transport and the maintenance of communications between Rhodes and the various Priories. Aragon supplied the 'Grand Conservator', in charge of the commissariat and the provision of supplies. England provided the 'Turcopolier', who controlled the Order's mounted forces and coastguard services. The 'Grand Bailiff', who controlled the fortified outposts, came from Germany. The 'Chancellor', who was responsible for the 'chancery' with its duties relating to administration and maintenance of records, was always an appointment from Castile.[59]

In this way, as befitted a sovereign territorial State, the Order took on bureaucratic appurtenances and assumed an organizational structure appropriate to its polyglot character. As a discrete polity it was something of a freak—not only a multi-national enterprise sustained by the membership it recruited from its branch offices, but also a sovereign State in its own right, occupying its own island domain, and all this under the patronage of the Pope, to whom it owed fealty. Its form of government was similarly unique. It was ruled by a princely autocrat who

had been elected by his aristocratic peers and was bound by the Statutes they formulated. Yet it was hardly democratic. The Master, or as he came to be known on Rhodes, the Grand Master, has been likened to the Doge of Venice. Though aristocratic, having the status of a cardinal, and thus being a prince who could meet on equal terms with other princes and kings, he was not himself a sovereign. Nor was he a complete autocrat, for having been elected he must answer to those who had elevated him. But as the supreme executive officer he had far-reaching powers to formulate and execute the policy of the Order, and to co-ordinate the bureaucratic machinery it had developed. A polity like this does not readily succumb to categorization, but if classification is demanded the Order in its time after the transfer to Rhodes is best described as a theocratic republic of international nobles.

In their two centuries on Rhodes the mythology accreting around the Hospitallers continued to accumulate. By now it had developed its own hagiology, and the list of its own saints was growing longer. In addition to the original duo, the Blessed Gerard and the Blessed Raymond du Puy, it had or would acquire St Gerland, St Hugh Canefro, St Flora of Beaulieu, St Toscana, St Ubaldesca, the Blessed Peter of Imola, and the Blessed Adrian Fortescue.[60] The lives of two of this holy company illustrate the deeds required for sainthood through service with the Hospitallers—St Ubaldesca and the Blessed Adrian Fortescue. Ubaldesca was born to a noble family near Pisa in 1136, and at the age of fourteen entered the recently established house of the Order in Pisa after seeing a heavenly vision. Her ascetic living habits, piety, devotion and gentle nature impressed all who met her. Various miracles were attributed to her. For example, it was said that when some pilgrims had begged water from her and she blessed it, it turned to wine; and for that reason pictures of her generally depict her carrying a flask of water, and also a palm branch. The latter emblem was intended to indicate that she died 'a martyr to her own self-devotion'. Vertot, the early eighteenth century French historian of the Order, wrote that

> she was the mother of the poor; the sick met with relief always at hand in her assiduous care; there was no kind of misery but she brought a remedy for it, or gave consolation under it; and when her duties allowed her some moments to herself she spent them before the cross, and in a continual meditation upon the death and passion of our divine Saviour.[61]

She was at prayer before the Cross when she died aged seventy in 1206. Her head was preserved with her miraculous flask in her convent church until that was destroyed by the French in 1808. Her body eventually found its way into the Conventual church of the Order on Malta.[62]

The Blessed Adrian Fortescue was also a martyr, though of the more conventional sort. He was a first cousin of the ill-fated Queen Anne Boleyn of England and was born about 1476 to a noble family dating from the Norman Conquest. He married for the first time in 1499, served

6 St Ubaldescha, a Sister of the Order of St John

the royal court as 'commissioner' on various assignments, and was knighted for his aid to the Crown in 1503. When the youthful Henry VIII ascended the throne in 1509 Fortescue served him well, both on the battlefield and as a personal attendant. He rose in Henry's favour, and by 1530 was being rewarded with grants of land. His kinship with Anne Boleyn, with whom Henry was now forming his notorious liaison, probably worked to his benefit. He married again about this time, but what happened to the marriage is not clear because in 1532 he entered the Order of St John as a 'Knight of Devotion'. This was a lower rank than 'Knight of Justice', made open to those with inadequate 'proof of nobility' for entry into the latter, higher, grade. Presumably his credentials for nobility were insufficiently impeccable according to the discerning eye of the Order.[63]

It was a bad time for becoming a Hospitaller in England. Henry VIII had been pressing the Pope, Clement VII, for favourable consideration in his marital problems since 1528. Clement, as we will see in the next chapter, had his own non-religious and political reasons for refusing Henry's requests for a divorce. He deliberately delayed. Negotiations dragged on. Henry became more impatient and irascible. Their earlier harmony, at its most serene when Clement declared Henry to be '*Fidei Defensor*' ('defender of the faith') for his 1521 polemics against Lutheranism, gave way to jarring discord. Henry, with the compliance of both Parliament and Thomas Cranmer, his appointee as Archbishop of

Canterbury, had his former marriage nullified, married Anne Boleyn and had her crowned Queen in 1533. In 1534 Clement declared the first marriage valid and the second one *ipso facto* null, then excommunicated the King. Henry smartly responded by severing ties with Rome, having himself proclaimed supreme head of the Church in England, and then by insisting that the clergy acknowledge his supremacy.[64]

Fortescue was arrested that year, 1534, for refusing to take the oath of allegiance required under the Act of Supremacy. He spent nearly a year in gaol but was released under a general amnesty. If his kinship with the Queen was of no avail in keeping him out of gaol, it was about to become a decided disadvantge for in 1536, Henry's fancy having flitted elsewhere, Anne's pretty head rolled. The same year Clement's successor, Paul III, published a Bull calling for Henry's removal from the throne. He followed this up two years later by confirming the excommunication. Henry's response was to crack down on the remaining dissenters. Fortescue was re-arrested early in 1539 with another Hospitaller, Thomas Dingley, a nephew of the current Grand Prior of England, William Weston. They were tried on vague charges in April, convicted of 'traitorously' refusing their duty of allegiance and of committing other 'diverse and sundry detestable and abominable treasons', then beheaded together on Tower Hill in July. Adrian Fortescue had to wait another three and a half centuries for beatification, but in the meantime he was a signal addition to the martyrology of both Church and Order.[65]

The lives of the saints and martyrs of the Order were but one legend of its lore. There was other evidence to remind Hospitallers of the sacredness of their calling. Over the years the Order had gathered a number of relics. In addition to the bones of Gerard and Ubaldesca and the sculptured effigies on the tombs of the Grand Masters, there were two items Hospitallers prized above all else—a piece of the 'true' Cross of Jesus, and a mummified hand purported to be that of none other than their patron saint, John the Baptist himself. The 'True Cross', as it became known, had numerous adventures before coming into the Order's possession. How they obtained it, and when, are uncertain. It had been in the possession of the Patriarch of Jerusalem but was taken into the Battle of the Horns of Hattin in 1187 to help rally the Christian troops; Saladin captured it and sent it to Baghdad for burial in a pavement there so it would daily be trodden under Moslem feet; his refusal to turn it over to Richard I after the recapture of Acre in 1291 gave the English king a pretext for slaughtering the city's captured Moslem garrison; after that it was exposed to the public in Damascus so that all true Moslems might show it their contempt, by which time, presumably, it had been stripped of its original casing of gold and pearls. It next turned up shortly after as a gift to the Byzantine Emperor Isaac II, by which stage no one could be certain if it was the original piece, nor which of the rival 'true' crosses it came from.

The mummified hand, had been through similar adventures. It seems to have been a relic first held in Constantinople by the Byzantine Emperors; Mohammed II removed it when he conquered that city in 1453. His son Bayazit, in concluding a truce with the Hospitallers in 1488, presented it to the Grand Master, d'Aubusson, at Rhodes in 1488. It then remained with the Order through all their time at Rhodes and Malta, and went with them into exile when Napoleon expelled them in 1798. Napoleon chose to keep another of the Order's treasured relics – the ornate sword and dagger the Spanish King had presented to the heroic Grand Master, John de la Vallette, after the Great Siege of Malta in 1565; but he declined taking the mummified hand with some disdain: 'Let them keep the carrion!' he is said to have told his aides. Both 'True Cross' and the hand ended up in the possession of the Russian Tsar, Paul I, at St Petersburg, where a group of refugee knights were given refuge. By 1938 both relics had found their way into the chapel of the Royal Palace of Yugoslavia in Belgrade. There they were so venerated they were not displayed to the public. Hume, the American historian and a Knight of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, reverently reported having seen them that year. His awe in doing so was, perhaps, a measure of the aura of sacredness they radiated for Hospitallers in centuries gone by.[66]

To the secular public it is the knightly deeds of the Hospitallers rather than their mysticism that is memorable. On Rhodes there was ample opportunity for military glory, for in their two centuries there they had to face two great sieges by the Ottoman Turks. The first of these was in 1480, when they withstood a three month siege by an army of Mohammed the Great, Mohammed II, who twenty-seven years earlier had conquered Constantinople and overthrown the Byzantine Empire. The second, by his grandson, Suleiman the Magnificant, ended the Hospitallers' sovereignty over Rhodes and sent them, fugitives once more, to wander the Mediterranean in search of a new home.

The Grand Master during the first siege was the Frenchman, Peter d'Aubusson (40th Master in succession, 1476-1503), in King's view 'the greatest hero the Order had produced since Raymond du Puy'.[67] The siege followed the refusal of the previous Grand Master, John de Lasic, to pay tribute to Mohammed II. The Sultan considered that now he controlled the Levantine dominions of the Byzantine Empire, his suzerainty must be acknowledged by the residents. The Hospitallers would bow to no Moslem overlord, so simply ignored him. He was too preoccupied with more momentous campaigns elsewhere to do anything about them until 1480, when, on 23 May, his 160-ship fleet put ashore a 70,000-strong army on Rhodes under the command of Palaeologos Pasha, a renegade Greek Prince of the Imperial Byzantine dynasty. Against them d'Aubusson had only 450 Hospitallers and about 4000 mercenaries, supported by perhaps another thousand of the local citizenry.

The first two Turkish attacks were against the outlying fortress of St Nicholas, the defence of which was led by the Grand Master himself. These cost the Turks more than 3000 killed. They then bombarded the walls of the main town with cannon. The walls were breached but the garrison fought furiously to keep the Turks out. Again d'Aubusson led the defence himself; and though he is said to have been knocked from the ramparts five times with serious wounds, he doggedly returned to the fray on each occasion. The defenders at last drove the Turks from the breach, then pursued them out into the countryside. The Turks fled in disarray. Palaeologos tried rallying them with little success, then finally withdrew at a cost of a further 9000 killed and 30,000 wounded. Mohammed died the next year, after which the Ottomans left the Order alone for another forty years. This was fortunate for the Hospitallers, for the toll of the siege for them was high. Their total losses are unknown, but 231 knights holding Convent portfolios had been killed.[68]

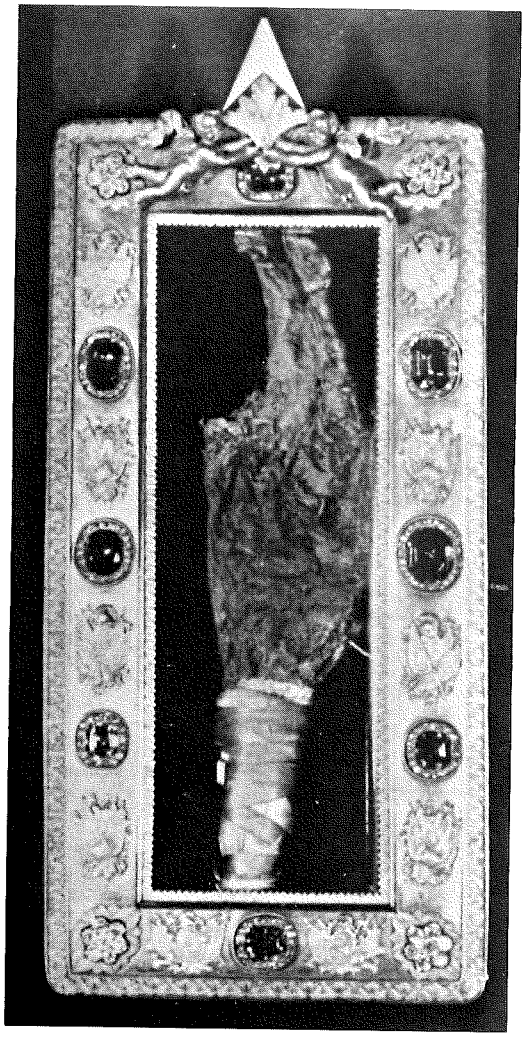
Out of this valiant but dear-bought triumph arose one of the Order's best-loved legends. It is said that when the Turkish captives spoke with the victors later they mentioned having seen a mysterious, terrifying sight when d'Aubusson climbed on to the breach and held aloft the white cross standard for the assault that finally repulsed them:

> They suddenly saw a golden cross shining in the heavens and the Virgin clothed in white, bearing a spear in her right hand and a shield in her left, and beside her a man clothed in camel's hair, and following them a band of soldiers richly armed, hastening to the help of the town, and . . . this vision was the cause of the panic that seized their army.[69]

There was no heavenly host led by the Virgin and John the Baptist to save the city at the next siege.

Leading the Hospitallers through the second siege was a new Grand Master, the former Grand Prior of France, Villiers de L'isle Adam (44th Master, 1521-34). He had been elected only the previous year, 1121, probably in the knowledge that another siege would soon be laid. Suleiman was storming across eastern Europe at the time. His capture of Belgrade the same year meant that his control now swept in a great arc around three sides of Rhodes. The island clearly would not be allowed to remain beyond the sway of the Crescent for much longer. As might have been predicted his mighty army—double the size of his grandfather's in 1480—were soon disembarking at Rhodes. His 140,000 men and supplies took a fortnight to get ashore once his 400 vessels began dropping anchor on 16 June 1522. To rebuff this awesome host de L'isle Adam had hardly more men than d'Aubusson mustered in 1480—600 Hospitallers, 4500 mercenaries and maybe a couple of thousand local citizens.[70]

For the first month Suleiman's general, his eager young brother-in-law Mustapha Pasha, made little headway. Suleiman therefore arrived himself with a further 15,000 men at the end of July to hasten the taking of the city. Throughout August his artillery pounded the walls, then in



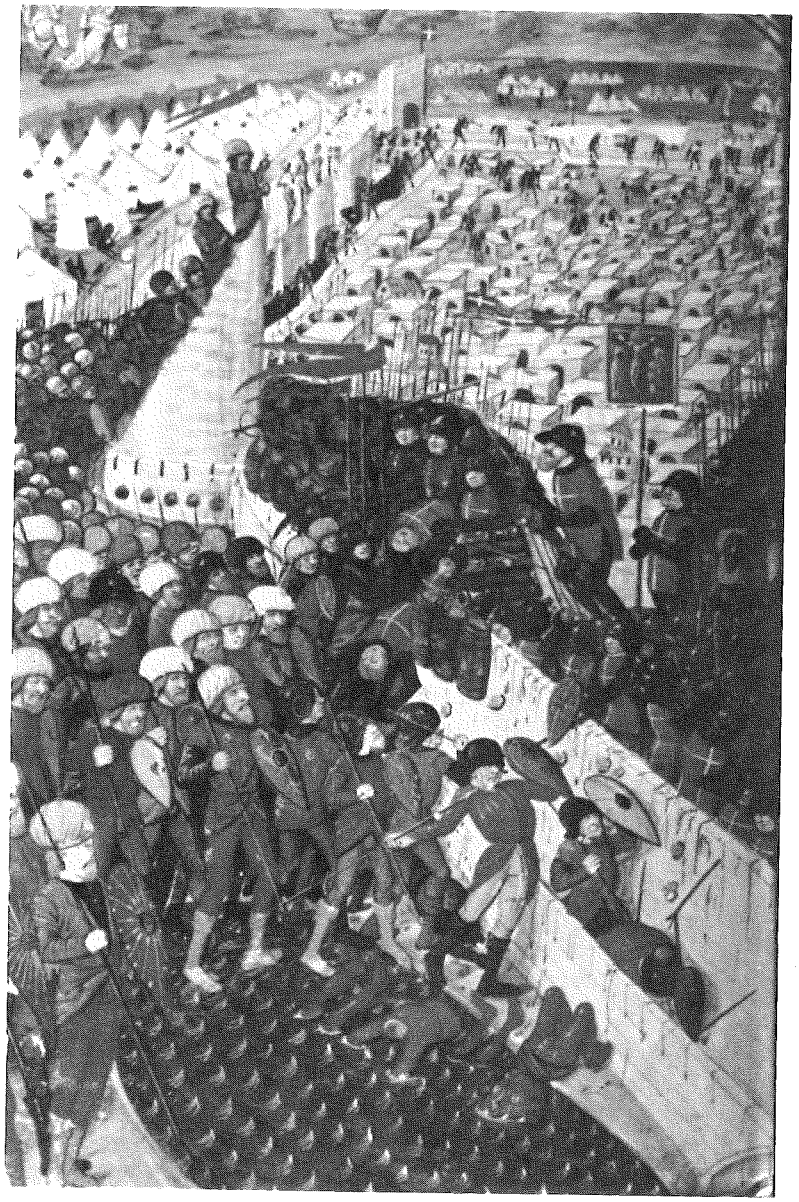
7 'The hand that baptised Christ'—the 'carrion' Napoleon did not want; the mummified hand said to be that of John the Baptist, the most precious relic of the Knights of Malta

September the sappers moved in to undermine them. Five of the *Langues* each had a bastion along the wall to defend. That of the English on the south-west angle collapsed into the sappers' tunnels first, on 4 September. The Turks' first attempt to send troops through the breach cost them 3000 dead. The second attempt, led by Mustapha Pasha himself, was also repulsed at a loss of 3000 more. Mustapha Pasha, who had announced that he cared little how many men he lost as long as he took the city, mounted an all-out assault against the walls on 24 September, at a further toll of 15,000 killed, still without the walls being taken. At this Suleiman packed his general off in disgrace to be Viceroy of Egypt.[71]

By this stage, however, the garrison was severely depleted. Reinforcements could not be obtained when they were sought in some quarters, or they were not forthcoming when procured in others. For instance, the entire English *Langue* had fallen in defending their bastion, while a shipload to replace them were drowned soon after leaving Dover when their boat foundered in the Bay of Biscay. Then, too, ammunition was running low, and there had been a hint of division and treason within Hospitaller ranks. The Chancellor, d'Amaral, who was a bitter rival of de L'isle Adam and was said to have aspired to the Grand Mastership, was accused of passing information to the Turks and of secreting away kegs of gunpowder desperately needed by his brethren. He was tortured, tried and publicly beheaded, and his alleged accomplice hanged. Suleiman, who knew much of what transpired within the city and must have been pleased by the tales of disaffection, got ready for the final general assault.[72]

As autumn turned to winter those within the city could see that the conquest was nigh. The Grand Master himself was inclined to fight on to the last knight, saying he 'would prefer to die on the breach surrounded by his knights than surrender' to any infidel.[73] Suleiman knew morale was dropping, and knew from his informants that there were elements within the city who would welcome a peaceful surrender. To obtain the latter he sent the Grand Master an offer of a negotiated surrender, to be peremptorily told that 'the Knights of St John only treated with the infidel sword in hand'.[74] When de L'isle Adam similarly rebuffed a second offer, the city's Greek residents sent the Metropolitan of their church to entreat him to listen to the Sultan to avert the general massacre they feared would proceed after the last knight fell. The Grand Master now entered negotiations with the Sultan, who agreed to honourable terms: members of the Order and any citizens who chose to could quit the island unmolested and in possession of their personal property; those who remained would have freedom of worship; all public and private property would be protected; and citizens would not be subject to financial tribute for the next five years.[75]

The capitulation came on 20 December. When he heard about it, the Emperor Charles V summed up the attitude of many people in Europe who by now were tiring of the valiant deeds of the knights. 'There has been nothing in the world,' he said, 'so well lost as Rhodes!'[76]. By now, of course, Europe was sundered by the great schism that began opening up in 1517 when the Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, nailed to the door of Wittenberg cathedral his ninety-five propositions disputing the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome. Many Christians were thus too absorbed in religious debate at home to be bothered by one setback for the Church elsewhere. At the same time there were probably some who saw in the loss of Rhodes a measure of divine retribution being poured on a Church gone rotten. By now, too, Europeans were more



8 The Knights of St John defend Rhodes against the armies of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1522

aware of a world beyond the extremities of the Mediterranean. They wanted the trade items which came to them from the East via the Levant. They knew that the incessant wars of the Hospitallers were obstructing the flow of goods. Was truculence towards the infidel really a Christian duty, then? Was not some co-existence with the Turk worth a try?[77]

Questions like that probably were not entering the minds of the Hospitallers who still lived to see the Turks enter the city on Christmas Eve 1522. They departed eight days later, on 2 January 1523, with a large body of the local citizenry, estimated variously at between one and five thousand souls. Before they went Suleiman is said to have called for an interview with de L'isle Adam. One account of their meeting has it that the Sultan had been so struck with the valour of his adversary that he offered enticing rewards in the hope of switching his allegiances from the Cross to the Crescent. These blandishments rejected, the Sultan went on to deride the Christian monarchs who had stood by watching the knights of the Cross bleed and, even when the latter were *in extremis*, had remained insufficiently moved to send relief. As the Grand Master left the room to take the fragments of his Order with him into exile, Suleiman is supposed to have turned to his Vizier to say, 'I cannot help being concerned that I force this Christian at his age to go out of his home'.[78] Whether or not this story was yet another of the legends of the Order, the fact remains that, like that other magnanimous Sultan—Saladin—four and a half centuries previously, Suleiman was proving himself to be a merciful victor.

For the next seven years the Hospitallers were homeless. The Grand Master took his followers from port to port around the Mediterranean—Candia (Iraklion) on Crete, Messina, Baia near Naples, Civita Vecchia near Rome, then Viterbo further north, then on to Nice. They still kept up their charitable works: they converted one of their galleys into a hospital ship; they opened hospitals at Civita Vecchia and Viterbo; they nursed the sick and dying in outbreaks of plague in Messina and Viterbo. The Grand Master himself wandered further afield through the courts of Europe seeking aid for the recapture of his island. As in England, where Henry VIII—not yet embittered against Pope Clement—welcomed him and presented him with nineteen great cannons and 1023 balls thereof, he was received with ceremony, deference and gifts, but no offers of a new crusade. Eventually when he realised that Rhodes was a lost cause he turned his attention to finding a new territory for his landless state.[79]

In the end the possibility of the Emperor Charles V ceding Malta to the order presented itself. de L'isle Adam was dubious at first for Malta was a bare rock, whereas Rhodes had had fruitful fields aplenty. However, Pope Clement, himself a Knight of the Order, intervened. He eventually prevailed upon the Emperor to make the island over and upon the Grand Master to accept it. The Hospitallers' advance party sailed into the Grand Harbour on which Valletta now stands aboard the 1700-ton warship *Santa Maria* under the command of the English Grand Prior, William Weston, on 26 October 1530. Hardly surprisingly, even before they started repairing the run down defences of the Castle Sant 'Angelo, they opened their first hospital on the island within the castle.[80]

9 The Sultan Suleiman II (Suleiman the Magnificent)

4 *Malta*

The Hospitallers had to pay annual tribute to Emperor Charles V for the right to occupy their new domain. Each year they were bound to present him with a falcon, in recognition that their territory was nominally under his suzerainty.

What the Order got for this fee was something of an anomaly. There were four islands, the peaks of a submarine limestone ridge now fifty fathoms beneath the sea, and once a land bridge between Europe and Africa. Malta, the main island, is roughly thirty kilometres long and twelve wide; Gozo, about five kilometres northwest of the main island and a third its size, is about fifteen kilometres long and seven wide; in the strait between the large two is Comino, three kilometres by two; and the fourth, Cominotto, is but a dot half a mile (0.8 km) across and separted from Comino by a channel barely 200 metres wide. Whether the islands are properly of Europe or of Africa is a moot point: they are only eighty kilometres south of Sicily, but are also only 300 kilometres southwest of the Tunisian peninsula, the northern-most tip of the African continent, and lie within the great gulf between Tunisia and Libya.

If the Maltese islands were not a part of Africa then one of the Hospitallers' new possessions assuredly was—Tripoli. This was a

different Tripoli from the one in Lebanon they had known well in their Crusader days: it was the one on the coast of Libya, 315 kilometres to the south of them. Tripoli, which had been one of the possessions of Charles V since 1515, also came to the Hospitallers in the Maltese gift he presented them in 1530. They were not entirely happy at having to take the city over from the Emperor, possibly remembering from their loss of Smyrna the previous century that Christian cities on Moslem coasts were difficult and costly to defend. Despite that, they took control of the city and posted a garrison there. They did not retain Tripoli for long. In 1551 the Barbary Corsair Dragut, in command of a Turkish fleet, besieged the city. Earlier that year he had made an unsuccessful bid to capture Malta. He had landed there with Turkish troops, but withdrew hastily when he heard a rumour that the Emperor's fleet was setting out against him. Before he left he made sure of getting at least some profit for his efforts by plundering Gozo thoroughly. The knight commanding the Tripoli garrison, Gaspard La Vallier, capitulated to Dragut before the end of the year. His brethren were obviously displeased with his loss of the city for they later stripped him of his habit and imprisoned him.[81]

Once in possession of Malta, the Hospitallers were more and more frequently referred to as simply the 'Knights of Malta'. This identification with the island did not mean that its inhabitants had accepted their presence. The local populace were a unique, independent-minded people, and at first resented the aloof Knights, the latest in a long succession of invading overlords. The Maltese numbered between 14,000 and 17,000 in 1530. They were descended from a mixture of Sicilian and Arabic ancestors, and had their own language, said to be related to ancient Phoenecian, which contained Sicilian and Arabic elements.

The ancient Greeks and Romans, the Arabs, and the Normans had all controlled Malta in turn, but from the late thirteenth century the islands were under the control of the kings of Aragon. During the late fourteenth century they came under the sway of unpopular Sicilian suzerains, who had purcased them from Aragon. In 1427 however, the Maltese revolted against the latter overlords, in consequence of which they were once more incorporated into the domains of Aragon by King Alfonso V (Alfonso the Magnanimous). Alfonso now granted them their own 'Magna Carta', which gave them authority to resist any intermediate overlord future monarchs might attempt to impose. In addition to that guarantee, they had their own governing council, or *universita*, a representative body which governed their internal affairs, appointed officials and also judges, raised taxes, dispatched ambassadors to Aragon to treat with the King, and guarded Maltese privileges jealously. It was, in the opinion of one historian, 'as liberal and democratic a body as any in Europe in the Middle Ages'.[82]

How a self-sufficient nation like the Maltese would greet a change in their proprietors was hardly a difficult prediction. They might have been

prepared to accept Aragon being drawn into the Spanish domains of Charles V, and thus having the Emperor as their king; but they would resist vigorously any attempt to dispose of them as a job lot. They did, of course, protest hotly, arguing that the new ownership of their islands was a breach of the charter given them 102 years before by Alfonso the Magnanimous; but to no avail.[83] This time it was not some petty Sicilian feudal overling they were trying to dislodge, but a sturdy pillar of Western Christendom, buttressed by both Pope and Emperor. As the Greeks of Rhodes had discovered, the rights of autonomous islanders were ignored. Once again, this is an issue many historians of the Order have ignored; indeed, most accounts of the knights' occupation of Malta leave the impression that the islands were previously uninhabited.

The Maltese, again like the Rhodians, had a long wait before their former freedom was restored—over 400 years. In all that time the memory of what happened in 1530 probably lived with them. One thing that seems to have displeased them much was that they were never asked what their wishes might be. Nearly four centuries later this fact still rankled in the mind of one of their own notable historians, the Canon Monsignor A. Mifsud, himself a Knight of Justice of the Order, who was plainly irked to reflect that the Emperor had passed the islands over to the Hospitallers 'without at all consulting the Maltese'.[84]

In time the Maltese became more or less reconciled to the presence of the Knights. Two chance events in which the Maltese saw good omens, seem to have helped here. First, a Turkish boat foundered on the same rock on which the Apostle Paul is said to have been wrecked. (The reef is in the bay at the northern end of the main island now bearing his name.) The Maltese understood this to be a sign that they would now be free from the perennial raiding of Moslem priates. Not long afterwards the pride of the Knights' fleet, their Great Carrack, broke free of its moorings during a storm and was driven ashore—not on to rocks like the Turks' vessel, but only on to a mud bank from which it could be freed unharmed. This was taken to mean that the Knights had rightly reached a safe refuge in Malta.[85] Perhaps this was but another of those legends beloved by Hospitallers, and told to show how charmingly naive the Maltese were. Be that as it may, the islanders eventually came not only to accept the Knights, but even to regard them with an inverted sense of proprietorship.

As things turned out if the Maltese *had* been concerned about raids by Moslem pirates they would not have been disappointed in the Knights' performance. The Order once more became a great naval power, waging sporadic war against Moslem fleets and in particular against those of the north African pirates for the rest of the time they occupied Malta.

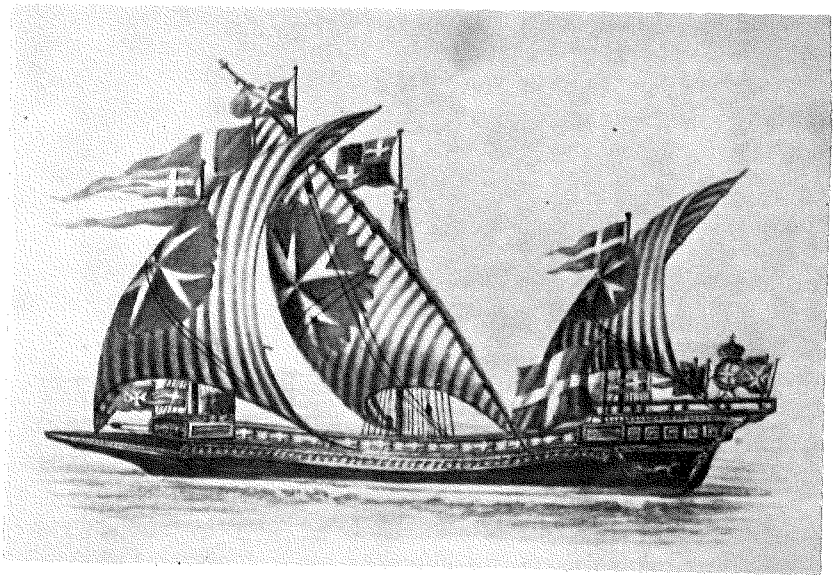
Turkish campaigns in the Mediterranean did not end after they were repulsed from the Great Siege of Malta in 1565, which is discussed below. In 1571 the Turks invaded Cyprus, which had been under the con-

trol of Venice since the end of its rule by the de Lusignan dynasty; they then incorporated it within the Ottoman empire, of which it was to remain a part for the next 300 years. The invasion aroused Christian fears of new Islamic offensives around the Mediterranean, which led to the Battle of Lepanto in October the same year. The Knights joined in the 'holy league' of Mediterranean states—Venice, Naples, Sicily, Genoa, the Papal States and Spain—to inflict on the Turks the crushing defeat that marked the beginning of their decline as a power in Europe. The 'holy league' destroyed the Turkish fleet of almost 300 vessels; 20,000 Turks were killed; and 8000 Christian galley slaves were freed. The Knights themselves were badly mauled, losing their flagship, but they gained merit through the manner in which their naval surgeons aboard the ships of the Christian States laboured throughout the battle.

There were numerous other naval expeditions to follow. In 1639 the Knights raided Tripoli, and in 1640 Tunisia, to strike blows against the Barbary corsairs. In 1665 they engaged the Turks again at the mouth of the Dardanelles, destroying the Ottoman fleet, and liberating 7000 Christian slaves. In 1721 they defeated the Barbary corsairs in a great sea battle off Tunisia. In 1741 they assisted the Emperor of Ethiopia in his war against the Turks, capturing Massawa on the Eritrean coast of the Red Sea. Finally, in 1783-84 they helped the Spaniards against the Algerians.[86]

By now the naval strength of the Knights was dwindling, paralleling the decline of Turkish sea power. As this happened the unspeakable occurred—relations between the Knights and Ottomans became less unfriendly, to the extent that they began exchanging diplomatic representatives. Without the traditional foe in the East to be countered there was less need to maintain a fleet. By 1780 their fleet was down to four galleys and several frigates. At the end it was an ornamental navy of gold-painted fittings, fluttering pennants and billowing blue and white striped sails emblazoned with great crosses of red. It sailed the seas majestically but was suitable neither for fighting nor standing up to rough weather. It successfully maintained the image created by past glories but served little other purpose. An Italian traveller who saw it off Egypt in the 1780s remarked upon it aptly when he wrote that 'it was one of those ancient institutions which had once served to render the brotherhood illustrious but now only attested to decay'.[87] And it was an expensive fossil at that: in 1789 it accounted for seventy-one per cent of the budget of the Knights on Malta, compared with sixteen per cent for the maintenance of the *Auberges*, and thirteen per cent for the Hospital.[88] These priorities, perhaps more than anything else, were a measure of the extent of the decay.

Another aspect of the display of glory of which the later navy was part was the art works and buildings the Order acquired. Their gold and silver plate, altar fittings, jewel encrusted reliquaries, the ceremonial swords



10 The galley of the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, late 18th Century

and silken banners, the statuary and sculpted cedar panelling, and all their other treasures created during the High Renaissance formed an impressive, priceless collection. It was one that proved too tempting for later despoilers. When Napoleon Bonaparte captured Malta in 1798, for instance, he made off with the famous silver dishes on which the patients in the great Hospital in Valetta received their meals. When melted down they yielded him 3449 pounds of silver bullion to help finance his Egyptian campaigns. He missed one notable collection of silver, however—the ornate high silver gates of the chapel of Our Lady of Philermos in St John's Church in Valetta. A thoughtful brother had painted them black, which led the plunderers to mistake them for iron and leave them standing.[89]

The Knights themselves generated a whole 'school' of painting. Many famed Renaissance artists—Giorgione, Titian, Caravaggio, Vasari, Dürer, El Greco—and dozens of their imitators depicted the Knights. Perhaps it was the spare trappings of their brand of knighthood—the workaday armour and plain monks' robes adorned with nothing more than the plain white eight-pointed cross. Perhaps it was their noble, knightly bearing, or the intensity of expression in their dour, melancholic faces. Or there might have been something compelling about catching on canvas the paradox of the avowed slaughterers of Moslems who spent the intervals between their slaying in ministering to the Christian sick and poor. Whatever it was about the Knights that drew artists to them, they attracted painters.[90]

The Knights' buildings on Malta were hardly less famous than the names of the artists who came to paint them. With contributions from the royal houses of Europe, who were delighted in their successes against the Turks, the Knights erected stately and palatial building after building, most grandly embellished with the ornately worked arms of the Order—the plain white cross of St John on its red field superimposed on the eight-pointed Amalfitan cross. The lavish Conventual Church of St John at Valetta, consecrated in 1578, was one of the most magnificent in all Christendom. Across its barrel vaulted high ceiling and walls spread a heavenly host of paintings depicting the life of the patron saint. Its floors of varicoloured marble, its huge tapestries, its pillars and balustrades intricately worked with bas-reliefs, and the majestic marble tombs of twenty-six of the Grand Masters along its aisles, all bespoke a material splendour that formed a fitting foil to the glory of valorous knightly deeds. The other buildings—the Magistral Palace, the Hospital (known as the Sacred Infirmary), the *Auberges* of the *Langues*—and the more public buildings such as the forts, barracks, wharves, aquaducts and fountains, were not perhaps as grand as the Conventual Church. Yet they, too, were built to monumental proportions: all were tributes in bricks and mortar to the success of the Knights in keeping Christendom safe from the infidel.[91] The Knights, of course, were not alone among Churchmen of the day in building up on earth the riches the earth had to offer. Nevertheless the modern observer of their past glory, while being impressed, cannot help wondering how the Knights interpreted the vow of poverty they still had to take on entering the Order.

For all the majesty the name of the Knights still evokes, there was a darker side to their character behind this monumental facade. Though it is fair to judge them only by the standards of their day, there were aspects to their sojourn on Malta that strike the modern observer as incongruous, if not bizarre, in an organization professing its devotion to the Lamb of God. For a start, not all the Knights were paragons of Christian virtue as portrayed to us in their own legends and in the histories compiled by their hagiographers. As might have been expected in an organization divided between eight principal and numerous other 'languages', national chauvinism and more petty personal pride often divided them. Between and within the *Auberges* there were frequent 'discord, bickerings and quarrels, often leading to fights and bloodshed'.[92]

Two cases from the voluminous court records of the Knights on Malta bear out their fractiousness. In 1534, for example, an English Knight, Oswald Massingberd, was stripped of his habit and imprisoned in the Gozo gaol, one of the four prisons the Order had to maintain in the islands for refractory Knights. He had been charged with plotting to kill none other than the new Grand Master, Peter del Ponte, an Italian, who had had him placed under house arrest in his *Auberge* for fighting other

11 One of the portraits by Titian of a Knight of Malta

Knights of his *Langue*. At his trial he was said to have boasted of killing four slaves chained by their legs to the benches of their galleys, because they would not fall in with a plan he had had for getting rid of the old Grand Master, de L'isle Adam, who in the meantime had died. Massingberd begged for mercy, so rather than expelling him from the Order, the court made him forfeit a commandery he held plus two years' seniority. Later that year he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment in the Tower of the Fort St Angelo for tearing out the beard of a junior Knight of his own *Langue*. Massingberd was later appointed Grand Prior of Ireland, but his quarrelsome ways continued. He was arrested in 1547 for using abusive language against the current Grand Master, an Aragonese, John d'Omedes. Still later, after he had advanced yet further in the Order, to the Lieutenant-Turcopoliership, he was arrested again for forcibly taking a slave he claimed to have purchased from a local Maltese nobleman, then boxing the ears of the nobleman when he remonstrated.[93]

The Scottish Knights were as unruly as the English. In 1558, for instance, John Sandilands, who had been elevated to the Knighthood over the protests of his brother Knights in the Priory of Scotland, was wounded in the head and hand in a duel with another Knight, Elias de Cugnac, after a dispute over a game of cards in the *Auberge* of Provence. Although the Order had adopted special statutes to prohibit it, duelling

between the Knights was common. A narrow street in Valetta, the Strada Stretta, was the trysting place for the duellists, whose seconds would block the street off with drawn swords to prevent passers-by from interfering. Unable to stamp out the practice despite the severe penalty for engaging in it (expulsion from the Order), the Order turned a blind eye to it, accepting injuries arising from it as being from 'casual encounters'. Sandilands had later troubles: he spent two months in the Tower in 1563 for quarrelling in church, and later attracted attention by engaging the Lieutenant-Turcopolier and Secretary to the Grand Master, Oliver Starkey, in an unseemly dispute in the Magistral Palace. His final misdeed was to steal silver plate from one of the churches, melt it down and sell it. He confessed to this under torture, was stripped of his habit, executed, and his body tossed into the gutter.[94]

The Statutes against duelling were not the only ones the Order tacitly ignored. Those relating to sexual morality were also honoured more in their breaching than the observance. The vow of chastity the Knights still took meant only occasional celibacy for many brethren. The Statutes might decree 'that all associates of loose women shall be ranked as incestuous, sacrilegious, and adulterous, and shall be declared incapable . . . of holding any office or dignity in our Order', but were worded ambiguously. Consequently many Knights climbed through the loopholes in their rules to consort openly with the droves of whores who came from all corners of the Mediterranean to live on Malta. According to one historian, it was 'a public scandal' that from their early days on Malta the Knights 'threw off all restraint' and 'abandoned themselves to the most reckless debauchery'.[95]

That many Knights should have been thin-skinned, lecherous, sacrilegious brawlers is not really surprising, for their profession had much to do with defending honour, spilling blood and pillaging. What is surprising to the modern observer is that the Order has been so successful in 'sanitizing' its image down the years. Its historians have been wont to dwell upon its moments of valour and glory—the great sieges the Knights withstood and the last-ditch, self-sacrificing stands they made around their embattled banner. Less seemly episodes have been allowed to fade from memory lest they dispel the fog of romantic chivalric mythology.

Also surprising to the modern observer are several other less-than-wholesome aspects of Knightly rule on Malta. One is the slavery on which the Knights' navy relied. Their large fighting galleys carried anything from fifty to a couple of hundred slaves, sometimes eight to an oar, chained to benches. The slaves were either convicts serving out sentences or captives taken in wars against the Moslems and pirates. Galley slaves were no less expendable to the Knights than to other naval powers: if they collapsed from fatigue and could not be revived with the usual panacea of bread soaked in wine, they were tossed overboard dead or alive. No galley captain could afford to give his slaves too much rest in

12 El Greco's portrait of Vincentio Anastagi, Commander of the fleet of the Knights of Malta during the Great Siege

case they lost strength and muscle tone; and even in port they followed strict drills to stay in shape. Teams of slaves were also kept to do the menial work of cleaning and carting around the Hospital, the Palace and the *Auberges*, and individual Knights could retain their own personal slaves. So widespread was slavery, and so advantageously placed were the Knights to acquire slaves by virtue of their continued forays along the Moslem shores of the Mediterranean, that Malta became 'a vast slave mart'. The Knights indeed were *the* suppliers of slaves to the kings of France and Spain.[96]

That the slaves probably loathed the Knights is clear from one incident during the reign of the sixty-eighth Grand Master, Emanuel Pinto de Fonseca (1741-73). In 1749 a well-planned general uprising of Malta's 4000 or so slaves, both on the galleys and in the towns, aimed to seize Valetta and massacre the inhabitants, Maltese and Knights alike. The signal for the outbreak of the uprising was to be when the Grand Master's own valet, a trusted Turkish slave, beheaded the Grand Master in his bedchamber and then displayed the head from the balcony. The Grand Master learnt of the plot after one of the principal conspirators

drunkenly bragged about it in a tavern. He had the perpetrators arrested and tortured to elicit fruther details. In the end nearly a hundred of them were executed; a sunset curfew was imposed on all domestic slaves; and for the rest of their time on Malta the Knights observed public celebrations of the discovery of the plot.[97]

It is, of course, easy to condemn the Knights for their role in the slave trade of Europe; but that is to make judgements out of their historical context, which is unfair. While slavery itself is to be condemned, it would be unreasonable to single the Knights out for opprobrium here. It is, perhaps, as well to remember that William Ewart Gladstone, the epitome of English liberalism, was a slave owner until 1834, that slavery survived in the United States of America until 1864, and that until the Second World War Australia's operation of the indentured labour system in New Guinea looked to many observers in the League of Nations suspiciously like slavery.

The planned revolt of slaves was not the only act of insurrection against the Knights of Malta. In 1775 there was an uprising by the Maltese themselves—the so-called Priests' Revolt. The Knights always kept themselves fairly aloof from the native Maltese. They comprised a superior, priestly caste of foreign-born nobles. It was therefore hardly surprising that in a decade when revolutionary ideas were abroad in Europe the autocratic rule of the quasi-absolute monarch, the Grand Master, whose civil authority gave him powers of life and death over the Maltese, should be resented by the common populace of the islands. A Maltese parish priest, Don Gaetano Mannerino, a gentle, unassuming man who in the view of one observer 'might in calmer times have become a bishop', emerged to direct the islanders' dissatisfaction.[98] He had grown disgruntled at the loose morality of some Knights, at their despotic treatment of the Maltese, at their appropriation of the revenues of the local Maltese churches, and at the inferior position of the secular, that is, the Maltese, priests *vis-a-vis* priests of the Order. He began preaching the rights of the Maltese to manage their own affairs, and attracted a large following among his fellow priests and citizenry. On 23 September 1775 a group of his followers forced the gunners in the Fort of St Elmo to turn a cannon on the Grand Master's palace. They got only one shot off before being arrested. Little else happened, and the uprising fizzled out soon afterwards. Mannerino and four priests were arrested that day. He received a life sentence; the heads of his four accomplices decorated pikes for all the citizens to see. He lived on in prison for another twenty-three years until Napoleon released him after the French capture of the islands in 1798. He left his gaol to find himself a national hero, hailed by his people as their great patriot.[99]

In the years following the Priests' Revolt there were other events which showed that the Maltese were tiring of domination by the Knights. There was an incident when a native Maltese member of the Order was ap-

pointed Prior of the local community over a French aspirant for the position. A faction of Knights opposed the advancement of 'natives', whom they derided as 'Arabs' and 'blackamoors'. As the new Prior conducted his first mass in the Conventual Church of St John, Knights of this faction heckled and catcalled. So incensed were the Maltese at this insult, and so intransigent were the guilty Knights in their refusal to be penitent, that the Grand Master had to force them to leave the islands to preserve the peace. There were other incidents of similar racial animosity to suggest that even if Napoleon had not expelled the Knights the Maltese themselves would have done it before too long.[100]

Apart from making a grand display, and notwithstanding the sordidness of their own squabbles and their disdainful attitude towards the Maltese, the Knights had some notable achievements on Malta. Amidst more tawdry preoccupations their medical work shone with true lustre. In that, at least, the Knights remained Hospitallers. Their great hospital, the 'Sacred Infirmary of Malta', was completed in the same year as the Conventual Church of St John, 1578. It replaced an earlier hospital built in the first years after their occupation of the islands. It was, as Hume has observed without exaggeration, 'the glory and pride of the Hospitallers'—an institution which pioneered hospital nursing.

The Sacred Infirmany occupied a vast building. Its Great Ward was more than 150 metres long, ten wide and nine high. In an age when hospitals elsewhere crammed patients in three to a bed, the Sacred Infirmary provided single iron beds, 300 of them, each with its own canopy in winter and mosquito net in summer. There were separate wards for medical and surgical cases, isolation wards for fever and dysentery patients, a ward for the insane (at a time when they were generally confined in prisons), separate accommodation for convalescents, and spacious quarters for treating ordinary soldiers and galley slaves. In addition there was a special, luxuriously equipped ward with 150 beds reserved for Knights, who might return at any time sick or ill from military duties abroad.

Visitors from far and wide throughout Europe and the New World used to visit the Sacred Infirmary. Few failed to be impressed. One who sang its praises in its final years was the German poet, Friederich Schiller, the son of an army surgeon and an army doctor himself before forsaking medicine for poetry and drama. Whether he actually visited the Infirmary personally is not clear, but he was obviously impressed with the notion of Knights with sixteen quarterings to their coats of arms humbly serving the sick from platters of silver. He wrote of 'lions of battle, scions of the most noble dynasties, serving at the sickbed, meeting [patients'] every need'.[101]

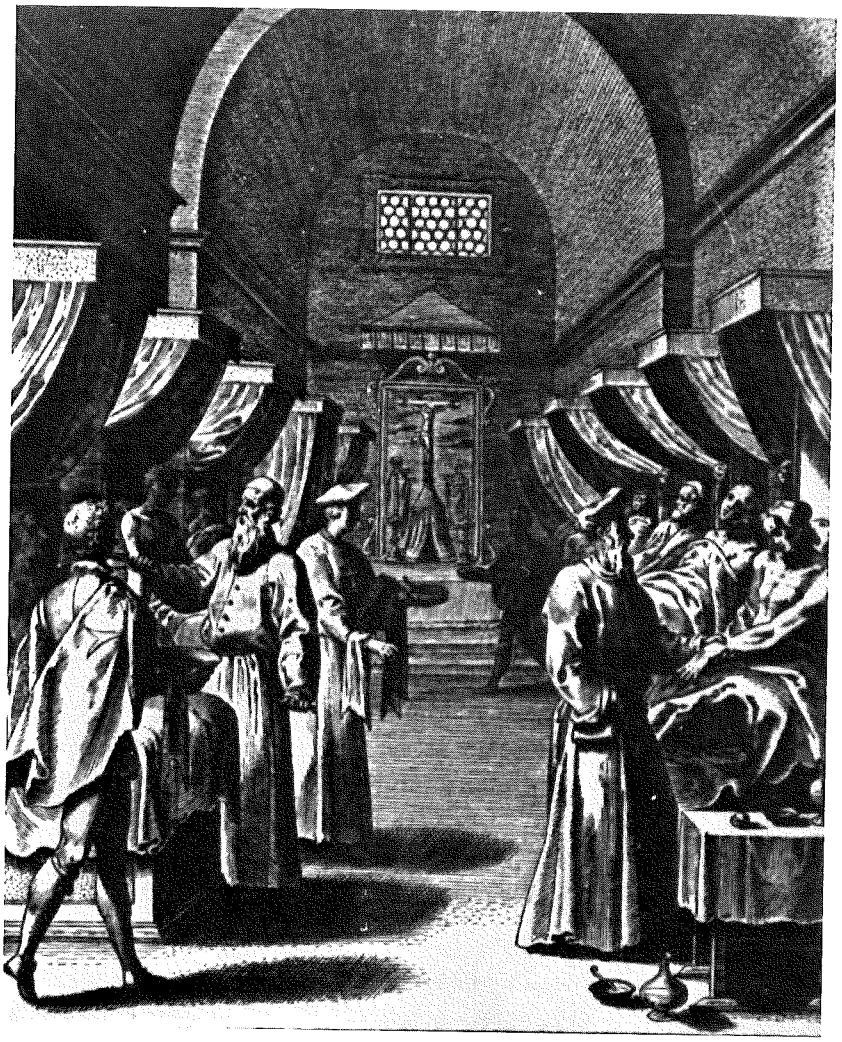
The administration of the Sacred Infirmary was the responsibility of the Grand Hospitaller, always from the *Langue* of France. Under him, and also from that *Langue*, was the Infirmarian, or hospital ad-

ministrator, who actually lived in the hospital. The task of the Infirmarian was to ensure that patients received a nourishing diet—on some days 200 fowls might be boiled to make chicken broth—that the resident doctors and attendants were at their posts, that the linen was changed regularly, and that patients received their prescribed drugs. Medical practice was systematic. There were five physicians, five surgeons, and a pharmacy with a dispenser-in-chief and a number of assistants. The physicians visited the wards daily, and made notes on the diet and drugs to be prescribed for each patient. A slate at the head of the patient's bed contained entries relating to his or her treatment and progress. The physicians also held weekly conferences on the treatment of their current patients.[102]

The surgeons attached to the Infirmary were skilled anatomists. They conducted *post mortem* examinations on *all* patients who had died—Knights as well as ordinary patients—when dissection was uncommon elsewhere. Consequently they developed a reputation for expertise in this specialization, which they taught to visiting medical students, who came to Malta especially to study under them. They pioneered some branches of surgery, and in doing so attracted visiting surgeons who came to learn their techniques. Ophthalmology was one of their particular skills, and they were among the first to carry out successful operations for removing cataracts.[103]

In addition to the hospital services provided by the physicians and surgeons, the Infirmary also maintained an 'Out-Patients' Department' and a 'District Nursing Service' which made the rounds of the sick poor in Valetta and nearby towns.[104] There were also other, better known aspects to the Knights' medical work. Late in the sixteenth century they founded a medical school in Valetta, and later a school of pharmacy. These schools eventually developed into the University of Malta, formally founded in 1769 by the Grand Master Emanuel Pinto de Fonseca. The courses were thorough and students received a firm grounding in botany, anatomy, medicine and surgery. Then, too, the Infirmary also came to function as an important scientific research institute, disseminating its findings via published papers. Hume's medical history of the Order lists some seventy papers, mostly emanating from the hundred year period from the 1680s to the 1780s, on a wide range of topics from 'malignant rheumatic fever' to the 'use and abuse of chocolate in medicine', and from 'the sensitivity of tendons' to 'astrological falsehoods in relation to epidemics'.[105]

The Knights' innovations in public health also deserve comment. From 1682 the Order began regulating the practice of medicine by law. Initially no less than ten years' attendance at the Infirmary were required for the issue of a licence to practise, though later this was reduced to six years for a physician and four for a surgeon. Without understanding the causes of the transmisson of infectious diseases they treated these fairly



13 The Knights of St John minister to patients in the Great Ward of the Sacred Infirmary at Valetta, Malta; from a woodcut of 1584

effectively through isolation and quarantine. They had, however, some appalling failures with major epidemics that occasionally came to the islands. Plague came twice: in 1592-93 it claimed 7000 victims and in 1675-76, 8700. Whether much more could have been done to keep the death toll down without knowing the trigger to the disease is an open question. On other fronts, however, the practices insisted on by the Order were notably sound. The manufacture of medicines and drugs was closely supervised and regulated; bakeries and abattoirs were regularly inspected and cleanliness required; water supply was protected, and each

house had to have its own cistern; drainage canals removed surface water; a garbage removal and disposal system operated; septic tanks were constructed for sewage; regulations governed the burial of the dead, and cemeteries away from residential areas were provided and burials elsewhere prohibited.[106]

A facet of the Knights' charitable and medical work that pointed almost prophetically in the direction their twentieth century 'descendents' would follow was disaster relief. Their efforts in the aftermath of the earthquakes that destroyed Messina and Reggio (on opposite sides of the narrow Strait of Messina) on the morning of 5 February 1783 were exactly the work in which the modern Orders of St John excel. News of the disaster reached the Grand Master, Emanuel de Rohan-Polduc (70th Grand Master, 1775-97), at 7.00 that evening. He and his Knights worked all night to equip a flotilla of galleys with supplies for the victims. The chief surgeon of the Infirmary and forty Knights accompanied the expedition, which took forty chests of medical and surgical supplies, 200 beds, and tents, food and clothing for the worst off of the people in the wrecked cities. The tremors continued that night, and when the expedition got to Messina the next day it was to find that the devastation was nearly total. Those not killed were huddled on the beach with no shelter, food or warm clothing. The relief party discovered that Catania and Syracuse to the south, though not hit as badly were without food. A message was sent back to Malta, and further vessels despatched with supplies of grain and bread to feed these towns. The expedition stayed three weeks, distributing food and supplies, treating the wounded, and helping the citizens get re-established. Then at the end of that time the worst medical cases were evacuated to the Infirmary in Valetta for continued treatment.[107] It was exactly the sort of operation which latter-day Hospitallers in Australia and elsewhere would be called on to perform many times some two centuries hence.

All these were notable achievements, but they are not what the Knights of Malta are now remembered for. One event in particular stands out in popular memory and still looms large in the Order's own self-perception—the Great Siege of Malta in 1565. The Knights' resolution in withstanding the four-month siege by an army of Suleiman the Magnificent, the victor over the Knights at their last great siege, is properly the material of legends. One other event, however, stands out, and ultimately it was of greater moment to the Order—its expulsion from Malta by Napoleon. But to say that is not to detract from the Knights' steadfastness in 1565.

By 1565 Suleiman was an old man of sixty-nine with only a year of life left. He did not know that in the following year he would be killed while laying siege to the Hungarian town of Szigeth; but he had certainly lived to regret his magnanimity after the siege of Rhodes forty-three years before. As we have seen, no sooner were the Knights established on

Malta than they resumed their blood feud against Islam. In particular, from their strategically situated islands mid-Mediterranean they were proving an irritant if not a check to the smooth westward flow of Ottoman influence. Suleiman accordingly decided to have done with them for ever. In early 1565 he despatched an armada of 130 galleys, fifty sailing ships and a fleet of transports carrying 30,000 troops (boosted to 50,000 by later reinforcements) under the command of Mustapha Pasha, his young general at the opening of the siege of Rhodes in 1522 and now redeemed from his disgrace then. The fleet hove to on 18 May. To repel the Turks the seventy-one year old Grand Master, John de la Valette (49th Grand Master, 1557-1568), a Provençal, had barely 8500 men – 540 religious, 5000 Maltese militia, 800 Spanish infantry and perhaps 2200 miscellaneous troops from Italy.

The inlet around which the main towns of Malta then stood is complex. It is only 1.6 kilometres wide at the mouth, but dividing it in two and poking from the mouth like a tongue is the promontory on which Valetta now stands (it was not yet built in 1565), with the fort of St Elmo at the tip. On the north-west side of the promontory is the Marsa Muscetta Harbour, and on the southwest side is the Grand Harbour. On the far side of the latter are two further promontories with towns built across them. The town on the promontory nearer St Elmo was the Borgo (now called Victoria), the town of the Knights, with the fort St Angelo at its tip; and on the other was the town Senglea with the fort St Michael at its tip. The Turks planned to capture St Elmo first, then take out the other two forts with the towns behind them.

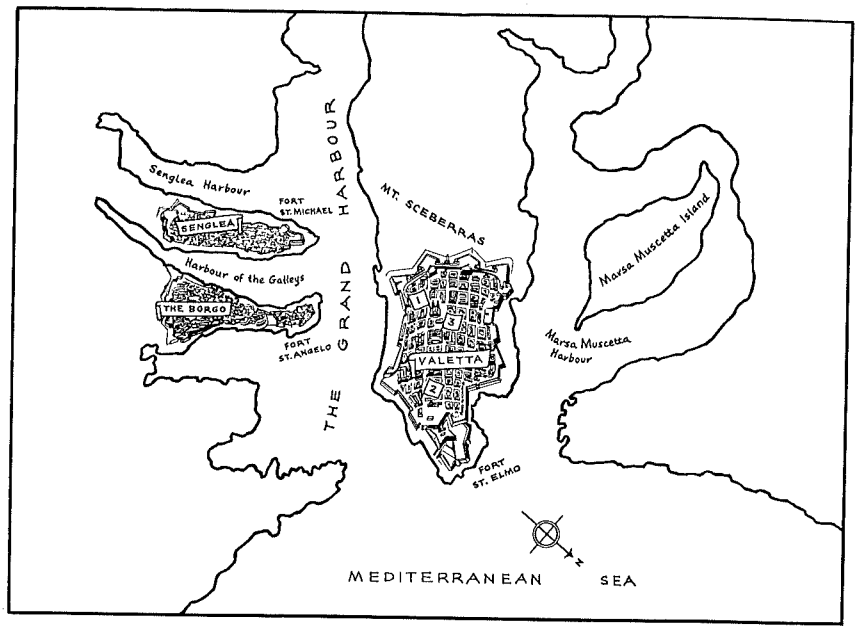
The Turkish bombardment of St Elmo began on 24 May 1565 from an artillery battery set up 165 metres from the walls on the Marsa Muscetta side. In the battery were fourteen huge guns, ten for shooting 60-pound (54.4 kg) shot, three for 80-pound (72.5 kg) shot, and one monster to fire off 160-pound (145 kg) shot. On 4 July the Turks tried to scale the walls but lost 2000 men in doing so. The corsair Dragut, who had already tried capturing the islands and had taken Tripoli from the Knights fourteen years before, arrived now with reinforcements to take over command of the assault. He pounded the walls again then launched a general assault on 16 June, and when that was beaten off he resumed the cannonade. Dragut himself was mortally wounded but the bombardment went on. Another assault on 22 June was beaten back three times by the few left alive in the St Elmo garrison. The Turks finally took St Elmo the next day. All that was left of the original garrison of 1500 was a remnant of sixty men; and of these all except for five, who managed to escape by swimming across the Grand Harbour, fought on to the very end. At the last the Knight who was second in command was seen sitting on a log with his leg fractured, still laying about him with a two-handed sword, with which he killed several Turks before finally falling. St Elmo cost Mustapha Pasha 8000 killed, and that for just an outlying fort. 'What

will not the father cost us when the son who is so small has cost the bravest of our soldiers?' he ruefully wondered.[108]

Now came one of those grisly incidents that live on as a stain on the pages of history to shame the best of generals. Mustapha Pasha had the heads of as many of the 130 dead Knights as could be found struck from their bodies, fixed to stakes, then stood up facing the Borgo barely more than several hundred metres away across the Grand Harbour. Their bodies he had crucified on planks; he slashed crosses into their chests; then he launched them into the harbour to float across to the Borgo. Such was the anger of the Grand Master when the Knights awoke next day, 24 June, to find the mutilated bodies of their brethren bobbing across the Grand Harbour that he responded with a deed of savagery of his own. He ordered the beheading of the principal Turkish prisoners and directed that the heads be fired from cannons into the Turkish camp on the other side of the harbour. 'St Elmo's Pay', the Knights dubbed it. Perhaps in the heat of the moment de la Valette did not see, as posterity can, the irony of such ferocity on the day of the patron saint, the day on which Hospitallers customarily give thanks and offer prayers of intercession through John the Baptist.[109]

The Turks now moved their big guns along the St Elmo promontory opposite the Borgo and Senglea, only 400 metres across the Grand Harbour. The bombardment began on 5 July, from seventy cannons in nine batteries. It lasted for ten days. Then, on 15 July, 4000 troops crossed the harbour to attack Fort St Michael. Only 500 of them were left by the end of the day. Mustapha Pasha now attempted simultaneous attacks on both the Borgo and Senglea. He sent 8000 men against Senglea on 7 August, while 3000 attacked the Borgo in a diversionary move. He almost had victory in his grasp when he called off the attack because he had heard of false rumour that a Sicilian army had landed and was marching up on his rear. He mounted another general assault on 18 August, which was repulsed, and a final sally on 1 September. By now the Turks had lost not only some 30,000 men—the number they had landed with four months before—but also the will to fight. Insidious murmurings that Allah's will was not for them to capture Malta began circulating. The long-expected Sicilian relief force of 8500 landed at Melleha Bay at the opposite end of the island on 7 September. That was the signal for Mustapha Pasha to call off the siege and begin withdrawing. It was just as well for the garrison that he did: there were only 600 men left of the original 8500 capable of bearing arms, including the sick and wounded the Grand Master had ordered out of the Infirmary to help man the breaches.[110]

By any standard it had been a heroic defence. Prayers of rejoicing were heard all over Europe. The Pope in thanksgiving offered indulgences to anyone who had offered prayers for the safety of the island. Even in England, where Henry VIII had suppressed the Order twenty years



MAP 3
Valetta and its harbours

before, his daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, had directed that prayers be said in all Anglican churches for the defenders of Christendom.[111]

Recognition of de la Valette's resolution flooded in. Philip II of Spain sent the Grand Master a magnificent sword and dagger, the hilts of which were fashioned from gold encrusted with diamonds and other jewels. The Pope offered him a cardinal's hat—a reward Peter d'Aubusson had accepted after the first siege of Rhodes eighty-five years before—but he declined. de la Valette's reward was the new town he began building on the promontory behind St Elmo the following year. He did not live to see this completed. He died only three years after the siege. The town, which was now beginning to take shape thanks to the princely donations sent by the crowned heads of Europe, was known to de la Valette by a name he had chosen—Humilissima. The Knights now called it Valetta instead.[112]

The glory of the Knights, as we have seen, continued to find expression in the splendours of the new city. Yet once the Turks had been repulsed, and especially as their empire began declining towards the end of the sixteenth century, the Order's historic mission was complete. By the eighteenth century neither Ottoman nor Moslem posed any real threat to Knight or Christian. Indeed in 1722 the Grand Master and the Sultan had reached such a degree of harmony that they could make agreements over exchanging slaves and prisoners. They could even agree on reciprocal guarantees of the privileges of their respective citizens dwelling in each

14 Lariviere's painting of the raising of the Great Siege of Malta, 8 September 1565

other's territories. It was through this arrangement that Moslems living on Malta were allowed freedom of religion, including worship in the mosque they then built.[113] So, having lost the purpose that had sustained them through some six centuries of struggle, keeping Islam confined, the Knights became an anachronism.

It was the French Revolution which sounded the death knell for the Knights of Malta no less than for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The *ancien régime* was swept from France in 1789, and with it the feudal world of which the Order was part. From August 1792 the ill-fated King and his family were imprisoned in the Temple, the Paris centre of the Priory of France, which had come to the Hospitallers after the suppression of the Templars. By the time the tumbrils bearing the King and Queen had rolled off to the guillotine in 1793 the properties of the three French *Langues*—France, Provence and Auvergne—had been confiscated, their treasures broken up or melted down, their ancient records burnt in Revolutionary bonfires, and their landholdings sold off. Many of the brethren had fled abroad, including the Order's ambassador to France, who thought it more judicious to be in Switzerland. Eventually they found their way back to Malta, along with many of the *émigrés*—the fugitive French nobility and gentry.[114]

The loss of its possessions in France crippled the Order, as the three French *Langues* had been contributing a third of all the revenues it customarily relied on. The Revolution also opened up fatal rifts within the community of Knights at Malta. Some Knights supported the aims of the Revolution; and many of the French Knights applauded the victories of the Revolutionary army abroad. Others remained Royalists, and went

15 The Grand Master John de la Valette, who led the Knights of Malta during the Great Siege in 1565, from Vertot's *History of the Knights of Malta*

off to fight in the armies opposing the Revolution. Worse still, the Revolution forced the Order to compromise its previous stance of neutrality in the disputes between the states of Europe, and that led to the Order's loss of Malta. Giving shelter to *émigrés* and secretly subsidising the attempts of the Royal Family to escape from France were breaches of neutrality. But worse still was an alliance made with Russia.

The bond with Russia was one of the last acts of the Grand Master de Rohan-Polduc. At the beginning of 1797 a Convention signed by the Grand Master and the Tsar, Paul I, established a Grand Priory of Russia, and named Paul as 'Protector of the Order of Malta'. Tsar Paul had succeeded his mother, Catherine the Great, only the year before. He had been a fervent admirer of the Order and its Knights from childhood, ever since he had read Vertot's seven-volume history of the Order published in 1725. Besotted with notions of chivalry, and extraordinarily vain, he loved dressing up and posing in the robes and decorations of the Order—a pleasure he had enjoyed from childhood. By declaring Paul 'Protector' de Rohan-Polduc had hoped to shore up the Order's failing fortunes; but what he did instead was to place the Order firmly in the camp of France's enemies. France protested about the Convention with the Tsar, claiming it would lead to the establishment of a Russian base on

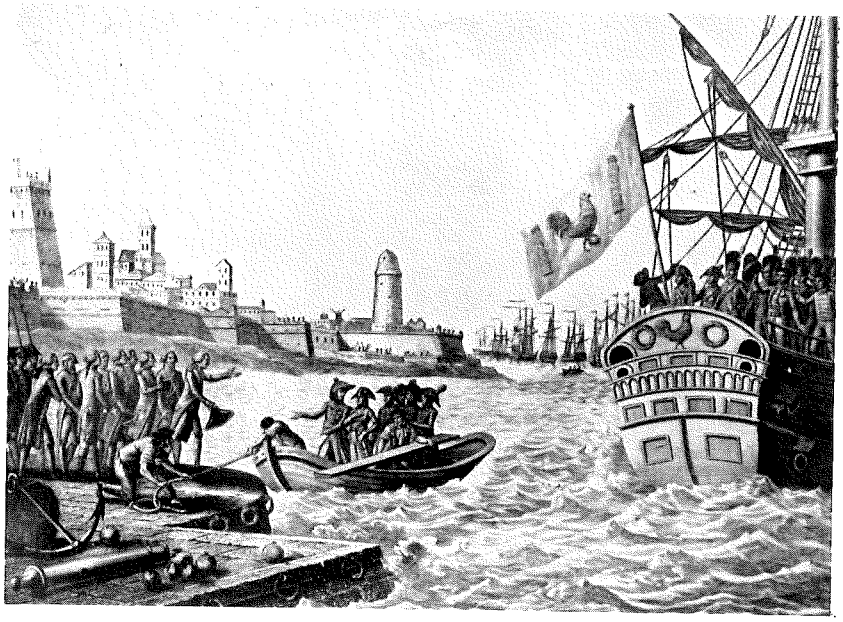
Malta and the presence of a Russian fleet in the Mediterranean. de Rohan-Polduc died in July 1797, and was succeeded by the Grand Prior of Brandenburg, the charming, and good, but mild and meek Ferdinand von Hompesch.[115]

These events could not have suited Napoleon Bonaparte better. Already the principal general of the Revolutionary armies, and the fastest rising star in all Europe, he wanted Malta as a stepping stone to Egypt and also to prevent England from getting it. The presence in Malta of a Prussian potentate who was in league with the Russians and was commanding an organization that had harboured enemies of the Revolution and had conspired to help the dead king miss appointment with the guillotine were excuses too good not to be given practical employment. So Bonaparte decided to go to Malta long before he ever went to Prussia or Russia.[116]

On 9 June the next year, 1798, the biggest fleet the island had ever seen appeared off Malta. Napoleon himself entered the Grand Harbour in a pinnace to pass over a letter to the Grand Master requesting entry for the fleet. Von Hompesch, overawed by the size of the French armada, dithered for a while then called together his advisory council, which decided to deny the request. It did this on the grounds of established policy, which maintained that no more than four vessels of any belligerent power could enter the harbour at any one time. The French consul was informed accordingly. The 'Citizen General' now had his final excuse for an invasion; and so his siege of the islands began the next day.[117]

Von Hompesch, with 18,000 men at his disposal, declined the opportunity to be the de la Valette of 1798. He capitulated two days later, on 12 June, knowing that even if he had the loyalty of the Maltese and could rely on those of his Knights with Republican sympathies, both of which he strongly doubted, the end would not be long in coming. A French Civil Commission of Government was now set up under the command of a French general. The fleet began leaving for Egypt on 16 June, and by 18 June the last of it was gone, taking with it the treasure it had stripped from Valetta to pay for the coming campaign against Nelson's fleet.[118]

That day, too, von Hompesch and the other Knights were deported to Trieste. Only a few old Knights over sixty were allowed to remain. Von Hompesch, who had thus presided over the penultimate expulsion of the Order, did not remain Grand Master for much longer: two months later, on 26 August, a group of Knights who had gathered in St Petersburg under their Protector, Tsar Paul, issued a manifesto deposing him. The following year, 1799, the rebel Knights elected Paul Romanoff, Tsar of All the Russias, as the 72nd Grand master. Whether this election was legitimate is doubtful. Even if von Hompesch's unorthodox removal was valid, and if the irregular method of electing a new Grand Master without calling a Chapter General could be overlooked, there were still



16 Napoleon Bonaparte lands at Valetta, 12 June 1798, to a welcome from his supporters within the Order

objections to its legality. It seems dubious that a married, non-Catholic, non-ordained non-member could be the head of a Catholic religious order of celibates with prescriptive rules for admission. There was no doubt, however, in the mind of the posturing, vainglorious heir to Peter and Catherine the Great that he was indeed the Grand Master, and thus also the heir to du Puy, de Villiers, de L'isle Adam and de la Valette.[119]

Tsar Paul had little time left to enjoy parading in his ermine-trimmed Grand Master's robes emblazoned with their giant Maltese Cross. The following year a group of conspirators who were alarmed at his increasingly irrational behaviour strangled him in his bed. His title 'Grand Master of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem' went into abeyance for some years. With that a tradition that had flowed circuitously but unceasingly down more than seven centuries finally petered out.[120]

The Order did not disappear entirely but went underground for a while. When it re-emerged it bifurcated several times and followed different courses. Now far away from its sources in the Holy Land, in Rhodes and in Malta, it was to find replenishment that would take it along new branches and into fresh fields. The new Orders of St John would not bear much resemblance to the earlier Knightly Order; nevertheless, as succeeding chapters endeavour to demonstrate, the charitable efforts of the revitalized Branches stem from the same wellsprings that fed the original stream.

17 The last of the Grand Masters of the Knights of St John on Malta, Ferdinand von Hompesch

Could the Knights have survived the Napoleonic era intact if they had chosen to defend Malta? It is a hypothetical question with no answer; but even if they had managed to hold off the vast French fleet until, say, Nelson came to their rescue, the omens for a propitious post-Bonapartist future were hardly encouraging. The French Revolution sent shock waves abroad that cracked open the fossilized feudal world of which the Knights were a part. The Maltese were seething with discontent beneath the rigid crust of absolutist rule maintained by their archaic overlords. Sooner or later from among their number another Mannerino, or even a Garibaldi, would have arisen to prise apart the fissures in the facade of Knightly control. The slave population were a further embarrassment: their proportion of the population of the islands was probably higher than was the case in slave-owning societies elsewhere. It would not have been long before the anti-slavery societies of Europe would realize this. The disappearance of the revenues from the Order's French estates would also have proved a debilitating loss. It is possible, of course, that the Knights could have offset these disadvantages by acquiring interests elsewhere. They seem to have been trying to set up a Commandery in Quebec. In the 1650s they had acquired several Caribbean islands—St

Christopher, St Bartholomew, St Martin and St Croix—and though they subsequently sold these they were still keen to acquire territories in the Americas. During the 1790s, for example, they were working on a proposed treaty with the United States which would have granted the U.S.A. harbour facilities in Malta in return for lands in America.[121]

Whether or not a few dots on the map of the New World would have sufficed to save the Knights of Malta is a matter for debate. Their difficulty was that they were a relic of a bygone feudal era, a quaint remnant from the Crusades who would have been poorly equipped to survive in the century of industrialization just around the corner. They had done well to last as a sovereign military order as long as they did. And though they could not have foreseen it at the time of their humiliation by Napoleon, their regeneration in different forms in the century ahead would ensure that at least the charitable aspect of their tradition would both endure and thrive.

3

Suppression and revival in England

1 *Suppression*

As the eighteenth century turned into the nineteenth the focus of the Order's affairs moved erratically from Malta to St Petersburg. As this happened much that was not strictly regular according to previous practice occurred. One such event was the revival of the English *Langue* during the first decades of the new century. Though the Order subsequently repudiated its revitalized English Branch, resuscitated after almost three centuries of dormancy, the revival was hardly more 'irregular' than some of the other fluctuations in its development post-Napoleon and ex-Malta.

The English *Langue*, the life of which Henry VIII had all but ended with his Act of Dissolution in April 1540, was more than 400 years old when he moved to extinguish it. From its early beginnings in Clerkenwell, Kilmainham and Torphichen it had become one of the wealthiest institutions in the British Isles. In 1338, when its Grand Prior, Philip Thame, enumerated its personnel and property, the Clerkenwell Priory and thirty-six English Commanderies possessed many estates including ninety manors. The actual membership of the Order in Britain was not large, and was rather thinly spread across its estates. Thame's census showed that there were 119 Brethren, of whom thirty-four were Knights, thirty-four Chaplains, forty-eight were Serving Brothers and three were 'Donats' (that is people granted the Priviliges of the Order for having made a substantial donation to it). Only a minority of the Commanders – officers in charge of a Commandery – were knights: there were thirteen Knights, seven Chaplains and sixteen Serving Brothers serving in that capacity. In addition to the Commanderies there were some fifty nunneries for Sisters of the Order. By the time of dissolution in 1540 membership of the Order in England had dwindled to about a quarter of the 1338 figure, yet they were comparatively more wealthy, for they owned 1900 separate properties in England. The richest of these was the five-acre Priory headquarters at Clerkenwell, its annual revenues assessed at £2385 in 1535. At the same time the Order's English estates beyond Clerkenwell had annual revenues of £3206. Only the huge monasteries of Glastonbury and Westminster had higher annual incomes than Clerkenwell among all religious houses closed down during Henry's dissolutions of 1535-40.[1]

Over the centuries the Order of St John had developed a routine for running its Commanderies which varied little from Priory to Priory and *Langue* to *Langue*. In England, for example, a typical Commandery probably consisted of the Commander and perhaps two or three Brethren, a couple of novices and a number of servants, both freemen and bondsmen. The novices generally entered the Commandery at sixteen and served there until they were twenty, when they went out to the Convent in the Mediterranean. Here they would do their 'caravans', that is a series of six-month stints of compulsory military service, at first in the armies of the Holy Land but later aboard the galleys of Rhodes and Malta. Between successive caravans the novice might return to his home Commandery, though later on caravans came to be compressed into a single two-year spell. On completing his caravans the novice could enter full membership of the Order. If he could furnish adequate proof of his nobility that would be as a Knight, otherwise he entered as a Serving Brother. To become a Commander he had to have served five years in the Convent, and even when running his own Commandery he was liable to recall to the Convent along with all able-bodied Brethren whenever some military crisis loomed over the Order.[2]

As time went on life in the Commanderies of the English *Langue* became fairly comfortable. The British Isles were far from the Mediterranean battlefields, with the result that the sense of imminent danger from the Turk often felt in the Priories of Spain, France and Italy was lacking in the British Priories. The British Commanderies enjoyed a good income and had ample servants. As well as the alms the Order collected, revenue came in from a variety of reliable sources—rents, levies and dues from houses, arable land, pasturage (levied per head of stock depastured), mills, dovecots, fisheries, tithes from churches and chapels, and labour service from villeins and bonded servants, which was often paid in cash or kind. In addition each Commandery generally had its own kitchen gardens and orchards worked by servants.[3]

The household each Commander maintained was considerable, and usually consisted of three parts, divided along class lines according to rank. The Brethren formed a privileged élite, who enjoyed various privileges, such as eating at their own table and enjoying the best of the food and beverages. The free servants—valets, armourers, cooks, washerwomen and other 'skilled' tradespeople—also ate at their own table. The lowest class, consisting of bondservants who, like serfs elsewhere in feudal society, had restricted freedom, were 'tied' to the Commandery and also ate at a separate table. Symbolic of these divisions was the diet of the household: while the brethren ate white bread and drank *melior* (better) beer, the bondservants had to be content with black bread and *secunda* beer. Many Commanders were thus able to live like country gentlemen, holding authority over a dozen or more lesser beings, waited on by servants, eating and drinking well, riding around their

estates, and spending their ample leisure in hawking, hunting and fishing. All that might occasionally disrupt this bucolic existence was the 'General Citation', or summons to arms in defence of the Convent.[4]

The revenues did not only go on luxurious living. Each Commandery had to make 'responsions', or annual remittances of money to the Convent for its upkeep, and to defray the costs of its wars against the Moslems. A proportion of the local exactions of the Commanderies thus found their way to the Mediterranean every year, so that every tenant and villein on the Order's estates would have known they were doing their bit for the defence of Christendom. The main expense, however, was hospitality—the purpose for which the Order existed. Wayfarers were continually coming and going at the Commanderies. They could expect up to three days' hospitality, which the Brethren were generally bound to provide, both by their own rules and by the requirements of benefactors who had bequeathed estates to them in expectation that they *would* dispense hospitality. Then there was the obligation to support the poor, the succouring of whom had always been a primary duty of the Brethren. One observer has commented that the poor laws in England only became necessary after the dissolution of the monasteries: previously poor relief was a burden largely carried by monastic houses like the Commanderies of the Knights Hospitallers.[5]

Part of the burden of hospitality borne by the Commanderies was the entertainment of dignitaries—local, national and from overseas. There was always also a sizeable corpus of 'corrodaries', or people who could demand privileges from the Order in recognition of some debt or obligation. They might, for instance, claim the right to dine at the table of the Brethren and have their servants dine at the tables of the Commandery's servants; or they might claim the right to be clothed, or to have their horses fed at the expense of the Commandery. The Prior Thame's census revealed that in 1388 there were no fewer than eighty corrodaries, or nearly seven of them for every ten Brethren. Clerkenwell probably carried the heaviest load in entertaining notables. As well as dignitaries such as bishops, Priors and Papal Legates from abroad, there were all the local countesses, earls, dukes, Chief Justices and Privy Councillors who often called in expecting board and lodgings for their stay in London, not to mention members of the British Commanderies passing through town on their way to or from the Convent. There were also the royal visitors who often availed themselves of the Knights' hospitality in their royal progress around the country. Clerkenwell in particular was a favourite resort of the monarchs. Henry II, Edward I, John, Henry IV, Henry V, Richard III, Henry VII and Henry VIII all frequented Clerkenwell; and when foreign princes and kings visited England they sometimes stayed there too. Thus, in 1414 when the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II was visiting Henry IV he stayed at the Priory; it was here, of course, that the Grand Master de L'isle Adam stayed during his visit to

Henry VIII in 1528. Some Kings used Clerkenwell for great State occasions: Henry II, as we saw in an earlier chapter, called a meeting of his Council of Ministers there in 1285 to consider the pleas of the Grand Master des Moulins and the Patriarch Heraclius; John lived and held court there for a month in 1212; and Richard III called a public meeting there in 1485 to deny rumours that he planned to marry his niece, Elizabeth of York, who later wed Henry VII.[6]

The bond between the Order and the British kings was thus close. There were mixed benefits in this. On the one hand there were political and diplomatic advantages in royal patronage, but there were also costs, of which the obligation to provide hospitality and entertainment was only one. Another was what Mifsud, the Maltese historian of the ancient English *Langue*, called 'the pronounced subjection of the English Knights to their soveriegn'.[7] In both England and Scotland the Order lost some of the independence and neutrality it preserved elsewhere. The English and Scottish Knights rode into battle alongside their kings, they accompanied them on their diplomatic missions, they served as Ministers of the Crown, and they took the seats reserved for them in parliament.

There is ample evidence for the strength of the links between the British Priors and their monarchs, and for the way in which that compromised the Priors. In both Scotland and England the Priors were lords of the land in every sense. In Scotland they were known as the Lords St John of Torphichen and sat in parliament as Lords of Council. In England they sat in the House of Lords as the premier barons of the realm. In Ireland, too, they were Lords Spiritual within the Irish parliament, albeit as minions of the English monarch of the day. The latter fact became obvious in 1275, when Edward I ordered the Prior of Ireland, William Fitz-Rogers, to return to Ireland, there to be about his parliamentary business, rather than to proceed to the Convent in Acre, where, presumably, he was going to help stem the tide of the Sultan Baibars and his Mamelukes. In Scotland during the wars between the Scots and the English, the Scottish patriot Sir William Wallace had used the Priory of Torphichen as his headquarters before the Battle of Falkirk in 1297, in which the Prior of Scotland, Alexander de Welles, fell in defence of the Scottish cause. Welles' successor, Ralph de Lindsay, also fought for Scotland against England in the armies of Robert the Bruce. Then, too, in the great defeat of Scotland's army by Henry VIII's troops under the Earl of Surrey at Flodden in 1513, men of Torphichen fell with their King, James IV.[8]

In England the Priors of the Order became even more closely identified with the Crown than in Scotland. In the late fourteenth century the Grand Prior, Robert Hales, served as both Admiral of the Western Fleet and as Lord High Treasurer to Richard II. It was through his policies in the latter portfolio that he lost his life at the hands of Wat Tyler's rebels in 1381. Another English Prior who lost his life was John Langstrother,

who like Hales accepted the post of Lord High Treasurer during the reign of Henry IV. In 1471 he commanded a section of Henry's army at the Battle of Tewkesbury against the pretender, Edward IV. When Edward won he ordered the Prior's execution. Yet another English Grand Prior who entered the employ of his king was Thomas Docwra, who was perhaps the greatest of the Priors of England. In his twenty-six years as Grand Prior (1501-27) he served as counsellor and diplomat in the reigns of both Henry VII and Henry VIII. It was at his instigation that the former accepted the title 'Protector of the Order', a title which the latter also assumed with pride. They were the only monarchs apart from the Tsar Paul I 300 years later to bear such a title. Docwra also accompanied Henry VIII as his principal counsellor to his meeting with the King of France, Francis I, at the 'Field of the Cloth of Gold'—the fortnight of intense diplomatic negotiations near Calais in June 1520 during which Francis endeavoured unsuccessfully to persuade Henry to join him in an alliance against the Emperor Charles V.[9]

This close identification of the Priors of Scotland and England with their respective monarchs meant that often the English *Langue* must have been divided against itself during the two centuries or more of sporadic warfare between the two countries. It was not only battles like Falkirk, Bannockburn and Flodden that served to split the two adjacent Priories of the *Langue* asunder, for there were also doctrinal issues to divide them. Thus, during the forty-year Great Schism of the Church from 1378, when there were two claimants to the Keys of St Peter—one in Avignon and another in Rome, each of whom excommunicated the other—the Scottish Knights supported their ancient ally, France, and the 'French' Pope, Clement VII, while the English Knights supported the 'Italian' Pope, Urban VI.[10]

For all the closeness between Prior and monarch in the English *Langue* there were nevertheless serious tensions between the Order and the State in Britain long before Henry VIII ever thought of claiming the Knights' estates as his own. One major source of strain was the annual remittance of 'responsions' to the Convent's Treasury in Rhodes and Malta. As the Order became visibly more prosperous, its coffers ever more replete with the revenues from its hundreds of properties; kings, nobles and citizens alike could ponder the purpose of maintaining so vast an enterprise. The amount leaving Britain for the Mediterranean via responsions was considerable. In 1535, before Henry VIII shut the monasteries down, he sent commissioners into all the religious houses to assess their revenues and ascertain how these were being disbursed. As far as the Hospitallers were concerned, their annual revenues were reckoned at £5591 (£2385 from Clerkenwell and £3206 from the Commanderies elsewhere), and of this amount nearly 20 per cent—£1105 (£186 from Clerkenwell, £919 from the other Commanderies)—was going back to Malta as 'responsions'. In Scotland the proportion was even higher: fully 54.5 per cent of the

revenues—£36 out of an income of £66—was being sent to Malta at the time of dissolution.[11]

It was not surprising that needy and greedy monarchs should both resent and covet the remittances the *Langue* made to the Convent Treasury, and it is likely that their people shared their envy. When Edward I endeavoured to hold back the moneys the English Knights had earmarked for Rhodes, his argument that now the Holy Land was lost the funds would be better employed in looking after the poor in England, contained just the sort of persuasive rhetoric to rally his people behind him. On more than one occasion thereafter the English Priory had to get the Conventual Council to request kings of England to sanction the remittances the Priory wished to make. On such occasions the Conventual Council would be at pains to point out to the English that the practice of responsions was fair, because 'the Knights at Rhodes were doing service for the whole of Christendom'.[12] But arguments like that probably never really convinced Henry VIII, who even while basking in the glory of his title as Protector of the Order was seeking a means to seal off the leakage of English funds abroad via the conduit of the Knights' remittances. Well before his marital affairs began ticking like a time bomb to blast the Order out of England he had been making plans to sever the English *Langue* from the rest of the Order, by installing himself as the Grand Master of a new English Order of Knights Hospitallers who would have the task of keeping Calais within his domains. He only desisted from this scheme because of the diplomacy of the Grand Master de L'isle Adam, who during his visit to England in 1528 coaxed Henry into recommitting himself to the Knights' struggle against Islam. Henry's uncharacteristic generosity towards the Order at that time was, however, an aberration. More typically he dreamt of securing the wealth of the Knights within his grasp, or at least of deflecting their energies into schemes to benefit his kingdom.[13]

The popular anger which the wealth of the Order could arouse in England was perhaps most evident during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Sir Robert Hales, the Prior of England since 1371, who had returned in 1380 from a long period of distinguished military service overseas with the Convent, took on the office of Lord High Treasurer at the request of King and parliament shortly before the revolt broke out. It was an inopportune time to do so: there was already great discontent over low wages and exactions for the wars in France, on top of which parliament levied an unpopular new poll tax. Hales thought his duty lay in ensuring that the tax was collected. He sent his commissioners from village to village to see that people paid it, and that succeeded in turning mere sullen passive resistance into open rebellion. Commoners from the nearby counties converged on London in angry mobs to vent their anger against 'Hobbe the Robber', as they dubbed the Prior. They sought him out at Clerkenwell after pillaging and burning several other properties on the

way. On 13 June 1381 they broke down the gates to the Priory then sacked it, killing anyone unfortunate enough to be caught there, then putting the torch to its church, hospital, library and all other principal buildings. Their bonfire burnt for days. They could not find Hales there because he had sought refuge in the Tower of London with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Sudbury, who also held state office as Chancellor of England. The next day the boy king, Richard II, rode out to meet the mob at Mile End, but they were little mollified by his promises of an end to serfdom. Their leaders under Wat Tyler came back into the city to winkle Hales and Sudbury from the Tower. They over-awed the 400-strong garrison, who scattered before them, then dragged the unfortunate prelates from a chapel where they were reciting final prayers for each other. Outside, on a rough log on Tower Hill, the two Lords Spiritual received a clumsy execution. The headsman took eight blows to sever Sudbury's head. The exultant mob then paraded the mangled heads through the streets on pikes before attaching them like trophies of the hunt over the arched entrance to London Bridge, with further insult added to Sudbury, whose mitre was nailed to his forehead. The rebellion fizzled out a day later, Saturday 15 June, after the Mayor stabbed and killed Wat Tyler for speaking insultingly in a further meeting with the King. It all ended with the promised reforms being withdrawn and the other leaders rounded up and executed.[14]

Hales, whom some chroniclers claim could have been the model for the 'verray parfit gentil knight' of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, is a figure much loved by historians of the Order. In explaining the ferocity of his treatment by Wat Tyler's mob they customarily cite the opinion of Sir Thomas Walsingham, the secretary to Elizabeth I and the chronicler who said of him that he was 'a magnanimous Knight, though the commons loved him not'.[15] Waslingham could hardly be accused of exaggeration, in view of what the 'commons' did to Hales, and his explanation of the Prior's death—that he was a noble, honourable man who died because he was saddled with administering an unpopular policy—is accurate. Nevertheless the explanation does not go far enough, and the historians of the Order have shirked facing up to the reality of the Knights' position in the England of the later Middle Ages by simply accepting Walsingham's summation.

The reasons behind the Peasants' Revolt were not simply financial—the hardship caused by the tax Hales was enforcing. There were deeper social and economic causes rooted in the maladies of the whole ossifying social structure of feudal society, which the Grand Prior personified to the peasants. Before they burst into the city on 13 June they had listened to a sermon by John Ball, 'the mad priest of Kent', whose theme was the popular slogan of the aggrieved lower classes of the day

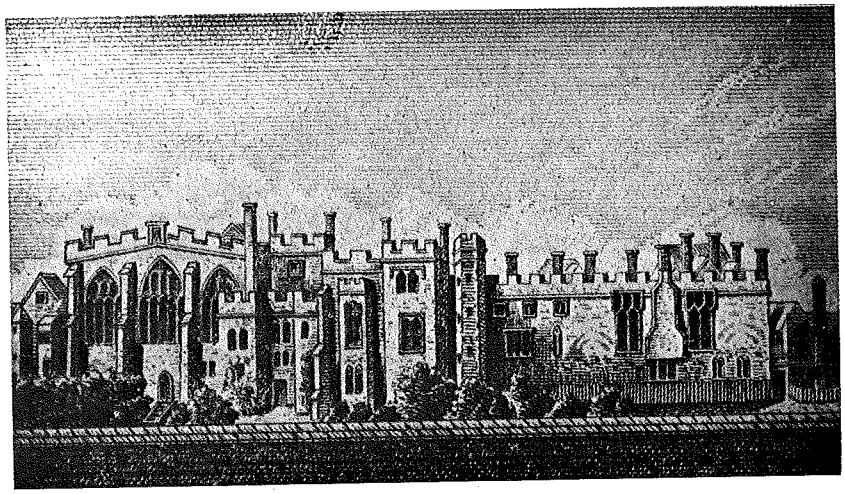
> When Adam delved and Eve span
> Who was then the gentleman?

To outraged peasants the Grand Prior was a symbol of all the inequities and iniquities of an intolerable social system. To them it was one in which they must cheerfully suffer the increasingly onerous exactions of a parasitic privileged élite, whose idle, pampered existence in comfortable benefices was an inexcusable imposition on them, the populace. It was a refrain taken up in many languages and nations over the next six centuries, and wherever it has been sung its words have rung with similar passion. The Brethren of the Order were not to know that, however, locked as they were in their day and age. In contemplating the smouldering ruins of their Priory, and in lamenting the summary butchering of their Prior, they had ample grievances and an enormous task of rebuilding to distract them from pondering the ills of feudal societies. We might have expected historians of the Order, on the other hand, to be more far sighted. They at least should have been able to see that the savagery of the rebels was in direct proportion to the degree of the Knights' privilege, and to the rightlessness of the peasantry on whom the Commanderies of the Order fed.[16]

The Clerkenwell Priory headquarters arose again from the ashes Wat Tyler's inflamed mob had left behind them. Under the Grand Priors who succeeded Hales the Order rebuilt Clerkenwell, and within a hundred years the buildings there were more magnificent than ever. At the opening of the sixteenth century and at the appointment of Thomas Docwra as Grand Prior in 1501 the English *Langue* was more prosperous and influential than any Knight could remember. The last years of the fifteenth century had been the 'high period' for the Knights in England. Henry VII, the first of the Tudor monarchs, had come to the throne in 1485, ending the disastrous Wars of the Roses, in which the Order had become embroiled at the cost of Prior Langstrother's head. The Order stood high in the new king's favour. He visited Clerkenwell often; he was pleased with his unique title of 'Protector'; and he prized Docwra's diplomatic skills. The latter, to the benefit of his Order, proved himself as accomplished a builder as he was a man-about-court. Under his rule the task of rebuilding was completed, the gatehouse which now forms the headquarters of the Most Venerable Order of St John being but one of the edifices reconstructed then.[17]

Docwra's twenty-six year rule as Grand Prior, 1501-27, was the third longest in the four and a half centuries in which the English Priory was extant. Despite the loss of Rhodes, which came near its end, the Docwra years were an Indian summer for the Order in England. The year after Docwra's death in 1527 the marital troubles of Henry VIII were to signal the onset of a long, hard winter, by the end of which not only would the fruit have been plundered but the tree uprooted and cast out.

In the previous chapter we saw how Henry's protracted dealings with Pope Clement VII from 1528 in the matter of the proposed marriage to Anne Boleyn by 1534 had led to the complete rupturing of relations bet-



18 The buildings of St John Priory, Clerkenwell, in 1640

ween King and Pope, and with that the establishment of the Church of England over which Henry reigned supreme. Even if Henry's wish to gather in the wealth of the Knights had not given him reasons enough for doing away with the Order, he would have had to move against them sooner or later if his religious policies were to survive. His version of the Protestant Reformation would always have been vulnerable as long as he allowed a powerful institution like the Order of Knights Hospitallers to live on within his kingdom. Standing by their loyalty to the Pope, and waving a Catholic banner for all to see, the Knights would inevitably have inspired courage in those who opposed the Henrican reforms.

Yet Henry hung back for a while, loth to make the final decisive moves against the Knights. He had had a happy association with them for over a quarter of a century as their formal Protector. Perhaps this was why they remained immune for several years from the process of confiscation of religious houses which had begun in 1536. In 1539, even the two Knights Adrian Fortescue and Thomas Dingley were going to the block for refusing the oath of allegiance, he was trying to coerce the Order into recognising his, rather than the Pope's, authority over the *Langue* of England. Rather than close it down altogether he seemed anxious to preserve it within the framework of his reforms. He accordingly issued a Royal Charter for the Order stating that he had been elected its Protector by its Knights, and so from now on his authority and not Rome's would determine matters like who would be admitted into membership of the *Langue*, and who would receive its honours, dignities and benefices. He wrote to the aged Grand Master, John d'Omedes (47th Grand Master, 1536-53), suggesting that the way to save the Order in England was to agree with his Charter. The Grand Master sent two Knights on a special

19 Sir Thomas Docwra, Grand Prior of England 1501-27

mission to London, but they protested to Henry and later to the Chapter General that the Charter was subverisve and could not be accepted by the Order. There was, however, some precedent for what Henry was proposing, for already the Bailiwick of Brandenburg, the Prussian segment of the *Langue* of Germany, had gained similar autonomy within the Order. In September 1540 the Chapter General nevertheless declared that Henry's conditions were impossible. Not that that mattered any longer: an Act of Henry's parliament the previous April had already decreed that the Order in England was dissolved and all its estates forfeit to the Crown. By this stage Henry had probably come round to the view that the retention of the Order under his patronage was not really crucial to the success of his reformation; and so, sentimentality notwithstanding, he might as well close it down and make a profit from it.[18]

The Act of Dissolution was a shrewd ploy. The Act not only got rid of the Order by confiscating its estates, destroying its corporate being, and removing its special identity (by forbidding the wearing of its robes and badges and by abolishing its honours); it also successfully subverted the

loyalty of a number of Brethren. The latter gain was made through the granting of liberal pensions to those Knights who would undertake to remain within the realm. By granting them pensions roughly proportionate to the revenues of the Commanderies in which they had held office, it tried to buy their allegiance away from the Order. Thus, the Grand Prior, William Weston, who had fought in the great siege of Rhodes eighteen years before and who in later happier days had piloted de L'isle Adam into the Grand Harbour of Malta aboard the Order's flagship, the *Santa Maria*, in 1530, was to receive £1000 a year. Oswald Massingberd, the fractious Knight who later became Grand Prior of Ireland, was to receive £10 a year; and the other Brethren were to receive various amounts between—provided that they remained in England.[19]

Not all the Brethren could be bought off with the pensions. Weston died the very day the Act of Dissolution was promulgated. Seven of the Brethren were serving at the Convent in Malta at the time, and they remained there. Three, including Massingberd, indignantly rejected the pensions and returned to Malta soon after. Five or six sought refuge with fellow Knights in Commanderies on the continent. One Knight, David Gunstone, chose to follow Fortescue and Dingley into martyrdom: he refused the oath of allegiance to Henry, was dragged through Southwark on a sledge, and was then hanged, drawn and quartered for high treason. A couple more died in prison, thus denying themselves the chance of sharing the other three martyrs' fate.[20]

The rest of the Knights, perhaps eleven or twelve of them, seem to have accepted the pensions and to have relinquished their vows. Their exact number is uncertain, because no list survives of those who did this. There were probably not many who were eligible anyway: the Act listed only thirty-one Brethren who might receive the pension. This was a much smaller complement than was enumerated in Prior Thame's census of 1338; but the English *Langue* had never been large. It had always been one of the smallest and least wealthy, a mere sprat by comparison with the sturdy sturgeons of France, Spain and Italy. For Henry, buying off the loyalty of such a few was a cheap price to pay for what he was getting from the Order. Those who accepted his largesse possibly did not regret their apostasy, for their pensions seemed generous. Significantly, the ten Knights on Malta soon decided to bail out of the Order too, and return to England; equally significantly, the Grand Master refused to let them go. Perhaps, as critics of the Henrican reforms argue, he did this to save them from the fate of Fortescue *et alii*; perhaps he hoped for an improvement in the affairs of the Church in England, and wished to keep together a nucleus of Knights in case the Order could return to England; and—equally possible—he might have reasoned that if his ten remaining English Knights got back to England and the temptation of their pensions the English *Langue* would indeed be lost forever.[21]

The Order did eventually return to England. Henry died in 1547 and

20 The Blessed Adrian Fortescue, an English Knight and martyr of the Order, beheaded in 1539

was succeeded by his sickly ten year old son, Edward VI, who died in 1553. His Catholic daughter Mary I, wife of Philip II of Spain, then came to the throne. With the encouragement of both her husband and the Grand Master she reinstated the English *Langue*, along with its Grand Priory at Clerkenwell, nine of its Commanderies and many of its former landholdings. During the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI the Grand Masters had managed to keep the rump of the *Langue* alive on Malta. Reviving it in England was fairly simple: Mary simply invited the Knights to return, then issued Royal Letters Patent in April 1557 restoring the Order as a body corporate and re-establishing its name, dignities, privileges, and many of its former properties. Sir Thomas Tresham was appointed Grand Prior.[22]

For a time it began to look as if Henry's actions had been but a temporary setback—a misfortune the Order could take in its stride, as it had done with many previous reversals. But when Mary died only nineteen months later, in November 1558, her half-sister Elizabeth, Anne Boleyn's daughter, succeeded her, and once again the Protestant Reformation

gathered momentum. In the first year of Elizabeth's reign the estates of the Order were again confiscated, though the *Langue* was not formally dissolved, as under the Act of 1540. Perhaps it was an oversight, but Elizabeth never revoked her sister's Letters Patent. The effects of confiscation were just the same, however: deprived of the sustaining sap that flowed through the stems of the Commanderies, Knighthood in the Hospitallers' English vineyard shrivelled swiftly. Proof of this came only six years later, for at the Great Siege of Malta in 1565 only two English Knights were present—Oliver Starkey and Peter Felizes de la Muça. And the latter, who fell in defending the Fort St Michael, was not English-born. He was a Castilian who, to the chagrin of Brethren in both countries, had become an English subject so that he could, at the grace and favour of the Grand Master, become the Bailiff of Egle, the fourth ranking position in the English *Langue*. As before, the other brethren went their separate ways. Some like Oswald Massingberd, retired into secular life. Some fled abroad and died in exile. A couple died in prison during the waves of religious persecutions that periodically marked Elizabeth's reign. Later, in 1585, there was another martyrdom, when Sir Marmaduke Bowes was hanged, drawn and quartered at York for giving shelter to Catholic priests.[23]

Connoisseurs of legal niceties like to savour the fact that the English *Langue* never formally died. Elizabeth's failure to revoke Mary's Letters Patent which had restored the Order in England allows them to enjoy the fiction that the *Langue* always remained extant. The everyday reality, however, was that the Order in England was defunct by the end of the sixteenth century. Occasionally an English Catholic would find his way to Malta for induction into the Order. Even after the Knights were expelled from Malta the Order continued to maintain a nominal '*Langue* of England' with titular Grand Priors. But with the exception of Richard Shelley (appointed on the death of Tresham in the third year of Elizabeth's reign), Andrew Wise (an Irishman in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries) and, during the first part of the eighteenth century, three of the Fitz-James dynasty (descendents from an illegitimate line of the last Catholic King of England, James II, who was deposed in 1689), none of the titular Grand Priors of England were remotely English. All were Spaniards or Italians who probably never set foot in the country or knew much about it.[24]

The Knights fared little better in Ireland or Scotland, the other Priories of the *Langue* of England. In Ireland, where the Order had continued on as an Anglo-Norman plantation in unyielding Celtic soil, the Knights had not really prospered. Despite the separate identity of the Irish branch of the Order, as a Grand Priory in its own right, albeit within the English *Langue*, and even though its twelve Commanderies ran hospices and hospitals for the native inhabitants, it failed to take firm root. The native Irish probably saw the Knights as simply another appendage of English

rule, for the Knights and Priors were Anglo-Normans who often held high office in the English government of the country as well as in their Order.

There was a tendency among English immigrants to Ireland to regard themselves as a race apart, as Anglo-Irish rather than as simply expatriate England. Consequently the Anglo-Irish baronage came to regard themselves as free of the English Crown. The Priors of Ireland, too, tended to assimilate if they remained long enough. Though they may not have become Irish, and were probably never regarded by the Irish as anything but English, the Knights in Ireland often saw themselves as independent of both English and the Convent of Rhodes and Malta. In 1482, for example, the prior of Ireland, James Keating, fortified Dublin against the Royal Deputy—a breach of the Order's neutrality which the Grand Master, Peter d'Aubusson, would not tolerate. D'Aubusson therefore deposed Keating and sent a new Prior, Marmaduke Lumley, to the Kilmainham Priory to replace him. In defiance of the Grand Master Keating continued to rule the Priory and simply gaoled Lumley when he arrived from Rhodes. Eventually Keating was ejected, but only in 1491 and at the behest of Henry VII, who directed that henceforth the Prior of Kilmainham (that is, the Grand Prior of Ireland) must always be English, as opposed to Anglo-Irish. That, presumably, was the only way of keeping the Irish Grand Priory at heel.[25]

Possibly because of the unruliness of the Irish Knights, possibly because they were remote from the headquarters of both *Langue* and Order, and possibly because they had to work with a people who saw them as aliens, the importance of the Grand Priory of Ireland declined steadily over the years. Its holdings dwindled from twenty-three Commanderies, running 142 estates in 1212, until by the time of dissolution its twelve Commanderies were returning such small revenues that its 'responsions' to Malta had declined to only £26, or 1.3 per cent of the remittances of the *Langue*. The decline in prosperity accompanied a loss of Knightly vigour, to the extent that when the 'General Citation' went out in 1522 to summons the Knights for the final defence of Rhodes no Irish Knights answered the call. In 1554, during the Marian restoration, the rumbustious Oswald Massingberd became the Grand Prior, and he returned from Malta to rule at Kilmainham. But when Elizabeth reconfiscated the Order's estates he surrendered the Irish properties to the Royal Deputy, Henry Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, in 1559, and retired to civilian life. Radcliffe then took over the Priory headquarters. Kilmainham remained the Vice-Regal seat of Ireland for the next 363 years of turbulent history, until the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922.[26]

In Scotland, too, the Order was grinding to a halt as the 1550s ended. As in Ireland, the Knights experienced only limited success in Scotland. They certainly never became the prosperous institution in Scotland that

they were in England. The interminable wars that fill the pages of Scottish history in the Middle Ages deprived the Scottish Knights of many of the comforts of the seigneurial lifestyle enjoyed by their English Brethren and the country was not rich enough to sustain the lavish Commanderies that typified the Order's holdings in England. The revenues of Torphichen were minuscule by comparison with Clerkenwell's and small even in relation to those of the smaller English Commanderies. Torphichen and its subsidiary estates produced less in revenues than the smallest of the English Commanderies, and only about half as much as most of the others. As we have seen, its annual revenues at the time of dissolution were only £63. At the same time its rate of 'responsions' into the Maltese Treasury were much more onerous than for any of the English Commanderies—54.5 per cent as against an average of from 25 to 33 per cent in the latter.[27]

Though Torphichen was not as sugary a plum as those growing on the trees across the border, it was nevertheless, like them, eagerly plucked once the Reformation set in. The Prior of Scotland at the time was a local Knight, James Sandilands, whose method for coping with the dissolution of his Priory was as novel as it was profitable to himself. This Sandilands was not apparently connected to the termagent Scottish Knight of the same name, John James Sandilands, who was executed on Malta about 1563 for stealing silver from a local church. Indeed James Sandilands had opposed the entry of his namesake into the Order in 1554, claiming that the latter had insufficient proof of nobility for admission as a Knight.[28]

James Sandilands was descended from a long line of knights from the Clydesdale region of Lanarkshire, who had held lands there from the mid-fourteenth century. His family motto, *Spero meliora* ('I hope for better things'), was strangely apt in view of the success he later made of himself. He was probably born about 1510, which means he was already a mature adult when he entered the Order in Malta in December 1540, after the dissolution of the *Langue* in England. In 1541 he was deputed to join the Scottish Prior of the day, Sir Walter Lindsay, in trying to persuade Henry VIII to modify his measures against the Order. He duly returned to Scotland, and stayed on there once his mission with Lindsay had failed. In 1547 he succeeded Lindsay as Prior. Then about 1563 he came under the influence of his friend John Knox, a former priest but now the leader of the Scots Calvinists and the prime mover in the Reformation in Scotland. The next year, 1554, the Order was suppressed in Scotland and its properties confiscated. Sandilands stayed on at home for a while, then in 1557 returned to Malta, where he took part in the election of de la Valette as Grand Master. Back in Scotland again, in 1560 he was sent to France as an envoy of the parliament to secure the Queen's assent to the bills it had passed. (Mary Stuart, Mary Queen of Scots, was the wife of Francis II, King of France.) It was he who brought back to

21 The church of the Preceptory of Torphichen, seat of the Knights Hospitaller in Scotland

Scotland news of the death of the Queen's husband. In August of that year the Council of the Order on Malta removed him from his by now titular position of Commander of Torphichen because of his open Pro-

testantism, and replaced him with his namesake, John James Sandilands. This action neither punished the former nor reformed the latter, for Sir James remained at Torphichen and Sir John James remained on Malta getting into further troubles. Sir James then surrendered to the Crown Torphichen and the seven other properties the Order held in Scotland.[29]

Despite his Protestantism and his friendship with Knox, who remained the Queen's most virulent critic ('the Catholic whore' was how he was wont to refer to her), Sir James found favour with the Queen when she returned from France in 1561. In January 1563 she granted him a Royal Charter over the estates of the Order he had surrendered. She also made him a peer in his own right. He took the title Lord Torphichen, which still survives among his descendents and which was not very much different from his previous title as Prior of Scotland, 'Lord St John of Torphichen'. The new Lord had thus proved himself to be a consummate diplomat, even if he was not actually a wily turncoat with a knack for turning events to his own advantage. He was the only Knight of the former *Langue* of England to have emerged triumphant from the turmoil of the past twenty years.[30]

From time to time over the next couple of hundred years various hopeful individuals tried to breathe new life into the English Tongue. During the reign of the first two Stuart Kings, James I and Charles I, the Grand Masters made several fruitless diplomatic overtures to the English court. The revival of the *Langue* seems to have been a wish of successive Grand Masters. Their best hope came in 1685 when James II, a Catholic convert, succeeded his brother Charles II. The Grand Master of the day, Gregory Carafa (62nd Grand Master, 1680-90), sent a special mission to London to see whether—now a Catholic was on the throne again—the Order might return to England. James was non-committal. To encourage him Carafa installed as Grand Prior of England Henry Fitz-James, the second of the King's illegitimate sons by Arabella Churchill, when the young prince visited Malta. The diamond-studded cross of the Order presented to Henry on this occasion undoubtedly look grand but achieved nothing, for the next year, 1689, James was deposed. Further dealings with the English Crown took place in 1782, when the Grand Master de Rohan-Polduc created a new 'Anglo-Bavarian' *Langue* to accommodate the estates the Order had acquired in Bavaria. This was an administrative rearrangement only, but the Grand Master took pains to secure the approval of the English King, George III, lest his displeasure should hazard any future attempt to resuscitate the *Langue* in England.[31]

The Grand Masters, of course, were living in the past. What they did not seem to appreciate was that conditions in England had changed. The religious reformation had been too thorough, English nationalism had become too strong, English parliamentary democracy had advanced too far, and economic faith in mercantilism was too well established for a Catholic, supranational, aristocratic, and obsolete feudal institution like

22 Sir James Sandilands, Prior of Scotland 1546-54, then the first Lord Torphichen

the Order of the Knights of Malta to be welcome again in England. As events in Revolutionary France were about to demonstrate, the days of such institutions were done.

2 *Revival*

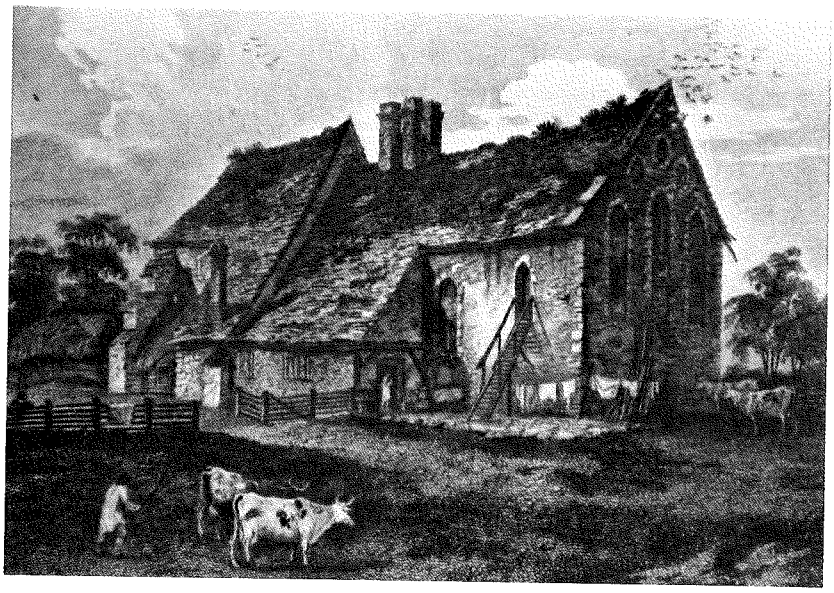
A revival did eventually occur in England, but it did not come about in the way that the Grand Masters would have expected, nor for the reasons they would have chosen, and they would not have recognised it in its regenerated form. To appreciate this we must now look briefly at what happened to the Order after its expulsion from Malta.

Many of the Knights felt deeply embittered about the passive acceptance of Napoleon's demands by the Grand Master von Hompesch. Committed above all to the honour of their Order, many of them felt betrayed. They believed that the Order should have resisted the French invasion to the end, as it had customarily done on numerous other occasions when outnumbered and outgunned. Malta, they reasoned, was one of the best fortified citadels in Europe and could have held out for months even against a force as large as Napoleon's. They were fairly confident that Nelson's British fleet would have come to their aid if a prolonged siege had ensued. Consequently, when Nelson destroyed the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile only seven weeks after von Hompesch's capitulation, their disgust and anger at the spinelessness of their Grand Master was intense.[32]

In Russia, where the recently created Grand Priory had become part of the Anglo-Bavarian *Langue* set up in 1782, the Russian Knights met to protest the Grand Master's actions. Tsar Paul as Protector of the Order talked of sending a fleet of Russian ships under the flag of the Order to recapture the islands. He never did; but ironically within two years Napoleon was offering to hand over the islands to the Tsar as head of the Order, to prevent the British from getting them. ('I would rather see the English on the heights of Montmartre than on Malta,' Napoleon said at the time.)[33] The offer came too late, for the British captured Malta in September 1800. (Despite agreeing in 1802 to return the islands to the Knights, they held Malta for the next 162 years.) Paul was furious when the British declined to pass the islands over to him as head of the Order immediately after expelling the French. As a sanction against the British he imposed an embargo on British vessels in Russian ports in November 1800, to be maintained until Britain returned Malta to the Order. His foreign policy continued to be obsessed with securing the islands. What sort of conflict with Britain this would have led him into if he had not been assassinated four months later makes interesting speculation, because he had begun imprisoning the crews and burning the boats of the British seamen who tried to break his embargo. It is also interesting to speculate over whether Paul's main interest in Malta was as head of the Order or as Tsar of an empire yearning for a base in the Mediterranean.[34]

With this support from their Russian Protector and new Brethren, many of the Knights driven from Malta gravitated to St Petersburg. Their displeasure with von Hompesch was extreme. The hapless Grand Master was not with them: he remained in Trieste for a time, then eventually ended up in Montpellier in France. There he found refuge as a Penitent Brother and lived in ascetic seclusion until his death in obscurity and poverty in May 1805. Pressed heavily by Tsar Paul, who wished to supplant him, von Hompesch formally abdicated as Grand Master in July 1799. By then he no longer mattered to his former Brethren, because already those of them in St Petersburg had acquiesced to the undisguised ambitions of the Tsar, whom they had voted in as Grand Master the previous October. They had presumably taken this unprecedented and irregular action in awe of the Tsar and out of gratitude for his hospitality. Their wish to exact retribution on the discredited von Hompesch for the humiliation he had brought them and their conviction that under Paul's leadership they had their best chances of returning to Malta also motivated their extraordinary departure from their centuries old conventions for finding a new Grand Master.[35]

For a time it seemed that the Knights had made the right move, even though the Pope, Pius VII, had strenuously opposed it because of the way it had installed a married, Orthodox prince of a secular State in the position of head of a celibate, Catholic and neutral order. The Tsar's talk



23 The former Commandery of St John, Swingfield, England, in 1806

of a naval recapture of their islands; Napoleon's offer to Paul to hand Malta back to him as Grand Master; Paul's aggressive foreign policy in respect of the British occupation of Malta; and the Treaty of Amiens between Britain and France in 1802, which provided that the islands should be neutral and should be passed back to the Order, were all developments that seemed auspicious.

But other events intruded to frustrate the Knights' hopes and to keep them in permanent exile away from Malta. First Paul's assassination and then renewed hostilities between France and Britain in May 1803 removed their hope for an early return to Malta. Paul's son and successor, Alexander I, assumed the title Protector of the Order but declined the Grand Mastership. Then Britain, in view of its deteriorating relationship with France, flatly declared that she would continue occupying the islands. An election for a new Grand Master proved abortive when the candidate chosen declined the office. The Pope, Pius VII, was then requested to name a Grand Master. In February 1803 he chose the Bailiff John Baptist Tommasi di Cortona, who now saw fit to set up the Convent at Catania, eighty-six kilometres south of Messina on the east coast of Sicily, presumably because that was close to Malta. When Tommasi died only two years later, in 1805, control of the Order fell on the shoulders of his deputy or Lieutenant-Master, the Bailiff Innico-Maria Guevara Suardo. For the next seventy-four years the Order had no Grand Masters. Successive Popes simply deputed a succession of nine Lieutenant-Masters to rule the Order, which remained at Catania until

1826, when it moved to Ferrara in the Papal States. Its final move was to Rome in 1834, where it has remained ever since. It now occupies two renowned premises in Rome—its Magistral Palace, the 'Palazzo Malta' on the Via dei Condotti, and the 'Villa Malta' on the Aventine Hill, the centres of its worldwide charitable, chivalric and diplomatic endeavour.[36]

In 1879 Pope Leo XIII restored the office of Grand Master and raised the then Lieutenant-Master, John Baptist Ceschi a Santa Croce, to the position. In the century since then the Order has re-established its ancient, honourable and distinguished reputation for charity by sponsoring a range of good works of great diversity. In doing so it has been greatly helped by the financial contributions that come from the 'Associations of Knights of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta' it set up in a number of countries, including Britain, Ireland, Australia and other Commonwealth countries. It still maintains its traditional structure as an aristocratic, Catholic, sovereign order. It issues its own postage stamps and exchanges diplomatic representatives with countries of Roman Catholic tradition. Even Castro's Cuba maintains an ambassador to the Order, though other countries in the Communist Bloc do not; nor do Commonwealth countries or the U.S.A. Nowadays its charitable endeavour is directed towards running hospitals—as it has always done—giving instruction in first aid, maintaining dispensaries and leprosaria in Africa and Latin America, operating ambulance transport services, and engaging in relief work after disasters such as earthquakes, flood, famines and wars, in many nations of Europe, Africa and the Americas. The colourful pageantry of its ceremonial life remains an important ingredient in its endeavours, still evoking a haunting memory of Knightly deeds on ancient battlefields.[37]

The thirty-six year period between the Knights' expulsion from Malta and their re-establishment in Rome in 1834 was an interlude of great dislocation and confusion within the Order. Once the Knights realised that Britain meant to hang on to Malta they began searching elsewhere for an island home. In 1806 the Swedish King, Gustavus IV, offered them the Baltic island of Gothland, but they declined for fear of prejudicing their rights of a return to Malta under the Treaty of Amiens. During negotiations towards the Peace of Paris in April 1814 the restored Bourbon King, Louis XVIII suggested that they be given the Adriatic island of Corfu; but that notion did not get far and was forgotten when Napoleon returned from exile on Elba the following February to throw Europe into turmoil again until Waterloo in June 1815. Following the Paris discussions the Congress of Vienna had begun meeting in September 1814 to sort out the settlement of post-Napoleonic Europe. In these international assemblies the few Knights who now comprised the Convent at Catania had little hope of influencing the 'Big' Powers, for what did the Convent now represent? Sovereign it might be in name, but it was an impoverish-

ed body controlling no territory and few sources of revenue; moreover the Knights of the various *Langues* were now widely dispersed, and the *Langues* themselves had all but disappeared in the generation of Revolutionary and Napoleonic chaos.[38]

With the downfall of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty, many of the French Knights had returned home, where they could now meet openly for the first time since their proscription in 1792 at the height of the 'Terror'. At the instigation of Prince Camille de Rohan, Grand Prior of Aquitaine, they assembled in Paris in 1814 as a 'Chapter General' to consider the future of the Order. Taking the view that the Convent at Catania was impotent they elected a 'Capitular Commission' consisting of de Rohan and six senior Knights from the three French *Langues* to superintend the affairs of not only the French *Langues* but also the political and financial affairs of the whole Order. The authority of the Commission was confirmed by a Papal Bull of Pius VII on 10 August 1814. The Lieutenant-Master and his Council in Catania concurred with this action, and Louis XVIII also recognised its authority.[39]

The most pressing immediate concern of the Capitular Commission was to protect the interests of the Order at the forthcoming Congress of Vienna. At the Congress they bid unsuccessfully for the cession of a Mediterranean island as compensation for the loss of Malta, which the Congress confirmed as a British possession. The Capitular Commission was further frustrated at the next international assembly, the Congress of Verona, in 1822. Still anxious to secure a Mediterranean island, the Commission entered negotiations with the Greeks the following year, 1823. The Greeks, who had been fighting their War of Independence against the Turks since 1821, had proclaimed themselves independent in 1822. The Greek successes persuaded the Capitular Commission that an eventual return to Rhodes by the Order might even be possible. It therefore entered into a treaty with the Greeks in July 1823 by which the small islands of Sapienza and Kabrera on the southwest coast of the Morea (Peloponnesus) peninsula would be ceded to the Order, while Rhodes would follow when it was recovered from the Turks. In return for this the Order would secure a loan of four million francs for the Greeks. Towards that end the Capitular Commission now began trying to raise £40,000 in London through the Rothschild banking house. In the end nothing came of these dealings, and the plans had to be dropped in 1825, firstly because Austria disapproved of such moves within her 'sphere of influence' and secondly because the Lieutenant-Master at the Convent at Catania, Anthony Busca, disagreed with the proposals. Busca, because of his opposition to the independence of the Capitular Commission, had revoked the authority of the Commission and ordered its immediate disbandment in 1824.[40]

The Capitular Commission was reluctant to accept the Lieutenant-

Master's command to dissolve itself. It saw that for the past ten years it had been the only body of Knights to have taken effective action to restore the Order. The three French *Langues* it represented were under the protection of Louis XVIII, and it regarded itself as both stronger and more representative than the Convent at Catania. It saw itself as following a sensible policy towards the restoration of the Order's pre-Napoleonic position. It was unwilling to surrender the wide powers it had been exercising over the last decade. Consequently it was not ready to abolish itself at the peremptory demand of an unrepresentative Lieutenant-Master whom it saw as acting in contravention of the Papal Bull of 1814, which the Lieutenant-Master's predecessors had confirmed.[41]

To strengthen its bargaining position against the Lieutenant-Master the Capitular Commission began casting round for support elsewhere. Its leader by this stage was the Grand Chancellor of the Order, the Marquis de St Croix Molay. Among his strategies for helping restore the Order to its former glory and for resisting the Lieutenant-Master was the revival of the *Langue* England. To help him here were a group of 'English gentlemen of rank and distinction' whom von Hompesch had inducted into the Order; in addition Tsar Paul had been generous in bestowing membership and the honours of the Order on a number of Britons, including Lady Emma Hamilton, Nelson's paramour. In England there was thus a body of members and supporters of the Order who might form the nucleus of a new English *Langue*. It was to them that the Marquis de St Croix Molay now turned. Protracted discussions between them and the Capitular Commission resulted in a series of Articles of Convention being drawn up and agreed to over the period June 1826 to October 1827 to govern the proposed revived *Langue*. The main impediment in reincarnating it was religious: most of those who would be recruited into it would probably be Protestant. However, the Lutheran Bailiwick of Brandenburg (the Prussian branch of the Order) and the Orthodox Grand Priory of Russia provided precedents for non-Catholic segments being accommodated within the Order; and so the religious formula to be adopted for admitting British members was to be that used in the case of the Bailiwick of Brandenburg. The 'Articles of Convention' took care of this difficulty, and pointed out that the revival of the English *Langue* was occurring with the approval of the three French and two Spanish *Langues*. A delegate from either side was now appointed, in December 1827, to officiate as midwives at the rebirth: a French Knight, Philippe de Chastelain represented the Capitular Commission and a Mr Donald Currie the British members.[42]

A long delay occurred before a Committee to superintend the affairs of the reborn *Langue* was formed in late 1830. On 29 January 1831 it elected the chaplain to King George IV, the Reverend Dr Sir Robert Peat, to be the first active Grand Prior of England in almost 300 years. The

Langue, now believing it had been duly constituted, proceeded to recruit new members; and so 'the names of many English noblemen and gentlemen were inscribed on the roll . . . and its proceedings were conducted in full assurance of its perfect and lawful revival'.[43] Peat and his fellow members hoped that the never-revoked Royal Letters Patent of Mary I would add further legitimacy to their *Langue*; and so he decided to take the Grand Prior's oath, *de fidele administratione*, required under Mary's charter. He swore this, undertaking to 'faithfully truthfully carefully and strictly perform fill keep and obey the ancient Statutes of the . . . Sovereign Order as far as they are applicable to the government of the [English *Langue*]', before the Lord Chief Justice of England, Sir Thomas Denman, in the Court of the King's Bench at the Guildhall in London on 24 February 1834.[44] It was undoubtedly an impressively solemn occasion, but it made little difference legally or qualitatively to the *Langue*; and the date now celebrated as marking the revival is that in 1831 when Peat was elected.

Peat died in 1837 and was succeeded by Sir Henry Dymoke. Complications now arose, for in the meantime the Marquis de St Croix Molay had also died, the Capitular Commission had finally been abolished, and the French *Langues* had returned to their obedience under the Lieutenant-Master. The Convent of the Order, now permanently domiciled in Rome, self-assured in its authority once again, and wary of admitting a flood of Protestants into the Order, advised that a special dispensation was required for every Protestant who joined. Protracted negotiations now proceeded to find a way round that obstacle. Then in 1843 the Lieutenant-Master placed a further stumbling block across the path of the *Langue* by declaring that only Catholics could be admitted. The final, insuperable, hurdle was dropped before the English in 1858 when they tried to reopen negotiations. This time they were told that the French action in reviving the *Langue* was repudiated, and the *Langue* was no longer recognised.[45]

Thirty years of diplomatic to-ing and fro-ing had thus been to no avail, but the earnest 'noblemen and gentlemen' who comprised the membership of the English *Langue* were not prepared to be thus affronted and humiliated. In their view the *Langue* had been legally constituted in January 1831 and they had met its restrictive criteria for membership. They therefore proclaimed themselves to be an independent body, 'The Sovereign and Illustrious Order of St John of Jerusalem: Anglia'. They now set about producing a constitution for themselves, which they thrashed out over succeeding years and adopted in its final form in 1871.[46]

Up to this stage the revived *Langue* had been little more than a club for British upper class members with a romantic sense of chivalry. They had comprised an association of quaint antiquarians the membership of which afforded them an opportunity for dressing up in outlandish an-

cient garb. To many of them the Order probably seemed a painless way of acquiring high sounding titles. Few of them were probably aware of the calculatingly political and territorial motives of the French Knights, who had encouraged them in the hope that this might strengthen their own hand for the infighting with the Convent at Catania, and for the retaking of Rhodes. In a decade which saw the passage through parliament of the First Reform Act of 1832 and the presentation of the People's Charter of 1838—constitutional markers of a rising tide of populist agitation for equality and democracy—they perhaps hoped that by reaffirming the old aristocratic values they might stem the flood of radicalism threatening to level out the social hierarchy. Few in Britain apart from the members of the Order themselves took the *Langue* seriously, and even the members recognised that its position was 'precarious'. The more honest among them perhaps realised that, as one newspaper of the day put it in 1860, the Order in Britain was a 'feeble and purposeless society' which was doing little to justify its existence; but they were few.[47] And so, apart from the long drawn out and ultimately fruitless negotiations with the Convent in Rome, nothing much happened within the *Langue*. It simply sat and 'awaited a new vision'.[48] It was about to receive this, however, because by one of those odd chances that occasionally place the right individuals with the right inspiration in an organization at the right time, the reborn British order was about to experience its true renaissance.

Whether or not the rebirth of the Langue of England was legitimate has been a matter for lively contention ever since Sir Robert Peat was elected Grand Prior in 1831. An even more controversial issue has been whether or not the independent 'Illustrious Order of St John: Anglia' (that from which The Most Venerable Order descends) is entitled, having been repudiated by the Convent of the parent body, to hold the parent liable for paternity. Those denying legitimacy maintain that the offspring was misbegotten—that from such a highly irregular union no rightful claim could exist. Those advocating the right to legitimate descent argue that the infant was conceived in good faith by the effective leadership of the Order and with the support of five of the six *Langues* then extant. The debate continued until 1963, when the Lord Prior of The Most Venerable Order and the Grand Chancellor of The Sovereign Military Order of Malta made a joint declaration of mutual esteem between their two orders which 'recognises their historical links and the common tradition that inspires their humanitarian activities'.[49]

The 'common tradition' to which the heads of the two orders thus alluded was in the end what saved them both, the Maltese parent and its British offspring, from extinction. As clubs for aristocrats who wallowed in nostalgia for a remote chivalric past, neither order might have lasted long in an industrial age. Each of them was saved by separately finding a sustaining charitable purpose that gave them the means to prosper

in new endeavours which the ancient Knights could not have foretold but of which they would certainly have approved.

3 *A new humanitarian tradition*

The impetus for transforming the revived British Order into a useful charitable organization committed to alleviating human suffering came from four men. They were Sir William Drogo Montagu, 7th Duke of Manchester (1823-90); Sir Edmund Lechmere, Bt. (1826-94); Sir John Furley (1836-1919); and Colonel Francis Duncan (1836-88).

The Duke of Manchester was an eminent man from a distinguished family. The founder of his lineage, the first Earl, was Henry Montagu, a Lord Chief Justice of England most remembered these days for being the judge who sent Sir Walter Raleigh to the block in 1618. The family seat, where the Duke was born, was Kimbolton Castle, near Huntingdon north-west of Cambridge, where Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife, spent the last years of her life. In his twenties he had served in the Grenadier Guards and as an aide-de-camp to Sir Peregrine Maitland, Governor of the Cape Colony. He later entered parliament as a member of the House of Commons, where he sat for eight years until he inherited his title in 1855. He was an author of books on historical and military subjects; a Doctor of Laws of Cambridge University; a Knight of the Most Illustrious Order of St Patrick (an élite British Order comprising the Sovereign and twenty-two Knights) and a Knight of the Order of the Iron Cross of Prussia; and was president of the Royal Colonial Institute and an investor in commercial ventures in Australia and Canada. The Duke became the fifth Grand Prior of the revived British Order in 1861, three years after its repudiation by the Lieutenant-Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. His rule of twenty-seven years has been, after those of the Duke of Connaught (1910-42) and the Duke of Gloucester (1942-74), the third longest of the ten Grand Priors of the revived British Order. His rule was also the last by a non-Royal: all the five Grand Priors since have been members of the Royal House of Windsor. Thus, he was in short the very type of 'English gentleman of rank and distinction' whom the French Knights had hoped to bring into the English *Langue* when they revived it.[50]

For all the Duke's accomplishments, and notwithstanding that he presided over the Order during the quarter-century of its true revitalization, he remains a shadowy figure. The histories of the Order tell us little about him other than that he was 'enlightened'; indeed some of them do not mention him at all.[51]

Sir Edmund Lechmere was from an ancient and distinguished Worcestershire family. He came from a line of local squires and bankers at Severn End, near Hanley Castle in the Malvern Hills, and was the third Baronet Lechmere. After an education at Charterhouse and Oxford

he threw himself into the task of being a county gentleman. He was one of those human dynamos who can play a dozen roles at once and carry them all off with aplomb. He was variously a member of parliament, Deputy Lieutenant High Sheriff of Worcestershire, Vice-President of the Worcestershire Historical Society, an antiquarian of note, with an interest in restoring notable buildings of the county, a captain in the local company of Worcestershire Rifle Volunteers, and a leading light in the Worcestershire Rowing Club. He was also an active director in the family banking firm; he was a notable agricultural 'improver' and member of the Worcestershire Chamber of Agriculture; and as the landlord of the tavern on the family estate he took an interest in the diet of his customers—having pronounced 'temperance' views on the evils of drink, he provided wholesome food which he liked them to eat as they drank, because he thought drinking on an empty stomach led to alcoholic excess.[52]

In between all this Lechmere and his wife usually managed to spend the winter months each year travelling in the Levant and the Holy Land. During these excursions he became interested in Crusader history, and that in turn led him into the 'Illustrious Order of St John: Anglia', which he joined in 1865. Characteristically he threw himself into it and within a couple of years he was its Secretary General. He found the company of those he met there congenial, which was not surprising because for the most part they were men of his own background. Among them were some with his own 'improving', community-oriented interests, and with them he became keen about renewing the Order's charitable endeavours in medical and health-related programmes.[53]

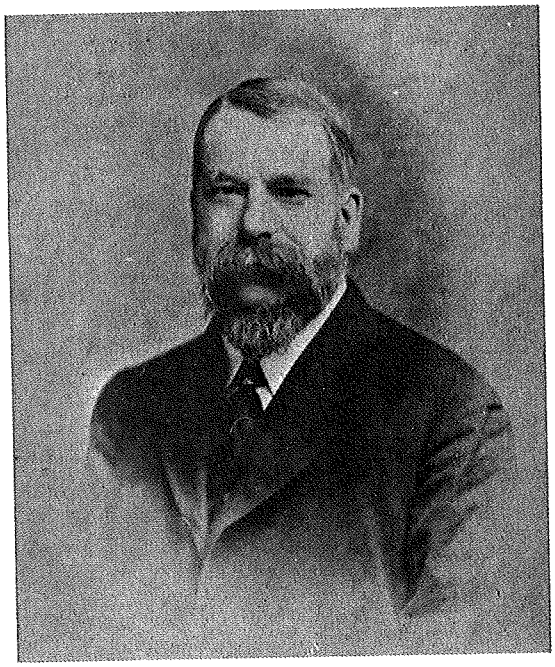
One of those Lechmere met through the Order was Sir John Furley, son of a prominent burgher of Ashford, Kent, who had joined the Order the year before Lechmere. Furley had been at Harrow and studied Law, but he always yearned for a military career. He was one of those men who lived for the regular army without ever serving in it. His parents insisted that he was too 'delicate' for army life (despite his supposed infirmities he lived to eighty-three), and so he had to content himself with serving as an officer in the local Ashford militia. Whenever he could he dashed over to Europe to watch troops in action. He was bitterly disappointed when his attempts to get to the Crimea in 1854-55 were frustrated; but he got a consolation prize when he was allowed to live under canvas with Napoleon III's troops during their manoeuvres at Châlons on the Marne in 1856. When he returned to London he managed to obtain permission to drill with the Scots Guards.[54]

In 1864 Furley at last got his chance to serve, as he put it, his 'apprenticeship in war'. He attached himself to a Danish colonel during the brief Danish-Prussian war, and was pleased to find, as his biographer notes, 'he was able to face unpleasant, even gruesome, situations with calmness and a tough courage'.[55] The plight of the wounded was something else

24 Sir William Drogo Montagu, seventh Duke of Manchester, Grand Prior of the revived English Tongue of the Order of St John, 1861-88

that impresed him; and so, back in England again with Lechmere and several others within the Order, he became interested in the Red Cross Societies which the Swiss gentleman, Henri Dunant, was organising. Dunant had been much influenced by the efforts of Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War. His own experiences at the Battle of Solferino during the Franco-Austrian War of 1859—when in one day of inconclusive fighting 38,000 soldiers died—led him to gather together delegates from fourteen European nations at the First Geneva Convention in 1863, which led to the establishment of the International Red Cross Committee. Furley attended the Geneva Convention, and as a Delegate of the Order of St John he also went to the subsequent Red Cross conferences at Paris (1867) and Berlin (1869).[56]

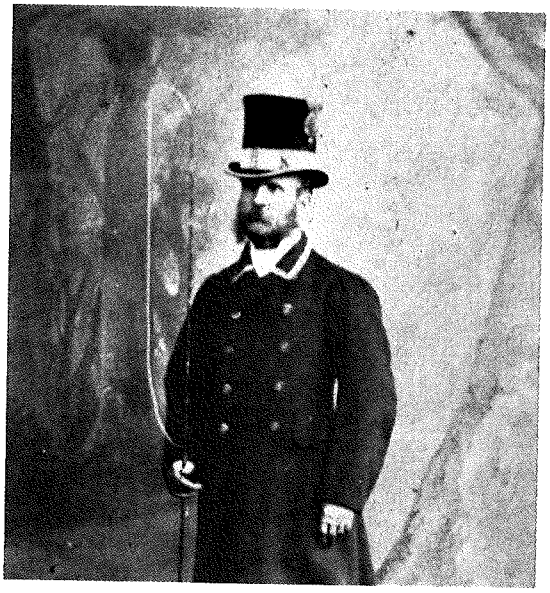
In 1870, the year the Franco-Prussian war broke out, Furley and Lechmere were part of the group of members of the Order who, under the chairmanship of the Duke of Manchester, formed the 'British National Society for the Sick and Wounded', the forerunner of the British Red Cross Society. The British National Society despatched an 'Anglo-



25 Sir Edmund Lechmere, one of the principal co-founders of the St John Ambulance Association

American Ambulance Unit' to the war with Furley as one of its two joint-commanders. This Unit, which eventually employed 200 surgeons, nurses and attendants, endeavoured to keep both sides provided with medical supplies, blankets and hospital clothing. After the Prussian-French phase of the war was over, the frightful ten-week civil war of the Commune of Paris ensued. In the appalling destruction of life and property—65,000 people are said to have died; the carnage was far worse than at the height of the Revolutionary 'Terror' eighty years before—the Unit operated field dressing stations for both sides. The horrors of this brief war moved Furley deeply. If the experience was insufficient to palsy his love affair with the army, it nevertheless was enough to make him dissatisfied with the 'Red Cross' type of aid—chiefly the provision of medical supplies—the Unit had been giving. While it had been useful it was not able to help the thousands of suffering wounded. What was needed, he saw, was to have an army of people trained and organized in peace time to handle large scale injuries expertly in an emergency.[57]

Colonel Francis Duncan, the final member of the trio, was what Furley had wanted so dearly to be—a career soldier. He came from Aberdeen in Scotland, where his father was a promoter of railway companies and railway construction. After a first-rate education at the Grammar School and University of Aberdeen he became a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery Regiment. He joined the army just after Crimea and spent the next six years in Canada on garrison duty. Posted back to the Woolwich Gar-



26 Sir John Furley, co-founder of the St John Ambulance Association

rison in London he developed interests in a number of the humanitarian movements then gaining acceptance. As an adherent of the temperance movement he opened a coffee house at the Garrison so that the troops might have something other than cheap grog to drink; and, a son of the stern Scots Kirk, he also established a Sunday School within the Garrison. Duncan had a flair for language, which he used in becoming a military historian of note. His lively two-volume history of his regiment, his artillery manual, and his commentaries on various campaigns attracted considerable interest. The army life, military history, and keeping his troops sober and devout were not entirely satisfying, however. So he joined the Order of St John in 1875 because it seemed to offer fulfilment: the Order, he said in his first speech at one of its meetings, presented 'grand possibilities . . . to establish and develop a system of practical philanthropy that would benefit the whole community'.[58]

The conjunction in the Order of these four able, committed, well-connected men, the Duke of Manchester, Sir Edmund Lechmere, Sir John Furley and Colonel Francis Duncan, was fortuitous. Restless, public-spirited, inventive and imaginative, they were able to give the Order the zest for charitable work it had previously lacked.

The time was ripe for this sort of endeavour. The second half of the nineteenth century was a great era for improvers and reformers of all sorts. Following on from the age of the Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century, which taught that humans were born good and it was only society that corrupted them, the humanitarian reformers of the nineteenth century sought to ameliorate the worst aspects of human

society. Progressive social reform, they thought, would ennoble humans, raising them near to their original perfection. There was ample scope for the ministrations of improvers. The Industrial Revolution of the past century had bred great misery among the social classes it had spawned—the impoverished urban working classes, the dispossessed rural workers. As industrialization advanced the social problems multiplied, and with that the task of the humanitarian reformers expanded.

Thus, for example, the ideas on penal reform implanted by John Howard bore fruit in the efforts of Elizabeth Fry to tackle the problems of overcrowded, insanitary gaols and asylums. Authors of the naturalist *genre* like Charles Dickens and Emile Zola were making the world aware of the evils of child labour, child neglect, the urban slums, and the squalid lives led by the masses of humanity crowded into factory and mining towns. William Wilberforce's efforts paid off with the suppression of slavery. The French philosopher, Auguste Comte coined the phrase *Vivre pour autrui* (life for others), which gave birth to the word 'altriusm' to describe what motivated the reformers. The evangelical preachers of the Quaker, Methodist and Salvation Army movements strove to give their converts a 'social conscience' while leading them to God. Orphanages, foundling homes and refuges for wayward serving girls sprang up like mushrooms; and William Gladstone combed the streets of London by night to save the street walkers from vice. 'Royal' humanitarian societies of all shades multiplied—the Humane Society, the Society for the prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The Rechabites and Temperance Unions strove to save the working classes from drunkenness. Governments began enacting 'social' legislation to enshrine the new humanitarian reforms. And even the capitalists and industrialists who had grown rich helping create the misery—Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller and their ilk in other industrializing nations—found that philanthropy was almost as spiritually rewarding as industry was financially.[59]

The Order of St John, too, when it began looking around the human wasteland being created by the advance of industrial capitalism, by social change, and by war, found ample scope for humanitarian endeavour. Under the authoritative and impeccably respectable guidance of its Grand Prior, the Duke of Manchester, and propelled by the inspired and energetic drive of Lechmere, Furley and Duncan, who came to be known as 'the Great Triumvirate of the Ambulance Movement', the revived Order at last found the sustaining purpose it had lacked.

With Lechmere as General Secretary the Order began experimenting with various charitable endeavours. Its meetings became a forum for airing matter of interest in public health. Topics like 'sanitary education', 'diets for poor convalescents' and 'the conveyance to hospital of sick and infirm persons' were discussed, and led to the formation of a medical

27 Col. Francis Duncan, co-founder of the St John Ambulance Association

sub-committee. In the late 1860s, between the conferences of the International Red Cross, the Order acted as the British branch of the Red Cross Society; and when the Franco-Prussian War began in July 1870 it sponsored the formation of the British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded, which later developed into the British Red Cross. During the war, as we have seen, it supported the Anglo-American Ambulance Unit, which Furley jointly commanded and which many members of the Order also crossed the Channel to work for.[60]

The war was a watershed in the development of the revived Order, because it forced Furley, Duncan, Lechmere and others to think more carefully about treating and transporting the wounded. This new interest became apparent in the year after the war, 1872, when the Order contributed £100 towards Britain's first ambulance transport service. This was established by private enterprise at Burslem among the Staffordshire potteries. As 'ambulances' it used two-wheeled stretchers, called 'litters', modelled on those of the Prussian Army. (The word ambulance came from the French *ambulant* meaning 'to stroll, or walk', which was what the first ambulance attendants had to do.) The Order developed its own type of litter, called the 'St John Ambulance', in 1875. This proved very popular and by 1880 the Order was selling models of its all over the country. In 1872-73 the Order had also begun instructing lay people in treating the cases they might be called on to carry on the 'ambulances'. This interest in ambulance work led the Order to establish an Ambulance Department in 1875. The following year Duncan became its director. In

1876 another war broke out, this time between Turkey and Serbia. To provide aid the Order set up an Eastern War Sick and Wounded Relief Fund, which soon merged with the British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded. The combined organizations subsequently sent a team of thirty-five surgeons, nurses and attendants to the war along with tent hospitals, wagon transports, 'St John Ambulances' and medical supplies to aid both combatants.[61]

The next year, 1877, was probably the most important to date in the life of the revived British Order. At the instigation of Lechmere, Furley, Duncan and a surgeon, Sir Edward Sieveking, the Order formed the first of its modern 'foundations', the St John Ambulance Association. They intended the new body to be 'a civilian reserve for the Army Medical Department' and a means to 'train men and women for the benefit of the sick and wounded'.[62] Its formation, of course, was in direct response to the frightening carnage being wreaked on civilian and military populations alike through the new 'industrialized' wars. Army medical corps alone could not hope to cope with the hordes of wounded humanity such wars produced. Only the training of large contingents of civilian volunteers could hope to achieve any more than the token treatment of the tens of thousands of victims each war left behind.

The St John Ambulance Association quickly got down to business. It formed links with the London teaching hospitals, whose staffs it employed as instructors; and using a triangular bandage, a stretcher and a wheeled litter it began teaching courses of 'Aid to the Injured' to classes recruited from the general public. At the end of the programme of lectures each class was examined, and candidates who passed were issued with a certificate. The Association believed that 'no individual is deemed properly qualified to render first aid beyond a year from date of certificate'; and so those who wished to remain 'efficient' first aiders had to keep signing up for annual retraining. To encourage them to do so the Association issued a medallion to those who passed two re-examinations. The teaching was organized by Duncan's Ambulance Department and took place from an Association 'Centre' at Woolwich. The classes were an immediate success, particularly with women, who at first outnumbered men by four to one—thus causing some sceptics to dismiss first aid as 'an ephemeral feminine fashion'.[63] Scepticism did not keep the public away from the Association's classes, however, with the result that within six months 1100 women and men were taking the lectures in twelve centres in London and beyond. The growth continued over the succeeding year as centres for instruction opened on the Nottingham and Derbyshire coalfields, with the Metropolitan Police and the railway companies.[64]

By 1882 there were 130 centres throughout Britain and the colonies, where first aid training was proving as popular as it was 'at home'. The Order was perhaps surprised at the enormous success its new venture was

enjoying. It now had to set up a Stores Department, which Furley supervised, to distribute handbooks of instruction, poster diagrams for teaching, bandages, tourniquets and stretchers. It found it had on its hands a whole new industry growing up around the courses. The market was wide open for exploitation. In 1880 a second course, 'home nursing and hygiene', was developed to help fill the public demand for basic medical training. In 1881 the first public demonstration of first aid techniques took place at a medical congress and exhibition at South Kensington. Four teams took part—one from Association headquarters, one from the Scotland Yard Police, one from the militia and one other. Public demonstrations and team competitions like this further promoted the Association's courses, thus helping make first aid a 'fashionable' skill which anyone regardless of education or class background might acquire.[65]

Why did the courses prove so immensely popular? Undoubtedly the reasons had much to do with their shrewd and energetic promotion by the 'Great Triumvirate' of Lechmere, Furley and Duncan. Possibly the fact that the fabled Knights Hospitaller were behind them added some allure. But the main reasons probably lay in the nature of the industrial and urban society which Britain had become over the past century. Such societies are 'dangerous': accidents are commonplace in such societies—in the home, in the industrial work-place, on the congested streets, on public transport and among the crowds that mass together for sports and entertainments. In an earlier age, when towns were smaller, traffic flowed more slowly and fewer people ventured far fom their homes in rural [illegible]; 'traffic accidents', 'occupational hazards' and 'accident [illegible]xpressions then unknown. The courses the St John Am[illegible]ion devised were thus catering to an important public [illegible]owing apace with the continuing industrialization and [illegible]ritain. The courses, most notably, had their greatest [illegible] and among people where the danger of accidents was [illegible]oalfields, in the railway systems, in the busiest cities, [illegible]waymen and police were being forced to work daily amidst dangers that might kill, maim or incapacitate in the briefest moment of lost concentration. The success of the courses was an index of the dangers presented by industrial urban society.

By 1882, five years after its foundation, the St John Ambulance Association was almost a household expression, as more and more of the public enrolled in the courses at the 130 centres. In that year the Royal seal of approval was stamped on the Order's efforts to disseminate first aid knowledge when seven women from the Royal family—Queen Alexandra, the Princess Royal, Queen Maud of Norway, Princess Victoria, Princess Beatrice, the Duchess of Connaught and the Duchess of Albany—all underwent instruction and examination and received their certificates. That year, too, people who had received first aid training

began grouping together as 'Ambulance Corps' to provide a voluntary system of transporting sick and injured people to hospital. The first of these corps was in Leicester and soon after there was another in Yorkshire; then, like first aid training, this idea caught on quickly. At first the corps used the two-wheeled litters, though later they used horse-drawn ambulances Furley had designed and built in 1883.[66]

In 1882 the second of the Order's modern foundations (the first having been the St John Ambulance Association) was established. This was the Ophthalmic Hospital of the Order of St John, which was opened in Jerusalem on a site near the Jaffa Gate by Dr J. C. Wardell. The Ophthalmic Hospital came about through the efforts of Lechmere, who, following up one of his bright ideas, had made inquiries in 1876 through the British ambassador in Constantinople to see if the Turkish government would grant the Order a site for a hospital. A similar request by the Bailiwick of Brandenburg had been made in 1869; and, perhaps to Lechmere's surprise, he found his was approved. Lechmere's wife provided much of the finance necessary. The Order decided that it would build an ophthalmic hospital because of the great prevalence of eye diseases in Palestine. The four-bed hospital, like first aid training and ambulance transport, was an immediate success: within six months the hospital had treated 1952 patients and had given advice and medicine to 6138 more; and on many days it had 140 patients turning up for treatment.[67]

The Ophthalmic Hospital was, of course, a great symbolic triumph for the revived Order. The Order now had what its parent, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, could not boast—an establishment in the Holy Land and the Holy City, where Hospitalling had begun some 900 years before. To those in the Sovereign Military Order who derided the British Order as an illegitimate upstart, Lechmere and his fellow Knights of the British Order could proudly point out that *their* Order was keeping alive the reputation of the ancient Hospitallers by engaging in their sort of Hospitalling, in the place where they had first made their name. Perhaps Lechmere had no intention of cocking a snoot at the disdainful parent Order in the way that may be inferred here. Nevertheless his Ophthalmic Hospital to this day remains a sacred tie binding all branches of The Most Venerable Order into a tradition which they feel makes them one with the ancient Hospitallers who rallied round the Blessed Gerard a thousand years ago. It was part of Lechmere's genius to sense that this might be so.

The Ophthalmic Hospital was not the only one of Lechmere's brilliant masterstrokes of symbolism. His first had been in 1873 when he privately purchased the gateway to the former Clerkenwell Priory—one of the edifices completed by Sir Thomas Docwra. After the final dissolution of the English *Langue* in the first year of the reign of Elizabeth I, the gatehouse had been used variously as a play-house by the Master of the

Queen's Revel, as a lodging house, warehouse, printery and tavern. St John's Gate, as it was now known, came on to the market in 1873. Lechmere snapped it up and transferred the title to the Order, which began using the premises the same year. Another party interested in securing the property was Cardinal Wiseman, whom Lechmere outbid to get hold of it. Presumably the Cardinal was interested in gaining possession of it so it could be passed over to the Association of English Knights of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta—the organization which in the view of the Sovereign Military Order was the legitimate revived *Langue* of England. In thus denying the Catholic Order occupancy while conferring this on his own Order Lechmere had established another link with the ancient Knights and had thus enhanced his Order's claims to legitimate descent. Like the Ophthalmic Hospital, St John's Gate, now the world headquarters of the Grand Priory of The Most Venerable Order, is a concrete symbol of a glorious tradition which most rank and file members of the various St John Ambulance organizations assume to extend backward through time, unbroken for a thousand years. St John's Gate is today the most hallowed shrine of the St John Ambulance organizations. Few members of these organizations would ponder the great disjunctions and the ironic quirks of fate that have shaped the development of their Order in the 150 years since a group of calculating and now forgotten French Knights of the ancient Order called it forth. That they do not is perhaps a tribute to Lechmere's genius, and in particular to his mastery in finding new and effective ways to promote the Order.[68]

Another of Lechmere's brilliant conceptions was the Life Saving Medal of the Order. The Royal Humane Society already awarded a similar medal for acts of gallantry at sea and along the coasts. Lechmere thought the Order might present a similar medal for 'saving life on land under conditions which endangered the lives of the rescuers'. He had in mind the reward for acts of bravery that from time to time occur in collieries. The medal, with the obverse showing the Maltese cross and the inscription 'for service in the cause of humanity' and the reverse showing a sprig of St John's Wort and the inscription 'awarded by the Grand Priory of the Order of the Hospital of St John in England', was instituted in 1874. The first two to receive it were miners who in 1875 had rescued six colleagues trapped in a cage suspended half way down a mine shaft. Lechmere presented the medals himself. His speech in doing so was probably not intended to sound as patronising to the recipients as it does to the modern reader. 'Who will say that chivalry is confined to any one class?' he asked rhetorically. 'Its impulse may beat in every breast, whether that breast be covered by the broadcloth of the gentleman or by the working dress of the collier'.[69] The medal, in gold, silver and bronze versions, is still awarded by the Order for civilian acts of gallantry in rescue work.

The third of the Order's modern 'foundations' was its Branch of uniformed volunteer first aid workers, the St John Ambulance Brigade, which was set up in June 1887. This developed from the 'Ambulance Corps', which had begun forming five years before. The first 'division', that is a local detachment, of the Brigade was that constituted from the Leicester Ambulance Corps, which had been in operation since 1882. The first official public duty of the Brigade was at the celebrations for Queen Victoria's Jubilee on 21 June 1887. Fifty men in three detachments were deployed to treat cases at three ambulance stations along the route of the Royal procession from Buckingham Palace to Westminster. Each detachment had a horse-drawn ambulance, litters, stretchers, bandages and medicines. They treated 200 cases. Like the other two earlier foundations, the St John Ambulance Association (the teaching foundation) and the Ophthalmic Hospital, the Brigade was an instant success. Within two years of its inception it boasted not only a Metropolitan Corps with 250 members in ten local Divisions, but thirty-four provincial Corps as well.[70]

For all its popularity and its swift success the Brigade had some obstacles to overcome before its members gained complete public acceptance. There was a section of the medical profession which remained sceptical of the ability of lay people to give medical assistance to the sick and injured, and who consequently remained opposed to the expansion of the Brigade. Some ordinary citizens, too, found the Brigade members amusing. As the uniformed volunteers of the Brigade went about their public duties with their two-wheeled litters and in their conspicuous black and white uniforms they simply had to grin and bear the nickname 'Body Snatchers'. Royal patronage possibly helped the Brigade to gain public acceptance. When the Royal Sub-Prior, the Duke of Clarence, died in 1892, and the Order decided to erect a memorial to him, his father, the Prince of Wales requested that a contingent of uniformed Brigade men should form a guard of honour at the unveiling ceremony. When this took place at St John's Gate, the Prince placed his hand on the shoulder of a nearby uniformed Brigade member, turned towards a group of newspaper reporters and said aloud, 'This is a good uniform. I believe that much good will come of it'.[71]

The year after the formation of the Brigade, 1888, was another of the great milestones in the development of the revived Order. On 14 May of that year Queen Victoria granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation to it 'in recognition of the excellent work performed by members of the Order of St John during the past half century, especially the establishment of the St John Ambulance Association'.[72] Under the Royal Charter the Queen herself became Sovereign Head and Patron of the Order; Edward, Prince of Wales, became its Grand Prior; and his son, the Duke of Clarence, became the Sub-Prior. The emblem of the Order was altered slightly to indicate Royal patronage: 'the Queen's beasts', lions and

28 St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London, late 1960s; formerly the gatehouse of 16th Century Priory buildings of the Knights Hospitaller, and now the headquarters of the Grand Priory of the Order of St John

unicorns, were added between the limbs of the Maltese cross. In addition the Prince of Wales became the President of the St John Ambulance Association.[73] If not before, then certainly now the Order was irreproachably a noble Order in its own right. With the Monarch as the Sovereign Head it gained enormous prestige throughout Britain and the Empire.

How the Order came to be considered worthy of Royal patronage is a matter for conjecture. In the six years or so before the granting of the Royal Charter the Order's ambulance work had won Royal favour in numerous ways. The Royal ladies who had earned first aid certificates in 1882 had remained firm friends of the Order. Alexandra, wife of the Prince of Wales, was an especially enthusiastic supporter of first aid training; and other members of the Royal family became Presidents and Patrons of different ones of the Association's centres. From 1883 the Queen began donating money to its funds. The Duke of Connaught, son of the Queen and younger brother to the Prince of Wales, was another fervent supporter. (He later served for a record thirty-two years as Grand Prior, 1910-42.) The Duke helped to promote the Order in January 1885 by speaking enthusiastically about it at a public meeting in the Guildhall of London which had been called by the Lord Mayor. He urged citizens

to enrol in first aid training and spoke in admiration of the work of the Association. But all this could not have come about without judicious prompting by the Order itself. The aristocratic leadership of the Order, principally the Duke of Manchester and Lechmere, must have put in hours and hours of assiduous legwork courting the Royal family, persuading them that St John Ambulance work was an eminently worthy charity to adopt. Their ability to confer honours and titles on the Royal family, to bring them into the Order as Knights and Dames of Justice, was perhaps an advantage: not all charitable societies seeking Royal favours could, after all, offer ancient and mellifluous sounding titles in exchange for Royal patronage!

By the time Queen Victoria had granted the Order the Royal Charter, which was to be the solid foundation stone for its subsequent development, the Order was spreading far and fast throughout the Empire. By 1881 the St John Ambulance Association course in first aid was being taught not only in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, but also in the United States of America, Russia, Germany and Australia. The first separate overseas Centres of the Association opened the next year, 1882, at Malta and Cannes on the French Riviera; and after that further overseas centres sprouted rapidly in all continents. Centres to open in 1883 were at Melbourne, Bermuda, the Bahamas, Bombay and Gibraltar. The next year, 1884, an Adelaide and a Hong Kong Centre opened. In 1885 New Zealand Centres followed, at Christchurch, Invercargill, Wellington and Nelson; and the first of the overseas Divisions of the Brigade was formed in Dunedin in 1892. In 1885, too, other Centres opened in Bangalore, Singapore, Jerusalem, and Kimberley and East London in South Africa. Borneo was next, in 1887. Finally a Canadian Centre was formed in 1897 (though St John Ambulance first aid courses had been running there from 1883).[74] By this stage there were few corners of the Empire where the name of St John was not synonymous with ambulance work and first aid. And so it has remained ever since. Exactly how this came about in Australia is what the rest of this book will endeavour to explain.

4

The Australian colonies and St John

1 *Australia in 1883*

The Australia to which the St John Ambulance came in 1883 was not yet a nation. 'Australia' was still simply the name of a continent which the British had annexed less than a century before and on which they had implanted six small colonies. The colonial society the British immigrants had created there was still very much just that. It was, however, a colonial society in transition.[1]

In many respects Australian society in 1883 was still rural, rude and raw; but at the same time it was already highly urbanized. Though there was still space a-plenty for frontiersmen, the urban and industrial development that was to give the nation much of its character a century hence was steadily proceeding. Many more people were consequently living in the towns. In New South Wales, for instance, only 41 per cent of the population were urban in 1861; ten years later the population was evenly divided between rural and urban areas; by 1881 the balance had tipped in favour of the towns, where 57 per cent of the people now lived; and a decade later 65.5 per cent were urban. The other colonies were experiencing similar urbanization. Industrial growth was less spectacular but was going ahead steadily. In 1861 there had been a total manufacturing work-force of only 32,000 for all the colonies; by 1891 this had grown to 200,000, though most of these were in Victoria and New South Wales, which had 91,000 and 74,000 respectively.

In addition to these developments Australia was fast becoming the immigrant society it has remained ever since. In relation to the previous population, the volume of the migration was massive. After the discovery of gold in the early 1850s, 740,000 migrants arrived over the next decade, carrying the population over the million mark to 1,174,000; and the influx of migrants continued, with the result that by 1880 the population almost doubled, to 2,231,000. Nearly everyone was either an immigrant or the offspring of immigrants, yet an obtrusive Australianism was becoming more and more evident. Paradoxically, each of the six colonies still felt very British and most of their residents still prized the close bonds with Queen and Empire. Australians were proud to belong to the largest empire in history, and they felt secure under the mantle of imperial protection. Nevertheless, all but one of the colonies were self-governing by 1883, and the political, legal, administrative, commercial,

financial and social institutions which had developed over the proceeding decades allowed them to unite in independent nationhood within twenty years.

Amidst these changes of the 1880s there were many reminders of the recent stages of the country's colonial development. Although most of the pioneering work of explorers, of squatters and their convict labourers, of drovers and other varieties of trail-blazers was over—done as settlements had spread outward and inland from the coastal towns over the preceding sixty or seventy years—memory of the earlier days was strong. The transportation of convicts to the eastern colonies had stopped in 1852, and to Western Australia in 1868, but there were still many people who had either been convicts or were the offspring of convicts. Most of the great journeys of exploration were over. The last of the heroic explorers, John and Alexander Forrest, Ernest Giles and Peter Warburton, by the end of the 70s had shown their countrymen that their continent did indeed have a vast, arid, 'dead' heart. So Australians were beginning to appreciate that the possibilities for agriculture were not limitless. Their confidence in their ability to tame the land had already been dented by the disastrous results of the exploring expedition of Burke and Wills. There were many people still alive who had watched the doomed explorers' wagon train wend its way north from Melbourne towards the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1860, and had then seen Burke's and Wills' remains brought back for a grand funeral in the Melbourne General Cemetery in January 1863.

Like the convict era and the age of exploration, the squatting days were done. Many people, however, could remember when an enterprising sheep owner could ride inland with his flock and squat with them wherever the grass and waterholes took his fancy. Squatters had since given way to 'cockies', as the old sheep runs were broken up by the Land Acts of the 1860s, releasing small holdings to a flood of selectors, who then fenced and tilled the land for the first time. Many of the original squatters were still alive, and they were still the lords of the land. They still came down to the cities to holiday in their mansion-like town houses; they sat in the Upper Houses of the colonial parliaments, election or nomination to which did not depend on the principle of 'one man one vote'; they frequented the most expensive hotels and the most exclusive clubs; and they made grand tours abroad.

The great gold rushes of the southern colonies were mostly over but fondly remembered. Gold production was now in the hands of deep shaft mining companies. The days when a man could win a fortune in a day with nothing more than a shovel, a pan and a lucky strike along some creek were thus a topic for nostalgic yarn spinning. Gold production throughout Australia was increasing towards its peak in the decade 1900-10; but in Victoria, where the earliest and most spectacular rushes had occurred in the 1850s, it was falling from a peak of 86,500 kilograms

in 1856 to 16,300 kilograms in 1901. Despite that, the wealth from gold had built 'Marvellous' Melbourne, with its array of splendid mid-Victorian architecture, enabling it for the half century, from the mid-50s to the early 1900s, to displace Sydney as the largest city in Australia. Gold had also built the 'almost-as-marvellous' Ballarat and Bendigo, which continued to be among the six largest Australian cities until the end of the century.

Melbourne was booming in 1883. During the prosperous years up till then, many of the city's most familiar present landmarks took their places along its broad, leafy avenues. The largest of them all, the Exhibition Building, had been erected specially to house the International Exhibition that ran for six months during 1880-81. The boom was to continue throughout the 80s until the bust of 1891 and the great depression that followed. So at the time when the first St John Ambulance Centre opened in Australia, confidence in the future was high and there was no hint of the lean years a decade hence.

If the prosperity of Melbourne promised a bright future in 1883, there had been one recent event which signified to Victorians that their rough, unruly colonial past was behind them. This had occurred on 11 November 1880, when the last, the most notorious, and also the most fondly remembered of the Australian bushrangers, Ned Kelly, was hanged in the Old Melbourne Gaol. The Kelly Gang had ridden far and wide through northern Victoria and into the Riverina of New South Wales, defying the police of both colonies for almost three years in the late 70s, before their spectacular last shoot-out at Glenrowan in June 1880. As Manning Clark has observed, the end of the Kelly Gang was a symbolic turning point in Australian history: with the convict and bushranging days behind them Australians were no longer bush barbarians. 'The agents of civilization—the schoolmaster, the railway, the electric telegraph, the press—' had been smoothing the rough edges of colonial society; a great 'calming down' was under way; the colonies were becoming more cultured.[2] The arrival of St John Ambulance in Australia was also a symptom of the change. Bringing with it its 900-year tradition of charity and defence of Western Christian civilization, it was at once a further 'agent of civilization', a signal reminder that the colonies were part of that civilization, and a token of the humanitarianism that typifies civilized behaviour.

Part of the civilizing process was the introduction of public education. In 1872 Victoria had been the first of the colonies to legislate for the creation of 'free, secular and compulsory' education provided by the State. The other colonies followed suit during the 70s and 80s. With the passage of the Education Acts, government departments of 'Public Instruction' and 'Education' came into being, and with that the foundations for the country's later enormous educational bureaucracies. The new bureaucracies and schools were to become important to the St John Am-

bulance Association, which was to spend much effort in trying to persuade officials and headmasters that first aid was one subject which ought to appear in every curriculum. Universities were also a part of the new notions on what an educated public should be, and in some colonies had been on the local scene for a generation. The university in Sydney took in its first students in 1852, that in Melbourne in 1855, and in Adelaide in 1874. With a web of suburban and bush schools being spun across each colony, and with even a homegrown university or two to choose from, the native-born Australian child could now become not only literate and numerate but a member of a profession, and cultured to boot, without having to return 'home' to Britain.

The educational bureaucracies that 'free, secular and compulsory' schools called into being were only part of the governmental apparatus of each colony, the setting up of which was a necessary by-product of the evolution of self-government. So the whole panoply of government departments, of 'Treasury', of 'Crown Law', 'Lands and Survey', 'Public Works', 'Posts and Telegraphs', 'Police', 'Penal Institutions' and so on, had come into existence during the 1850s, 60s and 70s—to the extent that in one colony alone, New South Wales, the number of government employees rose from about 1000 in the 50s to 35,000 by the 90s. Ever since then the Australian Public Services have remained large, employing about a fifth of the nation's work-force.

In other directions, too, Australia was developing along lines that gave it its later character. A range of manufacturing industries had grown up in the colonies, and particularly in the two largest, Victoria and New South Wales, to satisfy local demands for goods and services. But larger scale industrial development was soon to occur, and in this respect 1883 was significant. In September of that year Charles Rasp, a boundary rider and part time prospector of the Mt Gipps station in the far west of New South Wales, pegged out a sixteen hectare claim at the nearby 'broken hill', which he thought might be a deposit of tin ore. Soon afterwards he formed a syndicate which secured six more blocks nearby. Two years later, in 1885, the syndicate became the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, which during the 80s began building its fortunes on what turned out to be silver-lead-zinc ores, not tin. The 2000 shares the Company issued at £20 each in 1885 were worth £412 each at the end of the 80s. The year 1883 also saw the beginnings of another major industry, because all that year an eighteen year old Victorian farm boy, Hugh McKay, had been working on an invention to strip, thresh and clean grain all in one operation. He completed a working model in February 1884 and patented his new machine in 1885. He won a cash prize from the Victorian government for it in 1887 and used that to establish McKay's Harvesting Machine Company in a factory in Ballarat in 1891, producing what later became known as the Sunshine Harvester.

Inevitably towns, cities and suburbs grew up around the plants of in-

dustrial giants like B.H.P. and McKay's. It was to be in the mining and factory towns and the industrial and waterfront suburbs which Australian industry was spawning in the second half of the nineteenth century that St John Ambulance would find much of its task. In such places, among the working men and women who daily faced the hazards of the industrial work-place, St John Ambulance thrived. Many of the early first aid students came from their number and the first and most durable Divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade drew their membership from their ranks. The working class people of places like Glebe, Balmain, Collingwood, Footscray, Port Adelaide and Fremantle had a more immediate interest in learning and administering first aid than their fellow citizens in more genteel residential suburbs like Double Bay, Toorak and North Adelaide. So it is not surprising, that community support for St John Ambulance has always been strong in the former areas.

In other ways, too, 1883 was a year for developments pointing into the century ahead. In that year an important link was finally forged in the railway network that had been advancing across the eastern colonies during the 1860s and 70s. At Albury that year the line being built north from Melbourne crossed the Murray River to meet the line coming south from Sydney. The connection of the Melbourne-Adelaide line occurred in 1886; the Newcastle-Brisbane connection came in 1888; then the final link in the 2500 kilometre steel chain joining the capitals of the eastern colonies came in 1889 when the completion of the Hawkesbury River bridge connected Sydney and Newcastle. Like the factory and mining towns, the railways have always provided St John Ambulance with much of its work and many of its best volunteers. Indeed the earliest first aid class run under St John Ambulance auspices in Australia took place in a railways workshop—at the Eveleigh yards in Redfern.

As with railway construction, the 1870s and 80s were an important period in the development of the Australian telegraph network. By 1858 Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide had already been linked by a telegraph line, over which messages could be transmitted in Morse code. In 1859 a submarine cable from Melbourne to Launceston brought Tasmania into the network; Brisbane was connected in 1861, and much later Perth in 1877. By then the 3300 kilometre Overland Telegraph Line joining Adelaide and Darwin was finished. That had happened in 1872, the same year as the arrival in Darwin of the submarine cable from Java. Now 'the Australian colonies were connected with the grand electric chain which unites all the nations on earth', as Charles Todd, the South Australian Postmaster General responsible for building the line, remarked. Then, only two years after Alexander Graham Bell first demonstrated the telephone in the U.S.A. in 1878, telephone services were running in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. The first government-owned telephone exchange opened in Sydney in 1882; others followed in Adelaide and Hobart in 1883 and Perth in 1887. So the vast

distances,which had once forced Australian colonists to be parochial, were becoming less and less tyrannical.

In 1883 there were also notable developments just outside Australia. New Guinea, the largest of the islands on Australia's own front doorstep, became the focus of the colonies' awakening interests in defence and foreign policy that year. Previously New Guinea and other nearby Melanesian islands had concerned Australians mainly as a source of cheap labour, but now they became worried lest any foreign power but Britain should become established there. German traders had been settling at the northern tip of New Britain (just north of the New Guinea mainland) from the early 1870s; and in 1880-81 the French Marquis de Rays had brought 570 settlers to New Ireland (adjacent to New Britain) in an unsuccessful attempt to establish a 'free Colony of Port Breton'.[3]

To forestall further encroachments the Premier of Queensland, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, sent the police magistrate of Thursday Island, Henry N. Chester, to take possession of south-eastern New Guinea in the name of Queen Victoria. Chester duly hoisted the Union Jack at Port Moresby on 4 April 1883. Following protests by local British missionaries, who suspected that the Queenslanders were primarily interested in securing a reservoir of cheap labour for their sugar plantations, the British government repudiated the Queensland action. The Australian colonies and New Zealand responded angrily to Britain's refusal to add to her possessions. They called a convention to gather in Sydney in late 1883 which demanded the immediate British annexation of the entire eastern half of New Guinea (that is the part not already controlled by the Netherlands). Thus harried by her Australasian colonies, Britain announced her intention of establishing a protectorate over eastern New Guinea; but the British response was too tardy, for Germany proclaimed her own protectorate over north-east New Guinea and the adjacent Bismarck Archipelago on 3 November 1884. Britain then annexed the remainder, the south-eastern portion, which she passed into Australian control in 1906 as Papua. So in this way Australians began their century of close association with their nearest Melanesian neighbours.[4]

In 1883 there were numerous other facets of the Australia of the future which perceptive observers might have seen developing. One of these was what is now known as the Australian national character. This quality was a product of many different influences, and many writers have had difficulty in defining it. At best a nebulous concept it is nevertheless something Australians recognise in each other. Outsiders can also see that it is an attribute setting Australians aside as a 'different' people. St John Ambulance thus came to a society in which certain local customs, attitudes, values and beliefs were developing. In setting up its operations in this country, the Order was like an immigrant that must adjust to the local conditions if it wishes to be accepted.

One aspect of the emerging national character which was to be of enormous importance in the later work of the Order in Australia was Australians' preoccupation with sport. In a country where to call a man 'sport' means the same as what a Briton intends in calling someone 'mate' or an American does in referring to a person as 'buddy', sports are overwhelmingly important. By 1883 Australians, and certainly Victorians, were well on the way to being as sports mad as their descendents were to be a century later. Already some sporting fixtures were a well established part of the colonial calendar; and the names of some of the best known sporting institutions had become household expressions. Thus, in 1883 the horse Martini Henry, ridden by J. Williamson and carrying 7 stone 5 pounds (46.71 kilograms), won the twenty-third Melbourne Cup in the record time of 3 minutes 30.5 seconds, having started at odds of 5:1. That, of course, was in the November. At Easter that year R. Kinnear had won the sixth Stawell Gift (now the world's oldest professional foot race). His time over the 130 yards (118.82 metres) was 12.5 seconds, also a record, from a handicap of 14 yards (12.796 metres). In September that year Geelong were premiers over South Melbourne, winning their fifth Victorian Football Association title in six years. (Both clubs would later be among the eight rebel clubs who broke away from the V.F.A. to form the Victorian Football League in 1896.) In the South Australian Football League Norwood's record was even better than Geelong's: in 1883 they won their sixth premiership in a row. In 1883 the Victorian eight won the sixth Australian rowing championship in Sydney; and the same year the first inter-colonial soccer matches took place, with Victoria and New South Wales tying each of their two games, 2-2 and 0-0. Another sporting first in 1883 was the staging of Australia's first trotting championship, which took place on the Elsternwick circuit, now better known as the Caulfield Race Course. The champsionship took place on St Patrick's Day; the prize was 500 sovereigns; and the winner was aptly named Honesty. Trotting was then less refined than later: tradesmen's drays and iron-wheeled sulkies were used, as lightweight gigs were a later development. Despite that the record for the flying mile (1.609 kilometres)—2 minutes 30 seconds, set by Commodore at Elsernwick in 1882—stood for some years.

A number of Australia's other famous sporting institutions and events were even older. Cricket, of course, went right back to the early days of colonial Australia: the first specially designated oval was set aside in Sydney's Hyde Park in 1826; the Melbourne Cricket Club was formed in 1838, the year after the city's foundation; inter-colonial matches between New South Wales and Victoria began in 1856; the first Test against England took place on the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1877, and the famous first 'Ashes' Test on London's Oval in 1882. Australia's oldest cycling club, the Sydney Bicycle Club, was formed in 1879; Australia's first six-day cycling race took place on the Melbourne Exhibition circuit

in 1881; and in 1884 A. Edwards completed the first ride from Sydney to Melbourne in eight and a half days—on a penny-farthing. The Melbourne Bowling Club, Australia's oldest, formed in 1864; Parramatta Bowling Club, New South Wales' oldest, began in 1880; while Queensland's first, Brisbane Bowling Club, opened in 1878. Tennis gave Melbourne other firsts: the first match was played in 1878 at the Melbourne Cricket Club; and the first championships were the Victorian, also played at the M.C.C., in 1880. The first golf club, the Australian, was opened at Sydney's Moore Park in 1882. 1882 also saw the first N.S.W.-Queensland game of Rugby Union, and in addition the first overseas tour by an Australian Rugby side—by N.S.W. to New Zealand. The sporting fixtures that would later give St John Ambulance personnel in Australia much of their work were thus a permanent part of the Australian scene by the time the Association began first aid teaching in the colonies.[5]

Another of the important Australian institutions with which St John Ambulance had to learn to deal was the daily press. Like many 'respectable' charitable organizations it struck up a useful and profitable relationship with the newspapers of the day. So, when the first Centre of the St John Ambulance Association was formed in Melbourne in June 1883 its aims received generous and approving press coverage. Indeed it was mainly through their daily newspapers that the Victorian public learnt about the establishment of a Centre in their midst. Many of the newspapers of the day had long been part of the local scene, and nearly all of them have survived. The Melbourne *Herald* (which began in 1840), *Argus* (1846-1957) and *Age* (founded 1854) all carried lengthy items about the inaugural meetings of the Association, and reported on its subsequent development in detail. The provincial press also reported on the new organization: the *Geelong Advertiser* (founded 1840), *Bendigo Advertiser* (1853) and *Ballarat Courier* (1867) also ran items as they gleaned them. In the other colonies, too, the Association received copious coverage in the dailies as successive metropolitan Centres were established. The *Sydney Morning Herald* (1840) and *Daily Telegraph* (1879) in N.S.W.; the *Adertiser* in Adelaide (1858); the Hobart *Mercury* (1860) and Launceston *Examiner* (1877); the *Courier* (1861) and *Telegraph* (1872) in Brisbane, the Toowoomba *Chronicle* (1861) and the *Bulletin* of Rockhampton (1861); and the *West Australian* (1863) and Perth *Daily News* (1882) all gave the Centres of the Association in their respective colonies a good press.

The newspapers, the sporting teams, the speech patterns, migration, the political and administrative institutions, the industries, the towns, and the characteristics of the ordinary people in the street—all, by 1883, were coalescing into what, even then, could have been called Australian society; and there were many aspects of the Australia of that year which would have been familiar to Australians a century hence. Behind the

Australians of 1883 was a century in which a new nation with considerable promise had begun forming from originally unlikely—even bizarre—elements. By now many of them felt that the times ahead would best be met if they united to make their country the 'New Britannia In Another World' of which the native-born explorer-patriot, William Wentworth, had dreamt sixty years before.[6] In the period ahead, as they strove to build an Australian nation from the six British colonies, they would create a number of national institutions. And one which would not be insignificant among these was the ambulance and first aid organization recently imported into their midst.

2 *The formation of Australian branches of St John Ambulance*

Quite a few Australians would have been familiar with the work of St John Ambulance before the establishment of a Victorian Centre of the St John Ambulance Association in June-July 1883. In three Australian colonies at least it seems that first aid training, using the Association's course disseminated from the London headquarters of the organization, might have been in use well before any local branch of the Association formed.

The first person known to have attempted St John Ambulance-type training was Dr Robert Robertson, a private practitioner in St Kilda (a Melbourne inner suburb) who was formerly resident surgeon at the Melbourne Hospital and later Surgeon-Colonel of the Victorian Militia Ambulance Corps. Robertson gave four public lectures on military first aid in Melbourne between march 1880 and February 1881. He conducted these principally for members of the St Kilda Volunteer Artillery, of which he was then surgeon, but he also allowed the public to attend too. The *Argus* reported that the first lecture, on 12 March 1880, had 'a large audience', was 'easily understood' by the lay people present, and that they 'listened with great interest'. The later lectures referred to the ambulance drills then being taught 'in all the large towns in England under the direction of the Order of St John of Jerusalem'. Robertson assured his listeners that because of this in England now 'no accident could happen in the large centres of population without some competent person being forthcoming within the space of three minutes'.[7]

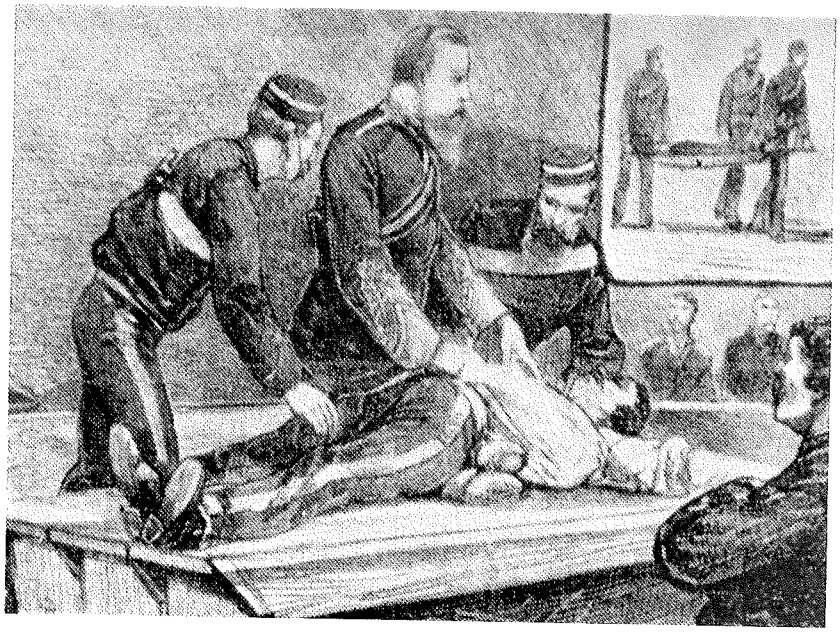
Robertson wished his lectures to bear the imprimatur of the St John Ambulance Association, for on 11 October 1880 he wrote to the Lord Prior of the British Order of St John (formerly styled the Grand Prior), the 7th Duke of Manchester, who was then in Sydney. (The Duke was staying at Government House during one of the visits he made to Australia every two or three years during the 1880s to inspect his local business interests.) Robertson's letter in duly deferential tones asked for advice and help in undertaking 'the groundwork in starting a branch—if so permitted—of the Order in Victoria'. He explained that he already had

a booklet on the Association and had been conducting lectures on ambulance drill. Four days later the Duke replied to the effect that he himself could not help much because he knew little about first aid, but suggested that Robertson mention his name in approaching either Francis Duncan (the Director of the Ambulance Department of the Order) or Sir Herbert Perrott (the Chief Secretary of the Association in London). After Robertson's last lecture, on 3 February 1881, one of his medical acquaintances, Dr Alexander Fulton, undertook to obtain full details on the running of Association courses during a forthcoming trip to England.[8]

What emerged from Robertson's efforts was not a local Branch of the St John Ambulance Association but the Victorian Militia Ambulance Corps, of which Robertson was the first Surgeon-Major and later Surgeon-Colonel. He nevertheless later joined the committee of the Victorian Centre of the Association soon after it was formed in June-July 1883, and he remained a member of the committee for the next sixteen years until he retired to Portsea. He also taught the first of the courses formally run under Association auspices in Melbourne, and subsequently examined a number of the earlier classes in Melbourne. Then, too, at the annual public demonstrations the Association mounted in Melbourne throughout the 80s and 90s he led his Militia Ambulance Corps in the guard of honour that customarily greeted the Governor.[9]

It is not exactly clear when similar links to Robertson's formed between the Australian colonies other than Victoria and New South Wales and the London headquarters of St John Ambulance. It is, however, quite likely that others elsewhere had his initiative. Probably the Duke of Manchester, who customarily stayed with the Governors during his visits to the various colonies, met members of the local medical fraternity at the social engagements he attended; and if he did there is a fair chance he would have helped to spread the new medical fashion by discussing the progress made in first aid training in Britain.

What is clear is that Robertson's was not the only positive contact Australian medicos made with St John's Gate in the very early 1880s. Almost a decade before the official foundation of a New South Wales Centre of the St John Ambulance Association, first aid training under Association auspices began in Sydney when Dr Samuel T. Knaggs of Newcastle obtained permission from St John's Gate in 1881 to train railwaymen according to the Association's methods. Knaggs had recently been in London and had brought back materials for conducting classes he had collected at St John's Gate. His course was 'very successful' and those who took it—apparently employees at the Eveleigh Railway Workshop—later gave a public demonstration of first aid techniques. Apparently, too, the Duke of Manchester himself signed the first aid certificates they received. Knaggs, who probably ran a similar class in Newcastle in 1883, was one of the group responsible for calling the public



29 Surgeon Major Robert Robertson demonstrates first aid to members of the Militia Ambulance Corps; from *The Sketcher* 26 February 1881

meeting in Randwick in November 1888 which led to the formal establishment of a New South Wales Centre in 1890[10].

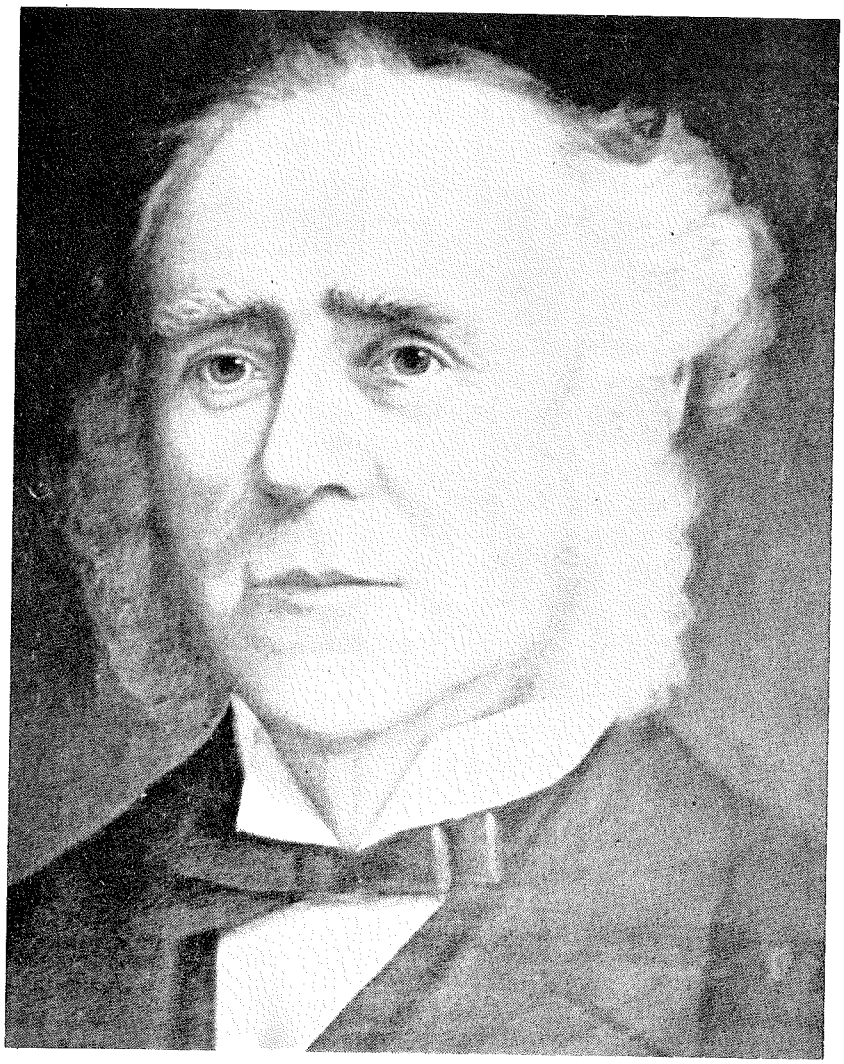
The early classes Knaggs and others ran in Sydney and Newcastle would have been what the Association headquarters at St John's Gate called 'detached' classes, that is instruction of groups organized by various interested individuals in areas where no formal Association Centre formally existed. The Association sponsored much teaching like that, in Britain, in the colonies and in other places – Jerusalem and Cannes for instance – where an English-speaking community dwelt. Thus, in the year 1887-88 alone no less than 596 'detached' classes ran in places as far apart as Abergavenny and Bombay, Cockermouth and the Kaiping Mines (China), Poona and Penzance, and *H.M.S. Parramatta* (presumably at Dock in Britain) and the Torres Strait Islands. As a result of these classes 10,545 people received first aid certificates. It is possible that 'detached' classes ran in various parts of Australia in the early 80s, though no definite record of them now survives. There is a hint, for example, that first aid teaching under the Association's aegis took place in Adelaide in 1883 or before: according to the annual reports of the Association headquarters at St John's Gate, there was an active Centre there in 1883, though the present records of the South Australian branch of the Order of St John suggests that the first 'detached' classes there were formed in 1884-85.[11]

(a) *The Victorian Centre*

Although individual doctors like Robertson and Knaggs were keen to see the St John Ambulance Association established in Australia from the outset of the 80s, there was no formal Centre of the Association in the colonies until one was formed in Melbourne in June 1883. The initiative for founding it came from a leading member of the Melbourne medical fraternity, a Yorkshireman called James Edward Neild. Neild had come to Australia thirty years before with gold fever at the age of twenty-nine. He had learnt medicine under the old apprenticeship system in his uncle's practice in Sheffield, and after that had also completed training as an apothecary at University College, London. In London he developed populist political views and took part in the campaigns of the Chartists for extending the franchise and of those seeking the repeal of the corn laws. When his colleagues at University College joined up as reserve constables to help quell the Chartists he was one of the few students who refused to join the police. His reformist zeal led him to take a position as medical officer at the Rochdale Dispensary in the Lancashire industrial wasteland, where his skills would benefit the workers.

In Australia he gave up prospecting to join his brother-in-law's pharmacy, but then reapplied himself to his medical studies, took the examinations for the M.D. degree at the new University of Melbourne and graduated in 1864. The next year he joined the staff of the Medical School as Lecturer in Forensic Medicine, a position he held for the next thirty-nine years. He also served as City Coroner during this period and was proud that on at least one occasion his evidence was able to save a man suspected of murder from the noose. From 1862 until 1879 he was also secretary to the Medical Society of Victoria and the editor of its journal, as well as being a frequent contributor to the *Medical Journal of Australia*. Outside medicine and medical politics he had broad interests. He wrote literary pieces for the newspapers of the day; under various *noms de plume* he was the drama and music critic of the *Argus* for many years; he is said to have been one of the founders of the Melbourne *Punch*, and a close associate of the local literary luminaries, Marcus Clarke, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall; while a further claim of him is that he 'discovered' Nellie Melba and encouraged her to become a singer.[12]

How Dr Neild came to be the one to initiate the formation of a Victorian Centre of the St John Ambulance Association is not clear. At the end of 1881 he received a letter from Francis Duncan, the Director of the Association at St John's Gate, advising that 'arrangements are being made for the extension of the practical and humanitarian work of our Association to Australia'. Duncan said he had been given Neild's name as one of a number of Melbourne medicos who might volunteer to examine any first aid classes that might form there. It was the sort of letter that might have been sent to numerous other doctors. Neild apparently



30 Dr James Edward Neild (1824-1906), 'father' of St John Ambulance in Victoria

answered it affirmatively, for on 20 February 1882 Perrott (the General Secretary in London) wrote to thank him for 'the friendly spirit' of his offer to help. Perrott also mentioned that Knaggs had recently left London for Newcastle with information on how to go about setting up Association classes 'in different parts of the Colony'. He said that as soon as he had heard from Knaggs he would contact Neild further.[13] Nothing much seems to have happened then for almost fifteen months, possibly because Neild was awaiting further advice from Perrott which never came. Perhaps Perrott thought Neild and Knaggs would contact each

other, and that Knaggs would simply get Neild to examine his classes when he had taught them. If this was the case then Perrott did not understand the colonial situation: Knaggs in Newcastle and Neild in Melbourne wore in separate colonies and, divided by 880 kilometres of sparsely settled bush, would not have been in ready communication with each other.

At the end of 1882, and still with no further word from St John's Gate, Neild discussed the matter with Robertson, who, as we saw, had made earlier efforts to set up a Melbourne Centre of the Association. He seems to have gone ahead to obtain his own kit of materials from St John's Gate—an historical outline of the aims and purposes of the Order, the Association syllabus of lectures, instructions for the male and female first aid and home nursing classes, notes on stretcher drill, sets of instructions for examiners, examiners' report forms, and supplies of triangular bandages printed with diagrams of how these were to be used. Then about 2 June 1883 Neild and Dr Richard Warren of the Bayside suburb of Brighton had a circular printed announcing their intention of forming a Melbourne branch of the Association. They sent out over 400 copies of this to the leading citizens—the editors of the eight newspapers, professors, judges, parliamentarians, public servants, city councillors, businessmen, the clergy, and eighty-four medicos. Neild apparently did not inform Robertson of his intention of issuing the circular, because the latter wrote expressing his surprise at not being consulted but undertaking to co-operate despite that slight.[14]

Neild's and Warren's circular extolled the aims of the St John Ambulance movement. Spreading knowledge about 'the preliminary treatment of the Sick and Injured among all classes of Society' was necessary, it pointed out, 'so as to lessen the unnecessary suffering so frequently caused by the ignorance of those unskilled persons with whom the patient is first brought in contact'. It then went on to bemoan the ignorance of the lay public in handling injuries:

> By rough handling, or even the mere want of the slightest knowledge of how to lift an injured limb, a simple fracture may be converted into a compound fracture. The method of arresting bleeding from an artery is so easy that a child may learn it, yet thousands of lives have been lost, the very life blood ebbing away in the presence of the sorrowing spectators, because none among them had been taught one of the first rudiments of instruction of an Ambulance pupil—the application of an extemporised tourniquet. Again, how frequent is the loss of life by drowning, yet how comparitively few persons understand the way to treat properly the apparently drowned.
>
> It is lamentable to reflect how many of these lives might have been saved, how much unnecessary torture might have been avoided, had those first present on the scene but known how to take the requisite steps for the restoration of life, or the alleviation of pain.[15]

Lest medical practitioners might infer from all this that the aim was to help amateurs muscle in on their market the circular took pains to say

that 'nothing is further from the intention of such an Association than any undue interference with the province of the Surgeon: the object aimed at is merely the adoption of precautionary measures pending his arrival'.[16]

Neild and Warren received only about thirty replies to their circular. Undiscouraged they then arranged a meeting of those interested for 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 13 June 1883 at the Melbourne Town Hall to consider the possibility of forming a local branch of the Association and for electing a provisional committee to organize it. On 9 June they sent out ninety invitations to a cross section of the citizenry. Four days later the meeting took place under the chairmanship of Mr G. Coppin, M.L.A., actor ('Coppin the Great'), theatrical manager and entrepreneur, banker and social reformer. Professor H. M. Andrew moved a resolution which the meeting adopted – that 'it is desirable that there should be established in Victoria a branch of the St John Ambulance Association'. In doing so he admitted that when he had been a school headmaster he had 'imperfectly' instructed his boys in ways of treating cases of snakebite and near-drowning; but now an Association branch was being formed 'he would be the first to submit himself for examination' in first aid. Mr E. L. Zox, M.L.A., retail trader, philanthropist, campaigner for friendly societies, leading member of the Athenaeum Club and president of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, then moved that to draw up rules for the proposed Centre a provisional committee should be formed consisting of the Mayor, Judges T. S. Cope and F. Quinlan, the parliamentarians Coppin and Zox, two professors (including Andrew), eight medicos (including Neild, Warren and Robertson), the Rev. D. J. Hamer, and seven others including the noted architect Lloyd Tayler, with Warren as secretary and Zox treasurer.[17]

The provisional committee met the next week, on Friday 22 June in the hall of the Royal Society of Victoria, to consider draft rules for the new Centre which it approved unanimously. At this meeting Warren announced that a 'centre' (really a sub-branch) had already been formed at Brighton; and a letter was read from a man at Cowes on Phillip Island offering to form another in the Western Port Bay district. Encouraged by these expressions of public interest, the committee called for a public meeting four days later, Tuesday 26 June 1883, at 3.00 p.m. in the Athenaeum Hall, Collins St., to adopt the rules and appoint a permanent council.[18]

The Order of St John in Australia regards the meeting in the Athenaeum Hall as its foundation date. In the sense that the meeting marked the establishment in the colonies of the first of many St John Ambulance organizations it was. The Order itself, however, did not properly exist in Australian yet, for the Grand Priory and its hierarchy remained in Britain and few, if any, ranking members would have been resident in Australia.

The public meeting in the Athenaeum went ahead as planned, under the chairmanship of Judge Quinlan. Warren read a letter from Sir Edmund Lechmere, the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Association in London, authorizing the formation of a Victorian Centre. Neild then moved the adoption of the draft rules, which the meeting approved. A fourteen-member Council to govern the Centre was appointed next: Coppin was elected chairman, Quinlan the deptuy chairman, Zox treasurer, Warren secretary, and Neild, Robertson and Tayler among the ten ordinary members. The meeting also resolved to approach Sir William Clarke, Bt, a major landowner and leading philanthropist, agricultural 'improver', Freemason, sportsman and Member of the Legislative Council; an honourary Ll.D. of Cambridge University; and one of the first Australians to be created Baronet—at the age of thirty-one in 1862—to see if he would accept the position of President.[19]

The first meeting of the new Council took place in Neild's rooms, 125 Collins St (the 'Paris' end), nine days later. Council members learnt that Sir William Clarke had agreed to become President (he held the position for fifteen years, until his death in 1897); they received a letter from a Ballarat doctor offering to set up a sub-centre there; they formally admitted the Brighton branch as a sub-centre; they deputed their two parliamentary members, Coppin and Zox, to call on the Minister for Railways to gain his co-operation in training railwaymen in first aid—an important priority as 170 people were injured in rail accidents that year in Victoria; and they decided to mount a first aid course for the public, which Robertson was to teach.[20] The Council held its second meeting three months later in October 1883. Warren as Secretary read a letter from St John's Gate expressing the pleasure of the Central Council of the Association at seeing the first Australian Centre successfully established. The meeting then learnt of offers from Bendigo and Kyneton for the setting up of sub-centres in those towns. It also learnt that eighty pupils had joined two first aid classes being run in Brighton—one for men and one for women—and that all who had completed the course successfully had received certificates signed by the Duke of Manchester. It deputed Warren to contact St John's Gate for further supplies of the first aid textbook, then concluded by agreeing to meet monthly in future.[21]

The Victorian Centre thus got down to the mundane routines that would chiefly occupy it for the next couple of decades—arranging classes and examinations throughout the colony; lobbying government ministers to persuade them to sponsor courses in first aid for their employees; setting up further suburban and country sub-centres; obtaining supplies from London; seeking publicity to make the populace safety-conscious; and maintaining a voluminous correspondence with St John's Gate, which for many years would continue to guide and oversee its activities.

At first the Centre made only slow progress. In its first two years it ran only eighteen classes in three cities—Melbourne, Ballarat and Geelong.

Most who took the course were women: 454 women and only 136 men enrolled, 85 of the latter being from the railways. Of these pupils only 265—a surprisingly low 44.8 per cent—passed the examinations. Why there was such a low pass rate is uncertain. Possibly the examiners demanded a very high standard; perhaps only a fraction of those receiving instruction saw fit to take the examination; maybe the standard of teaching was poor. At the same time public interest began falling off, which was probably a reflection of the difficulty of the course, its cost (five shillings), and the poor return on that investment which the high failure rate implied.[22]

This disappointingly slow progress drove the Council to send a deputation to the Governor to enlist his support in attracting more pupils. In December 1884 a deputation led by Sir William Clarke and Dr Warren called on the Governor, Sir Henry Loch, to tell him of its troubles. To rally public enthusiasm they suggested holding a public meeting at which he would present first aid certificates to the most recent batch of examinees. Loch was himself a Knight of Justice of the Order, a sometime member of the Central Committee of the Association at St John's Gate, and both he and his wife had passed first aid examinations in London. Not surprisingly he readily agreed to help. The Duke of Manchester, who just happened to be staying at Government House at the time and had joined Loch in meeting the deputation, promised to attend too if he was still in Melbourne at the time of the public meeting.[23]

The public meeting grew into the first of many 'public demonstrations' the Victorian Centre held thereafter. It took place on 27 April 1885 in the Athenaeum Hall. That morning Neild had an article in the *Argus* extolling the work of the Association and inviting the public to attend to watch the Governor present the certificates. It turned out to be as impressive a ceremonial occasion as any conferral of degrees at a university. Robertson began the evening by reading a paper on the history of the Order from its eleventh century gestation in the Amalfitan hospice in Jerusalem. Then with due solemnity His Excellency presented the certificates, which came all the way from St John's Gate, to the twenty-nine successful candidates. The Vice-Regal magic seems to have worked: within eighteen months the Centre was expressing its 'gratification' for its 'very satisfactory' growth in classes taught, pupils certificated, and new centres opened, the latter including Mount Gambier in South Australia and Launceston in Tasmania.[24]

In these early years the Centre felt its greatest success was in persuading the Railways Commissioners to sponsor first aid courses for railway employees. On the other hand it was aggrieved at its failure to persuade the Police Commissioner to see 'the necessity of the police of the colony being similarly trained'. Even though it brought this matter 'prominently' to his attention, 'pointing out how frequently accidents involving injury to the person occur in the public streets', he bluntly said he

thought the present training of the police adequate. Moreover he did not think the advantages of St John Ambulance training would make up for the inconvenience and cost of releasing his men to take the first aid courses.[25]

Eventually, and after what must have been some very persistent badgering of the government, the police came round to the Association's point of view in 1888. Within the first four months of that year 100 members of the force undertook first aid training. Thereafter the police remained among the best clients of the Association courses. Within two years 237 policemen had been instructed and 109 certificated. At the same time classes to railwaymen throughout the colony had forged ahead with the result that by 1890 834 railwaymen had been taught first aid and 382 certificated. Even the sober annual report of the Centre for that year could not disguise the elation felt by the Council, which by this time was chaired by Lloyd Tayler. The Council rejoiced in 'the good that must eventuate the general public' via the training of police and railways staff.[26] That year, too, another breakthrough came when the National Fire Brigade Association requested first aid training for firemen in Melbourne, Ballarat, Geelong, Bendigo, Maryborough and Wangaratta. In 1888 the Council also began having some success in getting its foot through another desirable door—into the schools. A railwayman, Thomas Ivy, began teaching first aid in state schools in the Williamstown area; and a course had been held at the Presbyterian Ladies College.[27]

By this time the Association had twenty-seven sub-centres throughout the colony, most of them actively running classes. Nine or ten new sub-centres were being opened each year, including some in other colonies—Deloraine in addition to Launceston, and Hay in New South Wales. The result of this rapid spread was that by April 1888, less than five years after the foundation of the Centre, over 900 people a year were being instructed and more than 440 (48 per cent) certificated. How the Association managed to attract increasing numbers of pupils while graduating only a minority is not clear. Did it reflect a fashion—had St John Ambulance training become the 'in thing'? Was the training filling such a need that people simply enrolled to pick up whatever useful knowledge they could, despite the risk of failing the examination?

One factor in the mounting popularity of the courses was the effort the Centre made to publicise its activities. The press wrote about the Association at great length, keeping it before the eye of the public. In an age that had no cinema, radio, television or motor vehicles, the public demonstrations of the Centre and sub-centres provided entertainment which attracted large crowds. At the fifth annual demonstration in April 1890, for instance, the Council found that 'the general interest of the public was manifest by an attendance which nearly filled the [Melbourne Town] Hall'. The crowd watched the Governor, the Earl of Hopetoun, present twenty medallions and 374 first aid certificates to successful ex-

aminees. Robertson's Militia Ambulance Corps formed a guard of honour. Men's teams of five and women's pairs competed for prizes in first aid and home nursing, and a squad of lads from Melbourne Grammar School displayed the Sylvester method of resuscitation. The entrance charges amounted to £27/19/8, which more than covered the cost of £15/15/- for prizes.[28]

One of the most notable promoters of the early St John Ambulance work in Victoria, in other colonies, and indeed throughout the entire Empire was Annie, Lady Brassey. Lady Brassey was the wife of Thomas Brassey (1836-1918), a Liberal M.P. interested in naval issues. He was Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1880-84, Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty 1884-85, and began publishing *Brassey's Naval Annual* in 1886, the year in which he was created Baron Brassey. He later served as Governor of Victoria (1895-1900), was Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports 1908-13, and became the first Earl Brassey in 1911. Lord Brassey had his own yacht, the *Sunbeam*, in which he and Lady Brassey made periodic world tours. In Britain Lady Brassey raised money for St John Ambulance by throwing the *Sunbeam* open to visitors. When abroad she promoted the St John Ambulance Association relentlessly wherever she went. In virtually every port of the Empire the *Sunbeam* entered she left behind a new Association centre if none had existed and a much reactivated one if there had been one before. She had been one of the earliest pupils to receive first aid training when the Association began teaching in England; she received her first of many certificates in 1877, and submitted herself for regular re-examination. She also had her servants trained in first aid; she placed hampers of bandages, splints and lint in convenient and central locations in Kent in case of accident; and she also taught first aid to Kentish working people.[29]

In 1887 the Brasseys toured eastern Australia aboard the *Sunbeam*, with their three daughters, personal physician and other members of their retinue. They made a grand procession around eastern and northern Australia, staying in the Government Houses of the capital cities they visited. As she was wont to do elsewhere in the Empire, Lady Brassey contacted the officers of the local Centre if there was one, organized public functions for them at Government House, made speeches on their behalf, won them yards of column space in the local press to publicise their activities, found them influential friends, and, to use her own words, generally 'stimulated' them to 'fresh exertions'. If any community she visited had no Centre she hectored it into forming one and took upon herself the organization and publicity of the inaugural meetings.[30]

The Brasseys' tour began in Adelaide, where a Centre had been started two and a half years before. Lady Brassey had 200 people invited to Government House to hear her speak on 'The Work of the St John Ambulance Association'. They heard her laud its campaign for first aid training as 'a cause in which all creeds, classes, denominations, and

every shade of political opinion can unite'. In developing this point she used a rhetoric that first aiders would have immediately recognised a century hence:

> it matters little to us what our politics are when we are ill, and I think it is a great comfort to have at all events one broad charitable meeting ground, where we can all unite with one accord to try and do good to our neighbours as well as to ourselves.

She addressed her comments chiefly to the lay people present, and particularly to the women. She remarked on 'how much good a poor weak woman can do to aid those abler and stronger than herself if only she knows the right way to set about it'. To stress this point she devoted most of her speech to listing a series of cases she had witnessed herself which illustrated the salutary effects of a modicum of first aid training. Just one of them suggests the tenor of the others:

> One great advantage of the instruction [is that] it enables you to overcome . . . the natural shrinking which is inherent in most of us . . . to all pain and suffering, and the sight of blood gently oozing or swiftly spurting, and from nasty-looking wounds. Only the other day on the yacht one of our stewards burst a soda-water bottle in his hand, cutting all the five arteries and blowing off the top of one finger. Blood was starting out in all directions, and if someone had not been on hand to bind a handkerchief around his wrist, he would probably have bled to death, or have been terribly weakened by loss of blood. The picking out of the broken bits of glass, tying up the arteries, and stitching up the gaping wounds, though most skilfully performed by the doctor, was, as you may imagine, a terrible business, with the poor boy in frightful pain, groaning at intervals. Many of the men were obliged to go away, turned fearfully sick, and I am quite certain if I had not gone through some previous ambulance training I could not have held through the trying operation, though I must honestly own that I felt very ill after it, in spite of all the previous training.[31]

She made her life sound like the log book of a casualty clearing station, but her audience drank it all in. The Adelaide *Register* printed it verbatim—all 5000 words of it. It became an oft-quoted soliloquy which was still inspiring Australian members of the St John Ambulance organizations decades later. And as if all this had not been enough, she donated eleven large anatomical posters and a cheque for ten guineas to the Adelaide Centre, which in return made her and Lord Brassey life members.

From Adelaide Lady Brassey and her daughters took a side trip to Broken Hill, still little more than a raw and remote mining camp. They made the first stage of the journey by train, travelling in style in the Vice-Regal carriage. They had to make the next stage in a narrow gauge train, and the final stage by horse and cart. She visited the mines; descended a couple of shafts; and spoke to the miners and mine managers in such ardent tones about the necessity of first aid training for people doing their dangerous work in their remote corner of the country that they formed a sub-centre of the Association within a year.[32]

Back in Adelaide Lady Brassey took the train to Melbourne, where she found the local Centre strongly established under Lloyd Tayler's chairmanship. As in Adelaide, she and Lord Brassey donated ten guineas to become life members of the Victorian Centre. Her special contribution to this Centre was the 'Lady Brassey Ambulance Corps' of Williamstown, which she seems to have provided the funds to establish. This made no less than a third 'ambulance corps' to be set up at Williamstown, a dockside suburb on the opposite side of the Yarra mouth to Port Melbourne. Thomas Ivy, the railwayman who had been teaching first aid to Williamstown State School children, had already formed two 'ambulance corps' at Williamstown the year before. These were not quite the same as the ambulance corps of the Association in England, which were the stock the recently formed Divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade were growing from. As in England, the Williamstown 'ambulance corps' comprised certificated pupils from the Association's courses; however, as much as providing a local ambulance facility using two-wheeled litters, the aspiration of Ivy's corps seems to have been to provide a reserve to supplement the ambulance units of the navy and army in time of war. Neither Ivy's nor Lady Brassey's Williamstown ambulance corps seemed to have survived long, although a year after the Brassey visit to Melbourne they were reported to be 'doing useful work at the seaport'.[33]

Though these ambulance corps do not seem to have lasted into the 1890s, the Victorian Centre tried a similar idea out at the end of the decade. From 1897 it encouraged the formation of 'practice classes' in several suburbs and country areas to keep certificated first aid pupils in touch with the Association. The first of these was organized by a Miss Miriam Billing. It met monthly in Prahran (an inner suburb) and aimed at keeping up its members' skills in bandaging, splinting, resuscitation and stretcher drill. Some of these practice classes later formed the nucleus for Divisions of the Brigade when that formed in Victoria in 1910.[34]

From Melbourne the Brasseys went to Sydney, where Lady Brassey almost single handed began a Centre for New South Wales. She found that in this colony various 'detached' classes had been run in the preceding six years without a Centre having been formed. She therefore set about organizing one. She contacted Samuel Knaggs, who had run the first courses, and arranged for him and other interested parties to attend a preliminary meeting under the chairmanship of the Governor, Lord Carrington, in the drawing room of Government House on 13 July 1887. She instructed the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* to send along 'a competent reporter', and made sure that he gave the meeting adequate preliminary publicity. She called her meeting at a most opportune time. Only the day before a Royal Commission had released its findings on the colliery disaster at Bulli four months previously. An

underground explosion had killed six men and two boys, underlining the need for miners to have first aid skills. Then on the very morning of Lady Brassey's meeting, her publicity material shared space in the newspapers with the report of an inquest on a man killed when a train had crashed near Hornsby three weeks before. Sixteen people had been hospitalized as a result of this accident, six of them with fractures.[35]

With fate thus intervening as her ally, Lady Brassey's audience was both large and receptive. A bevy of leading citizens attended, including the Premier, Sir Henry Parkes, and several cabinet ministers, the Mayor, and leading members of the medical fraternity. Lord Carrington started the proceedings by saying that once he had had to ride ten miles with his collar bone broken in five places because none of his comrades knew how to give him first aid. Lord Brassey addressed the meeting next. Applauding the first aid teaching Knaggs had done among the mining community at Newcastle. Parkes spoke briefly, saying 'it would be folly for him to add anything to what had been said' but that he and all present felt 'gratified' by the presence of the Brasseys. Lady Brassey repeated what she had already said at her meeting in Adelaide. The meeting then ended by calling on the Mayor, Alderman A. J. Riley, and a small group of citizens including Knaggs to call a public meeting two days later, on Friday 15 July at 8.00 p.m. in the Town Hall, to 'promote the objects of the St John Ambulance Association'.[36]

The public meeting opened with the Mayor in the chair and a distinguished group on the stage with him. Among them were Knaggs, the Brasseys, Sir Frederick Darley, the Chief Justice, and Sir George Reid (who would later serve a five-year term as Premier of New South Wales and a one-year term as Australia's fourth Prime Minister). On Darley's motion, seconded by Reid, the meeting voted to establish a New South Wales Centre. A couple of days later Lady Brassey wound up her efforts in New South Wales by conducting a ceremony aboard the *Sunbeam* in which she presented certificates to sixteen women who had successfully completed first aid training in Double Bay and Woollahra.[37]

The *Sunbeam* then sailed north for Brisbane, Rockhampton, the Torres Strait islands and Darwin, from where it headed for home via Mauritius. As they went from port to port they proselytized for St John Ambulance. But Lady Brassey's preaching days were nearly done now, for she had been ill for some time. She died when the *Sunbeam* was seven days out from Darwin. She was universally mourned throughout the St John Ambulance empire she had created from the Bahamas to Bombay and from Borneo to Broken Hill. 'The record of her wanderings by sea and land and on nearly every shore', her obituary in the St John's Gate annual report noted, 'reads almost like another "Crusade" '.[38] Lord Brassey, of course, was to return to Australia with the second Lady Brassey to be Governor of Victoria eight years later.

If the first Lady Brassey was something the Victorian Centre of the

Association had to share with the Centres in other Colonies, there was one other aspect of its development in which it was so far alone. This was the setting up of litter and stretcher stations which the Centre ran with the co-operation of the poice from six police stations in and around inner Melbourne. The stations each had an 'Ashford' litter—an improved version of the original 'St John Ambulance'—and were linked by telephone so that 'a litter can immediately be sent to where a street accident has happened and the sufferer removed with proper care and skill'.[39] This service was intended to replace the previous means for handling street accidents—bundling the victims into a hansom cab for removal to hospital. It was set up through a donation of £120 from Lady Janet Clarke, wife of the President of the Centre and a major benefactor of the Association until her death in 1909. Posters advising of the service were fixed in prominent public places and on building sites. The service was a success from the time it began in 1889-90; and so the Council began making more ambitious plans, including the purchase of a horse ambulance wagon for £190, so that it might introduce 'a fully equipped ambulance service'.[40]

This scheme did not go ahead immediately, however, and the Council had to shelve its plans for a time. The colony had begun sliding into the great depression of the 90s, and the Council suddenly found its work much curtailed. By 1893-94 it was bewailing the fact that its programmes had been so 'materially affected by the widespread depression which has prevailed throughout the colony' that the Centre was finding it 'most difficult to obtain the requisite numbers to form [the first aid] classes' which were the staple of the Association diet. As the first aid course cost each pupil five shillings, the numbers enrolling provided a chart of the trend of the depression: that year, 1893-94, only 545 people undertook courses, compared to 921 the previous year and 1465 the year before that. Things did not pick up for another four or five years, and it was not until 1897-98 that the Council could begin thinking about ambulance services again.[41]

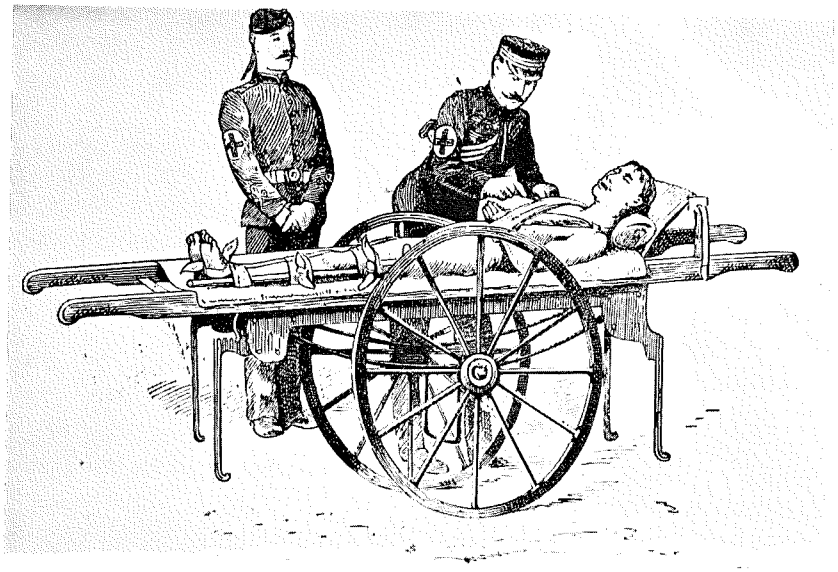
That year, 1897-98, the Centre placed an Ashford litter with trained attendants at the Metropolitan Fire Brigade station at Eastern Hill. With the co-operation of the Fire Brigade the Centre thus had what it considered to be 'the nucleus of a public ambulance service'. The service was connected to the Fire Brigade switchboard so that members of the public could telephone in to call it out whenever it was needed. It was a success from the outset: it was called out more than 100 times over the next year, and over 200 the year after that. By then the Council had ordered its long-awaited horse-drawn ambulance. This came into service in 1900-01, and it proved an even greater success. It was called out 400 times in its first year. Within six years another two horse ambulances had been purchased and the three vehicles were travelling some 34,400 kilometres a year in answering 2455 calls around the city and inner suburbs. By then

the Council was thinking even bigger and was wondering when it might introduce its first motor ambulance.[42]

As St John Ambulance entered the twentieth century in Victoria there were other signs of its success. Around Melbourne, in the provincial cities and towns, on rural properties and along the railways some of the thousands of first aid pupils trained by the Association were putting their knowledge into practice. News of their successes filtered back to the Centre headquarters in Melbourne. It was learnt, for example, that on New Year's Day 1896 one Annie Evans was at Lal Lal Falls near Ballarat when a boy fell over the falls, fracturing his skull and receiving other injuries. She administered first aid to him, and though he died several hours later the doctor called to the scene complimented her on the efficient way in which she had saved the boy from needless suffering. That year, too, Sister Hannah of the Central Methodist Mission was on Queen's Wharf when another woman tripped and broke her leg just above the ankle. Sister Hannah found a couple of bits of wood for splints and fastened them to the leg with hay binding. Doctors at the hospital later told the woman that the improvized splints had saved her from suffering a compound fracture. Railwaymen who had taken St John Ambulance courses and had formed themselves into a Railways Ambulance Corps were treating dozens of cases. Some of them in 1896 were 'joint of first and second fingers cut off', 'puncture wound in foot', 'fracture of spine', 'face severely burnt', 'finger of left hand severed and second finger shattered', 'fracture of thigh, dislocation of wrist, and ulna splintered', 'loss of eye', and 'severe cut on side of eye', to name but a few.[43]

The next year, 1897, there were other instances to show that first aid training was bearing dividends. At Romsey Lizzie Wilson, who ran the local 'practice class', treated a youth who had suffered severe shock, head bleeding and unconsciousness after being run over by a racehorse. At Bendigo Olive Bishop was complimented by a doctor for the way she bandaged a boy with a broken collar bone. In Wycheproof Miss McCabe bandaged the arm of a woman thrown out of a buggy; and at Sorrento Mrs Tipping bandaged the head of a man injured when a yacht ran into a pier. Then in Hobart, where Thomas Ivy of Williamstown fame was holidaying, a young woman stopped the Sandy Bay tram to ask if anyone was aboard who could help with a man drowning nearby. Fortunately Ivy was. He administered the Sylvester method of resuscitation to the apparently drowned man for twenty minutes. The patient began showing signs of life, and so Ivy worked on him for another fifteen minutes, by which time he had 'succeeded in completely restoring the man'. Ivy, who had received war medals from both the British and the Turks in the Crimean War forty years before, held the Association's first aid medallion. The Victorian Centre boasted of him as 'one of our best certificated pupils'.[44]

In its first decades the Victorian Centre of the St John Ambulance



31 An Ashford litter; from the Annual Report of the Victorian Centre St John Ambulance Association, 1904

Association was thus proving itself a worthy offspring of its British parent. By the end of its first quarter century it had overcome the earlier apathy and ignorance of the public; it had promoted itself effectively by showing that the community had need of it; it had cultivated friends in the right places; and it had helped make the public more safety conscious. In the litter and stretcher stations it had set up around the capital city it had fallen upon a scheme that proved a sure winner: the ambulance transport service growing from the litter stations was a runaway success that filled a vital need within the metropolitan community. But perhaps more important was the body of people throughout the State (as Victoria now was) whom the Centre had trained in first aid. The total trained to date was over 15,600, of whom more than 9000 had earned certificates.[45] Within these numbers were some at least who, when confronted with some injury, might be relied on to remember the commonsense principles they had learnt from their St John Ambulance instructors. How many lives they saved and how much suffering they relieved cannot be calculated, but the citizens of Victoria were certainly better off for having amongst them lay people who would not act from total ignorance at times of crisis.

(b) *The Adelaide Centre*

South Australia was not far behind Victoria in receiving the benefits the St John Ambulance Association was offering. An Adelaide Centre came into being within eighteen months of that over the border in Vic-

toria; and, as with the latter, it arose from the efforts of several individuals who took the initiative of getting in touch with St John's Gate to see how they might introduce the Association programmes to their colony.

The idea for a Centre in South Australia seems to have occurred first to one Major Arthur Carew Hunt, a British officer attached to the South Australian Military Force and a member of the Association in London. Perhaps Hunt had notions for a Militia Ambulance Corps similar to that of Dr Robert Robertson in Melbourne—a useful adjunct to the colonial defence force of which he was a senior officer. He gained the interest of various influential Adelaide citizens, including the Governor, Sir William Robinson, and a number of the city's leading medical practitioners. Among the latter was a group of British-born doctors with a keen interest in social medicine and welfare. Chief among this group was Dr Allan Campbell (1836-98), Dr T. W. Corbin (1843-1918) and Dr F. T. D. Clindening (1823-99).[46]

Campbell was a public spirited medico from the same mould as Neild in Melbourne. He was born in Glasgow in 1836, graduated from Edinburgh University in 1867, and migrated to South Australia two years later. With his brother he conducted a 'homeopathic dispensary'; he had been instrumental in establishing the Children's Hospital; he was a member of the Society of Arts, the Board of Education, the University Council and the Legislative Council. He was perturbed by the insanitary, overcrowded conditions many workers lived in, and at their high risk of injury on the job. Extending the Association's training in first aid and home nursing, with its emphases on equipping workers to deal with the types of injuries occuring in the work place, and on observing adequate standards of hygiene and diet in caring for the sick, seemed to Campbell to provide an important means for improving the lot of the lower classes.[47]

Corbin, who came to Australia in 1865, was from Derby. Like Campbell he found the poverty and unsanitary living conditions of the workers distressing. On his arrival in the colony he had lived for a time in the copper mining town of Burra, where many miners lived in dugouts cut into the banks of the creek, and had seen the appalling death toll exacted during the periodic outbreaks of typhoid in the unsewered, poorly watered mining camps of the day. He had also worked as a surgeon at the Adelaide Hospital and in practice at Riverton, and was one of the moving figures behind the Home for Incurables. Clindening, too, wished to improve the living standards of the lower classes. A Dublin-born Protestant and freemason, he had lived through the miseries of the Irish potato famine as a young doctor, and had learnt that sectarian and 'tribal' divisions were no necessary impediment to humanitarian work. Later in Liverpool he had won praise for his devoted efforts during cholera and smallpox epidemics there. He came to South Australia in 1853 and prac-

32 A first aid class in the Melbourne headquarters of the St John Ambulance Association demonstrate their bandaging skills, early 1900s

tised in scattered places—Middleton, Mount Gambier, Kapunda—before settling in Adelaide. In the capital he held appointments at the Destitute Asylum, in the government's Children's Department, and as Deputy Surgeon of the Military Force; and he was also an active supporter of the Home for Incurables.[48]

With the humanitarian conscience so well developed among leaders of the local medical fraternity, Hunt probably had little difficulty in persuading them to join him in establishing an Association Centre in Adelaide. He also secured the support of the Governor, who chaired the public meeting he and the Campbell-Corbin-Clindening group convened to initiate the Centre. This took place in the parlor of the Young Men's Christian Association on 15 December 1884. The meeting resolved to form a Centre; it established an 'influential' committee to bring this into being; and it appointed Hunt as secretary. Who was on the committee is not known, but it probably included Campbell, Corbin and Clindening, and Robinson was possibly at least its titular head. The committee's first public venture was an 'introductory lecture' on the history and aims of the St John Ambulance Association, which a Dr Dunlop gave at the Y.M.C.A. on 21 January 1885 before an 'interested' audience. The committee then enrolled the first class, for forty men, which began on 13 February 1885. Campbell, Dunlop and four other doctors shared the teaching, each giving one lecture. In May Corbin examined those who wished to take the examination. Fifteen of the pupils passed this, in-

cluding James P. Roberts, who was to become Secretary of the Centre 1887-99, and John Witherick, also a committee member from 1887 and through the 90s.[49]

The second class the Centre ran was for women, sixty-seven of them including seven nurses from the Children's Hospital whom Campbell had invited along because of complaints that the training of nurses there was inadequate. Campbell taught the course, which began on 2 July 1885. Corbin was once again the examiner because so far he was the only one authorized by St John's Gate to conduct examinations. He conducted 'a most searching and careful examination' over three consecutive days at the end of August, passing forty-five of the fifty-one candidates, but only three of the nurses from the Children's Hosptital. His examiner's report noted his 'marked approval of the evident enthusiasm of the ladies, their close attendance and elaborate notes of the lectures, the skill with which they bandaged and prepared the injured for removal, as well as their knowledge of the elementary principles of physiology taught in connection with the lectures'.[50] The reason why the nurses performed poorly compared with 'the ladies' had to do with the background of either group: the nurses lived at the hospital, worked long hours and had no days off, whereas the others were from the 'leisured' classes—women from Adelaide's leading families with plenty of time for study and practice.[51]

The next course the Centre conducted was in home nursing, the prerequisite for which was a certificate in first aid. Of the forty-five women who had received the latter, thirty-two joined the home nursing class. All but one of them took the examination, on 9 December 1885, and they all passed. Campbell firmly believed that a knowledge of nursing should spread among the women of the comunity so that general health standards might rise. That would happen, he maintained, because on the one hand the health of the women's own families would benefit from their training, and on the other hand they would be able to assist the poor people in their area. He also believed training in home nursing would help women recognise the spurious claims of quacks and of the patent medicines then freely advertised in the press.[52]

In its first three or four years, 1885-88, the Centre made slow but sure progress. It ran ten men's and three women's first aid classes, and two home nursing classes. From these, 221 first aid and forty home nursing certificates resulted. In this period sub-centres opened in Port Adelaide, Glenelg, Mt Barker, Gawler and Riverton. Early in 1888 a sub-centre opened at Broken Hill (in New South Wales but of Adelaide's rather than Sydney's sphere of influence). Hunt was responsible for this. He was no longer Centre Secretary (he retained the position for only six months, until the Centre was properly established), but he remained an active member of the Centre Committee until 1891. He had already launched the Port Adelaide sub-centre; and now, doubtless as a result of pushing

from the late Lady Brassey, he travelled to Broken Hill to persuade the miners and managers to start up the mines sub-centre she had urged upon them all. Part of its duties would be the organization of an 'Ambulance Corps' equipped with litters and hampers of medical supplies.[53]

One of the most notable achievements of the Adelaide Centre was the support it gained from the Adelaide Establishment. With the Governor as its President, its Vice-Presidents in its first decade or so included the Chief Justice and sometime Administrator of the colony, Sir Samuel Way, the President of the Legislative Council and former Premier, Sir Henry Ayers, the Chief Secretary, the Honourable D. Murray, and Sir Samuel Davenport, patrician landowner, agriculturalist and leading citizen. (Davenport was variously a cabinet minsiter, a promoter of and writer on scientific agriculture, the colony's representative at a string of international and intercolonial exhibitions during the 70s and 80s, and the president of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society, the Adelaide branch of the Royal Geographical Society, and the Chamber of Manufacturers, and Adelaide City Commissioner.) While these luminaries perhaps held nominal courtesy portfolios within the Association, their presence at the head of the Centre advertised the fact that St John Ambulance was a charity of which the leading citizens approved. It also indicated something of tactical skill of the Centre Committee in wining such support.

Under the *de facto* leadership of Frederick Wright, J.P. (Chairman from 1885 until his death in 1899), the Committee was an able one, composed of parliamentarians, businessmen and doctors whom Hunt had brought in to help inaugurate the Centre. The connections the Centre thus had with government, the medical profession and industry and commerce enabled it to gain access and seek favours in places where less well connected organizations might have been unwelcome.

The parliamentary connections were particularly valuable. In 1886, for example, the Centre went in deputation to the Chief Secretary (who was, of course, one of its own Vice-Presidents). They were seeking a government subsidy, in support of which they alluded to the Centre's 'gratuitous instruction of members of the Police Force and the Railway Officials'. He gave them a grant-in-aid up to £50 on a 'pound for pound' basis—for every pound the Centre raised up to £50 the government would give a matching pound. This was quite a generous contribution, for after the fees from classes it was the Centre's largest source of income. Thus, in 1890 (the year of the first published balance sheet) the four largest items in the Centre's revenues of £217 were the fees from classes (£93), the grant-in-aid (£50), receipts from first aid medallions—which had to be purchased by those who had earned them—(£31), and receipts from the annual meetings (£10).[54]

The government continued its grant-in-aid until 1895, after which the subsidy was suspended until 1901. By the mid-90s South Australia, like

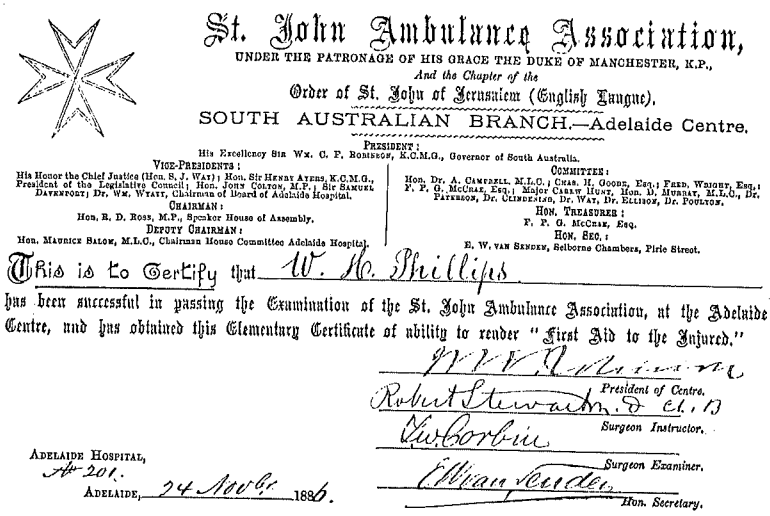
Victoria, had plunged into depression, which seems to have engulfed the Adelaide Centre more completely than it did the Victorian Centre. The annual reports of the former during the second half of the 90s make gloomy reading: whereas the Centre in 1895 had conducted twelve classes for 225 pupils, who gained 157 certificates, in 1896 teaching declined to the extent that there were only four classes with eighty-four pupils gaining a mere twenty-seven certificates. 'Many of our young people have left the colony during the past year to push their fortunes in Western Australia', the report for 1896 lamented. The 1897 report again rued the Centre's deteriorating fortunes:

> The withdrawal by the Government of the modest subsidy of £50 a year has been severely felt by the Centre, and its powers of usefulness remain considerably impaired. In view of the current bad seasons and continuing depression throughout the community your Committee have during the past six years carefully abstained from asking maintenance of this almost self-supporting organization, but the funds which have been so carefully husbanded are now fast diminishing . . .[55]

The Centre survived by living on its accumulated funds. In 1896 it ended the year with a credited balance of £210; this dropped to £165 in '97, £119 in '98, £86 in '99 and £65 in 1900. With the grant-in-aid restored in 1901, the credit balance that year rose to £112.[56]

Apart from attracting government financial support, and then surviving without it through the depression, there were other achievements in the Centre's early decades. Practice classes along the lines of those formed a decade later in Victoria, were running in Adelaide in the late 80s. The first of these was a private arrangement, organized in 1886 by John Witherick, successful pupil from the first class. The second formed in August 1888 in North Adelaide. This was mainly the work of Frances Wright, wife of the Centre Chairman, who had been one of the thirty-one women who had graduated from both the first women's first aid and the first home nursing classes in 1885. The Comittee requested her to convene a meeting of certificated women to start a practice club, and then from among them to recruit a Ladies' Committee of the Centre to encourage the formation of women's classes.[57]

The North Adelaide practice class developed into a semi-autonomous body called the Ladies of St John Ambulance Society N.A. (for 'North Adelaide'), which met in the Children's Hospital. Apart from keeping up their ambulance and nursing skills they raised money to endow a cot at the hospital. In 1895 they ran an 'ambulance stall' at the hospital's annual fête to raise £63 to open the endowment, and for the next thirty-nine years raised an annual £31/10/- to maintain the cot. This represented a notable fund raising achievement, for in the year they raised their first £63 the entire revenues of the Centre amounted to only £141. The Ladies' Society also known as the Ladies' St John Ambulance Mission, N.A., came into being in 1888 with Campbell, whose idea it was, as president



St. John Ambulance Association,
UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF MANCHESTER, K.P.,
And the Chapter of the
Order of St. John of Jerusalem (English Tongue).
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH.—Adelaide Centre.

PRESIDENT:
His Excellency Sir Wm. C. F. Robinson, K.C.M.G., Governor of South Australia.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:
His Honor the Chief Justice (Hon. S. J. Way); Hon. Sir Henry Ayers, K.C.M.G., President of the Legislative Council; Hon. John Colton, M.P.; Sir Samuel Davenport; Dr. Wm. Wyatt, Chairman of Board of Adelaide Hospital.

CHAIRMAN:
Hon. R. D. Ross, M.P., Speaker House of Assembly.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:
Hon. Maurice Salom, M.L.C., Chairman House Committee Adelaide Hospital.

COMMITTEE:
Hon. Dr. A. Campbell, M.L.C.; Chas. H. Goode, Esq.; Fred. Wright, Esq.; F. P. G. McCrae, Esq.; Major Carew Hunt, Hon. D. Murray, M.L.C., Dr. Paterson, Dr. Clendinnen, Dr. Way, Dr. Ellison, Dr. Poulton.

HON. TREASURER:
F. P. G. McCrae, Esq.

HON. SEC.:
E. W. van Senden, Selborne Chambers, Pirie Street.

This is to Certify that W. H. Phillips
has been successful in passing the Examination of the St. John Ambulance Association, at the Adelaide Centre, and has obtained this Elementary Certificate of ability to render "First Aid to the Injured."

W. V. Campbell M.L.C.
President of Centre.
Robert Stewart M.D. Ch. B.
Surgeon Instructor.
Ku Corbin
Surgeon Examiner.
Ellman Senden.
Hon. Secretary.

Adelaide Hospital,
No 201.
Adelaide, 24 Nov 6th 1886.

33 Early first aid certificate of the Adelaide Centre of the St John Ambulance Association

and Frances Wright as secretary and most active worker. As well as practising and maintaining ambulance and nursing skills the Mission aimed 'to spread among the poorer classes of the community some knowledge of first aid and nursing'. The Mission had its own distinctive badge—a white Maltese cross on a red armband worn on the left arm—but it did more than simply give 'social' ladies the chance of dressing up and meeting together for practice. In 1896 the otherwise gloomy annual report of the Centre complimented its members: 'their ministrations during the last seven years have been of good service and help in many cases of accident and illness, and also in imparting a knowledge of ambulance treatment and home nursing amongst women of the industrial classes residing in their neighbourhood'.[58] In addition to this work they participated in the demonstrations of ambulance work which helped enliven the formal annual meetings of the Centre through the 1890s. Until the South Australian District of the St John Ambulance Brigade was established in 1911-12, the practice clubs provided the main avenue through which pupils from the Association's classes could maintain their first aid skills.

The successes of the Association in its early decades in South Australia lay fundamentally in the numbers of pupils it trained. Despite the severe falling off of classes during the depression its record over its first quarter century was creditable: up to 1909 it taught some 4500 pupils, more than 3000 of whom gained certificates. Relative to the population of each State this was roughly the same achievement as that of the Victorian Centre in its first twenty-five years. In a State with roughly three and a half

times the population of South Australia, the Victorian Centre trained about that many times more people than did the Adelaide Centre. Presumably the same sort of benefits from the training being spread through Victoria were being diffused throughout South Australia as well.[59]

As in Victoria, the training of police and railwaymen was responsible for much of the dispersal of ambulance knowledge. The Adelaide Centre directed much of its energy towards training police and railways workers, to the extent of instructing them free of charge. At first the relationship with these select pupils was not fruitful, and the first attempt to instruct them failed: the lecturer complained of their poor attendance; they thought the lectures were too few and too spaced out, and refused to be examined. Thereafter separate classes were run for each group, with better success. The problem was then to persuade the police and railways commissioners to reimburse the Association for the free instruction their employees had received. During the depression this was more difficult than later; but by the end of the century things had improved and the commissioners became keen supporters of the Association. To encourage their men to undergo ambulance training the commissioners of both services allowed employees who held first aid certificates to wear a St John badge on their uniforms. As a further means for cementing the bond the Centre customarily invited successive police and railways commissioners to join its Committee.[60]

Another surprising source of early pupils was the Literary Societies, in other colonies known as Mechanics' Institutes or Schools of Art—organizations for helping workers improve themselves. In 1887 the South Australian Literary Societies Union arranged for the Centre to conduct first aid classes within their four suburban branches. The secretary of the Union was G. F. Hussey, who was a member of the Centre Committee 1899-1915. In the latter year he took over as Commissioner of the recently established South Australian District of the St John Ambulance Brigade, a position he held until 1931.[61]

The Adelaide Centre made other vigorous attempts to take its courses to the workers. From its early days it was concerned to introduce first aid training to factory workers, waterside workers and miners as well as to police and railwaymen. It accordingly sent a deputation to the Trades and Labour Council in 1888 to convince the unionists of the value of ambulance knowledge among their members. Whether or not this resulted in increased enrolments in Association classes is not clear, but in 1892 the Centre invited the Council to confer with it on jointly seeking means to spread ambulance training among the sixty unions having Council affiliation. Then in 1894 the Committee engaged a canvasser to visit factories to rouse interest in the formation of first aid classes. The Glanville Sugar Refinery was the first to let its workers receive on the job training in first aid. Then from about the turn of the century the Association began en-

couraging industrial firms to pay the costs of the classes formed among their workers. One of the first firms to do so was A. M. Simpson and Son, the founder of which, A. M. Simpson, M.L.C., had been one of the businessmen-parliamentarians who had been a Vice-President of the Centre since it inception.[62]

Part of the success of the Adelaide Centre lay in its keen nose for publicity. It proved as adept as the Victorian Centre in gaining ample coverage in the press of the day. Lady Brassey, as we have seen, brought it widespread press attention in 1887; and its practice of inviting successive Governors to be its Presidents ensured that its annual meetings, fund raising concerts and public demonstrations were written up in great detail in the *Register* and the *Advertiser*. From 1886 it began combining its annual meetings with the presentation of medallions and certificates, demonstrations of ambulance work by members of the practice clubs, and a musical concert. Thus, on 29 September 1887, for instance, it entertained the audience at its annual meeting with eight musical items, including two from three boy sopranos from the Cathedral Choir; the Governor, Sir William Robinson, presented medallions to ten men and certificates to the graduates from five recent classes; and one of the practice clubs went through its paces. Tickets were a shilling and so, with an audience of several hundred, the evening turned out to be a worthwhile fund raiser.[63]

The success of the Adelaide Centre in gaining favourable publicity by virtue of its Vice-Regal connections points to one of the paradoxes of the modern St John organizations. The St John Ambulance is an organization developed by the aristocratic and hierarchical Order of St John in furtherance of its wish to keep alive its ancient knightly charitable ideal. By gaining Royal patronage through its Royal Charter of 1888 its aristocratic and hierarchical structure had been reaffirmed. The Queen's Vice-Regal representatives therefore became its most appropriate figureheads in the colonies, as happened first in South Australia. In communities that valued their imperial connections Government House retained a social ascendancy it lacked in a later era when the imperial bonds had slackened. So the Adelaide Centre profited from having Presidents who were Governors, and from having the firm Establishment support of leading businessmen and politicians. Yet St John Ambulance, as the Adelaide Centre was demonstating, was an organization whose real work and ultimate success lay among the common people working in the factories, on the docks, along the railways. It could only achieve success if they, the 'industrial classes', espoused it wholeheartedly. In Adelaide its achievement was at both ends of the social spectrum. In developing a body with a respectable upper class head and sturdy working class feet it was taking on a form which all sections of the community could recognise as theirs. And therein it was laying the conditions for its continued success.

(c) *The Tasmanian Centre*

The next place after Melbourne and Adelaide to see St John Ambulance established was Launceston, where a group of local residents in early 1887 constituted themselves as a sub-Centre of the Victorian Centre. Prominent among them were the principal Anglican vicar of Launceston, Archdeacon Francis Hales, Rev. W. Law, Dr M. W. Gutteridge, Miss A. J. Duncan and Messrs. W. Barnes, Henry Edgell and Crosby Gilmore. They called a public meeting at the Collegiate Institute in Launceston on Wednesday 30 March 1887 with Hales in the chair. The 'very good number of ladies and gentlemen present' quickly agreed on a series of resolutions which had obviously been thought out in advance. First Law and Gutteridge moved 'that a branch of the Association be now formed'; Edgell and Gilmore then moved 'that the medical men in Launceston be requested to become honorary members, and to deliver courses of lectures as arranged by the committee'; a Dr Hallowes moved the formation of a committee of management, with the Governor, Sir Robert Hamilton, as president and his wife as 'lady patroness'; Edgell moved for the formation of a 'gentlemen's committee' to promote classes for men, while Hallowes moved for a parallel 'ladies' committee'; and Barnes and Edgell proposed that the Victorian Centre be requested to 'adopt' the new branch as a sub-centre. The meeting then ended with forty of those present signing up as members of the new body.[64]

Next day the Launceston *Examiner* warmly approved the arrival of St John Ambulance in Tasmania:

> That this begining is to be commended, nobody will deny. Wherever the St. John's Ambulance Society has been given a footing it has always found favour. The lamentable ignorance of the simplest remedies in cases of accident is already only too evident, but the want of practical knowledge is widely recognised, and the society is likely to flourish here as well as elsewhere. Its usefulness when once it is established, and the classes have acquired even a primary knowledge of the treatment of simple accidents, is so self-evident that its advantages will at once be recognised, and many a sufferer will be saved hours of pain by the use of simple common sense prior to the sufferer's arrival. In a new colony, where doctors are at a distance, such a knowledge as is obtained in these classes is doubly useful, and its importance cannot be overrated.[65]

It was the first of a series of articles on the organization over the next few years: as on the mainland, the Association in Tasmania had a good press.

The three committees formed at the public meeting got down to work within a week. Their first decision was to combine all three committees—the committee of management and both the men's and women's committees—under Barnes' chairmanship, with Annie Duncan as secretary. To guide them they had notes on the Adelaide Centre prepared by Miss Duncan. They agreed to ask the secretary of the Victorian Centre for sets of lecturer's diagrams, specimen bandages, elastic torniquets and forty copies of the 1878 first aid text book issued by St John's Gate, *Aids*

for Cases of Injuries and Sudden Illnesses, by Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd, the first lecturer of the first British Centre of the Association (Woolwich). They also agreed to request affiliation with the Victorian Centre, and to advertise the classes they planned to run in Launceston.[66]

Exactly how many classes the Launceston sub-Centre then ran is unknown, because it left no record of these. Victorian records, however, suggest that in Launceston in its first year, 1887-88, the sub-Centre taught thirty women and twenty-three men—probably one class of each—of whom twenty-one gained certificates. In Deloraine, fifteen kilometres to the west, another pair of classes were taught, though whether through the sub-Centre or by direct negotiation with Melbourne is not certain. Twenty-five of the twenty-four men and twenty-one women at Deloraine gained certificates. In the sub-Centre's second year, 1888-89, no classes seem to have been run at all; but in the third year, 1889-90, it ran classes in Launceston, Torquay and Scottsdale for eighty-seven women, of whom fifty-three gained certificates. In Deloraine that year another twenty women received instruction and twelve of them passed the examination. In all, then, the Association in its first three years in Tasmania taught perhaps eight classes with 205 students, most of them women (77 per cent in all—158 women to forty-seven men), of whom 111 gained certificates. While this was only a small number by comparison with those being trained in Victoria and South Australia, it was about the same proportionally: by the early 90s the Launceston sub-Centre had trained about one in every eighty-two of the local population, compared with one in eighty-four by the Adelaide Centre and one in eighty by the Victorian Centre. So, presumably, it was producing similar benefits to those we have observed on the mainland.[67]

Having brought itself into existence as an adjunct of the Victorian Centre, the Association in Tasmania spent much of its energies in its first two years in gaining separate status for itself as a Centre in its own right. Difficulties in its relationship with Big Brother across Bass Strait had soon appeared to provoke the wish for independence. The problems had appeared within the first year, when the secretary of the Victorian Centre, Captain C. B. Payne, R. N., wrote in early 1888 to inform the Launceston Committee that the results of the most recent examinations could not be recognised, as there had been 'a breach of the Rules and Regulations'. The sub-Centre wrote back to apologise and explain that 'no wilful opposition had been intended'. Payne replied on 8 May accepting this apology 'for non-compliance with the Rules of the Victorian Centre', and demanding that he be sent £9/7/- in respect of the fees for the course in question.[68] Obviously, if anyone was to profit from class fees it was to be the Victorian and not the Tasmanian organization.

Further problems arose over class sizes. Victorian Centre Rules specified a minimum of twenty pupils for each class. Finding that number in the more populous Victorian towns might not have been hard,

but in the smaller Tasmanian settlements it meant that where, say, eighteen people in a village wanted to form a class the sub-centre could not accommodate them unless they could inveigle an extra two people into taking the course. A letter to Sir Herbert Perrott, the Chief Secretary at St John's Gate, eventually, in 1892, won permission to run small classes at the Committee's discretion; but in the meantime the inflexible attitude of the Victorians prevented the Launcestonians from reaching their potential clientele. Then, too, the sheer volume of correspondence with Payne in Melbourne, over the running of classes, in arranging examinations, issuing certificates, collecting course fees, ordering supplies of text books and bandages, and querying Victoria's interpretations of its rules, meant that the Launceston Committee was spending effort that might be spared if it existed as a Centre in its own right.[69]

Not surprisingly, then, the Launceston Committee began moves to separate itself from Victoria. Two years after the formation of the sub-centre the Committee resolved to write to Payne asking for information on how to form a Tasmanian Centre; and at the same time they contacted Perrott to announce their wish to upgrade their status. After a couple of years of correspondence back and forth between Launceston and London, Launceston and Melbourne, and Melbourne and London, Perrott advised that the Head Centre at St John's Gate agreed with the request provided that Victoria had no objections. In the meantime the Launceston Committee began referring to itself as the 'Tasmanian Branch, St John Ambulance Association'. A few more letters produced the necessary agreement of the Victorians, then finally in March 1891 they received a letter from Perrott advising them that 'Launceston had been entered on the books of the Head Centre as a Centre separate and distinct from Victoria'.[70]

Now a Centre in its own right, the Launceston Committee was determined to guard jealously its pre-eminence as *the* centre for Tasmania. It was particularly concerned lest ambitions to that end existed in Hobart, the rival city to the south. The Committee accordingly contacted Perrott again, in July 1891, requesting 'that the Launceston Centre be understood to include the whole of Tasmania'. A couple of months later the Committee got their reply. It was everything they had hoped for: Perrott advised them that, as from 16 September 1891, Head Centre recognised their authority as the Tasmanian Centre, with responsibility for the entire colony. Perrott's letter was read out at the first annual general meeting of the new Centre several months later, and undoubtedly many a Launcestonian reflected with some satisfaction that in this matter at least the northern city had prevailed over the southern.[71]

Something of the determination of the Tasmanian Centre to remain a Launceston based body was apparent in the dealings the Launceston Committee had been having with its Lady Patroness over the past year or so. The Committee enjoyed a fairly warm relationship with Sir Robert

and Lady Hamilton, despite their being 'tainted' by dwelling in Hobart. The Hamiltons were enthusiastic devotees of the arts and worked actively to enrich the cultural life of the colony. They were both enlightened liberals, humanitarian activists who sought out avenues for advancing the welfare of the common people. Sir Robert helped the infant labour movement while Lady Hamilton engaged in what she called 'missionary' work among Hobart's poor. She took great interest in what the Launceston sub-centre of the Association was doing, as she saw ambulance work as something that should spread among the poor people of the colony.

Lady Hamilton (née Teresa Felicia Reynolds) seems to have been the most enthusiastic supporter of St John Ambulance work among the Vice-Royals to descend on colonial Australia; and she was certainly the most eager to be soiling her hands in the work the Association was doing. That is where her troubles with the Launceston Committee began. In Launceston in July 1890 to present the first aid certificates to the latest class, she announced during the public presentation that she had formed a class for women in Hobart and was teaching them herself. The class, she said, 'was not carried out in connection with the Victorian Centre at all' (as were the Launceston classes), and the cost was only three shillings (instead of the five charged in Launceston) so that she might attract a large volume of pupils quickly. Her idea was to create 'a band of nurses who would go out among the sick and destitute'—veritable 'missionaries' of St John! Back in Hobart again she wrote to Launceston asking for certificates to be issued to the members of her class, even though they had not been taught or examined according to Association rules. The Committee replied that it felt itself 'unable to depart from the rules'.[72]

A person of Lady Hamilton's enthusiasm could not be easily deterred. She soon wrote back asking for permission to enrol a new women's class in Hobart under the Centre's rules, but for a three shilling fee. She also requested to be allowed to let people not formally enrolled sit in on the lectures. The Committee replied that it would accept the women as a 'detached' class but at a cost of 7/6 each, and provided that no outsiders sat in on lectures and that no less than thirty pupils were on the course. They allowed a reduced fee of 3/6 for any Young Women's Christian Association members who might be taking part, but the cost of text book and bandages for each Y.W.C.A. pupil would be on top of that. Moreover an examiner's fee of £2/2/-, expenses for the Committee of £1/1/-, a 10/6 contribution towards St John's Gate, and any balance left over after payment of expenses had to be forwarded to Launceston. Lady Hamilton still did not take the hint that those in Launceston did not want her running her own Hobart sub-centre according to her own whims. She telegrammed three weeks later for books and bandages for a class of twenty-four. Launceston wrote back inquiring if the class was to run under St John Ambulance auspices, and if it was to be for the

Y.W.C.A. or a 'detached' group and it pointed out that an approved lecturer must be appointed before a class could begin. She responded with a long list of questions on how to form and run a class. The Committee now called a special meeting, in June 1891, to consider her letter, then wrote again to inform her 'the rules could not be relaxed' while advising her of the appointment of one doctor as a lecturer and another as the examiner for her class. Hobart's first formal class under Association control now proceeded duly, and by the September it had been taught and examined. It raised £13/15/6, which means that it probably had about thirty-six pupils, and it made a profit of £5/2/2 for the Launceston Committee.[73]

That seemed to settle the difficulties between the Centre and its Lady Patroness. At the end of the year she was in Launceston for the first annual general meeting of the new Centre, during the course of which the Vice-President, Archdeacon Hales, presented her with the colony's second first aid medallion. (The Secretary, Annie Duncan, had earned the first of these the year before.) In her speech of acceptance Lady Hamilton spoke of 'her experiences in Hobart among the poorer classes, to whom she had delivered lectures on nursing and on kindred subjects'. She then outlined her views on what the Association should be doing in Tasmania. As the *Examiner* reported the next day, she counselled the Association to involve itself in educating the public on a broader front. She wanted to see it teaching throughout the countryside as well as in the major towns; and to ensure that its influence spread far and wide it ought to use its lay members rather than just its medicos to do the teaching.[74] This, of course, was the approach the Association adopted many decades later; but in 1891 it was so radical a suggestion as to be fanciful.

Lady Hamilton left Tasmania at the end of the next year when her husband's term of office expired. That year, too, Annie Duncan, who as secretary-treasurer had been in the main administrative strength of the Centre, resigned and left for England. Little much happened in the Centre after that, except for an inquiry the Committee conducted into assertions by one of its medicos that the exam questions were becoming too easy. A sub-committee reviewed seven recent examination papers and reported in February 1893 that the questions were adequate: their object, after all, was 'not so much to impart full medical training . . . as to convey such knowledge as may be required in an emergency, pending the arrival of a medical man'.[75]

The Committee then seems to have fallen into desuetude. Probably debilitated by the depression, without Annie Duncan to do its leg work, and lacking a Lady Hamilton to inspire it into accepting new challenges, it seems to have gone into recess. No more is heard about it in the local press or in the annual reports of St John's Gate 'Head' Centre. In some shape or form it managed to revive itself later on, possibly in the years before the First World War, and it certainly operated during the war

under the secretaryship of a Mrs F. Styant-Browne; but then at the end of the war it went into recess again and was not revitalized until 1928.[76] It left behind no records of its activities during this period of wartime revival, and so what it actually accomplished in that time is unknown. The only records for this later period of the Association in Tasmania are from 1909 and relate to the setting up of a new Centre. But this was in Hobart, not Launceston; and ever since then the northern 'capital' of the State has been denied what its early members of the St John Ambulance Association were determined to keep from the 'other' capital—the prestige of being *the* Tasmanian Centre.

The emerging St John Ambulance organizations in Australia could have learnt something from the discontinuance of the first Tasmanian Centre after only six years. The first object lesson could have been on the dangers of allowing parochialism to take over from civic pride. When one city in a region wants to dominate the others, and when it values its own pre-eminence above what might be best for people elsewhere, there is a danger that the latter could lose interest in the schemes it is promoting. The second lesson could have been about channelling the enthusiasm of the energetic newcomer—the Lady Hamiltons, who see a task to be done then plunge ahead to tackle it, possibly successfully and probably using unorthodox methods. Such people can be readily tripped over and trussed up by the rules and by established conventions. It might be necessary to contain the exuberance of such people; but there is a risk of stifling their initiative and losing from the organization the zestful sort of person it needs to be successful. If points had been awarded for success in either lesson, the Launceston Centre would have scored poorly. Perhaps its inability to learn was why it became an early 'drop out'. Whatever the reason, its failure after a promising start was disappointing.

(d) *The Brisbane Centre*

Putting a date on the beginning of St John Ambulance in Queensland is difficult, for though Queenslanders had been learning first aid and home nursing under the banner of St John Ambulance since the late 1880s an Association Centre, as the other States understood that term, did not exist in Queensland until 1908.

The records of the London Head Centre at St John's Gate indicate that a 'Brisbane Centre' was established in 1889; but apart from annually recording this date in a list of the years of formation of the colonial Centres they give no further information until 1908. In that year the Head Centre's annual report has entries on the Brisbane Centre which show that by 1908 some 1623 first aid and 153 home nursing pupils had received instruction over the preceding nineteen years, and that from this number 859 first aid and 67 home nursing certificates and twelve medallions had been awarded. In addition the 1908 annual report from

St John's Gate reprints the comments of the recent first annual report from the Brisbane Centre. Consequently it is a matter for debate among antiquarians of the Order of St John as to whether an Association Centre can be said to have been operating in Queensland in the nineteenth century.[77]

What is certain about the history of St John Ambulance in Queensland is that the earliest first aid classes there under Association auspices took place during 1889 in Brisbane. They came about through the efforts of Dr John Thompson, who was both Principal Medical Officer of the Queensland Military Ambulance Corps and Medical Officer to the Queensland Railways. And, once again, the name Brassey occurs in the early affairs of the Association in colonial Australia.

THE BRASSEYS IN THEIR S.Y. SUNBEAM. JUN/JUL 1887

Lord and Lady Brassey, as we have seen, visited Brisbane and Rockhampton during their tour of the eastern Australian colonies in June and July 1887. In Brisbane Lady Brassey called her customary meeting, on 27 July, which was as usual well publicised, well attended and well reported. Some four hundred people gathered in the Town Hall with the Mayor, Mr J. Hipwood, in the chair. The meeting was perhaps shorter than those the Brasseys had attended earlier in their voyage because Lady Brasey was suffering from a heavy cold and could barely talk. Still, the speeches were stirring enough. The Anglican Bishop, Webber, personally and feelingly vouchsafed the need for an Association Centre in the city:

> I feel inclined to be a pupil of the ambulance classes, because I have again and again seen in this colony the necessity of knowledge of this kind. It was only the other day I was at a place 70 miles from a medical man when an accident happened. A man had his nose nearly severed from his face. Happily there was a lady present who had attended one of the classes of this Association and, when everybody had lost their heads, she set to work and the nose was in its proper place in a very short time. (Applause.) There was an instance of the extreme value of such an Association as this. (Applause.)[78]

Despite her cold, Lady Brassey recounted several more of the accidents that seemed to follow her and to demand a knowledge of first aid:

> Accidents occur only too frequently. I can give some of my own experience within the last forty-eight hours. I had just got out of my carriage the other day before the horses rushed away with it and it was partly smashed. One of the horses was hurt, and knowing what was best for itself wanted to lie down, and it was with considerable difficulty that it could be got on its legs. The first idea of those who do not know how best to treat the case of an animal meeting with an accident whereby a limb is fractured is to put it on its legs, almost certainly with the result of turning what might be a simple fracture into a compound fracture. Only today we were in a carriage which came into collision with a dray, and there might have been an accident, and later in the day our carriage upset a woman and a child in a cart. They were fortunately not hurt, but greatly frightened and might have been seriously injured. I only give you these common instances to show how the advantage of first aid taught by the St. John Ambulance Association comes in. (Hear, hear.)[79]

The resolution, 'That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that a centre of the St. John Ambulance Association be formed in Brisbane and that the Mayor be requested to form a committee for that purpose', was then put to the meeting and carried 'by acclamation'.[80]

The Brassey entourage now moved on to Rockhampton. From here Lady Brassey wrote a report on her Australian experiences to St John's Gate. 'In all parts of this great country I have visited,' she wrote, 'I have met with much encouragement from the leaders of public opinion, and valuable co-operation from the principal medical gentlemen, without whose cordial support the Association could not exist'.[81]

When Lord Brassey got back to London, where he joined the Central Executive Committee of the Association, he sent out to Thompson an Ashford litter, then the very latest thing in ambulance transport. (It was the type of litter the Victorian Centre was planning to instal at six of the Melbourne police stations.) Thompson became fired with the Brassey zeal for ambulance work, and in 1889 began giving first aid and nursing lectures to members of his Military Ambulance Corps and to anyone else who was interested. He held his classes in the Brisbane School of Arts, and the first of them was examined by Dr E. J. Byrne in August 1889 under Association rules. All but one of the twenty-two pupils who presented themselves for examination passed. A second course soon afterwards produced a further batch of seventeen certificates, making thirty-eight for the first year's work.[82] 1889.

The Schools of Arts and the Mechanics' Institutes were the main agents for adult education in the colonies in the nineteenth century. The Brisbane School of Arts could see that the type of training Thompson was giving his first aid pupils was the sort of programme it should be promoting in the interests of the broader education of working people. So it obtained permission from St John's Gate to be the official venue for the Association's teaching and examinations in Brisbane. Thereafter it offered St John Ambulance training on its curriculum, and it presented those who passed the examination with its own certificate. Later successful students received the official St John Ambulance certificate issued by St John's Gate; and those who held the School of Arts certificate were allowed to exchange it for the official one.[83]

The subsequent development of St John Ambulance effort in Queensland properly lies beyond the scope of this chapter, for the main events occur from 1908 onwards. However, because the formally constituted Queensland Centre (which came into being only in the period 1908-16) stemmed from events in the colonial period, we must now briefly trace the path it took from 1889 to 1916. QUEENSLAND CENTRE.

The Brisbane School of Arts evolved into the Central Technical College and later into the Brisbane Technical College. It was during the later part of this transition that the Brisbane Centre of the Association emerged, with the senior officers of the Technical College becoming the BRISBANE CENTRE

Centre's executive. This was in 1908, the year the Centre made its first annual report to St John's Gate. The *de facto* marriage of the College and the Association, now nearly two decades old, was formally sanctioned: the President of the Technical College, W. J. Byram, became the first president of the Brisbane Centre; D. R. McConnell, the College's Director; R. V. Mills the treasurer, and Drs Archibald Brockway and Alfred Sutton its first medical officers.[84]

The report this executive made to London that year was brief—one paragraph which simply stated that 'the number of members of this Centre appears small, but there is not much popular work done'.[85] The reason why the Centre was doing little 'popular work' was that those taking its courses were chiefly men wishing to become ambulance officers of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade—the State's civil ambulance authority. It certainly was small compared with other State Centres of the Association at that time: whereas the Brisbane Centre had only two medical officers affiliated with it in 1908, the New South Wales Centre had 210 and the Western Australian Centre had fifty.[86]

In effect the Brisbane Centre was little other than a preliminary training school for aspiring Q.A.T.B. staff, whom the Technical College would take in and put through the Association's certificate courses. It did not go out to promote itself amongst the public as the Centres in other colonies did; it did not try to 'sell' itself to the Police and Railways Commissioners as did the Centres elsewhere; nor did it lobby commercial and industrial firms to adopt it. The reasons for this lay partly in the way the Q.A.T.B. had developed: this organization had grown quickly from its foundation in 1892, and because it was effectively decentralized, with branches throughout the State, it performed the roles taken up by the sub-centres of St John Ambulance elsewhere. At the same time the Queensland railway service was developing its own Railway Ambulance Corps outside of the St John Ambulance organization. The Q.R.A.C., like the Q.A.T.B., began in 1892; but whereas similar railways units in other colonies started off in close association with St John Ambulance, in Queensland the Q.R.A.C. was independent of St John from the start. As it ran its own training programmes, and could always call on the Q.A.T.B. for assistance if need be, the Q.R.A.C. had little need of St John Ambulance, which thus was denied a major source of pupils the Association Centres in other colonies were tapping. And finally the Brisbane Centre remained small because it was not itself independent. Having developed as an adjunct of the Technical College, as one educational programme among the many its Technical College officers were charged with administering, it probably lacked primacy with them. In other colonies the Centre officials were latter day hospitallers first and foremost; in Brisbane they were educational administrators who lacked the zealot's determination to win converts to their cause. As a result they failed to take their cause to the people; they did not win for it the influen-

1892.

tial friends in high places which other Centres had gained; they did not seek out for it the newspaper publicity that was spreading its fame in other colonies. So the Brisbane Centre remained weak, and its achievement during the colonial period was the poorest of all the mainland Centres. In its nineteen years to 1908 it turned out only 926 certificated pupils, but in the same period the New South Wales Centre produced 10,580, Victoria 9623, Adelaide 3489, and Western Australia 1668.[87]

The low profile of the Brisbane Centre is evident from a couple of instances where St John Ambulance courses ran under the auspices of the New South Wales Centre rather than through the Brisbane Centre. In 1896 there were two classes in the far north of Queensland at Normanton, one for men and another for women each with over thirty pupils. Apparently the people in Normanton, on the Gulf of Carpentaria, were so remote from Brisbane some 1700 kilometres to their southwest they were unaware of the Association Centre there. The New South Wales Centre certainly knew nothing of its northern neighbour, for its annual report that year said that it took on the Normanton classes because there was no Centre in Queensland. Then in 1907 the Queensland Department of Public Instruction requested the New South Wales Centre to issue certificates to technical school students at Toowoomba and Mackay who had undertaken instruction and examination according to Association rules.[88] The Brisbane Centre thus seems to have been just that—a local organization with limited, strictly parochial interests and one that concentrated on its role for the Q.A.T.B.

Certainly the Brisbane Centre faced serious difficulties in taking the hospitalling cause to the people of Queensland. By the turn of the century the population of the colony was still only about half a million in a territory more than 1,727,000 square kilometres in area. It thus had to deal with a population less than half that of Victoria spread over an area more than seven and a half times as large. Its distances were therefore vast, its congregations of population small, and its settlements widely scattered and far apart. Its annual report of 1908 pointed to some of the constraints it had to work with here:

> Distances in Queensland are very great and doctors are often a day's journey away from cases. This Centre would like to suggest that where there is only one medical man in a radius of hundreds of miles some arrangements should be made whereby he could teach likely helpers first aid and obtain certificates for them by written examination. There have been two successful classes in distant places not placed on the records this year, because no examination can be held as no doctor but the lecturer is within possible reach.[89]

These were problems for the other vast and sparsely populated States, South Australia and Western Australia, too, and their annual reports also complained frequently of classes unexamined because there was no second doctor to conduct the examinations.[90] Among the strict rules St John's Gate laid down was one preventing a doctor who had taught a

class from examining it, which meant that for every class formed there had to be *two* doctors—one to teach, the other to examine. The solution was to appoint lay people—experienced first aiders—as both instructors and examiners; but it was many years before the Australian St John Ambulance organizations could convince London of that. The 'tyranny of distance' was not therefore a factor that inhibited the Brisbane Centre alone; but other Centres coped better with it.

The connection between the Brisbane School of Arts/Technical College, the St John Ambulance Association and the Q.A.T.B. which limited the achievement of the Association in Queensland was a long standing arrangement. The Q.A.T.B., the dominant partner in the triad, had been established in December 1892 as a result of the initiative of a group of fifteen members of the Military Ambulance Corps. The Corps, formed in 1884, was a militia unit like Dr Robert Robertson's in Melbourne. As well as turning out for parades of the Queensland defence forces its members made themselves available to the public as a first aid team in attendance at functions like sports meetings. They decided to form a 'City Ambulance Transport Brigade', the forerunner of the Q.A.T.B., after they had seen an injured jockey mishandled following an accident during the running of the Maiden Hunters' Cup at the Brisbane Showgrounds on 11 August 1892. Before the Corps members could get to him onlookers had bundled the jockey into a horse cab through its narrow door, in the course of which they managed to worsen his simple or 'closed' fracture of the leg, turning it into a compound or 'open' fracture. Among the Corps members behind the formation of the Q.A.T.B. were some who held St John Ambulance certificates earned from the courses at the School of Arts. The foundation President of the Q.A.T.B. was Colonel A. J. Thynne, M.L.C., the Irish-born commander of the Queensland militia; and the first Q.A.T.B. 'Captain', Eustace Jack, and 'First Lieutenant', C. W. Elliott—its principal ambulance officers—were both members of the Military Ambulance Corps and graduates of the School of Arts St John Ambulance classes.[91]

Eventually the Q.A.T.B. took over total responsibility for the Queensland activities of the St John Ambulance Association. This happened in September 1916 when the Queensland government assumed control of the Brisbane Technical College and incorporated it within the State education system. Homeless, the Association now merged with the Brisbane Centre of the Q.A.T.B., whose members for a long time had been the chief promoters of the Association's endeavours in Queensland. A new constitution was drawn up, this time for a Queensland rather than just a Brisbane Association Centre, and was approved at a meeting on 16 September 1916. At the same meeting a new executive was elected: Thynne became president, M. Baldwin the chairman, W. D. Grimes treasurer, and R. B. Barrett secretary. These officials also comprised the executive of the Q.A.T.B.'s Brisbane Centre; and so in Queensland the

Q.A.T.B. and St John Ambulance became synonymous, the latter wholly subsumed in the former.[92] This, as we shall see in a later chapter, was a situation that was to last for more than forty years; and one of the most disruptive and rancorous episodes in the history of the Order of St John in Australia would occur as the Association in Queensland endeavoured to extricate itself from the smothering embrace of the Q.A.T.B.

The early experiences of the St John Ambulance Association in Queensland, like the demise of its first Tasmanian Centre, could thus have provided a number of object lessons. Chief among these would have been one relating to the danger for St John Ambulance organizations in becoming too closely identified with outside bodies. Even if the marriage of the Association to the Brisbane Technical College was not, then union with the Q.A.T.B. was an instructive error not be be repeated if freedom to carry out the charitable work of the Order of St John was something to be prized.

(e) *The New South Wales Centre*

The New South Wales Centre might have been a late starter among the colonial St John Ambulance organizations, but it soon made up for lost time. Although it did not join the field until 1890, six and seven years after Adelaide and Victoria, it trained some 7628 people in first aid, 5187 of whom gained certificates, including 225 medallions, in its first decade. This compared most favourably with the achievement of the first two centres: among a combined population not much larger than that of New South Wales the Victorian and Adelaide Centres together had trained 14,629 people for 8148 certificates and 788 medallions by the turn of the century. But New South Wales was rapidly overhauling them, and entered the new century as the premier Centre, annually training over a thousand pupils compared to Victoria's 600.[93]

Why there should have been such a delayed start in New South Wales is puzzling. As we have seen, the earliest ambulance instruction under Association rules in Australia took place there when Dr Samuel Knaggs ran his course in the Eveleigh Railway Workshops in 1881. Moreover, Sydney in July 1887 was the scene of Lady Brassey's most determined, best publicised and most sustained promotional campaign for St John during her tour of the four eastern colonies. Her two public meetings in Sydney, the one in Government House and the other in the Town Hall, each attended by a galaxy of Sydney's dignitaries, had enthusiastically agreed to form a local Centre of the Association forthwith. But nearly three years would pass before further stirring by Knaggs and others finally produced a Centre some time in the second half of 1890.

What had happened in the meantime? For all the newspaper coverage of Lady Brassey's Government House and Town Hall meetings, and the fulsome speeches by the Governor (Lord Carrington), the Premier (Sir

Henry Parkes), the Mayor (Ald. A. J. Riley), the Chief Justice (Sir Frederick Darley), the Vice-President of the Executive Council (E. J. Salomons) and a future Premier and Prime Minister (G. H. Reid), nothing much ocurred. The Brasseys sailed off for further barnstorming in Brisbane and Rockhampton several days later, after Lady Brassey had entertained 'a large number of representative citizens and their wives' at an 'at home' aboard 'that pretty craft' the *Sunbeam* (as one newspaper of the day described it). Her guests had been soothed by the band of the training ship *Vernon*, who had been summoned aboard for the occasion; they had watched her present certificates to twenty-one Double Bay and Woollahra women who had completed first aid courses the year before; and they had listened to a witty speech by Lord Brassey which extolled the work of the Association and the beauties of the harbour city.[94] And then they were allowed to forget about St John Ambulance for a spell.

How Sydney could have forgotten its promises to Lady Brassey so readily is mystifying. At her Town Hall meeting, the Sydneysiders had elected a committee to draw up a constitution for the Centre they had agreed to establish. The motion to form the committee was moved by J. E. Salomons, the eminent jurist. (He had once been Chief Justice for a brief ten days, before Sir Frederick Darley's appointment; but had stepped down when one of the other members of the bench, Sir William Windeyer, refused to serve with a Jewish Chief Justice.) Salomons had spoken eloquently of the St John Ambulance movement as

> one which had a common interest for all classes of the community, and it was a movement which would place in the hands of everyone the power to alleviate the sufferings of others . . . Now that we had steam engines in the streets, open viaducts and cuttings, omnibuses and horses, all the complex dangers of civilized life, there was perhaps not an hour of the day that some accident did not happen, and it was therefore desirable that every boy, to say nothing of every man, should be able to render assistance when wanted? (Applause.) . . . The more sternly we addressed ourselves to aid each other in the battle of life, the more we would sweep away the artificial distinctions of society, and bring into play that which would cause the different classes to mix together for the benefit of all. (Applause.)[95]

Twelve of the committee members they elected later joined the leadership of the Centre, which except for a few additions remained more or less as Salomons had proposed. So what did the committee do for the next three years or so? Did they take that long to draw up a constitution and recruit pupils for the first classes? Or had they allowed themselves to be so bedazzled by the *Sunbeam* set that a mood of ennui overpowered them when the first Lady Brassey had left them behind, preventing them from translating all their speechifying into practical reality?

Whatever its reasons for not springing into immediate action, the Sydney committee dithered; and the first annual meeting it eventually staged, in 1891, was a subdued occasion entirely in contrast to the loudly trumpeted meetings that had heralded its formation.

The first practical step towards getting regular and systematic first aid training going in Sydney seems to have been taken by Samuel Knaggs, by now the Staff Surgeon of the Naval Brigade. He, too, was a member of the committee formed at the Town Hall meeting on 15 July 1887. Had he become impatient at the committee's lack of progress? Perhaps he had, for towards the end of 1889 he and a Mrs Hughes called a meeting in the Randwick Town Hall to form a local Randwick branch of the Association. The meeting, on 11 November, subscribed £10 to be forwarded to St John's Gate to have the branch duly registered; and it enrolled thirty women in a class to be taught by Dr Charles P. B. Clubbe of Randwick and to be examined by Knaggs. Mrs C. M. See, a member of the class and wife of a later Premier, Sir John See, became the branch secretary (it does not seem to have had a president) and Mrs Lucy H. Scott became its treasurer. Twenty of the women were examined, and all passed. Ten years later Lucy Scott (who in 1892 was one of three members of the Randwick Branch to receive Sydney's first medallions) recalled that, 'the Sydney Head Centre at that time not being in existence and certificates of competency having been sent out [from London], they were personally presented to the candidates at Government House by Lady Carrington on 29 July 1890'.[96] The branch held two more classes soon after, and continued to be an active sub-centre until about the turn of the century.

But the Randwick branch, however successful, was not the New South Wales Centre. When that finally formed is problematical. The Centre's first annual meeting took place in the Sydney Town Hall on 28 April 1891. If it was not in existence at the end of July 1890 but was having an annual meeting nine months later, it must have got going at some time in the latter part of 1890. The annual report presented at the meeting on 28 April was very brief and was never published, as all subsequent annual reports were. It mentioned nothing of how the Centre had finally been established, nor of when the Centre actually began operations, but simply noted that 'the work of the Association has been extended and its usefulness is beginning to be better understood by the public'.[97] It went on to say that a number of policemen had been trained and that other classes had been formed at Darlinghurst, Waverley, aboard H.M.S. *Dart* in the harbour, at Parramatta, Maclean, Clarence River, Urana, Narrandera and Forbes. The chairman for the annual meeting was P. G. King, M.L.C. Before he moved the adoption of the report, seconded by Mayor Riley, he referred to the Committee's regret at the death of the Centre Secretary, J. R. Street, M.L.A. Perhaps the removal of the secretary from the scene was the reason why the Centre left such a sparse record of its first year.

The only other document surviving from that first year is a list of the Centre's senior members. From the composition of the leadership it is obvious that much careful consideration had gone into planning the Centre. The list of its luminaries so glitters with the names of notables from

the Sydney Establishment that this could have been no hastily improvised Centre. At the head of its hierarchy were Lord and Lady Carrington as patrons. The president was the Chief Justice, Sir Frederick Darley, who was to keep this position for the next eighteen years. There were six Vice-Presidents—the Mayor, A. J. Riley; the Postmaster General, C. J. Roberts; the Commander of the Military Force, Major-General Richardson; the Commander of the Naval Force, Captain Hixson; the Inspector-General of Police, Edmund Fosbery; and J. E. Salomons, Q.C. There was a fifteen-man executive committee, of which Mayor Riley was chairman. Lieutenant-Colonel T. S. Parrott of the Army Engineers, who was to become the foundation Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in New South Wales in 1901, was deputy chairman. The secretary replacing the late J. R. Street was a Captain Preston, and the treasurer was Captain Alfred Broughton.[98]

Most of the ordinary committee members had similar Establishment and military connections. There were eleven of them altogether. Knaggs, who must at times have wondered if a Centre would ever be formed in New South Wales, was a member. So, too, was Major F. Carew Hunt, whom we have already met as the instigator of the Adelaide Centre some six or seven years before. Others were Hanbury Davies, who was to remain on the committee for the next fifty-three years until his death in 1943 and who was to be its chairman 1910-20; Brigadier-Surgeon Williams, the Principal Medical Officer of the Military Force; and Captain Lee of the Naval Force. In addition to Knaggs and Williams there were four other medical men: Dr Vandeleur Kelly, who was to be chairman 1892-1902 and was to be the first from the Australian colonies to become a Knight of Grace of the Order; Dr (later Brigadier-Surgeon) Reuter E. Roth, who was to become chairman 1903-09 and the first Medical Officer in Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade in New South Wales; and Dr T. B. Clune and a Dr Ellis. The president of the Trades and Labour Council was also a member, though he appears to have attended only one meeting of the committee in all the years his name was on the roll. The last member of the committee was perhaps its most distinguished. This was Philip Gidley King, who chaired the first annual meeting of the Centre. King (1817-1904) was the namesake of his grandfather, the third Governor of the colony and was the oldest son of Philip Parker King, the explorer and the first Australian-born admiral. King in later life was a large landowner and pastoralist, company director, president of the Australian Club of Sydney and a member of the Legislative Council from 1880. In his youth he had followed family tradition into the Royal Navy, in which he had served as a midshipman on the *Beagle* during its famous voyage with Charles Darwin, whose lifelong friend he had become. King was also a naval historian of note, publishing a book of commentaries on the logbooks of Captain Cook.[99]

With high-powered leadership like this, there was much to expect of

the new Centre. They could not have disappointed the ordinary Association members, for the gains the Association was soon making in New South Wales showed what could happen when an able, dedicated, well-connected executive of a charitable organization set to their task with a will. Their efforts were most obvious in an amazing spurt of teaching activity in the Centre's second year. Whereas 199 pupils had received instruction and 109 had gained certificates in New South Wales in the ten years to April 1891, in the next year to April 1892 the Centre trained 510 pupils for 293 certificates. The third year 627 pupils trained for 368 certificates. The fourth year, 1893-94, the Centre Committee complained of the way the depression was hampering its work, but there were still 759 pupils and 531 certificates. In the fifth year, 1894-95, when there were 895 pupils, 609 certificates and fifty-five medallions, the Committee reported that its impact 'would have been still more pronounced were it not for the depression which still prevails over the whole of the colony'.[100] The depression, which was so seriously retarding the Adelaide and Victorian Centres, might indeed have been hindering the New South Wales Centre too, but this was not evident in the steadily rising graph of its teaching and examination statistics. And even though 1895 was the worst year of the depression, the Committee could still report that 'in the country districts classes have been formed in many new localities and the advantages of a knowledge of first aid are being extended in nearly all directions'.[101]

There were other signs that the New South Wales Centre was developing lustily. A number of new suburban sub-centres came into existence and, like the first of them—Randwick—were each organizing several classes a year. Petersham was formed next, in November 1891, and by August 1895 it alone had instructed 248 pupils (82 men, 166 women) for 177 certificates (49 men, 128 women) and 21 medallions (5 men, 16 women). Then followed in swift succession the formation by the end of 1895 of sub-centres at the Colonial Sugar Refining Company at Pyrmont, and other sub-centres at Ashfield, Balmain, Newtown, North Sydney, Glebe, Woollahra, Waverley, St George, Scone, Muswellbrook, Warialda, Marrickville, Lismore, Bowral, Woolwich, Young, Hunters Hill, Leichhardt, Darlinghurst, Kiama, Liberty Plains, Redfern Bicycle Club, Armidale, Ryde, Moss Vale, Bingara, Croydon, the Sydney Meat Preserving Company, Gresford and Mosman—all teaching one class after another.[102]

The New South Wales Centre, like the Adelaide and Victorian Centres, put much productive effort into training railwaymen, police and firemen. It made its most spectacular gains, however, by taking ambulance training to Sydney's industrial work-force. The first of the industrial sub-centres was at the Colonial Sugar Refining works at Pyrmont, where the C.S.R. Ambulance Corps formed in early 1893. Then came sub-centres at Goodlett & Smith at Granville, the Sydney Meat

Preserving Company at Auburn, the Mort Dock Engineering Company, Hosking's Engineering Works, the Australian Gaslight Company, Clyde Engineering Works, Dalgety and Company's Wharf, Dixon & Sons Conqueror Tobacco Works, the Fresh Food and Ice Company, the Kauri Timber Company, Hordern's Foundry and Lever Brothers of Balmain. Certificated employees of each of these companies formed themselves into 'ambulance corps' and 'practice classes', and immediately began putting their knowledge to practical use.

The annual reports which the industrial sub-centres submitted to the Sydney 'Head' Centre indicate the value of the practical ambulance skills the workers were acquiring and employing via their ambulance corps. In 1900, for example, the C.S.R. (Pyrmont) Ambulance Corps reported that

> during the year 60 cases have received immediate attention from the members pending medical aid. Since the formation of the Corps 568 cases have been treated, comprising burns, scalds, fractures, wounds, and injuries of all kinds, including many cases of arterial bleeding. Head severely crushed, patient conveyed to Balmain Hospital. Fingers cut off, diver while under water. Treatment—bleeding stopped, wounds dressed, and patient conveyed to Sydney Hospital. Serious case of fracture of the base of the skull—attended by members, and conveyed to Sydney Hospital in the Company's ambulance wagon—man recovered and has since resumed work. Boy run over by electric tram near the works and received compound fracture of the leg. The injury was dressed by the members, who conveyed him to the Sydney Hospital in the ambulance. Severe cut in thigh seven inches long—patient fell in her own premises, and the Secretary of the Corps was asked to attend to the case and did so effectually until the arrival of the medical man on the scene.[103]

The same year Dalgety and Company's Wharf Division made this report:

> The following, after being treated by our Corps, were transmitted to the Hospital by our men in our own litter: crushed foot caused by wagon passing over it; fractured skull, broken nose and injured hip, caused by large door falling on him; fractured skull, sailor fell down hold of a steamer; injury to spine, laborer knocked down by bale of wool in ship's hold; four fractured ribs and lacerated head, sailor fell from upper deck to deck of steamer; officer of steamer had ear cut off and slight concussion through fall down hold of steamer; injury to spine and fractured ribs, drayman fell off wagon on to roadway; fractured ribs, knocked down by sling of cargo; sailor fell off ship's rail, struck wharf and fell into the water, severely cut head and injury to the spine. The following cases were treated first and the patients then went to Hospital to receive further treatment: Severe cut, laying open the hand, caused by barb wire; similar case to previous one; carpenter of ship severely cut his ankle with an axe.[104]

And in 1900, too, Kauri Timber Company Division reported as follows:

> During the past year we have had a number of minor accidents, such as cut fingers etc., but we have also had some fractured limbs to attend to. Injury to lower rib on right side and back, causing fits; crushed fingers, caused through being jammed between punt and wharf piles, which caused amputation of two fingers; broken instep on right foot through falling from wharf to punt; injury

to back through heavy lifting; right forearm fractured through fall of timber; badly cut foot; sailor on ketch in Blackwattle Bay, compound fracture on left leg through sling breaking and falling on legs. We were telephoned to fetch the litter and requisites. The patient was very refractory, and after some difficulty splints were applied to the injured limb and he was removed from the hold of the vessel to shore by our pupils.[105]

The reports of every industrial sub-centre contained similar stories, so it was sensible for industrial workers to take up their St John Ambulance certificates as shields for their mutual protection.

It was not surprising that many of the industrial sub-centres and practice clubs of the Association in Sydney should refer to themselves from the outset as 'ambulance corps'. While practice clubs and corps were springing up in other cities and other colonies, it was in the belt of heavy industry around Sydney's dockside suburbs that the ambulance work of the St John organization took on its modern connotations. Whereas ambulance work elsewhere might signify the quarterly get togethers of social ladies in genteel suburbs for bandaging practice over afternoon tea, in Sydney's dockside suburbs it meant saving the life of the mangled victim of the next industrial accident.

Nor is it surprising that the St John Ambulance Brigade started its Australian career in Sydney first, over a decade before it spread to the other States. The New South Wales Centre made its first attempt to form a unit of the Brigade in 1894. It called a public meeting in the Y.M.C.A. Hall on 8 June that year to stimulate interest in establishing the Brigade in Sydney. Dr Vandeleur Kelly, by now chairman of the Centre, delivered a lecture to the meeting on 'Civil Ambulance Organization', in the course of which he explained the objects of the Brigade as it was then taking shape in Britain. The meeting voted to form a delegation to the Premier, Sir Robert Duff, with a request for government help in purchasing the stretchers that the Brigade would need. The Premier apparently pleaded the depression, and so 'owing to the want of the necessary materials and funds' the plans for the Brigade got no further at that time.[106]

In the end the Brigade came about by other means. It grew not from the lofty ambitions of the upper echelons of the Centre's upper class leadership but from the practical needs of the working class membership; and rather than being imposed from above, it sprang up from below. The St John Ambulance Brigade in Sydney developed out of the ambulance corps and sub-centres of the industrial suburbs. By 1896 the C.S.R. (Pyrmont) sub-centre was calling itself the 'No. 1 City Ambulance Brigade'. It had forty-two members, sixteen of them with St John Ambulance medallions, who in addition to their first aid efforts in their work-place were now offering themselves for voluntary service at public gatherings, where they provided a similar first aid facility to that which later Divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade would supply. The C.S.R. Ambulance Corps even entertained Lord Brassey that year. Now back in

Australia as Governor of Victoria, he visited Sydney aboard the *Sunbeam* in 1896. Brassey, according to the Corps' annual report, 'expressed delight at the visit' they made to meet him, and said how pleased he was at the way the Association's work had multiplied since his last journey through Sydney nine years before.[107] The same year, too, the 'Mort's Dock Ambulance Corps' of twenty-five members set up in business much as the C.S.R. Ambulance Corps had done. Their annual report said they felt much encourged that 'the Board of Directors of the Company have generously promised a donation of six guineas towards the good work'.[108]

In 1897 the Association in Sydney capitalized on the mounting enthusiasm for ambulance work and at the same time took an important step towards the establishment of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Australia by forming a 'Volunteer Medical Staff Corps Reserve' from its certificated pupils. The first eighteen members came from the two C.S.R. sub-centres (Pyrmont and Broadwater). They had to attend at least six parades a year to ensure that their efficiency in first aid was up to scratch, and there was the same emphasis on discipline and drill that would later be part of the Brigade *modus operandi.* By the next year their ranks had swollen to forty-five, and a second detachment was being formed in Newcastle. Part of their function was to provide a civilian back-up for the Military Ambulance Corps, to which end they wore khaki drill uniforms. The Principal Medical Officer of the Military Ambulance Corps inspected them that year and complimented them on 'the highly creditable and efficient manner' in which they went through their stretcher-bearers' drills, and congratulated them from their 'smartness on parade'.[109]

A further move towards the formation of the St John Ambulance Brigade was the 'Union of Ambulancers' which came into being in 1899 with G. H. Robinson, secretary of the C.S.R. Ambulance Corps, as its secretary-treasurer. Whereas the ambulance corps of the industrial companies usually comprised male employees of those firms, the Union was open to anyone, male or female, who was interested in maintaining and extending their medical knowledge and skills. It arranged for medical practitioners to lecture its members on practical medical matters and for their first aiders' skills to be polished under the doctors' guidance. That year, too, a similar organization grew out of the Ashfield sub-centre's practice club. This body called itself the 'Western Suburbs Ambulancers'. It met regularly in the Ashfield Town Hall to discuss first aid problems and to employ its members' knowledge in practical tasks under the supervision of a doctor. From these assorted ambulance organizations it was but a small step to the formation of the St John Ambulance Brigade, which, as the next chapter shows, came about within a couple of years.[110]

The ambulance interests of the New South Wales Centre did not stop

at helping keen first aiders mobilize themselves in ambulance corps and ambulancers' clubs. Like the Victorian Centre in Melbourne, it, too, was actively moving in the direction of setting up a city ambulance service. In only its second annual report, in 1891-92, it was regretting its inability,

> from want of the necessary funds, to establish a most important adjunct to ambulance instruction in the shape of a Metropolitan Ambulance Corps, distributed in detachments of three or four members at stations in the city and suburbs and equipped with the necessary litters and appliances for rendering 'first aid' in street accidents. At these stations it would meet a great public want if one or more wheeled carriages could be provided for the private use of invalids to convey such persons, at their own expense, to or from their own house, instead of being, as now, dependent on that most unsuitable of all vehicles for sick or injured persons, a hansom cab.[111]

The next year, 1892-93, the lament was the same, though the Centre's ambitions were obviously greater:

> Your Centre Committee are still directing their attention to the important question of a city ambulance corps on the lines of those in the great cities of the United States, but to establish this very important branch of the work of the Association more funds are needed. In New York and other large American cities ambulance wagons are available over the whole city area, night or day, and do the most valuable work in cases of street accidents.[112]

As the Victorian Centre was coming to see, so did the the New South Wales Centre begin to think its future was as the provider of the city civil ambulance transport service; and like the Victorian Centre it was starting out to establish the makings of one.

It began by placing Ashford litters and stretchers at key points around Sydney. In 1894-95 it appointed a fund raiser to sell subscriptions in the proposed service for 7/6 each to build up funds sufficiently to purchase the litters and stretchers it needed. He obviously had some success for in a year subscriptions nearly trebled from £16/18/- to £46/8/6. The Committee now began placing Ashford litters (which cost £14 each) at points around town where they would be likely to be used most. The first went outside the Centre's own office in Imperial Arcade; another was stationed at the C.S.R. works at Pyrmont, where a horse ambulance was also available; and stretchers were placed at the Paddington Town Hall, the Fire Station and the Y.M.C.A. By 1900 the Committee had fourteen Ashford litter stations around the city in inner suburbs, a number of them donated by business firms; while the Ballina sub-centre on the far north coast had become the first country sub-centre to have its own Ashford litter.[113] The involvement with ambulance transport did not end with Ashford litters, however; and as the following chapter will show, the Centre would soon be tackling ambulance transport work as that term is now understood.

The New South Wales Centre was in many ways the most successful colonial Centre of the Association to this date. Its expansion was more spectacular than anywhere else in the colonies; the network of sub-

centres it threw out across the colony covered a broader sweep of territory than elsewhere; the enthusiasm it was arousing for its cause was more widespread; and though it had given the other Centres a head start, it was rapidly overtaking them in every direction, while the initiatives it was taking would provide the St John Ambulance organizations with the bearings they would follow throughout Australia in the first two or three decades of the twentieth century.

Why had such a late starter been able to outstrip the rest of the field so easily? It was partly to do with the economic factors that made the depression so severe in Victoria, forcing many Victorians to emigrate to other colonies, thus allowing Sydney and New South Wales to resume their earlier eminence as premier city and colony. New South Wales had also become *the* industrial colony. Its mines and its great port were in the process of spawning the country's largest concentration of industrial workers in what was becoming the biggest and busiest city. In such a place and among such people accidents are common, and that gave St John Ambualnce greater scope than elsewhere.

The success of the New South Wales Centre also had something to do with the people running it. By one of those twists of good fortune, exactly the right combination of practical idealists, humanitarians, dedicated toilers, ambitious promoters and well connected public figures came together in an organization whose ethic inspired them all and whose activities provided them with a fulfilling outlet for their energies. Perhaps a populous territory and a big city increase the chances of such people coming together in the same body. That might be why St John Ambulance was more successful in New South Wales and Victoria than in Tasmania and Queensland. Yet, as we observed in the case of the Adelaide Centre, perhaps the success of St John Ambulance in New South Wales also arose from the paradoxical social 'mix' it drew together. Its patrician head and proletarian feet made it a strange beast; but therein lay its strength, for in the colonies where it took that form it grew the more vigorously, whereas in colonies where it assumed some other shape it languished. St John Ambulance work was an activity in which people from all backgrounds would find satisfaction, for as Francis Duncan, the Association's first Director at St John's Gate, had once pointed out,

> The true Hospitaller spirit knows nothing of nation, party, or creed, nor asks questions as to antecedents or aims, when brought face to face with the pain it seeks to relieve.[114]

In the colonies where it succeeded the St John Ambulance organization somehow managed to give expression to that ideal, bringing under its banner both the high and the mighty and the lowly and the humble to further its charitable cause in harmony together.

(f) *The Western Australian Centre*

The Western Australian Centre of the St John Ambulance Association was the last of the colonial Branches of the organizations to be established. Like those in the other smaller colonies it was to experience mixed fortunes before it found itself securely established.

The latest of Centres seems to have come about through the efforts of an immigrant from Adelaide, Mathieson Henry Jacoby, who arrived in Perth aged only twenty-two in 1891, the year he began moves to open the Association in Perth. He had already gained a first aid certificate in Adelaide and later added to that one of the first certificates awarded in Perth. Jacoby started off in Perth as a commercial agent, representing various Adelaide firms in Perth, but in 1893 he moved out into the hills about twenty-six kilometres east of the city to become a viticulturalist in the Mundaring area. He later entered parliament, of which he was the Speaker 1904-05.[115]

Jacoby apparently wrote to St John's Gate about the possibility of beginning a Perth branch of the Association, for he received authority in a letter from the Chief Secretary dated 17 November 1891 to proceed to form one. He then contacted a group of about eight Perth doctors, the commissioners for the police and the railways, and the commandant of the local military force to invite them to form a committee to constitute the Perth Centre. One of the doctors he got in touch with, Dr George F. McWilliams, was to become the leading medical figure in the early Western Australian St John Ambulance organizations. McWilliams was born in Geelong in 1865 and graduated in Medicine from the University of Melbourne in 1888, which means that he was probably a former student of James Neild, the founder of the Victorian Centre. He also seems to have been the first of the Australian-born and Australian-trained medicos to become prominent in St John Ambulance: as we have seen, nearly all of the others were Scots, Irish or English graduates from British medical schools. After graduating McWilliams had worked in the pearling industry of northern Western Australia, and then as a stockman in the country behind Wyndham. He had then ridden on horseback the 3600 kilometres down to Perth, where he settled and began work as the out-patient physician in the Perth Public Hospital. At the hospital he organized a welfare service for sick children of poor families. He was also an active sportsman: he was president and a leading competitor of the Perth Cycling Club, and honorary surgeon to the Western Australian Turf Club. Later on he entered the lower house of parliament; he went to South Africa as a captain in the Western Australian Volunteer Force during the Boer War; he became the first Commissioner of the Western Australian Branch of the St John Ambulance Brigade when that formed in 1904; and shortly before he died aged forty-two in 1907 he became the State's first Knight of St John.[116]

The medicos and public officials Jacoby called together met for the

first time as a committee on Tuesday 15 March 1892 in the Military Office, Perth. (Even before they met the first class of the new Centre had been enrolled, by 3 March 1892, and McWilliams had given the first lecture. In the class were twenty policemen, ten railwaymen and two ordinary citizens.) The committee consisted of Jacoby; McWilliams; the police commissioner, Major G. Phillips; the chief of staff of the Military Force, Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. Campbell, who had arrived in the colony six years before aged forty-two after service in the Indian Mutiny and the Egyptian campaigns of 1882; J. Davies, the traffic manager of the railways; and seven medical practitioners apart from McWilliams—Drs Sloman, Harvey, Kelsall, Jamieson, Kenny, Harston and O'Connor. The meeting elected Jacoby as secretary, Dr Jamieson as chairman, and Campbell as treasurer; it received letters of congratulations from the Adelaide and Victorian Centres; and it heard a report from Jacoby on the class McWilliams had begun teaching. Moving on to other business, it then decided to form a women's class to be taught by Dr Harvey; it resolved to approach the Governor, Sir William Robinson (who as Governor of South Australia had already chaired the inaugural meeting of the Adelaide Centre) to ask him to become patron; it decided to ask the Premier, Sir John Forrest, to become its president but he declined, and so Sir Alexander Onslow, the Chief Justice and sometime Administrator of the colony, became president instead; and it appointed Jamieson, Jacoby and Campbell to form a sub-committee to draw up a constitution.[117]

The committee held two more meetings that year, 1892. It conducted several more classes, for both men and women, in Perth and Fremantle. It appointed Phillips as Deputy Chairman. It arranged with the railways commissioner for certificated railwaymen to wear St John Ambulance badges on their uniforms. It produced an 'annual' report for the Centre in August 1892. Then it fell into abeyance for six years.[118]

The committee seems to have met the fate that often overtakes small voluntary organizations when their leading figures retire from the scene. What seems to have happened in this particular case was that Jacoby withdrew to concentrate upon his new viticultural interests at Mundaring; the secretary appointed in his place seems to have lacked his dedication and ability; the depression was keeping prospective students away; and, as a later annual report noted, 'the management became lax'.[119] Evidence for the last point was the fact that 'a large quantity of valuable stores had gone astray of which no trace could be got, . . . some accounts [went] unpaid and . . . very little cash [was] in hand'.[120]

The Centre eventually revived itself in August 1898 after three interested people—Jacoby, Dr Herbert Horrocks and Dorothy Durlacher, a pupil from the first Perth women's class and the first person in Western Australia to gain the medallion—met together to consider its revitalization. They 'decided to recommence the work of the Association at once'.

They 'resolved to communicate with the principal residents with a view to electing from their number a Council to control the affairs of the Centre'. They also decided 'to communicate with the late secretary asking him to furnish the Council with information as to the disposal of certain stores held by him during his term of office'.[121] A further meeting, which Campbell, the previous treasurer, also attended, revealed that the Centre had £2/7/10 in the bank, and seemed to be owing more than £30. (The figure was later found to be £51/8/6, an amount perhaps two or three times the revenue of 1891-92.) They decided to write to St John's Gate for help in paying the debts, but do not appear to have received any assistance from that quarter. They also decided to write to certain 'influential ladies' to ask them to join the committee; to print pamphlets for public distribution advising that the Centre had opened up again; to contact doctors on the Kalgoorlie-Boulder goldfields to seek their help in getting sub-centres going there; and to call a public meeting to elect new office bearers.[122]

The new committee, or Council as it now called itself, got going in June 1899, this time with McWilliams as chairman and J. W. Lynch as secretary. At its first meeting, on 14 June, there was a minor dispute between McWilliams and Lynch over efforts to track down the missing stretchers and hampers of medical supplies. Lynch had gone to the police asking them to recover its property. When the police advised McWilliams they were issuing a warrant for the former secretaries' arrest, McWilliams said the Council would not lay charges but simply wanted back its minute book and missing stores.[123]

Having regrouped, the Council now got down to business in earnest. The new Governor, Sir Gerald Smith, agreed to be patron; Sir Alexander Onslow, became president again; the two bishops of Perth, C. O. L. Riley (Anglican) and Matthew Gibney (Roman Catholic), became Vice-Presidents; McWilliams and Lynch remained respectively chairman and secretary; Dr C. Coventry became deputy chairman; and Campbell again became treasurer. It secured a grant of £50 from the Premier, Forrest, for instructing the police, then it began recruiting and teaching classes again. It was rather disappointed to discover that during the six-year hiatus of the Centre it had lost one major source of students: the railways commissioner had formed a railways ambulance corps which was teaching railwaymen first aid for the railways department's internal certificate. But other sources of students had opened up in the meantime, and so the Centre was able to establish sub-centres at Kalgoorlie and Boulder in 1899 to bring its instruction to the mining communities there.[124]

By the turn of the century the Western Australian Centre had succeeded in re-establishing itself. It was still operating in only a very small way, for in the period since its rebirth it had taught only forty-five pupils (15 men, 30 women) for thirty-six certificates (11 men, 25 women); but its

chances now seemed a little brighter. Its 'annual' report for 1900, which covered its entire twelve-year record to date, noted that 'the revival of interest in the useful work of the Association which had taken place is satisfactory, and given that sympathy and support from the public so very desirable, in every way togather with the loyal assistance from members, the immediate prospect if promising'.[125]

Perhaps a sign of the renewed confidence was the Centre's first public annual meeting, held on 5 July 1900 in the Mechanics' Institute Hall, Perth. This occasion was an evening of rather mixed business. It opened with a Mrs Payne singing an 'overture' of Gottshalk's *Pasquinade*, followed by the reading of the annual report of the balance sheet, the latter revealing that the Centre's debts had now been reduced to £42/6/-. Then came the election of Council members, which resulted in Dr Coventry replacing McWilliams as chairman. The address and presentation of the thirty-six certificates to successful examination candidates were by Archbishop Riley, who got a laugh from the audience by saying he would not mind being looked after by the women graduating from the Association's home nursing courses. There were a few more songs, an exhibition of bandaging and wound dressing by graduates from the women's classes, and then one of the high points of the evening came when Superintendent J. M. Lapsley of the Perth Fire Brigade (a member of Council who would be its chairman 1916-25, and one of the first men in Western Australia to gain the medallion) 'gave a most entertaining series of selections on the gramaphone'.[126] Then, as if all these diversions were not enough, the meeting decided to hold a ball in the near future. The latter turned out to be a huge success. It grossed £130/3/-, which after covering its own costs left a handy sum of £63/15/4 that together with £25/6/- of 'concessions from creditors on old liabilities brought forward from the previous council' helped prise the Centre from the financial bog the earlier committee had left it in.[127]

The Western Australian Centre was now poised for a period of sustained growth which in 1904 would see it found Australia's second branch of the St John Ambulance Brigade and which by 1908, a decade after its resuscitation, would see it teaching more than 300 pupils annually and certificating over 180. By then it would have instructed a total of 2126 pupils for 1207 certificates, or about one in every eighty-three of the State's population, which meant that a modicum of useful medical skill was spreading among the far-flung people of the country's western third. Though these figures were small by comparison with the impressive tallies the older and larger Centre were then piling up, they signified that the Association in Western Australia was by then permanently in business. Perhaps no one could have foretold it at the time, but St John Ambulance was now on its way to becoming one of the key institutions in the State's structure of medical and health services.[128]

St John Ambulance in colonial Western Australia had made a shaky

start. The earlier phase of its development had shown that great charities cannot survive on their reputation alone. Unless they have able, dedicated and honest leaders they run a risk of discrediting themselves among the people they wish to serve. The depression of the mid-90s had hindered the Western Australian Centre, as it had the St John organizations in the other colonies, but the leadership of the day also let the organization down. Fortunately the second time round the Centre brought together people who learnt from its mistakes and had the fortitude to make good the earlier losses, thus helping it towards the honourable place it has occupied in Western Australian Society ever since.

As the old century turned into the new, it was not only in Western Australia that St John Ambulance was now a respected social institution. In most of the other colonies, too, people now identified first aid, resuscitation and ambulance work generally with the name of the organization. Indeed when many Australians thought of ambulances they were probably thinking of St John. Even though the St John Ambulance Brigade with its soon-to-be-familiar uniforms had not yet been formally established in Australia, enough people had now been trained throughout the colonies to make St John an Australian byword for emergency medical treatment.

Through the efforts of innumerable dedicated committee members, fund raisers, lecturers and examiners, certificated members of practice classes and ambulance corps, and organisers of local sub-centres, first aid and nursing knowledge was spreading around the community. The St John Ambulance organizations were annually training about one in every 1700 of the country's people. Though this might have been but a drop in a large bucket by comparison with later rates of training—in 1981 the figure was one in every 194 of the national population—it did mean that there were skills and confidence where these had been absent before. A speaker at one of the public meetings called by Annie Brassey had had that knowledge and that assuredness in mind when he had said,

> the importance of ambulance instruction could not be over-estimated, particularly in a country like this, where families were frequently settled many miles from medical assistance. He knew an estimable lady, who, when an accident happened, could only put her fingers into her ears and scream. He knew another who could only go into hysterics, and thus require much of the attention that should have been devoted to the sufferer.[129]

Hopefully, as a result of St John Ambulance training in the intervening years, there were more people in Australia who could be relied on in an emergency to act calmly and effectively to minimize the suffering of some injured person, and possibly save a life. At the same time there were, perhaps, fewer who would have hysterics or stand by uselessly wringing hands as the life ebbed from somebody that might have been saved with a little knowledge and training.

5

From Federation till the First World War

St John Ambulance in Australia entered the twentieth century securely established in all the colonies except Queensland and Tasmania. Even in the latter tardy extremities of the new nation-continent it would be well set up by the time war came some fifteen years into the new century, for this was to be a period of expansion and consolidation to gratify the founders of the ambulance movement both in Australia and in Britain. Indeed, Australia, after New Zealand, had proved to be the healthiest of all the colonial transplantings of the St John Ambulance movement; and by some yardsticks the movement in Australasia was even more productive than that in Britain. Thus, up to 1908, the first year in which comprehensive comparative figures became available, the St John Ambulance Association had trained some 330,270 of the British population of forty-two million, or—using a rough index—one for every 127 people in Britain, that is a ratio of 1:127. In New Zealand the ratio was 1:52, in Australia 1:107, in South Africa 1:859, and in Canada 1:2478. Taking another more refined measure, the number of certificates awarded in 1908; Britain produced 19,485 certificates, one for every 2155 of the population, a ratio of 1:2155. In New Zealand the ratio was 1:921, in Australia 1:2340, in South Africa 1:13,157, and in Canada 1:38,970.[1] For a population of four million thinly spread across a continent-sized area, with the main settlements far apart, the Australian figures represented a highly satisfactory accomplishment.

Other evidence for the vigour of the St John Ambulance organizations in Australia as the movement entered the new century was the enthusiasm with which the most successful of the colonial branches, the New South Wales Centre, threw itself into what was up till that time the biggest test of the ambulance movement—the Boer War. As the detachments of New South Wales troops left for South Africa they knew they had the warm support of at least one community organization, for the Association in New South Wales leapt to assist them in whatever way it could.

The New South Wales Centre proudly gave leave to four members of its executive committee to go to the Boer War. The Chairman, Dr Vandeleur Kelly, went as a lieutenant-colonel in the New South Wales

Army Medical Corps; the deputy chairman, Lt.-Col. T. S. Parrott, a career army officer, also left for South Africa; and two of the medical practitioners on the committee, Major T. H. Fiaschi and Captain (later Brigadier-General) Reuter E. Roth, also went in the Medical Corps. Six members of Association sub-centres joined the Medical Corps; in addition 'many of the police and others who volunteered and were accepted by the military authorities had received their first aid training from the Association'. This was, in the opinion of the Centre, 'illustration of the usefulness of the Ambulance Department of the Order in war time'.[2]

More than 16,000 troops left Australia for the war. Back in Sydney the New South Wales Centre enthusiastically rallied its own 'troops' to support them. Three prominent female members of the Association—Anne Greenway (the Centre secretary), Louise Woolcott (secretary of the North Sydney sub-centre) and Flora Read (later Lady Superintendent of the New South Wales St John Ambulance Brigade)—organized the collection and despatch to the Bushmen's Contingent of sixteen large crates of hospital supplies and 'comforts', ranging from ninety-nine tins of jam to fourteen bottles of eau de cologne and 500 copies of Surgeon-Major Shepherd's First Aid cards. The North Sydney sub-centre sent a further eight cases to the New South Wales Army Medical Corps containing, among other items, 180 dozen bandages, 180 pounds of tea, 7000 envelopes and twelve pairs of knitted socks.[3]

The Boer War gave the Order of St John its first opportunity to test on a large scale the efficacy of the medical procedures and training its two foundations, the Association and the Brigade, had developed over the preceding quarter century. In the opinion of one leading member of the New South Wales Centre, Dr G. Lane Mullins, the St John Ambulance organizations passed the test with honours. Mullins, who in 1902 became the editor of the Centre's short-lived news magazine, *The St. John Ambulance Gazette*, and who in 1903 became Commissioner of the N.S.W. District of the Brigade, sermonized along these lines in one of his earlier editorials in the *Gazette*:

> The Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England may well feel proud of the work now being done by its members throughout the world . . . But the greatest glory of our Association is the noble work carried out on the battle fields of South Africa during the recent war. Large numbers of certificated members joined the various regiments and corps, and rendered excellent service to their comrades. But beyond these, no less than 2046 members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade in England accepted service, of whom 66 lost their lives.[4]

Though no separate detachments of St John personnel went to the war from Australia, as they did from Britain, the colonial troops who had received training via the Australian branches of the Association presumably found their first aid knowledge useful. Among the 1400 Australian casualties, 500 of whom died, there would have been ample

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opportunity to practise ambulance skills. For the clinically curious there were intriguing observations to be made on the effects of different weapons, for, as one surgeon reported to the Association 'Head' Centre in London,

> the entrace orifice of the bullets of the [Lee-Metford gun] was exceedingly small, and, few of the larger vessels having been divided, the hemorrhage was in consequence slight, the wound closing almost immediately upon itself. The exit was about the size of the entrance, and in all cases much smaller than that made by the Martini . . . The wounds inflicted by the Martini were of a much more serious nature—larger, jagged, slow healing, with bad entrances and worse exits . . .[5]

This was modern warfare, the suffering from which the Association had partly come into being to alleviate. Though none of the Australian first aiders at the war left a record of their experiences to tell us how useful their knowledge proved, Mullins' enthusiasm suggests that they were probably pleased with what the Association had taught them.

But however valuable the Boer War might have been as a training exercise for the British St John Ambulance organization, for the Australian organizations it was of peripheral concern. Only the New South Wales Centre took the war up as a cause, for it never rated a mention in any of the annual reports of any of the other Australian Centres. The annual reports of the colonial Centres were, by and large, their news magazines; and so amidst the trivia that was the normal fare of the annual reports there would surely have been some mention of the war if they had espoused it like the New South Wales Centre did. For the Australian colonial St John organizations the most immediate concern was with ensuring that the public continued to enrol in their courses and, that goal having been reached, with organizing the graduating pupils into some useful civil defence and ambulance transport body. This in turn meant introducing the St John Ambulance Brigade into Australia.

1 *The foundation of the St John Ambulance Brigade in New South Wales*

In Sydney, as we have seen, the industrial sub-centres, practice classes and ambulancers' unions of the New South Wales Centre of the St John Ambulance Association had begun operating as ambulance corps from the mid-1890s. In offering their services voluntarily to their local communities, and in turning up at public gatherings to do first aid duty, they were operating very much like the Divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade then forming in Britain. Their formal organization within the Brigade structure and under Brigade regulations and discipline was therefore but a small step. The Association seems to have taken this step in Sydney in late 1900 because of a series of events due to occur in the first half of the coming year. These were the celebrations for the in-

auguration of the Commonwealth of Australia in January, the royal visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George V and Queen Mary) in May, and the Young People's Industrial Exhibition in June. All three events meant the large crowds would be congregating, necessitating the mobilization of a large force of ambulancers.

The New South Wales Centre seems to have made its move to set up the Brigade because of an invitation it received from the Principal Medical Officer of the New South Wales Military Force, who had responsibility for planning the first aid arrangements for the Federation Day festivities. He asked the Centre if it could supply organized teams of first aiders from among its certificated pupils, who would be on duty at the ambulance stations along the route the public procession would take on 1 January 1901. The Association recruited 160 male and female volunteers from its sub-centres, and they were duly posted along the streets of Sydney where the procession was to pass. The procession produced one of the biggest and most jubilant crowds any of the colonies had yet seen. The first aiders were therefore kept busy: at each of their ambulance stations they treated twenty or thirty cases,

> principally sunstroke, fainting, hysteria and exhaustion. Although no serious cases of accident or illness were reported, many persons received efficient aid, and were detained at the Stations until sufficiently recovered to go to their homes – failing this they were conveyed in the ambulance to the hospital. The day was intensely hot and trying, and water or ice was carried by the Ambulancers to some hundreds of persons, including a number who were on duty for many hours.[6]

The Centre arranged a similar public duty for its first aid teams when the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York rode through the streets of Sydney on 28 May 1901, after having opened the federal parliament in Melbourne. This was an occasion at which they felt particularly proud to be present, for the Duke was the Grand Prior of their Order. They staffed six stations along his route, and patrolled between the stations. Again, they had to treat 'a large number of cases of fainting, hysteria, collapse etc.'[7] Then from 2 June at the Young People's Industrial Exhibition teams of volunteer first aiders from the Balmain, Western Suburbs and Glebe sub-centres worked under the direction of Flora Read (the secretary of the Balmain sub-centre), taking turns over successive days to be in attendance at the ambulance station.[8]

These were all officially Association endeavours, but when the annual report for 1901 appeared in September they were written up as 'Brigade Work' under the heading 'St. John Ambulance Brigade', the officers of which were then listed – Lt.-Col. T. S. Parrott, Commissioner; Major R. E. Roth, Medical Officer in Chief; Major J. H. A. Lee, Deputy Commissioner; and Captain G. Lane Mullins, Chief Superintendent. The report also included a note to the effect that the work of the former practice classes would be 'taken up by Divisions of the Brigade which are now for-

ming, and under the direction of the Brigade Officers will be carried out more systematically and with increased vigour'.[9] At some point between June and September 1901 the Brigade had come into being. At what precise time and at whose initiative are not known. The New South Wales Centre of the Association has left no record of the birth date of the Brigade it spawned, but it did acknowledge that the transition from its sub-centres and practice classes was a signal progenitive act, for its annual report guessed that 'the most important work of the year is the establishment of the St. John Ambulance Brigade for the State of New South Wales'.[10]

Not all Association sub-centres were pleased with the move. Dr T. Storie Dixson, who came into the Brigade in 1903 as Deputy Commissioner after the foundation Commissioner, Parrott, had retired to South Africa and Lane Mullins had moved up to the position of Commissioner, outlined the problem here in a short history of the Australian branch of the Brigade he wrote fifteen years later:

> In England the task of forming the Brigade was relatively easy, for the soldier was a familiar and respected man, expenses were perhaps eased by titled and wealthy people, and by organizations contributing funds; but to the intensely democratic Australian with his feeling of independence, the proposition was not so simple, organization means restriction of individual action . . . A very few here who had to wear uniform, whether in daily life, or as military volunteers, naturally were enthusiastic to have one, and could not understand why many, the vast majority, should be intensely opposed to doing so; this opposition was backed up by reluctance to spend money on something they considered as savouring of servitude or affectation. Further, the keeping of written forms was looked upon as military red tape . . .[11]

One of the fears first aiders had was that to wear a uniform and to be organized into a 'Brigade' with a rank structure paralleling that of the army meant running the risk of military conscription. So the Centre had to 'sell' the idea of becoming Divisions of the Brigade to the Association sub-centres. Thus, for example, even before Storie Dixson joined the Brigade he attended a meeting of the Balmain sub-centre, then among the biggest and most successful, to explain that 'no compulsory military obligation existed if members joined the Brigade'.[12]

The proselytizing on behalf of the Brigade continued throughout 1901, 1902 and into 1903. Mullins and Storie Dixson went from sub-centre to sub-centre throughout New South Wales promoting the idea of the Brigade and laying the ghost that 'Brigade membership implied compulsory military service'.[13] Mullins, through *The St. John Ambulance Gazette*, was also doing his fair share to educate wary Association members in the bona fides of the Brigade. There was a need for both Association and Brigade, and he pointed out the necessary distinction between them:

> The Association provides instruction, and grants certificates of proficiency in First Aid, etc., to the individual, but does not undertake the organization of

> its certificate holders for the benefit of the public, and, having no hold on the individual after a certificate has been gained, does not guarantee the maintenance of efficiency; on the other hand, the main object of the Brigade is to organise certificate holders to train them to render First Aid to the public on public occasions and membership of the Brigade implies continued efficiency.[14]

The discipline of the Brigade was necessary not for the mere sake of regimentation but to maintain a high level of efficiency in serving the public; the uniforms allowed the public to recognise St John Ambulance personnel instantly, and were thus an aid to efficiency; and the hierarchy of ranks, too, facilitated efficient public service by providing a clear chain of command.

One by one the sub-centres, practice classes and ambulance corps reconstituted themselves as Divisions of the Brigade. The first to do so was Glebe Branch of the Association. Two Divisions from among its membership registered with the Brigade on 20 March 1903, one an 'Ambulance' (that is a men's) Division, the other a 'Nursing' (that is a women's) Division. (In the same way that the Association had always insisted on separate classes for men and women—'Modesty forbids!' said Storie Dixson in 1922 when the possibility of mixed classes was being canvassed[15]—the Brigade deemed it appropriate for the sexes to work in separate Divisions.) The next to be registered was the short lived Dixson's Tobacco Factory Division in Newtown on 25 March 1903. Then came Western Suburbs on 9 September, Sydney Gasworks on 21 Setpember, and Mort's Dock on 23 September 1903.[16]

As encouragement for a sense of *esprit de corps* within Divisions and throughout the Brigade, the New South Wales 'Corps' of the Brigade (the now familiar term 'District' came into usage only in 1903, with the official registration of Divisions) conducted an annual first aid competition. It began this in 1902, with the prize being a silver trophy—the Roth Challenge Shield—donated by the Brigade's Chief Medical Officer. First aid competitions, in which the rival teams treat simulated accident cases and receive point scores for the efficiency with which they do so, have remained an integral part of the Brigade life in Australia ever since, and are considered a necessary aspect of the maintaining ambulance skills. The team from Glebe—not yet formally registered as a Division—won the Roth Shield in the first year of the competition and twice more over the next four years.[17]

Despite the carrot of first aid competitions, and notwithstanding the preaching of Lane Mullins, Storie Dixson and others, some Association sub-centres refused to be organized and regulated along Brigade lines. The industrial sub-centres in particular proved the most resistant to Brigade blandishments. As late as 1907 some of the oldest of the Association's industrial sub-centres were still outside the Brigade: the Australian Gaslight Company, the Lithgow coalfields sub-centre, and the Clyde Engineering Works steadfastly remained Association sub-centres rather

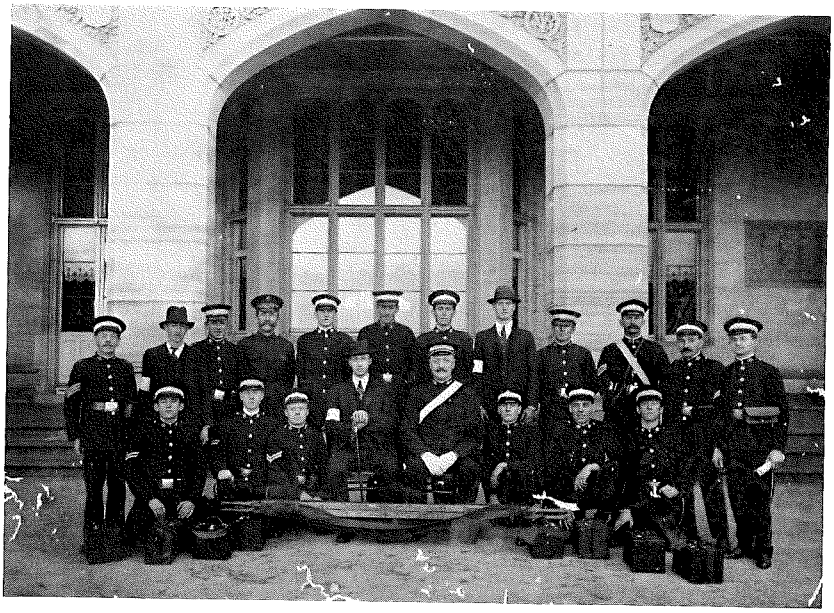
than submit to what they saw as regimentation within the Brigade. Other old branches of the Association—Colonial Sugar Refineries, Kauri Timber, Dalgety and Company, Sydney Meat Preserving Company, Fresh Food and Ice Company—disappeared or became inactive, either because their members would not join the Brigade, or organized themselves in a body independent of St John Ambulance, or affiliated with already established Brigade Divisions, or sought an outlet for their interests in ambulance transport work with the Civil Ambulance and Transport Brigade—a rival organization.[18]

The loss of so much of its earlier sphere of influence within the industrial suburbs of Sydney was unfortunate for St John Ambulance in New South Wales because it meant that it had alienated itself from the population it could do most to help—the industrial workers. The leading figures in the Brigade were able to rationalize to themselves the sharply declining enthusiasm among members of the industrial sub-centres once the Brigade appeared on the scene to make its takeover bids for these bodies. It was Storie Dixson who claimed that,

> in a hot climate such as ours . . . it is very hard to keep up enthusiasm in an Industrial Division of the Brigade; for, after a day's work, the men having to go several miles home are little inclined to come back to the factory where they work, especially seeing that the traffic service at night is small compared with that in the day.[19]

But these were not the only reasons why units which had functioned satisfactorily as Association sub-centres did not survive in the garb of the Brigade. Among others was the fact that to many industrial workers the Brigade epitomized a distasteful military ethic. To them the Brigade looked suspiciously like a paramilitary body, despite the disclaimers of advocates like Storie Dixson. With a leadership which proudly sported its military pre- and post-nominals—Lt.-Col. Parrott, V.D., Maj. R. E. Roth, D.S.O., Capt. G. Lane Mullins, A.A.M.C., and so on—and organized as a 'Corps' whose officers wore army-like insignia of rank, the Brigade seemed suffused with militarism. Keeping up first aid skills so as to be useful on the factory floor was one matter; but being regimented was another, an unacceptable thing for many workers. No amount of persuasion could convince them otherwise; and so the industrial sub-centres soon became the fossils in the evolution of the Brigade in New South Wales.[20]

Three years after its formation in New South Wales, the St John Ambulance Brigade took one of its most venturesome steps ever when it amalgamated with the Civil Ambulance and Transport Brigade of Sydney, which agreed to join it as a separate Corps in 1904. The C.A.T.B. dated from 1895. It was essentially an ambulance transport organization specializing in removing patients to hospital. In 1904 it had five bases—in the city on the corner of George and Pitt Sts., at Circular Quay, Balmain, Newtown and Rockdale. It maintained a permanent



34 A section of the Glebe (Sydney) Division of St John Ambulance Brigade—Australia's first and oldest—at the annual inspection, Government House, 1914-15

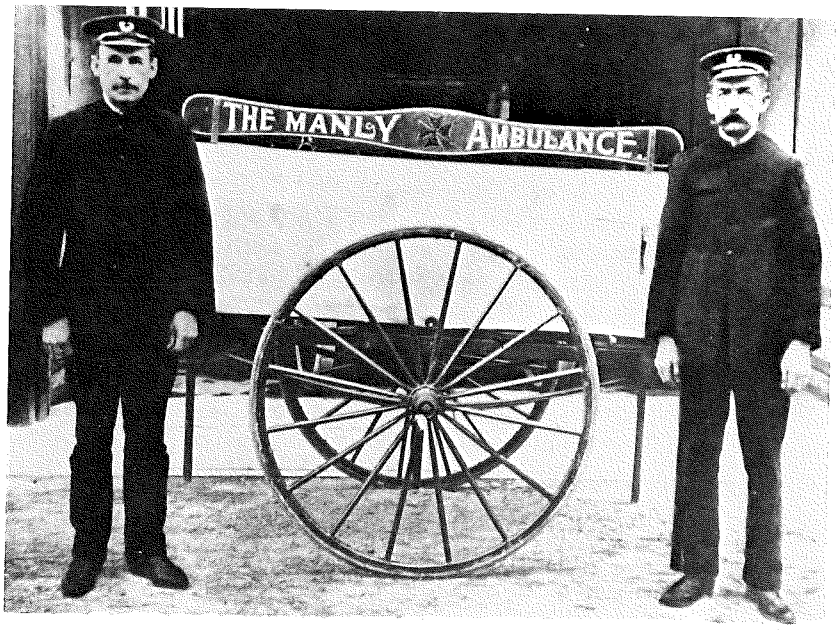
staff of ten in addition to a group of part time volunteers; it had two horse-drawn ambulances and eight ambulance litters; and it was funded by public subscriptions. About a third of its work came from doctors requiring transport of their patients; calls to street accidents and from government agencies (police, railways, tramways) the wharves and factories accounted for another third; and a large proportion of the rest was made up of the duties the St John Ambulance Brigade existed to perform, that is on-the-spot first aid and patient care at sports grounds, public gatherings and processions. The C.A.T.B.'s work had increased steadily over the preceding decade, and by 1904 it was transporting some 2700 cases a year, in the course of which it was travelling over 16,000 kilometres. But in addition to ambulance transport it was beginning to move in on what the New South Wales Centre of the St John Ambulance Association regarded as its exclusive domain—public first aid teaching. As early as 1900 it was running two women's classes and eight men's classes, and presenting the graduates with certificates. Ambulance training and ambulance transport have always been activities in which rival organizations do not readily co-exist. This was to be the case with the S.J.A.B. and the C.A.T.B. in Sydney. Amalgamation was one way round this problem, but as we shall see, it was not a satisfactory solution.[21]

Once the principle of disciplined voluntary first aid duty at public

gatherings under the St John Ambulance Brigade code of regulations became accepted among first aiders, the number of Divisions slowly increased. By September 1912 the New South Wales District (as regions of the Brigade are termed) comprised fourteen Ambulance (men's) Divisions including the four belonging to the Civil Ambulance and Transport Corps (Headquarters, Balmain, Newtown, Rockdale), and six Nursing (women's) Division including two of the C.A.T.C. (Headquarters and Newtown). The non-C.A.T.C. Ambulance Divisions were Glebe (registered 1903), Western Suburbs (1903), Wollongong (1905), Harbour Trust (1906), Water and Sewerage Department (1906), Vaucluse (1908), Randwick (1909), Commonwealth Portland Cement Company (1910), Paddington and Woollahra (1911), and Dulwich Hill (1911). The non-C.A.T.C. Nursing Divisions were Glebe (1903), Vaucluse (1908), Gladesville (1910), and Western Suburbs (1910). In addition the District claimed a Y.M.C.A. Division formed in Hobart in 1908, which had been operating under its aegis. The total District strength was 216 men (63 of them in the C.A.T.C.) and 120 women (54 C.A.T.C.). On average they met for 'drill' thirty times a year, or slightly more than once a fortnight; and on voluntary public duty that year, 1912, they treated 1907 cases (1725 by the men's and 182 by the women's Divisions).[22]

In addition to these successful Divisions there were three short-lived ones which had already lapsed. Lithgow, formed in 1905, had become inactive by 1911 and was thereafter no longer included in the annual reports. Similarly Cootamundra (1907-11) and Carlton (1910-11) were now out of action. Divisions of the Brigade, of course, were not immune from the problems faced by other small-scale voluntary associations. Like them they were always subject to change: they might form, lapse, revive, prosper, decline, or become defunct. The departure or death of a vital member or two, lack of an adequate meeting place, internal bickering and personality clashes, cliquishness and coldness towards newcomers, poor leadership, fractiousness within the ranks, an unimaginative approach to duties, lack of enterprise in pursuing new challenges, failure to attract and retain new members, financial difficulties, disagreements with District headquarters, a too-rigid adherence to the letter of the regulations rather than to their spirit, diminished enthusiasm and a waning commitment to ambulancing—all either singly or in combination could inflict wounds that might bleed a Division to death in a short space of time. Just as quickly Divisions could spring back to life again as new and more committed members, better leaders, improved financial circumstances and new challenges appeared. Divisions came and went, divided and amalgamated, stayed put or moved from place to place as their own situation changed and as external events—shifts in population, national emergencies, economic prosperity or depression—altered their milieu.

The year 1911-1912 was in many respects a special one for the New



35 A. W. Wilkinson and J. Ellison (right), of the Paddington-Woollahra Division of St John Ambulance Brigade, operators of Manly's first ambulance, 1903

South Wales District. The struggle for public acceptance seems to have been won, and perhaps the Brigade had at last convinced the public through its good works that it was not an agent for military conscription. The Commissioner, now Storie Dixson, was able to report to his superior, the Chief Commissioner for the Brigade Overseas at St John's Gate (Major-General J. C. Dalton of the Royal Artillery, Knight of Justice of the Order) in these terms:

> It appears to me that in no year since the foundation of the Brigade work in this State, have we been favoured with circumstances so unique or so likely to be productive of important developments in the near future, as those which have arisen during the year just ended.[23]

In June 1911 the former Duke of Cornwall and York was crowned as George V, and the Sydney celebrations of that event provided the Brigade with public duties much like those which had helped bring it into being ten years before, when the new King had visited Sydney after opening federal parliament. 'Enthusiasm continues to be shown in the work of the Brigade', the annual report noted, 'and during the coronation festivities many of the members of the Ambulance and Nursing Divisions responded readily for service in the public thoroughfares and rendered first aid in numerous instances'.[24] That year, too, the Brigade held its sixth annual three-day training camp at La Perouse. The camps were the

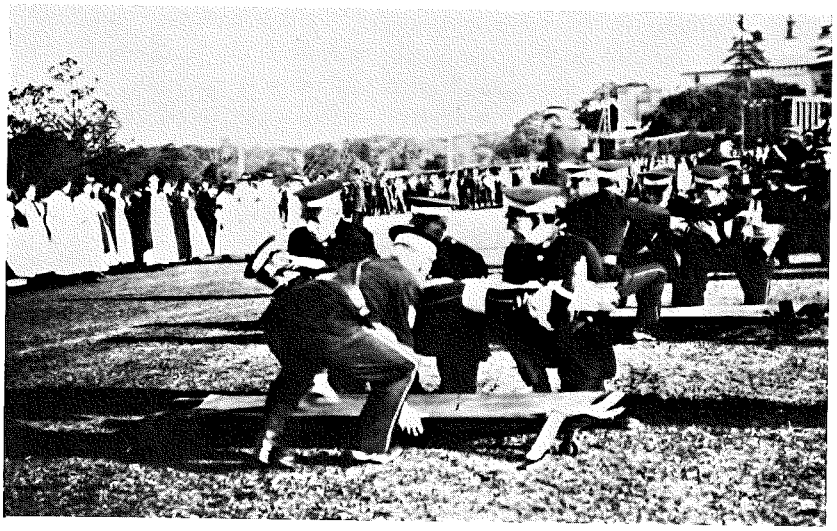
idea of the Brigade's District Secretary, Mr Boles R. Rainsford, who was also secretary to the Association Centre and had been secretary of the Milson's Point sub-centre of the Association from its inception in 1901. The 1911 camp was the best to date, for attendances were up and interest was the keenest.[25]

The greatest boost to Brigade morale in 1911-12, however, was the invitation—or perhaps instruction—the New South Wales District received from the St John's Gate headquarters of the Brigade Overseas to send six representatives to the Royal Review in Britain. The review was something of a first aiders' 'durbar', with the Sovereign Head of the Order inspecting St John Ambulance personnel from around the globe, who gathered specially for the occasion at Windsor Castle. The cost of sending the Australian delegation, comprising the six Sydney Brigade members (five men, one woman), was high. What the figure was is not known, but the amount was raised with 'the full support and encouragement' of the State Governor, Lord Chelmsford, the 'very practical sympathy' of the Premier, J. S. T. McGowen, and his wife, the 'generous financial help' of the city retailers Samuel and Anthony Hordern, and 'by the officers and members of the Brigade' itself. The Brigade personnel through this experience doubtless learnt something about being the ingenious and persistent fund raisers they have, perforce, remained.[26]

By now the public was familiar with the work of the Brigade. As more and more Brigade members found the money to outlay on uniforms people could identify them more readily. In recognition of their useful function the public found nicknames for them. To some they were plain 'Johnnies'. To others, probably those who saw them most often at football matches treating bruised players, they were the 'Zam-Buks'—after a popular patent medicine, a herbal liniment of the day said to heal anything from scratches and scalds to chilblains and bee stings.

The uniform represented a considerable investment for Brigade members, many of whom came from humble homes. For men the uniform was a black tunic with high collar; black trousers with white stripe; black cap with white band; black belt and equipment pouch; Brigade badge with Maltese cross on cap and on each side of collar. For women it was white gown and black cape and black nurse's bonnet with Brigade badge. At first only a small number of members could afford it, and most had to settle for civilian clothes with a Brigade armband. As late as 1913 the Western Suburbs Ambulance Division thought it had made an important step forward by fitting out twelve of its twenty-five members in uniform. Where members could not afford the uniform Divisions raised their own funds to purchase a stock of them to be loaned out to members; and so gradually more members could go on public duties in uniform.[27]

The routines the Brigade developed in these years have remained. Members paraded fortnightly for ambulance drill in local halls. (Even-



36 The Glebe Division team (foreground) competing in the first aid competition at the annual inspection and demonstration of the New South Wales District of the Brigade, about 1913-14

tually, as they began to prosper, some were even able to move out of municipal and church halls into buildings they acquired for themselves.) They drew up schedules of the public duties they would attend in the period ahead. They received, read and acted upon the memoranda and circulars that flowed unceasingly from District headquarters. In return they forwarded to headquarters the paperwork required of them—annual returns of Divisional strength, of parades attended, of duties performed, of training sessions conducted, of examinations and re-examinations held and results obtained, of the levels of first aid and nursing efficiency being maintained. They underwent visitations and inspections by headquarters staff. They prepared for first aid and nursing compeititions against other Divisions, and they ran their own internal competitions. They listened to lectures by their Divisional Surgeons—the medical practitioners attached to each Division. They raised funds to buy medical supplies and equipment, to purchase uniforms, to pay their rent, to travel to competitions, and to buy themselves publicity.

They worked at improving their reputations, promoting themselves to local community organizations, gaining coverage in local newspapers, being in attendance at local functions, attending church parades in local churches, and generally making the public aware of their presence and of their desire to be of service. They developed a camaraderie of their own as the Divisions became the focus of the social life of many members and of their families too: their balls, Christmas parties, card nights, concerts and other social gatherings not only helped raise money but also helped

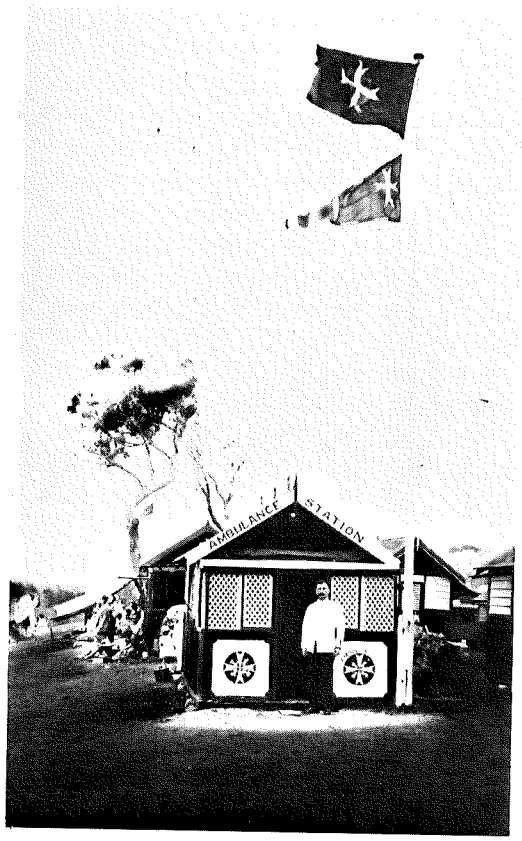
bind individuals to the organization and to the ideals and traditions it represented. Finally, as they learnt to conform to the discipline Brigade regulations required, they acquired a special sort of pride, an inner satisfaction in their knowledge that in so doing they were serving their Order, their King, their country and humanity generally.

In relation to the last point, members of the Brigade Divisions had much lore to assimilate. In addition to the ambulance and nursing knowledge and skills required to maintain the level of efficiency the Brigade required, there was a host of other information to acquire. The rule book required assiduous study if one was to perform proficiently on parade, in public, in meeting superior officers and in directing the activities of juniors, and in carrying out one's share of the burden of administration. Then there was the tradition of the Order of St John to be mastered and, with that, knowledge of its complex world-wide organization to be memorized. Thus, with regard to the Brigade alone, members of Divisions had to understand that their own particular Division belonged to a Corps, of which there were two in the District. Their District in turn was one of some twenty in 'the Brigade Overseas' in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, India, Ceylon, Malta and the Far East. Parallel to the Brigade Overseas there was 'the Brigade at Home' (that is in Britain) with eleven Districts. They had to learn the hierarchical structure of ranks, ascending from their own Divisional Superintendent (who wore three stars on his shoulders), above whom were the Corps officers and above them the District Commissioner. Above the District Commissioner was the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, and above him the Chief Commissioner, who was answerable to the Sub-Prior of the Order, in turn responsible to the Grand Prior and ultimately the Sovereign Head.

Chief Commissioners, Sub-Priors and Grand Priors perhaps seemed remote to ordinary Divisional members of the Brigade who, replete with their stretchers and boxes of bandages and medicines, spent their time for the Order attending, say, Sydney street parades or football matches. They might occasionally have to put up with the rudeness and ingratitude of the public they were giving up their own spare time to serve. Perhaps they might sometimes have been hard put to remain impervious to jibes about being 'body snatchers' who would cure anything from a fractured skull to prickly heat with a dollop of Zam-Buk. But when their public duties for the week had been done they could reflect with pride that they were part of an honourable team that spread across the Empire, whose captain was the King, and whose proud record went right back to the Crusades.

2 *The Brigade in Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia*

Like the Association, which had taken eight years to spread from colony



37 The Yarra bay beach first aid station, on Botany Bay, 1915. The Glebe Division of the Brigade had been staffing the station at weekends and on holidays since before the First World War

to colony, the Brigade moved only slowly from State to State. In all States but Queensland, however, the New South Wales experience recurred in the years before World War I as similar circumstances and pressures brought forth branches of the Brigade there as well. Even in Queensland a short-lived branch of the Brigade was to open in 1918, though for reasons a later chapter will examine a fully fledged Queensland District did not come into being until 1953.

(a) *Western Australia*

Western Australia was not far behind Sydney in forming a Brigade organization. The initiative for bringing the Brigade to the West seems to have been entirely that of the Association Chairman, Dr George McWilliams. He first raised the matter of a local branch of the Brigade at a meeting of the Council of the Western Australian Centre in July 1901. The Council held the matter over until it could obtain more information. McWilliams obtained this personally the next year when he went to Britain as the medical officer to the Western Australian contingent attending the coronation of Edward VII. He visited St John's Gate, and

canvassed the possibility of a Perth unit of the Brigade with the Chief Commissioner, Col. C. W. B. Bowdler. Back in Perth again he brought the matter of the Brigade before the Council in January 1904. The Council decided to advertise for certificated male graduates of its first aid classes who would be willing to form a branch of the Brigade. Seven men came forward. For some unknown reason the first meeting for intending members did not occur until the end of the year. At the meeting, on 23 December 1904, only three of the seven who answered the advertisement were among the ten present. Lt.-Col. J. A. Campbell, treasurer of the Council, chaired the meeting, which voted to form a Western Australian branch of the Brigade.[28]

The Perth Division thus established was at first small and top heavy. McWilliams became the first Assistant Commissioner. (The head Brigade officer in each State was not yet recognised by the St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas as being a full Commissioner, and, depending on his State, he was known as either Assistant or Deputy Commissioner.) The Divisional Superintendent was J. O. K. Jeffreson; the Divisional Surgeon was Dr O. Burkitt; the secretary was N. E. Probert; Campbell was treasurer; there was a sergeant and a corporal; and finally nine privates. Despite their small numbers they set to work with a will. They attended all the race meetings at the metropolitan race courses, in recognition of which the Turf Club began making them an annual donation of £25—a duty and a bonus that probably owed much to McWilliams' position as honorary surgeon to the Turf Club. According to their first annual report 'the members of the Division also act[ed] as the local Corps of the Australian Army Medical Corps, and was inspected by Major-General H. Finn and Surgeon-General W. D. C. Williams of the Commonwealth Military Forces during their respective visits to Western Australia'.[29] This rather irregular second role they probably also owed to McWilliams in his capacity as captain in the Western Australian militia. In connection with this role they went into camp with the Army at Easter 1905; and they also held their meetings and parades in the Army Drill Hall. In addition to their racing and military commitments they attended football matches, bicycle races, the police tournament and the Royal Agricultural Show—in all fifty-two public duties in their first year, during which they treated twenty cases. Probably as a result of their keenness and their challenging programme their ranks grew, and so they finished the year with another twenty-five privates on their books.[30]

In its first couple of years, until McWilliams' death in February 1907, the Perth Division seems to have been very much his personal oyster. He undertook to finance it himself 'until funds be forthcoming'; he undoubtedly gave it its entrée to the Turf Club, the Army and the bike races; and he was both founder and proprietor. Yet while both Association and Brigade derived strength from his leadership, there were costs in having the St John Ambulance organizations so closely identified with

one man. There is some evidence that a section of the public and some members of the St John bodies resented the sway he held. Thus, when J. R. Lynch, a former Centre Secretary, resigned as Association treasurer in 1901-02, he wrote to the press delivering a broadside against McWilliams' domination of the Council.

Lynch had been asked to resign from Council for refusing to attend its meetings on the grounds that these were always held in McWilliams' home. This practice, he said in a 'letter-to-the-editor', denied members of both Council and the Association generally the right to open discussion of St John Ambulance affairs. 'Can a member hold his own against a chairman under whose roof he is sitting and of whose hospitality he knows he will have to partake directly the meeting is over?' he asked rhetorically. He then attacked 'this autocratic system', which, he claimed, 'has been the downfall of the Association here in past years'; and proceeded to decry the 'certain small section of the medical profession of this city [who] reserve to themselves jealously the privileges and advantages of lecturing to and examining the . . . classes of the Association to the exclusion of other medical gentlemen equally if not better qualified . . .'[31]

There seems to have been dissatisfaction, too, in Brigade ranks, for after the Perth Division's vigorous first year, a spate of resignations occurred in the second. The first to go were a group of men from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade who wrote to resign *en bloc*. Then the secretary resigned. More resignations followed and other members simply dropped out, until by the end of 1906 the Division was down to fourteen members – one less than it had begun with. Worse was to follow, for McWilliams died at the beginning of 1907, and at the meeting several weeks later the superintendent, Jeffreson, the treasurer, Campbell, and another private resigned. Membership and morale continued dropping, and by the end of 1908 numbers were down to a rump of five, 'the few enthusiasts who still cling to the Division, most of whom have been members since the Division was formed' as the annual report plaintively put it.[32] They included the superintendent, A. McKay, and the secretary-treasurer, H. W. Lilley. No new Assistant Commissioner had been appointed to replace McWilliams (none would be appointed until 1912), and the effective leadership seems to have come from the Divisional Surgeon, Dr H. A. Lesghen. To their credit this small nucleus of devotees kept the Division alive, doing effective work and keeping faith with their clients by attending 'all race meetings, senior football matches, sports gatherings, and the Royal Agricultural Show', during the course of which they treated fifty cases.[33]

Some of the problem of low morale related to difficulties over uniforms. The Division originally planned to obtain uniforms from St John's Gate, and to write away to the Chief Commissioner for advice. They do not seem to have received it, for a year later they were passing

resolutions about writing to St John's Gate again for advice about how to procure uniforms. A photograph of a group of ten of them, with McWilliams resplendent in pith helmet and sword, appeared in the Association's annual report in 1905, but what uniforms these were is puzzling for at their May 1905 meeting they voted to obtain sixteen suits which they planned to have dyed by one of their members, Pte. Thompson, at 9/- each. The next year, 1906, their annual report points out that 'the need for a distinctive uniform is much felt, and we are constantly asked by the racing clubs to adopt a uniform'.[34] Uniforms seem to have continued to be scarce, because at the end of 1914 the Division voted to procure 'two dozen ribbon arm bands'; and a year later they resolved that 'members efficient for the year be supplied with uniforms' and that 'inefficient members be written to asking if they were going to continue to be members, if not then uniforms to be returned'.[35] (An 'efficient' member was one with a current certificate of first aid and who had attended a set minimum number of parades.)

While the lack of uniforms and perhaps a mixture of uniforms and arm bands might have made the Division look and feel like an amateurish outfit, there was a more serious problem inhibiting the Brigade's development. This was the strength of rival ambulance organizations operating with the blessing of the Association. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade, the railways, the police, the Fremantle Lumpers' Union, and the Kalgoorlie-Boulder goldmines all had their own ambulance corps affiliated with the Association, and these perhaps channelled off manpower that might otherwise have come into the Brigade. By 1908 both police and fire brigade required their staffs to hold a St John first aid certificate, and wherever they served throughout the vast area of Western Australia policemen and firemen were expected to double up as the local first aiders. In addition firemen voluntarily manned Perth's ambulance transport service, and the city police station in Perth also maintained a very active voluntary ambulance unit. The Railway Ambulance Corps, which amalgamated with the Association in 1908, had ambulance divisions and sections at all the principal railway stations. In 1908, too, the Fremantle Lumpers' Union, which had established the practice of paying for its members to undergo first aid training, raised the money to purchase its own horse ambulance. On the goldfields, where by 1910 there were some 800 accidents a year, both mining companies and miners had become very first aid conscious. The larger mines at least had all installed well equipped casualty stations staffed by workers holding first aid certificates. Similarly, in the south-western timber mills of the State the Association was making progress in its quest to see 'a first aid station in every timber mill in the district'.[36]

Among the ambulance corps affiliated with the Association were thus numerous competent, dedicated first aiders who found an outlet for their interests and skills on the job. They therefore had little reason to seek

some expression for their wish to practise first aid by linking up with the Brigade. Like some of the industrial first aiders in Sydney they were probably content to remain in an Association framework; and the effect most likely was to keep out of the Brigade recruits who might otherwise have joined it. The Brigade annual reports wistfully expressed the hope that some of these groups of workers might form a Brigade Division, but except for the later case of the miners this did not happen.[37]

Despite these early problems, the Brigade managed to survive, to build its membership, to establish new Divisions, to become a District, and even to create a second District on the goldfields, all by World War I. The Perth Division bottomed out in 1908, but thereafter its fortunes steadily rose. It added fourteen new members in 1909, and by then eight of its twenty-one members held medallions. A new Division of twenty men formed at Midland Junction the same year, under Divisional Surgeon T. D. Dawson and Divisional Superintendent W. J. Wilson. It was planning to open further Divisions at Fremantle and on the goldfields. The Perth Division treated seventy cases, mainly in connection with its public duties at the races, and many of these were challenging: they included eight cases of fractures, five of concussion, fourteen woundings, four shock cases, five sprains, three fits and one collapse, and three of the cases—two fractured skulls and the collapse—proved fatal. All in all things were looking up, and Lilley in his annual report for 1909 could say that 'Brigade matters are brighter now than ever before in Western Australia'.[38]

The upturn continued. The goldfields Division, Boulder City, with twenty-seven men under their superintendent, C. A. Bolton, was formally registered in January 1911, though it had been operating successfully for several years before that. The North Fremantle Division came in in January 1912. Then in 1913 the first Nursing Division formed in Perth with Dr Gertrude Mead as Divisional Surgeon and Mrs Harriet E. Parker as Lady Superintendent.[39]

In the period 1909-15 there were a series of administrative changes affecting the Brigade in Western Australia and in Australia generally. When Western Australia established its Division in Perth in 1904, the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, Major-General J. C. Dalton, elevated the Assistant Commissioner of the New South Wales District, Dr G. Lane Mullins, to the position of 'Commissioner of Australia', and raised Dr A. E. Perkins from Chief Medical Officer of the New South Wales District to 'Medical Officer in Chief' for the Brigade in Australia. At the same time Dr T. Storie Dixson as 'Deputy Commissioner' for New South Wales became the effective head of the Brigade in that District. What Lane Mullins' and Perkins' rights and duties were at the apex of the Brigade organization in Australia are uncertain. Presumably they were meant to foster the formation of Divisions and Districts in those States without them. Their chief function, however, ap-

pears to have been as a conduit through which the State branches of the Brigade, first New South Wales and Western Australia then later Tasmania and Victoria, forwarded to the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas their annual reports and numerous other returns he required. The State branches of the Brigade appear not to have liked doing so, for when the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas abolished the offices held by Lane Mullins and Perkins in 1912, Storie Dixson for one welcomed the move. It was, he wrote six years later, 'a change which has been in every way a vast improvement, and through which serious difficulties vanished'.[40]

Until the establishment of the Boulder City Division in 1911, Lane Mullins as Commissioner for Australia seems to have regarded the Perth Division rather much as he did the Y.M.C.A. Division in Hobart, as simply an adjunct of the New South Wales District. He counted both it and the Midland Junction Division in with the New South Wales Divisions in his annual returns to the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas. But with the foundation of the other Divisions he conceded that Western Australia had emerged as a District in its own right. After the Boulder City Division appeared in 1911 the District was divided into two—a 'Coastal District' consisting of the Perth, Midland Junction and North Fremantle Divisions under Dr W. Trethowan as Assistant Commissioner, and a 'Goldfields District' under C. A. Bolton, secretary of the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Chamber of Mines, as 'Acting Assistant Commissioner'. The latter consisted of the Boulder City Division and had the promise of perhaps seven more Divisions to be formed soon, mostly in association with different mines.[41]

Bolton, in his first annual report, as Acting Assistant Commissioner confidently predicted that within a short time he would have another 200 members enrolled in six Ambulance Divisions and a Nursing Division. He had been active in the 'Mines Ambulance and Rescue Corps', which had been affiliated with the St John Ambulance Association, and he was hopeful the miners who had worked with the Corps would transfer into the new Brigade Divisions. Bolton had also patented an electrically heated bed and a new type of stretcher. The bed was said to be useful in cases of shock, and models of it were installed in the casualty stations of all the major mines. His stretcher was designed for use in rocky confined spaces, where conventional stretchers made of canvas ripped easily. His inventiveness did not extend to allowing him to deliver on his bold promise of seven new Divisions with 200 new members: after the formation of the North Fremantle and Perth Nursing Divisions in 1912-13 Western Australia saw no new Divisions until 1924. His separate Goldfields District did not last long either. He went off to the war in 1915 with the Army Medical Corps, whereupon the separate Goldfields and Coastal Districts reverted to the one Western Australian District with Dr H. G. Tymms as sole Assistant Commissioner.[42]

By this stage administrative chopping and changing did not really matter. The Brigade was now securely established in the West. The leadership was effective. The organization had found a useful public role which it fulfilled faithfully for its appreciative clientele of sporting clubs and mining companies. Sufficient numbers were in the five Divisions to guarantee its survival. And members could be assured of stimulating challenges to their knowledge and skill in the duties they were called on to perform.

(b) *Victoria*

By the time a Brigade Division formed in Perth in 1904, the Victorian Centre of the Association had trained over 14,000 people in first aid over the preceding twenty-one years. It also had some twenty-five sub-centres around Victoria, all more or less active; a number of practice classes were associated with the sub-centres; and there was never any trouble in finding teams of keen first aiders to stage demonstrations and competitions at the large and festive annual displays the Centre still conducted in the Melbourne Town Hall before capacity crowds. Yet a Victorian branch of the Brigade did not come into being until 1909-10, nearly a decade after the formal establishment of the Brigade in New South Wales. Why, then, did it take so long for the State with the oldest St John Ambulance organization to take up the new type of St John Ambulance unit? No obvious reason presents itself. Despite the way the depression of the 1890s had battered Melbourne's confidence, it was still a large and diverse city with a population of 612,000 by 1911; so there must have been work enough for several Brigade Divisions. Perhaps the cause of the slow start lies in the Victorian Centre's preoccupation with the burgeoning ambulance transport service it was sponsoring, for by 1910 that had certainly become a major concern. The ambulance transport service now had three branches—in the city, South Yarra and Ascot Vale; it was called out 4304 times in the year to the beginning of May 1910; it travelled 23,406 miles (37,500 kilometres) that year; and its crews had to render first aid in 358 cases, which included 'fractured thigh, leg, arm, pelvis, skull, jaw, back, cases of apoplexy, epilepsy, sunstroke, drowning, poisoning, burns, and various kinds of fits'.[43]

What finally spurred the formation of units of the Brigade in Victoria was another occasion when huge crowds gathered, much as they had done in Sydney in 1901 for the inauguration of the Commonwealth and the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York. Federation Day does not seem to have involved the Victorian Centre at all, but like its northern neighbour it provided a team of first aiders to help out during the procession of the Duke and Duchess through the streets of its city. Fifty certificated members of the Victorian sub-centres volunteered for duty and worked with the Army Medical Corps to staff the first aid posts. But it was to take more than the future King and Queen and the opening

of the federal parliament to seize the imagination of Melbournians sufficiently to bring them into the streets in crowds large enough to launch a Victorian branch of the Brigade. It was to be an American flotilla that helped to float the Brigade in Melbourne.[44]

Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry's 'Great White Fleet' of sixteen battleships and five auxiliary vessels reached Melbourne at the end of August 1908. For the sailors' march through the city on 31 August the local official in charge of first aid arrangements, Surgeon-Major George Horne of the Army Medical Corps, had sixteen emergency ambulance stations set up from St Kilda Rd through the city and to the Exhibition gardens. To help to staff them he formed a 'volunteer ambulance corps' from the certificated pupils of the Association's classes. Horne was a prominent member of the Council of the Victorian Centre of the Association, on which he served for twenty-four years, 1903-27, two of them (1919-20) as president. When Dr Robert Robertson had retired in 1900, Horne had taken over the task of providing the guard of honour at the annual public demonstration the Centre ran in the Town Hall.

An enormous and excited crowd turned out to watch the Americans march. Melbourne's suburban rail system had its busiest day on record: 400,000 passengers travelled by train that day compared with 350,000 on the next busiest day, when The Duke of Cornwall and York had opened the Commonwealth Parliament. The next day's papers were full of stories of 'riotous scenes', and loudly sang the praises of the ambulance teams, who dealt with some 500 cases at Horne's emergency stations. In the opinion of the Association Council the day's events 'plainly show[ed] the desirability of having a trained body of workers at hand on all such occasions or in event of any large and serious action'. Council therefore announced its intentions of 'taking steps towards the foundation of an Ambulance Brigade similar to the Brigade at Home, in New South Wales, and in New Zealand'. It said it hoped that the 'women and men who did such splendid service at fleet time will be the first recruits'. It also announced the formation of a 'First Aid Volunteers' Association' which any certificated member of the Association might join, which was intended to keep together the first aiders of Fleet Week and to give them opportunities for practice.[45]

The First Aid Volunteers' Association was duly formed, with Horne as its President. It ran very much like Divisions of the Brigade did elsewhere, though without such a heavy stress on discipline and drilling and with greater emphasis on social activities. It was open to both sexes, unlike Brigade Divisions, and had an active executive, who arranged an interesting programme of educational, service and social activities for members. There were lectures by medical practitioners, many of them well known within St John Ambulance circles—Dr Charles Bage (chairman of the Association Council in 1909 and its president in the 1920s), Dr John Newman-Morris (President of the Association Council in the

38 The First Aid Volunteers' Association, Melbourne, about 1908-09; H. L. Perriman is in the front row, squatting at right hand end

1930s and 40s, and also the first Receiver General (treasurer) of the Priory of the Order of St John in Australia from 1946), Dr J. A. A. Sherwin (president of the Council in the 1930s and 40s, and first commanding officer of the Heidelberg Military Hospital), and Dr J. W. Springthorpe (chairman and president of the Council 1906-16, and the first Knight of the Order to be awarded that honour in Victoria). It took its members on frequent outdoor excursions to Melbourne's parklands and beaches for sociable first aid practice combined with picnics; it raised money and donated equipment for various charities—380 towels for the Red Cross at the outbreak of the First World War; and it went on public duty to do first aid. Among the functions it regularly attended were the Australian Natives' Association fête, the Warrnambool-Melbourne bike race, the St Patrick's Day procession and the Naval and Military carnival. On duty its members wore a white armband with their badge (which featured their own version of the Maltese cross) in red; and they also wore a cardboard 'First Aider' label on a bright ribbon from the lapel.[46]

The F.A.V.A. was highly successful. It started off with fifty members in 1908 and had 300 by 1915. Many of the members were active within Association sub-centres, and even when the Brigade started up in Melbourne a number of them remained in both the F.A.V.A. and the Brigade. The two proud boasts of the F.A.V.A. were, first, that it had been 'founded in Fleet Week 1908' and, second, that it was 'officially recognised by the St John Ambulance Association'. The latter was a claim it had to drop in 1915 when the Association suddenly withdrew recognition without giving reasons. Was it because F.A.V.A. members

were spending too much time in pleasant social diversions and too little in practical first aid duty; or was it because their large numbers were proving to be an impediment to the formation of the Brigade Divisions the Association Council was keen to see formed? Whatever the reason, the Council's action meant the end of the F.A.V.A., even though it managed to continue on without Association blessing at least until the end of the First World War.[47]

The Association Council was certainly perturbed that no Brigade organization had grown from the visit of the U.S. fleet, as it had hoped would happen. That the keenness rallied during Fleet Week had either dissipated or gone into the F.A.V.A., which seemed as concerned with giving its members a good time as with getting down to systematic first aid service, was plainly unsatisfactory from Council's point of view. The annual report for 1910 showed something of Council's concern: 'a constant cause for regret has been the fact that so many of the certificate holders have taken no steps to keep up the knowledge required, and have become inefficient', the report complained. It then went on to say that 'to remedy this the Council has approved the formation of a branch of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Victoria', and that 'Divisions have been formed in Melbourne, Brighton and other places'. Eventually, the report concluded, 'it is hoped . . . that Divisions will be formed in every town in the State'.[48]

Who actually moved to bring the Brigade into being in Victoria and when is not clear. The District was obviously created by fiat of the Association Council at some time late in 1909 or early in 1910, for the first Division was formed in March 1910 and the annual report announcing the establishment of the District was made the end of April. Horne probably had a lot to do with it. He had been in charge of the Fleet Week arrangements in 1908. He became the Acting Assistant Commissioner at some time in 1909-10; and he was confirmed as Assistant Commissioner in 1912, a position he retained until 1921. In the early years at least he was the District's only headquarters officer. As well as his service on the Association Council, he was also the editor of the shortlived *Victorian First Aid and St John Ambulance Gazette* (1918-19), a journal intended to keep members of the Association sub-centres, the Brigade Divisions and officers of the ambulance transport service in touch with each other. Horne was therefore the sort of dedicated promoter of first aiding who might have been expected to push for the establishment of a Victorian District of the Brigade, and to feel affronted that one did not already exist.

The first Division to be formed in Victoria was shortlived. It was neither the Melbourne nor the Brighton Division, as announced in the annual report, but the Hawthorn Ambulance Division. It was formed on 10 March 1910, from members of a class which graduated from the Hawthorn sub-centre of the Association in late 1909. Its Divisional

Surgeon was Dr P. E. Brett; its superintendent was F. H. Golland; and its secretary was W. Driver. (Both Golland and Driver were members of the F.A.V.A., and Driver was its chairman in 1917-18). A parallel Hawthorn Nursing Division was later formed on 3 May 1910, and it, too was similarly short-lived. Neither of these Hawthorn Divisions lasted much more than a year, mainly because of the formation of parallel Metropolitan Nursing and Ambulance Divisions at about the same time. The Metropolitan Nursing Division formed on 24 March 1910 and the Metropolitan Ambulance Division a couple of months later on 31 May. The two Metropolitan Divisions 'stole' both public duties and members from the Hawthorn Divisions, and so the latter folded quickly. A foundation member of the Hawthorn Ambulance Division, Mr H. L. Perriman, who was also a member of the F.A.V.A. and its treasurer in 1917-18, was still alive in 1980. Aged ninety-six, he recalled that the Metropolitan Division, 'being a city Brigade, . . . catered for most of the big events, hence there was little for the Hawthorn Division to do, also some of the members transferred to Melbourne including me and my brother'.[49] Perriman served a term as secretary to the Metropolitan Division, and he remembered that while members were waiting for uniforms to turn up from England they wore metal arm badges. He continued on in both the Brigade and the F.A.V.A. until 1919, when he went to the Northern Territory to do mission work for the Church Mission Society among the Aborigines on Groote Eylandt. There, far away from medical services, he said, 'I found my first aid and ambulance training most useful in a practical way'.[50]

The Metropolitan Division has left behind its earliest record, its registration form, and this provides us with an informative glimpse of the profile of this early Brigade unit. The superintendent has H. A. Osgood-Cannon, the chief officer of the Association-sponsored city ambulance transport service; the Divisional Surgeon was Dr H. W. Bryant of the Army Medical Corps; and the secretary was E. C. Montgomery, a salesman. There were two corporals and a sergeant in addition to the two officers (Osgood-Cannon and Bryant), and twenty-four privates—a total strength of twenty-nine to start with. Nearly all of them came from the ring of inner suburbs surrounding the city—Prahran, Carlton, Fitzroy, Brunswick, Clifton Hill—but they formed a fairly representative cross-section of occupations: there was a barrister (J. C. Anderson, at that time secretary of the Association Council, who came into the Division as a private), three engineers, a federal public servant, a teacher, an estate agent, three clerks, a chemist, and the rest were either small businessmen or tradesmen—a confectioner, an ironmonger, a grocer, a coach builder, a telegraphist, a fishmonger, a sanitary plumber, a bricklayer, a joiner, a wood machinist, a warehouseman, and so on. Only one of them, Osgood-Cannon, had the Association's first aid medallion, and only one other had passed a second examination. Nine of them had military ex-

perience, most of them in the local militia ambulance corps; and two of them apart from Osgood-Cannon were on the permanent staff of the Association, possibly as ambulance officers. The public duties this mixed bunch performed together in their first year included attendance at the Henley-on-Yarra regatta and the Royal Agricultural Show.[51]

No similar information seems to have survived in relation to the Metropolitan Nursing Division, apart from the fact that its superintendent was Mrs M. Lodge, its Divisional Surgeon Major H. Shirdee of the Army Medical Corps, and its secretary Miss L. Fargie. On the other hand the registration form of the Brighton Nursing Division, formed on 3 October 1910, has been preserved. Brighton had long been a stronghold of St John Ambulance work in Victoria. Dr Richard Warren, co-founder and first secretary of the Victorian Centre of the Association had practised there; Lloyd Tayler, chairman 1884-98 then President of the Council until his death in 1900, had lived there (and had designed the foremost Anglican church there); and the first of the Association's myriad subcentres in Australia had been founded there in 1883, and was still active. The superintendent-secretary of the Brighton Nursing Division was Mrs Jane M. McKinley, who was also secretary of the Brighton sub-centre from 1901 until her death in 1920. The Divisional Surgeon was Dr G. C. W. Weigall. All the twenty-eight women in the Division had passed a second examination, for the entry requirements into a Nursing Division were stricter than for an Ambulance Division: the former required a first aid *and* a home nursing certificate, the latter required only a first aid certificate. And thirteen of the women had the medallion. All in all, their ambulance training made the men of the Metropolitan Ambulance Division look like a bunch of novices. Their social profile is not, however, as sharply drawn: only four of them are listed as having a 'profession'—one clerk and three teachers—though perhaps that in itself is instructive.[52]

After the Brighton Nursing Division in October 1910 no further Brigade units came into being in Victoria until war produced a rash of new Divisions four years later. Several seem to have been mooted but none were actually registered. The next to be formed was the Footscray Ambulance Division, on 21 December 1912—now (1983) the Division with the longest period of unbroken service in the Victorian District. Then came Mildura, Williamstown, Fairfield, Moorabbin, Middle Park, Essendon, Brunswick and Geelong. The war, too, as might have been expected—given the greater interest women showed in first aid training, and that St John Ambulance provided them with one of their best opportunities for war service—produced a spate of new Nursing Divisions. By 1918 there were no less than twenty-three of them: a revived Hawthorn Nursing Division, and new Divisions at Fairfield, Williamstown, Mentone, Footscray, Middle Park, Moonee Ponds, Parkville, Ararat, Geelong, Balaclava, Camberwell, Malvern, East Malvern, Melbourne and Metropolitan Gas Company, Prahran, St Kilda, South Yarra,

39 Metropolitan (Melbourne) Division, St John Ambulance Brigade, 1913

Y.W.C.A., and Melbourne C.W.C. had joined the original Metropolitan and Brighton Divisions.[53] By this time, of course, war—as the next chapter argues—had given St John Ambulance work everywhere the greatest fillip it had ever received, or would receive until another war would again produce great enthusiasm for what the Association and Brigade were offering Australians.

(c) *South Australia*

Why South Australia, the second oldest 'St John Ambulance State', was among the last to develop a branch of the Brigade is puzzling. Before the Adelaide Centre of the Association finally sponsored the formation of the Brigade's South Australian District in 1911-12 it had withstood a sustained campaign by Lane Mullins, the Commissioner for Australia, to initiate Brigade activities in the State. If the Centre was not actually resisting the Commissioner then it was certainly showing itself to be decidedly tardy in springing to attention at his command. Why it should have been reluctant is not clear. Was it because it feared it would be saddled with sundry onerous expenses in equipping and fitting out in uniforms the Divisions that would come into being? Did it doubt that among the three or four thousand pupils it had trained by the early 1900s there would be sufficient who might be recruited for Brigade work? Did it wonder if there would be sufficient work for the Brigade to do?

The late foundation of the Brigade in Adelaide remains a mystery. The Brigade elsewhere was self supporting. It ran its own fund raising drives,

it received donations from grateful clients, and it paid for its own uniforms and supplies. The certificated pupils had shown themselves to be a keen lot, for in Adelaide the country's first practice classes had formed in 1887-88, whereas similar bodies in Sydney dated only from 1893 and in Melbourne from 1897. Adelaide ambulance pupils, moreover, had shown themselves to be just as interested in acquiring 'postgraduate' qualifications in first aid as those elsewhere. Thus, in South Australia by 1905 the local Centre had awarded 188 first aid medallions to 2576 certificates, a ratio of 1:13; in New South Wales the ratio was 1:20 (336 medallions to 7049 certificates) and in Victoria it was 1:12 (671 to 8052). And though Adelaide was hardly a third the size of either Sydney or Melbourne, its 145,000 or so residents still congregated for occasions like the visit of the U.S. fleet in numbers sufficient to warrant the formation of a Brigade unit in Adelaide if not elsewhere in the State.[54]

Perhaps the Brigade's late start in Adelaide can be blamed on the cautiousness of the Association Committee. It is possible they might not have wished to sponsor the Brigade until the Brigade elsewhere had proved itself. Perhaps there was no dominating, flamboyant individualist—no George McWilliams as in Western Australia—to enjoy being Brigade Commissioner, with the salutes from junior officers, inspections of Divisions, and parades in fine uniforms that that entailed. Perhaps the Railway Ambulance Corps, the Army Medical Corps, the police and the fire brigade sufficed to meet Adelaide's civil defence needs.

Whatever the reason for South Australia's lack of a Brigade organization a decade into the twentieth century, it was not for want of trying on the part of Lane Mullins in Sydney. Between 1904 and 1909 Mullins tried on at least five occasions to interest the Association Committee in setting up a South Australian branch of the Brigade. His first attempt was in June 1904, when he wrote to the Committee to ask if it would consider forming Brigade Divisions in the State. The Committee appointed a subcommittee to investigate the matter, then subsequently advised Mullins 'with regret that it was impossible to form Divisions of the Brigade at that time'.[55] Mullins tried again in August 1905. This time the Centre secretary, Bentley S. Connor, wrote off to Western Australia to inquire how the Brigade was faring there. What sort of response he obtained is unknown, but perhaps the Committee remained unconverted to the Brigade because in March the next year, 1906, Mullins was again petitioning the Committee, requesting it to reconsider its opinion on the formation of local Brigade units. This time the Committee instructed Connor to obtain full details and estimates of costs in setting up a Division. Then several months later, at its meeting on 27 July 1906, the Committee received yet another letter from Mullins, making his accustomed plea for action. The Committee now directed Connor to have his estimates ready for its next meeting. The 27 July meeting also received another inquiry about a local Brigade unit, from a warrant officer of the

No. 6 Field Hospital, Australian Army Medical Corps, who wrote to ask if one would be formed. This was a man called A. S. Lindsay, whom the Committee answered non-committally along the lines that 'the matter is being considered'.[56]

Three years went by without further developments, possibly because Mullins had despaired of spurring the Committee into action, and possibly because the local man most interested in seeing the Brigade established in Adelaide—Lindsay—had departed for New Zealand. In New Zealand Lindsay linked up with the Canterbury and West Coast District of the Brigade, of which he was Chief Superintendent for the three years to January 1910. In October 1909 Mullins wrote yet once more with his well-worn request, but that seems to have had no more effect on the Committee than his four previous letters. Another year passed, during which Lindsay returned from New Zealand and, presumably, took up the cause of the Brigade again with the Committee. Then the Committee invited Lindsay to discuss the matter with it at its meeting in November 1910. He attended as arranged, gave an outline of the way the work of the Brigade had developed in New Zealand, and offered to look into the issue more fully with Connor and the chairman, E. W. van Senden.[57]

The outcome of Lindsay's dealings with the Committee was that he was invited to become a member of the Committee in January 1911. At the February 1911 meeting van Senden read a paper Lindsay had prepared expounding on the objectives of the Brigade and on the benefits to the Association and the community generally of the presence of Brigade units. Van Senden then moved that a South Australian branch of the Brigade be established. The Committee must at last have been convinced, for it resolved unanimously to start the Brigade in South Australia and to appoint Lindsay as Assistant Commissioner. Next month the annual report of the Adelaide Centre noted that the Brigade had been formed in South Australia, and that it was 'fortunate' to have an experienced ambulancer like Lindsay as its officer in charge. In May 1911 T. Storie Dixson, the Deputy Commissioner in charge of the New South Wales District, wrote acknowledging the intention of the Adelaide Centre to form a local Brigade Division; the Association Centre secretary in Sydney, Boles R. Rainsford (who would soon become Brigade secretary as well), despatched papers relating to the operations of the Brigade; and in June 1911 Lane Mullins, as Commissioner of Australia, formally approved the formation of the District and the appointment of its Assistant Commissioner. The long awaited District now existed on paper if not in actual active Divisions. Nowhere else among all the colonial offshoots of the St John Ambulance organization does so much protracted paperwork seem to have been necessary to create a body that still existed mainly on paper.[58]

It took another fifteen months to add substance to the body which in

the meantime had only a head—the Assistant Commissioner. It was not until about September 1912 that Lindsay was able to produce his first flesh and blood Division, consisting of twenty-three members of the Municipal Tramways Trust. At the September 1912 meeting of the Association Committee he was able to say that he had not only formed this Division but had addressed a meeting of Hindmarsh people who had 'practically decided' to form a Division there as well. The latter did not eventuate, however, and nothing much more happened until the early months of 1914, when Lindsay made an agreement with R. V. Bulman, the Railways Ambulance Officer, whereby the units of the Railways Ambulance at Adelaide, Port Adelaide, Mile End, Islington and Glenelg would come into the Brigade as a separate corps with Bulman as 'Chief Superintendent of the Railways Corps of the S.J.A.B.' And so after what had been a most painfully long drawn out labour, the birth process was complete, and the infant had assumed a shape that gave it some hope of survival.[59]

On the outbreak of the First World War several months later, the parent departed. Lindsay, now a lieutentant, left Adelaide for service in New Guinea with the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force. Bulman took over as Acting Assistant Commissioner. As in Victoria the war gave impetus to the formation of new Divisions. The Y.W.C.A. ('Adelaide No. 1') and Adelaide ('No. 2') Nursing Divisions were formed almost within days of the outbreak of war; then in November 1914 the Adelaide Central Ambulance Division got going. By this time the Brigade had a total strength of 183, actively engaged in performing public duties much like those of Divisions elsewhere and in particular attending race meetings and the Adelaide Show. They had no uniforms as yet and had to make do with arm bands. The cash gifts they received from the racing clubs and other donors in recognition of their services enabled them to outfit their members one by one in uniforms; and much of the equipment they needed they made for themselves.[60]

Bulman resigned in February 1915 because he found difficulty in carrying on. (He was to return much later as Assistant Commissioner in 1931-33.) The Association Committee offered his position to G. F. Hussey, the superintendent of the Adelaide Central Ambulance Division. Hussey had had a long association with the St John movement in Adelaide. He had been organizing first aid classes through the Literary Societies Union since 1887 and had been a member of the Association Committee since 1899. He had recently visited the New South Wales and Victorian Districts of the Brigade and had reported on this to the Adelaide Centre. He was to remain Assistant Commissioner and Commissioner from 1915 until 1931—a record period in the position in South Australia.

The Brigade in South Australia, or more accurately Adelaide for it had not yet spread beyond the capital, was hardly thriving when Hussey

assumed control. In his first annual report, in March 1916, he expressed his disappointment that while many people were learning first aid few saw fit to graduate to Brigade membership. 'There ought to be,' he chided his fellow South Australians, 'a division of the Brigade in every town in the state and several in the city of Adelaide'.[61] The Divisions he had were doing useful work, the men's Divisions working mainly at the race meetings and the women's Divisions helping out at the Convalescent Hospital, in demonstrating first aid in country towns, and in raising funds for the Red Cross and for street ambulances. But their numbers had contracted. Membership was down fifteen on the August 1914 figure; and there were now only six Divisions. As a result of men departing for the war, the amalgamation of some Divisions and the lapsing of others—in particular the railways units, Hussey now had two Divisions fewer than Bulman had had. There was now but one railways Division (Islington), three ordinary Ambulance Divisions (Adelaide Central, Port Adelaide, Glenelg) and the two Nursing Divisions (Y.W.C.A. and Adelaide).[62]

Under Hussey the Brigade movement gradually gathered momentum and made up for its slow and faltering start. Until then it had seemed to provide ample evidence of the difficulties to be experienced in establishing voluntary organizations in large, sparsely populated territories with only moderately developed urban centres. It also showed that really vital charitable bodies could not be created from afar unless the local populace felt a need for them. For some reason Adelaide had no use for the Brigade as early as other capital cities, and no amount of prodding by Lane Mullins in Sydney could create the need if Adelaideans did not feel it. Where there was a persistent local individual, a Lindsay, to stir things up there was a better chance that something would happen; but nearly four years of stirring were necessary before the pot began to boil, and even then the concoction simmered rather than bubbled. But in 1915-16 it would have seemed unlikely that the South Australian Brigade organization would one day be the strongest in the country.

3 *Starting and stopping in Tasmania*

The early history of St John Ambulance in Tasmania is one of intermittent effort. From the early days of the first 'Tasmanian' or, more properly, the Launceston Centre of the Association in 1887-93 until the early 1940s, when a truly representative St John body for the whole of the island finally came into being, a succession of stops and restarts marked the progress of both Association and Brigade in Tasmania.

After the withering away of the Launceston Centre during the depression of the 1890s there seems to have been little further St John Ambulance activity in Tasmania until 1906, when T. Storie Dixson, the Deputy Commissioner of the Brigade in New South Wales, rekindled in-

terest in the St John movement during a holiday in Hobart. He called on the Anglican Bishop, the Mayor and the Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. to see if they could renew Tasmanians' keenness for St John Ambulance work. Some time later B. R. Rainsford, the secretary of both the Association and the Brigade in Sydney, also visited Hobart and 'interviewed some of the leading citizens to enlist their sympathy and support'.[63] In 1906-07 Dixson and Rainsford had been very active in New South Wales as well, drumming up support for St John Ambulance in Orange, Lithgow, Bathurst, Goulburn and down the south coast, and their trips to Hobart were an extension of that programme of promotions. In Tasmania their efforts paid off, for both an Association subcentre and a Brigade Division got going in Hobart soon after, each linked to the Sydney St John Ambulance headquarters.

At least one class of first aiders graduated in Hobart before the end of 1906, taught and examined by Hobart doctors approved by the Sydney organization. These were probably Drs R. D. Campbell, Wilfred Giblin and Gregory Sprott, whose names from 1907 began appearing in the returns of the New South Wales Centre. The annual report of the Centre for 1906-07 made brief reference to what the Sydney organization was sponsoring:

> HOBART (TAS.)—At the Y.W.C.A. Hall a very interesting function was held on 29th November last, when certificates issued by the New South Wales Centre were presented to the successful members of the First-Aid Class. The Premier (Hon. J. W. Evans, C.M.G.), in presenting the certificates, took the opportunity to advocate the formation of a local centre, which would encourage the aims of St John A.A. throughout Tasmania.[64]

The following year, 1908, a Brigade Division was formed in Hobart, presumably from among graduates of the classes begun in 1906. It called itself the Hobart Y.M.C.A. Division, and was registered as a division of the New South Wales District on 18 November 1908. Its brief annual report, submitted to District headquarters, enables us to glean a few impressions. Its superintendent was S. N. Bulcraig, its surgeon R. D. Campbell, its 'inspector of stores' P. F. Hooke, and its secretary-treasurer R. A. G. Wise of the Y.M.C.A., where it used to meet. It started off as a small Division with only eight members, six of whom were also reserves in the Army Medical Corps. It met twenty-four times in its first year; the members treated twelve cases, but only two of these on public duty; it raised its own funds from 'donations, concerts etc.'; it was hoping to pick up a few more members from a first aid class about to begin; and it was planning a fund raising drive 'to purchase stretchers, medical haversacks and uniforms without which the Division is heavily handicapped'.[65] The Division continued on for perhaps the next three years with the same leadership, but nothing more is known about it because after its first annual report to Sydney it forwarded no further information about itself.

As well as the Hobart Y.M.C.A. Division of the Brigade, a new Tasmanian Centre of the Association came into being during this period. It arose from a public meeting in Hobart on 19 May 1909, called to form a 'Southern Tasmania Centre', that is a body to cover the Hobart area but not to include the Launceston area. The leading figures behind it seem to have been the Premier, J. W. Evans (whose five-year term had only a couple of months to run), Dr Giblin, Dr Sprott, who was Hobart's Medical Officer of Health and had first lectured to Association classes at Lancaster in England in 1887, and the leaders of the Hobart Y.M.C.A. Division, Bulcraig, Dr Campbell, and Hooke. The meeting voted to establish a Centre. It also elected a Council, with Evans as chairman and Bulcraig as secretary, to produce a constitution and to guide the Centre's affairs. The Council did not meet formally for another seven months, until December 1909, when it voted to adopt the rules of the New South Wales Centre with a few minor alterations to suit local conditions. It seems to have held perhaps two more formal meetings, one in February and maybe another in May 1910, but after that it appears to have lain dormant for another three and a quarter years until World War I brought it out of hibernation. Perhaps it ran more meetings and held more classes than its documents indicate, but there is no record of these: its minute book has a gap from May 1910 until August 1914, which suggests that it was not very lively in the meantime.[66]

What was happening up in Launceston in the meantime? This writer cannot give a complete answer, for, as the previous chapter pointed out, no written records of the 'Northern Tasmania' or 'Launceston' Centre—which styled itself '*the* Tasmanian Centre'—have survived for the period following 1893. Apparently some form of St John Ambulance body existed there, because when Sir James Sleeman, the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, visited Launceston in 1935 he discovered that it had done 'good work' prior to and during the wartime years before 'a regrettable cessation of interest in our work' in 1919 once again forced St John Ambulance into recess in Launceston. Mrs F. Styant-Browne, the secretary 'during the strenuous war years', had been the mainstay of St John in Launceston until then, but no record of what she and her Centre were doing survives apart from this brief reference by Sleeman.[67]

Meanwhile, back in Hobart, where the St John people seem to have been unaware of what their colleagues in Launceston were up to, the Centre for Southern Tasmania continued to be active for most of the war, then it seems to have lost its drive again. There is another gap in its minute book from May 1917 until September 1921. Then it held another seven meetings up to the end of April 1923, when there is another gap in the record, this time for five and a half years. In the nineteen month period 1921-23 two issues preoccupied the Centre. The first was an 'investigat[ion] into the conditions of the Brigade, [in order] to formulate a progressive scheme of activities', as a result of which the Centre decided

to see if it could interest some local firms (Jones and Co., Electrolytic Zinc Co.), the tramways and the fire brigade in raising some 'in house' Divisions. This suggests that the Brigade in Hobart had fallen on hard times. Nothing seems to have come of the idea of starting the industrial Divisions; and, as we will see in a later chapter, another twelve years passed before the Brigade rose again and became securely established in Tasmania during 1835-36.[68]

The second issue to concern the Centre was a scheme whereby the Association would take over the control of the Hobart City Council's ambulance transport service. Sprott and Bulcraig seem to have worked out an agreement with the Town Clerk for doing so. They presented a report on what they were planning to a meeting of the Centre Council in April 1923. After lengthy discussion, however, the Council declined to endorse the scheme. It voted to advise the Town Clerk it was 'not prepared to accept the responsibility of taking over the ambulance work of the city'.[69] Sprott and Bulcraig both resigned within a few days of this decision. That was the end of the Council. It just seems to have collapsed once Sprott and Bulcraig pulled out, for its last meeting was one to consider their resignations.

The Southern Tasmanian Centre arose from its ruins in October-November 1928, but until it did, little St John Ambulance work seems to have occurred. The revival was prompted by the projected visit of a high powered delegation of officials from St John's Gate who were due to tour Australia to review the local St John organizations within the next couple of months. In order to have a Tasmanian establishment for them to inspect Evans (now Sir John Evans and still formally president of the Centre) and Sprott hastily got together a new executive committee for the Association in Tasmania. This was elected at a public meeting Evans and Sprott called in the Hobart Town Hall on 4 October 1928. The public showed little interest in the meeting, since only twenty people attended it; but one glimmer of hope for the future was an inquiry from a Launceston woman, Mrs Mary Robson, who could not be present but asked through a friend 'if there was any possibility of the Hobart Centre forming a branch at Launceston or taking some action to resuscitate the Northern Centre'. The meeting resolved to contact Mrs Robson with a view to reactivating St John Ambulance work in Launceston; and it decided that the question of having just a Southern Tasmanian Centre or a Centre for the whole island was something worth looking at further. It then got down to the business of electing a six-man provisional committee to draw up a new constitution.[70]

Even though few people attended Evans' and Sprott's public meeting, the Hobart *Mercury* made sure the public knew what benefits they might derive from a revitalized St John Ambulance organization. In an editorial that day it lamented the sorry situation into which the ambulance movement had fallen:

> It is a matter for surprise and regret that more attention is not given to ambulance training in Tasmania. There is supposed to be a branch of the St. John Ambulance Association in Hobart, but in recent times it has not functioned properly, and is virtually a dead letter . . . Tasmania lags sadly behind other parts of the world in its neglect of ambulance training. Throughout the British Isles there is a network of centres and brigades of the St. John Ambulance Association, with particularly strong representation in the industrial districts. Nearer home, all states on the mainland have active [St John] Ambulance branches . . . In factories and workshops, at racing, football and other sports gatherings, and among big crowds, there is a sense of security in the knowledge that ambulance workers are at hand in case of emergency . . . With energetic ambulance branches in our midst it would be possible to do much useful work in the protection of health and life . . . Because of the immense benefit to be derived from having live ambulance branches in operation in all important centres of population, it is trusted that the movement to resuscitate the Hobart branch will meet with strong support and every success.[71]

With at least that vote of confidence in the value of what they were attempting, the six-man provisional committee got to work under Sprott's chairmanship. It met several times over the next six weeks. Apart from the constitution it produced it was notable for the introduction to St John Ambulance work it gave to one bright young medical practitioner. This was the thirty-eight year old Dr Thomas Goddard, who would later become a St John personality of almost heroic proportions. (He had been the director of the Red Cross Society for Tasmania for eleven years; he would be District Superintendent, Assistant Commissioner and Commissioner of the Brigade for Tasmania in turn over a twenty-one year period; he would be chairman of the Association Centre for twenty years and then president of the Council that superseded it for another eight; and in addition to all this he was the local president of the Alliance Francaise for twenty years, as well as the first Tasmanian to become a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.) This time the Tasmanians got things right. They produced a constitution, albeit for a Southern Tasmanian Centre, which a further public meeting on 14 November approved. The provisional committee became the substantive committee; Sprott continued as chairman; Evans continued as president of the Centre; and this time round the Centre managed to stay permanently in business. Things were looking up in Launceston as well, for Mary Robson was getting a class together up there and the next year would become secretary of a new Northern Tasmanian Centre. The president of the revived Northern or Launceston Centre was Dr John Ramsay, and the Treasurer was Mr L. A. Cuff. They and their committee were soon running classes not only in Launceston but in Deloraine, Burnie, Railton, Devonport, Ulverstone, Wynyard, St Helens and on Flinders Island. Over the next eight years some 760 people gained first aid certificates as a result, providing a pool of trained people from amongst whom members of Launceston's first Brigade Divisions would soon be drawn.[72]

These events have taken us well beyond the outbreak of World War I,

but that has been necessary to indicate the halting development of the St John Ambulance institution in Tasmania. There is a lack of specific detail in what we have learnt, and that is a result of the fragmentary documentary record the early St John Ambulance organizations in Tasmania left behind. The oral testimony for the early years is similarly sparse, and none of the 'old identities' of the St John movement in Tasmania know much about what happened in it before the 1930s. This possibly reflects the spasmodic nature of the St John Ambulance bodies in the era before 1928.

Without a complete historical record we can only speculate on the malaise that afflicted the St John organizations that came and went in the movement's first forty years in Tasmania. Perhaps its continual starting and stopping was a function of population. Thus, in 1906, the year when the first Hobart sub-centre formed, Tasmania had a total population of about 183,000, while Hobart's population was little more than 40,000. It was at this time, as we have seen, that the Adelaide Centre of the Association was pondering the possibilities of starting up the Brigade in South Australia, and making very heavy going of it. If Adelaide (whose population of 175,000 was about the same as that of all Tasmania) was having trouble getting a Division launched then perhaps it was too much to hope that Hobart (with about two fifths of Adelaide's population) might keep a Division afloat. Even bustling provincial industrial and commercial centres like Newcastle, Wollongong and Geelong were fairly slow off the mark as far as Brigade Divisions went, and they, too, were bigger towns than either Hobart or Launceston.

Parochialism compounded the problems of small population. In all the deliberations of the Southern Tasmanian Centre of the Association from 1909 until 1923 there is not a single mention of the nothern region of the island. Nor is there any reference to the former Tasmanian Centre, that based on Launceston a couple of decades previously in the late 1880s and 90s. If the Hobart Centre did try to overcome the problem of a small potential clientele by seeking to bring Launceston back within the St John fold it has left no record of that.

There is a possibility that St John Ambulance work failed to make headway because there were too many competitors in the field. Did the militia ambulance units siphon off energy that might otherwise have strengthened the Brigade? Since six out of the eight members of original Tasmanian Brigade division were also in the militia ambulance perhaps the war tipped the balance against the Brigade. Perhaps municipal and hospital-based ambulance transport facilities provided a release for men who might otherwise have found their outlet in the St John organizations. Tasmania's Railway Ambulance Brigade would also have drained off a considerable reservoir of talent and energy which in other States fed the St John organizations. The R.A.B. of Tasmania was a vigorous, well organized and experienced body. In 1928, for example, it held its fourth

competition in first aid with teams from Hobart, Launceston and Devonport vying keenly for the Railways Department Shield; and that year the Launceston unit treated 450 cases requiring first aid, the Hobart unit 288, and the Devonport unit 100. That year, too, the R.A.B. regretted the fact that none of its members could earn certificates because the St John Ambulance Association seemed to be defunct.[73] In thus failing to forge the strong bonds with the railway ambulance that St John bodies elsewhere boasted, the Tasmanian St John organization had neglected a willing ally who would have strengthened it greatly.

The heaviest burden the Southern Tasmanian Centre had to bear, however, was its own leadership. Its early executive committees appear to have been wanting in vision, and initiative. From time to time they managed to get classes together and to have them taught, examined and certificated, but that seems to have been their only accomplishment. They talked of doing other things—of despatching a team of ambulancers to the war, of establishing industrial Divisions of the Brigade, of creating bonds with the mainland St John organizations, even of taking over the Hobart ambulance transport service. But nothing much came from all the talk, and on the one occasion when they had the opportunity of taking a bold, challenging step—assuming control of ambulance transport in Hobart—they drew back. The result of that display of timidity was that they lost their most able and dedicated workers, Sprott and Bulcraig. At the same time they were singularly unfortunate in their secretaries. The minutes of meetings were brief almost to the point of incomprehensibility; they were a poor record of events, omitting some important motions and providing an inadequate record of others; and they were both untidy and poorly spelt.[74] That Sir John Evans as president of the Council and as former Premier should have tolerated such sloppiness is surprising, that is unless talent was so scarce he had no choice. Not surprisingly, then, neither Association nor Brigade made much headway in Tasmania until Sprott and Goddard took charge of things and brought to the organization the bearings and drive they had always lacked under earlier leadership.

4 *The St John ambulance transport services*

For a long time St John Ambulance to people in some States of Australia has meant above all their local ambulance transport service. In Western Australia, where the St John organization now runs the State ambulance service, the St John Ambulance Association Centre began its involvement in 1922, when it took over control of the Perth ambulance service from the fire brigade. In South Australia, too, the St John organization conducts the State ambulance service, which, as in Western Australia, it entered through taking over the city ambulances in 1952. More recently in the Northern Territory the St John organization progressively assum-

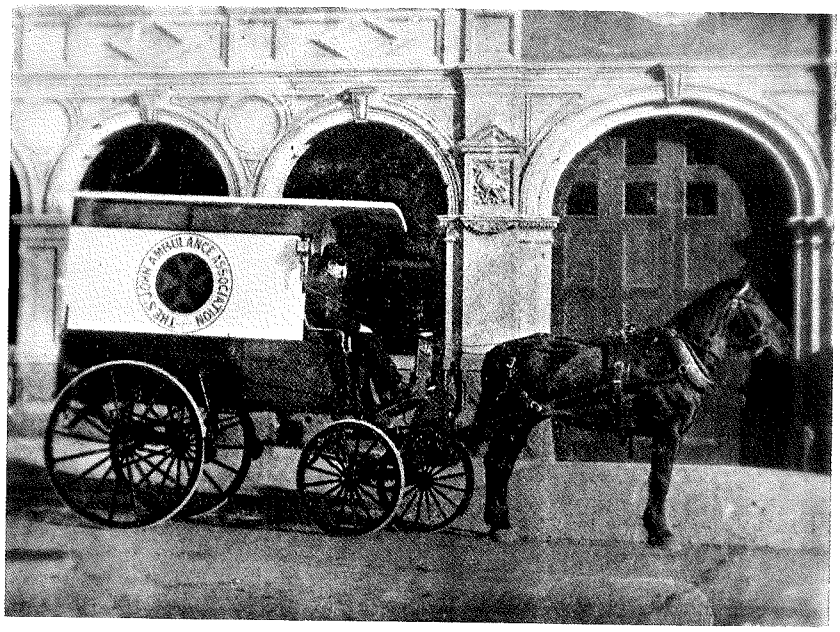
ed control of the Territory's ambulance services in the wake of Cyclone Tracy in December 1974; and for a time in Tasmania, 1959-65, St John conducted the ambulance services in the Hobart region.

In two other States as well St John was once synonymous with ambulance transport. In Melbourne, where the Association started off with Ashford litters in 1897-98, the 'St John ambulances' comprised the city's ambulance transport system until 1916. In Sydney, the Brigade had responsibility for the city's ambulance transport after it absorbed the Civil Ambulance and Transport Brigade as a corps in 1904, an arrangement that lasted until 1919. Both these ventures were important developments in the evolution of St John Ambulance organizations in Australia up to the First World War, for though neither stood the test of time each pointed the way ahead for St John bodies in the States where ambulance transport did become a successful St John endeavour. For a time they also brought the Victorian and New South Wales St John organizations public prominence and popularity; and, if anyone was heeding the signs, their failure provided a caution to future ambulance operators and councils of St John.

(a) *The St John ambulances in Melbourne*

The ambulance service the Victorian Centre began was laughably primitive compared to the high-technology, computerized, radio controlled motor fleets and aerial units with life support systems and paramedical specialists that are part and parcel of modern ambulance services. Its first ambulance was a horse drawn vehicle rather like the bakers' carts that still plied the streets of some Australian cities in the late 1950s. The ambulance, borrowed from the Defence Department, began its service in 1899, operating out of the Eastern Hill fire station. The following year the Centre was able to buy its own horse ambulance for £99/15/-, assisted by a £90 donation from a group of women calling themselves the 'Daughters of the Court'. (Their number included Mrs L. J. Bevan, a 'High Dame' of the Order, and Mrs Neild, wife of Dr James Neild, the founder of the Victorian Centre and now its president.) The service ran at an impressive loss: the Centre was £67/5/- out of pocket after it had met its £110/14/- costs because it was able to collect only £43/9/- from patients. On the other hand the ambulance had proved a great popular success. In its first year it answered 400 calls, compared with 200 calls the year before on the Ashford litter that had preceded it.[75]

At first the Centre ran the ambulance service through the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, whose chief officer doubled up as ambulance superintendent. In the first year the M.F.B. charged the Centre £100 to conduct the service; the second year it charged £350; then it announced that it wished to withdraw from the service at the end of 1902. The Centre Council asked the Salvation Army to take the place of the M.F.B., but they were not interested. For a short time, in early 1903, a Mr A. J. Nance conducted



40 The first of Melbourne's horse-drawn ambulances, 1904

the service for the Council from an ice works near Queen's Bridge for £6 a week, then it called tenders for someone to operate the service under contract. The successful tenderers were Fiske Brothers, livery stables proprietors at the corner of Queen and Lonsdale Streets, who undertook to run it from their premises for £200 a year, with the proviso that their drivers would take a first aid course.[76]

During 1903 Fiske Bros. took on a former warrant officer from the Boer War, Harry Osgood-Cannon, more recently a member of the Army Medical Corps, to supervise the service. Then when the Centre Council called for tenders in 1905 he put a bid which secured him the contract. The deal was that he would get £475 a year plus a 10 per cent commission on takings from patients' fees over £500 and a 20 per cent commission on takings over £600, and when a trip over 7 miles (11.2 kilometres) was done he would receive 25 per cent of the cost of horse hire. In return he had to supply the horses for the two ambulance wagons the Council now owned, and provide accommodation for the service, which he ran from a building in Lang Lane (off Bourke Street, behind the Grand Hotel). He won further contracts as the service expanded, took on further horse ambulances, then acquired motor ambulances, and set up branches in the Prahran-South Yarra and Ascot Vale-Essendon areas. In 1913 the Council terminated his current contract, and took control of the service directly via a sub-committee headed by the Centre's assistant treasurer, A. H. Hansford. Osgood-Cannon, who was also superintendent of the

Metropolitan Division of the Brigade, stayed on under the new management as the chief ambulance officer.[77]

Osgood-Cannon's contract with the Council, with its allowances for commissions and mileage bonuses, would seem to have been one that would have enabled an unscrupulous operator to milk off a handsome profit. That does not seem to have happened, however. Thus, for example, in 1909-10 a third of all calls the ambulances answered turned out to be 'charity cases', where the patient failed to pay, and another 3 per cent were hoax calls. Indeed there was more work than the service could handle that year: there was 'such a strain on the available carriages that several calls could not be attended to'.[78] Osgood-Cannon therefore does not appear to have had any need to create work, and his high rate of bad debts limited his earning potential.

The service Osgood-Cannon developed, moreover, gave good value for money to those who did pay. He and the Council earned the appreciation of the Melbourne community through the efficiency of the service they provided. The pile of 'fan mail' mounted steadily as 'many letters of gratitude [were] received from patients for the skilful and careful way they [had] been treated'.[79] Just how good the service was became obvious on Easter Monday 1908 after the Sunshine rail disaster on Melbourne's western fringes. Early that morning a passenger train crowded with holiday makers from Bendigo crashed at full speed into the back of a train from Ballarat. Forty-four people were killed or died from injuries. All four ambulances and their crews galloped the twelve kilometres out to Sunshine, where they were kept hard at work for eight hours treating and ferrying the injured to hospital. In this the first civilian disaster an Australian Branch of St John Ambulance had to cope with, Osgood-Cannon's 'contract' teams acquitted themselves most creditably, bringing honour to the organization that sponsored them.[80]

Partly as a result of the teams' reputation for efficient service, and partly because Melbourne's need for their services grew apace with its own population and increasing volume of motor traffic, the work of the ambulances continued to expand. By 1910 the Council found it necessary to place an order for its first motor ambulance to handle the increasing flow of business. This vehicle, powered by a 2-Cylinder '10-14' horsepower engine on a Renault chassis, was supplied by Kellow Motors for £400. Known as 'the Lady Carmichael' after the wife of the Governor of the day (Sir Thomas Gibson-Carmichael), who 'christened' it in a ceremony at the Melbourne Town Hall, it came into service on 25 October 1910. It was a graceful, noble machine. With its St John Ambulance emblem gracing its panelling as regally as a crown on some majestic brow, it was the pride of the St John movement in Victoria; and like the first horse ambulance it was an immediate success.[81]

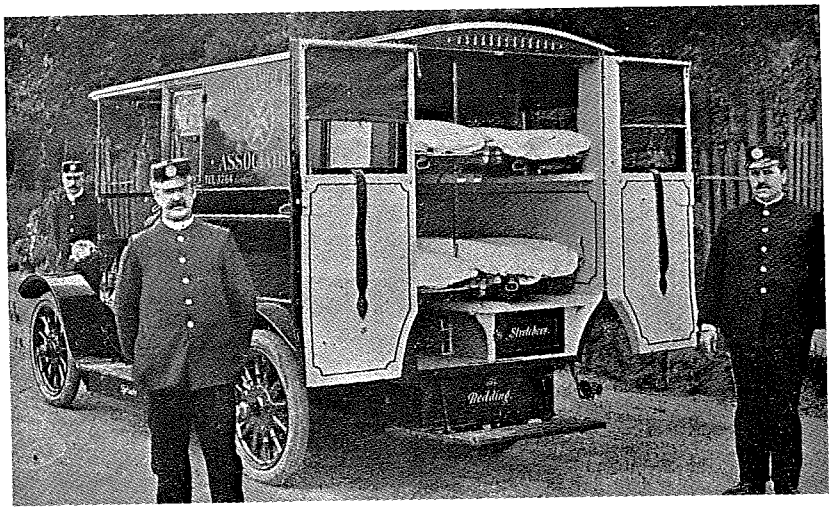
In its first six months 'the Lady Carmichael' answered 694 calls and ran 11,894 kilometres. In the year to that point the five horse ambulances had

41 Two of the horse-drawn ambulances run by the Victorian Centre, St John Ambulance Association, 1906

averaged 856 calls and 10,302 kilometres each. These figures meant that a horse ambulance could expect to travel only 86 per cent of the distances of the motor ambulance and to carry but 62 per cent of its quota of patients. The amount of work kept steadily increasing: at the end of the next year, 1911, the number of calls had risen 11 per cent (to 5585) and the distance rose 9.5 per cent (to 69,412 kilometres). Not surprisingly, the Centre brought into action a second motor ambulance in September 1911, and then a third in March 1913.[82]

The Council's debts were also mounting, keeping pace with the increase in business. A profit of £77/5/5 in its ambulance service account in 1907-08 became a loss of £94/3/10 by 1911-12. The Council covered the deficit by transferring money into the account from profits from first aid teaching. But first aid classes could not subsidise the booming ambulance service indefinitely. When the Council purchased the third motor ambulance to keep up with the rising number of calls, now increasingly coming from Ballarat, Portsea and other towns well beyond the metropolitan fringes, it hastened what was becoming an irreversible slide into debt. A government grant of £250 a year and a City Council grant of £75 only slowed the drift for a while. The service the Council had created had succeeded too well: it had grown so fast that Council's rudimentary financial machinery could not cope with the accounting work-load. The administrative changes of 1913, when Hansford's sub-committee assumed control, could not halt the drift into debt, which quickened in 1915 when the service became responsible for moving wounded soldiers returned from distant battlefields. To handle this newest duty the service borrowed private motor cars, but it still had to pay for fuel and for drivers.[83]

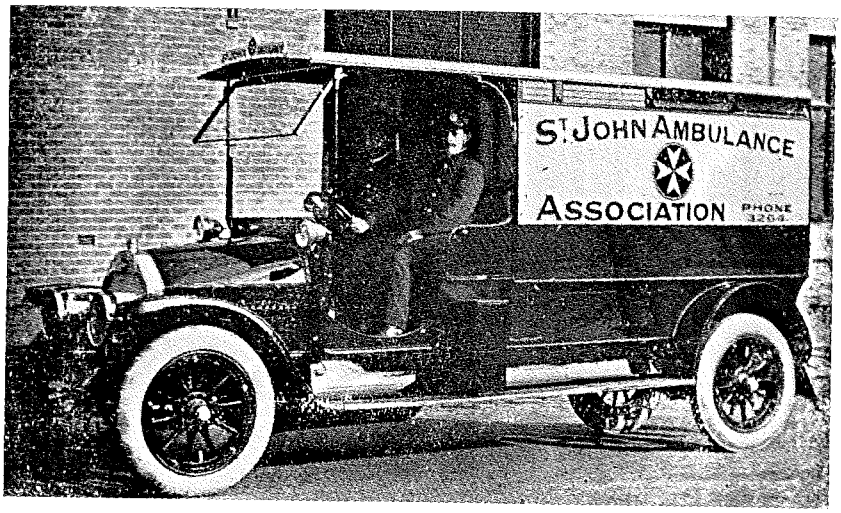
By June 1916 the ambulance service was close to bankruptcy. One



42 Melbourne's first motor ambulance, 1914; the ambulance superintendent, H. A. Osgood-Cannon, is at the front, left

viewpoint on the Council was that of the treasurer, A. P. Sykes, who argued that 'as a commercial proposition we were a failure, and there is no reason why he should lose further time— and he had given so much of it—to the service'.[84] He instructed Hansford to close the service down by August. The contrary viewpoint, maintained by H. Wardale-Greenwood, the Council secretary, and—as might have been expected—Osgood-Cannon, was that they were obliged to continue with it. The latter pair urged Hansford to disobey the treasurer's order. Hansford's solution was to keep the service going, but outside the St John framework. He managed to borrow sufficient cash in small personal loans to hold off the debtors for a few weeks more while he formed a provisional committee of management to take the service over. The provisional committee was entirely composed of St John people. Hansford was chairman, while the others were Osgood-Cannon, who stayed on as chief officer until his death in 1930; the incoming Association Council secretary, J. H. Lord; Dr Charles Bage, a former chairman and later president of the Council; Dr R. L. McAdam, a later president of the Council; and Miss M. G. Bell, also a member of the Council.[85]

The new body Hansford created took the name Victorian Civil Ambulance Service, and he remained its president until he retired twenty-one years later in 1937. He did not sever his ties with the Asociation Council. He took over as its treasurer and retained that position for the next nineteen years; he was also treasurer of the Association's 'Central Council for Australia', which enjoyed a brief life from 1925 until 1932; and he became a Knight of St John in 1925. The Association and the V.C.A.S.



43 Melbourne's second motor ambulance, 1914

continued their close links at least until World War II, by maintaining cross-membership on their respective councils, by helping promote the St John Ambulance Brigade, which also maintained high-level cross-membership with the V.C.A.S., and by sharing accommodation. But despite these close bonds, the St John organization and the V.C.A.S. were now structurally separate, and so it was to be expected that as time went on they would drift apart.[86]

The caesarean birth of the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service could not have taken place without considerable anguish and loss of blood on the part of the parent. Though the records of the St John parent body were shy of the issue, it is not difficult, reading between the lines, to imagine that the birth pangs were severe. Perhaps one manifestation of the painful birth was a shuffling of positions in the executive of the Association Council. Sykes, a respected businessman, departed from the scene, Hansford, who had disobeyed his instructions, took his place. Wardale-Greenwood, who had been on the opposite side to Sykes in the debate over the future of the ambulance service, went too. His place was taken by Lord. Dr J. W. Springthorpe, the president of the Council, who had become Victoria's first Knight of St John in 1913, stepped down. Bage took his place. One can only guess at the mortification and acrimony that might have attended these movements. Perhaps a further sign that the whole episode had caused embarrassment all round was that the next annual report—usually a chatty, newsy document—skirted around the subject of the loss of the ambulance service. Its only mention of what had happened was a brief reference in a paragraph on finance:

> Practically the whole balance in hand is at present unavailable for furthering first aid work in the State owing to the Association having to guarantee the bank overdraft on the Ambulance Service. The Council trusts that the Queen Competition and Carnival now being held will result in the overdraft being liquidated and the money released for the furtherance of the Association's work of teaching first aid and kindred subjects in districts where this knowledge would be most useful.[87]

Donations, queen quests, carnivals and other fund raising enabled the Council to pay off the £951 overdraft by February 1918. It still ended that year with a deficit of £153/11/-; but unencumbered by the ambulance service it would be able to survive on its accumulated funds and to avert the bankruptcy which had threatened it earlier.[88]

Strangely, the financial crisis enabled both the St John Ambulance bodies and the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service to gain strength through the popular support they jointly rallied as they desperately struggled to free themselves from the financial mire. Hansford, a city lawyer, flung himself into the task of saving both St John Ambulance and his fledgling V.C.A.S. He later wrote a short book describing how he pulled them both free:

> In 1917 we embarked on a long series of money-raising endeavours and I always consider the years 1917 and 1918 as my Soap Box Era. We had a very numerous band of helpers whose activities covered many operations for which a modern Attorney-General would order a prosecution. We raffled houses, suites of furniture, jewellery and china. We had a dancing floor—quite a failure. We had balls, card parties, a 'Yankee Sweat' machine in full operation, tugs-of-war, competitions of all kinds and a great Queen of Victoria Carnival. If you remember that all this was in the amazingly active period of the war, you will understand how it was that we could then enlist the services of hundreds of people who were craving for outlets to their energies . . .
>
> It devolved upon me to do the public speaking and I spoke from soap boxes and lorries and band stands and platforms and theatre stages. Once I addressed an audience from a chair in Bourke Street. The passers-by were not interested and trams rumbled me down. That did not matter to our helpers, for as soon as I ended they attacked the crowd with their collection boxes. I think that in my Soap Box Era I spoke from everything excepting a pulpit and if that idea had occurred to the general committee I would have had to carry out orders . . .[89]

Melbourne's ambulance organizations were by then imprinting themselves on the public mind. Borne aloft by the enthusiasm of their loyal supporters, they emerged from the mess morally, if not financially, stronger.

Hansford's fortitude in saving the ambulance service calls forth analogies with the battles of earlier Knights of St John, bringing to mind the epic struggles of the Grand Masters that still inspire toilers within the St John movement—de Villiers' retreat from Acre, de L'isle Adam's defence of Rhodes, de la Valette's unyielding resistance on Malta. If ever an Australian deserved his knighthood in the Order along with that illustrious throng it was the now-forgotten Melbourne lawyer, for not only

had he saved the ambulance service but he had saved the face of the St John organization as well. From his efforts Melbourne and Victoria got their modern ambulance service, while the St John organization was seen to keep faith with the public. He managed things so that the public thought the restructuring of the service was a simple St John-inspired administrative rearrangement, without their ever guessing that St John had become a notable casualty of its own managerial and financial ineptitude. Perhaps it was the public's right to know; but on this occasion it was all well for St John that they did not, for with hands and face kept clean the St John organizations could get down to what they were best at—training people in first aid and providing a voluntary first aid service.

One nagging question remains from this happy ending: why was the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service able to survive closely allied to but separate from St John Ambulance when virtually the same service run by the same people was a failure when it was a part of St John? There are no ready answers, though one can speculate. By 1915-16 the ambulance service was a complex, thriving business. It was no longer a simple charity that could run on a haphazard financial basis of donations and collections. It had developed fast into what modern ambulance organizations have become—a business enterprise which, to survive, must keep up with the latest technology, must employ modern management techniques, and must be possessed of an efficient financial apparatus for raising funds, collecting debts, and for overseeing accounting operations. Its rapid growth was probably too fast to allow the St John Council to evolve suitable managerial and financial machinery to operate the astoundingly successful enterprise it had almost unwittingly launched. Only when Hansford and his allies reorganized the service under siege conditions did it begin to acquire a more adequate set of machinery. By then, of course, the service was no longer part of the St John organization, although they retained strong affinitive ties. Outside St John, moreover, the V.C.A.S. was able to devote itself wholly to its one role, whereas inside the St John structure it had to compete with other St John bodies for the attention of the parent Council. The period 1910 to 1916, when the Council got into financial difficulties through the ambulance service, was also a time when it was trying hard to stimulate interest in the formation of Brigade Divisions. On top of that came an explosive increase in first aid and home nursing training as soon as the war began. The Council simply was not able to cope with the extraordinary pressures of an expanding ambulance service, a Brigade of multiplying Divisions, and a training programme suddenly handling astronomical numbers of classes and pupils. Was it a misfortune for St John to lose the ambulance service in Melbourne? That is a question we will not attempt to probe, though the present strength of the St John Ambulance movement in those States where the name of St John is still identified with the ambulance transport service does suggest some answers.

(b) *Sydney's St John ambulances*

An earlier section of this chapter told how the Civil Ambulance and Transport Brigade of Sydney and the St John Ambulance Brigade resolved to end their rivalry by amalgamating in 1904, with the former becoming the Civil Ambulance and Transport Corps of the latter. The merger dated formally from 1 May 1904, though negotiations had been going on for at least two years, almost indeed since the SJAB itself had come into formal existence.[90]

Under the agreement between the two bodies the CATC became responsible for 'all public work within the city and such suburbs as may be agreed upon'; that is, it would do all the ambulance transport work, leaving the SJAB divisions to do the voluntary public first aid duties at sporting matches and other public gatherings. The division of labour thus seemed unambiguous in principle, even if things did not work out that way in practice.[91]

Rather more anomalous was the structure of the new combined body. The secretary of the CATB, Leonard Dobbin, became district superintendent secretary of the SJAB; Herbert Priestley of the CATB became district superintendent treasurer of the SJAB; a member of the CATB's medical committee, Dr Sydney Jamieson, became the district chief surgeon of the SJAB. With them on the new SJAB executive were Dr G. Lane Mullins as the SJAB Commissioner of Australia, Dr A. E. Perkins as its Medical Officer in Chief, Dr T. Storie Dixson as Deputy Commissioner for the New South Wales District, and Dr J. A. Liebmann (a member of the St John Ambulance Association's South African branch who had migrated to Australia at the end of the Boer War) as district chief superintendent. In addition to their senior officers the CATB brought five Divisions into the SJAB—Balmain and Newtown Ambulance Divisions, and Balmain, Newtown and Headquarters Nursing Divisions—with a combined strength of 124, which boosted existing SJAB numbers to 299. All this was straightforward enough, but the root of future difficulties lay in the fact that as a corps within the SJAB the CATC retained much of its former autonomy. Its former executive committee stayed on holus-bolus as its finance committee with exactly the same structure of president, vice-presidents, treasurer, secretary and so on. Moreover the finance committee remained elected by its subscribers, only twenty of whom constituted a quorum. This point perhaps emphasised how different the CATB and the SJAB really were. The former was and remained a mutual provident society of people jointly subscribing to provide themselves with an ambulance service which would carry non-subscribers as well for a fee. The SJAB, on the other hand, consisted of amateur first aid and nursing trainees who were volunteering their services to the community. Under the merger each body retained its distinctive character; and so while the SJAB might have swallowed the CATB it had by no means absorbed it.[92]

Evidence of the separateness of the Brigade and the CATC was not hard to find. CATC members continued to obey their own rule book, albeit contained in SJAB covers. The CATC continued to conduct its own annual meetings and to publish its own annual reports. Its affairs were often written up in the newspapers under the heading 'Civil Ambulance' rather than 'St John Ambulance Brigade'—a fact which bothered the London headquarters of the Brigade Overseas. It also retained its own emblems, even though it displayed these in conjunction with the SJAB badge. It used either the now familiar plain red cross or a modified red Maltese cross (a cross with a shallow angle between the points of each arm, with a disc at the junction of the arms), and these devices featured prominently on its ambulance stations, wagons and equipment.[93]

With the CATC maintaining itself as a discrete entity in this way, it was perhaps surprising that the union lasted as long as nineteen years. The marriage was certainly never an easy one, and the discord between then was fairly continuous. The most serious disagreements were over money, but there were other difficulties that remained unresolved.

A hint that there might be troubles ahead came out of the joint meeting in April 1904, at which both bodies ratified their agreement with the merger. Dobbin, in formally moving the motion for union, said that 'the influence of the two societies amalgamated would be greatly increased'. There was some dissenting opinion within his own CATB ranks, however, for a member of his Newtown branch proposed that the meeting adjourn for a fortnight so that CATB members could think more carefully about what they were letting themselves in for. After some debate the meeting voted for Dobbin's motion by a big majority. The dissentient minority did not simply disappear. It remained on within the CATC, and some of its number never really accepted their transfer into the SJAB fold. So there came into the Brigade an element which Storie Dixson described as 'intensely democratic', one that disliked the rank-conscious Brigade organization, that distrusted the St John connections with the English parent body, and that felt ill at ease with the aristocratic ethos pervading the Order of St John. One of the earliest letters Storie Dixson wrote to the London headquarters of the Brigade Overseas on becoming the head figure in the New South Wales Brigade District was to point out to his St John's Gate superiors that this ginger group had to be treated 'with great tact as well as firmness': they could not be as easily subjected to Brigade discipline as the headquarters officials of the Brigade Overseas might like.[94]

The financial problems arose early in the marriage. Both partners depended on whatever they could raise through their own efforts; and even though both occasionally made public noises about the government's obligation to help out, government never seemed to hear. The CATC did at least have a regular income from its subscribers' con-

tributions, but its costs were higher, too: purchasing, housing and maintaining ambulances, be they horse wagons or motor vans, was more expensive than kitting out a division of first aid volunteers. Even when a CATC Division had a long list of subscribers and generous donors there was always a fear that its funds might dry up. The CATC was therefore jealous of all possible sources of funds, and consequently resented the revenue raising efforts of the Brigade's non-CATC Divisions. Particularly in districts where a strong non-CATC Division existed side by side with a CATC branch—for example, Glebe and Balmain—the CATC wanted to see fund raising by the non-CATC Divisions restricted. Lane Mullins as Commissioner soon gave way to CATC pressure here and decreed that 'no collections should be made by Brigade Divisions in the city and suburbs for their support, and if by concerts or other means they obtained money, 75 per cent of the profits would have to go to the Civil Ambulance'.[95]

The Commissioner's decision, as Storie Dixson later remarked, caused 'a cyclone . . . to break over the Brigade'. The latter pointed out its effects in a lecture he delivered to a Brigade audience fourteen years afterwards:

> Though not the intention of the Commissioner, the destruction of certain Divisions was threatened thereby; the Civil Ambulance and Transport Divisions alone would survive in the city and near suburbs . . . It seemed impossible for me to get the members to understand that in the interest of discipline I had to insist on the order being carried out, and that though I did not conceal my lack of sympathy with it, faith must unflinchingly be kept with the Civil Ambulance, for I would never tolerate any attempt to repudiate an agreement. The order did not achieve its possible purpose of strengthening financially the C.A. & T.C., but sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind of jealousy. It was for me truly like steering a ship through coral reefs during a gale.[96]

The disharmony between the CATC and the ordinary Brigade Divisions became obvious in a number of directions. First, they watched each other's fund raising operations suspiciously. They were never loth to complain to Storie Dixson or to Rainsford if they thought their territory was being encroached upon. In 1917, for instance, the Randwick Division protested that a female collector from a nearby Newtown CATC Division had been collecting in Randwick 'under false pretences', soliciting donations for the local ambulance.[97] Occasionally the CATC and Brigade even brawled publicly. Thus, in 1914, a provisional committee for a 'Northern Suburbs branch' of the CATC, which still had not formed but which had nevertheless been raising money for a motor ambulance, went public over a bazaar the Northern Sydney Division was running. It had an article placed in the *Daily Telegraph*. This said the committee

> 'regrets that considerable misunderstanding has been occasioned on the north shore by another body entering the field quite recently, and stating they also are collecting to provide ambulance facilities for the district; and the original committee deems it advisable to caution the charitably-disposed to make quite

clear, if approached for a donation, to whom they are giving and for what object, before opening their purse strings'.[98]

Rainsford entered the fray on behalf of the North Sydney Division. He wrote a letter-to-the-editor that the Division's fund raising was quite regular, and was for the purchase of uniforms and equipment the Division needed in order to continue providing the community with its accustomed high standard of first aid service. The CATC secretary, J. Cameron, replied to Rainsford's letter, claiming that the Division's fund raising activities were delaying the day when the north shore suburbs would have their own motor ambulance. An ambulance, he said, was a more urgent priority than the first aid at football matches provided by the North Sydney Division. He then gave the bayonet an extra twist by pointing out that 'in some Divisions the members take such an enthusiastic interest in their hobby that their uniforms and kits are purchased at their own expense, without asking the public to contribute in any way'.[99]

The north shore eventually got its CATC motor ambulance, but that did not lessen the antagonism between the North Sydney Division and the CATC. This was obvious in 1917 when Cameron wrote a strong protest to Rainsford over an incident concerning a patient two members of the Division had transported. They had been on voluntary after-hours service at the Crows Nest ambulance station, doing the evening shift after the full time CATC ambulance officers had knocked off. A call then came in from a local doctor, who wanted an ambulance to take a child with diphtheria from its home to hospital. Without ringing an off-duty driver to come on duty to handle the case, and apparently eager to take the case themselves, they set out with a two-wheeled litter. They collected their patient and wheeled it to the Royal North Shore Hospital, only to find that there was no bed available. The hospital's medical superintendent then rang the CATC drivers, who came on duty in the motor ambulance and drove the patient to the Children's Hosptial. The CATC was enfuriated by the act of 'piracy' by the two members of the North Sydney Division. Cameron informed Rainsford that the matter had caused 'friction likely to disturb the very friendly relations that should now exist between the Brigade and Corps'.[100]

This incident underlined a problem that was to become a sensitive area in the relationship between the Brigade and the emerging ambulance transport services in every State. In earlier days, before the development of comprehensive ambulance transport services, the ambulance movement had been undifferentiated: anyone with an interest in first aid and nursing was *ipso facto* an 'ambulancer' by virtue of the possession of a St John Ambulance first aid certificate. Nor was there any specialization with ambulance work: all ambulancers were trained both to deliver first aid and to lift, carry and transport patients. However, once permanent ambulance transport services coalesced from amongst the various

organizations with an interest in ambulancing, (as was now happening in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane if not elsewhere in Australia) a full time professional first aider—the ambulance officer—emerged. As salaried ambulancers who practised first aid for living, the ambulance officers developed pride in their knowledge and skills. They certainly practised their craft more frequently than ordinary Brigade members, who might be on public duty for a only a few hours each weekend and might treat only a handful of cases each year. The ambulance officers came to regard themselves as professional paramedics, and as such could condescend to the amateurs of the Brigade Divisions. And so a cleavage opened up between paid and voluntary staff.[101] It is one that has survived, and in every State can still create difficulties even where relations between volunteers and full time ambulance officers are the most harmonious.

Storie Dixson petitioned the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas about these problems with the CATC. When Lane Mullins' position as Commissioner of Australia disappeared in 1912 he managed to have revoked Mullins' decree protecting CATC fund raising. That removed at least one source of bitterness on the side of the non-CATC Divisions. However, the disagreements between the CATC and the Brigade continued to the end, that is until they began extracting themselves from their union in 1919.[102]

That a separation should occur between the CATC and the SJAB is an idea which the London headquarters of the Brigade Overseas seems to have suggested first. As early as 1913 St John's Gate was coaxing Storie Dixson in that direction. The Deputy Commissioner for the Brigade Overseas, W. H. Morgan, wrote to Dixson to point out that the ambulance movement should be looked on as consisting of two distinct parts, one concerned with transport, the other involving voluntary first aid and nursing. 'The need for both first aid and transport being worked in separate departments is not sufficiently realised in New South Wales', Morgan wrote, 'and until this fact is fully recognised the work of the Brigade will not progress within the Commonwealth'.[103] What London was obliquely suggesting to the New South Wales leader of the Brigade was that ambulance transport was a distraction from a real work of the Brigade. The inference was that the Brigade should perhaps leave the running of ambulances to bodies specially constituted for doing so, and should concentrate its efforts on voluntary first aiding.

Six years later, with Storie Dixson still communicating his problems to London, the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, J. C. Dalton, was even more explicit than Morgan had been. In a long letter to Sydney just after the end of the World War I Dalton stated his views on the Brigade's involvement in ambulance transport frankly:

> It is not suitable for Divisions of the Brigade to be attached to, or form part of organization such as the Civil Ambulance and Transport Corps, which has its

> own officers and paid staff, who with few exceptions are not members of, nor in any way connected to the St. John Ambulance Brigade Overseas . . .
> The same difficulty arose in this country between the Invalid Transport Corps at St. John's Gate and the Districts of the Home Brigade. The fear was that the Brigade units in seeking financial assistance would trespass upon the preserves of the Transport Corps. In practice this was proved to be fallacious, as the Divisions were found to tap a source of supply from which the Transport Corps received no assistance nor was likely to receive any assistance whatever. It was only when the two were properly separated that we had peace.
> Experience shows that an efficient Transport Service is an expensive undertaking, which cannot as a rule be supported wholly out of fees and voluntary contributions, especially when a large amount of free transport is done . . .
> Divisions of the Brigade undertake and have many important duties, which they can and should perform quite apart from Transport. Efficient First Aid promptly rendered often does away with the need of transport.[104]

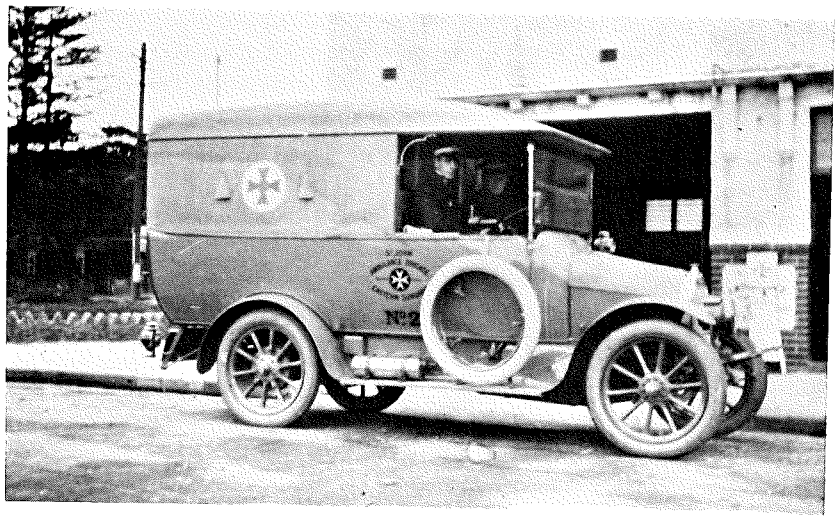
Perhaps it was this unabashed opinion that persuaded Storie Dixson to seek a separation between the Brigade and the CATC. An occasion to do so was appearing at the very time he received Dalton's advice. A catastrophic epidemic of pneumonic influenza had arrived in Australia towards the end of that year, 1918, and was sweeping the continent. Over about eight months it killed some 13,000 people in Australia. The CATC was stretched to the limit in carrying victims of the new virus to hospital. The work of the CATC, as measured in cases carried and mileages clocked up, had been increasing almost exponentially even before the arrival of the epidemic. The increase could be seen in the work of one branch of the CATC alone—the Eastern Suburbs Corps at Randwick. On the year of its entry into the Brigade, 1908, the Corps had carried only sixteen cases and had travelled but eighty-six kilometres. A decade later, in the year to September 1918, it carried 1702 cases and travelled 9819 kilometres. The effects of the influenza epidemic showed up in the statistics for the following year: in the twelve months to September 1919 the service carried 4088 cases (an increase of 240 per cent for the year) and travelled 29,254 kilometres (a 297 per cent increase). Of the 4088 cases in 1919 fully 1903 were known to be influenza cases. Without the influenza cases there would have been a normal increase of about 28 per cent in the work of the station; with the influenza cases added—and on their own they accounted for a 111 per cent increase in work—the workload became well nigh impossible to handle. The epidemic thus created one of those crises that happen perhaps once or twice a century in any country, producing a need so vast that ambulance and hospital services cannot cope alone and are glad of the presence of any voluntary agencies who care to help out.[105]

The influenza epidemic was a crucial event in the development of both the Brigade and the CATC. On the one hand it enabled both bodies, through their joint efforts in handling the crisis, to draw together in a spirit of co-operation that had not marked their earlier dealings; and, paradoxically, on the other hand it facilitated their divorce. During the

epidemic Sydney's several ambulance services—there were two or three local ambulance authorities in addition to the CATC—carried 11,772 cases between them and travelled 105,000 kilometres. The crisis caused by the epidemic was evidence to them and to the government alike that the time had come for a co-ordinated, government-supported State ambulance system, and that no longer could ambulance transport remain in the hands of self-supporting rival agencies. The government itself had shown its appreciation of this need in 1917 when it produced an 'Ambulance Amalgamation Bill', which it gave a first reading in the Legislative Assembly but did not proceed to enact. Led by Storie Dixson a delegation of ambulance agencies—the CATC, the Newtown Ambulance Association and the Canterbury District Ambulance—called on the Minister for Health, David Story, in August 1919 to ask him to proceed with the Bill. They 'impressed upon the Minister the urgent necessity of putting the ambulances upon a sounder basis, not only in respect of finance, but in regard to control'.[106] There was much wrong with the present situation, they pointed out, for 'the quarters provided for ambulance staffs were scandalous; . . . there was some measure of overlapping; and . . . the question of upkeep was acute'.[107] In other words, servicing the city was now getting beyond them, and they were too poorly co-ordinated and too destitute to carry on without government support and direction. Moreover, as the city expanded, and the newer suburbs began demanding ambulances, the problem would get worse.

Their approach to the government was most profitable. The Minister for Health welcomed their petition, and he promised to do his best to have the Ambulance Amalgamation Bill passed into law at the next session of parliament. The Premier, W. A. Holman, also threw his support behind the scheme for a government-controlled ambulance system. The Bill passed into law as the Ambulance Transport Service Act of 1919, and provided for a Board to take over the existing ambulance services. It took another three years to put the Act into force—there were five changes of government in that time—and it was not until late 1922 that Sydney got its co-ordinated, publicly funded ambulance service.[108]

Under the Act the CATC became a government-sponsored body operating under the New South Wales Ambulance Transport Service Board, which had a government-appointed chairman. The St John Ambulance Brigade was allowed three representatives on the Board, but apart from that its connections with the CATC and with ambulance transport were severed. Many of the ambulance officers who went over to the new Civil Ambulance wished to retain their ties with the Brigade, however, and wanted to continue doing voluntary first aid work in addition to their ambulance commitments—as they had always done. The Brigade's solution to this problem was to reconstruct two Divisions for people formerly with the CATC. As a result of this the Sydney Central Ambulance and Nursing Divisions were set up to absorb the members of



44 The newest ambulance in Sydney: a Ford van which came into duty for the Eastern Suburbs Ambulance Service during the influenza epidemic in 1919. The cross on the side is that of the Civil Ambulance and Transport Corps; that near the door is of the St John Ambulance Brigade

the former Headquarters Divisions of the CATC. These reconstituted Divisions continued on for many years, which suggests that the eighteen year marriage between the Brigade and the CATC had not been entirely unproductive. The Ambulance Division survived until 1973 and the Nursing Division until 1980.[109]

The separation of the Brigade and the Civil Ambulance did not solve all the problems between them. The chief difficulty remained the split between full time professional ambulance staff and part time volunteers. Many of the former soon joined up with a trade union, the Hospital Workers' Union of Employees, which remained hostile to volunteers and the Brigade generally. It took the view that 'voluntary workers, such as [the Brigade members] are, are not wanted in connection with the Ambulance Transport Service'.[110] Committed unionists saw voluntary workers as a threat to their jobs—as potential 'blacklegs', who might be expected to 'scab' on them during industrial disputes. The unionist's opinion was that the voluntary worker was undertaking duties that were properly the work of the professional ambulancer. Storie Dixson worried that as the operations of the Ambulance Transport and Service Board expanded the Brigade would lose valuable members, who, on signing up as full time ambulance officers, would feel so intimidated by their unionized colleagues that they would drop out of Brigade affairs.[111] As a later chapter will show, he was not the only Brigade Commissioner in Australia to lose sleep over that particular issue.

The period between the turn of the century and the outbreak of war in

1914 had been a productive one for the St John Ambulance movement in Australia. In every State first aid and home nursing teaching were prospering, and the State Centres of the Association were handling more classes and more pupils than ever before. This, of course, reflected a public need that was creating a demand for medical knowledge for the layperson. The need arose from the sort of society Australia was fast becoming—a mechanized urban society in which accidents were commonplace and random in their selection of victims. The New South Wales Centre of the Association, in reporting on one of its most successful years of activity to date, had its finger on the national pulse when it observed that,

> it is no doubt due to the increasing risk of accident owing to the present crowded thoroughfares, the extension of our tramways system, and the very general introduction of motor vehicles that so many of the public are beginning to realise how necessary it is to possess First Aid knowledge.[112]

This period of expansion had also seen the St John Ambulance movement establish the second of its modern foundations, the Brigade, in five of the six States. Though the Brigade was still wobbling on rather unsteady feet in a couple of the States, its presence in all the capital cities but Brisbane was providing it with a base for later growth. The experiment with ambulance transport in two of the capitals, Melbourne and Sydney, was not exactly a runaway success; but then neither was it a failure, for in each city the St John organizations were instrumental in developing the ambulance systems they now have.

But perhaps the most encouraging sign for the movement as it entered its fourth decade in Australia as the war approached was the degree of public acceptance it now enjoyed. There were few places in Australia now where the aims of the movement were not appreciated. In 1887 it might have been advantageous for Lady Brassey to campaign through Adelaide, Broken Hill, Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane and Rockhampton to advertise the arrival of St John Ambulance in Australia; but that was no longer necessary. The newspapers of capital cities and sleepy country towns alike were daily reporting to their readers on the activities of the local St John bodies. So many broken arms had been strapped in St John slings in the preceding forty years, and so many victims of street accidents had gone off to hospital on Ashford litters, that the public now knew what 'first aid' meant, and they knew it had much to do with the St John Ambulance. It was not therefore surprising that as war loomed in 1914 the St John offices throughout Australia were deluged with inquiries from people wanting to undergo first aid training.

6

St John at war

When the First World War broke out early in August 1914 Australia was without a parliament. On 30 July the Governor General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, had acceded to the request of the Liberal Prime Minister, Joseph Cook, for a 'double dissolution' of both House of Representatives and Senate. Four days later, on 4 August, Britain declared war on Germany. The elections for a new Australian parliament did not take place for another month, until 5 September. Then Andrew Fisher returned to office for the third time as Labor Prime Minister, with a majority in both houses.

Whatever party or Prime Minister held office the effect was the same as far as the war was concerned. The day parliament was dissolved, Cook, an Englishman who had come to Australia twenty-nine years before at the age of twenty-four, had declared that 'when the Empire is at war, so is Australia at war'. Fisher, a Scotsman who had arrived in Australia aged twenty-three in the same year as Cook, proclaimed that 'Australians will stand beside our own to help and defend [the Mother Country] to our last man and our last shilling'. On Monday 3 August the Government announced that,

> in the event of war they would place vessels of war under the control of the British Admiralty; they also announced they would send an expeditionary force of 20,000 men of any suggested composition to any destination desired by the Home Government. The cost of despatch and maintenance of the force was to be borne by the Commonwealth Government.[1]

This decision was popular. On the night of Monday 3 August expectant crowds thronged enthusiastically outside the newpaper offices of Sydney and Melbourne waiting the arrival of news that Britain had declared war. They sang their patriotic songs—'Rule Britannia', 'Soldiers of the King'—over and over and noisily boasted of what sons of 'the island race' would do to the Huns.[2]

Not all Australians welcomed the chance to teach the Kaiser and his cocky people a lesson. *The Labor Call*, for example, editorialized as follows:

> The dogs of war have broken loose in Europe with a vengeance, and it appears as if the people of the continent were about to have the biggest blood drunk since the days of Napoleon . . . Where it is all going to end no one can tell; but who is to pay for it, everbody can give a good guess—the workers. They will

> have to pay in blood and toil. They will be food for powder and shot, whilst the war is on; and they will be the victims who are to be sweated to raise the cash again to replenish the coffers of the State and Fat Co. This applies to workers the world over, no matter who wins . . . In the meantime, the various governments of the world will be voting millions upon millions of money for the purposes of the workers killing one another in an unholy war (in which they have no say), worked up by a few crowned-heads of Europe, assisted no doubt by trusts and combines. What war has ever been waged in the interests of the workers? What war have ever been waged in the interests of humanity? None . . . But after the war—what then? Thousands of widows and orphans left to battle on as best they can in a cold and callous world. Truly, civilization has not made such forward strides as one was led to believe. Some day the workers of the world will demand to have a say as to whether they will slay one another at the behest of someone else.[3]

Talk like this undoubtedly seemed like sedition to Empire loyalists. It is also fairly certain that few within the St John Ambulance organizations thought that way.

As might have been expected of the members of an institution with strong British links, whose allegiances were firmly with their Sovereign Head, King George V, and who prided themselves on their fraternal bonds with the local military establishment, the St John bodies in Australia supported Britain's war effort zestfully. It was not surprising, then, that on the day following Britain's declaration of war the Victorian St John Council was one of the first civilian organizations to offer its services to the Minister for Defence. As the Council proudly reported to members later,

1. Your Council placed at the disposal of the Minister . . . the whole of the Ambulance organization.
2. Your Council undertook to take steps to form the efficient and Certificated Members of the Association, both in the Metropolitan and Country Districts, into Divisions of the St. John Ambulance Brigade.
3. To have these Divisions of the Brigade instructed in
   (a) Drill and Discipline.
   (b) Advanced instruction in Dressing the Wounded and in Stretcher Work.

   and generally to render the Divisions capable of being attached as a reserve to the Medical Services of the Commonwealth.
4. To make special arrangements whereby all who volunteer for Ambulance work, and who were yet untrained, should be instructed and drafted into Divisions of the Brigade as soon as they proved by examination to be efficient.[4]

The very same day the Council received back from the Minister a letter expressing his 'deep appreciation' of their offer. So from the very outset the St John organization in Victoria threw in its lot with the patriots of Empire.

In other States, too, the St John response to the war was as immediate and as keen. In Western Australia the Council of the Perth Head Centre of the Association gained the co-operation of the Governor, Sir Harry Barron, in running a meeting in the ball room of Government House to prepare plans for civil defence. Representatives of the police, fire brigades, the Railways Ambulance Corps, and leading citizens met with Sir Harry and the Council to devise a scheme to facilitate mass first aid and home nursing instruction of the public. They agreed that the Council should drop its fee for instruction from 7/6 to 2/6 (that is from 75 cents to 25 cents) to encourage people to enrol in courses. They decided to seek the co-operation of the mayors and municipal leaders for mounting courses in the municipalities of the State. And to Council's pleasure, 'the medical profession as a body gave the movement its whole-hearted and gratuitous support, and the police, firemen, railwaymen and Brigade members volunteered their services to help in the practical side of running the increased numbers of classes'.[5]

In Adelaide the Centre Committee of the Association made a similar prompt response. Within days of the declaration of war it was forming special classes for people who wished to become wartime auxiliary medical workers. It advertised for, and received seventy applications from certificated men and women, people who would be prepared to travel overseas as auxiliaries with the Army Medical Corps; and it began forming additional units of the Brigade as a stand-by civil defence force.[6] In Tasmania, too, the Association came out of recess. The Hobart Centre revived its interest in running classes, and began making plans soon after the outbreak of war for drafting its successful pupils into 'St John Ambulance Bearer Companies' it hoped to send overseas with the military units.[7]

In Victoria the St John Council was eminently successful in living up to its promises to the Minister for Defence. First, it built up the Brigade rapidly and permanently. As the previous chapter showed, the Brigade made a late start in Victoria; but from three Brigade Divisions at the outbreak of war the ranks multiplied so that by the end of war there were thirty-three Divisions. In New South Wales, too, there was a similar expansion of Brigade numbers. The latter District almost doubled its membership from 331 in 1913 to 720 in 1914 and then grew further to 806 in 1915 and 1041 by 1917. Elsewhere the Brigade did not enjoy such spectacular success, though it maintained its numbers and emerged from the war strongly in Western Australia; and after initial teething troubles in Adelaide it was a permanent fixture there, too, by the end of the war; while in Tasmania it was undergoing one of its periodic revivals before going into recess again at the war's end. Only in Queensland, where the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade maintained its stranglehold on St John activities, was the St John Ambulance Brigade unable to make a wartime contribution. But even there a small Brigade unit ap-

peared in Brisbane by the end of the war; and it survived for another five years.[8]

It was in first aid and home nursing training that the St John Ambualnce bodies were to make their most memorable contributions to the war effort. If the Minister for Defence at all valued the presence in the community of a well trained civilian 'army' of ambulancers, he would have had no cause for disappointment in the St John organizations, for their accomplishment here was astounding. The numbers of pupils they managed to teach were staggering, and for the first time in the history of St John Ambulance in Australia the movement came in sight of one of its ultimate goals – having a trained first aider in every home in the country.

1 *'An unprecedented rush for Ambulance instruction'*

From the moment the war began to look as if it might become an Enterprise of Empire rather than remaining a minor squabble in Central Europe between far off and obscure termagents, Australians in every State flocked to enrol in first aid classes. They enrolled in droves. How the State administrative machines of St John managed to cope with them is a miracle, for in every respect the period from July 1914 through till 1916-17 was one of record business for St John. In 1914, then again in 1915, and yet again in 1916, the State organizations notched up spectacularly high tallies of classes taught, pupils instructed and certificates awarded. The 1914-15 annual report of the New South Wales Centre of the Association could have been speaking for all other Centres when it remarked:

> In no previous year . . . has the Executive Committee been privileged to submit to the members so remarkable a record of work as that which has been accomplished during the twelve months just ended.
> The enormous demands, in consequence of the war, made upon the Association for instruction in First Aid and Home Nursing by the public in every part of the State have been fully met . . .
> A record of 400 classes in one year is a fact which is eminently satisfactory when we consider that under normal conditions the formation of eighty classes in any one year in the past has been considered so.[9]

For the New South Wales Centre there could have been no more fitting a means of celebrating its quarter-century of existence than by thus demonstrating its usefulness to the public. That year it ran classes in all parts of the State. Groups of people from the most unlikely sources got together to take courses. The Castlereagh St Typists' Club and the Arncliffe Druids were but two of the special interest groups who formed classes for their members. Towns and villages far and near ran classes for the first time, in church halls, shire offices, schoolrooms, shearing sheds, mechanics' institutes, and the goods sheds at railways sidings. Corowa, Warialda, Temora, Nyngan, Gunnedah, Mudgee, Cooma, Dungog, Cootamundra, Deniliquin, Kiama, Bellingen, Katoomba, Bega, Molong,

Kameruka, Wyong, Bellambi and Cooranbong all had one class at least, and some had two, three or even four.[10]

The New South Wales experience was repeated in other States, too, and so St John Ambulance had at last cemented itself securely into the Australian lexicon. The Western Australian Centre reported a similar upsurge of interest from the public in what St John was offering. It felt it had done 'a very progressive year's work, the most gratifying feature [of which] is the enthusiasm pervading the community in respect to the work of the Association'.[11] The Adelaide Centre found that 'the Great War made the year a particularly busy one, men and women of all classes being most anxious to gain instruction in ambulance work'. The Centre secretary, B. S. Connor, drew cheers at the annual meeting when he reported that:

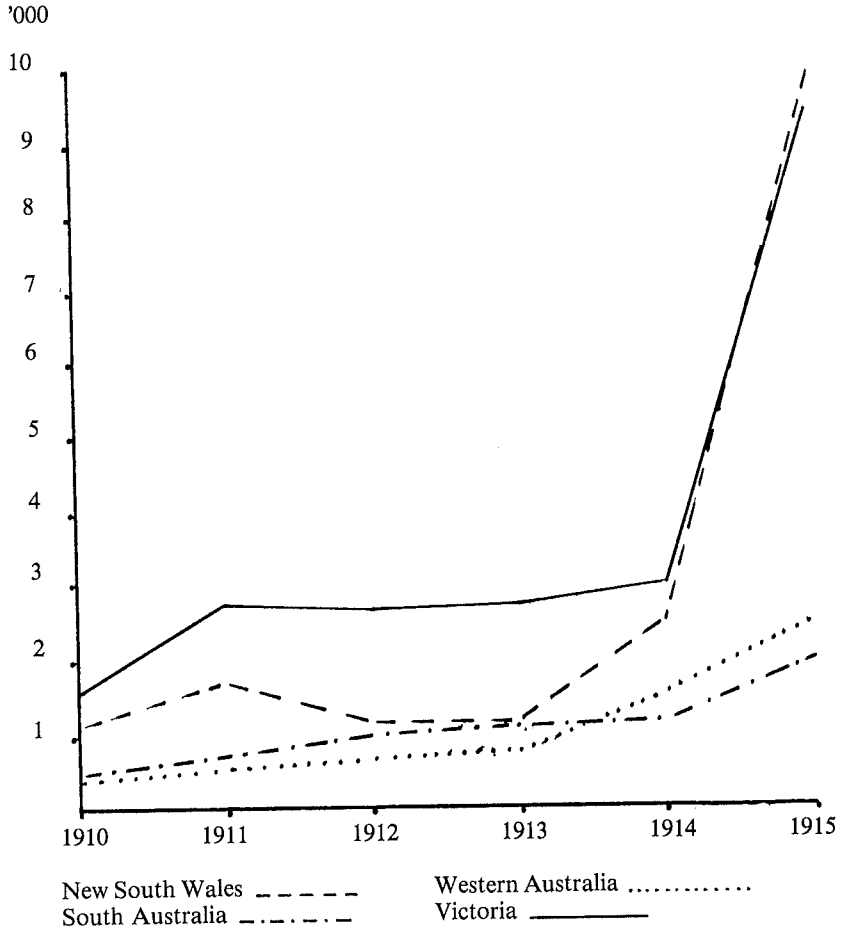
> There had been wonderful progress during the year. The war had had the effect of inducing a far larger number of people than usual to take up ambulance work. They [i.e., the Committee] rejoiced to know that nearly all the men who had left South Australia in connection with the Army Ambulance Corps had originally been trained in classes with the Association. There was no doubt that they would be able to do a lot of good tending the wounded soliders. (Hear, hear!) The passes had been so numerous this year that they represented one-sixth of the total number during the thirty-one years of the Centre's work.[12]

The experience of the Adelaide Centre in discovering, in the preceding year, that it had handled a sizeable fraction of all the pupils it had trained since its foundation in 1884, was one common to all State Centres. Thus, the New South Wales Centre trained 9870 pupils that year, or just under a third of all the 32,000 pupils it had processed since 1890. The Victorian Centre that year dealt with 9676 pupils, or about a quarter of its total numbers since 1883; while in Western Australia the 2415 pupils trained amounted to about two-fifths of those turned out since the inception of the Centre in 1892. The spurt in training in each State can be seen in the graphs on the following page, showing the trend in those States where figures are available.

The proportional increase in each State was as impressive as the actual numerical increase over the two years 1913 to 1915. In Adelaide there was an 81 per cent increase; in Western Australia it was 236 per cent; in Victoria 261 per cent; and in New South Wales a stupendous 834 per cent increase![13]

The effect of this burgeoning in first aid and home nursing training was to broaden as never before the pool of people with basic medical skills. The results could be seen in the ratio of trained people to the population of their States. Thus, in Western Australia in 1914-15, the Perth and Goldfields Centres, in teaching 2415 pupils out of a State population of roughly 299,000, had trained one for every 124 of the people of the State—a ratio of 1:124. This compared to a ratio of 1:203 in the

Numbers of pupils trained 1910 to 1915



preceding year. A similar striking improvement in the ratio of trained to untrained was evident in every other State where figures are available. The figures for the four States are summarized in this table:

Numbers of trainees, and their ratio in relation to State population

State	Approximate population in 1914 (millions)	Number trained 1913-14	Ratio to State population	Number trained 1914-15	Ratio to State population
Western Australia	0.299	1422	1:210	2415	1:123
Victoria	1.382	2896	1:477	9676	1:142
New South Wales	1.799	2491	1:722	9870	1:182
South Australia	0.432	1084	1:398	1890	1:228
Total	3.912	7893	1:495	23,851	1:164

Nowadays, in the early 1980s, with first aid training facilities much better developed, the St John Ambulance Australia-wide ratio is about 1:194. The accomplishment in 1914-15, in the 'primitive' era of the organization's development in this country, was therefore notable to say the least of it.[14]

The State bodies of St John strove to sustain the enthusiasm for ambulancing the declaration of war had engendered. Their public rallies, patriotic concerts, mass meetings, parades and demonstrations and their myriad fund raising activities all helped to keep the St John wave rolling towards the war effort. One of the most notable of these functions took place in Melbourne in late 1914. Melbourne was then the federal capital of Australia, and the seat of the Governor General, whose wife, Lady Helen Ferguson, was a keen supporter of St John work. She invited the Victorian St John bodies to stage a public demonstration of ambulance work in the grounds of Government House to attract donations of medical supplies for the troops. The Victorian Centre used the occasion as 'a preliminary test of the Association's resources'. Despite miserable wet weather it was able to muster 602 first aiders to demonstrate first aid techniques to a large crowd of visitors, who donated over 6000 items of medical equipment to the cause. In Sydney there were similar functions. The first General Parade of the Brigade in Australia took place there in the Government House Grounds in August 1915, with 413 members of the Brigade on parade for inspection by the Deputy Commissioner, Dr T. Storie Dixson. The *Daily Telegraph* was positively lyrical in the burst of generous praise it gave the Brigade on this occasion,

> that magnificent body of voluntary workers, women and men, which are comprised in the make-up of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, made a bold and brave showing on Government House grounds on Saturday . . .
> The women, the ministering angels, the reserve of like battalions at the front, lined up in spotless white and black caps and veils, forming a picture that was at once moving and appealing in its setting. Here were gathered together voluntary workers in the great cause of suffering humanity, young and old, married and single, with full medical kits, all banded together to succour the wounded and the sick wherever they might be, and whatever their station in life. It almost tickled one to see some of these bright young ladies in the bloom and vigor of life . . .
> The ladies mustered nearly 400 strong. The men in uniform and civilian clothes were also there in like numbers—all furnished with stretchers, all fully equipped, and all with their certificates of competency for the work they had so nobly and unselfishly undertaken in their pockets . . .[15]

In Adelaide, too, the members of the St John organizations paraded and marched. They took part enthusiastically in the 'patriotic days' the city fathers periodically ran to raise funds for the war effort. A feature of these occasions was the decorated floats of the street processions. The St John Ambulance Brigade generally had two lorries entered in the patriotic day processions, one with women demonstrating home nursing

techniques and the other with men doing first aid, on some occasions using convalescent soldiers as the patients. The July 1916 patriotic day gave members of the Brigade Divisions their first chance to do public duty at a street procession. These displays of St John Ambulance work were also repeated at suburban and provincial patriotic days.[16]

From amidst all the excitement about ambulance work generated by the war and these loyalist activities, several questions nag at the present day observer of those far off events. Why was the fervour for ambulancing so intense, and so widespread? Was it, as the annual reports of the various State organizations of St John maintained, a simple matter of 'enthusiasm', or were there other motives driving people to enrol in first aid classes?

'Enthusiasm' probably covered a multiplicity of motives. Patriotism was undoubtedly an influence prompting some people to learn first aid and home nursing. Even if national celebrations like the inauguration of the Commonwealth failed to inspire a love of their country among Australians, then the onset of war did; and patriotism had a spillover effect for St John Ambulance work. Perhaps for the first time people saw that in order to face the medical crises that war might throw up, and thus to be of use to their fellow citizens and their country, they ought to have basic medical knowledge and skills. The Assistant Commissioner of the Brigade in Victoria, Surgeon-Major George Horne, had this notion in mind in the editorial he wrote for the first issue of the *Victorian First Aid and St. John Ambulance Gazette*. 'It has taken a great War like the present one to bring home to the public mind the enormous importance and value of ambulance work', he said, then assured his readers that 'it is patriotic in the truest sense to be prepared in case of emergency' by acquiring first aid skills.[17]

Fear, too, probably played its part in prompting people to take St John Ambulance courses. The Australian propaganda mills fed people's sense of insecurity by churning out lurid details of the rapine that would ensue if the 'Huns' won the war and took over Australia. Storie Dixson, by now one of the best known St John Ambulance identities in Australia, helped keep the propaganda machine turning with a speech he made to 500 members of the Brigade at the second annual dinner of the New South Wales District on Saturday 26 June 1915. His comments were reported at length in the *Daily Telegraph* the following Monday under the heading 'If Germany won, Belgium would be heaven to Australia'. Storie Dixson spoke from some familiarity with German culture because he had studied medicine and pharmacology in Berlin, Vienna and Strasbourg (then in Germany) in the 1870s and 80s, and had travelled Germany on a world tour in 1903. What he had to say about his erstwhile hosts, the people he had lived and studied amongst, left no doubt in the minds of his audience that a German victory would mean bloodshed in Australia:

> There was a reality in the life of the Germans—a determination to get the world. Twelve years ago he had been told in Germany, 'We hate you and we will fight you'. The Germans . . . regarded Britain as a barrier to their expansion, and had set their hearts on obtaining certain British possessions, such as New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia . . . If Germany won, Belgium would be Heaven itself compared with what it would be in Australia. [Australians] would have to set their teeth if they were to do what they undoubtedly would do, in time—hold their country. (Cheers.)[18]

He left it to his cheering audience to make the logical inference from these comments, that their medical skills would be much in demand in the coming German attempt to conquer Australia.

But while patriotism mingled with fear of the fabled mail-fisted Teuton might have brought some people to St John Ambulance, simple altruism and compassion were also important ingredients in the wartime enthusiasm for hospitalling. In 1914, for instance, the New South Wales Centre reported on 'the remarkable and unprecedented rush for Ambulance instruction' which manifested itself late that year, replacing an earlier 'apathy' and 'lack of interest' which had begun worrying the Centre Committee. The Committee noted that 'a most gratifying feature' of this sudden turnabout in public commitment to ambulance work was the

> unanimous offer of the medical profession in New South Wales to place their services at the disposal of the Association in the capacity of Lecturers and Examiners, and the assistance given by them has been of incalculable benefit to the public.[19]

Perhaps it took a crisis like the war to bring out the best in people, as it did with the doctors, persuading them to give others unstintingly of their time and effort without any expectation of returns for themselves. In Western Australia a similar mood was abroad. There the Council of the Association, reporting on another record year in September 1916, reflected that the widespread interest in first aid seemed to arise from 'a genuine desire to acquire and use the knowlege in the cause of humanity rather [from] momentary impulses born of enthusiasm created by the desire to "do a bit" '.[20] Altruism and 'doing a bit' were not, of course, necessarily divorced; and, as the following section of this chapter shows, many women in particular found a practical outlet for both impulses in the V.A.D. (Voluntary Aid Detachment) movement, a Defence Department-sponsored amalgam of St John Ambulance and Red Cross Society volunteers.

It is interesting to speculate on the different motives that drove male and female groups of pupils to seek training. Mixed groups were not permitted. Indeed for many years the printed syllabus for instruction prominently bore the injunction 'Mixed classes of men and women are on no account permitted'.[21] So were the men taking courses in first aid for reasons different to those of the women? Certainly in the past the possession of a first aid certificate for many men represented the first step along the career path of a full time ambulance officer. Now, in war time, a

similar path for men led into the Army Medical Corps or to service in the Navy as a sick-bay attendant. The man seeking the dignity of being a 'returned' solider or sailor but without wanting to run the risks of being a frontline fighting man therefore had a good reason to earn a St John Ambulance certificate. How many men thought along these lines is impossible to say; so, too, is it impossible to guess how many were impelled into medical units of the armed forces from purely humanitarian motives. All that can be said is that the number who used the St John certificate as a stepping stone into medical units was probably high. In September 1915, for example, the New South Wales Centre reported that

> a general demand by men for instruction set in . . . when it began to be realized that, owing to the heavy casualties at the Front many more trained ambulance men would be wanted by the Army Medical Corps. A gratifying feature of this part of our work has been the recognition by the A.A.M.C. of the usefulness of the instruction the Association is able to provide, and their readiness to accept the holders of a St. John Certificate.[22]

Then near the end of the war, in 1918, Storie Dixson gave further evidence of a steady flow of St John-trained men into the medical units of the armed services: he produced a list of 230 members of the New South Wales District of the Brigade who had served in the Army Medical Corps, thirteen of whom had been killed. With this service mortality rate of 5.6 per cent, anyone joining the AMC in expectation of a hazard-free trip abroad would have been bound for disappointment.[23]

In addition to this New South Wales evidence, clues from other States suggest that there, too, the St John bodies provided a reservoir from which the medical units of the armed services drew freely. Thus, in South Australia, as we have just seen, 'nearly all' those going into the Army Medical Corps had had their initial training via St John Ambulance. While these figures hardly matched those in Britain, where 10,000 of the 32,000 men in the Brigade joined up, they do indicate that regardless of the motives prompting men to learn first aid during the war the St John organizations 'did their bit' for those at the front.

As with some men, so it was true that some women saw the St John Ambulance first aid certificate as a ticket overseas into one of the auxiliary nursing units. During the war the earlier trend, whereby women joining classes outnumbered men, became even more accentuated. Thus in New South Wales, in the eleven years to 1901, female trainees had outnumbered males by a factor of 1.2 to one. By 1913 the balance had tilted the other way in favour of men, who now outnumbered women in classes by a ratio of 1.17:1; but in the first two years of the war, 1914 and 1915, the balance again tipped heavily on the side of the women, by a ratio of almost 4.8:1. The table opposite summarizes the trend.

Some, but only a tiny fraction, of this preponderence of women found their way into medical units overseas. Many more were seeking some means of being useful at home in Australia. It was with them in mind

New South Wales: ratios of male to female trainees[24]

	1890-1901	1902-1913	1914-1915	Total to 1915
Men trained	3427	6569	2133	12,129
Women trained	4145	5614	10,228	19,987
Ratio of trainees males:females	1:1.21	1.17:1	1:4.79	1:1.65

that the Governor of Victoria, Sir Arthur Stanley, spoke when he addressed the annual demonstration of the St John organizations in Melbourne in 1916. In apologising for the absence of his wife he fulsomely praised the part women played in the ambulance movement:

> His Excellency said that he had to regret the absence of Lady Stanley owing to illness. Especially was this so for the St. John Ambulance Association was largely a women's movement. The Association was maintained by and owed its life to the women of Victoria . . . No one could walk around Melbourne and suburbs without seeing the St. John Ambuance at work, and every time he saw one of their cars he felt constrained to say, 'Thank God for St. John Ambulance'. (Applause.)[25]

Sir Arthur then directed the attention of the audience to the work St John Ambulance women were doing at the returned soldiers' convalescent hospital through their V.A.D. units:

> By far the most captivating work of the Association was its alliance with the Defence Department and the Red Cross. He wished every man and woman could visit the rest home and see the splendid work being done there . . . The order and arrangement indicated admirable management.
> A soldier—Hear, hear!
> His Excellency—I am glad to have this endorsement from one of those actually living in the Rest Home. Continuing, His Excellency said the real sympathy of voluntary labour, which looked after the men, was provided by women of all classes, combining to do their best for men who deserved the best. This voluntary service had a social effect far beyond all class distinctions. It was bringing all classes together, and making them have a keener understanding of any sympathy with each other. They had to thank the ladies for the cheerful way they took up the drudgery, for the domestic work was drudgery. It was a sacrificial rite the ladies were performing, a liturgy to the unity of the State.[26]

Florid though his phrases were, there was no denying that St John work did provide women with an opportunity for making a satisfying contribution to the war effort. They could not join up with the armed services like their menfolk, and so their patriotism had to find other outlets, through organizations like St John and the Red Cross. That in turn explains why women comprised some 80 per cent of the enormous influx into the St John training programmes during the years of the war.

2 *St John Ambulance at work in war*

In addition to the prodigious efforts the St John bodies made in training tens of thousands of Australians during the war, there were numerous

other avenues along which St John people helped push the war effort – all additional to the normal peacetime duties they continued to perform.

One of the first wartime contributions an Australian branch of St John made was the effort of the New South Wales District of the Brigade in supplying twenty-three of the twenty-four sick bay attendants of the steamship *Grantala*, which the Navy had fitted out as a hospital transport for use in the campaigns of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary force to take control of Germany's island possessions to the north of Australia. The A.N. & M.E.F. landed on the island of New Britain on 11 September 1914 and two days later captured Rabaul, the island's main town and administrative headquarters of the German South Seas protectorate. Several Australians were killed and a number wounded in the landing and the skirmishing that preceded the German capitulation. Among those killed was Capt. (Dr) Graeme Pockley of the Army Medical Corps, who became the second Australian casualty of the war on the day of the landing when he was shot just after attending to the first casualty, a mortally wounded seaman. Several Brigade members were part of Pockley's unit.

The *Grantala* reached Rabaul on 13 September, the day the town was taken. The ship's principal medical officer was Capt. W. N. Horsfall, who in civilian life had been the divisional superintendent of the Hamilton (Newcastle) Nursing Division of the Brigade. His chief sick bay attendant was W. Keato, superintendent of the Headquarters Civil Ambulance Transport Corps Division. After the *Grantala* returned to Sydney with its consignment of war wounded and victims of tropical diseases Horsfall wrote to Storie Dixson 'expressing his high appreciation of the assistance given him by the men of the Brigade, and his agreeable surprise at the excellent quality of their work'.[27]

The most sustained Brigade effort towards any wartime cause, however, went into the Voluntary Aid Detachments. The VAD movement in Australia was based on a similar co-operative arrangement between the military authorities, the Red Cross Society and the St John Ambulance in Britain. There volunteers from both charities combined with the support of the military authorities to bring home the war wounded from clearing hospitals in France and Belgium, to run auxiliary military hospitals and convalescent homes in Britain, and to provide medical and ancillary staff in the hospitals and clearing stations in the war zone. As soon as war began threatening in mid-1914 the parent St John Ambulance and Red Cross bodies in Britain suggested to their Australian offshoots that they, too, might implement a wartime volunteer organization along the lines of the British VAD movement. While the rivalry that subsequently developed between the two charities might have been an impediment to their close co-operation later on, during World War I strong fraternal bonds made careful co-ordinaton of their activities possible in some if not all Australian States. In two States

in particular—Victoria and New South Wales—St John Ambulance members had been instrumental in founding the local Red Cross societies, and in the early years the distinctions between Red Cross and St John were blurred. As in an earlier era in Britain, in some Australian States St John operated 'as the medium of Red Cross work'. This was certainly the case in Victoria, where the early wartime secretary of the Association Centre, H. Wardale-Greenwood, was also the director of the Victorian Red Cross.[28]

The VAD movement in Australia grew from a scheme drawn up by the Red Cross VAD Committee in Victoria, a six-member body formed in 1915 with two representatives from the Central Council of the Australian Red Cross Society, two from the Victorian Red Cross branch, and two from the Victorian Centre of the St John Ambulance Association—Wardale-Greenwood and Dr Charles Bage, chairman of the Victorian Centre of the Association, who became the VAD Committee chairman. The Defence Department, with whom the committee had consulted, approved the scheme, and so it got under way almost immediately. The scheme provided for the formation of VAD units in each State, the qualification for membership in which would be current certificates in both first aid and home nursing. The volunteers in each unit would be registered at military headquarters and would be officially recognized as comprising a reserve medical force. Each unit would function more or less like a Division of the Brigade, meeting regularly to practise and develop medical skills among its members, and going out on the duties assigned to it. In many cases whole Divisions of the Brigade registered as VAD units with the result that in some localities, and indeed in some States, the two organizations were virtually one.

Elsewhere VAD units comprised pupils who had graduated from Association classes but for some reason did not wish to be in the Brigade, or whose allegiance was solely to Red Cross. The scheme accepted ambulance training credentials from a number of agencies—the St John Ambulance Association, the railway ambulance corps, fire brigade ambulance units, the Army Medical Corps and the St Andrew Ambulance Association (a Scottish organization). In Australia, however, most VAD recruits came via St John classes, and so the Association made the preparation of VAD recruits its priority wartime task. In every State the Centre Committees and Councils saw it as their duty under the Victorian Centre's promises to the Minister for Defence to provide training for every prospective VAD member. They would all have agreed with the Victorian Centre, which declared that it was 'a privilege for the Association to help the Red Cross Society, the Defence Department and the Returned Men who have fought and suffered for the Empire'.[29]

The duties the VAD units performed were many and varied, but they gave wide choice to those seeking total immersion in patriotic duties, in five main functions:

(i) the provision of 'comforts' for troops abroad and especially for returning wounded servicemen—tobacco, fruit and flowers, confectionery, clothing, knitted goods, reading material, entertainment;
(ii) meeting the wounded at the docks, escorting them to hospital or convalescent home, and accompanying them on the interstate trains and ships to their home States;
(iii) working as voluntary hospital orderlies to relieve the regular staffs of the military hospitals at night and at the weekend;
(iv) organizing, equipping and staffing the Red Cross convalescent homes; and
(v) raising funds for all this.

The last of these was by no means the least, for Australian Military Forces regulations expressly stated that 'no Detachment will receive any government aid'. The comfort and post-hospital care of the wounded servicemen was therefore an expense to be borne by the voluntary agencies and thus, ultimately, the community. Put another way, it could be said that governments and generals made wars while the public, through the voluntary agencies, tidied up afterwards.

The efforts of the Voluntary Aids in all these activities were conspicuously successful. Greeting the shiploads of wounded and invalided servicemen was perhaps the earliest activity in which they caught the public eye. Australians everywhere welcomed back the first batches of returning wounded like heroes. The press treated them to lavish praise. Thus, for example, as the first trainloads of wounded soldiers from Gallipoli arrived at Central Station, Sydney, from Melbourne in care of their VAD-Brigade escorts in July 1915, it was the Sydney *Sun* that published a poem, 'From the Dardanelles', in their honour:

> . . . They took the shock of war upon a bloody shore;
> Brave Australians fought and fell who never fought before.
> Will we, who cheered them going, say:
> 'Wounded brothers, we will pay
> Something of our debt today,
> To soldiers back from war'?
>
> Soldiers halt and blind, we who stayed behind
> Something more than pleasant words for your aid must find;
> Every needless pang you bear,
> Helpless, waiting for our care,
> Means dishonour for our share,
> Soldiers halt and blind . . .[30]

It was not great verse, but perhaps it helped the public know something of what Australians had let themselves in for by entering the war. The photograph that accompanied the poem—of a group of bemused-looking maimed soldiers being helped by volunteers in Brigade uniform—conveyed the same message more poignantly, while also drawing attention to the work of the Brigade-VAD.

Unlike the press, the VAD members did not lose interest in the returning maimed and wounded as their numbers mounted to embarrassing

proportions and their flow through the ports and the interstate rail terminals continued unabated. Cheerfully waving parties of VAD women still waited on the wharves with baskets of flowers and fruits and cigarettes as the hospital ships pulled in. Solicitous teams of VAD men in Brigade uniform were still there to accompany the convalescents on the journey from Melbourne to Adelaide, Hobart and Albury, and from Albury to Sydney or Brisbane as soon as they were well enough to travel.

The Voluntary Aids found their chief work in the military hospitals and Red Cross convalescent homes, and there they made a colossal effort for the wounded and disabled. In Melbourne at the 240-bed Red Cross Rest Home there were ninety-five Voluntary Aids on duty on any day from when the home opened in 1915 until well after the end of the war. They prepared and served meals, cleaned wards and kitchens, operated the laundry service, took care of the office work, distributed parcels of 'comforts', relieved the nursing staff, and kept up patients' spirits by reading to them and talking with them. In New South Wales the work was much the same. Eventually there were ninety-two Detachments with 3000 members in New South Wales, taking turns at working in fourteen hospitals and homes in Sydney and four in the country (Bathurst, Moss Vale, Bomaderry and Burradoo). One of the Sydney Voluntary Aids, T. H. Henderson (superintendent of the Randwick Brigade Division and a later chairman of the New South Wales Centre) even turned his own home in Randwick over for use as a rest home for convalescents. In Adelaide forty members from the two local Nursing Divisions combined to form the one VAD unit to serve at the Woodville convalescent hospital and to help the men of the Ambulance Divisions accompanying wounded soldiers on the train between Melbourne and Adelaide. Many of them later received VAD medals for having given over 1000 hours of service, and they did it all on top of their normal divisional duties. In June 1918 an outbreak of ptomaine poisoning among the Children's Hospital nurses saw them taking over nursing duties at the hospital. The Detachment later received another medal in recognition of their 1000 hours of voluntary service over that particular crisis. In Perth, where the sole Nursing Division had also registered as a VAD, the Division's numbers increased from fifty-four to ninety-one during 1916-17. The Division maintained six of its members at the Fremantle Base Hospital in addition to fulfilling a vigorous programme of public duties.[31]

Some sense of the contribution the VAD movement made to the war effort was evident in an article the *Sydney Morning Herald* published in 1919 some six months after the war had ended. In praising the Voluntary Aids' 'sense of civic duty' and their 'social service [of] the very highest value', the paper pointed out that

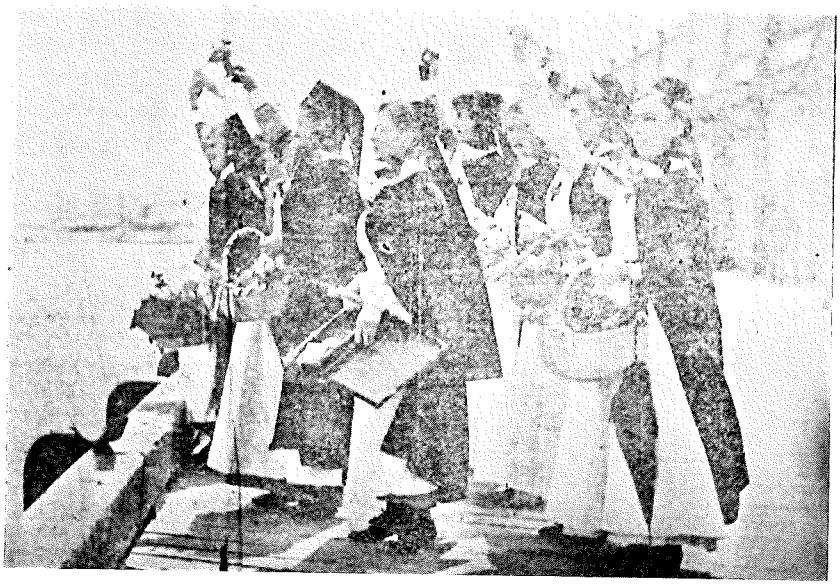
> the necessity for continuance of this humanizing factor in public affairs has not ended. Far from it. The coming of peace has only changed some of the

> directions in which effort must be exerted if we are to discharge in fair measure the duties of our citizenship. Military hospitals are still full and long will be so. Convalescent homes are still needed, and will have heavy calls upon them for many days to come. We have maimed and broken to provide for. The kindlier hand still has much to do.[32]

Even if the hospitals and rest homes had been emptied of the war wounded, the work of the Voluntary Aids would have continued beyond the war's end, for the VAD units were to be kept hard at work with the epidemic of pneumonic influenza that reached Australia with the demobilizing troops in 1918.

Apart from their commitment to the VAD movement, the St John Ambulance bodies continued to perform their routine peacetime roles. Brigade members continued to attend race meetings, football matches, and the public processions and gatherings that still took place, war or no war. Certainly the war threw up a host of new special occasions, as that in Sydney on Saturday 24 April 1915, when the troops departing for the Middle East staged their great Route March through the city. Nearly all the 500 members of the twenty-four Divisions of the New South Wales District of the Brigade were on duty that day, along the entire route of the parade. They worked in pairs, a man from an Ambulance Division with a woman from a Nursing Division, in close touch with the emergency ambulance stations they set up along the way. A huge crush of people lined the streets, kept back by members of the school Army Cadet Corps with arms linked. The usual cases of fainting, heat prostration, victims of tramplings and hysteria kept the Brigade teams busy. There was also the odd unusual case or two, such as the school cadet jabbed in the rear with a hatpin by a middle aged woman angered at the way he was pressing back the crowd with his back.[33]

While the war provided opportunities for some memorable public duties like this, however, much Brigade effort also went into serving the usual local needs, and seeking out new and enterprising means of doing so. In Adelaide the Brigade gained its initial momentum with the onset of war. A group of Brigade members introduced a novel scheme that no other Brigade unit had yet tried. The Adelaide No. 2 Nursing Division raised money to have 40,000 cards printed showing the points of the body where pressure could be applied to restrict bleeding. The Division presented one of these to every solider leaving for the overseas battle zones, and sold the others to the public at a penny each. Another, longer-lived, scheme of this Division was an attempt to do something about Adelaide's lack of an ambulance transport service. By 1916 the Adelaide public had grown discontented with this situation, and so members of the Division introduced a 'next best' system—street corner first aid cabinets. By running carnivals and concerts they raised £20 to finance the construction and stocking of the first two cabinets, which were made of cast steel and fixed to tramways standards, one in Victoria Square, the other at the



45 Women of the Paddington and Woollahra Division of the Brigade await the arrival of a hospital ship bringing back troops wounded at Gallipoli, 1915

corner of Currie and King William Streets. These went into service in December 1916, and were soon followed by two more, at the corners of Rundle and King William Streets and Pultney and Rundle Streets. The police and St John personnel had keys to these public medicine chests, and the idea was that when an accident happened the cabinets would be opened for use in aiding the victims. They were not a great success, however, and no real substitute for an ambulance transport service. Vandals kept breaking them open and either stealing or scattering the contents. In 1923 the Division running the scheme gave in to the vandals, and removed the cabinets.

The failure of the scheme was not the fault of the Nursing Division which had thought of it, for the members of the Adelaide No. 2 Nursing Division were always a resourceful, hardworking, public-spirited group of women.[34] The Division was based on the Adelaide YWCA, and much was demanded of its members. They were expected to join in the normal programme of YWCA activities on top of their St John work. They had to start each meeting with a quarter hour of physical exercises and also fit in another quarter hour of Bible Study. In addition they were expected to teach first aid to junior 'Y' members, and to the working girls of the city during lunch hour. Members of the YWCA committee would look in on their meetings from time to time to ensure they were abiding by 'Y' rules. At the same time they had to maintain a continuing fund raising programme to support their various projects and to buy their uniforms and

expendable equipment—roller and triangular bandages, safety pins, dressings and smelling salts. Most members of the Division were also registered with the VAD movement, and so their commitment to hospitalling was well nigh total. Their work for St John Ambulance, the Red Cross and the YWCA could have left them with little time for anything else.[35]

Elsewhere the work of the St John organizations went on throughout the war much as before, and most often unobtrusively. From time to time it might catch the eye of an appreciative journalist who would write a piece for his paper extolling the work of the first aid teachers, the Voluntary Aids, the Brigade, or the ambulance transport teams. Very occasionally some really remarkable St John Ambulance event would capture the attention of the public to bring further publicity, reinforcing the increasingly worthy reputation of the St John bodies.

One such incident occurred in Western Australia in July 1917. A stockman, James Darcey, injured himself badly in a fall from a horse about sixty-five kilometres outside Hall's Creek, one of the remotest outposts in all Australia, some 1900 kilometres northeast of Perth and 320 kilometres south of the port of Wyndham, where the nearest doctor lived. His brothers carried him into Hall's Creek over rough tracks. He was suffering severe pain from serious pelvic injuries, including injuries to the bladder that prevented him from passing urine. It would have taken a week to get him up to Wyndham, and so the Hall's Creek postmaster, F. W. Tuckett, contacted Dr John Holland in Perth to see what might be done for him. Tuckett had done a course of first aid under Holland nine years before at Kanowna near Kalgoorlie. He and Holland, by now Divisional Surgeon of the Perth Division of the Brigade, conducted a discussion on Darcey's condition by morse code through several intermediaries in the chain of telegraph stations between Perth and Hall's Creek. They decided that Tuckett should operate on Darcey with Holland relaying instructions by telegraph. The operation proceeded successfully by remote control. Holland then travelled up Hall's Creek to inspect his and Tuckett's handiwork. he later said he 'found that the work had been carried out perfectly'. Though Darcey unfortunately died as a result of his ordeal, Holland believe the proxy operation had relieved him 'from intense agony'.[36] It made a good story in the Western Australian newspapers, at once vindicating the efficacy of the St John first aid teaching and demonstrating the St John resolve to alleviate human suffering.

3 *Australians abroad with St John Ambulance*

An aspect of the wartime work of the Australian St John bodies in which all those within the movement took pride was the way many Australians responded to calls from 'Home'. Many Australian St John people worked in the war zones overseas, and the preceding sections have shown how

46 Women of one of Adelaide's wartime Brigade Nursing Divisions (probably the Adelaide No. 2, or YWCA, Division), showing off their new uniforms, April 1917

many went off with the naval and military medical units. But there was another group, who in the opinion of many of their Australian colleagues had answered perhaps a higher calling—a plea for help from the British St John organization. This had come in 1915 when the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, Major-General J. C. Dalton, circularized all Districts of the Brigade Overseas, inviting them to participate in a scheme for replenishing the reserves of volunteers available from amongst the ranks of the Brigade 'At Home', now much depleted because of the wartime drain on British volunteers.

The Chief Commissioner's scheme provided for the recruitment of female Brigade members from the dominions and colonies to work as 'probationary nurses' in Britain, and perhaps even in France and Belgium. The recruits, who had to be aged between twenty-three and thirty-eight, physically fit and the holders of current first aid and home nursing certificates, had to pay their own way to Britain, where they would work in naval and military hospitals under the direction of trained nurses. After a month's trial service they could be taken on by their hospital matron for a six-month contract period, or for the duration of the war if that should occur sooner. If the matron gave them a contract they were to receive £20 a year salary, board, lodgings, a laundry allowance and £1 a quarter for the upkeep of their uniforms. If, however, the matron rejected them at the end of the month's trial period, or if they were deemed to be physically unfit, they would receive no financial assistance and no offer of employment.[37]

Despite this risk of being left high and dry in Britain, out of pocket

and 19,000 kilometres from home, many Brigade women in Australia leapt at the chance to go. Mrs T. W. Henderson, superintendent of the Coogee Nursing Division in Sydney, called together the twenty-four women of her Division to discuss Dalton's invitation as soon as they heard about it, in October 1915. Thirteen of them decided they would join her in accepting the offer, 'either giving up pleasant homes or resign[ing] comfortable positions in the city' to do so.[38] How many of the Coogee women went in the end is not known, though thirty from New South Wales went. In addition four went from Perth and a group of Melbourne VAD members of unknown number joined the scheme in 1916, being posted to the Brigade hospital at Etaple in France.[39]

One of the Melbourne recruits later wrote a series of letters back home from England and Flanders describing her experiences in the field hospital to which she was posted in France. *The Victorian First Aid and St John Ambulance Gazette* ran them as a serial throughout the entire ten issues of its life, from April 1918 to January 1919. She was not a particularly profound observer and her thinking was infected with the popular prejudices of the day, but she was a lively writer and her comments evoke much of the sense of the grim conditions of the time and place. They give us a glimpse of what life behind the front was like for the wartime volunteer:

30th General Hospital,
British Expeditionary
Force, France.

16th December 1917.

I am still on night duty and in the hut. Tonight it is blowing an icy gale, and when we came on duty it was snowing a bit . . . I christened my gum boots, and certainly they keep my feet nice and dry, but are too cold and stiff in the ward, so I brought a pair of slippers over . . .

We had a couple of very heavy, hard white frosts at the beginning of the month . . . Even the water in the pails in our room was frozen over, and my sponge and sponge bag were stiff . . .

On the morning of the 5th there were three patients going to England at 6.15 so I had awakened them about 4.30 to have a wash and get dressed up . . . I thought I could hear a German plane in the distance, so went to the door of the hut and was quite certain then . . . In a few minutes we heard the guns and then the siren . . . In a few more minutes the lights went out and we just had a few candles and a hurricane lamp . . .

Well, Fritz stayed around for about ten minutes or so, and there was a great deal of firing, and we could hear some good old crackers coming down, too. Then we had peace for a little while, and another plane arrived on the scene, and there was another performance as before . . . We had four different strafes that morning at short intervals, but by six o'clock they had all gone. They had been over in 'Blighty' [England], but had been turned back, so had to leave their bombs somewhere . . . The men were awfully good . . . They all stayed quietly in bed, and only a couple of the shell-shocks got shaky and dithery . . .

9th January 1918.

Yesterday it snowed all day, with a terrific wind blowing, so that the snow and sleet were driven with great force all over the huts and just hung on in patches on the window panes . . . The ink was a solid mass. Last year the ink froze in the fountain pens the girls were wearing.

I have been on night duty over eight weeks now and should be due off on 14th January . . . The hut I am in gets all the serious cases, and as I am quite on my own, except for occasional visits from Sister, and the orderly relieving me for my meals, I have to keep my wits about me.

Unfortunately the day before Christmas we had a big evacuation, leaving my ward with only 14 patients for Christmas Day, two of them being Huns! . . . The Huns were put up in one corner, were given bags containing little gifts like all the other boys from the Red Cross, and got the Christmas fare, though one old Fritz was only on milk diet, so didn't get much; but otherwise no one took much notice of them . . . They are with us still, and last night we got another, two nephritis and one pneumonia, who is on the road to recovery. One Fritz takes fits, and 'fitted' the whole of one night . . .

We have had a sad time lately, as we have had four deaths, three from pneumonia, and one boy who was sent back from the hospital ship one morning as he was too ill to travel. He had been sent from a hospital by train, and the embarkation officer would not take him on board. He was a very bad gas case and died the same night. It was the first person I had seen die or dead, and though it was a very pathetic sight, it was not so terrifying as I had always imagined it to be . . .

One man—the nicest Scotchman—was conscious till he died, and kept asking me where he had to go. The hard part is they have to go on with their work till they get so ill they are almost beyond cure. The third pneumonia died yesterday morning at seven, after three nights and days of delirium, in which he sang, talked and shouted all the time without ceasing. He was very restless a couple of nights ago and in a very weak state, and had several times tried to get out of bed . . . From that time onwards he talked and shouted till he died two mornings after . . . The Captain had hopes of pulling him through, but though he was given an enormous quantity of drugs he could not rest or sleep but simply wore himself out.

It is very distressing to see a person so very ill, and it makes you feel you never want to get such a bad illness yourself. If only we could have pulled him through it would have been so great . . .[40]

Her identity was never revealed, but her letters gave her Brigade colleagues in Melbourne a direct link with the great wartime efforts of the VAD movement in Britain, enabling them to share in it at least vicariously.

Another Brigade member who wrote informatively about his experiences abroad was A. S. F. Wilkinson, who went away with the Army Medical Corps. Wilkinson, who earlier had been one of the party of New South Wales members of the Brigade who went to the Royal Review at Windsor in 1912, was one of thirteen members of the Paddington and Woollahra Ambulance Division who joined the Corps. Three of them, F. H. Coates, A. M. Wilkinson and A. L. Nix, were later awarded the Military Medal. Wilkinson left Sydney aboard the hospital transport ship *Kyarra* on 24 November 1914, bound for Alexandria via Melbourne, Fremantle, Colombo and Aden. Apart from the ambulance drills and

lecture programme their commanding officers, Lt-Col. J. B. Nash, M.L.C. (divisional surgeon of Glebe Nursing Division), and Lt-Col. J. W. Springthorpe (current president of the Victorian Centre of the Association), kept them at during the voyage, the trip was almost a pleasure cruise. There were games and sporting contests, and a 'King Neptune' ceremony as they crossed the equator. On 20 December they passed close to the Cocos Islands, and could see 'a heap of what looked like scrap iron—all that was left of the German merchant raider *Emden* by our glorious HMAS *Sydney*'. Then there were Christmas celebrations before docking at Colombo on Boxing Day for sight-seeing trips in rickshaws. On New Year's Eve there was a fancy dress ball in the saloon for the officers and nurses; and so the round of diversions continued. They reached Aden on 6 January 1915, spent a 'fearfully hot' five days steaming up the Red Sea, passed through the Gulf of Suez and the Canal, and finally reached Alexandria on 14 January, just over seven weeks after leaving Sydney.[41]

Wilkinson's days of leisure were now over for at least the next four years. His unit travelled down to Cairo by train to join the 1st Division AIF at Mena Camp in preparation for the Gallipoli campaign. He survived Gallipoli and went on to France, where he also survived the battles of the Western Front to return to Sydney to become superintendent of his Division and eventually District Superintendent of the New South Wales District of the Brigade. His reminiscences of the war ran in monthly instalments over two years in the Sydney journal *The Ladies' Sphere*, which ran a 'St John Ambulance' page during the war and into the 1920s.

Wilkinson, too, had some of the prejudices of the day. He wrote about Germany 'unsheathing the sword against civilization in Europe'; he thought the beggars in Colombo were 'most impudent and persistent and one often has to resort to force to drive them away'; in Egypt he found the 'Arab natives of all classes and ranks [to be] a real scheming and wicked lot'.[42] But his articles showed some of the wry humour that helped some Australians through the horrors they experienced on the World War I battlefields. His notes on the third battle of Ypres in late 1917 (when out of the total allied and German casualties of almost a million, Australia's share was 38,000 in eight weeks) showed that life in a medical unit was hardly less hazardous than in the infantry:

> . . . Just as we entered the ruined city, six heavy bombs exploded a few hundred yards ahead. The Major in charge of our party halted us and we took cover in ditches for a few minutes. We lost no time as soon as we arrived in unloading our medical and surgical panniers, and in an hour we were ready for the reception of the walking wounded cases. Our dressing station was almost a ruin, the roof had been blown off and only the bare walls remained; it had perhaps been a warehouse, and was situated along the railway line adjoining the railway station, which had long since disappeared. We were always obliged to wear our steel helmets, as every shell that burst caused bricks and mortar to

fall in lumps. We soon realized we were in a murderous position and in constant danger of being bombed or shelled out. Moonlight nights made matters worse, as scores of enemy machines hovered overhead, pelting the main roads. The wounded coming to us for treatment were in constant danger as their way lay along the Menin Road, and many were brought down in lorries.

On the 4th October our First, Second and Third Divisions launched one of the fiercest attacks which took place during the whole of the Ypres fighting. The casualties were very heavy, and many of our Ambulance men were killed or wounded. In this action Major (Dr.) G. M. Hunt, M.C., one of our bravest soldiers, was killed whilst supervising the evacuation of the wounded. We also lost Major T. J. Frizelle and Captain J. Davies of our unit. The casualties among our bearers were also numerous. The other Sections of our Field Ambulance, who were running the advanced dressing station on the ill-fated Menin Road, were also having a pretty rough time . . .

On October 9th our Second Division gave Fritz another go, and all the morning and afternoon we were busy dressing and evacuating the wounded with shells continually dropping near us. One shell fell right in front of our station whilst I was helping a batch of wounded into a lorry; I was thrown up against the tailboard and had a very narrow escape . . .[43]

There were other Brigade personalities, too, who found their way overseas to the war zones. Among them was a pair of remarkable women, Dr Katie Ardill of Sydney and Dr Phoebe Chapple of Adelaide, each a pioneer of women's rights within the St John organizations. Katie Ardill graduated in medicine from Sydney University in 1913 and immediately began lecturing in first aid for the Association. She joined the Brigade in 1914 and in 1915 became Divisional Surgeon of the Headquarters Nursing Division of the Civil Ambulance Transport Corps, the first woman in New South Wales to hold such a position. At the outbreak of war the Army turned down her application to join the Army Medical Corps because she was a woman. Wanting to serve overseas, she made her own way to Egypt in 1915, and then on to Britain, where she took charge of the Middlesex Hospital at St Albans, which received troops wounded in Europe. She later secured a position at the Anglo-Belgian military hospital, Calais, with the rank of Captain. She returned to Sydney in 1919, to a rousing welcome from both press and Brigade. Soon afterwards she opened a free clinic at Bankstown, which she ran for the wives and dependents of ex-servicemen until her death in 1955. She was deputy chairman of the New South Wales Centre of the Association from 1947 until 1950, then chairman from 1950 until her death, once again being the first woman to hold these positions.[44]

Phoebe Chapple was the first woman to become a Divisional Surgeon of the Brigade in Adelaide. She was the foundation Divisional Surgeon of the Adelaide No. 2 (YWCA) Nursing Division in 1914. She went to Britain in 1917 following another appeal by the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, this time for 400 female doctors to fill in for doctors of the English Brigade who had gone to the war. In England she became surgeon at the hospital for wounded soldiers at Aldershot, and after seven solid months of duty there she became a Major in the

Women's Auxiliary Army Corps being formed for service in France. In France she was promoted to major and awarded the Military Medal for gallantry. She won the latter when a Zeppelin raid scored a direct hit on a trench where forty of her women were sheltering, killing nine and wounding many more. Communications with other areas were cut, and so Major Chapple cared for the wounded alone. She, too, returned home to an admiring set of St John Ambulance colleagues, and a rousing welcome.[45]

4 *Peace*

By the time the war was drawing to its close in 1918 the long lists of casualties, the pitiful shiploads of returning wounded and disabled, and the appalling and seemingly senseless carnage to gain a few more metres of Flanders mud had taken the glamour out of the war. Even if these had not, then the bitterly contested conscription referenda of 1916 and 17 had made many people question the price of military glory.

In the St John organizations, too, the questioning was going on, even though they remained loyal to the end, and probably would have continued being so if the war had gone on for another ten years. A note of war weariness could be heard from time to time, however, for even the most faithful handmaiden of the military cause could not help but be shocked by the horror of it all. Thus, in Western Australia, where St John people had welcomed the war for the boost it gave their activities, the annual report of the Goldfields Centre by the end of 1916 was bitterly regretting the fact that 'the deplorable European War has not yet been brought to a satisfactory solution'.[46]

Elsewhere there were other signs that the waste of war was imprinting itself on the minds of the loyalists no less than upon the sceptics. The memorial services for fallen St John comrades became too frequent for those at home not to be appalled. Let us look at but one of them—for Captain William Thomas McDonald, a stalwart of Australia's oldest Brigade Division, Glebe. McDonald had spent most of his life in and out of the Army: he had been in the New South Wales Scottish Regiment for twenty-five years; he was a Boer War veteran and had been 'mentioned in despatches' for gallantry there; he was 'mentioned in despatches' again for his bravery at the Gallipoli landing; he was wounded at Lone Pine and subsequently invalided out to England; and he had just been promoted to captain and posted to France when he was killed in action in August 1916. His two brothers and his brother-in-law were also in France with the AIF at the time of his death. Behind him in Glebe he left a widow and two young children, and many grieving friends in the Glebe Ambulance Division and at the Glebe Presbyterian church. The church was crowded on Sunday 24 September 1916 for his memorial service, which members of his Brigade Division and senior District staff attended in strength. The hymn they sang for him was dedicated 'For those at that Front':

47 A. S. Wilkinson, Brigade District secretary, and later District Superintendent, about 1925. He was a member of the Australian contingent that travelled to England in 1911 for the Royal Review of the Brigade, and served with the Australian Army Medical Corps throughout the First World War.

. . . When Death flies swift on wave or field,
Be Thou a sure defence and shield;
Console and succour those who fall,
And help and hearten each and all.
Oh, hear Thy people's prayer for those
Who fearless face their country's foes.

For those who weak and broken lie,
In weariness and agony—

Great Healer to their beds of pain
Come, touch, and make them whole again!
Oh, hear Thy people's prayers and bless
Thy servants in their hour of stress.

For those to whom the call shall come,
We ask Thy peace in Jesus' name,
And when the bitterness is past,
We trust them to Thy love at last.
Oh, hear Thy people's prayers for all
Who nobly striving, nobly fall.

For those who minister and heal,
And spend themselves, their skill, their zeal,
Renew their hearts with Christ-like faith
And guard them from disease and death.
And in Thine own good time, Lord, send
Thy peace on earth till time shall end.[47]

The last verse was a particularly apt one for 'Zam-Buks' in their present wartime commitments through St John Ambulance; but if they took any notice of the last two lines they must have wondered how much longer their God would allow the killing to go on.

The war ground grimly on for more than two years after McDonald's memorial service, and there were to be many more similar memorial services around Australia before the fighting finished. It was not surprising, then, that the Armistice in November 1918 was greeted everywhere with joy. Something of the relief of the wartime volunteers was obvious at a 'War Workers' Thanksgiving Service' in Centennial Park, Sydney, on Saturday 23 November, twelve days after the Armistice. Lady (later Dame) Margaret Davidson, wife of the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Walter Davidson, and a great friend and supporter of St John Ambulance, the Red Cross and the VAD movement, arranged it. Eight Nursing Divisions and the District staff attended to represent the Brigade, while men from the Ambulance Divisions were on public duty.[48]

The most jubilant celebrations came the following year. The great Peace Parade on Saturday 21 July 1919 in Sydney, three weeks after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, which marked the official end of the war, typified the mood of similar festivities in all the other capitals. The *Sydney Mail* described it as 'undoubtedly the finest parade ever witnessed in Sydney'. It comprised 10,523 soliders, sailors, nurses and war workers, including 1500 VAD members and a small, sad band of thirty wives and mothers of the fallen. The Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, took the salute from astride a cavalry horse once ridden by Sir Ian Hamilton, the British General who had commanded the landing at Gallipoli. Near the saluting base was a large stand for wounded and disabled soliders. In the opinion of the *Daily Telegraph* it was 'a sad place, since it represented part of the penalty that must be paid for war'. On the other hand the paper also thought it 'a very happy place' because

> one only had to glance at the faces of its occupants to realize that they were making the best of things and determined to enjoy their day as much as anyone. Men with crutches, men still too weak from illness to look after themselves, blind men, men with all kinds of injuries, were helped to their seats by members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade. And they all settled down; some poor paralysed fellows near by in the cars from which they could not be moved, and the rest in the stand. A few with friends or relatives or nurses to look after them; blind men smoking pipes; one-legged men with their crutches sticking up beside them; one-armed men waving to a friend coming up or a friend in the crowd or among the marching men—all happy and on holiday.[49]

The Brigade was on duty again, of course, The District Superintendent, T. H. Henderson, had 150 men and 150 women in uniform stationed at points along the whole route of the procession, and eight motor ambulances in key positions. They were kept busy with the usual quota of 'fits, faints and "false alarms" '.[50]

The Brigade Divisions held their own celebrations later. The Eastern Suburbs Corps based at Randwick held its own 'Peace Carnival' at Coogee on 10 December, and the Glebe Division held its 'Welcome Home and Reunion' on 19 December 1919.[51] By now it was more than a year since the fighting had finished. There was a good excuse for the delay, however, for in the meantime Brigade Divisions everywhere in Australia had been bringing themselves near exhaustion in helping fight another sort of war—against the pneumonic influenza that struck in the latter half of 1918.

5 *The influenza epidemic of 1918-19*

The influenza epidemic, resulting from a new strain of the influenza virus, reached Australia at the end of the winter of 1918. Troops returning from Europe probably brought it. It spread quickly across the continent, rampaging through a peak period of infection from October 1918 until about the end of May 1919. The disease was popularly called 'Spanish' influenza, though more properly it was called 'pneumonic' influenza because it was a form of influenza 'associated with the germs that cause pneumonia'.[52] By the time it had passed some people had dubbed it 'the great plague'.[53]

While it was perhaps medically inaccurate, the last name was apt because the disease proved to be an even greater scourge than the Black Death of the Middle Ages. In about eight months it left some 13,000 Australians dead. This was proportionately a more devastating mortality than the war itself: averaged out on a monthly basis Spanish influenza cost 1625 Australian lives a month for eight months; the war took the lives of 59,258 service personnel over fifty months, an average of 1185 a month. World-wide the effects were even more colossal, for whereas the war is estimated to have claimed the lives of about eight million service personnel and five million civilians, pneumonic influenza left twenty

million dead. This is the largest number of people ever to have succumbed to a single epidemic, and led to the coining of a new word—'pandemic'—to describe a truly global epidemic.[54]

For some strange reason which is still unclear, the new virus killed mainly young adults aged between twenty and forty years, and mortality was less among older and younger age groups. *The Victorian First Aid and St. John Ambulance Gazette* described its effects on victims:

> *Symptoms* The onset is generally sudden, beginning with a chill or a shivering fit and high fever. Headache and backache ensue, followed by a general aching of the body, and extreme weakness. Something the disease begins with reddening and running of the eyes, coughing, sneezing, and sore throat.
> *Complications* The most important and the most dangerous complication of influenza is pneumonia. The presence of pneumonia is revealed by high fever, flushed face, cough, increased frequency and difficulty of breathing, and sharp pains in the chest.[55]

As soon as the epidemic began assuming plague proportions, by about the end of October 1918, the health authorities in each State made arrangements to cope with the emergency. Ministers for Health issued regulations to halt the spread of infection. Those which came into force in Victoria in November 1918 were as follows:

> *Legal Obligations*
> (1) Every householder shall immediately send a report in writing to the Council of every case of influenza, or any illness resembling influenza, which occurs in the house, and such report shall include the name, age and sex of the patient, and the exact location of the house.
> (2) Every person who suffers from symptoms of influenza shall immediately inform the occupier of the house wherein he resides of his condition.
> (3) Every person who has been in contact with a case of influenza shall immediately send a report to the Council, and such report shall include such person's name and address.
> (4) No contact and no person suffering from symptoms of influenza shall enter any public building or place where persons are congregated.
> (5) Any person who fails to comply with the foregoing regulations, or is guilty of any neglect or disobedience thereof, is liable to a penalty of £20.[56]

As time went on even more stringent controls had to be enforced. Governments took to measures like banning public congregations of people in numbers greater than a set maximum. Consequently theatres, sporting fixtures, schools and churches went into temporary abeyance in different parts of the country in response to various restrictive edicts during the worst part of the crisis.

Restrictions like these had an immediate effect on the Association's teaching programmes. Most State Centres of the Association had to abandon their classes for the duration of the emergency, with the result that in 1918-19 most Centres produced their lowest numbers of graduates in almost a decade. The Adelaide Centre, for example, had taught 413

pupils in the year to March 1910 but had only 352 pupils in the year to March 1920, compared with 2214 pupils in the peak wartime year, 1916. In Victoria the trend was similar—2738 pupils in 1910-11, 1916 pupils in 1918-19, and 9336 in the peak year, 1915-16.[57]

But while the St John training programme thus slowed down from a brisk canter to crawling pace, the voluntary duties its members did probably exceeded even the busiest of the wartime years. As soon as the crisis of the epidemic began approaching, the St John organizations in three States—New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia—placed their resources at the disposal of the public health authorities. In Victoria the Council of the Association in October 1918 organized a team of volunteers in 133 centres throughout the State who would be willing to offer their services to the State and local health authorities. It arranged for them to be given special lectures on the handling of influenza cases and subsequently 'trainees in practically all the centres . . . assisted in nursing influenza victims'.[58] The trainees received long and detailed sets of instructions:

> *Treatment* Complete rest . . . Quinine, salicylates, acetylsalicylic acid and phenacetin have proved the most useful drugs in relieving symptoms . . . Air and light should freely enter the room . . .
>
> *How Influenza is spread* The infecting organisms are contained in discharges from the mouth and nose . . . The commonest way in which the disease is contracted is by inhaling small particles of infected sputum or mucus expelled in the act of coughing or sneezing . . .
>
> *Prevention*
> (1) Isolation of patients and contacts. (2) Disinfection of discharges fom nose and mouth of patient. (3) Disinfection of nose and mouth cavities by douches, mouth washes, sprays and inhalations. (4) Attendants on patients should wear a gauze mask or suitable respirator. (5) Avoid crowds; be in the open air as much as possible. Allow sunshine and air to freely enter all living, sleeping and working rooms. Avoid fatigue and beware of the cougher and sneezer. (6) Evidence from South Africa shows that the special vaccine prevents serious complications, if not the disease itself. This vaccine is supplied by the Health Department to Councils, to which application should be made for inoculation.
> *Disinfection of nose and mouth.*
> *Douche* A flat teaspoonful of salt, baking soda, and boracic acid dissolved in a quart of warm water.*
>
> *Sprays* Permanganate of potash, 1 in 1500, or 2 per cent solution of hydrogen peroxide. These may also be used as mouth washes.
>
> *Inhalant* Eucalyptus oil, 7 parts; terebene, 2 parts; and menthol, 1 part.[59]

In Adelaide the health authorities set up an emergency isolation

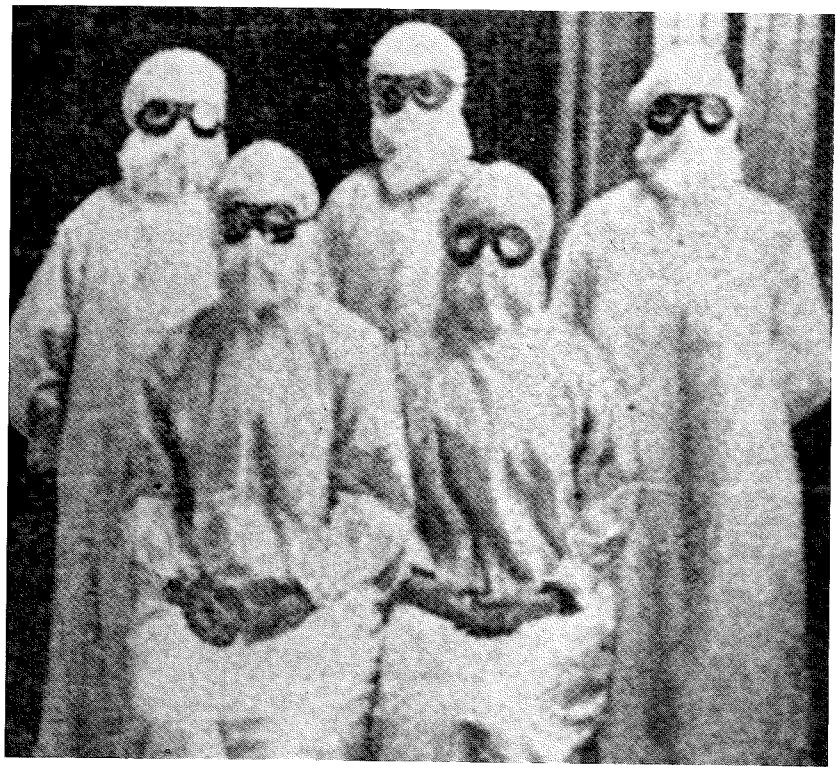
* Author's personal note: At the time of the epidemic my mother was a schoolgirl in Creswick, Victoria, where the local State school closed down temporarily and became an emergency hospital during the worst of the crisis. Local families were given this particular recipe and advised to use the solution to gargle with. My mother still makes it, and swears by it for all mouth and throat infections. Over the years her five children must have gargled away dozens of gallons of it.

hospital for the influenza victims in the Old Exhibition Building on North Terrace, and called for volunteers to help run it. Many members of the local Brigade Divisions volunteered and were accepted for service. Miss Dixon, secretary and mainstay of the YWCA Nursing Division, went further afield, first to Burra and then to Wallaroo to help out in the hospitals in those towns. In one of its earliest annual reports the Brigade in South Australia congratulated its members for 'rendering devoted service in combating the influenza epidemic in this State'.[60]

New South Wales St John bodies kept a more detailed record of their activities during the epidemic than did those elsewhere, allowing us to gain a more comprehensive view of how they helped their State to handle the emergency. Expecting that the crisis would be prolonged, the New South Wales Director General of Public Health called a meeting of interested agencies, including the St John Ambulance bodies, to form a committee to plan strategies for handling the epidemic. From this came plans for quarantining victims, for setting up emergency hospitals in suitable venues—public schools, the Moore Park ice skating rink, even Army tents—for inoculating the public, for supplying masks to volunteer workers, and for requisitioning all ambulance vehicles from the five or six authorities owning them to facilitate the co-ordination of the ambulance transport arrangements.[61]

Storie Dixson put the Brigade at the disposal of the Director General of Public Health, guaranteeing to provide a body of volunteers who would help out either in the emergency hospitals or in the victims' homes. One of the first fruits of this offer was that the Newtown Division of the Brigade went on duty at the Newtown Vaccination Depot, where prospective volunteers had to be inoculated. Mrs Ida Withers, the Brigade's lady District Superintendent, then organized a ten-hour working bee at the Railways Institute to make face masks for the volunteer workers. The men of the Newtown Ambulance Division made a special contribution by manning an 'ambulance tram' which the tramways authorities made available for shifting parties of influenza victims to the 'Coast' (Prince Henry's) Hospital at Little Bay near La Perouse, Sydney's principal hospital for infectious diseases.[62]

As the previous chapter has shown, 11,772 patients were transported in Sydney by the co-ordinated ambulance system that operated during the epidemic. Sydney's population at the time was roughly 892,000, which means that at least one in seventy-five of the city's inhabitants were hospitalized. With such a huge influx of patients, many emergency hospitals were necessary to relieve the established hospitals. One which the VAD-Brigade members of the Marrickville area ran almost single-handed was in the Chapel Street Public School, Marrickville, sponsored by the local municipality. As well as staffing the hospital and nursing patients both there and at home, the volunteers gave over 8000 inoculations. They also made their own overalls and head masks—which, with



48 Women of the Marrickville Brigade Division dressed for duty at the local emergency hospital during the influenza epidemic, 1919

the goggles they also wore, made them look rather like modern workers handling radioactive contamination. The Marrickville city council later presented them with suitably inscribed gold brooches for their efforts. The Governor, Sir Walter Davidson, and Lady Davidson visited the Chapel Street emergency hospital. Sir Walter, a Knight of the Order of St John, and Lady Davidson, a 'Lady of Grace' of the Order, were much impressed. Sir Walter undoubtedly stirred pride in the hearts of all St John volunteers when his comments appeared in the press afterwards. 'Ours is the oldest and greatest organization for the care of the sick', he said, '—and it is the best'. He also told the volunteers, 'You can have no more useful ambition than to learn how to care for the sick'.[63]

In Randwick, too, the local Division of the Brigade ran a home nursing service for influenza victims. It provided teams of volunteer nurses to look after patients in their own homes. They set up an influenza depot in the Randwick Town Hall with the help of the Randwick Council. Part of the depot consisted of a hostel for eight live-in volunteer nurses, who were available around the clock as long as the crisis lasted. The Council provided a relief car to take them to the homes where they were needed.[64]

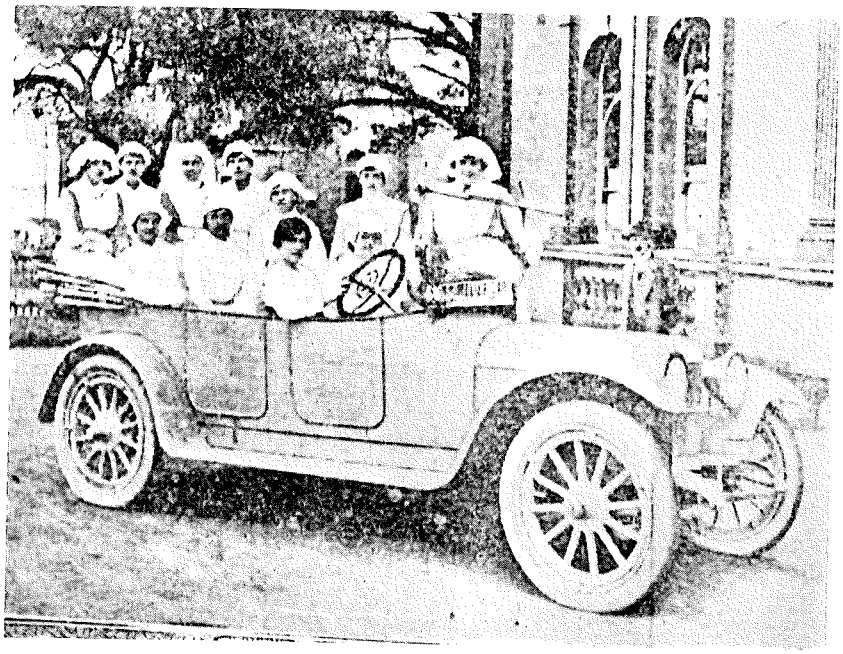
The risk to such volunteers was high. Every single member of the Brigade's Civil Ambulance Transport Corps—the full time ambulance officers—succumbed to the illness; and at least seven of the St John volunteers died from it after having picked it up while on duty. The latter were the Divisional Surgeon of the Western Suburbs Ambulance Division, Dr Bowen Thomas; J. A. Stone, superintendent of the Balmain CATC Ambulance Division; Michael Mealey, also of the Balmain CATC Division, who had not long before returned from overseas military service with the AIF; Dr Bruce Withers, Divisional Surgeon at Auburn; George Young of the Glebe Division; Leila Prince, a young 'society' woman from Mosman who worked with the Darlinghurst VAD unit; and Lt-Col. (Dr) J. B. St V. Welch, a member of the Committee of the New South Wales Centre of the Association.[65]

The press was lavish in praising those who thus helped influenza victims at danger to themselves. The imagery of sacrificial rites came readily to mind in contemplating the dangers to which they readily exposed themselves. *The Sydney Mail* eulogized the women of the VAD movement who laboured on through the trying months of the epidemic. It likened them to the Anzacs decorated for deeds of self-sacrificial gallantry:

> What are our feelings when we find girls in our midst who are just as brave, and who face death and meet it in a war that is not less destructive because it comes creeping insidiously, like an invisible poisonous gas? In our cities and towns today there is no thunder of cannon, no glint of sunshine on bayonets, no risk of death from bombs—none of the terrors that the Anzacs faced. There is no summons by bugle call . . . —nothing to inflame one to a superhuman effort. It is another call—it comes quietly to a girl in her home. She has resolutely and faithfully worked for the soldiers, and is due to rest awhile. She cannot win a decoration—she can only offer her life. And many girls have done this! The impulse of any soldier would be to tear off his decoration from his tunic and pin it on the dress of one of these girls. Talk of Anzac, which . . . a century hence will be immortal in history, in song and in legend—build your Arch of Triumph; but what is to be done to proclaim our appreciation of the girls who are fighting the Silent Army of pestilence—worthy sisters of Anzacs . . .[66]

Perhaps the metaphor was extended a little too far, perhaps the point was driven home with two or three blows too many. Nevertheless the effusive praise did indicate something of the appreciation a grateful public felt it owed the devoted volunteers. The epidemic, as we now see with hindsight, was of such a vast scale that it ranks among the greatest calamities Australians have had to face. In helping them to meet it, the workers of St John Ambulance had shown that the motto of their ancient Order, 'for the service of humanity', was no empty phrase. They had incremented a worthy reputation for themselves and their Order by adding substance to these words.

St John Ambulance, Red Cross, the VAD movement (which continued on and was expanded considerably during World War II), and doubtless



49 The relief car and crew provided by the Randwick Division of the Brigade for work in the municipality during the 1919 epidemic of influenza

many other charitable organizations as well, emerged from the wartime years with their prestige greatly enhanced. War, to put it bluntly, had been good business for them: it created the conditions in which their endeavours could thrive, bringing to their members a sense of re-dedication, attracting into their ranks new and eager members, making governments and officialdom sympathetic to their needs, persuading newspapers and other organs of publicity that they deserved generous treatment, and encouraging the public to support their fund raising efforts liberally.

Great crises like the war and the influenza epidemic brought out the best in many people. They could certainly produce great disagreement, great controversies—the national repturing of the body politic over the conscription issue, for example. But at the same time they also produced great unity, a great sense of national purpose and solidarity among large sections of the community. People who might otherwise have drifted along aimlessly on tides of trivia, self-indulgence and hedonism found new purpose and new bearings through and because of the war. They became more sensitive to others' needs, more willing to go out of their way to be charitable, more ready to inconvenience themselves by taking up causes, and more prepared to work in teams with those around them.

St John Ambulance both contributed to and profited from this mood of self-denial and the sense of team spirit pervading the community. It

gained strength from it both morally and quantitatively. It had done its bit over and over again in helping the nation fight its distant enemies and then the illness that struck them all. But now the crises has passed there would be new tasks and new purposes to seek. As Australians settled back into their peacetime pursuits, the serious question for St John organizations everywhere was whether or not they could retain the strength they had gathered during the war. Could they hold the interest and the commitment of their own members, and could they convince the public that ambulance skills and duties were as important in peace as in war?

7

Between the two world wars

Relief, pride and optimism prevailed throughout Australia as the young nation left its teens and entered its twenties. Australians were relieved that their wartime trials were over. They were proud their servicemen and women had acquitted themselves so well. They were confident that their country was embarking into a prosperous adulthood, during which it would take its rightful place among the great nations of the world.[1]

All this boded ill for the St John Ambulance organizations, whose enormous wartime successes arose principally from the fact that there had been a war. Great national crises meant great public support, but peace and prosperity brought complacency—and diminished concern for what St John offered.

The decline in public interest was immediately obvious in the much reduced enrolments in the first aid and home nursing courses. A sigh of relief echoes from the statistics of the depleted classes of the early 1920s. In Victoria, for example, where the Association Centre was complaining of the apathy of the public, only 988 people joined the classes in 1921, compared with 1476 the previous year, and 9336 at the peak of wartime enrolments five years before. The Western Australian Centre had a bad year in 1920, when there were only 299 pupils, as against 2297 in 1916. Elsewhere the decline was the same. In South Australia there were 352 pupils in 1920, compared with 715 in 1919 and 2214 in 1916; in New South Wales the corresponding figures were 1153, 1881 and 9870. In short, pupil numbers around Australia in 1920-21 were 39 per cent down on the previous year, and 88 per cent lower than five years before. It was as if Australians everywhere were shouting, 'The war is behind us; so is the need for first aid training.'[2]

1 *The Association post-war*

Fortunately for their own good the St John Ambulance bodies quickly grasped the implications of the downturn of public interest, and promptly took the necessary corrective action. They soon realised that publicly bewailing their waning support would not bring back the pupils. Nor would their proud wartime achievements sustain them in the peace ahead. Instead they must chase the prospective clients, keep battling away at seizing public attention, maintain the never-ending task of con-

vincing people that basic medical skills were necessary in every household and place of work.

This realization became obvious in a number of directions. In New South Wales the Association took effective action to halt post-war ennui by appointing its first full time secretary, Sister Bertha Parry, in December 1921. She had trained at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney before the war, and had then worked as a nurse in the New South Wales Department of Public Instruction before leaving Australia in November 1914 aboard the hospital ship *Kyarra*, bound for Cairo and a year's service with the Army Medical Corps. Back in Australia again, she became matron of hospitals at Penrith and in the Gippsland district of Victoria. Towards the end of the war she undertook postgraduate studies in San Francisco, where she also did volunteer nursing with the Red Cross during the pneumonic influenza epidemic. She spent three months nursing Eskimos in Alaska, a period as superintendent of a tuberculosis hospital in San Francisco, and a spell on the editorial bench of the American *Nurses' Journal* before returning to Sydney and her job with St John. She was to remain full time secretary to the Association in New South Wales for the next eighteen years, until the outbreak of the Second World War, when she resigned to take up a position with the National Emergency Service.[3]

Sister Parry's zestful approach to her job soon began producing results. She began a concerted campaign of visiting employers and social clubs in town and country to promote the work of the Association, and she circulated posters on its courses wherever she went. Places as diverse as the Dubbo Country Women's Association, the Excelsior Quarries at Wollongong, the North Bondi Ladies' Swimming Club, the Belmont Sailing Club near Newcastle, and Lever Brothers, the Berlei Company and the Rexonola Phonograph Company in Sydney all ran classes as a result of her first excursions abroad in 1922-23. She set up a display at the Royal Easter Show in Sydney, produced pamphlets, advertised in the press, and 'circularis[ed] to clubs, schools, firms, mines, public works, societies, churches etc.'—all part of what she termed 'propaganda' work, a 'vigorous policy of organizing classes'.[4] Above all, however, she travelled. One year it would be from Newcastle and across the central west of the State; the next year it would be from Wollongong south to the Victorian border; then it would be the turn of the Riverina district, or the north coast towns as far as the Queensland border. Within four years of this sort of promotion enrolments were climbing back up to the wartime levels and Association sub-centres in all corners of the State were being reactivated.

As well as persevering with publicity and the revitalization of sub-centres, the New South Wales Centre pushed its cause on other fronts. In 1923 it sent deputations from its Executive Committee to the State Ministers for Mines, for Education and for Labour to urge the com-

pulsory installation of first aid cabinets and kits in all mines, factories, warehouses, hotels, schools and public conveyances. It also tried to persuade these Ministers to introduce legislation requiring the employment of a specified proportion of trained first aiders in every work place where twenty or more people were employed. To further spread its gospel of 'safety first' the Centre produced and marketed its own first aid kits. These promotional efforts met with mixed success. The Ministers made encouraging noises and promised that the deputations' pleas would receive due consideration, but were otherwise non-committal. The manufacturers of motor vehicles, whom the Centre tried to persuade to equip each vehicle sold with an Association first aid kit, were evasive. Consequently not much eventuated from these overtures, though perhaps the Centre felt it had helped make the public generally more safety-conscious through its efforts.[5]

More productive was the step the Centre took into the new technology for publicity—radio. In 1927 it ran a series of weekly 'wireless lectures', talks on first aid, which Broadcasters Ltd. broadcast across the nation via their radio stations. This 'proved a great source of propaganda, and many letters of appreciation were received from all over Australia and New Zealand'.[6] The Victorian Centre of the Association had already discovered the value of radio. In 1926 it had broadcast a series of programmes on first aid through station 3LO, 'as a result of which many inquiries were received from persons wishing to undertake courses'.[7] The Adelaide Centre was not far behind in learning to turn radio to its use. In 1929 it produced a series of fifteen-minute talks for station 5CL which resulted in a substantial boost to class sizes.[8]

With Bertha Parry's hand at the helm to assist successive chairmen the New South Wales Centre sailed boldly into new seas where no other St John body, in Australia or abroad, had yet ventured. Some of the courses she charted proved too venturesome altogether for the staid ship she steered. One notable example was a course in 'pre-maternity and post-natal first aid'. Childbirth was a subject which the St John textbooks and teaching coyly omitted. The Association in Australia, and even more so in Britain, was still very shy of issues that might offend against 'modesty'. Though St John's Gate was reluctant, it had relaxed its earlier prohibition against mixed classes of men and women. It had done so because of pressure from the Australian Centres, who had come to recognise that in remote, sparsely populated districts at least it was better to have one combined class than to see separate classes of men and women lapse for want of numbers. Combined classes were an area where the London leadership of the Association had grudgingly had to concede that Australians knew best what was good for them. But childbirth courses were altogether too daring a proposition for London to allow Sydney to go its own way!

Nowadays the Association routinely gives practical instruction in

emergency childbirth procedures as part of its standard first aid course, but in 1923 the idea was rather startling. Nevertheless it was one urged on the New south Wales Centre by the Country Women's Association, with whom Parry had opened up a fruitful relationship. The CWA was keen for women in the more isolated parts of the State to be able to acquire midwifery skills for use in emergencies, and had suggested to Parry that the Association might devise a certificate course in the subject. The Centre gave the CWA-Parry proposal qualified support. The Executive Committee approved their plan, but hedged it in with restrictions. First it stressed that the technical aspects of the course must not 'exceed that laid down in an approved handbook'—in other words decency must be preserved by limiting the explicitness of the instruction. Secondly, it required that 'the lectures be for women of eighteen (18) years and over', presumably on the grounds that men and younger women were not suitable candidates for initiation into the secrets of childbirth. Finally, it stipulated that 'no examination be conducted nor certificate of proficiency in the subject be awarded'.[9] Thus having taken precautions that the scheme would be above moral reproach, the Committee now had one of its members, Dr Harold Norrie, draw up 'a series of five short lectures in more or less simple language', which it accepted as an approved handbook within the meaning of its own prescriptions. It then had Norrie's notes published as a short textbook for use in the courses.[10]

The following year, 1924, Storie Dixson (now chairman of the New South Wales Centre as well as Brigade Commissoiner for Australia) and other members of the Executive Committee were in Adelaide for the Australian Science Conference, and while there they met together with St John Ambulance representatives from Victoria, Queensland and South Australia to discuss matters of mutual interest. This meeting approved Norrie's textbook and voted to send copies of it to all Australian Centres of the Association for their perusal, with the recommendation that they adopt it for use in first aid training relating to childbirth.[11]

It was at this stage that the project ran foul of the St John authorities in London. Why St John's Gate should have opposed the scheme is not clear, but it seems that the Association leadership there were perturbed by the propriety of such a topic for public teaching and by the 'danger' to the public of lay persons presuming to practise midwifery. They also seemed to have been worried by the fact of offshoots of St John going their own way, independently producing their own texts, and unilaterally going ahead with their own courses that the London 'Head' Centre had not sanctioned. Such waywardness could not be allowed to pass unremarked; it was time to pull the unruly colonials back into line! Correspondence on the matter ensued between London and Sydney, the upshot of which was that 'the question of a textbook in Pre-Maternity First Aid and of instruction on the subject [was] deferred'.[12] The matter did not arise again, at least not in the inter-war years, apart from one address

50 Sister Bertha Parry, secretary of the New South Wales Centre, St John Ambulance Association, presents certificates to the first aid class at Tooth's Brewery, 1930

on 'pre-maternity first aid' which Norrie delivered to the CWA annual conference in 1924. The squelching by London of what might have proved a productive initiative by one of its farflung outposts was thus most effective, allowing the seemliness of the St John name and the authority of the Head Centre to be preserved. Unfortunately we do not know the personal reactions of Parry, Storie Dixson, Norrie and other proponents of the scheme to the action by London. Undoubtedly they were disappointed that their initiative had been stifled, and that their Centre was out of pocket as a result. It says much for the awe in which Australian branches then held St John's Gate that they seem meekly to have given up their scheme once London put its foot down.

Unlike the pre-maternity first aid course several other schemes of the New South Wales Centre were fruitful. One of the more notable successes, not only in New South Wales but also in Victoria, was the formation of an 'Association of Honorary Organisers and Honorary Instructors', that is a body of volunteer lay first aid instructors, more and more of whom were being used to help qualified medical practitioners conduct classes. The idea orginated in Victoria, where an Honorary Instructors' Association was formed in February 1924 with the aim of 'increasing the efficiency of honorary instructors . . . by means of bi-monthly meetings with a free exchange of ideas and methods of demonstrating first aid'. The HIA in Victoria set tests for prospective members, and those passing were awarded a certificate by the Centre

Council qualifying them for a period of three years to act as demonstrators and assistants for the doctors who did the teaching. The New South Wales Centre was pleased to follow this lead in 1925, and the other State Centres also eventually fell in behind Victoria and New South Wales. Later, after the Second World War, when lay instructors gained approval to conduct classes in their own right, the HIA became the venue through which the Association in Australia trained and certificated people as first aid instructors. The instructors' associations have been one of the enduring successes of the St John Ambulance movement in Australia. Something of the scale of their operations was evident in New South Wales in 1977, when the Centre there began employing large numbers of full time salaried instructors rather than the host of volunteers who had sufficed until then. At that time the New South Wales HIA had almost 1300 members.[13]

Another of the notable successes that Bertha Parry notched up in the New South Wales Centre in the inter-war years was the formation of an 'Auxiliary Committee'—a body consisting of leading members of the sorority of Sydney socialites. Parry brought them together in the Auxiliary 'for the purpose of helping to raise funds by means of public functions, and to generally assist, by means of its influence and support, the work of the Centre'.[14] Their membership lists were peppered with well known names—Macarthur Onslow, Street, Knox, Chisholm, Fairfax and Hordern. They sorted themselves into a Senior section for society matrons and a Junior group for the younger set. The patroness of the Seniors was Lady de Chair, wife of the Governor, Sir Dudley de Chair, while their daughter became patroness of the Juniors. In their first year they raised £262/2/3 for the Centre by staging a Polo Week Ball, held in the Palais Royale in May 1925. The Centre voted it 'an unqualified success . . . due to the tireless efforts of all members, especially the Junior Auxiliary for the sale of tickets, cigarettes, balloons etc.'[15] Another stunning success that year, this time by the Senior Auxiliary, was the making of a film, *The Amazons and Others*, starring 'well known Sydney ladies in different sporting sets', filmed gratis by the Australasian Film Company and set 'in lovely gardens in Bellevue Hill'. When the film had its premiere in October 1925 'the audience enthusiastically expressed their appreciation'. Indeed, in the view of the Auxiliary itself, whose members of course provided the cast, the release of the film 'proved one of Sydney's most popular functions of the year'. *The Amazons* raised £236/15/6 for the Association; and so the Auxiliary had thus yielded a nett gain to the Association of almost £500—nearly a third (32.15 per cent) of the Centre's income that year.[16]

To scoff at the smart set is easy, but doing so discounts their valuable contribution to St John Ambulance. They toiled on devotedly for the rest of the inter-war period and beyond, serving St John in a very practical way. They ran their card parties and bridge evenings, their balls, after-

noon teas, garden parties, pageants, luncheons and theatre parties, and raised large sums of money for the organization. This contributed substantially to the revenues of both Association and Brigade over the years. The St John organizations, indeed, could not have survived without them. The only year in which they faltered was in 1931, at the height of the Great Depression, when they ran no fund raising function but 'decided to wait until the next year owing to the prevailing distress existing amongst a number of supporters of the Auxiliary'.[17] One of their most notable contributions was in 1937, when they organized a 'Centuries' ball and pageant in the Sydney Town Hall to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the visit of Lord and Lady Brassey, which the Centre (mistakenly) regarded as the foundation date of the Association in New South Wales. It was a lavish occasion, with Association and Brigade members dressed up to portray important personalities and incidents in the development of the Order of St John down the centuries. There were tableaux to represent the evolution of hospitalling all the way from the Blessed Gerard and the ancient Knights Hospitallers down to the modern ambulance officers and first aiders. The Centre thought the event an outstanding success, no doubt partly because it 'resulted in a substantial cheque of £140/3/8 for the Association and an equal amount for the Brigade'.[18]

The Great Depression left its mark upon St John Ambulance in various other ways apart from the quiet year it gave the Auxiliary in New South Wales. In Victoria the Association Centre for the first time in forty-three years did not publish an annual report in 1929. Finances that year were causing the Victorian Council grave anxiety and so, as an economy-seeking measure, it spared itself the cost of publication, thus saving about £60, or roughly 6 per cent of its normal annual expenditure. The following year, with the financial problem still very difficult, the Council again published no report. To overcome its liquidity problems it launched a first aid drive, publicizing its courses widely in the hope of bringing in more pupils, and with them an increased revenue from class fees. This gambit worked, for whereas enrolments in 1929 were 2275, 126 down on the 1928 figure, in 1931, the year of the drive, there were 3015 pupils, whose fees helped the Centre to a profit for the year of £185. Surprisingly, despite the widespread poverty and unemployment the depression brought, class numbers did not drop appreciably, and even increased as the depression wore on. A similar pattern unfolded in other States. In South Australia the Association Centre noted in 1930 that 'in these unprosperous times it would not be surprising if this year had been unsatisfactory, but on the contrary we have been remarkably successful'. That year there were 696 pupils in South Australia, as against 621 the year before. The Centre seemed startled by the fact: 'our success in spite of the adverse circumstances due to the general impoverishment of the community' was something to be marvelled at. In New South Wales, too, the

depression did not keep many pupils away. Thus, in 1929 there were 3366 pupils; in 1930 there were 3253, and in 1931 there were 3435. In 1930, the worst year for enrolments, the Executive Committee of the New South Wales Centre was gratified to find the number of its sub-centres was steadily increasing and that the populace was still enthusiastic about learning first aid, 'despite industrial depression and widespread unemployment'.[19]

Why the depression did not reduce the St John teaching programmes is not immediately obvious, particularly as none of the State Centres seems to have lowered its fees to encourage more people to enter courses. Perhaps, as during the war, it was a matter of people becoming more public spirited in times of crisis. Possibly also people joined classes so they could be useful to those around them suffering from ill health arising from poverty. It may also have been that in taking courses people were insuring themselves against the risk of medical expenses as times got tougher—by acquiring skills they hoped would obviate the need for a doctor. If this were the case, the cost of a course, generally 7/6, might have seemed a worthwhile investment, even to the poor and unemployed. Whatever the reason for the buoyancy of the enrolment statistics, it was a phenomenon experienced in all State Centres.

If the depression had any serious effect on the Association in Australia it was towards retarding some of the more ambitious schemes some of the State Centres wished to embark upon. In New South Wales, for example, the depression delayed a forward-looking promotional campaign the Centre had been planning. The Executive Committee had big ideas for a 'Learn First Aid' drive it announced to a fanfare of publicity in 1930. Having heralded the campaign abroad the Committee then had to defer it for over a year because there were insufficient funds to proceed with it. It eventually got under way in 1931-32 under the direction of a campaign manager, Colonel J. C. Selmes. It took the form of a road show. The Committee engaged a first aid instructor, A. K. Harris, secretary of the Broken Hill YMCA, to travel the State in a motor caravan it purchased for £280 with the aid of a bequest. The caravan was fitted out as a mobile class room, complete with film projector, and doubled as a sales booth for selling first aid kits and educational materials. Harris was charged with carrying out a missionary effort to boost enrolments in both senior and junior classes. He made four tours in all, his arrival in each town being proclaimed in publicity releases issued to the local press. Harris spoke to schools, scout troops, surf clubs, church congregations and various other local community groups. The Committee believed his activities excited considerable interest wherever he went, though the campaign does not seem to have produced startling increases in class enrolments, which climbed only from 3435 in 1931 to 3662 in 1932. The all-up cost of the campaign, excluding the £356 capital expense for purchase of caravan and projector, was £489—considerably more than a quarter of the Cen-

tre's expenditure for the year. Both Selmes and Harris resigned in 1933, and so the Committee decided to terminate the campaign. It exchanged the caravan for a small car for use by Bertha Parry, whose position it upgraded to 'organising secretary' with responsibilities for undertaking promotional tours around the State.[20]

Sister Parry is an interesting figure in the evolution of the St John Ambulance organizations in Australia, quite apart from the novelty of her occupying such an influential position at a time when men generally predominated in the ambulance movement. She represents the emergence of a new type of person within St John—the professional administrator. In those States where St John either had or had had involvement in the running of ambulance transports services a body of professional ambulance officers had sprung up, as a previous chapter noted. Parry, however, was not an ambulance officer but a general administrator, the first full timer receiving a salary for superintending St John affairs in all their complexity—promoting its programmes, maintaining its records, handling its correspondence, organizing its fund raising, liaising with government and community groups, and generally overseeing its annual routines. Previous secretaries in New South Wales and the other States had always been proud of being honoraries—part time volunteers who undertook their usually demanding duties out of some sense of commitment to the ideals St John represented.

The advent of the professional administrator indicated how successful and also how complex the St John bodies were becoming. At a certain point in their development it became necessary for them to take on professionals like Parry if they were to continue growing. The volume of administrative work eventually became too much for the most dedicated and committed of honoraries, and at that point the governing committees and councils of St John would make their first full time appointments. That the New South Wales Centre was the first to do so is not surprising, because its operations in both the Association and the Brigade by the 1920s were by far the largest of all the six States.

The entry of the salaried administrator also implied certain other changes. One was a shift away from the ideal of Voluntary Service and the notion of service to charity as a form of self denial. While the administrators were volunteers that ideal remained foremost, but the arrival on the scène of people like Parry represented a departure from it. As an employee her commitment was essentially to her job rather than to the ethos of charitable good works that sustained her employer. While she worked for St John it got very good value for money from her; but when a better job or a more enticing employer presented itself there was nothing to stop her leaving and taking her loyalties with her. In short, the professional administrator was basically a mercenary, who crusaded in St John garb only while it suited him, or in this case her. Parry's departure from St John for a more influential and prestigious position in the

National Emergency Service at the outbreak of war underlined this fact. Professionalism was nevertheless a welcome development, since it made for a more efficient organization; yet it also meant a step away from voluntary service and not everyone within St John would have welcomed it.

One of the problems with engaging mercenaries as crusaders was that they had to be kept happy if they were not to become deserters. There had to be certain perquisites of office if the employer was to retain the services of its valued officers. Parry enjoyed a number of these, and over the years her employer indulged her liberally. The car and the interesting tours around New South Wales were but one form of emolument. Socializing with the fashionable members of Sydney society, meeting visiting dignitaries, being written up in the social pages of the newspapers, invitations to Government House, and public acclaim as a notable woman of achievement were others. Yet another was the publication by the Centre of a short textbook on first aid which Parry had written. This was *It's in Your Kitchen*, a book compiled with a view to helping everyone—more especially women in homes remote from medical aid—to a better understanding of how certain household commodities may be used . . . in an emergency.[21]

Parry's best bonus from her satisfied employer was the seven-month trip to the United Kingdom and Europe it sent her on during 1926. She received a grand reception at St John's Gate, where she studied methods of organization and administration, and she travelled the length and breadth of England and Scotland looking at Association sub-centres and Brigade Divisions to learn about British methods of fund raising, publicity, control of stores, and first aid instruction. She inspected safety precautions in factories and mines across the country—Cadbury's at Bourneville, Bryant and May's at Liverpool, St Mary's Stocking Factory at Leicester, Singer's at Glasgow, Armstrong and Whitworth's at Newcastle, and the copper and arsenic mines at Redruth. In London she visited the headquarters of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Associations, the Royal Sanitary Institute, the British Red Cross, the London Police Ambulance, the Railways Ambulance, and the London County Council. She topped all this off with a visit to a Buckingham Palace garden party. She also got herself across to Amsterdam to attend an international conference on life saving, and dropped into the world headquarters of the International Red Cross on the way back. On the return voyage to Australia her ship called into Capetown, which enabled her to make contact with the South African St John Ambulance organization. All in all it was a most profitable excursion. In the report she wrote after her return she said 'it will bring about a much greater understanding with our London headquarters', and she expressed the hope that 'the next twelve months will show a great progress in the work of the New South Wales Centre as a result of my studies abroad'. It had cost £100 to send her away, but she at least was in no doubt that the benefits to St John were worth it.[22]

2 *Expansion of the Brigade*

Post-war weariness might have slowed down the Association in the early 1920s, but not so the Brigade. The war had not yet finished when Storie Dixson as Commissioner for Australia was organizing an interstate conference of Brigade representatives—the first such meeting of any of the St John bodies in Australia. The Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, J. C. Dalton, had suggested the conference before the war 'in order that the higher officers might discuss matters of administration which required modification, in view of Australian conditions being so different from those existing in England'.[23] The wartime preoccupations of the State bodies of the Brigade, however, had precluded any interstate get-together until the war was over.

Storie Dixson's conference took place on Saturday 10 April 1920, in the Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, headquarters of the Victorian St John bodies (which they shared with the Victorian Civil Ambulance). All States except Tasmania had representatives there. Storie Dixson and B. R. Rainsford came from New South Wales; South Australia sent G. F. Hussey and R. V. Bulman, respectively Assistant Commissioner and Senior Corps Superintendent; H. G. Tymms, the Commissioner for Western Australia, was the sole representative from his State; the Victorian Commissioner, Lt.-Col. G. Horne, and Senior District Superintendent, H. A. Osgood-Cannon, represented the host State; and J. H. Lord, the Victorian District Superintendent, represented Queensland by proxy. The conference elected Storie Dixson to the chair and Rainsford to be secretary. Each District of the Brigade had submitted in advance the matters it wanted discussed; and delegates hoped the outcome would be 'the more efficient working of the Brigade and closer co-operation between the various States'.[24]

A series of resolutions flowed from the conference discussions. The most important was the decision to recommend to the State Centres of the Association that they should approach the Chapter General of the Order of St John in London with a request for a Priory of the Order to be established in Australia. That is, the delegates wanted an autonomous national body set up to co-ordinate the State Centres of the Association and the Districts of the Brigade. Such a resolution was a signal to St John's Gate that the Australian organizations of St John now considered they had come of age, and no longer needed the close parental guidance London had previously given. As Association and Brigade operations in Australia had prospered the volume of correspondence with London had increased enormously. The need to refer even the most trivial matters to London for bureaucratic processing or adjudication was both irksome and time-consuming. The war, when delays in receiving answers on urgent issues were perforce longer than usual, and when the local St John bodies had shown they were capable of taking responsibilities for vast enterprises, had proved to be an important catalyst in stiffening 'colonial'

self-confidence. A call for independence in the form of an Australian Priory was thus a logical expression of the rapid development of Australian St John bodies over the past six or seven years.[25]

Another conference resolution called for a standardized uniform for the Brigade throughout Australia—khaki, thought to be more appropriate to Australian conditions than the traditional black of the Brigade at Home. Another regretted the infrequency of honours within the Order in Australia, particularly for Brigade members; that is, the conference thought that admittance into and promotion up the grades of the Order should occur more often for Australians. Still further resolutions called for the establishment of a Brigade hospital in Australia, the setting up of a naval sick berth reserve force, the publication of an Australia-wide first aid journal, and the inception of a system of interstate first aid competitions for Brigade members.[26] All this was given generous publicity in the Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide press; but apart from allowing the participants to get to know each other a little better, nothing much came of the conference and its resolutions, at least in the short term. The Priory of Australia did not eventuate until after the second World War; only Western Australia adopted the khaki uniform; an Australia-wide first aid journal never materialized; nor has the Brigade opened its own hospital. Nevertheless the conference probably was a useful exercise. Arguably it was a necessary step towards a pan-Australian sentiment within the St John organizations which had to emerge before any truly national St John structure could have any chance of success.

Even if national planning and interstate co-operation were not to be conspicuous features of Brigade life between the wars, the Brigade in most States continued to consolidate its reputation for efficient public service. During the 1920s and 30s it performed commendably well at a series of events which became great occasions in its own history in Australia if not in that of the country as well. The first of these was in 1920, when the Prince of Wales (later, as King Edward VIII, the Sovereign Head of the Order) toured Australia during a grand tour of the Empire. Everywhere he went in Australia he drew enormous crowds, and this indirectly provided a great deal of work for Brigade members across the nation. On the day he made his Royal Progress through Sydney, on 9 June 1921, Storie Dixson had 350 Brigade members on duty along the entire route from Farm Cove to Hay Street and back to Government House via George Street. There was a Nursing Division member every fifty paces, and an Ambulance Division member with a stretcher every hundred. There were nine ambulance stations along the route, and the one at the Town Hall alone treated 200 cases. During this procession Sydney Brigade members handled over 1000 cases, thus affording the Sydney Division 'a splendid opportunity to show their fully organized condition and usefulness' as a contemporary report put it.[27]

Other spectacular successes at public functions followed. In 1925 the New South Wales District had 287 members in the streets of Sydney on 23 June for a march through the city of sailors from an American fleet then in town, and at a fireworks display afterwards, while members of Dr Katie Ardill's Sydney Central Nursing Division maintained an emergency ambulance station at the Orient Wharf throughout the fleet's visit. That year in Adelaide the Brigade put in one hectic day at the Oakbank racetrack on Easter Monday. Nineteen Brigade men were on duty, one at every hurdle, a group at the casualty station, and some manning the racetrack ambulance wagon. The day began with a Major C. H. Bath being knocked down by a horse and killed during the running of an early race. Brigade men picked him up from the track but could do little to save him. During the running of the Great Eastern Steeplechase five jockeys fell and needed treatment. As the ambulance van was taking them to the casualty room a bridge at the rear of the grandstand collapsed, dumping about twenty people into a creek. Two women and a man were injured seriously and they, too, ended in the casualty room. Three female spectators collapsed soon afterwards, and joined those in the increasingly crowded casualty room. The Van Doussa Steeplechase shortly after sent three more jockeys injured in falls to the casualty room. To top it all off a truck and a car collided outside the racetrack gates. The six people in the car were thrown onto the road, and they required casualty room treatment as well. Not surprisingly, the racing clubs became firm supporters of the Brigade and gave generously to its funds, to the extent that in the mid-20s the racing clubs' donation of £300 amounted to almost the entire Brigade revenue.[28]

In Victoria also, the Brigade was consolidating its reputation for devoted, reliable service by performing creditably at various public events. In Melbourne in 1927 the Brigade was on duty for the street procession of the Duke of York (the future George VI), who had arrived as the Royal guest for the transfer of federal parliament from Melbourne to Canberra. Brigade members were on duty at the march past in the city and at a special children's display on the Melbourne Cricket Ground. They treated a thousand cases between the two events. Then in 1934 Victoria's centenary celebrations provided Brigade members with an exceptionally busy period: public duties were continuously performed; Brigade personnel were in readiness for all occasions, and, the annual report proudly noted, 'coped with all emergencies, winning congratulations from the highest quarters for efficiency in their work'.[29]

A signal Brigade success in South Australia in the early 1930s was a highly popular rodeo on Adelaide's Jubilee Oval in 1932 to mark the seventy-fifth birthday of the pioneer pastoralist, Sir Sydney Kidman, and to raise money for the Australian Inland Mission. The gates of the oval opened at 1.00 p.m. on the day of the rodeo, but as the crowds has been queueing since mid-morning the ground was full by 1.30 p.m. The gates

closed at 2.00 p.m., by which time the crowd numbered 70,000. When Sir Sydney arrived the crowd was jamming the entrance. Police had to ask people to move on to the arena to allow him and his escort of riders to enter. Eventually the crowd was packed eight deep inside the picket fence surrounding the arena; other were perched up trees, on the scoreboard, on the roofs of buildings, and on any vantage point. The Brigade had rostered thirteen members for duty, but when they arrived and saw the size of the crowd they sent a call out over the radio for every available member to come on duty. Twenty-three more members answered this call, and had to fight their way into the grounds. It was a hot, sultry day, and as had become usual on such occasions Brigade members had to treat dozens of cases of fainting, collapse and heat exhaustion. One man died when he fell from the roof of a shed he had climbed, and there were several cases of serious injury from other falls. More injuries occurred as excited animals charged into the crowd packed around the inside of the arena. Police could not remove spectators from this area, despite threats of not allowing the arena events to proceed. More and more spectators kept clambering the fence for a better view. Probably only the skill of the riders and stockmen prevented a general stampede of animals and people. The efforts of the Brigade on this occasion attracted favourable publicity and high praise, a measure of which was the £76/5/- donation the rodeo organizers made to Brigade funds—a generous sum at the height of the Great Depression for one afternoon's duty.[30]

The Brigade in South Australia gave similar worthy service during the 1930s at a number of other functions where huge crowds gathered at sporting arenas. Many of these took place on the Adelaide Oval. As Beryl Fegan, the historian of the Brigade in South Australia, has remarked, 'these were the days of big rallies and displays'; and as a result of the fine record of duty Brigade members were building up by attending such events, more and more requests came in from organizers of public demonstrations, processions and sporting fixtures likely to be well attended by the public. One early event on the Adelaide Oval for the Brigade was a Girl Guide rally on Anzac Day 1931. There was a shortage of stretchers on this occasion so one Brigade member improvised a stretcher from a hessian bag purchased for three shillings. The Brigade received a donation of four shillings for attending the rally; and so their profit from this duty was one shilling. In 1933 Brigade members were at the Adelaide Oval again for the notorious 'Adelaide Test'—the England-Australia cricket match during the 'bodyline' series when the Australian captain, Bill Woodfull, fell when struck by a bumper from Harold Larwood. Some contemporary observers believed that if one incensed spectator had leapt the fence the rest of the crowd would have followed to vent their anger against the Englishmen. In 1934 the Adelaide Oval was the scene of a children's farewell to Lady Hore-Ruthven, wife of the

51 The Brigade's Adelaide Central Division, early 1920s. Divisional surgeon Dr Dunstone is in front row, centre. Bernie March, who in 1936 became superintendent of South Australia's first cadet division, Norwood, is second from left, centre row.

retiring State governor, Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven (later Lord Gowrie, Governor-General of Australia). Every child was dressed as a flower. It was summer, and the Brigade was kept busy with buckets of iced water as 'flowers' wilted all over the ground. In 1935 there was another children's pageant, this time for the visit of the Duke of Gloucester (a future Grand Prior of the Order of St John, and Governor-General of Australia), and in 1936 the most ambitious Adelaide Oval pageant yet—for the centenary of South Australia. The latter took place in hot, humid conditions. The ground was packed; children were collapsing from the heat even before the programme began; and Brigade members on duty soon lost count of the numbers of cases they had attended.[31]

The Brigade had grown rapidly in South Australia from the late 20s. Through service first at metropolitan and surrounding race meetings, then at football and cricket matches, the motor speedway, and at Anzac Day parades, the Henley-on-Torrens regatta, the agricultural show, exhibitions, pageants, gala days and demonstrations, its reputation had spread. Requests came in for the Brigade to perform an ever-increasing range of public duties. A novel public duty which became a permanent part of the Brigade calendar in Adelaide was the patrolling of Adelaide's popular suburban beaches—Brighton, Seacliff, Glenelg, Henley, Grange, Semaphore and Largs Bay. The beaches were especially popular during the Great Depression: they provided a cheap, accessible form of

public diversion during the hot summer months. Both railways and tramways offered a concession fare of ninepence return from the city to the beach. Trains and trams on the beach routes became so congested that passengers had to fight their way aboard. Men from the Ambulance Divisions began regular patrolling of the beaches during 1929, treating minor cases on the spot, bringing more serious cases to the women from the Nursing Divisions, who set themselves up at points along the beaches, using nothing more than a rug spread on the sand and a pennant to show who they were. People who needed attention were reluctant to seek it, however, because crowds of onlookers would gather to watch 'first aid in action'. Within two or three years most Divisions patrolling the beaches therefore obtained tents, though these were not very satisfactory—they were too hot to work in, the wind blew the sand into everything, and they occasionally blew away in a stiff breeze. As the 30s wore on, most Divisions staffing beach stations sought to obtain permanent buildings as a result.[32]

The first of the Brigade's permanent beach casualty stations opened at Glenelg in December 1932. It was a fine brick building built by the grateful local municipal council. The equipment was donated by business firms. Nursing Division members themselves made the curtains and bed covers, all of which they embroidered with the St John emblem. In its first season, from early December 1932 until the end of March 1933, Brigade members put in 1087 hours of duty there and treated 275 cases. Eventually, in 1939, a local Glenelg Division was formed around the beach casualty station. Over the next forty-three years the Division was to treat well over 20,000 casualties during the season—a succession of cut feet, stubbed toes, fainting fits, marine and insect stings, epileptic attacks, sunburn and heat exhaustion, wrenched joints from beach ball games, splinters, abrasions, grazes, and occasional assault victims. Half a century after the beach station first opened the volume of work continues unabated, though the nature of the casualties has changed with the times. Entries reading 'cut head from accident with surfboard/windsurfer' nowadays recur in the casualty record book; and the two chief duties of the Glenelg Division, apart from staffing the beach station, are the annual Birdman competition and the City to Bay fun run. The former is a charity fund-raiser in which entrants equipped with man-made wings leap from the end of the pier. The latter, Adelaide's main public running event, over a 14-kilometre route, usually yields the Division about seventy cases of heat exhaustion, chafing, blistered feet, sprained and wrenched ankles and knees, muscle strain and torn ligaments.[33]

Large crowds gathered in all the major Australian cities; but it was in Sydney above all that the Brigade became accustomed to the routine handling of vast numbers of cases at huge public events. The visit of the Prince of Wales in 1920 was but one of the earlier of such occasions. The

52 The St John Ambulance Brigade tent on Glenelg beach, Adelaide, sometime between 1929 and 1933. The woman on duty is Vi Watson, later District Officer.

street march by sailors from the visiting American fleet in July 1925 was just another, and the 267 cases the Brigade handled that day were a small number compared with the totals of other, later Sydney events. During the procession of the Duke and Duchess of York in 1927 there were 386 Brigade members on duty, and they handled 544 cases. The next year, in September, the Roman Catholic Church called on the Brigade for help during the processions for the international eucharistic congress. There were 212 Brigade members on duty from 7.00 a.m. until 8.00 p.m., and they treated 960 cases. In March that year 120 Brigade members had been on duty among the crowd gathered at the Mascot aerodrome to see the arrival of Captain Bert Hinkler, who had just made the first solo flight from England to Australia. In June the crowds turned out at Mascot again for the arrival from Brisbane of Charles Kingsford-Smith and C. T. P. Ulm after their flight in which they were the first to cross the Pacific.[34]

But perhaps the grandest public duty of all for the Brigade in Sydney, indeed in all Australia, during the inter-war years was the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge on 19 March 1932. The government, anticipating a huge crowd, had formed a committee of Ambulance Transport Service and St John Ambulance Brigade representatives to plan the ambulance and first aid facilities for the day. They arranged for fifty ambulance vehicles to be available, and for Brigade personnel to be stationed along the full eight-kilometre length of the procession. Almost a million people turned out on the day, which was hot and sunny. 'The blazing sun took a heavy toll of women and aged people', the Brigade an-

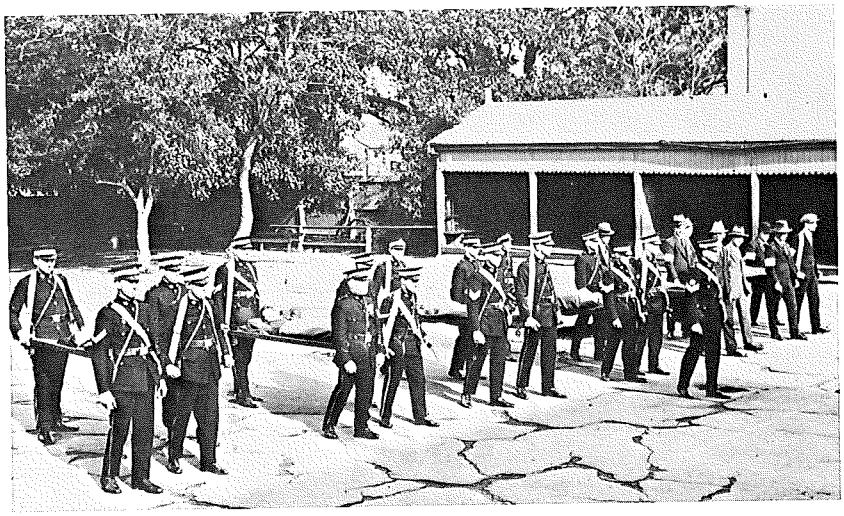
nual report later noted; and consequently the 438 Brigade members on duty treated no fewer than 3032 cases.[35]

Great challenges like these called forth a commensurate response from the Brigade, and so in New South Wales at least the Brigade went from strength to strength. The Brigade there was now a larger, more effective force than ever before, despite the Great Depression. There were now sixty-one Divisions in the New South Wales District (twenty-nine Ambulance Divisions, nineteen Nursing Divisions, and thirteen Cadet Divisions), with a membership of 1685. The work was expanding apace, for whereas Brigade members had treated 7394 cases on public duty in 1925, 11,083 in 1927, 20,256 in 1929, and 33,125 in 1931, their tally in 1932 was 45,388 cases. By 1935 it would be 54,791, and 66,421 by 1937, 10,000 of these having been treated in connection with the festivities for the coronation of George VI. By the end of 1939 the figure was a staggering 79,936. Amidst the adversity of the times the Brigade in New South Wales had entered its 'golden age'.[36]

Anyone who now goes through the annual reports of the New South Wales District for the 1930s cannot help but be struck by the great vitality of the Brigade under the leadership of the District Commissioner throughout the 1930s—Hugh (later Sir Hugh) Poate. In 1941 Poate was to graduate from the Commissionership in New South Wales to become the first Commandery Lieutenant, that is the administrative director of the Australian Commandery of the Order of St John, the national body set up in that year to co-ordinate the national affairs of the order and its three foundations, the Brigade, the Association and the Ophthalmic Hospital at Jerusalem. When the Commandery was upgraded to full Priory status in 1946 Poate became the first Chancellor, or functional head, of the Priory, a position he filled until his death in 1961. He was an eminent Sydney surgeon who devoted the greater part of his adult life to the furtherance of the St John cause. He first entered the Brigade at the age of twenty-six as Divisional Surgeon of the country's first Brigade Division, Glebe, which he joined in 1910, seven years after its foundation. His biographer later wrote of the awe in which he was held by his professional colleagues, pointing out that this was 'due in no small degree to his capacity to work hard and constantly, to his dogged striving toward an objective and to the painstaking, thorough manner in which he prepares himself for any task'.[37] The same thoroughness marked his efforts for the Brigade in New South Wales, but he brought other qualities to the Commissionership as well. He was above all a dynamic, inspirational leader, with a flair for anticipating needs, for taking effective action to ensure they were well met, and for welding disparate elements into a loyal, dedicated and active task force. He had become Acting Commissioner for New South Wales in 1926 and Commissioner in his own right in 1929. His impact on the Brigade was evident from the outset.

53 Miss B. Swan, superintendent of the Glenelg Nursing Division, in the newly opened Brigade casualty station at Glenelg beach, Adelaide, 1932

Under Poate's leadership the Brigade in New South Wales not only increased its work-load and its strength in Divisions and members, but also embarked on a whole range of initiatives. One of the first of these was the Staff School of Instruction which he introduced soon after taking over as Acting Commissioner in 1926. The aim of the school, run first by District-Sergeant F. W. True, and from 1934 by District-Officer W. B. Kubig, was to give advanced training in Brigade lore and medical knowledge and practice to future Brigade officers. About thirty promising members of the Brigade's other ranks entered the school annually for a year-long programme of instruction and examination to prepare them for eventual duty as commissioned officers. Promotions within the Brigade depended upon successful completion of a course at the school. It all made for a more efficient, more professional Brigade; and it increased pride in wearing the Brigade uniform and in obtaining rank



54 The Glebe Division practises stretcher drill, about 1925

within the organization. By thus linking personal pride and ambition to the goal of a more effective Brigade, Poate and his officers-in-charge of the school had hit upon a recipe for success. Fifty years later graduates of the school could still look back with great pride at having been selected for training at the school, and at having graduated from it.[38]

A later innovation of the Poate Commissionership was the establishment of a District Headquarters brass band in 1938. The band was formed by the Brigade taking over the former Bondi Beach Concert Band, assimilating this as an Ambulance Division in its own right. It was the first such band within the Brigade Overseas. Under the direction of its bandmaster, Ambulance Officer A. H. Baile, and supported by an enthusiastic committee, it quickly became one of the State's leading brass bands. It won the 'A' Grade Championship in the State band competition in 1939, and remained a top band for many years after. From its inception it was greatly in demand at Corps and District annual church parades, inspections, Association annual meetings and concerts, and for general patriotic rallies, charitable appeals and 'pleasant Sunday afternoons' within the wider community.[39]

Yet another innovation of the Poate regime was the introduction of a corps structure to the Brigade in New South Wales, in 1938. Previously the seventy-odd Divisions comprising the New South Wales District had been co-ordinated from Sydney headquarters, but as more Divisions were formed a measure of decentralized control became desirable so that the increasing volume of public duties could be handled more effectively. Under the new corps system the Divisions were grouped according to geographical region and so that each corps comprised about 300 members. No. 1 Corps embraced the inner-suburban Divisions—Sydney

55 Lord Wakehurst (centre), Governor of New South Wales and a later Lord Prior of the Order of St John, with Dr (later Sir) Hugh Poate, Commissioner of the New South Wales District of the St John Ambulance Brigade and later Chancellor of the Priory of the Order of St John in Australia, at the annual Brigade inspection, 1937-38. (The man on the left is Wakehurst's aide.)

Central, Balmain, Glebe and Leichhardt; No. 2 Corps comprised the western suburbs Divisions—Auburn, Granville, Parramatta—and as far west and north as Katoomba and Lithgow; No. 3 Corps consisted of Divisions in the southern suburbs—South Sydney, Canterbury-Bankstown, St George, Marrickville—and as far south as Wollongong. No. 4 Corps, encompassing the eastern suburbs Divisions of Paddington-Wollahra, Waverley and Bondi, was formed the next year, 1939, as was No. 5 Corps, which took in the north shore Divisions and as far north as Newcastle. Distant country Divisions—Broken Hill, Goulburn, Canberra and Albury—remained as 'unattached'. By this time, of course, world war was again imminent. Poate was well prepared for it. He had a large, well-trained, well-disciplined, well-co-ordinated and efficient civil defence force under his control which he could place at the disposal of the government and military authorities.[40]

Elsewhere and in other directions the Brigade was prospering, too. In Western Australia, where the Brigade had remained healthy but static, with no new Divisions being formed in the period 1912-24, a period of expansion began in the mid-1920s. Six new Divisions were registered in 1925, all of Railways Ambulance men who had decided to throw in their

lot with the Brigade. The new Divisions were at Fremantle, Katanning, Midland Junction, Narrogin, Northam and Perth. Other Railways Divisions followed—Collie (1927), Geraldton (1928), Bridgetown (1929), Merredin and Wagin (1930), Albany, Kalgoorlie and Pingarra (1931), Meekatharra and Perth Tramways (1935). Non-Railways Divisions registered as follows: Fremantle (1927), Goldfields Boy Scouts, and Kalgoorlie Nursing (1928), Fremantle Nursing (1929), Kalgoorlie and Lake View & Star (1932), Boulder Perseverence, Bunbury Nursing, and Geraldton Nursing (1934). By 1936 there were twenty-four Divisions with a strength of 523 members, and the Brigade was about to open its first Cadet Ambulance Division—at Fremantle.[41]

Cadet Divisions were an innovation in Australia during the inter-war years. The first Juvenile Unit of the Brigade, for youths aged fourteen to seventeen, was formed in September 1903, in association with the Sutton-in-Ashfield Division of the Brigade At Home. It continued for several years before lapsing. The idea of a young people's or Cadet movement paralleling the adult Ambulance and Nursing Divisions of the Brigade did not catch on for nearly another two decades. In March 1922 the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade At Home, Sir James Clark, authorized the formation of Cadet Ambulance Divisions for boys, and Cadet Nursing Divisions for girls, to be attached to adult Divisions, and to be composed of two sections, 'seniors' for those aged sixteen to eighteen, 'juniors' for those eleven to fifteen. In many respects the St John Ambulance Brigade Cadet movement was analagous to the Scouting and Guiding movement founded by Lord Baden Powell some fourteen years previously: after initiation into the movement the cadet donned a Brigade uniform, learnt St John lore, practised first aid and nursing skills, earned proficiency badges for successful completion of courses and tests, took part in first aid and nursing competitions, went on camps, learnt marching and parade ground drills, attended patriotic assemblies, participated in social, sporting and outdoor activities, and—it was hoped—eventually graduated to membership of an adult Division.[42]

The first Cadet Division to be formed in Australia was the Darlinghurst Cadet Ambulance Division, Sydney, in October 1925, followed in December that year by the Glebe Cadet Ambulance Division. The next were the Blackheath Cadet Ambulance Division and the first Cadet Nursing Division, Campsie, in 1928, followed soon after by two further Cadet Nursing Divisions, Waverley and Randwick. By 1932 there were sixteen Cadet Divisions in New South Wales, with a total strength of 412 members. A measure of the rapid success of the cadet movement in New South Wales was the prize earned by Marion Higgins, a member of the Marrickville Cadet Nursing Division, in February 1933. She became the first cadet in the Brigade Overseas to gain the coveted Grand Prior's Badge—the movement's highest award. This award, analagous to the Boy Scouts' Queen's Scout badge, is earned through a rigorous pro-

gramme of examination in first aid and nursing, and the gaining of proficiency badges in a wide range of technical, practical and community skills over a period of five or six years. By 1938 a further five nursing cadets had won Grand Prior's Badges.[43]

The cadet movement was slower to get moving in the other States. Victoria was the next to introduce Cadet Divisions, the first there being the Williamstown Cadet Ambulance Division, which was formed in June 1933. Victoria's first Nursing Cadet Division took another fifteen years to appear: the first Nursing Cadet Division there being the South Melbourne unit, which was not formed until November 1948. South Australia's first Cadet Divisions were formed in 1936. The first three were all Cadet Ambulance Divisions – Norwood with fourteen members, Prospect with eleven and Port Adelaide with seventeen. A Cadet Nursing Division could have been formed, too, in association with the Adelaide No. 1 Nursing Division. However, the senior nursing members were having an exceptionally busy year with the State centenary, and so the proposed class of preliminary first aid for prospective nursing cadets had to be postponed until July 1937, when twenty girls were finally able to enrol in the State's first female Cadet Division.[44] Tasmania, too, in 1936 gained its first Cadet Divisions, shortly after its first permanent adult Divisions were formed. Thirteen girls under the superintendency of May Zantuck and twenty-six boys under the leadership of William White took courses in preliminary first aid, then in September 1936 were registered as the Hobart No. 1 Cadet Nursing and Cadet Ambulance Divisions respectively.[45]

3 *The Brigade arrives in Queensland*

Among the more fleeting achievements of the St John Ambulance movement during the inter-war years were the efforts of a short-lived Brisbane Division of the Brigade, which briefly ran an ambulance transport service in the Coolangatta district in the early 20s. Until the Brisbane Division was formed, at some time during World War I, Queensland had been the only Australian State where the Brigade had not managed to get its toe in the doorway. One major obstacle barred the way into Queensland – the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, which jealously guarded its government-subsidized monopoly of ambulance transport work and would admit no other organization to the State that might loosen its grip on Queensland's ambulances. Somehow or another the founder of the Brisbane Division, one R. T. Moore, managed with encouragement from Storie Dixson in Sydney either to overcome the opposition of the QATB, or was simply bold enough to proceed despite it. As a result the Division was functioning actively by the end of the war.

During the Christmas holidays in 1918 Moore and two members of his Division began operations around Coolangatta, in the area south of

Brisbane now known as the Gold Coast. They set up camp at Kirra Beach near Coolangatta and began offering first aid treatment to campers and holiday makers. They met with some ridicule at first, but persevered and in the end treated forty-five cases. They were back again the following Easter, and thereafter regularly staffed beaches around Coolangatta and Tweed Heads (just over the border in New South Wales) over the Christmas-New Year and Easter holidays. The local community welcomed their services; they received help from various business firms; their case load increased steadily as beach users became accustomed to their presence; and eventually the Division was able to maintain a staff of two nursing and four ambulance members in the district over the holiday season. In their earlier days there they ran their service out of tents but later on the Greenmount Surf Club allowed them the use of its resuscitation room.[46]

In October 1921 the Division posted one of its members, Sergeant Ernie O. Wolter, at Coolangatta permanently. This was at the invitation of the local community, who wanted the Division to run a full time ambulance transport service for the twin towns, Coolangatta and Tweed Heads. Wolter drove his new Dodge ambulance wagon into Coolangatta to a rousing welcome from the residents. The mayor and mayoress inaugurated the service amidst great civic celebrations; the townsfolk then escorted the vehicle to the town boundary, where the president of the local chamber of commerce welcomed it across the State border and into Tweed Heads. All went well for several months, until March 1922, when the Division applied to the Home Secretary for Queensland to have its Coolangatta ambulance centre included in the subsidy scheme by which the government supported local units of the QATB. The QATB had earlier offered its services to the Coolangatta Town Council, but the Council was already negotiating with the St John Ambulance Brigade. The local community was happy with what the St John Brigade had been doing along the beaches; and so the Council turned down the QATB proposal. The QATB then appears to have used its influence with the government to have the St John application for a subsidy rejected. At much the same time a QATB ambulance officer complete with late-model Buick ambulance van arrived in Coolangatta to open up a QATB service. The town for a time was therefore well served by the two rival ambulance organizations.[47]

The community soon split into contending St John and QATB camps, who waged furious warfare in the columns of *The Border Star*. QATB supporters called a public meeting to form a committee, but the St John faction turned out in such strength at it that they were able to capture the committee positions. QATB advocates cried 'Foul!', and the controversy raged on in *The Border Star*. The St John service struggled on as best as it could without a subsidy, but lacking government support it was doomed. Wolter returned to Brisbane disheartened at the end of 1922. His suc-

56 The Governor, Lord Wakehurst, at the march past by St John Ambulance Brigade cadets of the New South Wales District, 1937-38

cessor, George Hartnett, who proved to be an adept fund-raiser with abundant energy and enthusiasm, rallied the St Johnites and managed to keep the service running for a few months more. However, without government aid its subscribers could not afford to maintain it, and so it lapsed during 1923.[48]

During the eighteen months or so in which the St John service stayed in business in Coolangatta it performed creditably despite the odds against it. The ambulance crew were ever ready to turn out at all times of the day and night, in all weathers and in all seasons, around the twin towns or in the back blocks. They consequently acquired a reputation for tireless, dedicated service. On one occasion, in February 1923, for example, the crew answered a call at eleven o'clock one night to take a patient with a suspected fractured skull from Coolangatta to the hospital in Tweed Heads. The government's Tick Regulations required the gate at the State border to be kept locked at night, and the call had come so late the crew were unable to have the gate opened. At the gate they therefore had to unload the patient on to a stretcher, then complete the journey on foot. Just as they set off a summer storm broke over them, and so they had to pick their way through pot-holes, puddles and driving rain. 'It seems a pity that the authorities should allow the Tick Regulations to interfere with the humane work of our ambulance,' *The Border Star* observed in reporting this story.[49]

The Brisbane Division did not survive for long after the closure of its

Coolangatta-Tweed Heads ambulance service. It seems that the Division incurred debts over the service which it could not repay, and which Storie Dixson eventually had the New South Wales Brigade District redeem. A delegation sent out to Australia from St John's Gate in 1928 under the leadership of Sir John Hewett subsequently reported that 'a few years ago' the divisional superintendent, R. T. Moore, had done 'a great deal of harm . . . to the reputation of the Order'. Hewett's report claimed that 'his disreputable behaviour involved the Brigade in having to settle some decrees against it', and that attempts had consequently been made to expel him from the Order, in which he was a Serving Brother.[50] Hewett, whose informants were QATB men, was being unduly hard on Moore. All Moore's troubles arose from QATB opposition; but certainly his Division's debts hastened its demise.

The surviving records of Moore's step into QATB territory tell us little of what happened. Storie Dixson's brief 1918 historical survey of the Brigade in Australia simply tells us that a Brigade Division was opened in Brisbane during the war. What support he gave it as Commissioner for Australia and what assistance it received from the Brigade elsewhere are not made clear. Storie Dixson himself had urged the Division on but possibly did so circumspectly for fear of QATB ire. He had visited Brisbane twice before the war and had come away impressed by QATB operations. Perhaps this was why he does not seem to have driven the local community openly to form Brigade Divisions as he did on his visits to other States. Hewett, too, and later the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, Sir James Sleeman, in 1936, came away from Queensland singing praises of the QATB. Hewett even reported to St John's Gate that 'there is no place for Ambulance Divisions [of the St John Ambulance Brigade] in Queensland since the work which they would undertake is already performed most efficiently [by the QATB]'. Sleeman also reached similar conclusions, albeit reluctantly. He reported that he was 'equally convinced that it would be wrong to attempt to form Ambulance Divisions in Queensland, seeing that the work is being so excellently performed by [the QATB]'. Sleeman did, however, make it clear that he thought Nursing and Cadet Divisions of the Brigade should be established in Queensland and that these would not interfere with QATB operations.[51]

It seems fairly certain that the QATB leadership went all out to influence both delegations from St John's Gate. W. D. Grimes, chairman of both the QATB and the Queensland Centre of the St John Ambulance Association from 1927 until 1936, and E. R. B. Pike, the secretary of both organizations from 1919 until 1949, were the leading St John personalities of the day in Queensland. Each rose through the ranks of the Order to become Knights of St John. As simultaneously the key figures in both QATB and Association they feted the Hewett and Sleeman delegations, conducted them around Queensland, rolling out the red carpet at every stop, losing no opportunity to impress upon them firstly the great

57 The ambulance of the Coolangatta-Tweed Heads St John Ambulance Brigade service fords a creek, early 1920

value to the State of the QATB and secondly the lack of a role for the St John Ambulance Brigade there. Not surprisingly the English delegations returned home eulogizing the QATB as 'a wonderful institution' (Hewett) which provided 'a magnificent service' (Sleeman).[52] Nor would it have been surprising if Grimes and Pike had taken care to denigrate to the delegations Moore's attempts over a period of six years or more to introduce Brigade Divisions to southern Queensland. Whatever the circumstances of the Brisbane Divisions' conception, birth and death were, the QATB proved relentless in its determination to keep the Brigade out of Queensland. After the disappearance of Moore's Division the Brigade did not show its face in Queensland for another thirty years. When it did, as a later chapter will show, this would be against strong opposition from the QATB-St John Ambulance Association axis.

4 *Revivals in Tasmania*

A Brigade Division, as we have seen, had functioned in Hobart for a dozen years or so before 1920, but it did not survive the period of flatness that followed the exhausting wartime years. Although Association members in Hobart talked of reviving it from time to time during the 20s, it was to remain moribund for almost fifteen years. Especially after 1928, when the Southern Tasmania Centre of the Association was revived, there were cries for a reactivated Brigade. Sir John Hewett and his delegation from London had given the matter some priority by expressing the hope that a Division or two might be formed from among the numerous members of the public now holding first aid and home nursing

certificates. And periodically communal organizations asked if the Brigade could not start up again—as in 1933, when the State Schools Old Boys' Football Association requested the Centre to assign a first aider to attend each of its matches.[53]

Pleas like these prompted a member of the Centre Committee, Robert Wallace, to propose to the Committee in 1933 that it should sponsor the re-formation of the Brigade. A further eighteen months of talking about the matter finally led to a largely attended and enthusiastic public meeting in the Hobart Town Hall on 10 April 1935, at which thirty men and twelve women undertook to join a rejuvenated Hobart Division. The Centre secretary, C. L. Colvin, in opening the meeting, announced they were all present 'to fulfil a wish . . . to make their services available for the public good to a greater degree than had been possible for them in the past as individual members of the Association'. On the motion of Wallace the meeting then proceeded to vote into existence the Hobart No. 1 Ambulance and Nursing Divisions. The numbering of the proposed Divisions was perhaps a sign of confidence that other Divisions would soon follow. The meeting went on to elect officials for the two Divisions. It named the chairman of the Association Centre, Dr Tom Goddard, as Divisional Surgeon, J. E. Hulbert as Superintendent, Wallace as Ambulance Officer (that is second in charge to the Superintendent) and R. N. Woolley as secretary of the Ambulance Division; and it elected Eleanor Hawkins as Superintendent and Gladys Marshall as secretary of the Nursing Division. When the two Divisions were actually registered formally, thirty-two men and twenty women enrolled. To help the new 'Southern Tasmania District' along the Association Committee donated £10—the amount left in the bank by the defunct former Division.[54]

The Hobart *Mercury* welcomed the reappearance of the Brigade. It devoted an editorial to the event, and in solemn tones informed its readers that the paper felt a profound sense of

> gratification in realizing that a body of persons can be found willing to give their time to training to serve the community free . . . The St John Ambulance has grown from its original small nucleus in Britain to a large Empire organization. In it are men and women who for no reward seek to train themselves and gain such knowledge of first aid work as will enable them to save life and suffering . . . This is a very great thing, and represents one of the seldom mentioned triumphs of civilization.[55]

With that portentous affirmation of its worthiness, the two-Division District now began functioning like the mainland Brigade Districts. This time round its members' keenness was such that they became a permanent part of the Hobart scene. A year late, when Sir James Sleeman visited the city in his capacity as Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, he found that they comprised 'a smart, well uniformed and well drilled body of men and women able to perform valuable duty at any time, and [he] was impressed with both their steadiness and fine

physique'. At a reception for Sleeman the State Governor, Sir Ernest Clark, praised the Brigade members to their chief, saying 'the appearance of members of the Brigade at every large gathering was now familiar', and applauded their 'noble ideal of self-sacrifice . . . in devoting time and energies voluntarily to assist those in need'.[56]

As well as undertaking the routine duties which the mainland District carried out, the Southern Tasmania District began a number of ventures Sleeman had suggested to it. The first of these was the formation of Cadet Ambulance and Nursing Divisions. Within five weeks of Sleeman's visit the District had resolved to introduce the cadet movement, and within another four months it had signed up and trained the boys and girls who constituted the nucleus of the first Tasmanian Cadet Divisions.[57]

A further innovation, and perhaps one more difficult to initiate, was a dialogue with the Northern Tasmania District in Launceston. Even if Sleeman had not commented directly on the oddity of the situation in which there were separate St John Ambulance establishments for Southern and Northern Tasmania, in a State only a fraction the area of those on the mainland and with a population smaller than those of any of the mainland capital cities, he had strongly urged them towards closer co-operation. When he left Tasmania he said that he hoped his visit would result in 'a closer touch between the ambulance activities in Northern and Southern Tasmania'. Though he had pointed out to them that 'friendly competition and wholesome rivalry play a considerable part in the obtainance of higher efficiency', this was probably an elliptical way of telling them they ought to work more co-operatively. The Brigade leadership in Hobart and Launceston followed up this hint by planning a conference between their two Districts, to be held in Antill Ponds, a small town on the Midland Highway safely in neutral territory midway between the two cities. In the end the conference did not take place, because of the cost of sending representatives from each District. Instead, a Launceston delegate went down to Hobart for discussions, one practical outcome of which was the starting of the first North-South first aid competitions, in Hobart on 13 March 1937.[58]

The Launceston or Northern District had been formed in March 1936, only a month before the Sleeman visit. It consisted of just one Division, 'Launceston Men's' or Launceston No. 1 Ambulance, with George Shield as superintendent, John Carter as secretary, Dr Arthur Grounds as surgeon and seventeen other members. The corresponding women's Division, the Launceston No. 1 Nursing, was not formed for another two and a half years, until September 1938. It consisted of eighteen members, with Jean Aitken as Superintendent and Dr John Grove as Surgeon. Both Launceston Divisions had been preceded by the Launceston-and-Devonport Ambulance and Nursing Divisions, which had been formed in June-July 1932 but had disbanded a year or so after their foundation.

The Launceston-and-Devonport Nursing Division had been the first to be registered, in the June, with sixteen members, only five of whom subsequently rejoined the new Launceston No. 1 Nursing Division in 1938. The Ambulance Division had been formed in the July with twenty-seven members, and only five of them, too, later linked up with the Launceston No. 1 Ambulance Division. The nine Devonport men in the earlier Division were all railway ambulancemen, and none of them joined the later Division.[59]

Why the earlier Launceston-and-Devonport Divisions had foundered is not clear. The driving force behind their formation was Mary F. Robson, the secretary of the Northern Tasmania Centre of the Association and the principal figure in St John affairs in Launceston ever since the visit of the Hewett delegation from London in 1928. She had prompted the formation of the District in 1932, and it was she, too, who did most to revive it in 1936. She did not however, become an active member of the nursing Divisions herself. Instead she enrolled as a supernumary only, which suggests that she was either too elderly or too preoccupied with Association duties to give the infant District the vigorous promotion it needed to become securely established. Whatever the reason for the hiatus in Brigade activities in the North between about 1933 and 1936-38, the Launceston Divisions, like those in Hobart, succeeded at the second attempt. They remained active for the next thirty years in the case of the men's Division and for forty years in the case of the women's. Reformed as the Archer Launceston Combined—men's and women's—Division they are still in business.[60]

By the end of the inter-war years the Brigade had thus become a permanent fixture in Tasmania. Its next major step was to be to rationalize itself—to overcome long-standing provincial rivalries by amalgamating its Northern and Southern fractions to form the one unified District. Union was only two or three years away: it was to come in 1942, in consequence of the Tasmanian St John bodies' decision to come into the Australian Commandery for the Order of St John, the national St John organization set up that year to co-ordinate the various State St John operations. A welding together of Tasmania's Northern and Southern St John bodies was the price they had to pay for entry into the Commandery and the Priory that succeeded it in 1946.[61]

5 *Questions of Reputability*

By the inter-war years the St John bodies had earned themselves wide acclaim. Their notable good works brought them public support; their special efforts won praise from the newspapers; and their Vice-Regal patronage and Royal connections lent them an aura of respectability. This was a mixed blessing, however, for it created problems relating to the *bona fides* of the organization and its members.

One of the penalties of a good institutional reputation was that the St John bodies attracted a mixed bag of recruits. Most people joining the organization came out of genuine and generous concern for the ill and injured. On the other hand, from time to time the St John organization found that it had within its ranks various opportunists, who had seen something to gain by belonging to such a widely acclaimed institution. Some, who hankered after the decorations, honours and fine-sounding titles the Order bestowed, joined St John with preferment as much as altruism in mind. Others, yearning for a bygone age of chivalry, came in the hope that the pageantry of the latter-day Hospitallers would satisfy deep nostalgic longings.

The self-seekers, unfortunately, were all to a greater or lesser extent a threat to the continued success of the Order and its associated bodies. At best they represented a weakening of the hospitalling ideal of selfless voluntary labour for suffering humanity. At the worst their activities could discredit the good name of St John Ambulance, eroding the extensive public support which generations of leaders had toiled to build up. The reputation of the St John bodies was their most precious asset, and one which bruised easily.

That good reputation has its problems became apparent for the first time in the life of St John Ambulance in Australia in the ventures of the Darlinghurst Ambulance Division of the Brigade during the 1920s. This Division was a newcomer, having been formed only in February 1920, with twenty-one members. Under the energetic leadership of its Superintendent, Patrick Joseph Purtill, J. P., a Tramways Board inspector, it developed rapidly. Within three years it had fifty-four active members, including two Divisional Surgeons, two officers, three sergeants, four corporals and forty-three privates. In its earlier years it was highly active. By the end of 1922 it was claiming its members were putting in some 240 man-hours of voluntary public duty a week and more than 12,000 hours a year; and in that year it treated 1679 cases. It operated initially out of the hall of St Peter's church, Darlinghurst. It not only held its meetings there but also ran a first aid post there which treated nearly 400 cases during 1922. It had also acquired a small but imposing first aid post near the beach at La Perouse on Botany Bay, which it manned every weekend during the warmer months. It also attended the Balmoral beach each weekend at the request of the Mosman Council. In addition to these public duties its members attended football matches played on the Rushcutters Bay, Hampden, Erskineville, Alexandria and University ovals. The Division also had its own small brass band—three cornets, three euphoniums, two tubas, one trombone and a bass drum—which it boasted was the first Divisional band of the Brigade anywhere in Australia. By 1922 the Division, or at least its superintendent, was thinking of acquiring a property in Flinders Street, Darlinghurst, and of building on it a lavish three-storey divisional centre.[62]

In setting its sights on such a grandiose scheme the Division overreached itself. To raise the necessary funds it began running art unions or lotteries. Purtill, on behalf of the Division, ran three of these in the period 1920-22. The last of them became notorious. Prizes for it totalled £2777 and included a first prize of a Hudson Super Six motor car or £1000 cash. To advertise this art union he produced a letter on Brigade letterhead, featuring the name of Storie Dixson as Commissioner for Australia—without bothering to obtain the latter's permission. The letter, a hard-selling blurb extolling participation in the art union as 'a matter of public urgency to raise funds for our Division and other Divisions pro rata for carrying out the good work of the Brigade', was circulated widely throughout New South Wales and beyond. A flood of complaints against it soon reached Brigade headquarters in Sydney. One came from E. R. B. Pike, secretary jointly of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade and the Queensland Centre of the St John Ambulance Association, pointing out that the QATB would allow none of its branches to solicit funds outside its own boundaries. He curtly suggested that the St John Ambulance Brigade in New South Wales should adopt a similar policy with its Divisions.[63]

The Darlinghurst Ambulance Division's art unions drew criticism on other grounds—the cost of running them, and the progressively smaller proportions actually being returned from them to the Division. Later litigation over the art unions revealed that whereas the 1920 art union had grossed £632 and had made a net return to the division of only £116, that of 1921 had grossed £1634 for a net return of £201. The third, in 1922, made £2417 gross but just £57/16/7 net. Litigation subsequently showed that although Purtill might not have diverted takings to his own use, his administration of the art unions had been extremely sloppy. Eventually, in 1924, probably at the instigation of Storie Dixson and other leading Brigade figures, who were becoming increasingly alarmed at the damage being done to the Brigade's reputation, the State Attorney General laid information against Purtill in the Equity Court. He alleged that not only had Purtill failed to account to the Brigade for moneys received from the art unions, despite repeated requests to do so, but that he had refused to supply the information requested. Subsequently the Master in Equity ordered Purtill to repay a sum of £817 to the Darlinghurst Division, and placed a restraining order on him in respect of Divisional moneys still under his control. Purtill appealed to the High Court of Australia against this judgement. The appeal took two years to come up, but was then dismissed, in November 1926. He then began planning a further appeal, to the Privy Council in England, but in the end did not proceed with it. In the meantime the Darlinghurst Division, the New South Wales Brigade District and indeed the entire organization of the Brigade Overseas had been receiving adverse publicity as a result of his fund raising ventures.[64]

While all this litigation was under way Purtill had also become entangled in separate court action relating to his organization of a charity carnival. 'Charity carnivals', otherwise known as 'fancy fairs', had become a notorious means for funding charities in the early post-war years in Sydney. Typically they were run by so called 'charity promoters', who hired out fairground equipment such as merry-go-rounds and slippery-slides together with chocolate wheels and other gaming materials. The charity concerned would hire the equipment for a period; the promoter would set it up and operate it for them on a vacant block. The public, now well used from years of wartime giving to dipping into their pockets in aid of deserving causes, rolled up, glad of the chance to combine entertainment and a little harmless betting all to help a worthy charity. The promoters generally creamed off about 50 per cent of the takings in hiring and operation fees. By the mid-20s this form of fund raising was a scandal, and the more forthright newspapers of the day were gleefully exposing the shysters profiting from it. Banner headlines in *Truth* screamed against the 'charity mongers and vulture promoters', the 'professional scavengers', 'charity batteners' and 'benefiteers' who were 'growing fat and prospering in the cause of charity', and otherwise 'bludging on the community and robbing the sick and needy'.[65]

Truth soon homed in on Purtill, whose art union involvement had earlier received its attention. The newspaper ran an article on his charity carnival in the alliterative style it reserved specially for the scandals it took greatest joy in exposing. 'Patrick Purtill's Pretty Pranks' its headline announced on 21 June 1925. The story that followed dealt with Purtill's appearance in court on charges of having made an unlawful collection. The charges related to a charity carnival he had run for a month at the beginning of that year in the hope of raising money for the 'massage clinic' the Darlinghurst Division was planning to open. Police had laid charges against him alleging that he had failed to secure the permission of the recently established Ambulance Transport Service Board, which under the Act setting up the board now had to approve all public appeals on behalf of ambulance organizations. When the case came into court the prosecutor alleged that Purtill had been 'systematically carrying on fraudulent operations for some time'. The magistrate found against Purtill and imposed the maximum penalty of £50. *Truth*, in reporting proceedings with great relish, asserted that on receiving this fine Purtill 'did not seem particularly worried. In fact a rather cynical smile adorned his ruddy features'. Purtill does not seem to have been much abashed: he was in court a month later on a similar charge, which resulted in a further fine of £25. Undismayed, he appealed against both convictions and was later successful in having both verdicts quashed.[66]

Though Purtill's financial dealings on behalf of his Division were at best suspect, and demanded the closest scrutiny by the Brigade's District headquarters hierarchy, moving against him for the disrepute he was

bringing to the organization was difficult. Such a litigious member of the Brigade could not be disciplined with impunity. He was at once thick-skinned, heedless of the damage he was doing St John, determined to stay put in his Division, and unwilling to accept the conventions of Brigade discipline. In 1925, for example, the Acting Commissioner for New South Wales, Col. Morgan Martin, had invited him as a gesture of 'good taste' which was 'to the benefit of the Brigade' to resign from the Brigade. Purtill declined the invitation, on the grounds that the recent court decisions against him were under appeal. District staff feared dismissing him outright because they strongly suspected he would brazenly sue them for slander, which carried the risk of further bad publicity and the possibility of punitive damages against them and the Brigade. Better, then, to sit and wait for him to make some error for which he could be sacked.[67]

Purtill thus represented something new to the experience of the St John Ambulance organizations in Australia. There had been fractious fellows before him in St John bodies; indeed St John Ambulance, like all voluntary agencies, had found that personality problems were a fact of life to be accommodated. But here was a termagant whose indiscretions might well cripple the organization, who cared little if he did, who would not accept discipline, and who refused to go gracefully. At the same time he represented something rather more sinister—the opportunist who realised the commercial potential of the organization's good name, who saw that its reputation might profitably be used to give credence to dubious financial dealings. How to discourage the malcontent, the self-seeker and the confidence trickster from joining, and how once they were in to get rid of them if they would not go quietly, were problems the Brigade leadership had to consider for the first time.

In the case of the Darlinghurst Division they found no easy answers. Purtill was able to manipulate the situation to his own advantage. Periodically, usually as his name was appearing in newspaper articles, he would offer to resign as Divisional Superintendent to spare his members embarrassment. They customarily obliged him by passing resolutions of confidence in his leadership which asked him to reconsider. He retained the trust of a loyal core of his Division's members down the years. Most of these owed him for favours he had done, and any members dissatisfied with his rule either dropped out of the Brigade or transferred to other Divisions. So he managed to stay on and on as Divisional Superintendent. Apparently undeterred by his bad press and the antagonism of District headquarters, he prospered till the end. His last venture was 'The Sydney Foot Clinic', a free podiatric service funded by public donations which he ran with the secretary of Darlinghurst Division.[68]

All this time the Brigade leadership had been angling to bid Purtill good riddance. As soon as his affairs had come into court the first time, Storie Dixson had contacted Sir Havelock Charles, the Chief Commis-

sioner of the Brigade Overseas, for advice on how to curb his excesses. Purtill fought off all moves against him, however. Years went by before effective action against him could get under way. This came in September 1931, when Storie Dixson at the urging of the Commissioner for New South Wales, Hugh Poate again took up the Purtill case with the Chief Commissioner. Poate wanted to have Purtill placed on the Brigade's Reserve list, which would have been an effective means of removing him, allowing him to remain in the Brigade but rendering him inactive. Storie Dixson passed on this proposal to the new Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, Sir James Sleeman. His letter to the Chief Commissioner did not hide the loathing senior Brigade staff felt for Purtill:

> One of our Divisional Superintendents is an obnoxious type of man, has been a source of great trouble to us on many occasions, and is a veritable 'bush lawyer', i.e., knows the Rules and Regulations fully and insists on their fulfilment to the letter of the law. If I suspended him as he justly deserves he would institute a civil action against me. He has not attended an annual inspection for some years, sending in a medical certificate stating he is unfit to do so as he is suffering from Chronic Myocarditis. This would give me an excellent opportunity to place him on the Reserve, if I had the power, as being unfit for health reasons to carry out his duties. I am sure he does not send in true and faithful records as regards his Division, but it is a difficult thing to prove in order to suspend him. I would be glad to know in what way I can remove him without incurring the liability of a law suit?[69]

Sleeman replied to the effect that placing Purtill on Reserve was not acceptable as that implied an honourable discharge from active duty, for which he was plainly unfit.[70]

Much correspondence between Sydney and London ensued over the next year on the best means of sacking Purtill. In the meantime Poate decided that the best way to handle the problem was to disband the Darlinghurst Division, on the grounds that it was 'serving no useful purpose' and was not complying with Brigade regulations. He duly advised Purtill by registered letter that he intended initiating moves in this direction. The Dead Letter Office returned the letter stamped 'unclaimed'. Purtill meanwhile, shameless to the end, submitted a recommendation that he and four members of his Division be given long service awards—a medal for himself and badges for the others. Storie Dixson and Poate were obliged to forward the recommendation to Sleeman, who replied that he would not approve Purtill's proposed medal but would hold the badges over pending the outcome of Poate's plans to disband the Division. Sleeman finally agreed to a disbandment in August 1932. His letter authorizing this move reached Sydney on 27 September. It arrived too late, however, to have any effect on Purtill. He had died nine days before, on 18 September. It was left to G. W. Shaw, his partner in The Sydney Foot Clinic and the secretary of the Darlinghurst Division since its formation, to negotiate with Poate the closure of the Division.[71]

6 *Ambulance Transport in South Australia and Western Australia*

In its earlier decades in Australia the workers for St John Ambulance often longed to share in doing what their name suggested—running ambulances. In all States their organization has at some time had that involvement, and the inter-war years were a time when the issue exercised their minds greatly.

Victoria, as an earlier chapter showed, had been the State where St John first forged links with ambulance transport, but in 1916 it had relinquished control of the Melbourne ambulance system it had established in the 1890s. New South Wales was next, with the Brigade there taking on the sponsorship of Sydney's Civil Ambulance Transport Corps in 1904; but as the 1920s began it withdrew from that partnership. Queensland does not really concern us at this stage for, as we have been reminded time and again, the QATB consummated a marriage with its handmaiden, the Brisbane Centre of the Association, in 1916 and remained the dominant partner until an abrupt divorce in 1962. Consequently there was in that State a QATB involvement in St John rather than a St John participation in ambulance transport. A previous chapter also showed that it was a proposed takeover of Hobart's ambulance transport system that tripped up the Southern Tasmanian Centre, causing it to stumble into a period of retirement from 1923 until 1928. It left the field when Dr Gregory Sprott, who had proposed the scheme, resigned from the Centre committee, which had timidly declined to support his plans. That leaves two States, South Australia and Western Australia, in each of which the local St John bodies had begun a commitment to their State ambulance systems which they retain today.

In South Australia the ambulance transport system was late in developing. As late as 1916 Adelaide had only one horsedrawn ambulance, run by the police, and one motor ambulance, a vehicle the Central Board of Health owned but was keeping in storage, presumably until the bureaucrats could decide how to deploy it. A series of serious street accidents in 1916-1917 accentuated the inadequacy of these facilities. After several bad traffic accidents the victims had to spend long periods lying on the road waiting for the horse-drawn police wagon to arrive. In one mishap a tram conductor with both legs crushed in a collision between two trams died in hospital after the police wagon had turned up very late. Bystanders, tired of waiting, had splinted his legs, though what he needed most was prompt removal to hospital. A public outcry arose over this case, with the press pointing out that, while Adelaideans had contributed generously to equipping the troops abroad with motor ambulances, their own city lacked such a facility. The Chief Secretary undertook to look into the matter. Subsequent inquiries revealed that thirteen wheeled ambulance litters had been purchased for use at the

docks and elsewhere, but because there was nowhere to house them at Port Adelaide they were still being stored in the Town Hall basement. Nothing more seems to have come from the Chief Secretary's investigation, and the police continued to provide their minimal service.[72]

In September 1919 the chairman of the Adelaide Centre, H. D. Gell, its secretary, B. S. Connor, and the Brigade Commissioner, G. F. Hussey, formed a sub-committee to look into the possibility of an ex-Army motor ambulance with which to begin a St John service. When they estimated that the running costs would be £700 to £800 annually on top of the purchase price, the Centre declined to go ahead with the scheme. About this time another accident emphasized the need for better ambulance facilities. A fire in the kitchen of a King William Street restaurant left seven of the staff shockingly burned. After half an hour waiting for the police ambulance, the victims were taken to hospital in a private car. Six of them subsequently died, and yet again the official response was ponderous and inadequate.[73]

The continued lack of co-ordinated system of public ambulance transport pompted various groups into setting up their own ambulance services. The Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade on the north-western outskirts of central Adelaide obtained a motor vehicle and began running an ambulance service with it in 1921. This became known as the Hindmarsh Volunteer Ambulance. Among its volunteer attendants were a number of St John men. Another group of citizens, wanting facilities to cover an area wider than the arc served by the Hindmarsh ambulance, set up a body they called the 'South Australian Ambulance Transport Service, Adelaide & Suburban Districts' at the end of 1921. They gained the support of some of the suburban municipalities, business houses, the Red Cross, the Australian Natives' Association, and the St John bodies to purchase a motor ambulance they planned to staff with St John Ambulance certificate holders. They took delivery of a car they hoped would become the first of three ambulance vans. That was in October 1923. Three months later, with the ambulance still to begin its service, the Adelaide No. 2 Nursing Division, which had raised £600 of the funds collected to set up the scheme, began asking when the ambulance would begin operations.

Their inquiries uncovered an administrative and financial mess. The ambulance was in the possession of an accountant of the now-deceased engineer who had been given the task of converting it into an ambulance van; and he would not release it until he was satisfied no money was owing on it. Later in 1924 the SAATS, A&SD voted to disband, to pass its assets (including the ambulance) over to the Hindmarsh Volunteer Ambulance, and to appoint a liquidator. The name 'SAAT' remained, however, for when the defunct body's vehicle was handed over to the Hindmarsh Volunteer Ambulance it still had 'South Australian Ambulance Transport' painted on its side. The Hindmarsh body left the wor-

ding intact and began calling *itself* the SAAT because it was now operating in other districts as well as in the Hindmarsh area. Its service prospered and grew, with the result that by 1936 it was operating six motor ambulance vans and a number of motor cycle units out of five depots staffed by 100 permanent and volunteer attendants.[74]

In the meantime the St John Ambulance Brigade had been developing ambulance transport facilities of its own. When the 1919 scheme for an ex-Army ambulance had fallen through, the Brigade began hiring an ambulance van from the SAAT to use at the city race meetings where it did first aid duty. This arrangement continued until 1928. In June that year, following a proposal from the Superintendent of the Metropolitan Railways Division, G. Burns, the Superintendents of four Brigade Divisions—Islington, Adelaide Central and Adelaide Railways in addition to Metropolitan Railways—formed a committee calling itself the 'Transport Committee, St John Ambulance Brigade, Adelaide Corps'. The four Superintendents obtained loans from their Divisions to purchase a Chevrolet vehicle for conversion into a four-berth ambulance for an all-up cost of £417. The ambulance was ready by September 1928 and was soon in service at the city race tracks, allowing the Brigade to end its hire of the SAAT van.[75]

Great acrimony was building up within the Brigade while all these developments were under way. Hussey, its ever-fractious Commissioner, was demanding the right to chair meetings of the transport committee instead of R. V. Bulman, the District Superintendent, who was the choice of the other committee members. Hussey took his troubles to Sir John Hewett, who was in Adelaide at the time heading a delegation to Australia from St John's Gate. Hewett consoled him, saying, 'The colonel is always at the head of his army'. With Hewett's words as his mandate Hussey now suspended Bulman from duty as District Superintendent. Bulman insisted on retaining his chairmanship of the transport committee, however: he argued that as one of the guarantors for the loans to purchase the Chevrolet ambulance van his responsibility was to remain on the committee until the loans were repaid. Hussey's response to this was to resign from the transport committee himself, and then to refuse to give his authority as Commissioner for an appeal by the committee to raise funds to pay off the loans. The committee wrote to the Commissioner for Australia, Storie Dixson, to seek his intervention, but its letters remained unanswered, apparently because Hussey had not passed them on. Bulman now took the trouble of going to Sydney personally to see Storie Dixson, who told him he was *not* under suspension because he, the Commissioner for Australia, had not approved Hussey's action. Hussey continued on unperturbed, treating Bulman as suspended and using another officer as District Superintendent. In March 1930 Bulman resigned from the transport committee, having now completed his obligations as guarantor for the loans. Various Brigade Divisions tried

58 The Hindmarsh Volunteer Ambulance, early 1920s. Left to right are F. Bartholemeous, the salaried driver, and volunteer bearers E. Stroud, W. Anderson, W. Fraser, —, and G. J. Plenty. The Hindmarsh service eventually merged with the St John Ambulance service in 1952.

to get Hussey to call a meeting to discuss Bulman's case, in the belief that he had been badly done by, but Hussey remained impervious to all pleas. The problem remained unresolved for another year. It then disappeared on the 'retirement' of Hussey as Commissioner. (Hussey, possibly, had failed to have his incumbency renewed by Storie Dixson when his term as Commissioner expired. He resigned from the Association also at this time.) The Brigade's District Surgeon, Dr S. L. Dawkins, now took over as Commissioner in place of Hussey and restored Bulman as both chairman of the transport committee and District Superintendent.[76]

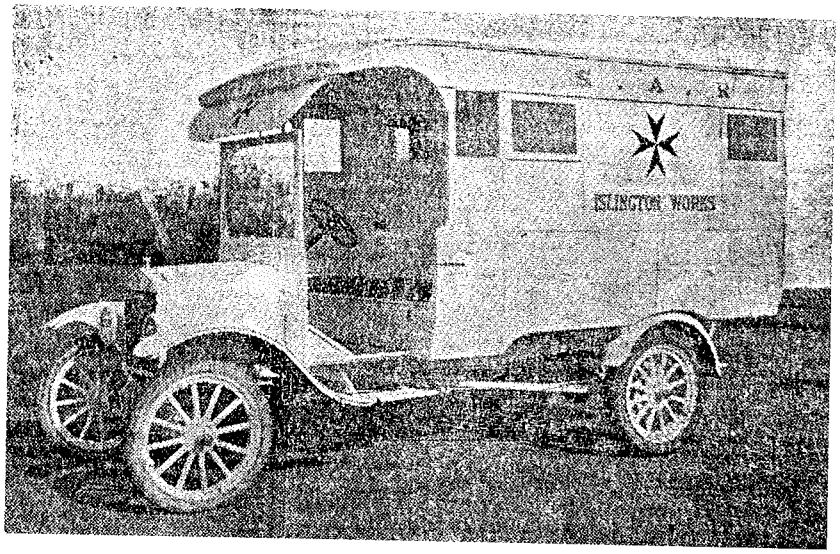
Dawkins now pushed the Brigade into further commitments to ambulance transport. He persuaded the transport committee to move into general ambulance transport work and to purchase a second ambulance van. By the end of 1932 there were no less than seven vans in which the Brigade had a stake—its own two, one it was hiring from a private contractor on a long-term basis, two owned by the railways but staffed by Brigade volunteers, and another two run via a similar arrangement with the police. All the while an intense rivalry had been building up between the Brigade and the SAAT. This had begun in 1928, when the former stopped hiring one of the vans of the latter for use at the race tracks. The SAAT had started running its own first aid classes, offering tuition free, conducting exams, issuing certificates. It had also set up a body it called the 'South Australian Ambulance Brigade' to provide a first aid service at sports meetings, the beaches and other public gatherings much like that

supplied by the St John Brigade. At first Dawkins fought back by trying to get the local branch of the British Medical Association to instruct its members to refuse to give lectures at SAAT classes where the fee would be less the the price of St John's tuition. He also endeavoured to persuade the government Chief Secretary to bring all the Ambulance services under the one control. The SAAT retaliated with its own form of sabotage, seeking to undercut the St John service by canvassing householders with an irresistable offer—the conveyance of sick and injured to hospital for two shillings a household annually. Dawkins had no stomach for further unseemly hostilities that would end in besmirching the St John reputation. He bid for a truce, in 1933 arranging a conference between the two organizations and the suburban mayors in order to sort out some compromise.[77]

Eventually, in 1934, the St John Brigade and the SAAT agreed that the Brigade would withdraw its ambulance vans from general service and would use them only for special purposes like its commitments at the racing and trotting tracks and the Royal Agricultural Show. The SAAT part of the bargain was to stop using the world 'brigade' in relation to its own bodies and to leave the voluntary field duties to the St John Brigade.[78]

The *rapprochement* endured, to the benefit of either side, but it still did not leave Adelaide—much less South Australia—with a unified ambulance transport system. Within the city there was a patchwork arrangement. Several private vans, two police vans (which had operated under the banner 'Civil Ambulance Service' since 1923), when the name had changed from 'Police Ambulance' because of public objections to that term), a SAAT breakaway group called the 'Northern Suburbs Ambulance', and sundry other ambulances attached to specialized institutions (the railways, hospitals, the abattoirs, the Red Cross, the Crippled Children's Association) all ran parallel with the SAAT service. A similar hotchpotch situation prevailed in the provincial centres. So it continued until 1952 when, because of government dissatisfaction with the State's poor ambulance services, St John was invited to take over the Adelaide ambulance service. We will leave it to a later chapter to describe how this happened and how that in turn led St John to assume responsibility for the State's entire network of ambulance transport facilities.[79]

In Western Australia, by contrast with South Australia, the St John organization found the path to acquiring control of ambulance transport to be trouble free. In Perth, where the St John Ambulance Association assumed responsibility for the city ambulance service in 1922, the makings of the later ambulance system had come into being in early 1903, when the police department obtained a two-wheeled litter. With pneumatic tyres, it was the very lateset model. The police kept it at their Roe Street station in the city. In its first year of use it handled twenty-six cases, including three broken legs, two broken ankles, a fractured knee, a fractured skull, and various cuts, burns, faintings and fits.[80]



59 Model-T Ford ambulance belonging to the South Australian Railways workshops, Islington. The workshops had a Brigade Division, which manned this ex-Army ambulance van.

About the same time as the police litter came into service, Perth's Metropolitan Fire Brigade obtained a horse-drawn ambulance wagon which firemen possessing St John certificates operated on a voluntary basis. In its first couple of years finance was a problem, and by the end of 1906 the Chief Superintendent of the Western Australian Fire Brigades, J. M. Lapsley, was complaining about this to the Association Centre council, of which he was a member. Public donations that year, he said, had been infinitesimal. The fire brigade would be unable to replace the wagon's iron-rimmed wheels with rubber tyres, as they had hoped to do. Citizens were 'still under the impression that the van is owned and worked by the government, and that patients are entitled to the service free'. As well as its horse-drawn wagon the fire brigade was proud of another service it offered: Perth was 'the only city in the Commonwealth where the street fire alarms are allowed to be used in cases of accident, each hose cart and steamer being fully equipped with all necessary first aid appliances'. In 1903 some sixty-seven cases received treatment via a call through one or other of the city's 105 fire alarms.[81]

These arrangements continued for several years, during which time various other interested parties also began offering transport facilities for cases of emergency. By 1908 there were, in addition to the police litter and the fire brigade wagon (which answered 205 calls that year), the following: a horse-drawn wagon the City Council had acquired for use in case of infectious diseases; a horse-drawn wagon at each of the three metropolitan race tracks, Perth, Belmont Park and Canning Park; a

horse-drawn wagon at the Claremont council chambers, and another at Fremantle, run by the Town Council there—a lead the Subiaco and Victoria Park Councils followed in the next couple of years. Two-wheeled litters were also in wide use. The Harbour Trust kept one at Fremantle, and the railways department had them at eight stations—Perth Central, Midland Junction, Northam, Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany and Kalgoorlie.[82]

Ambulance facilities in and around Perth by the end of the First World War were still much the same as they had been a decade previously. About the only change since 1908 was that the fire brigade had replaced its horse wagon with a motor ambulance van during the war, and had taken responsibility for the Town Council wagon at Fremantle, which it had also replaced with a motor van. The fire brigade service was now the main one for the central city and Fremantle areas. As motor traffic increased so did the volume of calls on the service, with the result that staffing it on a voluntary basis became more and more of a problem for Lapsley and his firemen. The fire brigade were anxious to withdraw from the service. Who better to pass it over to, then, than St John Ambulance? Lapsley was a committed St John man. He had been one of the founding fathers of the Association in Perth, having joined the Centre council at its re-formation in 1898; he was the current chairman of the council, a position he held from 1916 until 1925; and he was a member of the Order, with the rank of 'Esquire' (nowadays called Commander), the next rank down from a Knight. In his view there was probably no alternative to a St John-sponsored service. So after a couple of years' negotiations the fire brigade ambulance service in June 1922 became the St John Ambulances. With the service came its head, H. W. Lilley, the former superintendent of the Perth central fire brigade station. His commitment to St John was of the same scale as Lapsley's: he had been a member of the Centre council since 1905; he was secretary and District Superintendent for Coastal District of the Brigade from 1907 to 1925; and he was an Officer of the Order (next rank down from Commander). He was to remain in office for another six years, until the Centre council compulsorily retired him in 1928, apparently because they thought him too old for the job.[83]

As a base for the ambulance service the Association Council obtained a two-storey building in Murray Street, Perth, opposite the Royal Perth Hospital. Building and land cost £3756/9/0, including £1394 for renovations and alterations. To meet these costs the council relied on donations from the general public. The most generous donors were the Trotting Association (which gave £504/10/7, the W.A. Turf Club (£115), and the Commercial Travellers' Association (£100). The council raised most of the money itself, however, through an ambulance day appeal (£211/11/10), the sale of its former property (£550), and by other fund raising devices. The Brigade also contributed to the cost, not least by

60 The new St John ambulance transport service, Perth, early 1920s

providing the furnishings. The ambulance depot occupied most of the ground floor in the new building, while the upper floor contained the superintendent's private residential quarters, a large lecture hall, and the Centre's headquarters offices. The Association patron, the State Governor, Sir Francis Newdegate, opened the premises with due ceremony on 19 December 1921, congratulating the Association on 'this practical result of its great work in the cause of humanity'.[84]

The 'hardware' of the transport service consisted of four motor ambulances, two Fords, a Scat and a Jackson. Two of these vans were for routine 'medical' cases (i.e., home-hospital runs with sick patients), a service previously lacking in Perth, and the others were for emergencies and accidents. The staff comprised Lilley and three full-time attendants. Because of the cost of maintaining the service—£1900 in the first year—the vans were restricted to an eight-kilometre radius from their

depot for medical cases, though they would go further afield for accidents. The financial burden made itself felt immediately. The Association received no government or municipal financial support and hoped the service might run on donations from the public. Patients were expected to make some donation for using the ambulances, and for medical cases the suggested amount was a guinea (£1/1/0). In the first month of operations there were 130 calls, consisting of 88 medical, 36 accident and 6 hoax calls, for a total mileage of 794 miles (1270 kilometres). Only £24/18/0 came in from patients in donations, however, and in 61 per cent of the cases there was no donation at all. Finance was to remain a problem for some time, and in the meantime the Association had to be content to subsidise the losses from its general funds. A small price, perhaps, for the chance of doing 'real' ambulance work.[85]

Under St John control the service grew appreciably. Within four years it was answering some 3050 calls annually (an average of over 250 a month) for a mileage of 14,717 (23,547 km), or 1226 miles (1962 km) a month. After ten years the figures were: total calls, 3270 (272 a month); mileage, 21,590 (34,544 km), or 1799 miles (2878 km) a month. By the end of the 1930s the work-load had increased substantially and in 1939, a year of record business, the figures read: total calls, 5134 (427 a month); mileage, 39,189 (62,702 km), or 3265 miles (5225 km) a month. The Association was now employing a staff of six ambulance officers at Murray Street, and was providing a round-the-clock service with four ambulance vans. In addition it had taken over the Fremantle depot (which the fire brigade had continued to run for some years after 1922), where it had two more ambulances, and had just opened a new depot at Midland Junction, where it had one ambulance. As well as the service in the Perth metropolitan area, the Association was offering ambulance facilities via its rural sub-centres to the residents of provincial towns. From Geraldton 500 km to the north of Perth, to Albany 560 km to the south, and Kalgoorlie 595 km to the east there was a network of nineteen motor ambulances 'all under the badge of the Order of St John'.[86]

The service might have been spread rather thinly on the ground in this south-western corner of Australia's 'western third'. Its clients, however, knew they had a service as good as the times and circumstances allowed. Each year the Association received 'numerous letters of appreciation from patients and their relatives'. It also enjoyed a good press. When *The Geraldton Guardian & Express* expressed the following view in 1934 it was voicing widespread feelings:

> Of the many organizations that are carrying out work for the benefit of the community of the district, the St John Ambulance Association is one that stands very high in the regard of the people generally . . . Geraldton is fortunate in having a very vigorous organization to carry on [the ambulance work] and the annual meeting of the local sub-centre, which was held last night, provided once more eloquent testimony to the valuable work . . .[87]

From time to time the citizens themselves penned their own tributes. Letters-to-the-editor were the customary means of doing so, but occasionally the eulogizers took to verse. 'R.P.' of Norseman, whose five-verse tribute, 'The White Van', made it into the local newspaper in 1940, was one such. With the still distant war beginning to heat up, 'R.P.' wrote,

> The White Van fears no border,
> She goes, God speed her on;
> Whose Cross defines the Order
> And eight points of Saint John . . .
>
> Through 'gold' fields of Australia
> Or crimson fields of Spain;
> God grant her one regalia
> And purpose be humane.
>
> The White Van fears no border
> Where peace or war holds on;
> Whose ensign bears the Order
> Of the Ambulance of Saint John.[88]

It was only a jingle, but its sincerity was patent and it did show what the statistics of growth could not—that Western Australians had taken St John into their hearts.

One reason why people were so loyal to the St John ambulance service was that it was one with which they felt involved. It was very much a *community* service, one that people could recognize as *theirs*. Perhaps this was simply fortuitous; perhaps, on the other hand, it was a result of wise planning by those who promoted it—at first Lapsley, Lilley and Dr H. G. Tymms (jointly Association president and Brigade Commissioner) then later Dr J. J. Holland (Tymms' successor as Association president) and W. C. Brear (Lilley's successor as chief officer of the ambulance service and District Superintendent of the Brigade). If the latter were the case then the planners had plainly found a formula that worked. Whatever the cause, the effects of communal involvement could be seen in several directions. One indication that it was a people's service was the way it raised its funds. It was entirely self-sufficient, for example—that is, it did not beg from the government. Apart from £300 or so that annually came from the Lotteries Commission (in reality a form of indirect public subscription), it received no State money at all. Instead it raised the annual cost of about £1700-£1800 needed to run the ambulances by soliciting donations from the public—that is, relying on charity to perform its charitable task. Patients' own donations made up the largest portion of the annual revenues—about 40 per cent—despite the fact that more than half of them still failed to contribute. Contributions made by grateful municipal councils amounted to about another 25 per cent; 17 per cent or so came from the Lotteries Commission; business houses contributed roughly 5 per cent; and about 2 per cent came from the Royal

Automobile Club, which in 1923 had started conducting an annual 'petrol day', at which RAC members presented cans of petrol or the equivalent in cash to the ambulance funds. The rest came from various appeals and collections, with any operating loss made good from the Association's general funds.[89]

The communal approach was also obvious in the way the Association went about building the grand new headquarters building it acquired just as the Second World War began. By then the ambulance service had outgrown the Murray Street building, which could no longer accommodate the increased staff, the expanding work-load and the growth in first aid and home nursing classes. The Perth City Council helped greatly by waiving the purchase price of £1500 for the site in Wellington Street it made over to the Association. This was a block of former railways land near the Perth central railway station. The three-storey building the Association now erected there was designed by the architectural firm of Ochiltree and Hargraves and built by C. W. Arnott. The cost of building and furnishings was £18,500. £8500 of this came from an overdraft with the Commonwealth Bank; the sale of the Murray Street premises to the fire brigade realized £4000; and the rest came from what one observer describes as the 'remarkable' contributions of the general public. The Lotteries Commission were prepared to put in up to £3000 on a '£1 for £1' basis with the Association's own collections from the community. The latter responded most generously, with the result that the Association had little trouble in filling its quota with donations from contributors as diverse as the suburban municipalities, Divisions of the Brigade, police districts, private individuals, and even the W. A. Barmen and Barmaids' Association. By finding the wherewithal in this way the Association had given the community a stake in both building and service.[90]

Construction of the new headquarters began in September 1939 as war was erupting and was completed the following May. The Lieutenant Governor, Sir James Mitchell opened it officially on 10 June 1940 in the presence of a large audience and the Returned Services League band. Apart from Boan's Store (then the leading city retailer) it was 'the most imposing building in the street'. Community interest in it was so strong that the Association council left it open for public inspection for a week.[91]

So it was that Western Australia emerged from the 1920s and 30s as *the* success story of the St John Ambulance movement in Australia. The Western Australian Branch of St John had become at once the only State Branch running an ambulance transport system (of which it has had continuous control for over sixty years) and the only one to have built its own headquarters – the first of the 'St John Houses' now in every capital city, the acquisition of which was to become a passion for the State branches in the period ahead. But perhaps even more important than fine

buildings and smartly turned out ambulance vans was something less tangible—communal pride in an institution the people looked on as their own.

8

Towards federalism and independence

The establishment of an Australian Priory of the Order of St John in 1946 was as great a step for the St John Ambulance bodies in the different States as the creation of a federated Australian nation had been for the citizens of the former colonies forty-five years before. As with the national body politic so, too, with St John Ambulance—union was a seed that took years to sprout and take root, and then developed as only a slow-growing plant.

The 1920s and 30s were an important growing season for St John Ambulance bodies around Australia. We have just observed the way in which their enterprises flourished during the inter-war period. Among the buds that formed then and ultimately bore fruit were those of federalism and independence, for during the 1920s the notion that the State bodies of the organization should grow closer together was one that spread. With it developed a feeling that they could sustain themselves with fewer of the tendrils that had always bound them tightly to the British trunk of their Order.

Three events in the inter-war years were important factors in the development of federalist sentiment and a wish for greater autonomy among the Australian St John branches. These were the formation of a Central Council for Australia, and the arrival of two delegations from St John's Gate, the first led by Sir John Hewett and the second by Sir James Sleeman.

1 *The Central Council for Australia*

The first move towards federalism in the St John bodies had come in 1904, when, with the formation of Brigade units outside New South Wales, St John's Gate had appointed the New South Wales Commissioner of the Brigade, Dr G. Lane Mullins, to be Commissioner for Australia. At the same time a Sydney doctor, A. E. Perkins, was appointed Surgeon in Chief for Australia. As an earlier chapter showed, the creation of these positions led to administrative problems: the positioning of middlemen who intervened in the direct dealings between the State Brigade Districts and the head office at St John's Gate was not a welcome development for some Brigade members. They saw Lane Mullins as an extra and unnecessary link in the chain of command.

Moreover, his high-sounding title notwithstanding, the position of Commissioner for Australia in practice proved ineffectual. Lane Mullins did not travel the country setting up new Divisions, establishing new State Districts and generally rallying the Brigade from State to State. St John's Gate seems to have recognised that the Commissionership for Australia was a useless bureaucratic impediment to the efficient administration of Districts, and so abolished the position in 1912.[1]

The federal idea languished for a while thereafter, until the middle years of the first World War, when in early 1916 the Victorian Centre of the Association floated a proposal for a conference in Melbourne of all the State Association Centres, with the aim of setting up an Australian Federal Council for the Association. The proposal, of course, had to have London's approval. This came through in May 1916: St John's Gate advised the State Centres in Australia that 'Central Executive [in London] would welcome the formation of a Central Council in Australia'.[2]

The Victorian proposal, and London's endorsement of it, provoked mixed but generally discouraging reactions from the other States. The Southern Tasmanian Centre at first agreed to participate, then deferred further action pending the arrival from London of additional comment on what the Victorians might have in mind. The Centre then finally rejected the notion of a Central Council, on the grounds that 'federation would not benefit this Centre or in any way increase its efficiency, nor is it clear how Tasmania could form a unit in such a federation with two entirely separate and independent Tasmanian Centres'. New South Wales seemed rather dubious too, and also wanted further information. The Adelaide Centre decided that the time was not ripe for either a conference or the establishment of a federal council. It did inform Victoria, however, that if represenatives from there were ever in Adelaide the Centre would be pleased to greet them and to discuss the idea further. Western Australia declared itself 'firmly opposed to such a proposal'. The Centre in Perth prized and prided itself on its direct access to St John's Gate, and was not about to sacrifice that to any would-be overlords in far off eastern States! Queensland does not seem to have had an opinion at all. The State Centre was languishing. As the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade did not take the Centre under its wing until September 1916, the Association in Queensland was still four or five months short of being revitalized.[3]

The next step in a federal direction was one the Brigade took. This was Storie Dixson's interstate conference of the Brigade in Melbourne in April 1920. As we have seen, this conference was attended by senior Brigade officials, either in person or by proxy, from all States except Tasmania. The principal resolution coming from it was the request to State Centres of the Association to approach St John's Gate with the aim of having an Australian Priory established—that is, federation and national autonomy at one blow.[4]

In response to the suggestion for an Australian Priory St John's Gate in June 1921 informed the State Centres that it would 'welcome the formation of a Central Council for the whole of Australia'. This was the same reply it had given in 1916, when asked to approve Victoria's plan for a conference. London clearly supported steps towards federation, even if it did not go so far as to say this should be in the shape of a Priory. The London response led to another interstate conference later in the year, this time of the State Centres of the Association. This conference, too, took place in Melbourne, on 24 October 1921. Delegates to the conference voted to accept the notion of a 'Central Council for Australia', and elected a provisional council with Storie Dixson as president, J. H. Lord (secretary of the Victorian Centre) as general secretary and A. H. Hansford (chairman of the Victorian Civil Ambulance) as treasurer. This executive was entrusted with the task of producing a draft constitution for the Central Council. 'The formation of [the latter] body, it is confidently expected, will result in the work throughout the Commonwealth being forwarded through the adoption of standard methods, the exchange of ideas and specialized advice', a contemporary report observed.[5]

Once again the federal idea met with a mixed reception in the States. The Southern Tasmania, New South Wales and Victorian Centres voted to affiliate. The Western Australian Centre declared that, 'being opposed to the scheme for centralization for the Commonwealth', it would have nothing to do with the Central Council. In Adelaide the Association Centre declined to link up with the Council; however, the Brigade District there was bulldozed into affiliating by its Assistant Commissioner, G. F. Hussey, a keen federationist, despite the misgivings and discontent of many of his rank and file members, whom he failed to consult before committing the District to support of the Council.[6]

In 1924 there was a further thrust towards federalism when representatives from the State Centres met together with Storie Dixson for a 'special council meeting' in Adelaide during the Australian Sciences Conference. This was the meeting which decided to promote Australia-wide the New South Wales course and textbook in first aid relating to childbirth. We have already seen the way in which St John's Gate smothered that particular initiative. A second, and perhaps more significant decision the 'special council meeting' took was to seek London's permission to publish an Australian first aid manual. The latter was a particularly worthwhile scheme because Australian environmental conditions created medical needs the British manual covered inadequately, if at all. Australia's menagerie of venomous land and sea creatures, its toxic flora, the frequency of sunburn and heat exhaustion, the extensive use of the beaches, and the vast distances over which the sick and the injured must be transported, were situations no textbook conceived in Britain could hope to deal with in a manner satisfactory to Australian readers.

The idea of a special Australian manual came from the New South Wales Centre, which proposed that the compilation of the book be delegated to it, and that in the meantime Storie Dixson be entrusted with drawing up an Australian supplement to the British textbook as an interim measure. The Queensland, Victorian and South Australian Centres all readily concurred with these suggestions. That was the last that was heard of them. It seems fairly likely that they, like the proposal for first aid relating to childbirth, ran up against the obduracy of the Ambulance Department of the Order in St John's Gate.[7]

St John's Gate had set itself against the teaching of childbirth practices on the grounds that 'it is unwise and possibly dangerous for laymen to receive instruction on this subject'. At least that was the ostensible reason. What was there about an Australian first aid manual that would make it equally offensive to the hierarchy of the Order in London? Was it a case of the dominions becoming over-enthusiastic in their urge towards independent action? Or was there a more mercenary consideration—the threat, perhaps, that a 'colonial' manual could endanger London's monopoly of textbook production and sales? Unfortunately no correspondence survives to enlighten us, but whatever its reasons St John's Gate remained hostile to suggestions from overseas branches of the organization that the British first aid manual should be rewritten to be more relevant to local situations outside England. In 1932, for example, the Victorian Centre submitted to London a list of seventy amendments to make the manual more useful to Victorians. Not one of the suggested alterations was adopted.

Twelve years later Sir John Newman-Morris, who had been president of the Victorian Centre in the mid-1930s, recalled that when the Centre subsequently remonstrated with St John's Gate, pointing out 'doctors in Victoria are most dissatisfied with the book', it was 'told very firmly "if you do not like the textbook then we will deregister you as a Centre" '. The Ambulance Department at St John's Gate to appease the Victorians later produced a supplement for special use in Victoria but the Centre refused to use it. The unsuitability of the British manual and the absence of an Australian version continued to be irritants in the London-Australia relationship for decades thereafter. An Australian supplement to the British book did not appear until 1963, while the first Australian manual appeared only in 1969. As in the case of first aid for childbirth, this patience and forbearing on the part of the Australian St John Ambulance movement was a tribute to the deep loyalty of the Australian organization to its British parent, and to the value it placed on its British connections.[8]

For reasons other than the defeat of the federal initiatives over childbirth training and first aid manuals, 1924 was an important year for the movement towards union among the State St John bodies. It was on 18 December that year that St John's Gate finally approved the constitu-

tion of the Central Council for Australia which Storie Dixson's provisional executive had been toiling over since their election three years before. The Central Council, pledged to 'co-ordinate, protect and advance the interests of the Order and the work of the Ambulance Department thereof within the Commonwealth in every way possible', held its first meeting in the George St, Sydney, office of the New South Wales Centre of the Association on 26 June 1925. Ten men were present. Storie Dixson was there as 'Senior Officer of the Brigade within the Commonwealth (Western Australia excepted)'. (With the establishment of the Central Council he began using the title 'Chief Commissioner for Australia (Western Australia excepted)'.) He took the chair. J. H. Lord and A. H. Hansford of the Victorian Centre attended as secretary and treasurer respectively. B. R. Rainsford represented the New South Wales Centre and Dr T. Morgan Martin the New South Wales District. E. R. B. Pike (secretary of the Queensland Centre and the QATB) was there as proxy for A. J. Thynne, the chairman of the Queensland Centre and QATB. Dr Charles Bage, who, having been a member of the Victorian Centre since its foundation in 1883, had by far the longest connection with St John Ambulance of anyone in Australia, and Dr Rupert Downes represented the Victorian Centre and District respectively. G. F. Hussey attended on behalf of the South Australian District; and Col. J. Adam Dick, 'Surgeon in Chief of the Brigade in Australia (Western Australia excepted)' and a member of the New South Wales Centre, represented the Northern Tasmanian Centre by proxy. The Central Council thus represented rather less than the full complement of Australian St John bodies, for Western Australia had no delegates to it at all, of either Association or Brigade; South Australia had no Association representation; while Southern Tasmania, currently in one of its quiescent spells, sent representatives of neither Association nor Brigade.[9]

What the Central Council actually did is not exactly clear. Apart from compiling a list of the various St John bodies in each of the six States and producing a register of the members of the Order according to rank—nine Knights of St John were the most senior and sixteen 'Honorary Associates' the most junior in Australia—there does not seem to have been much for it to do. Storie Dixson, *en route* to England in 1926, called in to Hobart and Perth to induce the local St John bodies to seek admission to the Central Council. Most probably once he reached England he promoted to St John's Gate some of his favourite schemes for the organization in Australia. But other than this, he and his Central Council seem to have done little.[10]

One reason for the Central Council's very limited achievement was that its executive met only annually and its general meetings took place only triennially. The next general meeting after the Sydney meeting of 1925 was in Adelaide in 1928. The next meeting after that was set down for Canberra in 1931, though it does not seem to have been held.

Another reason was that its members were all old men. Each of them had toiled for St John for several decades, but they were now well beyond their most vigorous years, and were consequently unable to give the Central Council the primacy they might have wished. Thynne died in 1927, Morgan Martin in 1928, Rainsford and Bage in 1930, Lord in 1931, and Storie Dixson himself in 1932. In the end the Central Council was left without nearly all of those who had conceived it and who had laboured to bring it into being.[11]

If these were not impediments enough, the Central Council suffered other disabilities. It had no revenues, no support staff, and no power either to lay down or implement policy, or to be the medium of communication between St John's Gate and the States. Its inability to speak on behalf of all the State St John bodies weakened it both in their view and that of London. Then, too, the St John bodies that did not affiliate with it—the Association and Brigade in Western Australia, the Association in Adelaide—resented its presence, seeing in it a remote Sydney-Melbourne axis attempting to interfere in their affairs. In any case it was dying on its feet, for it received a mortal wound in 1929 at the hands of Sir John Hewett, whose delegation to Australia from St John's Gate heard various complaints against it and subsequently reported on it to London in adverse terms. Hewett pointed out to his superiors that

> it is indeed hardly correct to describe it, as is done on its notepaper, as functioning throughout Australia . . . as not only Western Australia but also the South Australian Centre has decided not to join it.

He and his fellow delegates wrote, 'we understood before we left London that the existence of the Central Council had not been of any great value to St John's Gate Headquarters'; and having travelled through Australia 'were unable to find any clear evidence of the value of the Central Council in Australia' either. Indeed one member of the Council's own executive was candid in confiding that it was 'of no value except to secure prompt recognition of the activities of the Association and Brigade in the event of war breaking out'. The delegation found that Australia's great distances nullified the Council's best intentions, for with the secretary living 600 miles from the chairman

> it was difficult to conceive how a Council separated at such distances from the Centres and Districts which it is intended to represent could function effectively, and so long as Centres and Districts do remain out of it it cannot be regarded as representative of the interests of the Order throughout the Commonwealth.[12]

Little is heard of the Central Council after the visit of the Hewett delegation, and from 1929 it seems to have become more or less defunct. It continued on in formal existence for a few more years, on paper if not in fact, until May 1933, when St John's Gate advised the Australian St John bodies that it had been disbanded. Why London had not taken this

step earlier is not altogether certain, though possibly it was out of consideration for the feelings of Storie Dixson. Storie Dixson, the grand old man of the St John Ambulance movement in Australia, died aged seventy-eight in December 1932 after having given thirty of those years to St John. He had come into the movement as Deputy Commissioner for the Brigade when it was first set up in Sydney in 1902; he had become Commissioner for New South Wales in 1918, and was appointed Knight of St John the same year. In addition he had been a member of the executive committee for the New South Wales Centre of the Association for thirty years, and was its chairman during 1920-21. His interests and involvements outside St John had been many. He had a lifetime interest in the sciences. After education at Sydney Grammar School he had completed his medical studies in Edinburgh, Dublin, Berlin and Vienna; then, back in Australia, had held a lectureship in *materia medica* and therapeutics at the University of Sydney from 1883 until 1917. During a two-year period of leave in the late 1880s he worked at the University of Strasbourg, where he translated Schmiedeberg's *Elements of Pharmacology* into English and isolated the toxic compound in the castor oil bean. He had been president of the New South Wales Medical Board from 1919; he was a member of the council of the Linnean Society of New South Wales for fifty years, and its president 1903-05; he spent a period as president of the Institution for Deaf, Dumb and Blind Children, was an honorary consulting physician to the Sydney Hospital, and for many years was a trustee of the Australian Museum, Sydney, and its president 1918-25. Finally, he was a Life Vice-President of the Highland Society of New South Wales. Dismantling before his eyes the organization which such a distinguished man had toiled to create would have been cruel; and so it seems likely that St John's Gate allowed the Central Council to remain alive, though safely inactive, until its creator had died.[13]

Storie Dixson had no doubt hoped that his Central Council would ultimately become a Commandery or Priory, and he probably saw it as a necessary first step in that direction and towards independence from St John's Gate. A call for an Australian Priory had been the chief resolution emerging from the interstate Brigade conference he organized in Melbourne in April 1920. The suggestion for a Central Council had been London's response to that request. Probably neither Storie Dixson nor the Australian St John bodies were satisfied with being fobbed off with a powerless Central Council when what they wanted was the independence a Priory would confer. Despite the presence of the Central Council various of the St John bodies continued to call for at least a Commandery. In 1928 there were some within the New South Wales Centre who wanted New South Wales to become a Commandery of its own. Then in 1930 the New South Wales Centre resolved to press for a Commandery not just for that State alone but for the whole of Australia; and

they passed this resolution on to the Central Council for its consideration. Six years later the clamour for a Commandery had spread beyond New South Wales, to the extent that when the Chief Commissioner for the Brigade Overseas, Sir James Sleeman, toured Australia in 1936 as the representative of St John's Gate he found the issue was 'the first subject raised in each State on my arrival'.[14]

Sleeman found that while the Central Council 'had failed most lamentably', some national St John body which could rise above the antagonisms that occasionally divided the Association and Brigade in each State and which could transcend the customary interstate rivalries was needed in Australia. He reported back to London that

> there can be no question but that the establishment of a Commmandery or some other central body is all important where there is a possibility that either the Association or Brigade find it difficult to see eye to eye; for so often this develops into a battle for supremacy on the part of the individuals, in which the interests of the Order, and its ancient traditions and dignity are apt to be forgotten.[15]

In both Sydney and Adelaide Sleeman was obliged to sit through special meetings called to discuss the formation of Commanderies, if not for the whole country then for one State or a group of States. He dealt with the issue circumspectly whenever it was raised, finding it a question which 'exercised a great amount of feeling', particularly in view of the fact that the other former 'white' colonies, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand, had already been raised to Commandery status. He agreed with his hosts on

> the necessity for some form of Central control, for without it there is always the danger of some individual to attempt to control policy by referring local questions to remote London, rather than to have them dealt with on the spot where witnesses and evidence are procurable.

On the other hand he made clear that it was a matter 'which would not even be considered by the Grand Priory unless both Association and Brigade were unanimous in regard to its necessity'. He pointed out 'it was better to remain without a Commandery than establish one prematurely, only to court failure'; and he persuaded his hosts wherever he went that

> the best policy would be to allow time for both the Association and Brigade to hold meetings in connection with this matter and then . . . send a representative to meet those of the other States of Australia at a combined meeting in order to discuss this most important question.[16]

As the next chapter will show, his advice was followed, and the eastern States at least—it was still a matter of 'Western Australia excepted'—got their Commandery six years later.

There were good reasons for the Australian St John bodies to seek the independence Commandery status would confer. London *was* a long way off, and to refer even the most trivial matters there for approval—things

like promoting or disciplining individual Brigade members—was tedious and time consuming. But above all, and despite the deep loyalty of the Australian St John bodies to the Order, the Sovereign Head and the Empire, Australian conditions differed greatly from those in England; and St John workers in Australia were finding it increasingly irksome that the St John's Gate leadership failed to appreciate this point readily. The Hewett and Sleeman delegations found repeatedly in Australia and New Zealand that the local St John bodies were concerned with several issues. To start with, London would allow mixed classes of men and women in exceptional circumstances only. 'Modesty forbade otherwise' (to quote Storie Dixson). Yet in the Dominions the huge distances and sparse populations meant that mixed classes were generally necessary if minimum class sizes were to be reached. Moreover, there were many places where women could not be taught at all unless mixed classes were permitted. Then there was the matter of instructors' qualifications. London required that where no medical practitioner or trained nurse was available a lay instructor might teach a course, but only a 'B' class certificate could be issued. As a result many in Australia were not entitled to call themselves 'qualified first aiders' although they held St John certificates. There were complaints, too, about the long delays in obtaining certificates, which St John's Gate insisted on issuing from London and which consequently took many months to reach recipients. As we might have expected, the first aid manual came in for much criticism because it said nothing about red-back spiders, Queensland stinging trees, the scrub tick and the Portuguese Man of War jelly fish. There were objections to the requirement that a Brigade Division must number at least sixteen members—thought to be too rigid a rule in small country towns; and there was a strong feeling, too, that insufficient numbers of devoted toilers for St John were gaining admittance to membership of the Order, and, once in, were being promoted too slowly within it.[17]

If these were good reasons for greater autonomy and wider powers for the Australian St John bodies, St John's Gate also had good grounds for being wary of granting Commandery status too readily to the insistent Australians. The Hewett and Sleeman delegations were disturbed to find in two States at least an unseemly fractiousness in relations between the Association and Brigade, and this must have raised doubts in London about the Australians' ability to run St John affairs in the decorous manner befitting an august institution like the Order of St John. In South Australia, for example, the Hewett delegation happened upon an undeclared war going on between Association and Brigade. It all came out when Hewett and his colleagues were being entertained at a garden party in their honour at the home of A. A. Simpson, the Association Centre chairman. Simpson and the Assistant Commissioner of the Brigade in South Australia, G. F. Hussey, had fallen out over the composition of the committee to manage the delegation's visit, Hussey wan-

ting greater Brigade representation than Simpson was prepared to allow. Hussey, not getting his own way, refused to assist in welcoming the Hewett team, and even tried to forbid Brigade members from wearing their uniforms when giving the first aid demonstration planned as part of the entertainment at the garden party. Symbolic of the long-standing disagreements betweeen Association and Brigade, and between their principal personalities, was the fact that while Hussey was a staunch supporter of the Central Council and had brought his District into it against the opposition of some of his own members, Simpson and his Centre remained resolutely outside the Council.[18]

Sleeman found similar Association-Brigade tensions in Sydney when he was called on to chair a specially convened meeting of Association and Brigade at Government House. Sister Bertha Parry, the full time salaried secretary of the Association Centre, found reason for not attending, and she did not show up at the organization's church parade in St Andrew's cathedral two days later—presumably because of her hostility to the Brigade personnel who would be present on each occasion. Despite Parry's assurances when he did meet her that the Association and Brigade were 'working amicably together', he found it 'disturbing' that the two bodies were 'working separately', in separate buildings, with separate secretariats, and 'without the harmony which should exist between foundations of our ancient Order of brotherhood'. He thought the distancing that had been going on between the Association and Brigade were contrary to 'the maintenance of a dignity fitting [the Order's] great antiquity . . . and . . . expected from it by the general public'. St John's Gate thus had cause to think that, while Canadians, South Africans and New Zealanders could be entrusted with running their own affairs, the Australian branches of the organization still had something to learn about co-operative endeavour and the seemliness of the behaviour expected of its adherents, and that these were lessons the Australians need learn before they could be given the independence they wanted. Whether the Australians actually learnt from what Sleeman had to say about them is not certain. As we will see in the following section, he went back to St John's Gate much impressed by the loyalty and enthusiasm of the thousands of Australian workers for St John whom he had met. Perhaps it was this which finally persuaded St John's Gate to grant the Australians the independence they were clamouring for, allowing them their Commandery in 1942, thus letting them take their place alongside the St John bodies of the other white Dominions, as equal partners with the organization in Britain.[19]

2 *The Hewett delegation*

One important consequence of the pro-federalist rumblings in the St John organizations in Australia as the 1920s wore on was the despatching

from St John's Gate of the two top-level delegations which previous sections refer to. Sir John Hewett, who toured Australia in 1928, and Sir James Sleeman in 1936 were luminaries among the constellation of senior officers of the Order in Britain, and their opinions on St John affairs in the white Dominions of the Southern Hemisphere would be trusted by the local population and by St John's Gate alike.

The idea for the first of these visitations took root in 1923 as the St John's Gate hierarchy and Australian branches were working towards setting up the short lived Central Council for Australia. In that year the chairman of the South Australian Centre of the Association, A. A. Simpson, visited St John's Gate during a trip to London, and found the hierarchy mulling over the possibility of sending out one of their number to see what the Australian, South African and New Zealand branches were up to. When Simpson's Centre heard of the proposal in February 1924 they wrote to London saying they would welcome a visit and also contacted the other State Centres to elicit their support. Some of the other States were interested but claimed they would be unable to find funds to support a visitation. The Adelaide conference of St John Ambulance representatives held that year in conjunction with the Sciences Congress endorsed the scheme and voted to approach the Governor General (Lord Forster) to issue an invitation.[20]

Little happened then until Sir Evelyn Cecil, a former Secretary-General of the Order, called into Adelaide in 1926 as a member of a House of Commons delegation visiting Australia as representatives of the Empire Parliamentary Association. Cecil conveyed to London news of the continued interest of Australian St John bodies in a tour of inspection by some high placed officers of the Order. The proposal lay dormant for a while longer until April 1927, when Simpson, who was a prosperous Adelaide businessman, offered to pay first class steamer fares for an official from St John's Gate to come to Australia. At the same time his Centre committee prevailed upon the State government to grant a free rail pass over the State railways. Other State Centres followed the lead, and obtained similar concessions from their rail services.[21]

Why the Australian St John bodies should have been so eager to be looked over by some dignitary from St John's Gate is not quite clear. Was there a deference that was too ready—a need to be reassured that their policies and programmes met with the approval of those in England? Perhaps there was a tinge of Australian pride, a keenness to show off, to demonstrate to those in England and in other States that what they were doing locally was equal to the best elsewhere? There was certainly a hope that they would benefit from a visitation. The publicity and renewed interest in their efforts they hoped would flow from it should, they calculated, give their efforts the sort of prominence St John Ambulance had enjoyed forty years previously during the tour of Lady Brassey.[22]

Instead of one dignitary St John's Gate sent four. Hewett, its leader, held the position of Bailiff of Egle within the Order—one of the five 'Great Officers' of the Order and the seventh ranking position within it after the Sovereign Head (then George V) and the Grand Prior (then Prince Arthur, his uncle, the Duke of Connaught). Accompanying Hewett were his daughter, Mrs St John Atkinson, a Dame of Grace of the Order, Major Colin MacRae, a Knight of Justice, and his wife, Lady Margaret MacRae, a Dame of Justice.

The delegation left the Tilbury docks aboard the *Oronsay* on 27 October 1928 and landed in Fremantle exactly a month later after checking on the work of the St John Ambulance bodies at Gibraltar and Colombo along the way. At Fremantle Dr H. G. Tymms, President of the Western Australian Centre and District Commissioner of the Brigade, and J. R. Campbell, the Centre Secretary, met them and escorted them to Government House, where they were to be guests. Their first official function in Perth was a civic reception by the Lord Mayor and Councillors; and then followed a week of consultations with Association and Brigade officials, investitures of members of the Order, inspections of ambulance stations, demonstrations of Brigade work, trips to Busselton and Bunbury and to the Kalgoorlie-Boulder goldfields. What they saw greatly impressed them, for they came away concluding, 'We do not think it possible that there could be Overseas a more satisfactory demonstration of how the work of the Order should be carried out than is to be found in Western Australia'.[23] They also received their first lesson on the nature of Australian federalism, at least in so far as it existed in St John: while they were pleased to detect in Western Australia 'a most enthusiastic feeling of loyalty to the Order', they were puzzled to discover the St John branch in the West expressing 'a most determined wish to work directly with headquarters in London rather than through any other body'—such as an Australian federal St John body.[24]

Adelaide was the next stop, and here unfolded further the pattern of reception committees, guards of honour of Brigade Divisions, hospitality at Government House, public addresses on the history of the Order by members of the delegation, inspections of first aid and ambulance facilities, investitures, presentations, luncheons, receptions, garden parties, dinners, demonstrations of first aid and nursing drills, and much speechifying—all of which received generous press publicity. After five days of this frenetic activity and a 'hot, dusty and uncomfortable' train trip they reached Melbourne. Here their now-familiar routine continued, interrupted only by the withdrawal of the MacRaes, who returned to London because of the ill-health of Lady Margaret. (She had been ill ever since arriving in Australia. She found the Australian summer oppressive, and had taken little part in the delegation's activities.) Their five days in Melbourne were followed by six in Tasmania, where they found that both the Northern and Southern Centres had recently emerged from their

periodical fits of quiescence in honour of the delegation's visit. After a Christmas back in Melbourne they moved on to Sydney, where a Brigade guard of honour headed by Storie Dixson and Poate was waiting for them at Central Station. In succeeding days they met a large and distinguished company of guests at a Government House garden party in their honour; they attended a Brigade church parade in St Andrew's Cathedral; they saw the lifesavers in action at Bronte beach; they visited Katoomba in the Blue Mountains to inspect an ambulance station; and they gained ample space in the local press. Then, after a New Year in Sydney, they travelled north for a couple of days' QATB-observing before returning to Sydney to sail for New Zealand on the *Aorangi* on 10 January 1929.[25]

Everywhere the delegation had gone it had met with deferential treatment as not only St John personnel but also local dignitaries at all stops along their progression from State to State greeted them with a deep reverence. The awe in which they were beheld was almost like that which many Australians reserve for visiting royalty. It was only in hard-boiled Sydney that a less than reverential welcome awaited them. There a newspaper columnist, who on discovering that Sir John was a keen amateur ornithologist, pondered the possibility of his joining local bird-observers on an outing into the bush:

> Local ornithologists are Cassius-like individuals—with 'lean and hungry looks'—and much given to scaling dubious trees. One dreads to think what will happen if Sir John, who scales about seventeen stone [108 kg] follows their example and perches on a slender bough.[26]

Everywhere else, however, Australians received Sir John and his party most respectfully.

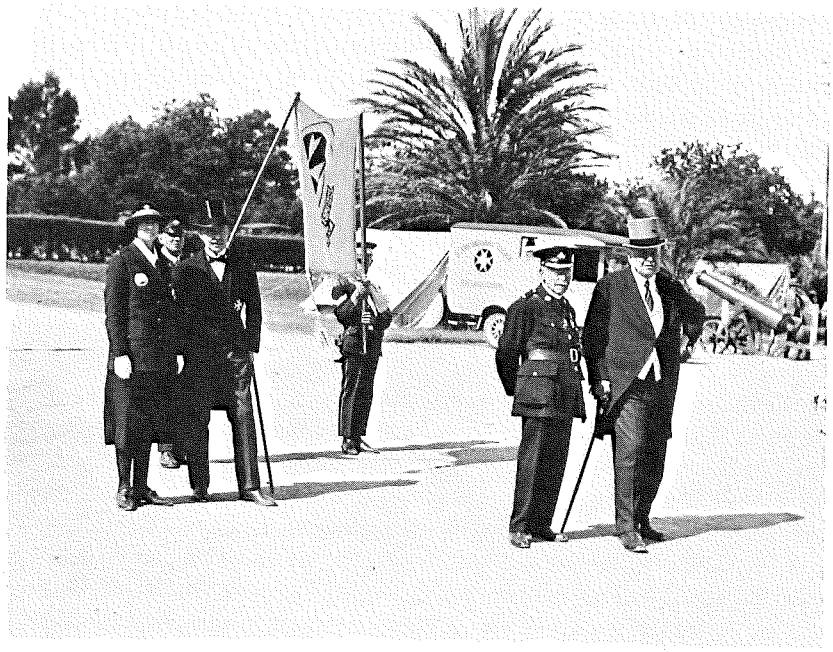
What practical value the Hewett visitation had for either the St John organization in Britain or in Australia is debatable. It certainly gained ample publicity for St John around Australia, for as Hewett said,

> We were constantly photographed by representatives of the press. Our movements were regularly notified, and our doings chronicled at every place. Not infrequently leading articles were devoted to a description of the Order's activities.[27]

But even though the State Branches of St John reported greater public interest in their affairs as a result of the tour, there was no great rush by the public to enrol in first aid classes or to sign up with the Brigade.

Perhaps the visitation made St John's Gate more aware of the special difficulties the Australian environment presented, for Hewett's report to the Chapter General of the Order

> emphasiz[ed] the fact that owing chiefly to the enormous distances, the conditions under which the Order works in Australia and New Zealand are so dissimilar from those in Great Britain that it is quite impossible to grasp the character of the work without paying a visit to the Dominions.[28]



61 Sir John Hewett (right) with the South Australian Brigade Commissioner, G. F. Hussey at a Brigade review on the Torrens military parade ground, Adelaide, 1929. Hewett's daughter and fellow delegate from London, Lorna Atkinson, is at the left.

Many Australians had visited St John's Gate by this time, both to marvel at the ancient home of their Order and to tell of the work of St John in their home States. Few from England had journeyed in the opposite direction, however, so it was not until someone from St John's Gate of Hewett's stature had personal experience of the work in Australia that Chapter General could be persuaded that St John there might safely be allowed to develop differently from along the familiar lines in England.

The Hewett delegation certainly had the effect of laying to rest the feeble Central Council for Australia, which Storie Dixson and the older generation of St John devotees in eastern Australia had over-optimistically striven to establish. As the previous section showed, the delegation reported adversely on the Central Council, pointing out that its powers and influence were so circumscribed it was of little value. Thereafter not much more was heard from or about the Council, and as the old men of which it was composed died off one by one it died with them.

Perhaps the visitation's greatest value was its effect in reaffirming the crusading spirit among the St John workers in Australia. Everywhere the members of the delegation went they managed to rally the interest and

enthusiasm of the local toilers for the Order. The arrival among the latter of celebrities from Chapter General in London released a deep well-spring of fervour within the St John community. Most of the State St John branches subsequently reported enthusiastically on the benefits of the flag-waving the delegation had done on behalf of the Order. The South Australian Centre found that there was a wider interest in their activities as a result. The Victorian Centre thought 'the Order in England is to be congratulated on sending such able and charming ambassadors' who were able to make so many 'helpful comments' on enlivening St John work in that State. The New South Wales Centre found the delegation's views 'illuminating' and expressed deep admiration for its 'extraordinarily clear grasp of conditions in Australia'. The Western Australians basked in a glow of parochial pride, irradiated by the Hewett Report's comment that St John work 'Overseas' could hardly be better than in Western Australia. The later was ample proof to them that they were wise to remain aloof from St John comrades further east, and it confirmed for them the sacredness of their direct link with London. As for Tasmania, we have already seen how the Hewett visit caused both the Hobart and Launceston Centres to re-emerge temporarily from their most recent hibernation. That, perhaps, was the most telling sign of the delegation's effect in rekindling the dedication of the Order's Australian servants.[29]

3 *Sir James Lewis Sleeman*

The Sleeman visitation, eight years after Hewett's, came about as a result of one of the recommendations of the Hewett Report. Hewett thought that a longer and more intensive tour than his own should be made by the Secretary-General of Chapter General, and that this should be made later in the year so that it would not be interrupted, as his had been, by the summer vacation. He had also recommended that someone more directly concerned than himself with the Empire-wide structures and routines of the Order should undertake periodic trips to the Dominions so that Australian problems could be solved on the spot, thus doing away with much of the protracted correspondence that tended to frustrate smoother dealings between London and the State branches in Australia.[30]

Sleeman was an impressive figure, who came from a distinguished military family. His father was Capt. Henry Sleeman of the Queen's Lancers, and his grandfather, Maj.-Gen. Sir William Sleeman, had been the suppressor of the murderous cult of thuggee in India in the 1820s and 30s. He had invented the entrenching tool used by the British forces in World War I; he was the author of books on military subjects, including one in English and another in French on his grandfather's campaign against the thugs; he was prominent in the Scouting movement, and held its highest award, the Silver Wolf. He came into the Brigade as Chief

62 The Hewett delegation at a St John Ambulance conference, Government House, Sydney, 28 December 1928. Sir John Hewett is in the centre holding a sheet of paper. On his left is Sir Phillip Street, Chief Justice of New South Wales and president of the New South Wales Association Centre. On his right is his daughter, Mrs Lorna Atkinson, who with him comprised the delegation members for the New South Wales leg of the tour. On her right is Dr T. Storie Dixson, Chief Commissioner for the Brigade in Australia and chairman of the Central Council for Australia of St John. Behind Storie Dixson are Flora Read, 'Lady' District Officer of the Brigade in New South Wales, and Boles R. Rainsford, District Secretary of the Brigade in New South Wales and secretary of the Central Council for Australia of St John. Next to Rainsford is Dr Hugh Poate, Commissioner of the New South Wales District of the Brigade; and in front of him is Sister Bertha Parry, secretary of the Association Centre. Behind Parry is T. H. Henderson, District Officer of the Brigade; and next to him at extreme left is A. S. Wilkinson, Brigade District Superintendent.

Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas after a long and notable career of some thirty-six years in the Army, including service in the Boer War (when for a time he had commanded South Australian troops), the command of a regiment in Flanders during the First World War, followed by two years as the British military attache to the Japanese fleet 1916-18, and a three-year period 1919-21 as Chief of Staff of New Zealand forces. He was highly decorated with military and civil awards for gallantry and service. In short he was just the sort of cultivated, public-spirited, able and dedicated gentleman soldier the Brigade in Britain sought out for appointment to its senior staff. On the other hand, in some respects he was an unusual man to be holding such a high office within the Order. Firstly,

despite his aristocratic mien and connections with the gentry, he was a Cornishman who vaunted his separateness as such from the English. He took unfeigned delight in meeting other 'Cousin Jacks' (as Cornishmen fondly call each other), many of whom he found in Australia. He was also a Roman Catholic in what was then rather more than ostensibly an Order with deep Anglican ramifications. His religion seemed to cause him little trouble, however: indeed he preferred Anglican cathedrals as the venue for the frequent Brigade church parades in which he was required to take part. They provided, in his opinion, the most appropriate venue for the ancient rituals of the Order, and impressed upon those Overseas workers for St John, who were generally unfamiliar with the ancient shrines of the Order, something of the due solemnity of its ceremonial life. Apart from these idiosyncrasies Sleeman had other notable qualities to suit him to his task in Australia. As an Army officer who had spent much of his life fighting for the Empire, he was a firm believer in the imperial virtues. Good, firm discipline among the ranks, and wisdom and devotion among the officers, was what he expected of Brigade members. Evidence for this, he believed, was a smartly turned out, correctly uniformed Brigade member, whether it be on public duty or at a parade. He also expected that, first and foremost, Brigade members and anyone else associated with St John would be loyal—devoted to the Order, to the Sovereign Head, and to the Empire. In the latter respect he was to be delighted with what he found in Australia: Australians' most endearing quality, he thought, was their lusty singing of the National Anthem at virtually every public gathering he attended. This perhaps more than anything else heightened the already high esteem in which he held Australians as a result of his dealings with them in the campaigns of the Boer War and World War I.[31]

It is worthwhile for us to dwell at length upon the Sleeman visitation. Doing so will tell us much about Australian society in the inter-war years, about what mattered to Australians then, about the way in which St John Ambulance had been assimilated into Australian society by that stage, and about the nature of the Empire of which both Australia and St John were a part. If Australians were insular and colonial in their outlook, imperial patriots who ambiguously asserted their independence while sheltering in the skirts of Mother England's empire, then the Australian branches of St John Ambulance shared these characteristics. If, too, Australian society was unique, and Australians an 'unusual' people because of it, then Australian workers for the Order were unlike those elsewhere. That Australia and Australians were an enigma both within St John and without was something the Sleeman tour demonstrated, and so will we examine it in detail.

1935 Sleeman reached Fremantle aboard the *Nestor* at 5.00 a.m. on 21 December 1935, to be met by a clamouring horde of journalists wanting information about him, the Order and his mission to Australia. At the

more discreet hour of 9.00 a reception committee from the Western Australian St John branch, led by Dr H. G. Tymms, who was both Association President and Brigade Commissioner, arrived on board to welcome him to the State. He was only passing through Australia on his way to New Zealand, which he was to tour before returning to examine the Australian States in turn, but they were determined to make the most of his one day in their midst. They escorted him the twenty-two kilometres into their Perth headquarters, where a further and larger welcome awaited him at a 'high' morning tea—'almost a solemn rite in Australia', he wrote later—following which there were speeches of welcome. Then came a call on the Lieutenant Governor, Sir James Mitchell, and a visit to the Children's Hospital. He could not sail on for Adelaide that afternoon as planned because of a sudden shipping strike ('unfortunately not unusual in Australia'), but that allowed him to dine at the Royal Perth Yacht Club, where he met 'many other of the leading residents', and then to go on to a Trotting meeting to inspect the Brigade-run casualty station alongside the race track. He was probably fairly tired by the time he got to bed aboard the *Nestor*, but it had all been a fair trial run for the next 143 days he was to spend in Australia and New Zealand, each of them to be spent in a similar whirl of receptions, speechmaking, consultations, inspections, banquets, excursions to points of interest and quizzings by journalists.[32]

After a cold, stormy Christmas at sea crossing the Great Australian Bight Sleeman arrived in Port Adelaide late on Boxing Day. A reception committee headed by the Brigade Commissioner for South Australia, Dr S. L. Dawkins, met him there. A trip up Mt Lofty to see the Adelaide panorama, a meeting with the Governor, Sir Winston Dugan, who had been his commanding officer in Flanders, and discussions with the St John hierarchy of South Australia filled the next couple of days; and then he was off to Melbourne, where yet another big welcome awaited him. He got through his press reception before breakfast, then met the St John reception committee, led by the Victorian Commissioner, Maj.-Gen. R. F. Downes, and the Centre President, Dr John Newman-Morris. A meeting with the Governor, Lord Huntingfield, followed, after which came lunch at the Naval and Military Club, a meeting with A. H. Hansford, president of the Victorian Civil Ambulance, and a dinner at the Melbourne Club with representatives of the Association, the Brigade, the Victorian Civil Ambulance and the Aerial Medical Service (the 'flying doctor'). After all this it was back on board the *Nestor* and on to Sydney to catch the trans-Tasman ferry for New Zealand.[33]

The first thing to catch his eye in Sydney was the Harbour Bridge ('this colossal effort of man, so delicate in effect as to harmonize with that incomparable harbour'), which had not been there on his last visit to Sydney with the Prince of Wales in 1920. The inevitable St John reception committee was waiting for him, this time led by Hugh Poate, the

New South Wales Commissioner. Lunch was at the Hotel Wentworth, and among the guests was A. S. Wilkinson, now District Superintendent of the Brigade, the last surviving member of the team of six from the New South Wales District who had represented Australia at the Royal Review of the Brigade at Windsor in 1912. This last fact prompted Sleeman to remark, as he would time and again during his tour, 'the Grim Reaper has indeed been active among our best workers'. Few indeed of the first generation of Australian supporters of St John were still alive, for in the eight years since the Hewett delegation most of the surviving pioneers of the movement in Australia had died. The stop-over in Sydney also allowed Sleeman to make a call on the Governor-General of Australia, Lord Gowrie, a Knight of the Order who was soon to become the 'Knight Commander' or head of the Australian Commandery of the Order when that body was set up in 1941. Finally the first day in Sydney allowed Sleeman to fulfil a long-standing ambition by catching up with the elusive Rev. John Flynn, the legendary 'Flynn of the Inland', founder of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, an organization Sleeman greatly admired because he thought 'no finer Ambulance work is being done in the Empire today than that of the Australian Aerial Medical Services'. He was to keep running into Flynn all around Australia, and during his seven subsequent meetings with 'this great personality in Australian life' he found he was able to give Flynn useful suggestions for improving the organization of, and training for, the flying doctor service. Flynn for his part complimented Sleeman for what he and his 'great Organization' were doing 'in paths of practical chivalry'.[34]

1936. After two months in New Zealand Sleeman returned to Australia in March 1936 to undertake his inspection of the Australian St John organizations State by State. He started with Queensland, working round the country clockwise towards Western Australia. In Queensland he was squired around by W. D. Grimes, president of the QATB and chairman of the local Association Centre, and by E. R. B. Pike and R. M. Stodart, secretary and treasurer respectively of both organizations. They took him to Beaudesert, Stanthorpe and Warwick to the south-west of Brisbane, then north across the Darling Downs to Clifton and Toowoomba, and back to Brisbane via Ipswich. In the capital and at each town visited they took him to inspect the local QATB branch and its facilities. At the end of the tour they put on a huge reception in his honour at the Hotel Canberra in Brisbane, the climax of which came when Grimes proudly asked him what he thought of the ambulance transport work he had seen. He would have appeared churlish had he not been free in his praise; but he also made it clear he felt 'Queensland was backward in regard to Nursing and Cadet Divisions and that such should be formed by the Order'.

Brainwashed by Grimes TCB

He was obviously puzzled as to why, in Queensland of all the Australian States, the St John Ambulance Brigade had never become a

part of the local scene; and to that end he sought out Edgar Slaughter, the QATB superintendent of the Dalby branch. As a young man of twenty-one Slaughter had attended the meeting of Army Medical Corps men in 1892 which had led to the formation of the QATB. He explained to Sleeman that the QATB had struck out on its own outside of the St John Ambulance framework because they had all thought 'it would be preferable to act on their own rather than be controlled from London'. Sleeman later reported back to London that, for all this sturdy spirit of Queensland independence,

> in the QATB I have found a great respect for [the Order] and particularly for our Association', with the result that 'although the main part of [our work] is being done by the QATB, . . . the work of the Order is appreciated on the part of the General Public.

As an earlier section pointed out, he came away from Queensland convinced of the worth of the QATB. Except for the proviso that Nursing and Cadet Divisions of the Brigade should be introduced there, he thought the Order's symbiotic existence within the QATB was most satisfactory.[35]

After Queensland Sleeman moved down to Sydney. Here, as we noted earlier in this chapter, he was disturbed to find a rift between the Association and Brigade, and he was visibly displeased that Bertha Parry, the Association secretary, was absenting herself from meetings where Brigade personnel were in attendance. He chaired a conference between the two foundations in Sydney, and when the issue of a Commandery for Australia arose, as it did time and again thereafter in every State, he pointed out that unless they could work harmoniously together they would never get their Commandery. He spent nearly a fortnight in New South Wales, packing an enormous amount into his schedule. There were meetings with the Acting Premier, M. F. Bruxner, with the Anglican Archbishop of New South Wales and Primate of Australia, Dr H. Mowll, with the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Archie Howie, and with Sir Joseph Cook, the former Prime Minister of Australia. He inspected the annual parade of the Brigade at Government House, at which a thousand members of Ambulance, Nursing and Cadet Divisions were mustered, 'all well turned out and smartly uniformed, while their alert appearance showed the pride which they felt at belonging to our Brigade'. Sleeman, an imposing sight in his Chief Commissioner's uniform of lace- and satin-trimmed black frock coat with sash, and full military, civil and St John decorations, topped off by a high cocked hat with cascading black plumes, stepped ramrod straight among them to look them over closely, row by row. Their District Commissioner, Poate, similarly attired—but not quite as imposingly because he wore only a white peaked cap rather than a plumed cocked hat, followed in his wake. Little did anyone guess how ill at ease their awe-inspiring visitor was feeling, and how reluctantly he wore his finery. In his report of his visit he later wrote,

> It was an extremely hot and muggy day with a powerful sun, and having by this time been for seven hours in the thick full-dress of a Chief Commissioner . . . I was not sorry when I reached Sydney again late that evening. The wearing of a thick frock coat and cocked hat was not my choice; but, as in South Africa and Rhodesia, it had been represented to me that intense disappointment would be felt were I to wear the lighter khaki uniform and sun helmet with which I had come provided. It is only those who have been compelled to wear a black cocked hat with black feathers, both of which attract the sun in a temperature considerably above that experienced in an English summer, who can sufficiently appreciate its discomfort. Certainly the days of penance of the Knights of St John have not yet ended![36]

But he masked his suffering superbly and played with aplomb his part in the ritual. It was, perhaps, the grandest parade of Brigade personnel Australia has yet seen.

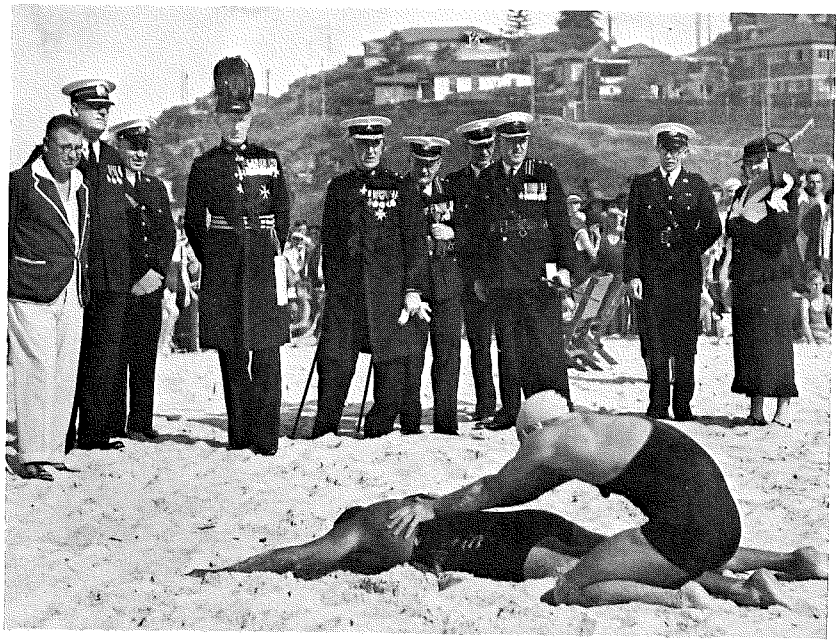
The following day, at a Brigade church parade in St Andrew's Cathedral attended by Archbishop Mowll and the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Philip Street, a Knight of the Order and Chief Justice of the State, Sleeman invested Poate as a Knight of St John. He had formed a very high opinion of Poate, whose 'wonderful work' as Commissioner he thought was chiefly responsible for the health and strength of the Brigade in New South Wales, the strongest of the six Districts at that time. 'That the Order possesses as its Brigade Commissioner in New South Wales one of the leading surgeons in all Australia is a matter for congratulation', he later reported to London. Little wonder, then, that when St John's Gate granted Australia its Commandery five years later Poate was chosen as Commandery Lieutenant, that is the chief executive officer of the new federal structure.[37]

Sleeman's inspections in and around Sydney took him to five of the ambulance stations the New South Wales Ambulance Transport System maintained in the suburbs. He visited hospitals. He looked over the casualty room of the Royal Aero Club at Mascot, which Brigade members staffed, and the club honoured him with a fly-past of its planes. He visited the casualty rooms of the Bronte, Coogee and Maroubra surf lifesaving clubs, which Brigade members also staffed, and at each place a guard of honour of lifesavers—'men like Grecian statues', he noted in admiration—greeted him then put on a display of reel and rescue work. He came away much impressed by the work of the lifesaving clubs, which, he informed St John's Gate,

> serve a most useful purpose in Australia. Breakers and undertow are powerful while there is always a danger of sharks . . . Their members are carefully selected and are in consequence magnificent specimens of humanity, highly expert in swimming and lifesaving, well-drilled and disciplined.[38]

The inspections continued at Yarra Bay beach on Botany Bay, where the Brigade maintained a casualty station, and at Taronga Park Zoo, where it ran another.[39]

As well as conducting inspections Sleeman took every opportunity to



63 Sir James Sleeman and Dr Hugh Poate (4th and 5th from left) watch a demonstration of resuscitation by lifesavers at Maroubra, Sunday 15 March, 1936. Earlier that day Sleeman had invested Poate as a Knight of the Order of St John in a ceremony at St Andrew's Cathedral.

publicize and promote the Order. He spoke to the Sydney Rotary Club on its history and work; and next evening was guest on a radio programme broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, when that was his theme again. He was later pleasantly surprised to learn that 'this wireless talk had been listened to by fully 3,000,000 people' including many in New Zealand. Several days after this he spoke to the Australian Pioneers' Club—'gentlemen each of whom is required to be a descendant of a pioneer of Australia able to trace his ancestry back on the male side to the First Fleet'. The club president, Sir Kelso King, an Officer of the Order, later treated him to an At Home at his 'delightful home, Quambi, one of the oldest homes in Sydney'. Present on this occasion were 'leading members of Sydney society'—representatives of the medical and legal professions, the academic community, the armed services, and conservative politicians. 'I was greatly struck by the number who assured me of their interest in the Order', he wrote afterwards. 'This was particularly interesting in view of the fact that it is sometimes erroneously thought that those Overseas do not value History as much as in the Old Country'.[40]

In New South Wales Sleeman also had a taste of rural Australia during a visit to Bowral, Berrima and Goulburn. In Goulburn the local mayor,

T. P. Manion, presented him with an address of welcome, then drove him to the show grounds where he 'witnessed the final of the wood-chopping competition, a marvellous performance in which giant Australians cut through mighty logs as if made of butter with the utmost dexterity and ease'.[41] Surfers, axemen, and later at Kalgoorlie, the miners—Australia, it seemed, was a home of supermen.

Southern Tasmania was the third of the State Branches of St John to receive its visitation. Despite their chequered career in St John the Hobartians managed to give Sleeman the impression that 'great progress had been made in the past year or two'. Dr T. H. Goddard, as Association Centre chairman and Brigade District Surgeon, was the rising star of the St John movement in Tasmania. He struck Sleeman as a particularly valuable asset to the Order, as did the older Dr Gregory Sprott, who had been mainly responsible for the formation of the Southern Tasmanian Centre in 1909, and for its subsequent revivals. The Southern Tasmanians took their distinguished visitor through the now familiar succession of meetings and entertainments, civic receptions, guided tours (visits to the Electrolytic Zinc Company and to Cadbury-Fry-Pascall Ltd.; a drive up Mt Wellington—'one of the few occasions on my tour when I welcomed my thick uniform'), a luncheon at the Tasmanian Club, and a parade and demonstration of first aid by members of the Brigade Divisions. He made his second nationwide broadcast over the ABC network via Station 7ZL, again on the history and work of the Order. He paid a visit to the Milbrook Psychiatric Hospital, £15,000 towards the cost of which came from the combined war fund of St John Ambulance and the Red Cross Society. He was somewhat piqued to find here that whereas the Red Cross portion of the donation was acknowledged by a plaque on the wall the St John contribution was not. Then, after his two days in Hobart, he sailed for Melbourne aboard the *Oronsay* 'with every confidence that the work of our Order [in Southern Tasmania] is in safe hands and that the future will show even greater progress. . . .' For a Branch with its record of discontinuity over its quarter century of formal existence this was perhaps an optimistic endorsement, though one which time has shown to have been justified. Possibly Sleeman's faith in its future sprang from the expressions of loyalty he heard on all quarters. After the civic reception the Lord Mayor of Hobart, J. J. Wignall, had staged in his honour at the Town Hall his delight was intense, for he wrote that

> it is difficult to describe the magnificent spirit of Empire which exists today among Australian people, and their utmost loyalty to the Throne, and nothing impressed me more during my visit than this, and I am firm in my conviction that nowhere else does the pulse of Empire beat more strongly.
>
> What has strengthened this patriotism was an attempt made within recent years by misguided Communists, who were utterly routed by the wave of intense loyalty to Empire which their efforts succeeded in stimulating, and by visits of the Princes of the Royal House, who by their character, sympathetic

understanding, and fine characteristics, captured the hearts of the Australian people.

Throughout my Australian tour all the ceremonies and entertainments have commenced with the singing of the National Anthem; which must surprise many who live nearer the Throne in England and is proof of the patriotism of a splendid people.[42]

In Melbourne again on 30 March his round of activities there started off with another civic reception, at which the Lord Mayor, Sir A. C. Wales, presided. Then came a luncheon at the Naval and Military Club in the company of diverse luminaries—Downes, the Brigade Commissioner (who was also the chief medical officer for the Australian Army), Newman-Morris, the Association chairman, Hansford of the Victorian Civil Ambulance, Sir John Latham, Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, Vice-Admiral Sir G. S. Hyde, chief of the Australian naval staff, Maj.-Gen. J. D. Laverack, chief of the general staff of the Australian military forces, and Frederick Raven, secretary to both the Association Centre and the Victorian Civil Ambulance and District Officer of the Brigade. In the evening the St John organizations and the Red Cross combined to organize a grand public welcome for him in the Town Hall. Some 650 members of Ambulance, Nursing and Cadet Divisions, all in parade formation, about 1500 members of the general public, and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Band were waiting there to greet him. After the speeches of welcome and customary assurances of the loyalty of local St John bodies to the Crown, the Empire and the Order, Sleeman spoke for an hour on his usual theme of the history and objects of the Order. Again his speech went nationwide via the ABC, so that if not before then now Australians in even the remotest corners of the continent had little excuse for being ignorant of the name of St John.[43]

Over the next week Sleeman faced visits to the coal mining town of Yallourn, to the old gold mining city, Bendigo, and a descent down its 'Red White and Blue' mine, then the oldest operational mine in the country, and through Geelong and along the Great Ocean road to Lorne. He laid a wreath in the shape of the St John cross on the memorial stone of the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance. There were meetings and consultations with a succession of notables both within and without St John—Mrs D. Young, whose father, the thespian, 'Coppin the Great', had chaired the inaugural Association meeting in Melbourne some fifty-three years before; Albert Dunstan, the State Premier, who requested him 'to convey his loyal greetings to H.R.H. the Grand Prior, the Duke of Connaught'; the mayors of the principal Victorian cities, whom he urged to encourage the formation of further Brigade divisions, especially Cadet Divisions, within their municipalities; 'Flynn of the Inland' again, together with three of his flying doctors; representatives of the Victorian Red Cross and the Victorian Civil Ambulance; and the State Governor, Lord Huntingfield, who was his host during his week in Victoria.[44]

In addition to these engagements Sleeman faced up to the usual cycle of dinners, parades, inspections and conferences. Chief among them was a Brigade parade of 400 members at Bayswater, attended by the Royal Australian Air Force Band and 'many hundreds of spectators'. This allowed him to witness 'one of the best displays of drill seen on [his] Australian tour'. He was also highly pleased with the 'admirable demonstration' of first aid which followed,

> the whole of the materials for which were improvised, making the proceedings most realistic. Saplings were cut from the bush, and by means of ties, bootlaces, and braces, converted into satisfactory stretchers within twelve minutes, stretchers which could hold a heavy patient with great comfort. The Australian has indeed reduced such improvisation to a fine art, being much helped by the fact that it is not a criminal offence to cut what timber one requires as is the case in the older countries.[45]

Perhaps a less prodigal use of Australian timber was made in 'a handsome clock of wood of rare character . . . subscribed for by all ranks of the Brigade in Victoria as a token of their appreciation of my visit'. They presented it to him at the end of the parade; it was, he thought, 'a generous gift which indicates the great value placed by the Dominions Overseas upon such links with St John's Gate'. Then there was a conference of the Brigade and Association, which he chaired and at which, predictably, the chief item of business concerned the establishment of an Australian Commandery. He was able to compliment the Victorians on the way the two foundations were 'working most splendidly together, with that spirit of Brotherhood which our ancient Order has the right to expect'. The harmony between them he attributed to the influence of their joint secretary, Raven, 'a zealous servant of the Order whose whole energies are directed in a most loyal and unselfish manner to the interests of both bodies'.[46]

All in all Sleeman, was 'well pleased' with what he had found in Victoria. Among Brigade Divisions there he observed 'a high standard of discipline and efficiency, while the *esprit de corps* is comparable with that of the Home Brigade; and let me here add there can be no higher standard than that'. Only a couple of shortcomings caught his critical eye. He was disappointed with the weak development of the cadet movement in Victoria especially, where there were as yet no nursing cadets, and in Australia generally. 'Australia fails in regard to Cadet Divisions', he reported, 'for whereas New Zealand has over seventy, in Australia there are less than twenty'. The other matter that bothered him in Victoria and elsewhere was the appearance of some Brigade members on parade without uniforms. He was pleased that, the depressed economy notwithstanding, most members had found the £5 required to purchase a uniform; but he also thought this was a sacrifice *all* members might be expected to make. Everywhere he found members out of uniform he took pains to point out that,

> in the event of a major catastrophe, distracted and injured survivors must be able to distinguish between the sympathetic but ignorant, and those others who reach the scene fitted and able to render expert assistance.

On such occasions he cited a 'salient instance' from his own experience

> in the heart of a riot area in Bombay in 1929, on a day during which over 300 were killed: . . . had our Division there not been uniformed it would have been immediately annihilated by the vast fanatical horde by which it was surrounded.[47]

So with injunctions to the Victorians to raise more Divisions, particularly of cadets, and to have them properly dressed, he sailed for Tasmania again, this time aboard the Bass Strait ferry, the steamer *Taroona*.

In Launceston, where he spent three days, Sleeman found the Northern Tasmanian Centre in good health again. Having been revived after a long lapse for the Hewett delegation eight years before, it was functioning well and had trained 760 first aiders in the meantime. Its good fortunes were due mainly to the efforts of its chairman, Dr (later Sir) John Ramsay, a former mayor of Launceston and chairman of the Hospital Board, whose home, 'Ruglen', was the venue for many St John activities in the city. Its secretary, Mrs M. F. Robson, had also been a significant factor in its revival. They worked Sleeman hard. On his first day amongst them there were visits to Ulverstone, Burnie, Devonport and Deloraine, then back to Launceston, with civic receptions and speeches at each place—a round trip of 375 kilometres during which he had urged northern Tasmanians in eight separate speeches and an interview with the Launceston *Examiner* to support the work of the Order. As he had discovered early in the tour, his enthusiastic hosts 'made no allowance for previous tiring days'. It was as if the Tasmanians were anxious to make the most of his visit, catching up for time lost during their years of inactivity. He later wrote,

> During this tour I have on several occasions been called upon to perform almost superhuman duties, but I do not think that any portion of it gave me more to do, in so short a time, than this visit to Tasmania'.

In his time in northern Tasmania his programme included eight civic and public receptions, six inspections, thirteen speeches and another national broadcast. He saw several hospitals, the Anzac war veterans' hostel, the first aid facilities of assorted factories and commercial firms, and the ambulance facilities provided by the railways and fire brigade. He had discussions with representatives of the Red Cross VAD organization, the Scouting organization, and the Education Department. He was a luncheon or dinner guest of the Mayor of Launceston, E. E. von Bibra, the Launceston Rotary Club, and the Launceston Club. And while he was among them he no doubt strongly suggested to the Launcestonians, as he had done among the Hobartians, that instead of the schizophrenia that had previously dogged the development of St John work in the

island State, there should be 'a closer touch between the Ambulance activities in Northern and Southern Tasmania'.[48]

Back on the mainland again, Sleeman took the Adelaide train out of Melbourne. Aboard the 'Overland' he again met Flynn of the Inland, who, like the Cheshire cat, kept appearing at unexpected moments throughout the tour. In Adelaide Dawkins, the Brigade Commissioner, was waiting again at the head of a reception committee. Then after brief calls on the Governor, Sir Winston Dugan, and the Roman Catholic Archbishop, Rt. Rev. Dr Andrew Killian, there was a tour of the Brigade's beach casualty stations at Brighton, Henley, Glenelg, Grange, Semaphore and Largs Bay. Sleeman ended his day with an evening at the Trotting, where Brigade members

> functioned throughout the proceedings admirably, marching on to the centre of the track before the start of every race in perfect military formation and then radiating out like the spokes of a wheel, every member going to a different part of the track where an accident might be expected.

A couple of days later he was at the races again, together with 60,000 others, at the Onkaparinga race track. He lunched there with the Premier and Chief Secretary of South Australia, R. L. Butler and Sir George Ritchie, the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, J. R. Cain, and Senator A. J. MacLachlan. The race meeting gave him a good opportunity to see the Brigade in action, for when he inspected the casualty room it operated there, he found six jockeys receiving treatment, together with a number of spectators, including a woman whose arm had been fractured when her handbag had caught in the stirrup of a passing horse during one of the races.[49]

Over the next fortnight Sleeman maintained in South Australia the same punishing routine he had followed elsewhere. His report to St John's Gate conveys some sense of the weariness he had begun feeling by now. It spoke of

> that feeling of almost despair which overcomes one when, almost overwrought with fatigue at the completion of one of the many stages of the long travel, one arrives at the next to be met by a fresh and enthusiastic Reception Committee, positively straining at the leash to compress into every minute of one's stay sixty seconds' worth of instructional value, hospitality and entertainment; utterly oblivious to the fact that behind is a long trail of exhausted officials who have also done their best to kill the Visitor by enthusiasm and kindness.[50]

But whatever he might have been feeling by the Adelaide leg of the tour, he kept a brave face for his hosts as he went into the next round of engagements. These included consultations with Adelaide notables—the Governor, the Premier, the Chief Secretary, the Chief Justice, Sir George Murray, the Lord Mayor, the mayors of the suburban municipalities, Flynn of the Flying Doctor Service yet again, Sir Douglas Mawson, the Antarctic explorer, and the Police Commissioner, whom he congratulated for the fact that South Australia was the only State with a

Brigade Division composed of police-officers. He later inspected the latter, seventy members strong, which he deemed 'the best Ambulance Division seen during my whole tour'. He took part in a conference that Sir Winston Dugan chaired at which the Association and Brigade members quizzed him about how they should go about forming an Australian Commandery. He attended civic receptions in virtually every municipality he entered—Adelaide City, Woodville, Thebarton, Prospect, Unley, Port Adelaide, Glenelg, Murray Bridge, Norwood, Port Pirie and Port Augusta. He laid a wreath on the Adelaide War Memorial, then led the Brigade in a march to the memorial to the Boer War. At the latter he laid another wreath, in the shape of the St John cross, in the presence of veterans of the South African campaigns, among them some he had commanded. The same day he inspected a parade of 400 Brigade members on the University Oval. He was pleased to note that 'the large grandstand was packed to capacity while hundreds of other interested spectators lined the ground on all sides', for this indicated 'the intense interest taken in ambulance work in Adelaide'. He inspected the Adelaide Hospital, where a distant cousin, Dr J. G. Sleeman, was medical superintendent; and he spoke to the 700 students of St Peter's College, where he was tickled to find a fellow 'Cousin Jack', one Guy Pentreath, as headmaster. He inspected the ambulance facilities maintained by the South Australian Ambulance and the Hindmarsh Ambulance services, and those of the railways ambulance. He attended various sporting fixtures, noting that 'in no other part of the Empire is the work of the Brigade better appreciated by sporting bodies than in South Australia'. And everywhere he went he was gladdened by the warmth of South Australians' loyalty. 'The pulse of Empire beats most firmly in the Australian breast', he wrote, 'however much some may attempt to disguise any feelings of sentimentality.'[51]

After touring north through Port Pirie and Port Augusta Sleeman joined the continental express for the trip across the Nullabor Plain into Western Australia and the last leg of his tour. He found 'little on the Trans-Australian journey to wax lyrical about save the immensity of the journey', and therefore busied himself catching up on paper work. The only diversions came at Tarcoola in South Australia, where he met A. K. Harris, an Association-trained first aider whose repertoire of skills included the practised treatment of bites by scorpions, redback spiders and snakes. At Tarcoola, too, he

> met the true Aboriginal, who will persist in haunting the outskirts of civilization, although decimated by disease when they do so. One particularly hairy specimen gave me a demonstration in boomerang throwing of particular interest, until one returned with such splendid effect to almost break my leg, after which I limped back to the train sufficiently content with this experience.[52]

A large reception committee headed by the Commissioner for Western

Australia, Tymms, the chairman of the Eastern Goldfields Centre, Dr H. O. Irwin, and the mayors of Kalgoorlie and Boulder welcomed Sleeman into the goldfields for the start of his inspection of Western Australia. A civic reception in Kalgoorlie, a visit to the Kalgoorlie Hospital, the inspection of a parade of local Brigade Divisions, and a large public meeting with an audience of a thousand filled up his first day there. The next day began with a descent to the 750 metre level of the Boulder Perseverence mine, the inspection of the Boulder mines' ambulance facilities, and a civic reception in Boulder. Despite the fast pace Sleeman enjoyed his time among the goldfields community—'a most hospitable and delightful people'—and he was 'remarkably struck by the fact that the majority of the Ambulance Divisions consisted of a fine type of young man of quite exceptional physique and good appearance, a welcome sight after the many Divisions I had seen in which old and middle-aged men predominate'.[53]

Sleeman reached Perth on 28 April, and this time his reception committee was headed by Dr J. J. Holland and J. R. Campbell, president and secretary respectively of the Western Australian 'Head' or Perth Centre (which was once more separate from the Centre on the goldfields). Then came a civic reception at the Town Hall, at which Sleeman's address in reply to the Lord Mayor, J. J. Poynton, was broadcast nationwide by the ABC—the eighth occasion he had been on air. That evening there was a dinner and conference run by the 'Head' Centre council, at which the issue of a Commandery for Western Australia was not long in surfacing.[54]

Over the next fortnight the routine continued with visits, receptions, parades, inspections, dinners, meetings and interviews and two more broadcasts, as far apart as Fremantle and Northam, New Norcia and Collie, Bunbury and Narrogin. Sleeman's final parade, the two hundred and fourth of his tour, took place in the Perth Esplanade on 10 May, when he reviewed 300 members of the Perth Divisions. He left Australia
11. MAY 1936. the next day aboard the *Cormorin*. A final gathering of Association and Brigade dignitaries at St John headquarters bade him farewell, and he was then driven away to his ship at Fremantle. As he came on board he was amazed to find there all those who had just said goodbye to him in Perth. They had raced him to the docks for a penultimate farewell. He sailed for England that night, relieved to have filled all 988 engagements planned for his eight-month tour of South Africa, Rhodesia, New Zealand and Australia. He had been deeply touched by the loyalty to the Order, Sovereign Head and Empire he had found to be so intense in Australia. 'Never previously had I sufficiently appreciated the fine British character of the Australian peoples', he later wrote. Though Australians of the later twentieth century might not welcome such a compliment, Australians of the inter-war years would have felt honoured by the description. To have reached the state of awareness of Australians'

worthiness where he could describe them in these terms was to Sleeman a personal achievement to compensate for the enormous strain of his 82,000-kilometre odyssey across the white dominions of the southern hemisphere. In the end it was this realization on his part that was to be the chief benefit of his tour to the Australian branches of the Order.[55]

What were the benefits? First and foremost the Sleeman visit had the effect of ushering in the federal structure for the Order, the Commandery for Australia, which the State Branches were now eager to join. Sleeman's subtle but pointed comments on the need for a spirit of unity between Association and Brigade, and from State to State, had their effect in making the State Branches realise what preconditions St John's Gate would require for Commandery status to be granted. Then, too, the knowledge of Australian conditions acquired at St John's Gate, coming so soon after that gained through the tour by the Hewett delegation, probably persuaded the senior officers of the Order in London that the Australians would be best allowed to manage their own affairs in their own way. They were, no doubt, much reassured in coming round to that position by Sleeman's very favourable reports on the ability and dedication of the leading St John personalities in Australia. Around the nation he had found a rising generation of competent and committed executive officers within the State branches who were taking over from the older generation of pioneers. In Sydney there were Poate, Wilkinson, Dr W. Vickers, Mrs J. E. Henson and Messrs. W. Kubig and N. Hayton. In Brisbane there was Pike of the QATB-Association Centre. Tasmania had Drs T. H. Goddard, J. Ramsay and J. L. Grove, Mrs M. F. Robson, Messrs. C. L. Colvin, J. Hulbert, R. N. Woolley, and Misses E. M. Hawkins and G. Marshall. In Melbourne there were Downes, Newman-Morris, Raven, Drs J. A. H. Sherwin and W. W. S. Johnston and Miss Edith Wells. In Adelaide he had found Dawkins, Bulman, Drs H. H. E. Russell, E. A. H. Russell, S. R. Burston and C. E. C. Wilson, and Miss V. Watson. And in Western Australia there were Tymms, Holland, Campbell, Drs H. O. Irwin, J. R. Donaldson and B. C. Cohen, Messrs. S. F. L. Hussey, W. C. Brear and S. Middlewick, and Mrs H. E. Parker. Together they constituted a wealth of talent that could be expected to remain at the disposal of the Order for many years to come, so that the future of the Order in Australia might safely be entrusted to them.

Secondly, the benefits consisted in the renewal of zeal Sleeman aroused in the Australian Branches of the Order. Like that of the Hewett delegation, his visit greatly stimulated the St John workers of every State, reinvigorating those who had gone stale and refreshing those whose dedication had never faltered. This was most timely, for scarcely more than three years would pass before the organization in Australia would be called on to make its greatest efforts to date, in the dreadful war that many now knew was looming ahead.

There were other benefits as well. Through the press and radio

coverage of the visit, and the frequent broadcasting of Sleeman's speeches, Australians everywhere were now thoroughly familiar with the work of the Order. When the time came, as it soon would, for them to avail themselves of Brigade and Association services they would turn to St John in unprecedented numbers as a result. Not the least of the benefits to flow from the Sleeman tour was the confidence it gave the Australian workers for the Order. They were indeed proud to belong to an ancient organization that was one of the pillars of the Empire they fervently believed in. It did them well to know they enjoyed the high esteem of the distant leadership of their Order At Home, and to know that what they were doing for their Order was equal to the best done anywhere else. If deference to the opinions of putative 'betters' in England had ever been a part of the St John mentality in Australia, the Sleeman Report probably had the effect of dispelling it. The warm approbation of Sleeman for their endeavours perhaps convinced them that they could be self-sufficient, that they did not need to refer to London for a decision in any weighty matter, that if they were prepared to support a federal body, a Commandery, they really had little need of the remote St John's Gate.

War was already looming as Sleeman toured Australia, and hardly more than three years later its onset gave Australian workers for St John their greatest opportunity to prove their worth. As we will now see, they rose to the occasion, confirming what Sleeman had said about the 'splendid' qualities of Australians. The period ahead would be a great one for building, and during the times of trouble ahead they would not only burnish their fine reputation for dedicated public service but would also set about establishing the structures that would make them a great national institution of Australia rather than the imperial appendage their London leadership might have perceived.

9

At war once more

As the 1930s drew to a close people in St John Ambulance, like most Australians, were anticipating war but they were better prepared for it than many. Indeed the ethos pervading the St John bodies around the nation was one of quasi-military readiness, almost as if, knowing their beloved Empire was bound for its dénouement, they would do or die in defending it. Many of their leaders had affiliations with the armed services, and most of the principal medical staff of the St John Ambulance Brigade held senior rank in the medical service of Army, Navy or Air Force. Indeed the Brigade leadership, if not St John members generally, had never regarded the St John Ambulance organization as anything but a loyalist force which would dutifully rally beneath the military colours of nation and Empire in times of war, and which would be keeping itself ready in times of peace.

There had been ample evidence for St John's readiness to serve as military handmaiden in preceding years. The St John attitude had been manifest throughout the Australian tour of the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, Sleeman, in 1936. As he had reminded Premiers, Cabinet Ministers, senior government officials and military 'Brass' around the country, 'the Government might . . . regard our Brigade as a unit of its Defence Force on mobilization' and 'the Federal Government had a right to call upon the Brigade in the event of mobilization'.[1]

The war preparedness of the Australian St John bodies was apparent in a number of directions. To start with, the Brigade in each State had been enthusiastically participating in the VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment) movement since the Department of Defence had reactivated it in the early 1930s. The revival of the VADs had been foreshadowed in 1929. In advising members of his District what was afoot, Hugh Poate (then Assistant Commissioner for New South Wales) had at that time sent a circular around the Divisions saying, 'Our Order has always taken part with the Military and Naval Departments of Empire as an auxiliary Service in times of National Emergency', and so 'we as loyal subjects of the King may be expected to play [our accustomed part] if ever the dread shadow of war threatens our Home Land'. He went on to express the hope that each Brigade Division would register as a VAD unit, as most had done under the previous VAD scheme during World War I, and that 'we as a body and as individuals [will] do what we can to help the scheme along'.

V.A.D.

1. Except Queensland.

By 1934 thirty-four of the forty-eight adult Divisions in New South Wales had registered with the Commonwealth as VAD units. Thirty-two of them, represented by 415 of their members, attended the first parade of New South Wales VADs held at Sydney's Victoria barracks on 9 June 1934. From then on they and their Brigade colleagues in VADs in other States readied themselves both psychologically and in the sharpness of their medical skills for the trial ahead, which even then they sensed was not far off. At the fourth of the annual parades of New South Wales VADs, in 1938, the Director General of Medical Services for the Commonwealth Military Forces, Maj.-Gen. R. M. Downes (who was also the Brigade's Commissioner in Victoria), reviewed the volunteers. He expressed 'great satisfaction at their enthusiasm, loyalty and self-sacrificing service for their country'. By this stage the New South Wales District of the Brigade was proud that if war should break out it alone had ready in VADs some 1000 men 'sufficiently fully trained . . . to form two field ambulances, a casualty clearing station and a hygiene section for service in any part of the Commonwealth', and at the same time had '600 women . . . fully trained in all nursing duties and air raid methods' and their services could be utilized as hospital auxiliaries'.[2]

As well as vigorously supporting the VAD scheme, St John in Australia had been gearing up to handle other contingencies that might arise in the event of war—gas attack and air raids. In New South Wales the Brigade's School of Instruction for prospective officers in 1938 introduced two new courses, 'Anti-Gas Drill' and 'Air Raid Precautions', and trained two squads of students in them. The students were then attached to Corps of the District to train Divisions in each of the two procedures. If the Second World War had begun with, say, the gas bombing of Sydney, the Brigade would have been ready for it. The Brigade in other States was making similar precautions. In 1937 in Perth, for example, District staff attended a series of lectures on 'the protection of the civilian population against gas attack', given by officers of the Army Medical service at the Swan Barracks; they then placed themselves at the disposal of the State government for any civil emergency plan it should devise. In 1937, too, the Brigade in Western Australia sent a team to London as the Australian representatives at the Jubilee of the Brigade. While in the U.K. they took the opportunity of attending a course in Air Raid Precuations, in which they were subsequently examined. The knowledge they picked up as a result was disseminated through their District on their return home. In South Australia, too, gas attack and air raid had been topics of concern to Association and Brigade alike. Initially they tried to interest the State government in these issues in order to obtain assistance in getting hold of gas masks, gas charts and bottles of gas samples (so that the smell could be recognised). They ran up against two problems here, however: the U.K. government would not allow the export of gas masks or gas samples, and the State government passed the

64 Inaugural inspection of Perth Voluntary Aid Detachment (many of whom were St John personnel), in front of the Murray St. headquarters of the St John Ambulance service, August 1930. Dr J. R. Donaldson, later Commissioner of the Western Australian District of the Brigade is at left front; Mrs H. E. Parker, 'Lady' District Officer of the Brigade and Commandant of the VAD, is centre front.

buck to the federal government, claiming that it had no jurisdiction in such matters. Somehow they managed to obtain a limited number of gas masks, however, and began giving instructions in their use.[3]

Then, on top of their preparations to meet the possibility of gas attacks and air raids, the St John bodies established strong co-operative links with the State emergency services in each part of the Commonwealth. 'State' and 'National' emergency services had come into being around the country during the late 1930s, and plainly they had much to gain through association with well-organized, disciplined and willing organizations like St John Ambulance. Even before the war began Association and Brigade instructors were helping train State emergency service workers. Members of the Honorary Instructors' Associations of the different State branches of St John were already busy conducting classes in first aid, gas attack and air raid precautions by the time war arrived to make this a priority task.[4]

When Australians heard their Prime Minister, R. G. Menzies, announce on 3 September 1939 that because Britain was at war so, too, was Australia, the St John workers among them knew they were well prepared for what was ahead. The most immediate task was to handle the biggest rush to learn first aid the country had ever seen.

1 *'All previous records shattered'*

The Australian entry into the war produced the same effect for St John Ambulance as had the other war in 1914-15. It provoked an unprecedented public demand for first aid and home nursing training. In every State people thronged into the St John training centres, clamouring for the basic medical training they knew St John existed to provide. In Victoria, for example, where in 1938 the Association had conducted 150 classes with a total enrolment of 3505, in 1939 it handled a huge increase in both classes and enrolments, running 489 classes and training 14,759 pupils—more than a four-fold increase in the latter, which broke the record set in 1915 by over 5000. The next year, with the end of the 'phoney' war and the Battle of Britain raging, even more pupils flooded into the classes. Again the Victorian Centre broke its record, teaching 750 classes with an enrolment of 22,673. The following year, 1941, gave the Association in Victoria its 'most strenuous in the history of the Centre'—753 classes and 24,375 pupils. But an even more exacting year was ahead, for the eruption of war in the Pacific with the Japanese capture of Singapore, the invasion of New Guinea and the bombing of Darwin brought the conflict into Australia's own front yard. This gave the Centre such an enormous increase in its task that by the end of 1942 it could report with justifiable pride that 'all previous records have been shattered'. Indeed 1942 proved an all-time record—1135 classes and 43,496 pupils. Nowadays the Victorian Centre routinely instructs fifteen to sixteen thousand pupils annually, but in a State population double that of 1942. As the table further below indicates, in 1942 the Association trained one person in every forty-five of the State's inhabitants, which was also another all-time record, the previous best ratio having been 1:142 in 1915.[5]

In the other States, too, the Association Centres found each year's effort eclipsing the records set the year before. In New South Wales the Centre reported to members that 'the European crisis aroused great enthusiasm with regard to training in first aid, home nursing and air raid precuations'. So great was the increase that it was able to reduce the instruction fee from five shillings to three shillings and sixpence. The Centre trained 11,822 pupils in the first year of the war, almost treble the 1938 figure and 3000 above that for 1915, and disposed of 16,000 copies of the first aid text book. It soon ran out of the books. 'We ordered books in quantities previously undreamed of', the Annual Report noted in amazement; but still they ran out, and had to send off to London for 9000 more—a number that would not have lasted long in view of the fact that the peak year, 1942, saw 47,275 pupils enrolled in New South Wales (compared with about 21,000 forty years later, by which time the State population had almost doubled).[6]

As the two larger Centres, New South Wales and Victoria, set these records, Association sub-Centres were opened across the length and

breadth of south-eastern Australia. Small towns and hamlets where St John had never run classes before, not even in the most hectic days of the first World War, now boasted sub-Centres teaching two, three, four, even five classes successively in the one year. The list of sub-centres doing so reads today like a dictionary of Aboriginal place names. In Victoria there were Bealiba, Benalla, Birregurra, Cohuna, Colac, Cope Cope, Culgoa, Derrinallum, Dimboola, Echuca, Euroa, Kallista, Kalorama, Kaniva, Kerang, Koo-wee-rup, Korumburra, Kyabram, Lang Lang, Longwarry, Merbein, Merino, Minhamite, Mooroopna, Moe, Neerim, Nhill, Numurkah, Picola, Tallangatta, Toora, Tooradin, Traralgon, Warracknabeal, Warrnambool, Warragul, Waubra, Werribee, Willaura, Wodonga, Wonthaggi, Yannathan, Yarragon, Yarrawonga and Yallourn. And in New South Wales there were Adelong, Brundah, Barellan, Bowral, Boolaroo, Bellingen, Bendick, Bungwahal, Brogo, Bulli, Bethanga, Bermagui, Buckaroo, Bigga, Brawlin, Bega, Bundanoon, Coonabarabran, Cowra, Cookardima, Coolangatta, Coraki, Cooranbong, Condobolin, Corrimal, Corowa, Currawarna, Dudauman, Eurimbla, Ganmain, Goonellabah, Goolagong, Gunnedah, Gundagai, Gulgong, Guyra, Greta, Jindera, Jindalee, Jerilderie, Kurri Kurri, Katoomba, Mittagong, Murwillumbah, Mulwala, Mooree, Mullamuddy, Mudgee, Mullumbimby, Mandurama, Narrandera, Narrabri, Nowra, Nundle, Queanbeyan, Terrigal, Thirroul, Terara, Taree, Tumut, Toowoon, Temora, Walgett, Wee Waa, Woy Woy, Wagga Wagga, Wilcannia, Walla Walla, Warrawong, Woonona, Wiangarie, Wyalong and Yass. Some were places everyone knew; others were so small and remote the Centres had never heard of them before. In 1942, however, the Post Offices were kept busy shuffling mail between them and St John headquarters.[7]

The Centres in the other, smaller, States were doing similar record business, and in some cases were doing even better on a proportional basis than New South Wales and Victoria. The Western Australian Annual Report for 1940, was proud—with good reason—to observe that 'prior to the year under review the greatest number of classes instructed in any previous year [1915] was 143; this year the number increased to 301'. The following year the Centre felt its resources had been 'severely taxed' in handling a new record, 415 classes, unaware that the next year, 1942, would find it accommodating 636 classes. The South Australia Centre, too, recorded an enormous upsurge in its training programmes as civilians realized that some first aid knowledge and skill might be useful, and could indeed save the life of a loved one, if the same happened to Adelaide as had just happened further north in Darwin.[8]

The following table indicates something of the effect the Darwin bombing and fear of an imminent Japanese invasion had in making people rush off to take a course in first aid. The increase ranged from ninefold in S.A. to a remarkable twenty-fivefold in W.A.

Numbers of pupils instructed by St John Ambulance Association, 1938-42

	New South Wales	Victoria	South Australia	Western Australia
1938	4 235	3 505	1 201	573
1939	11 822	14 759	988	2 388
1940	24 188	22 673	8 981	6 139
1941	26 091	24 375	4 969	9 951
1942	47 275	43 496	5 572	14 285

But perhaps a more eloquent testimony to Australians' anxiety about the destruction threatening to rain upon them in the grim months of 1942 were the actual proportions of the citizens of each State who came to St John for training. In every State for which there are records the ratio of trainees to local population in every year of the crisis was better than in the best years of World War I. Thus, in Western Australia, where the best ratio of any Australian State had been achieved in 1915, with one first aider trained for every 123 citizens, the proportion in 1942 was one for thirty-two. This table shows what proportion of the inhabitants of each State underwent training:

Ratio of pupils in St John Ambulance classes to State populations, 1915 and 1938-42

	New South Wales	Victoria	South Australia	Western Australia	The four States combined
1915	1:182	1:142	1:228	1:123	1:164
1938	1:644	1:536	1:493	1:809	1:533
1939	1:223	1:128	1:602	1:196	1:191
1940	1:115	1:84	1:66	1:77	1:93
1941	1:108	1:79	1:121	1:47	1:89
1942	1:60	1:45	1:110	1:32	1:53

With the training that subsequently took place in each State in the remaining years of the war, 1943-45, there was by the end of the war a veritable multitude of first aiders. A total of some 344,000 people underwent St John Ambulance training in the above four States 1939-45, a ratio of roughly one in sixteen or seventeen of their combined populations by the end of the war. This was the closest the organization has ever come in Australia towards the goal that remains forever out of reach—that of having a first aider in every home. Remembering that Australia-wide the ratio in the early 1980s was about 1:164, the wartime accomplishment represented a prodigious effort by the Association in every State.[9]

How was such an achievement possible? First and foremost it arose from the dedication of St John members of all ranks to the work of their

Order, and to the aid of their nation in its time of peril. Because of the challenge war presented, people who might otherwise have made only a nominal commitment to either toiled devotedly on year after year. In Adelaide, for example, people who would not normally have become involved in St John's teaching programmes—the most senior and most junior of Brigade members, and various paramedics outside St John—pitched in to help. The Lady Superintendent of the Brigade in South Australia, Mrs S. L. Dawkins (wife of the current Commissioner) wrote a report in 1944 which hinted at how the St John organization there coped with the tidal wave of pupils:

> In 1940 after France fell and England was fighting alone, the matter became urgent. We had to have more nurses immediately, owing to the increased work the war was entailing on the faithful and loyal few . . . We organized large classes in the Liberal Club Hall, our former headquarters having been taken over by the Railway Department, which needed more accommodation. The Commissioner lectured to the first class . . . Lady District Officer G. Jude, with the help of Lady Superintendent M. Burns and other Superintendents, undertook to demonstrate the practical work . . . When the Japanese entered the war, it was expected that any part of Australia might be bombed . . . We approached Matron Daw, then Matron of the Royal Adelaide Hospital . . . [and] she approached a number of the Sisters of the Hospital who consented to draw up a syllabus of lectures . . . and see that the work was carried out. Other trained nurses joined us, and between them not only were the lectures given, but the examinations at their close were also undertaken. We owe a great deal to the selfless work of these busy women who gave up many hours of time to what normally would have been spent in rest and recreation. In the absence of numbers of our surgeons [away with the armed services] their help has been of the utmost importance.[10]

And so, whenever a suitable venue was available—in hospitals, city offices, school rooms, church vestries, scout halls, mechanics' institutes, public libraries, shire halls, masonic temples, government departments, retail stores, R.S.L. clubs, sporting pavilions, ware houses, the foyers of banks and insurance companies, the lodges of friendly societies, post offices and Army drill halls across South Australia and every other State—St John-accredited instructors and demonstrators diligently applied themselves to the task of equipping the public with basic medical skills that might save lives and spare suffering if the bombing were to proceed below Darwin.

The training of vast numbers was also possible because St John Ambulance was well organized and well prepared. The various Association Centres had long had a committed corps of teachers and examiners on call via their Honorary Instructors' Associations. Many of the instructors taught only occasional classes before the war, but as soon as danger threatened they were pressed into service to run class after class. Something of their devotion was evident in the tribute the 1940 Annual Report of the Victorian Centre paid them. The Report praised both the instructors' dedication and their efficient organization.

> Words cannot adequately express the gratitude of the Council to members of the Honorary Instructors' Association. They . . . have been the backbone of the Association's record year. With the base expansion of our classes extra demands have been made on their honorary services, and their response has been truly wonderful. It is not generally known that these men and women work in a voluntary capacity giving many nights to training citizens and in most cases at expense to themselves.[11]

As the war came nearer to Australia more and more of the instructors enlisted in the medical units of armed services, with the result that by 1940 Centres were having difficulty in locating qualified medical practitioners to teach and examine. It was at this stage that St John's Gate relaxed its former rigid ruling on the qualifications required of instructors and examiners, who up until then had to be qualified medical practitioners. In 1940 London advised that henceforth registered nurses and 'medallion' holders (i.e. people with a current Association certificate for a second re-examination) who had been recommended by a medical practitioner would be permitted to conduct classes and examinations. The New South Wales Centre alone could consequently sign up immediately a further 253 honorary instructors, who were then ready for the huge rush on classes the following year.[12]

Finally, the Association was able to handle vast intakes of pupils because it was efficient and experienced. The Centres were running a tried and tested programme of instruction as well suited to the needs and abilities of the lay public as anything else available. In most parts of Australia they had now had over half a century of practice in leading the public through their courses. They were recognized as the experts in the field, as a result of which the specialized agencies like the Red Cross, the VAD movement, the State and National Emergency Services, and their offshoots, the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) bodies, the police and the fire brigades, turned to them to train their own personnel. Many of the latter, having qualified themselves, returned to St John Ambulance to help to teach others. This productive co-operation between St John and other civil defence organizations had begun in the years before the war, and so when war did come the habits of team work were routine.[13]

Inevitably, once the Japanese avalanche was halted by the battles along the tail of New Guinea in the latter part of 1942, the frenzied activity within St John slowed too. As the public realized the crisis had passed, fewer felt the need to undergo training. During 1943 enrolments in Association classes dropped away, then continued to decline for the remainder of the war, until by the end of 1945 they were above the pre-war level. The graph opposite shows the trend.

The fall-off bothered the St John leadership in some States. Most understood that their recent successes had arisen from exceptional circumstances, and most appreciated that they had succeeded almost too well: their efforts had been so effective they had quickly saturated their

St John Ambulance Association: numbers of pupils trained in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, 1938-45

market. Despite that, many within the St John organizations continued to look back wistfully to the three or four years of peak activity. As time went on this period looked more and more like a 'golden age', a time of total commitment for all, when the public had been receptive, the workers willing and the authorities co-operative, a season when a great sense of unity and common purpose had strengthened both the institution and its individual members. Certainly it was a war that had brought out these qualities, but that was probably true of other voluntary agencies too; and the enthusiasm for the work of the Order which the war had generated among St John workers continued to inspire them and their successors for at least two decades of the peace which followed.[14]

2 *Wartime Work*

In the Second World War, as in the previous great war, St John people found themselves many jobs to be busy in, and once again the Brigade provided a means for doing so. The Brigade, like the Association, did record business, and underwent rapid expansion. It was in South Australia that the Brigade leadership commented on their changing fortunes: 'whereas six years ago the Brigade in South Australia was a small

band of 200 men and women, most of whom were in Adelaide', the Commissioner observed in March 1940, the District was now over six times that size, with many of the new members enrolled in recently-opened country Divisions—at Whyalla, Gladstone, Booleroo, Salisbury, Glossop, Port Pirie, Gawler, Lobethal, Berri, Glenelg and Riverton. Wartime membership of the District peaked at 1679, a figure not reached again until 1958. There was plenty for old and new members to do. In 1940, for example, in addition to the Royal Agricultural Show, 122 race meetings, 86 trotting meetings and duty at the beach casualty stations (where they treated 1478 cases)—the usual 'bread and butter'—Brigade members were on duty at 2306 separate functions, at which they treated 5686 casualties. Their total attendances for the year were 6633, not including those at 'special' fixtures such as their annual inspection and parade at Government House, when the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, reviewed them, the annual church parade in Adelaide Town Hall, a parade to welcome the new Governor, Sir Charles Barclay-Harvey, a concert of massed bands the South Australian Bands Association ran on the Wayville Oval to raise money for them, the annual first aid competitions in the Town Hall, and the annual cadet camp at Kingston Park.[15]

The Brigade was burgeoning in other States as well, and in most of them its membership doubled. In Western Australia Brigade strength increased from 946 in 41 Divisions at the end of 1938, to 1718 in 56 Divisions two years later. The case load was up too, from 3650 casualties in 1938 to 5953 in 1941, the latter not including voluntary service at the public hospitals and ARP first aid posts. In Tasmania, where a permanent Brigade establishment was something of only the last four years at the outset of the war, there were 559 Brigade members in 16 Divisions in 1942 (the first year for which figures are available). Within two years District strength has risen to 595 in 24 Divisions, which was the highest membership until 1962. In Victoria the tally of 1309 members in 36 Divisions in 1944 was not to be bettered until 1949.[16]

The New South Wales District saw the most spectacular growth. Brigade strength there went from 1901 in 72 Divisions in 1938 to the District's all-time high, 4200 in 135 Divisions, in 1945. The routine work of the premier District in just one wartime year, 1941, gives us some idea of the range of public duties the war turned up. Members began that year by attending an Australia Day parade of the National Emergency Services and an inspection by the State Governor, Lord Wakehurst (a future Deputy Prior for the Order in Australia and a Lord Prior of the Order worldwide), in Centennial Park, Sydney. In February there were three major public duties: a march through the city by men of HMAS *Sydney* on the 11th, a War Savings Certificate campaign and procession by the Militia Mechanized Forces on the 14th, and 'Greek Day' on the 28th, when members also assisted in the sale of buttons. March was busier. On

the 14th they did duty at the Hospital Saturday Fund Parade of Women's Organizations; on the 16th they were at the parade and inspection in Centennial Park of the Women's Australian Naval Service; on the 20th they attended the arrival of the American Naval Detachment and its subsequent march through the city, and were out again on the 23rd for its departure; and on the 28th they were presented for the march and recruiting campaign of the RAAF. In April they came out only once, for the Anzac Day dawn service and the procession later on, between the two of which they had 768 members on duty and treated 810 cases. There were three functions in May: an Army Day march through the city and War Loan campaign on the 7th; the 'Ginger Meggs' Billy Cart Derby in aid of the Kindergarten Union in Centennial Park on the 10th; and the Empire Day celebrations and Lord Mayor's Patriotic Appeal on the 24th, when members again helped with the sale of buttons as well as being on duty. Three events brought them out in June: a march by the Women's Australian Naval Service and kindred bodies on the 6th; a march through the city and recruiting campaign by Anti-Aircraft Units on the 10th; and the Red Cross appeal on the 20th, when they again helped sell buttons and badges. There were no major duties then until 5th September, when they were out for the 'V For Victory' military march and fund raising campaign. In October there were two main events: a War Loan and recruiting campaign with a march by senior military cadets on the 10th, and on the 29th another procession of mechanized military units in connection with the Commonwealth Loan campaign. They finished their year with three major duties in November—the Armistice Day celebrations on the 11th, an Army Day on the 21st during AIF Reinforcements Week, and Prisoners of War Day on the 28th. Their total number of cases for these twenty-two major duties was 1133, yet these represented but a tiny 1.28 per cent of all cases they treated that year. The year's tally was a staggering 88,125 cases handled by Brigade members around the State at a vast number of patriotic, sporting, fund raising and social gatherings. Moreover, 1941 was by no means a heavy year, for the year previously they had treated 109,237 cases and in the peak year, 1944, they handled 120,617. Another way of expressing this latter figure is to say that in 1944 they treated a quarter of the population of the State. The six wartime years thus found them working harder than they had ever done before or have since, for in that time they dealt with no fewer than 704,608 cases, which was no less than 57 per cent of all their case load for the twenty-year period 1925-45.[17]

It was this tireless commitment to the war effort by the Australian St John bodies that prompted the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, Sleeman, to express his pleasure to the Governor General, Lord Gowrie, in September 1940. He wrote about 'the heights of heroism to which the ordinary man, woman and child' in Britain were rising during the aerial bombardment of the Battle of Britain they were then ex-

periencing. The main burden of his letter, however, was praise for the Australian St John movement:

> I feel it is only right to let you know how gratified we are at St John's Gate with the magnificent work being done throughout Australia, in all its several States, by the Association and Brigade of our Order. Not only has the increase in strength been exceptionally good, but from all reports I have received the spirit of service and standard of efficiency have been equally fine.
> As head of our Order in Australia, and as its Governor General, I should be most grateful if you could find time to let those in charge of our work in all States know the deep satisfaction which we in England feel for the magnificent response of Australia in all the many aspects of the war effort.[18]

He was plainly pleased that his 1936 comments about the splendid Australian sense of commitment to Empire and to Order seemed visibly to have been verified.

The Chief Commissioner's reference to the Brigade's expansion, if not those about Australians' loyalty to Empire, were based on hard evidence he received via the annual returns and reports from the Districts 'Overseas'. The following table summarizes the Australian developments that had pleased him so much:

Brigade Membership, 1938-46

	New South Wales	Victoria	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	Total
1938	1901	*	720	946	*	3675†
1939	2413	*	839	1072	*	4324†
1940	2909	*	1209	1718	*	5836†
1941	3274	*	1322	1875	*	6471†
1942	3897	946	1551	1831	558	8783
1943	3927	1066	1679	1636	574	8882
1944	4104	1309	1629	1556	595	9190
1945	4200	1190	1439	1029	556	8414
1946	3900	1050	1667	920	340	7877

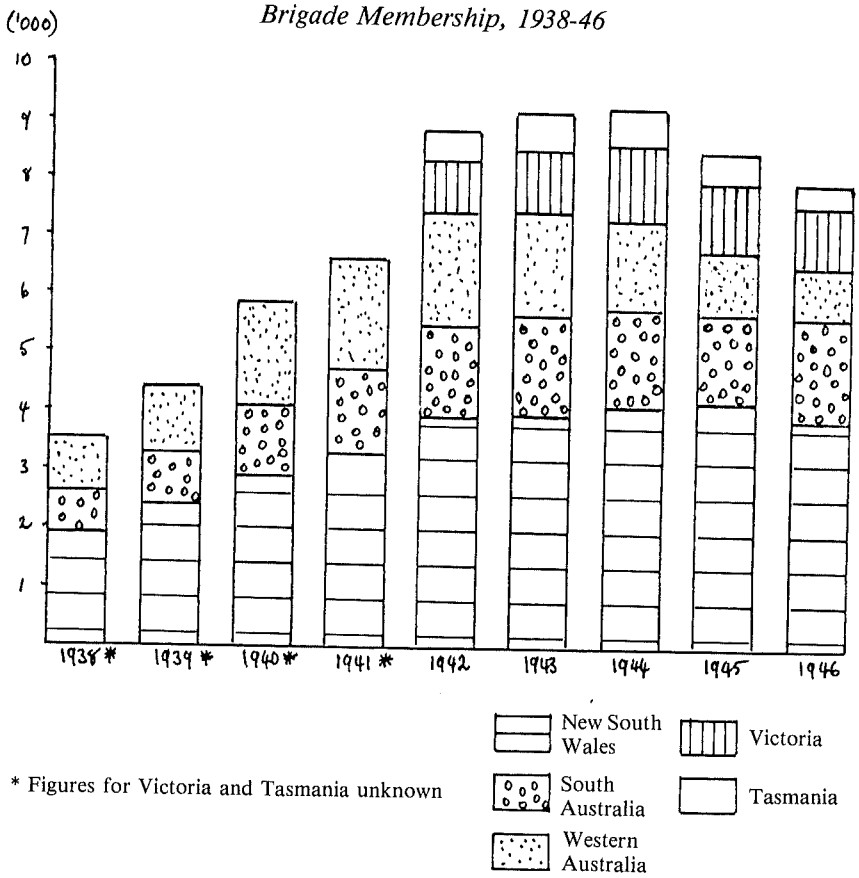
** Figures for Victoria and Tasmania unknown.*
† Totals exclude Victoria and Tasmania.

As we observed earlier of Association class sizes, there was an appreciable dropping off of the figures towards the end of the war (though South Australia was prompt off the mark in making its post-war recovery). This is presented in graph form opposite.

The drop in strength was to be expected. As Beryl Fegan, the historian of the Order in South Australia, commented about that State,

> Once the immediate threat of the invasion of Australia was over, the demand for first aid classes gradually eased and with it the need for Brigade members as instructors . . . At the same time those who had joined a division in the spirit of 'doing their bit' for the war effort now slackened their efforts and either resigned or, more frequently, attended less regularly and became less 'efficient'. By 1944 . . . many divisions were 'inefficient', especially in the country.[19]

Brigade Membership, 1938-46



* Figures for Victoria and Tasmania unknown

At the same time, those who remained 'efficient' (i.e., who met the minimum requirements for membership by passing the annual re-examinations and by attending the requisite number of parades, drills and inspections—in other words those who remained active) were kept busy. Despite the fall off in their numbers the Brigade was now much better known to the public, and so 'as life began to return to normal the demand for St John personnel to attend the sports, picnics etc. of even quite small organizations grew'.[20]

Apart from their normal public duties at public processions and sporting meetings and attendance at the Divisional gatherings necessary to maintain efficiency, Brigade members during the war found themselves involved in other special activities occasioned by wartime conditions. Firstly, there was the St John commitment to the Air Raid Precaution organization, sponsored (according to the State concerned) by State and National Emergency Services and State Defence Councils. The Association Centre in each State was the first aid teaching agency for the ARP wardens; but in addition to that particular function many St John people

also helped the ARP authorities by staffing their official first aid posts. In Western Australia, for example, the ARP scheme included the establishment of a system of casualty stations throughout the populated parts of the State near sites deemed vulnerable to air attack. The Brigade there was allotted a quota of these posts, and especially during the tense months of 1942 Brigade members spent countless hours on duty in sandbagged redoubts across the State, awaiting the rumble of approaching Japanese aeroplanes. 'Thus the Brigade in this District is ready and prepared to play its part in assisting the Empire against aggression', the Commissioner, J. R. Donaldson, proudly observed.[21]

In Victoria there was a similar link betwen the ARP organization and St John, both in training the ARP ambulance orderlies and in staffing the ARP first aid posts, and also in staging ARP demonstrations around the State.* In South Australia the Brigade had a strong link with the State Defence Council (which ran the ARP system there). All male Brigade members there were issued with a 'civil defence' badge and worked for the Air Raid Casualty Service. In turn their numbers swelled as ARCS men they had helped to train went on to enrol in the Brigade too. In New South Wales the Brigade had been training ARP personnel for the National Emergency Service since 1936, and as soon as war broke out it assigned 200 instructors from its own ranks to train the influx of civilians required in ARP first aid stations. As well as this the Brigade selected 450 men from the Ambulance Divisions to assist the ARP Wardens attached to municipal councils, while nine Corps Officers were appointed to be the 'Commandants' of the nine major first aid posts the ARP set up in the City of Sydney.[22]

As well as ARP work there was the Brigade's involvement in the VAD movement. As we saw above, Brigade Divisions had re-affiliated with the movement as VA detachments once the latter began re-forming in the early 1930s; and the Association, too, had become heavily committed in training prospective VAD members. Once the war began VAD women were given the chance of working in the hospitals set up to cater to the armed services; and in each State Brigade women were among the VAD members invited to join the staff of these for the duration of the war. As the military hospitals were becoming established during 1940 there was 'a steady demand for full time VAD members', who received their further training at the major metropolitan hospitals. In Victoria the St John bodies felt that a great honour had been accorded their Order when Col.

* Author's personal note: My father was an Association-trained ARP ambulance orderly in Brighton, our home suburb in Melbourne. He was one of about thirty local citizens organized into a team by our Air Raid Warden, an old Brigade man appointed by the Brighton City Council. Under the Warden's direction they drilled once a week in the local recreation hall, manned a sandbagged first aid post behind the Town Hall, and publicly staged occasional simulated bombing attacks and rescue operations—all so impressive for a five year older that it remains one of my main memories of the war.

J. A. H. Sherwin, jointly president of the Association Centre council and District Surgeon of the Brigade (he was later to be Commissioner, 1945-51), was appointed commanding officer of the State's major military hospital at Heidelberg, where a number of Brigade members were working as VAD staff.

The Victorians were also proud that they had met every request made of them for full-time VAD workers, and that a number of those they had supplied were in a unit sent to North Africa with the Ninth Division of the AIF. (This unit subsequently spent seventeen months on active service, after which they were recalled to Australia, absorbed within the Australian Army Medical Women's Service, and re-posted to New Guinea—but not before the Association and Brigade in Victoria had treated them to a Welcome Home party at Government House, presided over by the Governor, Sir Winston Dugan). The New South Wales District, on the other hand, saw cause for pride in the fact that their Assistant Commissioner, Dr Wilfred Vickers, was the State Controller of the VAD movement, that the Commissioner, Poate, and the Lady District Superintendent, the formidable Dr Frances McKay, were members of the VAD Council, that eleven members of Nursing Divisions were serving full time with VA units in overseas postings or on hospital ships, and that another fifty-four were in general hospitals or the blood transfusion service.[23]

The VAD movement underwent a shake-up in September 1941 when the Army reorganized it. As a result it became a movement for women only, with the male VA units being deregistered and handed over to the State and National Emergency Services for ARP duties. A further policy change resulted in VA units no longer being taken into the Army as discrete detachments; instead the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS) took over their function. Henceforth women from the VAD going into the Army full time generally joined the AAMWS. The assumption of their role by the AAMWS was not to the liking of some VAD members. Although the Brigade leadership could put a brave face on it, taking the view that the VAD movement was still the main recruiting ground for the AAMWS, there were murmurs of discontent among the rank and file, some of whom felt they had been left with only residual functions. They were nevertheless proud of being volunteers and of doing their bit to help the war effort. Something of their pride was obvious in a marching song Perth VAD women used to sing lustily, especially when they went on training exercises or into camp at the Swanbourne Army Base. It went to the tune of 'The old grey mare':

We don't want to ride with the Cavalry,
March with the Infantry,
Fight with the Army,
We don't want to sail with the Navy,
We are the V.A.D's.

There was a defiant edge to it, and if any of the Army 'Brass' ever heard it they might have guessed what the women thought of the way their movement has been shunted around.[24]

Outside the Army, if not within, the VAD movement remained in healthy existence. It continued on for the rest of the war and for several years beyond, until it just petered out, having outlived its usefulness. An impression of what life in a VAD unit was like can be gained from a short account of the work of the South Australian Nursing Divisions of the Brigade in their VAD capacity. The author, Vi Watson, the wartime Lady District Officer, recalled that

> Prior to World War II—maybe in 1937—Dr H. H. E. Russell visited the nursing division of St John and asked that we join Red Cross as a body and form a VA Detachment. We were told that we could wear our St John uniform; that the St John exams would count towards efficiency as would our inspections, but that in the event of war we could be called up, either for home or overseas duties according to whether we had signed for mobile or immobile service . . .
> After other detachments were formed we had to get the blue uniform worn by the Red Cross VAD's and join in Red Cross inspections, reviews and competitions. Many Saturday afternoons were spent on the parade grounds doing drill.
> After the outbreak of war, St John nurses were given the task, if necessary, of manning decontamination centres, and it became necessary to decide which duties should have priority, civil or military. It was decided that members over 35 should do St John duties and those under that age would do VAD work whenever the two clashed.
> The German Club was taken over as headquarters and it became necessary for us to have meetings separate from the St John ones as we had to take examinations from the Red Cross first aid and home nursing books, which were at variance from the St John books in quite a number of the treatments.
> In addition we took courses in stretcher drill, hygiene and sanitation, chemical warfare, diet and food values, and were encouraged to sit for the Proficiency Medal after three years' service. This meant taking examinations in five subjects—first aid, home nursing, hygiene and sanitation (military), chemical warfare, and VAD organization. Qualifications for the Service Bar were the same as for the St John Service Medal—twelve years' efficient service.
> We did hospital duties to gain experience in ward work, as against the St John casualty work. Other duties were undertaken at the Woodside Camp for soldiers, such as helping with innoculations and general nursing duties.
> Although No. 400 Detachment continued to meet on Friday evenings for several years after World War II, duties gradually ceased except for assisting with the immunization of children at local councils, and in the examination of Legacy children by medical officers.
> There was no official disbandment, but we just seemed to be ignored with no instructions coming through from Red Cross, so members felt it futile to continue meeting.
> Materials and equipment went to St John on permanent loan. Members continued to assist with the immunization of children but gradually brought St John members into this, and wore St John uniforms themselves for this duty.[25]

It was perhaps a sad oversight that the VAD units were allowed to wither away like this, without much official recognition from either Red Cross

65 Members of the Australian Army Medical Women's Service (AAMWS) and the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs), Sydney, 1945

or government of the effort they had made. Some VAD members did receive citations thanking them for their labours: in New South Wales, for example, 226 members of the Brigade Nursing Divisions received 'Joint War Organization certificates' for voluntary work, and another eighteen received the coveted 'Chief Commandant's Card'—the civilian's equivalent of a 'mentioned in despatches'.[26] Forty years on, however, these now-yellowing mementos lack the lustre with which the military decorations from the same war still shine.

In addition to supporting the ARP and VAD organizations, the St John bodies in each State believed they were making a notable contribution to the war effort through those of their members who joined the armed services, particularly when this was in one of the medical units. The numbers of those who enlisted appear to have been considerable. In Western Australia by 1941, for instance, the Commissioner, Donaldson, had gone into the Army with the rank of colonel; one of his District Officers, Dr A. L. Dawkins (son of the Commissioner of the South Australian District) had enlisted as a major; and 274 other Brigade members had also joined up—in all about 16 per cent, or one in six of the District strength. The ranks had thinned out so much as a result that three Divisions—Geraldton Nursing and Busselton and Southern Cross Ambulance—were forced to go into recess. In South Australia, too, the war caused problems for depleted divisions. There, Fegan has written,

> the war brought new members, but also took others for military service or Civil Defence work. In December 1939 the Thebarton and Torrensville division reported that it only had five members to carry out the public duties, the majority of their members being in military camps . . .

> [Some men were] called up for service with the Civil Construction Corps. It was then decided to notify the Allied Works Council of these Brigade men, asking that they be recognised as first aiders on arrival at Alice Springs. The AWC expressed thanks to the Brigade for notifying them of these men, as many gangs had been formed and were working hundreds of miles away from medical help.[27]

In New South Wales by the end of the war 560 male Brigade members had enlisted (25 in the RAN, 4 in the Merchant Navy, 132 in the RAAF and 399 in the AMF), while 123 female members had (7 in the WRANS, 2 in the Land Army, 13 in the AWAS, 13 in the WAAF and 88 in the AAMWS). The total in the various services from the New South Wales District was thus 673, or—as in Western Australia—about a sixth of the membership. Sixteen of them lost their lives.[28]

How many members from other Districts enlisted is unknown. In Victoria, however, it was a matter of some pride that Maj.-Gen. Downes, Brigade Commissioner since 1921, was Director-General of Army Medical Services; that the District Surgeon, Sherwin (who succeeded Downes as Commissioner when the latter was killed in a 'plane crash off the Queensland coast in March 1945), was—as we have seen—the commander of the Heidelberg military hospital; and that Brig. W. W. S. Johnston (later Sir William Johnston, successor to Sherwin as Victorian Commissioner, and later Chief Commissioner for Australia) was Deputy Director of Army Medical Services. South Australians were similarly pleased that their Assistant Commissioner, S. R. Burston, held high Army rank. On Downes' death he became Director-General of Army Medical Services, and—within the Brigade—also succeeded Dawkins as South Australian Commissioner in 1945, and in 1947 succeeded him again as Chief Commissioner for Australia. Another man from whom Victorians in particular felt some reflected glory was a member of the council of the Victorian Centre, Sir Thomas Blamey, an Officer of the Order, who took leave of absence from the council in 1939 to proceed overseas as General Officer Commanding the 2nd AIF.[29]

Among the St John personnel who enlisted were some who found their way into Prisoner Of War camps. When the war ended and the surviving POW's returned home, details of what some of the Brigade men among them had done began emerging. One of the POW's in the Changi camp at Singapore was Dr A. Home, Divisional Surgeon to the Albany Nursing Division in Western Australia. In Changi he ran at least one first aid class for fellow prisoners. Both teaching and examination proceeded 'under dangerous and difficult conditions'. The examination results eventually reached the New South Wales Centre by a long and circuitous route. At the end of the war the Centre tracked down the surviving graduates from Home's class and presented them with their certificates. The survivors 'assured [the Centre] that this POW class was the means of saving many lives, particularly on the notorious railway', during the construction of which, presumably, Home's trainees often used first aid.[30]

First aid training under St John auspices also took place among allied POW's in camps in Germany and Poland. One of those to organize classes there was Sgt. Thomas K. Loch of the Sixth Division AIF, previously with the Willoughby Ambulance Division in Sydney, who arranged St John Ambulance training for fellow prisoners at the Stalag XXaV camp near Thorn, south of Danzig (Gdansk) in what is now Poland. One of his pupils was Harry Roe, a Yorkshireman captured by the Germans at Dunkirk in May 1940. Roe, who subsequently migrated to Australia and settled in Canberra, later recalled that, when Loch arrived in Stalag XXaV in about 1942, morale among the mainly British POW's there was very low: they spent much time lounging around moping and worrying about those at home. Various individual prisoners tried raising the spirits of those around them, leading community singing, putting on stage shows, boxing tournaments, and first aid classes. The last of these were not very successful until Loch turned up. Not long after his arrival he discovered Roe whiling away the time with a copy of Esther Greisheimer's *Physiology and Anatomy*, which had come in a parcel sent by the YMCA War Prisoners' Aid body in Geneva. Loch borrowed the textbook and developed a course in first aid from it, and Roe drew posters and charts for him based on diagrams in Greisheimer. He then persuaded a Royal Army Medical Corps captain, A. O. S. Irwin, to teach the class he had rounded up. He acted as demonstrator himself, and found another RAMC officer, Lt.-Col. J. C. McKay, to examine his pupils. Roe himself became one of the pupils, and later took the home nursing course Loch subsequently drew up and had taught by G. H. Thomson, a major in the New Zealand Army Medical Corps. Loch's programmes brightened POW's lives and proved so popular he was kept busy organizing one after another of them. The graduates from them received certificates issued by the 'Prisoner of War Camp (Germany) Branch' of the St John Ambulance Association of Great Britain. Forty years later Roe's 1943 first aid and home nursing certificates did not take long to appear from among his wartime mementos once he began recalling his three years in Stalag XXaV.[31]

Back in Australia much St John effort went into fund raising, both for the organization's own expanded duties and for the war effort generally. Tin Hat appeals, Red Cross appeals, stalls to raise money for causes like the War Victims' Fund, raffles to help finance the military hospitals, and participation in the campaigns and demonstrations to promote War Savings Certificates, Commonwealth Loans and Liberty Loans took up the spare time of many St John members. In the New South Wales District one of the main fund raising ventures was the Brigade War Effort Fund to raise finance and equipment for the medical units of the forces. By September 1941 Brigade members there had raised £544, which was used to provide two urgently needed mobile X-Ray units for Army hospitals overseas. The fund continued for another year or so, providing another

£434, which helped to buy six refrigerators for RAAF medical units and laboratory equipment for the RAN. In 1944 the New South Wales District and Centre then combined to run the first general appeal for St John funds the organization in that State had ever made. They raised £1527 through selling buttons for a St John Ambulance Day. In Victoria the major fund raising effort was the Order of St John Appeal, for which Association and Brigade combined in 1941 to raise £6000 to build and equip a recreation hall at the Heidelberg military hospital. The appeal ran over three years and by September 1944 had raised £11,175. The hall, known as 'the St John theatre', was completed during 1943 and officially opened by the Governor, Sir Winston Dugan, in July 1944. In the other States, too, fund raising took much time even though the activities involved were on a lesser scale than this. Brigade Divisions still had to keep their first aid cabinets stocked, and that was expensive when the expansion in their public duties meant measuring the casualties treated in multiples of a thousand.[32]

Even though Allied advances during 1944 and 45 meant a lessening of St John activity, the actual ending of the war in August 1945 gave the Brigade one of its longest public duties for the entire six-year war period. The surrender of the Japanese, and the victory celebrations that followed in every city, town and village throughout the land, produced a spate of casualties for Brigade members to treat as they would not have again for nearly a decade—until the Royal Tour of 1954.

The victory celebrations were, to say the least, boisterous. In Sydney, where they were perhaps the most abandoned, crowds began congregating in Martin Place at about 4.00 p.m. on Tuesday 14th, when a BBC broadcast relayed to Australia announced that a Japanese declaration of surrender was only hours away. Jubilant workers in surrounding offices began shredding their telephone books and showering the throng below with 'confetti'. They had a long wait ahead of them, for it was not until 7.00 a.m. next day, Wednesday 15th, Sydney time (only 4.00 p.m. on the 14th in Washington), that the American government learnt that the Japanese had accepted their terms for surrender. Later that day Emperor Hirohito broadcast news of the surrender to his subjects shortly after which the Australian Prime Minister, J. B. Chifley, spoke to *his* countrymen over ABC radio. Chifley's words were solemn and reflective:

> Fellow citizens, the war is over . . . At this moment, let us offer thanks to God . . . Let us remember those whose lives were given that we may enjoy this glorious moment and may look forward to a peace which they have won for us . . . We owe, too, a great debt to those men and women who performed miracles of production, in secondary and primary industries, so that the battle of supply could be won . . . In your name I offer to the leaders of the United Nations our congratulations and thanks. . . . And now our men and women will come home; our fighting men with battle honours thick upon them from every theatre of war. Australians stopped the Japanese in their drive south . . . They are coming home to a peace which has to be won . . . In the name of the

> Commonwealth Government, I invite you to join in the thanksgiving services arranged for, truly, this is a time to give thanks to God and to those men against whose sacrifice for us there is no comparison.[33]

Some citizens of Sydney took him at his word and actually gave thanks for their delivery, and many remembered their dead by placing tiny crosses around the sole remaining Flanders poplar at the Cenotaph in Martin Place. But for countless thousands the occasion soon degenerated into an all out rort.

Up the hill in King's Cross a woman was injured when a hit-run motorist knocked her down. There, too, a man was badly lacerated when the crush of the crowd pushed him through a shop window. It was also in King's Cross that many young women began swapping clothes with American sailors. One sailor became angry when he kissed another sailor he mistook for a woman and had to be dragged off by his mates to prevent a brawl.[34]

The bacchanalia continued all that night and all the next day, Thursday 16th. The Victory Parade through the city streets that afternoon interrupted it for a while. But the revelry started up again later and only petered out towards midnight, as Sydney slowly drifted home to bed and the peace their Prime Minister said they had to work for.[36]

The other capital cities had been the scene of similar jubilation, though on a lesser scale. In Melbourne, for instance, some 400,000 people crammed into the streets between the Town Hall and Post Office. The red, white and blue bunting was out, and the Union Jack, the Stars and Stripes or Australia's own part-British ensign flew from every flagstaff. The souvenir sellers made a fortune from miniature flags, patriotic badges, plastic whirligigs, whistles, streamers and various other brightly coloured geegaws. Amidst it all there was almost endless work for Brigade members, minding lost children, reviving the cases of fainting, bandaging and plastering the cuts and blisters, soothing the damaged pride of those who came off the worse for brawls, placing out of harm's way the utterly inebriated, and calming down the hysterical. In the end they lost count of their cases treated. In Sydney, where 525 Brigade members were on duty at various points around the city, the Brigade handled 1019 recorded cases in connection with the Victory Parade alone, and countless thousands in the revelry before and after. It was much the same all over Australia.[36]

Life, of course, went on; and normal conditions gradually returned as the troops came home, shed their uniforms and went back to work or study. Normal times came back for St John as well, as enrolments in Association classes dropped back nearer the 1938 levels, and as the inefficient fell away from the Brigade. Herein lay a major postwar challenge for the St John bodies everywhere—to retain the ground they had won during the war, to ensure that they held on to the public support they had earned. In attempting to do so, as we will shortly see, they had the aid of

a new St John body, the Commandery or federal structure they had been working towards during the 1930s.

3 *Relations with the Red Cross and the visit by Lady Mountbatten*

One of the bonuses the Australian St John bodies felt the war had brought them was a month-long tour of the country in March and April 1946 by Edwina, Lady Louis Mountbatten, Viscountess of Burma. She came as the emissary of the British Joint War Organization, the body in which British Red Cross and the Order of St John in Britain combined in the period 1939-47 to co-ordinate their contributions to the war effort. Her purpose in coming was much the same as that of the two notable tourists from St John's Gate who had preceded her, Sir John Hewett and Sir James Sleeman, eighteen and ten years previously. She had to inspect St John and Red Cross establishments, see what progress they had made during the war, resolve any difficulties that might have arisen, and report back to London on any problems she might find. She was well qualified to do so, being a seasoned traveller on such tours of inspection: since 1944 she had undertaken inspections of Red Cross establishments in France, Belgium, Germany, South East Asia, China, Southern Europe and the Middle East, and her trip to Australia was part of a longer tour taking in the Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia) and New Zealand in addition to her visits to each Australian State.[37]

Her tour of Australia was arranged and managed jointly by St John, the Red Cross and the Australian Army Medical Corps. The tour began in Victoria, proceeded through all States and the Northern Territory, and finished in Darwin. It was, like Hewett's and Sleemen's, exhaustive and exhausting, and took her through a hectic series of dinners, receptions, visits to hospitals and homes, meetings with St John, Red Cross and AAMC officials, parades and inspections, conferences and consultations, and – because she was of the Royal Family – much lionizing. In Victoria, for example, she visited the Heidelberg Military Hospital for an inspection of the 'St John Theatre' and discussions with the commandant, Sherwin, and was met by a guard of honour of the Brigade's Ambulance and Nursing Divisions. The council of the Association Centre gave her a formal dinner, immediately after which she attended a reception given her by 250 members of the Brigade's Nursing and Cadet Divisions and VAD units. She made it her business to meet and speak individually with everyone present, thus winning at least 250 hearts in Victoria. In Hobart she inspected the Red Cross Convalescent Home at Claremont, where the Nursing Divisions and VADs again formed a guard of honour; she attended a reception at Government House attended by the State's leading citizens as well as by St John and Red Cross personnel; and she visited the military hospital at Campbelltown, where she met a large number of Brigade members who were working there voluntarily. And, once again,

everywhere she went she managed to speak individually with every Brigade member present.[38]

From Hobart she flew to Brisbane, where there were visits to the QATB headquarters and the VAD Club, a luncheon at Lennon's Hotel with the executives of Queensland Red Cross and the St John Ambulance Association, and a public meeting with many speeches of welcome at the City Hall. In Sydney there was a grand parade of Brigade Ambulance, Nursing and Cadet Divisions in the Domain, a dinner tendered by members of the nursing Divisions, and an inspection of the recently acquired St John House. The highlight of the visit to Sydney, as far as local Brigade members were concerned, however, was the Centuries Pageant they staged in her honour at the Assembly Hall. This depicted the history of the Order from the Crusaders to modern times. Members of the Ashfield Division provided the cast. Lady Mountbatten was obviously delighted with it, and came on stage to say so—winning further friends for herself, and delighting her audience in turn. In South Australia, the next stop, the major function was a joint parade of fifteen hundred Brigade and Red Cross personnel, all of whom she inspected. The next day in Perth there was another parade, including contingents that had travelled in from as far afield as Bunbury and Boulder, and a conference with Red Cross and St John delegates at the proud new citadel of the Order in Western Australia, St John House in Wellington Street. After a stopover in Darwin she flew off to the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya to round off her tour by reviewing Red Cross establishments there, and thus to bring Red Cross and St John headquarters in London up to date with how their respective organizations far to the 'East of Suez' were faring in the wake of the war.[39]

The St John bodies in Australia saw immediate benefits from the Mountbatten visitation. Lady Mountbatten was able to report to St John's Gate something of the great frustration St John bodies in Australia and New Zealand were feeling over the first aid text book, which in their opinion was of limited use in their countries because it was written for British conditions and contingencies. St John's Gate remained inflexibly opposed to the notion of separate editions of the text book emanating from the Dominions; but perhaps there was a cumulative effect here, and if the Order in Britain heard from one visitor to the Dominions after another that the issue of the manual for instruction was causing resentment abroad, then perhaps there was eventually a chance that the Branches of St John in the Dominions would get what they wanted. A more immediate by-product of her visit, and one of great importance to Australians in St John, was the upgrading of their national body from Commandery to Priory status. On her return to London Lady Mountbatten argued forcefully with the St John's Gate establishment that *all* the Dominions should be accorded that honour—that the Commanderies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand should be made

Priories forthwith, and that Western Australia should become a Commandery within an Australian Priory. This was a view she had heard expressed frequently in Australia, but it was perhaps the urgency that she gave the issue on her return to London that clinched the decision St John's Gate soon took to give the Australians what they wanted. They got it before the year was out, as we will see in the following section. But if someone of her prestige had not been on hand to speak out for the Australians the decision might have taken years to reach. That would have meant incalculable frustration around the St John branches in Australia, with a possible withering away of membership and effort as a result.[40]

Those who met Lady Mountbatten remember her with evident pleasure. Like Sleeman and Hewett she was accorded great respect as the delegate from far off St John's Gate; but there was also a human warmth about her, an informality, a lack of severity, that won her the affection of Australians. When she returned to Australia on a second visit a decade later in 1956 those who had met her the time before welcomed her back with unfeigned delight. If, however, her visit was partly intended to cement the bonds between the Australian Branches of St John and the Red Cross, then that part of its purpose was unproductive.

In many respects Red Cross and St John were kindred organizations. Both Red Cross and St John in its modern form had grown out of the bloodshed and suffering that were by-products of the mechanization of warfare during the nineteenth century. Both served the same humanitarian ideal, and both were inspired by the same Christian virtues. In wartime, if not in peacetime, they also had similar work to do, which inevitably raised questions of precedence: in a military hospital, for instance, who was to be in charge of the voluntary workers—Red Cross or St John? Then there was the issue of the first aid and nursing manuals they used, and the medical procedure they followed: which organization spoke with the more authority? There was also the matter of the slender dollar available to charity: which of the two bodies would succeed in extracting most cents from it? If these were not enough to stimulate competition between them there was also the vexed problem of nationalities. Ultimately all St John bodies around the world owed allegiance to their Grand Prior and Sovereign Head; and so, at a time when there still was an Empire, St John Ambulance was British, that is coterminous with Britain's dominions and possessions. Red Cross, on the other hand, was answerable to the headquarters of the International Red Cross in Geneva, and though the organization might be putatively supranational the Swiss influence on its directions and policies was undeniable. These factors made for an uneasy relationship between St John and Red Cross in Australia.

In Britain the two bodies buried their differences for the duration of the war, coming together in a Joint War Organization that endured from

66 Edwina, Lady Mountbatten toasts members of the St John Ambulance Brigade and the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachments in Sydney, April 1946. In the front row second from right is Dr Katie Ardill Brice, District Officer of the Brigade in New South Wales and a later chairwoman of the Association Centre in Sydney. On her right is Dr Frances Mckay, 'Lady' Superintendent of the Brigade in New South Wales and later Chief Superintendent (Nursing) of the Brigade in Australia.

1939 until 1947. This both proved a fairly satisfactory means of eliminating the worst aspects of the competition between them, and for co-ordinating their efforts towards an allied victory.[41] Similar joint bodies also combined the efforts of St John and Red Cross in New Zealand and India, but in Australia only fitful attempts were made to harness them together. Australia presented problems for such a partnership because of the fragmentary nature of the body politic: since St John, like the Commonwealth, was an entity consisting of separate fractions, action on a national scale was problematic. When the war began St John was still two years away from the creation of its own federal body, the Commandery, and so it was perhaps too much to expect that it could enter into a national partnership with Red Cross. In New South Wales St John and Red Cross talked of co-operating closely. The Centre there boasted that it maintained 'the best of friendship' with the local Red Cross branch, and reported to its members that its chairman, Dr Athol Mobbs, was making 'strenuous efforts . . . to put in motion machinery for the establishment of a Joint Council in this State, and it is hoped that at a future date some mutual and satisfactory arrangement may be agreed on' with Red Cross. Urged on by the General Secretary of the St

John Ambulance Association in London, Mobbs held further discussions with the chairman of the Red Cross Society in New South Wales in 1940. But although the Annual Report of his Centre alluded to the fact that 'cordial relations still remain with Red Cross', the proposed Joint Council came no closer.[42]

1942. Two years later, in 1942, the recently formed St John Commandery for Australia took the issue up, and henceforth the matter was one for the Commandery rather than individual State Branches of St John. At its second meeting, in August 1942, the Commandery Council discussed the question of a joint organization with Red Cross. They resolved to form a special committee to confer with Red Cross and to draw up proposals for each side to consider. This committee, led by Hugh Poate (recently elevated from the position of Commissioner of the Brigade in New South Wales to that of Commandery Lieutenant), met that very afternoon and produced its proposals, which it then forwarded to the Secretary General of the Australian Red Cross. The letter containing the proposals said,

> The desirability of conversations to ensure mutual support for common objectives and to prevent overlapping [has been] in the minds of members of the Order in Australia. The two bodies have much in common. Both are concerned with the prevention and mitigation of human suffering in peace and in war. Enormous and increasing demands are being made upon the Red Cross Society in fulfilment of its statutory obligations. The Order of St John feels it might help to share the burden imposed by war and sees a useful field of further co-operation in the problems of reconstruction which will arrive after the war. It is suggested that conversations should take place between three delegates of the Australian Red Cross Society and three of the Order of St John on ways and means of co-operation between the two bodies.[43]

The Red Cross agreed to these suggestions, and three of their representatives duly met three from St John at Government House, Melbourne, with the Governor, Sir Winston Dugan, in the chair. As a result of this meeting the parties agreed to form a Central Standing Committee of the two organizations 'to co-ordinate the respective activities towards common objectives'.[44]

The committee they formed soon began calling itself the 'Joint Federal Council of the Order of St John and Australian Red Cross Society'. It met for the first time in February 1943, again at Government House, Melbourne. It decided that each State should set up a committee of three from each organization to meet to discuss means of co-ordinating the activities of their respective State bodies. Differences between St John and Red Cross emerged at this meeting. The St John representatives were keen for the Joint Federal council to advise Commonwealth and State governments on post-war reconstruction, but the Red Cross delegates had doubts about doing so. Despite such differences they all went back to their States, and within four months co-ordinating sub-committees had been appointed for each State. Mobbs reported to the Commandery Chapter meeting in Sydney in June 1943 that the New South Wales sub-

committee had met and cleared up several matters. But after that little more seemed to happen, and the Joint Federal Council is not mentioned again anywhere in either Commandery, Association or Brigade records.[45]

What had happened to so limit the achievements of this attempt at togetherness? In the first place the Red Cross seems to have been a reluctant partner. St John had made all the overtures, and though the Red Cross representatives dutifully attended the requisite meetings they possibly did so under heavy pressure from their affiliates in the British Red Cross – responding in much the same way as St John had done to the influence of St John's Gate. Then as the war rolled on towards the allied victory through 1944 and 45, the national emergency eased, making a combined approach less crucial. Moreover, towards the end of the war the Red Cross in Britain and in Geneva began reappraising its links with kindred organizations like St John. Throughout the war the British St John organization, by virtue of the fraternal bond with Red Cross in the Joint War Organization, had styled itself in its literature and on its certificates as 'one of the Red Cross Organizations of Great Britain'. But now, with the war moving towards its dénouement, the Red Cross establishment seemed to wish to distance itself from its non-Red Cross affiliates. At the end of the war the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies held a conference in Geneva which resulted in a number of resolutions making this clear. One decision was to restrict the use of the familiar Red Cross emblem to the International and National Red Cross Societies. This meant that affiliated bodies like St John Ambulance could not use it, as they had done in the past, on their literature, their awards, their ambulances, their first aid kits, their uniforms, or their equipment, as evidence of their ties to Red Cross.

Another decision was that where National Red Cross bodies co-operated with other bodies like St John their freedom of action should be preserved. This meant that Red Cross in future would not agree to be bound by concords like the one it made with St John in respect of the Joint War Organization. As Sir John Newman-Morris (who was at once president of the Association Centre in Victoria, Treasurer of the Commandery, and chairman of the central Council of the Australian Red Cross) told the Commandery after a hurried trip to London in early 1946 for urgent consultations at St John's Gate over a number of issues, including links with Red Cross, future co-operation with Red Cross was going to be very difficult. The Geneva leadership, he said, had set itself against working in tandem with other kindred bodies like St John Ambulance, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the *Johanniterordern* of north-western Europe.[46]

The motives of the Swiss leadership of the International Red Cross remain unpublished. Perhaps their retreat into isolation was prompted by a feeling that the Red Cross should be supranational, coupled with a fear

that too close a bond with unabashedly patriotic organizations like the Empire-serving St John Ambulance would compromise their impartiality in the eyes of nations outside the Empire. Perhaps too, there was a wish to win a larger share of the charity market. There might also have been a strand of 'charitable imperialism' to it as well—a wish to impose a Swiss view on the far flung outposts of an empire built on humanitarian good works. Both Red Cross and St John Ambulance were analogous to the multinational corporations of a later age: they operated around the world through national Branches but ultimately answered to boards of directors, the one in Geneva, the other in London. Occasionally the national Branches needed to be brought back in line if their practices were not in accord with the global interests of the organization as a whole. Concords of fraternity with rival institutions may therefore have been seen as something to be avoided, because they had the effect of limiting the power of Geneva to ordain what world-wide charitable strategy should be.

The foregoing paragraph, of course, is speculative; but in the absence of an explanation by Geneva to St John's Gate one can only speculate. Whatever the reasoning behind them, the Geneva resolutions were soon felt in Australia as the distancing between Geneva and St John's Gate began to become apparent. Complaints began filtering through to the St John Priory in Australia about competition from Red Cross. It had begun teaching its own first aid courses, using the St John text, to pupils who might otherwise have come to St John classes. It was, moreover, undercutting St John, offering its tuition free, whereas St John on principle always charged a fee. Ironically, many loyal St John workers continued to work for Red Cross too, as they had always done; and a significant number held high office in both organizations. Sir John Newman-Morris, for example, managed to divide his time between them without his loyalties being split; and later his son, Sir Geoffrey Newman-Morris, also simultaneously held high rank in each, being at once Chief Surgeon of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Australia and Australian Delegate to the International Red Cross Conference.[47]

4 *The Commandery and the Priory*

By the time Sir James Sleeman reached Australia in 1936, Australians in St John were aggrieved that they alone among the white Dominions lacked a Commandery to guide the affairs of their Order in their country. St John's Gate had given the South Africans a Commandery in 1921, the New Zealanders theirs in 1931 and the Canadians theirs in 1934. The reluctance of the Australians to manage their affairs nationally was one reason why they lagged: some of their State Branches had preferred dealing direct with London to the tedium of travelling interstate to confer with other branches. While there was occasional frustration in trying to get action out of London, this in many ways seemed preferable to traips-

ing back and forth across the continent, especially when there was a fair chance of ending in disagreement with those in other States. Australia's physical and political geography, and the interstate suspicions that arose because of them, had thus enabled the other Dominions to steal a march on the Australians.

Federal consciousness within the Australian bodies of the Order had nevertheless been growing slowly; and so as Sleeman toured the country it was to a litany of enquiries about the chances of the Order in England creating an Australian Commandery. As the previous chapter showed, his accustomed response was to say that St John people within each State must learn first to work together, and then be sure they could get along with those in other States. On his return to London he then wrote a long and entertaining report which made a point of detailing the insistent questions Australians had asked about their Commandery. However, 'no agreement was reached and no further advice was received from London'.[48]

Time, it seems, moved slowly in the 1930s, or at least that was so at St John's Gate. In London there appeared to be no sense of urgency about satisfying Australian longings. Undoubtedly the Sleeman Report was read and discussed at St John's Gate, but no action taken upon its implied need to consider forming an Australian Commandery. Presumably the Order in London adopted a 'wait and see' attitude: wait for the import of Sleeman's comments to sink into the Australian consciousness, then see what substantive proposals the Australians can produce for the Commandery they say they crave. The Australians seem to have adopted a similar approach: wait, as is proper, for St John's Gate to make a move, and see if they offer us our Commandery.

Whatever either side was thinking, nothing more was heard about a Commandery until July 1939, when the New South Wales Governor, Lord Wakehurst, discussed the matter with Dugan the Victorian Governor, and the Lieutenant Governor and Administrator of South Australia, Sir George Murray. Wakehurst then wrote to St John's Gate tentatively suggesting that a Commandery should be created in Australia. Wakehurst, Dugan and Murray, all of whom were Knights of the Order and strong supporters of its work in Australia, were probably acting in response to judicious prompting from the influential St John figures in their respective States—Poate and Mobbs in New South Wales, Newman-Morris and Downes in Victoria, and Dawkins and Dr C. E. C. Wilson (Association Centre chairman) in South Australia. It was one thing for St John's Gate to overlook the petition of a Centre Chairman or a Brigade Commissioner, but quite another to ignore the King's personal representative. But despite Wakehurst's prestige within the Order in Britain—he was a future Lord Prior of the Order—he seems to have received no reply to his letter. He wrote again in November 1939 saying that now the war was in progress it was 'important to take preliminary

steps to set up a Commandery in Australia'. Again he seems to have received no reply. There was indeed good cause for delay: at the time the Secretary General would have been preoccupied with setting up the Joint War Organization with the Red Cross, and the war was undoubtedly giving him myriad other pressing tasks behind which the petitions of remote Dominions who remained unthreatened by the war must simply have had to take their place.[49]

The first definitive steps towards the Commandery came in March 1940, when Dugan received a letter from the Secretary General dated 5 February 1940, advising that the Chapter General of the Order had considered the matter of a Commandery for 'South-eastern Australia and Tasmania', and had approved the idea almost three months before, at its meeting on 17 November 1939. Draft regulations for the proposed Commandery were soon sent out from London to the Governors of the States concerned, with the request that they discuss them. The Governors began consulting with the St John principals in their States and swapping letters on the subject. By pure chance the Governors of the three mainland States were all due to be in Melbourne in June 1940, and so they decided to hold a conference, to which they invited the Association chairmen and Brigade Commissioners from Victoria and New South Wales (Newman-Morris, Mobbs, Downes and Poate). This conference decided to proceed with the formation of a Commandery, which Queensland and Western Australia would be asked to join, and which would have the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, as its Knight Commander. Gowrie accepted the invitation to head the new body, and was henceforth one of its most enthusiastic advocates, 'not only in the preliminary negotiations but in all subsequent conversations and correspondence'.[50]

These further discussions succeeded in bringing Queensland into the Commandery, but not Western Australia. Despite repeated attempts to include them the Western Australians preferred to remain 'a district attached to London'. Their attitude was later encapsulated in the words of their Director of Ambulance (i.e. head of the Association in Western Australia), Dr B. C. Cohen, who in 1962 wrote,

> Not only were we geographically separated but we felt that with our large territory we were better able to cater to our very great activity in the St John field (Association, Brigade, and Transport), if we adhered to a strict autonomy answerable only directly to the Grand Priory.[51]

The negotiations between the other States continued without them, however, and eventually the other five States joining up decided that their Commandery headquarters would be in Sydney, which was most convenient to the Knight Commander, who lived in Canberra most often, and was the home city of the man he chose to fill the key position of Commandery Lieutenant, Poate.[52]

Early in 1941 Gowrie invited the Governors of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland (Sir Leslie Orme Wilson) to meet him and Poate at

a conference in Admiralty House 'to reach finality' on the issue. They met on 22 May, and that day radioed London advising that they had reached agreement. They also requested various revisions to the draft regulations sent out earlier, and asked for authority to proceed with the formation of the Commandery. The necessary approval from St John's Gate arrived on 10 June. Then during June and July Gowrie, the new Knight Commander, after consultations with Poate and the Deputy Knights Commander, the five State Governors, nominated his executive officers. They were the Commandery Lieutenant, Poate; the Chaplain, the Most Rev. H. Mowll, the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney and Primate of Australia; the Director of Ambulance (i.e. head of the Association), Dr Wilfred Vickers, then Assistant Commissioner of the Brigade in New South Wales; the Commandery Commissioner (i.e. head of the Brigade), Dr S. L. Dawkins, retiring Commissioner of the Brigade in South Australia; the Treasurer, Newman-Morris; the Hospitaller and Almoner (responsible for activities towards the aid of the 'other' of the Order's three foundations, the Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem) Brig. R. M. Stodart, the treasurer of the Queensland Centre of the Association; the Director of Ceremonies (responsible for the ceremonial life of the Order, and for admissions into and promotions within it), Dr T. H. Goddard, Brigade Commissioner and Association chairman in Southern Tasmania; and Commandery Secretary, Commander R. Griffiths Bowen, a retired Royal Navy officer who had previously been a council member of the Western Australian Centre but was now secretary to the New South Wales Association Centre.

On 24 October 1941 Gowrie received back from London the approved amended draft regulations. On 5 November he cabled to the Secretary General for permission for the Commandery to function. He received a cable in return on 11 November saying, 'Grand Prior and Chapter General approve. Please take action'. He now asked the Association and Brigade in the five member States to nominate two representatives each to constitute the Commandery Council. Those whose names came forward were: Mobbs and Dr Harold Norrie (Association in New South Wales), T. H. Henderson and Dr. C. A. Verco (Brigade in New South Wales), E. R. Pike and George Rees (Association in Queensland), C. L. Colvin of Hobart and Dr J. Newell of Launceston (Association in Southern and Northern Tasmania), J. E. Hulbert of Hobart and Dr A. E. Grounds of Launceston (Brigade in Southern and Northern Tasmania), Downes and Sherwin (Association in Victoria), Miss Edith Wells (the sole female member) and Frederick Raven (Brigade in Victoria), Dr C. E. C. Wilson and R. P. Goode (Association in South Australia), and Dr H. H. E. Russell and R. V. Bulman (Brigade in South Australia).[53]

The inaugural meeting of the Commandery took place in Admiralty House, Sydney, at 8.00 p.m. on Monday 19 January 1942, only six weeks 1942.

after the eruption of the Pacific War and at the beginning of the most hectic and successful year ever in the history of the organization in Australia. It opened with Gowrie assuring those present of the value the Commandery would be to the State bodies they represented. It would, he promised, 'co-ordinate . . . their activities and save a great deal of time and correspondence'. The Deputy Knight Commander for New South Wales, Wakehurst, as leader of the host State, paid tribute to the Knight Commander 'for the way he took the various threads of the Commandery in hand for the different States and wove them into a concrete pattern'. He, too, said they would all find the Commandery 'most useful, and particularly so in that a central control had now been established'. They then appointed each other to a series of Standing Committees—Finance, Ambulance (which had separate Association and Brigade sub-committees), Hospitaller and Almoner, Library (to document the development of the Order both overseas and in Australia, and to preserve its documents, records and artifacts), and Investigation (to examine the credentials of those under consideration for admission to or promotion within the Order). They resolved to send their condolences to the Royal Family, together with an expression of their appreciation of the services of the late Grand Prior, the Duke of Connaught, who had died recently after some thirty-two years of office. They agreed to a request from the Secretary of the Department of Air to allow the use of the Maltese Cross on the aircraft of the Flying Doctor Service. They examined a statement of the quotas of members of the Order allowed to each overseas Commandery, and were no doubt interested to learn that, whereas St John's Gate would permit Australia (Western Australia excepted) twenty-six Knights and eight Dames of the Order at any one time—the figure being on a *pro rata* basis according to the numbers of personnel affiliated with a Commandery—the Canadians had forty and twelve, the South Africans fifteen and five, and the New Zealanders twelve and four apiece.[54]

Their next meeting was the one at which they took the initiative to form the Joint Federal Council with the Red Cross. That major item of business agreed on, they got down to purposeful business in a number of other directions. They discussed the dissatisfaction of the State branches with the home nursing textbook issued by London. 'It is increasingly observed', they noted, 'that textbooks produced in England for the Order are not wholly suitable, at least in Australia and probably elsewhere'. They consequently resolved that 'whenever any revision of textbooks takes place, representatives of each Commandery [should] be included in the revision committee'—thus serving notice on London that they were unlikely to be the same pliant, spineless body as Storie Dixson's Federal Council for Australia had been a couple of decades previously. On R. V. Bulman's motion they agreed to introduce a series of interstate first aid and home nursing competitions for both adults and cadets, which—once

67 Third meeting of the Chapter of the Commandery of the Australian Commonwealth (Exclusive of Western Australia) of the Order of St John, 24 June 1944 in the Chapter House of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney. Seated, left to right, are Lord Wakehurst, Governor of New South Wales and Deputy Knight Commander of the Order (and a future Lord Prior of its Grand Priory); Lord Gowrie, the Governor General and Knight Commander; Archbishop Mowll, Anglican Primate of Australia and Chaplain of the Order; Dr C. E. C. Wilson, Chairman of South Australian Centre of the Association; and Wing-Commander High Poate, Commandery Lieutenant and later Chancellor of the Priory in Australia.

Standing, left to right, are Capt. E. R. B. Pike, secretary of the Queensland Centre of the Association; Fred Raven, secretary of both the Association and Brigade in Victoria; T. H. Henderson, Assistant Commissioner of the Brigade in New South Wales; —; District Officer W. B. Kubig of the Brigade in New South Wales; —; and Sir Hugh Poynter, a member of the committee of the New South Wales Centre.

they got going in 1947 — were to prove an important means for boosting federal sentiment within the Brigade. They accepted an invitation from the Commonwealth government to supply three representatives to serve on the publication committee for a handbook on first aid in civil defence. And so they got down to the tasks of serving as a national forum for the bodies they represented and of encouraging the work of the Order around their country.[55]

Even more important than the purposeful activity the Commandery engaged in was its 'demonstration effect'. The Commandery officials and representatives showed each other, and their State branches, that a federated St John could work to the benefit of all. The constraints of

Australian distances, the parochial pride of the State bodies and the disagreements between the Association and Brigade were seen *not* to be insuperable hurdles to defeat a national organization. The experience they had all gained in working together for four years, meeting twice annually in either Sydney or Melbourne or Adelaide, had proved to them that federation worked. Now, having seen the uses of a national body, they began desiring even more autonomy—in the shape of an even more prestigious national body, a Priory.

PRIORY
18 SEP. 1946.

They got their Priory on 18 September 1946. The decision by St John's Gate to upgrade the Commanderies of South Africa, New Zealand, Canada and Australia was a result of several factors coming together at much the same time. It was partly in consequence of the urging by respected members of Chapter General, particularly Sleeman and Lady Mountbatten, who had toured the Empire and appreciated the quality of those bearing the St John banner abroad. It also came partly in response to the representations of visitors from the Dominions—people like Poate and Newman-Morris, whose long, distinguished, loyal and authoritative service to the Order equalled that of anyone in Britain itself. It owed something to an increasing awareness in London that the Commanderies abroad were entirely capable of managing their own affairs with little guidance from the leadership in England. It owed much to the sterling service the Commanderies had given the Allied war effort—a contribution which London felt required appropriate recognition—and in Australia's case it owed something as well to the wishes of the Grand Prior, the Duke of Gloucester, whose term as Governor General of Australia 1945-47 had convinced him that Australia warranted a Priory.[56]

The elevation from Commandery to Priory was historically significant, and everyone concerned recognised this and made much of it. But as an event it was unremarkable, and required few adjustments. The federal structure remained the same, albeit under slightly different regulations and nomenclature: the Knight Commander, for example, was renamed the Prior but was still normally the Governor General, while the Commandery Lieutenant became the Sub-Prior (and later the Chancellor) and was still Poate. The Commandery Council and Commandery Chapter simply became the Priory Council and the Priory Chapter. Griffiths Bowen became foundation Priory Secretary, using as his office the Chapter House of St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney (made available by Mowll). The standing Committees remained the same. Otherwise the only changes worthy of note were that Western Australia affiliated and that for a short while the Governor General was *not* the head of the federal structure. The reason for the latter was that Gowrie's successor as Governor General in 1945 was none other than the Duke of Gloucester, who had been Grand Prior since the death of his uncle, the Duke of Connaught, three years before. It would have created a conundrum for him

to have been a national Prior within an Order of which he was already Grand Prior: there would have been the possibility of his being in conflict with himself by wearing two such hats, not to mention the unfair advantages the situation would have given the Australian Priory. So Sir Winston Dugan, who had taken over as Knight Commander on Gowrie's departure, now continued on as Prior, to be succeeded by Sir William McKell after the Duke had returned to Britain in 1947.[57]

The major change to come about through the setting up of the Priory was the entry to the federal scene of Western Australia. The formal title of the Commandery had been 'The Commandery of St John of the Australian Commonwealth (Exclusive of Western Australia)', for, as we have just seen, while the five eastern States were learning to work together within their Commandery, Western Australia had remained resolutely without, preferring to be a dependent outpost of the London organization to participant membership of an Australia-wide structure. Perhaps it was the parenthetical emphasis of the Commandery's formal name which finally brought home to the Western Australians their anomalous position within the St John movement. Perhaps, too, it was the ready success of the Australian Commandery which persuaded them to join the federation. St John's Gate had been promising them that they would be granted separate Commandery status if and when the Australian Commandery matured into a Priory, and so they had been watching the development of the federal body with keen interest. When St John's Gate duly offered them their own Commandery they accepted with alacrity, but also agreed to become a Commandery within the Australian Priory rather than stand alone as a Commandery answerable to London. Such a compromise, they felt, allowed them both to join their fellow Australians and to retain the distinctive separateness they had always craved. They marked their proud rise to Commandery status with 'a ceremony carried through with the dignity befitting the Venerable Order'. It took place on 23 April 1947, in the presence of Sir James Mitchell, the Lieutenant Governor and long-time Administrator of Western Australia 1933-47 (and later its Governor 1947-51), who had made a unique decision for one of his office by declining to become the head of his local St John organization, on the grounds that as Lieutenant Governor only it was not appropriate for him to become Knight Commander. The high point of the ceremony came when Poate, as delegate of the Prior, invested the Chief Justice of the State, Sir John Patrick Dwyer, as Knight Commander.[58]

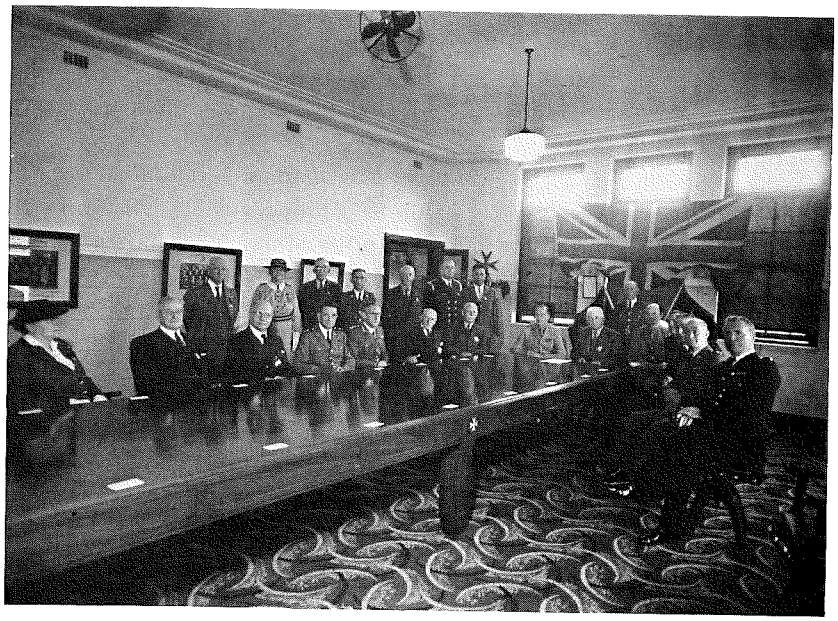
The compromise between Western Australia and the eastern States solved one long-standing problem of the federal movement among St John bodies. It also created fresh problems. As time went by disagreements inevitably arose between the Western Australian Commandery and the Australian Priory. On such occasions the Commandery tried – at least in the early years – to call on London to adjudicate, claim-

ing supposed rights of direct access to St John's Gate. The Grand Priory soon tired of these tactics by those in Perth, however, and 'directed [them] to channel all [their] activities through the Australian Priory'. As the Western Australians were to discover,

> With the advent of the Priory of Australia and of the Commandery of Western Australia a change occurred necessitating a fresh orientation of ideas . . .
> Now this creates a rather difficult situation. Seeing that we do not actively participate in Priory Executive and Chapter meetings and deliberations (although of course the higher ranks have access to the Chapter), we are often ignorant of what is happening and what has been decided upon. Many of these decisions do affect us, for example alterations to text books, decisions concerning instruction in resuscitation, competition regulations and the recognition of honours and awards. All these matters and others are held up and related to us in very belated fashion. The Executive of Commandery have asked the Chapter here to find some means whereby the two bodies can be more closely integrated. Commandery Chapter is rather reluctant to forego our birthright by seeking full participation in Priory's deliberations, and indeed there are obvious objections apart from our loss of autonomy and hard won status. There is the financial obstacle; there is a difficulty arising from the fact that our relative positions to State Councils would be very ill defined; there is the question of long travelling distances; and moreover most of the business arising would have very little interest to W.A.
> Now I know that Priory is more than willing, it is indeed anxious that all sections of St John in Australia should be harmoniously integrated . . .
> We have no wish to take part in running the local affairs of the East, we want to maintain our independence and we desire to give some meaning to the term 'within the Priory'.[59]

This long exposition on the relationship between the Western Australian Commandery and the Priory was written some sixteen years after their creation. It was part of a letter the Director of Ambulance in the Commandery, B. C. Cohen, wrote to his opposite number in the Priory, E. A. Daley, in 1962 as an appeal for special understanding for the Western Australian view of things. So the ambiguous position of the Western Australians had remained: they continued eating their cake and wanting it.

St John people in the eastern States at times became impatient with the Western Australians' demands for special consideration. They generally felt that within the Order every State branch should be equal. The awkward constitutional fact, however, was that they *were* unequal, because Western Australia was indeed a special case. No other Sate enjoyed the substantial degree of autonomy which Commandery status brought to the Western Australians. Although it was ultimately dependent on the Priory, the Commandery in Western Australia had scope for independent action which those States tied directly in with Priory lacked. This was something the Western Australians believed they needed: it was the ideal solution to the problem of a small population scattered over a vast area, all far removed from St John activities elsewhere in Australia.



68 The Grand Prior, the Duke of Gloucester, visits St John headquarters, Perth, 1946, during his term as Governor General of Australia. He is at the head of the table in uniform. Sitting, left to right, are Mrs H. E. Parker; Sir Ernest Lee-Steere; Capt. J. J. Airey; A. E. Fisher; Dr J. R. Donaldson; J. R. Campbell; Dr H. G. Tymms; the Duke of Gloucester; Dr J. J. Holland (Commandery Lieutenant); the Duke's aide; Sir Thomas Meagher; —; G. C. Stewart and Insp. T. Tetterington.

Standing, left to right, are S. F. L. Hussey; Mrs M. Robertson; L. O. Siggs; A. B. Krug; C. Harper; E. O. Lange; Dr B. C. Cohen and W. C. Brear. The table, of jarrah, was so wide and long it had had to be constructed within the conference room.

Then, too, at least until 1952, theirs had been the only State branch running an ambulance transport service; and on that score alone they had had a strong claim for separate consideration. On top of all this they had been singularly fortunate in their choice of leaders. Their principal executive officers, the Commandery Lieutenants (analogous to the Chancellors of the Priory), had all been strong leaders who gave the Order in Western Australia purpose and direction it sometimes lacked elsewhere. The Commandery Lieutenants, moreover, brought stability and continuity, which contrasted with the chopping and changing and the ructions that occasionally disrupted the leadership in some other States. After the first of the Commandery Lieutenants, Dr John J. Holland, who rounded off a long and notable career in St John by serving in that position for over ten years, 1947-58, there were only three others up until the early 1980s. They, too, had all served long and distinguished apprenticeships in the work of the Order before their pro-

motion. Two of them, like Holland, remained Commandery Lieutenants for a decade—Dr J. R. Donaldson (1959-69) and Sir John Lavan (from 1973 until the present). The third, Dr A. L. Dawkins (1969-73), was the son of the former Brigade District Commissioner for South Australia, Dr S. L. Dawkins, who had gone on to become the foundation Chief Commissioner for Australia when the Australian Commandery had been set up. All things considered, then, it was not surprising that as far as the Western Australians were concerned the foundation of their own Commandery was at least as important as the establishment of the Priory.

For the other States there was less ambiguity in the creation of the Priory. Even though it was a move the effects of which probably took years to filter down to the grass roots of the Order—the humble teachers of Association classes, the uniformed toilers in the Brigade and the officers working in ambulance transport services—it was a move which the leadership in each State soon appreciated. Their satisfaction was evident in the Annual Report of the South Australian Centre in 1947:

> Constant reference to England has at times been irksome, and we are grateful that the Venerable Order of St John in England has seen fit to recognise the importance of Australia, and to establish first the Commandery, and now the Priory, which will enable us to deal locally with matters of local concern and assist and facilitate the Association and Brigade in Australia in carrying out the objects and purposes of The Order.[60]

Even though to many in the organization in Australia the rise from Commandery to Priory might have seemed a remote or unexceptional occurrence, it was indeed one of the most significant milestones of the Order's sixty-three year career in Australia. It was at once the federation and—figuratively at least—the act of independence of the Australian offspring from its British parent. Though the ties between them were to remain strong for a time, the Australian infant had now passed beyond its adolescence and could lead a separate life of its own. In learning to do so in the decades that followed, its distinctive Australian personality would be confirmed.

So it was that, once again, a war had showered benefits upon the St John Ambulance bodies of Australia. Morally it had sharpened their sense of purpose while providing them with an unparalleled opportunity for translating ideals into practice. Physically they had gained from it thousands of dedicated adherents, among whom were many who would later emerge as their leaders. They were now better known and more widely accepted than at any time before, and had consequently built up an enormous reservoir of good will. Their credentials as a devoted and well organized institution which efficiently and promptly delivered on promises had been greatly enhanced, and they were now the envy of their rival kindred organizations. They had won the admiration and trust of both their 'head office' overseas and their clientele locally. Their federal structure, the adoption of which the war had greatly facilitated, was

bringing them new strength, self esteem, and authority as a national institution. It is not surprising, then, that in the more uncertain time ahead many within the movement would one day look back longingly on the great strides they had made during the Second World War. Increasingly those legendary wartime years of frantic activity passed into the lore of St John ambulancers around Australia, merging into their 'dreamtime', sustaining the older generation and inspiring the new.

10

The post-war recovery, and beyond

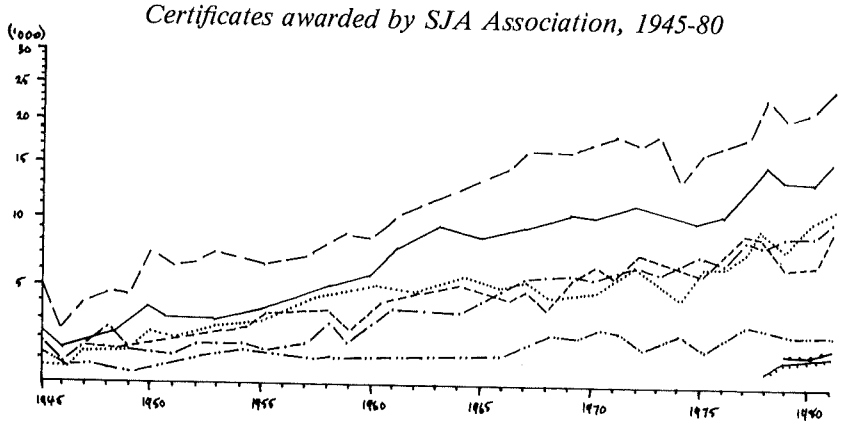
The end of a war rarely provides a prosperous season for a voluntary welfare agency. What often happens is that many people who have rallied to the cause slip away as the emergency passes and the more mundane days of peace return. Donors whose support has been generous find other uses for their money. Governments which have been grateful for the loyal service they have unstintingly received become less sympathetic, or preoccupied with commitments elsewhere. The voluntary workers themselves, having fought the good fight, are often worn out and in need of time to recover their energies. Winning back the lost support, attracting new (and especially younger) members and finding new enthusiasm, become major needs, though often those who are left feel too listless to make the required effort.

St John Ambulance was no exception and, as after the First World War, in 1945 a feeling of ennui afflicted some Branches of the organization. There were complaints in some quarters about public apathy in relation to first aid knowledge, of self-centredness among young people who were not interested in graduating from the Brigade's Cadet Divisions into those for adults, and of the laziness of some Brigade members who did not keep up their efficiency.

The mood of deflation did not last long, however, for after the slump in enrolments in Association classes and the decline in Brigade strength towards the end of The Second World War, the Order's fortunes quickly revived. Indeed the post-war recovery began lifting the new Priory and all its branches in the States to levels of achievement higher than at any time other than during the wartime rush of 1941-44. If those had been the golden years, then what followed in the first couple of post-war decades was at least unalloyed silver, for the period up to the middle-to-late 1960s was one of solid achievement in nearly every direction. The series of graphs and tables on the following pages condenses some of the attainment in visual form. First of all was the steady growth in training, which was evident in the numbers undergoing instruction:

The causes of the ridges and troughs in the curves are too complex for thorough explication in a general history like this. Suffice to say that many and varied are the influences that act together to produce the upward trend. Economic prosperity and recession made their presence

Certificates awarded by SJA Association, 1945-80



New South Wales — —
Western Australia - - - - -
Aus. Capital Territory - - - -
Northern Territory - - - -
South Australia —·—
Victoria ——
Tasmania ··—··
Queensland .....

felt, during the 1960s and early 70s in the case of the former and in 1974 and '79-80 for the latter. At times national politics intruded, as in '72-'74, when the advent of a reformist Labor government with a forceful and generously funded social welfare policy coincided with one of the most notable slumps. (This of course enables us to speculate on whether or not the Welfare State is good or bad for the health of voluntary charitable agencies like St John Ambulance. Do people take less interest in charity if they think the government is making itself chiefly responsible for welfare? Are they more prepared to help others if they think the government has absolved itself of responsibility?) There are other, quantifiable factors as well: a series of well-publicized road accident fatalities or drownings might lead to a sudden spurt in enrolments in a particular State; so, too, will a major natural disaster, like the Hobart bush fires in February 1967 and Cyclone Tracy in Darwin in December 1974; while a major advertising campaign by a State branch, like the 'Play it safe' programme by the Victorian Centre in 1979-80, may also produce an upsurge.

Other factors are less tangible. The vitality, enthusiasm, enterprise and effectiveness of a Centre committee; the leadership qualities of its executive officers; and even the personalities of individual officials or instructors produce rises and falls in our graph. General social change also has its effect. Australia, arguably, has become more divided and more violent in the post-war decades. Crimes of violence increased as did deaths from road accidents; and the advent of television ensured that people who did not themselves actually witness violence were nevertheless experienced in it, albeit vicariously. Immigration, population

growth, urbanization and easier geographical mobility at the same time were producing a larger-scale and more impersonal society, with a diminishing sense of community. It was a less caring and more dangerous society, one in which the traditional moral verities were increasingly open to challenge, and one in which the possession of basic medical knowledge and skills was becoming important for self-preservation if for no other altruistic reason. So while the numbers of people enrolling in and graduating from St John Ambulance classes fluctuated at times, the overall trend was upwards.[1]

The numbers of people St John Ambulance has trained in its various first aid and nursing programmes have done much better than keep up with population growth. Apart from those heady days of the Second World War, when for a time it looked as though St John might reach the goal of a first aider in every home, the organization has rarely trained better than roughly one person for every hundred of the population in any State or Territory. Despite this the achievement has been impressive, for the accomplishment of a proportion of trained people of that order was well in sight by the early 1980s. By that time most State and Territory branches had succeeded in reducing their annual ratio of trainees to better than one graduate for every 200 of population. This table shows the steady rate by which they have done so:

Certificates of training awarded, as a ratio of State/Territory population, 1947-81

	1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1975	1979	1981
New South Wales	1:735	1:506	1:390	1:286	1:254	1:299	1:245	1:198
Victoria	1:1030	1:784	1:398	1:366	1:325	1:372	1:278	1:243
South Australia	1:369	1:427	1:269	1:228	1:191	1:175	1:148	1:129
Western Australia	1:298	1:247	1:176	1:202	1:181	1:192	1:198	1:140
Queensland	1:816	1:453	1:318	1:344	1:327	1:328	1:280	1:209
Tasmania	1:309	1:194	1:308	1:268	1:168	1:245	1:122	1:126
Australian Capital Territory*	—	—	—	—	—	—	1:157	1:100
Northern Territory†	—	—	—	—	—	—	1:133	1:78
Australia	1:649	1:477	1:338	1:299	1:259	1:286	1:227	1:186

* included with New South Wales until 1979.
† included with South Australia until 1977.

The only major arrest in the St John organizations' quest to reduce the ratios further was that which we notice around 1975—the period coinciding with the federal Labor government of 1972-75. Whether it was the rapid economic inflation of 1973-74 or the government's comprehensive

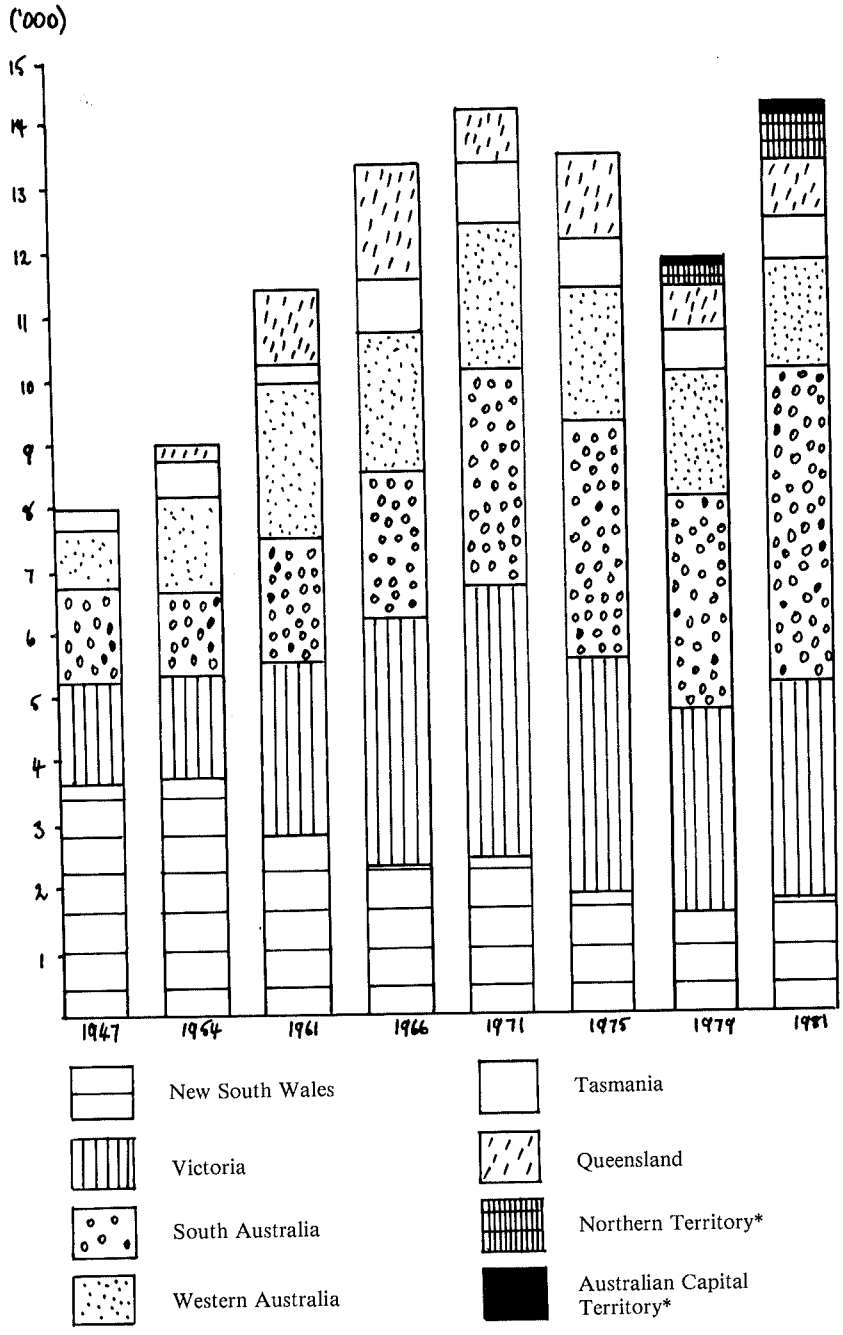
69 Corporal A. Hammond of the Western Suburbs Division of the Brigade conducts a public first aid class, 1957

welfare packaging that caused this 'hiccup', or a combination of these and other influences, is uncertain. But what *is* obvious is that St John has striven hard and successfully to cast its net ever wider.

When we turn from Association training programmes to Brigade membership patterns, the story, unfortunately, is not one of such unqualified success. The Brigade, it would seem, is more sensitive to the societal influences we have just noted. The graph for post-war Brigade strength on page 386 illustrates the trends:

What were the main features of these developments? After a slump in membership at the end of the Second World War, the Brigade in every State save New South Wales climbed steadily to record strength in the late 1960s and early 70s. Thus, the Victorian District climbed back to surpass its wartime peak of 1309 members and reached its record membership level of 4363 in 1970. Tasmanian membership had peaked at 595 in 1944, fluctuated between about 290 and 570 for about fifteen years and then rose to a record of 939 in 1969. The Western Australian District had peaked at 1875 in 1941; it took sixteen years of recovery to pass that level again, and went on to a high point of 2632 in 1976. The Queensland District entered the field as a very late starter in the early 1950s, then peaked at 1807 in 1966. Two other late entrants were the Northern Territory, which became a District in its own right on separating from the South Australian District in 1977, and the Australian Capital Territory, which split off from New South Wales in 1979 to become an autonomous

Brigade Strength in years of Commonwealth Census (1947-79) and 1981

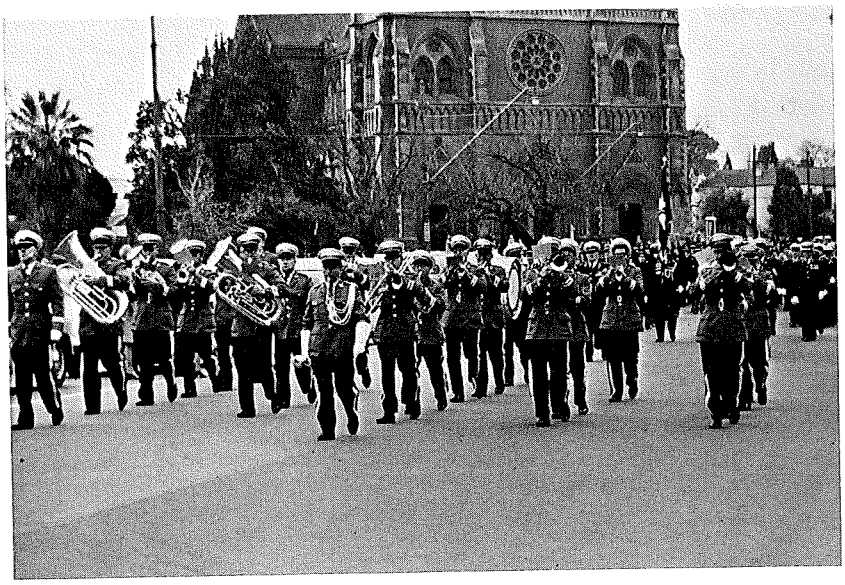


* Northern Territory strength included with South Australia until 1977; Australian Capital Territory with New South Wales until 1979.

Sub-District. Each was small but healthy: the ACT grew to 186 by 1981, while the Northern Territory had a spectacular expansion from 211 in 1977 to 715 in 1981. The most enviable success, however, was that of South Australia. Here the wartime peak had been 1679 in 1943, a level which the District took another fifteen years to surpass; a steady increase in strength led to a new peak of 3914 in 1974; then came a falling off for several years before a further recovery leading up to an all-time record for any District—4967 in 1981. By this stage the South Australian District was some 1600 members stronger than its nearest rival. But if South Australia represented vigorous growth, then New South Wales, formerly the 'premier' Brigade State, had become the byword for a wasting disease. From its peak strength of 4200 in 1945 its membership declined unremittingly year by year to reach a low point of 1307 in 1980, though happily there was a substantial improvement to 1780 the next year, 1981.[2]

Even though senior Brigade officials of Priory could be well pleased with the sturdy muscle their organization was putting on in South Australia and the Northern Territory in particular, the overall trends in membership were cause for concern. The very encouraging figures coming in on the annual returns from Adelaide and Darwin reflected one dominating factor—the strong link between Brigade and the St John-sponsored ambulance transport services in South Australia and the Northern Territory. In those two Districts Brigade members had the opportunity of regular voluntary service on the ambulance vans—an exciting and absorbing means of employing first aid skills, and a very concrete way to translate ideals into practice. With such an inducement to offer prospective members, neither District had severe recruiting problems. In States where there was little or no chance for voluntary ambulance transport work in the Brigade uniform, however, recruiting and retaining members was a problem. This becomes evident when we examine the ratio between Brigade members and the wider population in each State. The table on p. 388 summarizes these ratios.

The ratios indicate that Brigade membership generally kept ahead of population growth until the beginning of the 1970s; thereafter it began falling behind badly, and continued to do so everywhere but in South Australia and the Northern Territory for the next decade. Whether the improvement in 1981 represented the beginning of an upswing in membership which would continue, or was indeed but a 'hiccup', only time could tell. It was to be hoped that the former was the case, for poor recruitment and retention rates carried their own penalties. In the first place, flagging strength entailed an inability to meet requests for public duty; and Divisions which made a habit of rejecting requests suffered a loss of public confidence and, worse still, damaged the reputation of the Brigade generally. Secondly, declining membership meant fewer backs to bear the burden, and overwork and frustration for the remaining

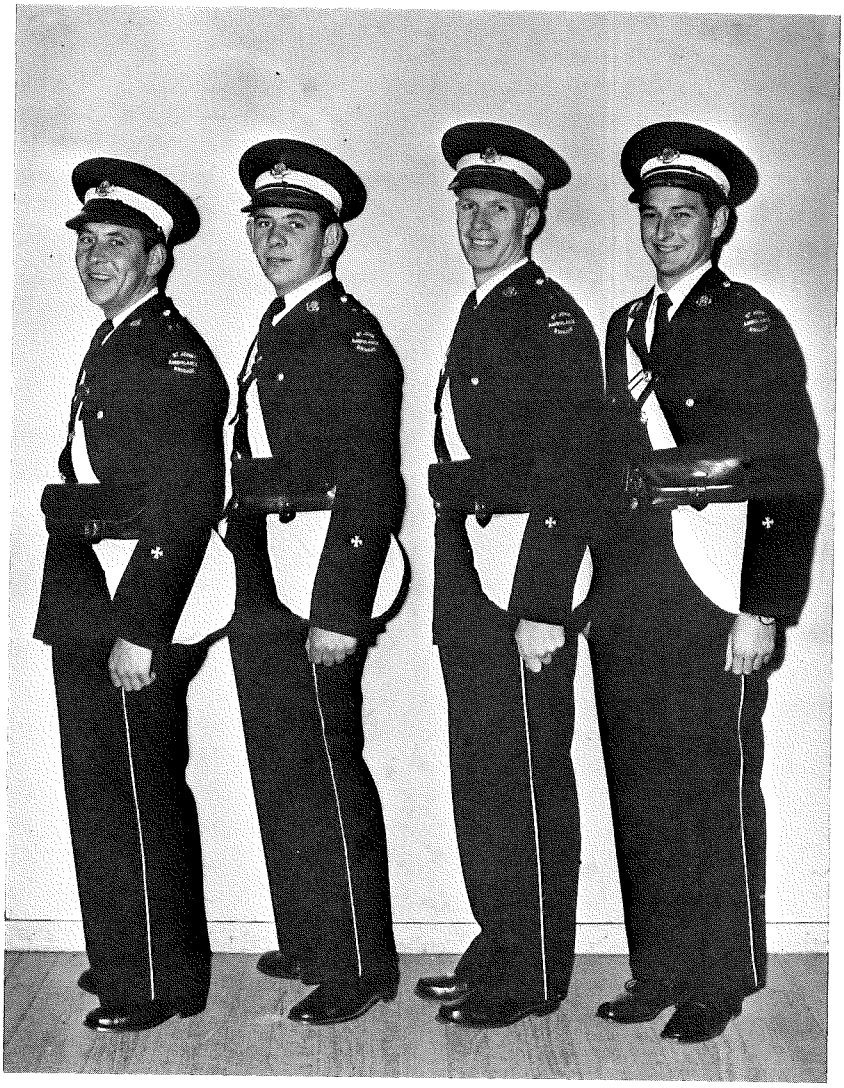


70 Drum Major Harold Hewson and Musical Director Alf Griffiths (far left) lead the Adelaide St John Ambulance band and Adelaide Brigade Divisions away from St Peter's Cathedral, where the 1965 Priory church parade has just been conducted

Brigade strength as a ratio of State population in years of Commonwealth Census (1947-79) and 1981

	1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1975	1979	1981
New South Wales	1:821	1:919	1:1397	1:1847	1:1944	1:2634	1:3374	1:2877
Victoria	1:1771	1:1317	1:1073	1:825	1:819	1:989	1:1215	1:1130
South Australia	1:417	1:617	1:491	1:470	1:349	1:340	1:393	1:261
Western Australia	1:546	1:522	1:333	1:407	1:460	1:528	1:642	1:747
Tasmania	1:756	1:535	1:986	1:453	1:423	1:507	1:667	1:662
Queensland	—	1:4132	1:1281	1:926	1:2109	1:1659	1:3060	1:2405
Australian Capital Territory	—	—	—	—	—	—	1:1554	1:1224
Northern Territory	—	—	—	—	—	—	1:327	1:173
Australia	1:993	1:998	1:933	1:876	1:896	1:994	1:1228	1:1021

faithful. It also meant a smaller pool of talent from which to draw the future leaders, which in turn increased the likelihood of the mediocre being promoted to fill the gaps. The fruits of *that* solution to staffing problems was further frustration, and a goodly measure of dissidence



71 The New South Wales team which competed at the Brigade's interstate first aid competitions in Melbourne in 1957. (Left to right, R. Ford, A. Ford, F. Mullins and C. King.)

and backbiting. And finally there was an eventuality which few in the Brigade could countenance—the emergence of rival and alternative charitable agencies eager to tread St John turf. Though none had been so bold as to do so, there were several lurking on the sidelines by the early 1980s.[3]

The problems of the Brigade were in clearest focus among the cadet Divisions. The cadets are the sapwood not only of the Brigade but also of

the St John Ambulance movement generally. From their ranks must come the future adult members of the Brigade, the future Brigade leadership, and many of the future instructors of Association classes. Among the cadets are to be found the most promising acolytes, the girls and boys who will grow up steeped in the ancient lore of the Order, imbued with its traditions of selfless voluntary service, and pliable enough to move with the times, to adapt to new needs, to seek out new challenges. Except for a serious slump in membership in the mid-1970s the cadets generally comprised just under a half of total Brigade strength, as the figures indicate:

Cadet membership in relation to total Brigade strength, 1953-81

	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1976	1979	1980	1981
Cadet Strength	4588	5169	6401	7044	3559	3514	5948	5845	6873
Total Strength	9967	10800	13728	14244	13848	13021	11742	11835	14267
Cadets as % of total strength	46.0%	47.8%	46.6%	49.4%	25.7%	26.9%	46.8%	49.3%	48.1%

There was considerable comfort in this knowledge, for the Brigade could always be fairly confident that even if only a fraction of the cadets graduated into the adult Divisions there was an assured supply of recruits for the senior Divisions.[4]

Unfortunately, however, as time went by the Brigade could not so easily assume that the cadets *would* pass up into senior membership. The Cadet Divisions, still a fairly recent innovation at the end of the Second World War, proved even more sensitive than the adult Divisions to pressures from outside and to the tensions arising within any voluntary body. A tiff with another member, a clash with a leader, failure to gain an expected award or promotion, the development of new interests and commitments as childhood changed through adolescence into adulthood, boredom, frustration, and a lack of fulfilment might at any time cause a bright young thing to slip away from the movement forever; and as time went on the reasons for doing so multiplied. As more and more young Australians stayed on at school to complete secondary education then went on to tertiary studies there were fewer cadets who could find the time for service in an adult Division. Rising juvenile wages and the proliferating seductions of the consumer society drew many away. The motor car, the surf board, the jet trip for a working holiday abroad, the hi-fi stereo system, the catamaran and the night club purveying exotic foods and music, all beckoned, and most were within reach of the post-war generation of cadets by the time they were due to move up into the adult Divisions. Some within the St John organizations could find fault with the products of the post-war baby boom: they were, it was said, the

72 The New South Wales District of the Brigade on parade at Victoria Barracks, Sydney, 1956. Present were 1100 members of the Ambulance, Nursing, Cadet Ambulance and Cadet Nursing Divisions

'Dr Spock children'—a generation raised in an era of permissive child-rearing philosophies, an indulged generation which had learnt all about self-gratification but had failed to discover what service to humanity, dedication to duty and the sacrifice of one's own pleasures meant. Some blamed the decline of traditional values: a decrease in religious observance, they said, resulted in the erosion of the idea that one could gain merit by helping one's fellow humans; and at the same time there seemed to be a loss of respect for older people and for authority generally, at least for the sort of authority implicit in the Brigade structure. Some looked askance at the changing composition of the Australian population. The post-war influx of non-British immigrants, they thought, was hurting St John: the immigrants were too busy settling in to spare a thought for voluntary ambulance work, and in any case their 'non-British' customs did not seem to stress voluntarism and aid to outsiders. Others thought that the very plethora of voluntary organizations emerging by the 1970s were to blame. With new groups forming all the time to pursue newly arising interests, there were plenty of causes competing for the commitment of those with social consciences: the women's, Aboriginal and environmental movements were but some of those doors opening to entice those who at other times might well have entered St John. Probably every senior Brigade loyalist had his or her own explanation for the reluctance of the young to stay around long when the time came for them to move up from the cadet to the senior Brigade Divi-

sions. Perhaps there was a grain of truth in all their viewpoints, for the nation had indeed undergone considerable social change during the post-war decades. The Brigade as a nationwide body could not hope to have remained immune from it. So if the old prescriptions for retaining youthful interest were now outdated, new formulae must be sought.[5]

The graph on page 393 for cadet membership over the post-war decades followed similar lines to the one for adult membership. There was the same general rise towards record strength in the late 1960s and early 70s, followed by plummeting numbers in the mid-70s and at least a partial recovery towards the 80s.

There was, at the same time, a volatility about the graph for the cadets: the swings either side of the mean were greater, the peaks loftier, the troughs deeper and steeper, particularly as the 1960s gave way to the uncertainties of the 70s. Uncertainty, indeed, became the prevailing mode of thought as the 70s wore on, not only in St John but also in other voluntary service organizations. Self-examination became the order of the day, as the leadership of sundry voluntaristic bodies sought to attune their efforts to the changing moods of the times. St John was not alone in organizing conferences, seminars and workshops to explore topics like 'Meeting the challenge of the eighties', 'Implementing change' and 'The future of the Brigade'. Indeed the leaders of all voluntary agencies wishing to stay in business were probably grappling with similar problems, seeking to adapt their institutions to a world where their recruits were more inclined to calculate the benefits accruing from membership and less willing to tolerate slogans about service and sacrifice, a world in which the State had become the chief provider, a world that promised little of the prosperity that had given people confidence in the recent decades.[6]

Statistics like those we have been pondering can show how an institution has fared over time, and they invite reflection on the influences setting the trends. But what they do *not* indicate is the quality of the service the St John bodies were giving the public. By the time of the early post-war decades the St John reputation for reliable and dedicated public service was, of course, enviable. Among the proliferating voluntary service and welfare agencies its name had few equals. The Salvation Army, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Brotherhood of St Laurence and other similar religious groupings, the Scout Association, Legacy, Save the Children Fund, Rotary, Apex and other service clubs, the Lifesaving Societies and Associations, the Good Neighbour Councils, the Handicapped Children's Associations, and medical bodies like the Heart Foundation, Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Anti-Cancer Council, not to mention the Red Cross Society, were all kindred organizations to a greater or lesser extent. All performed admirably from their inception, filling the niches that opened to them as conditions changed and new needs arose. Yet even amidst this distinguished congregation St John

73 Members of the Brigade's Granville Nursing Division, 1957. (Left to right, Miss Watson (superintendent), Mrs Smyth, Miss Murray, Mesdames Redfern, Nixon, Parry, Bate and Gildart.)

Ambulance was inferior to none, and continued adding to its reputation through decade after decade of solid accomplishment.

During those decades there were countless instances, large and small, widely acclaimed and unobtrusive, of aid to the community from the St John bodies. There are too many to include here, even of the former type, too many in fact even to remember. Indeed, there was something about the nature of St John work and the people doing it that precluded too much concern with former glories. The St John style most often was to do a worthy job then get on with the next public duty, and not to reminisce for too long. Some occasions must be remembered, however, for they add to the lore of an organization, providing it with standards to aim at and inspiration for attaining them. One such event was the Royal Tour of 1954, a truly Great Occasion in the life of an organization that had had many.

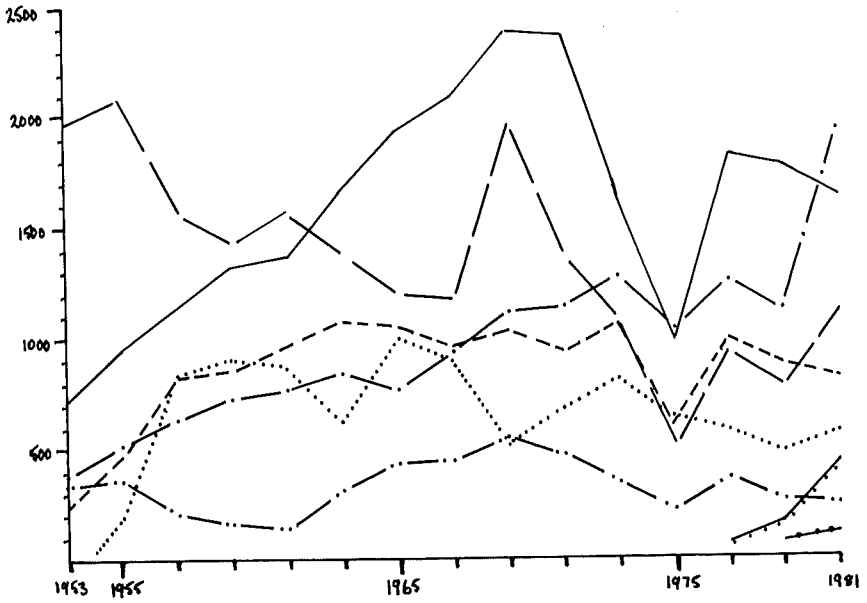
The Royal Tour, like earlier 'Great Occasions' for St John—the inauguration of the Commonwealth in 1901, the visit of the 'Great White' Fleet in 1908, the victory parades of 1919, the celebrations of the end of the Second World War—was one of those grand extended festivities that bring out jubilant crowds in their hundreds of thousands, and leave in their wake a multitude of casualties. Australians had seen many royal tours before; but though the last three Kings had each visited the country as princes, there had never been a tour by a reigning monarch. Australia's citizenry had been looking forward to such an occasion for

many years, and there had been great disappointment when ill health had prevented the late King, George VI, from arriving about six years before. So they awaited the arrival of their new Queen with a special and long pent up excitement.

Something of her Australian subjects' enthusiasm might have been evident to the Queen as the Royal Yacht *Gothic* approached Sydney Heads near dawn on Wednesday 3 February. Small craft ranging from cabin cruisers down to rowing boats were waiting for her anything up to twenty-five kilometres out to sea; and five kilometres out there were nine men who had paddled surf boards out from Maroubra. At Farm Cove 100,000 people craned their heads to watch her step ashore just after 10.30 a.m. A million lined the route of her procession, and Sydney had its worst traffic jam in history. Cars were banked up from Lane Cove to Watsons Bay, and took until midnight to clear.[7]

The excitement continued day after day. Everywhere the Queen went she drew tumultuous crowds a million strong. They thronged in to line every street, highway and walkway she was due to pass along. Often they camped out overnight to be close enough to the barricades to catch a glimpse of her as she drove past. A Royal Tour industry seemed to have mushroomed overnight, and its enterprising marketeers were ready with

Membership of SJA Brigade Cadet Divisions, 1953-81



74 The West Geelong team, winners of the Victorian District cadet first aid championships, 1955-56. (Back row: D. Lawry, A. Drayton, J. and B. Southern; front: W. Falkingham, H. Wall, H. Southern, F. Southern.)

a product to suit those coming too late for a barrier position—a cardboard periscope in patriotic colours.

Everywhere the crowds were so, too, was St John. The first aid coverage of the tour had been carefully worked out in advance by Commonwealth, State and municipal officials, police and fire brigade departments, the ambulance transport agencies, and with the St John bodies called in as members of the planning committees in each State. The Brigade in New South Wales gave a spare summary of its commitments in its annual report later in 1954:

> From *Gothic*'s arrival on the morning of February 3rd until her departure on February 18th every available member of the Brigade was on continuous duty or on call to succour those needing aid. . . .
>
> For the Royal Progress on February 3rd, nearly 1000 men, women and senior cadets of the Brigade lined the 10-mile [16-kilometre] route, and, under direction of eighteen Brigade Surgeons, staffed the 78 first aid posts and casualty clearing stations set up at strategic points throughout the city. Stretchers, blankets and groundsheets provided by the Army Authorities were distributed throughout; and the Ambulance Transport Services arranged for 28 Ambulances to be located at various street intersections. Special telephones were installed at all clearing stations, and all fire station telephones along the route were available to our personnel. Many extra drinking fountains were in-

75 The winners: nineteen members of the Brigade's Cadet Nursing Divisions in Western Australia who have earned Grand Prior's Badges, and six who have been awarded Special Service Shields, display their awards at the Brigade's annual inspection in Perth, 1962.

stalled and several temporary public conveniences were erected by the City Council.

On every occasion when crowds assembled to see the Royal Party, St John volunteers took up public duty to minister to those needing first aid. Many of our personnel were on call the whole time—some went to work in uniform and, through the generosity of their employers, took time off without monetary loss to do public duty whenever and wherever required.

On several occasions when the Royal Party left Sydney for the country, parties of St John personnel preceded it and made arrangements for taking up public duty in conjunction with the local authorities—Newcastle, Dubbo, Wollongong, Bathurst, Katoomba and Canberra.[8]

In outlying country areas beyond these provincial centres, where there was no Brigade, 'it was gratifying . . . that Association-trained personnel, wearing the Association's armbands, carried out first aid duties during the Royal Tour'.[9] By the time the New South Wales stage of the tour was over the Brigade alone had treated some 10,800 casualties, 8857 in Sydney and 1943 elsewhere. As the tour of the State lasted for seventeen days that was a rate of about 635 a day. Brigade members had their special reward for all this on 5 February, when 440 of them went to Government House at the invitation of the Governor, Sir John Northcott, their Deputy Prior, to form a guard of honour for the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh as they left to address ex-servicemen and women in Hyde Park.[10]

St John people had a special reason for welcoming the Queen, quite apart from the work she was inadvertently bringing their way and the

76 The home team, from New South Wales (left to right, P. Enfield, T. Younger, I. Fortescue and J. Walton), on their way to winning the James Sleeman Shield for the interstate competitions in home nursing, Sydney, 1958

burnishing of their reputation this entailed. As they, like most other occupants of buildings in central Sydney, rolled out their bunting and turned up their lights, they did so with a special sense of reverence. The 1954 annual report of the Association preserved the mood of the occasion:

> The visit of Her Majesty, being Sovereign Head of the Order, was of special significance to all connected with the Order of St John. ' St John House' was appropriately draped and decorated for the occasion with a large illuminated crown at the top of the building, the St John Ambulance Association badge in the centre and glittered 'Greetings to our Sovereign Head' below. The drapings were in black and white.[11]

Amidst the bewildering whirl of public engagements her subjects had arranged, the Queen might even have had time to see the lengths the Sydney branch of her Order of hospitallers had gone to in greeting her. She had the chance of doing so on 5 February. That day, watched by 30,000 people, she was in the Macquarie Place gardens, close to St John headquarters, to plant a plane tree intended as the first of 10,000 in a 'Remembrance Driveway' to Canberra. Whether or not she did notice is unknown, but for those in St John the occasion was fraught with symbolic importance: that year's annual report proprietorially carried a

photograph of her wielding a silver spade, with a caption to the effect that 'the ceremony is felt to be of significance to the St John Ambulance Association, being performed by the Sovereign Head and opposite St John House'.[12]

In other States the St John bodies made similar efforts, and drew similar inferences. In Victoria, for example, they found that the tour

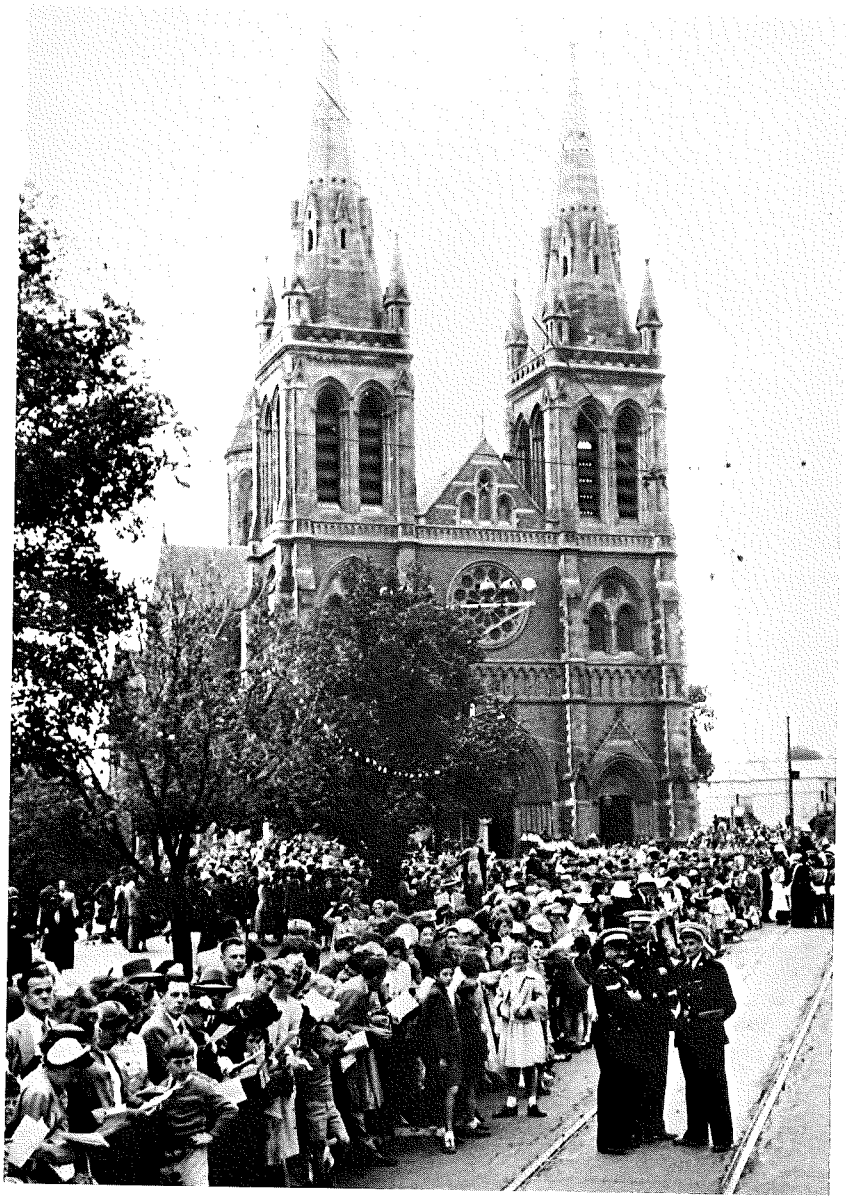
> provided the busiest period in the experience of the Brigade. Some 2500 cases were treated and some 20,000 man-hours of duty were performed. . . . The manner in which the Brigade met its responsibilities . . . was evidence not only of the spirit of loyal co-operation which permeates it, but also of the capacity to deal with any similar situation in the future.[13]

Like Sydney, Melbourne had turned out its greatest crowds ever, and on the day she had arrived, Wednesday 24 February, a million people had lined her route all the way from Essendon Airport to Government House. In their excitement on this and succeeding days Melbournians probably gave Brigade members much more work than the official tally of casualties indicated. The latter represented only those cases which Brigade members had time to enter in their casebooks.

In South Australia, where 'it [could] be said with confidence that St John gained prestige in the minds of the public, thus giving impetus to the organization', the Brigade treated 2798 casualties during the Royal Tour. Its contribution earned it plaudits all round. Afterwards the Premier, Thomas Playford, sent what he said was 'a token grant of £5000 as an expression of thanks from the State for the magnificent services rendered during the visit of Her Majesty'. The Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Arthur Rymill, wrote to express 'sincere thanks' and to 'add congratulations on the wonderful work of the Brigade'. The State director of the tour gave 'sincere thanks for the great assistance and co-operation received from the organization; it is but typical of the service [the Brigade has] been rendering to the community for many years'. The Director of Education said 'it was a great relief to know that the whole matter of rendering first aid to such a vast assembly of school children was in such capable hands'. The Leader of the Opposition, M. R. Halloran, said 'the Brigade lived up to the very high standard of service it has always rendered as occasion requires'. And H. S. Dunks, a grateful member of the public, sent £5 in appreciation of 'the splendid work during the days and nights of the Royal Tour'.[14]

1954 In Queensland, where the Brigade had been in existence for barely four years, the Queen's visit was, for this new District,

> the highlight of the year. The Brigade was represented at most of the official functions, and Ambulance Nurses and Officers, numbering 139, giving 1435 hours on voluntary duty, played their part throughout Queensland. Country divisions were well represented when the Royal couple visited the towns. In Brisbane, nursing personnel, to whom we issued over £25 worth of First Aid material, were on duty throughout the week as an ancillary to Q.A.T.B., and



77 The crowd await the arrival of the Queen, outside St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide, during the Royal Tour of 1954. Groups of Brigade personnel are on duty, right foreground and background.

over 60 were proud to form a Guard of Honour, with Red Cross V.A.'s, at the women's reception in the City Hall.[15]

The scale of the contribution was, perhaps, smaller, but the sense of loyal devotion and service was the same. In Western Australia 'the Divi-

sions were extremely active in providing first aid on all public occasions during the visit'. In Tasmania, too, where the tour coincided with the sesquicentenary of white settlement in Van Diemen's Land, there was also ample work for the Brigade. On 19 February, for example, the night before the Queen arrived in Hobart, even the prospect of the events to come was drawing out the residents in force. As the Hobart *Mercury* noted next day,

> the usually staid city ran riot last night. It was invaded by 50,000 people who took part in a joyous pre-arrival celebration which left no doubt in anyone's mind that today will be the most memorable the city has known.

Brigade members had been among the crowd, and next day they were on duty again, as 200,000 people jostled to see their Queen go through her first day's programme. At the unveiling of the sesquicentennial monument alone the Brigade team treated 200 cases of fainting. By the time the tour was over St John people around the nation had probably lost count of their cases treated, which must have numbered tens of thousands. Though nearly every succeeding year brought Great Occasions, there could scarcely have been periods of public duty quite as intensive as that in early 1954.[16]

The Royal Tour was remarkable for more than its statistics of casualties. Three decades later the fervour it aroused surprises the person who takes the trouble to read about it in the newspapers of the day. Even at the time the enthusiasm with which Australians greeted their Queen surprised some observers, including the Chancellor of the Priory of St John, Hugh Poate, that most loyal servant in a renowned bastion of loyalty. In his address to the Priory Chapter later in 1954 he drew attention to the singular way in which the tour had 'evoked amazing and spontaneous gestures of loyalty and affection throughout the Commonwealth'. And he was proud that, above and beyond the Brigade's and Association's contributions, which, of course, he took for granted, the Priory had made its own special gesture. This had been the presentation of a 'Loyal Address of Welcome' to the Queen. Unfortunately her schedule had not allowed her time to receive this at any special meeting with St John people. Instead, the new Prior, Sir William Slim, who probably would not have been offended to have been described as a 'born again' Knight of the Order, presented the address to her privately. He later informed a meeting of the Priory Chapter that Her Majesty, 'who has always shown great interest in the movement', had been most pleased to receive it.[17]

Although the Royal Tour had undoubtedly been one of the memorable events in Australia's first century of nationhood, and even more so in the case of St John's history, it was by no means the climax of the Order's achievements. Other equally notable milestones followed to mark its further services. The year after the tour, 1955, for example, the Brigade

78 Brigade men help an ambulance officer move an elderly patient from the crowd during the Queen Mother's visit to Sydney, 1956

in New South Wales rendered outstanding service during the Maitland flood disaster. Then in 1956 there were the Olympic Games in Melbourne—another event that daily brought out the crowds in their hundreds of thousands for several weeks on end. Some 100,000 Melbournians lined the streets to watch the Duke of Edinburgh arrive in the city on 22 November to open the Games, and two days later 90,000 people were at the Melbourne Cricket Ground to see the crowd's darling, the local girl, Betty Cuthbert, win the 100 metres final in the Olympic record time of 11.4 seconds. Few of them would have been aware of the efforts of a Brigade team among them trying in vain, even after all hope had gone, to save a man who had suffered a cardiac arrest. The Brigade people were part of a contingent of 150 the District had undertaken to provide daily throughout the Games. The contingent attended all events, logged a total of 17,000 hours of duty—roughly 113 hours each—and treated about 2500 casualties over the three-week period.[18]

Some of the most impressive of post-war duties by Brigade members were still to come. Many of them were to be the work of a new formation within the Brigade in Victoria—the Rescue Squads, an élite group who combined first aiding with the search-and-rescue work more familiarly

79 Victoria's Brigade Rescue Squads on a weekend training camp, late 1960s

associated with specialist police, fire brigade and armed service units. The Rescue Squads were the brain-child of the District Superintendent in Victoria, Max Phelan, who had formerly been a foundation member of the Victorian Police Search and Rescue Squad, which served as his model in developing them. Recruitment into the Squads was selective. On top of a better-than-average performance in the Brigade's first aid tests, full membership required a year's training in bushfire rescue and survival, map reading, vehicle navigation, cliff rescue, hard physical training, hygiene in the field, and exacting civil defence operations 'on location'. Squad members had their own distinctive uniform of white overalls over a black skivvy, a white helmet, army-style black webbing belt and gaiters, and heavy boots. Members '[wore] the Rescue Squad badge proudly on their sleeves'; and, if members of the Brigade's conventional Divisions were the 'infantry', they constituted the 'commandos'.[19]

From their inception in 1962 until their eventual demise about fifteen years later the Rescue Squads performed many notable deeds. Vigorously promoted by Phelan, they enjoyed an excellent press and, popularly referred to as 'the Knights in White', they became familiar figures on the front pages of Melbourne newspapers and on Victorian television screens if not further afield. As their acclaim grew, so too did the generosity of the public towards them. The State government

80 Members of a Brigade Rescue Squad searching the beach at Portsea, Victoria, December 1967, for the missing Prime Minister, Harold Holt

presented them with a civil defence van equipped with rescue gear, including hydraulic implements for clearing wreckage. Members' employers were extremely generous in releasing them for duty whenever the occasion demanded, and public servants were allowed to go off on full pay. The Squads prospered as a result. Within four years there were over twenty of them throughout the State, most at least notionally a part of established Brigade Divisions. The usual complement of a squad was about a dozen; many soon had their own well equipped, radio-controlled vans; and there was a waiting list of prospective members all eager for the excitement which life in a Squad offered.[20]

In 1969 the Rescue Squads seem never to have been out of the news. They gave conspicuous service in a whole series of disasters that seemed to prove the wisdom of their formation. On 8 January they helped out during the State-wide bushfires. On 7 February seventy-one of their number were quickly on the scene of the wreck of the *Southern Aurora*, the Sydney-Melbourne express, which had collided head on with another train near Violet Town, about 170 kilometres north-east of Melbourne, killing nine people and injuring scores of others. At the request of police a unit of Squad members flew to the wreck from Melbourne soon after the crash. They, and the other squads that came later, worked tirelessly for hours to free and treat trapped and injured victims. Two of them

later received British Empire Medals for their efforts. In September the Squads were out in force again to help search for a light aircraft missing near Yarra Glen. That year, too, the Squads were involved in a number of other searches for lost hikers and people who had just wandered off into the bush or desert. And it was in 1969 as well that two of their number helped free a fatally injured driver from an overturned tanker of highly inflammable liquid vinyl chloride.[21]

The two Rescue Squad members attending the last of these mishaps, Alan Smith and Edward Briner of the Broadmeadows unit, were the self same pair who had been the principal participants in a great drama in Tasmania at the end of 1968, when they rushed across Bass Strait to help rescue a youth trapped in an underground pothole. The youth, Timothy Walters, aged sixteen, was one of a party of six who had been exploring a cave known as 'The Devil's Den' near the top of Mt Fawkner, above Claremont and about twenty-four kilometres from Hobart. Four of them had entered the cave mid-afternoon on Saturday 14 December; they descended to a depth of about thirty metres, along a winding, mostly vertical, 'S'-shaped fissure averaging little more than half a metre in diameter. About half-way down they had had to squeeze through a tight 'pinch' measuring only twenty-five centimetres by forty-six. Near the bottom and midway down a 3.5 metre drop, they were worming their way through another tight 'pinch' when a rock fall trapped all four. Walters was pinned by rocks above his shoulders and several large boulders across his legs; two others were caught by rocks around their shoulders and heads; the fourth was not wedged in but was unable to climb free. The two who had remained on the surface later entered the cave, heard their mates' cries, ran to the nearest police station and raised the alarm. A police rescue team hastened up from Hobart, and by 9.30 that night had released three of the youths. Walters, however, remained stuck fast. Police then called in local cavers to help, and when they could not free him a team of miners were brought in. By now it was the early hours of Sunday morning. The miners then worked away for several hours, managing to remove the rocks from around Walters' head and shoulders but not the boulders across his legs.

About 11.00 on the Sunday morning the Tasmanian Police Commissioner decided to ask the Victorian Police for help. They agreed to, then arranged for four members of the Victorian Speleological Association and two members of the St John Ambulance Rescue Squad—the former chosen for their knowledge of caves and caving techniques, the latter for their skill in first aid and rescue work—to fly over to Hobart early that afternoon. The team took with them assorted caving and rescue gear—over 300 metres of climbing rope, flexible wire ladders, hook belts, karabiner links, safety harness, lamps, walkie-talkie radios, hand tools, and 'Porto-Power' hydraulic jacks. By 5.00 p.m. the two St John men and one of the speleologists, Graham Wilson, who had been rushed on

ahead from the airport, were in the cave. Wilson reconnoitred, and located the trapped boy's position, then Briner struggled through the 'pinch' with difficulty—Smith was too stout to make it—and administered a 10-milligram dose of morphine to Walters, who was in pain. They had to break off their efforts soon after this, when movement in the creaking and groaning rock overhead threatened a further fall. In the cave ceiling, slightly up from the narrow 'pinch', was a fault in the rock, comprising several hundred tonnes of loosened material precariously supported by a wedge-shaped keystone.The miners warned that the keystone might give way at any moment, and they strongly advised against using the hydraulic jacks, which they said could trigger this. Indeed, they averred, there was only a one-in-a-hundred chance that hydraulic implements would *not* set off a collapse that would kill everyone in the cave. Against this view was that of a medical practitioner who argued that unless the boulders were soon removed from Walters' legs the lad would die. After further reconnoitring and discussions the Victorians decided that Briner should attempt the rescue, and he in turn chose to use the 'Porto-Power'. With a Tasmanian caver as an aid he went back down through the 'pinch', and after careful planning of every move began to dislodge the boulders. He had to work mostly in a head-down-feet up position, with Smith passing the necessary materials down through the 'pinch' and calling out encouragement over his walkie-talkie. At 10.00 p.m., after four hours' labour, Briner announced that Walters was free, and had no fractures. The latter, however, was almost immobile after having had blood circulation in his legs severely constricted for over thirty-two hours. Briner and the caver had to drag him up to the 'pinch' on a length of canvas, then pass him through to Smith, who examined him then took him to the surface on a stretcher. The party re-emerged just after 11.00 p.m. Walters, who had suffered no serious injury, was placed aboard a waiting ambulance then whisked away to hospital. Briner and Smith retrieved their equipment the next morning; watched Mines Department men seal off the cave entrance with explosive charges; then returned to Melbourne.[22]

In recognition of Briner's and Smith's efforts the Order of St John bestowed a rare distinction upon them—its Life Saving Medal. This is awarded in three grades, gold, silver and bronze, by the Grand Prior on the recommendation of Chapter General, to 'those who in a conspicuous act of gallantry have endangered their own lives in saving, or attempting to save, life'. Before Briner and Smith it seems only to have been awarded seven times in Australia. The first occasion was a medal in silver to a miner named Edward Nicholls who had rescued a mate trapped under a rock dislodged by a charge they had set off in the Cussols mine at Kalgoorlie in 1906. The next three medals also went to Western Australian miners. Francis Hughes was awarded a silver medal in 1907 for donning a diving suit and descending through 100 feet (30.5 metres)

of water in the flooded South Kalgoorlie mine to make a rescue. Arthur Young earned a bronze medal in 1910 for saving an injured mate in the Senate mine at Edjudina during a series of explosions. Then in 1912 Leonard Cullen earned a bronze medal after he had rescued two men trapped by fallen rock after an explosion in the Bullfinch mine near Perth. The fifth and sixth, to Frederick Zarah and Frederick Martyn and in silver and bronze respectively, were for an act of bravery in 1919. Zarah and Martyn had entered a gas tank at the Mortlake (Sydney) works of the Australian Gas Light Company to rescue men overcome by fumes. The seventh medal, in bronze, had gone to an ambulance officer, Cuthbert Thorpe, who in Western Australia in 1956 had rescued a man from the bottom of a twenty-six metre well shaft. Since the award to Briner and Smith there have been only two others in Australia, both in bronze and both to members of the Brigade in South Australia. One went to Jim Toshach, the Superintendent of the West Torrens Cadet Division, who in September 1979 pacified a disturbed gun-wielding man who was threatening to shoot police. The other was for Colin Bourne, a voluntary ambulance attendant who received massive lacerations to the head when the ambulance in which he was riding at Murray Bridge one night in September 1979 was involved in a head on accident. He lost much blood, subsequently requiring three litres of plasma expander, and suffered concussion. His driver was trapped by the legs, and the door was jammed. They could see flames fed by leaking petrol leaping up from under the bonnet of the ambulance. Despite his injuries, Bourne kicked out a window, put out the fire, disconnected the battery, and then collapsed. The driver and a passenger in the other vehicle had been killed, and the patient in the ambulance died later; but Bourne had acted courageously, thinking he would be able to save all their lives.[23]

To make comparisons between the deeds that earn such rare awards is invidious yet Briner's actions *do* stand out. He accordingly received the Life Saving Medal in gold and was only the twelfth person to do so since the medal's inception nearly a century before in 1874. The medal in gold, the Victoria Cross of the Order, had last been awarded ten years previously. Smith's medal was in bronze, and though it was the 327th to have been awarded its worthiness lost nothing by that fact, nor through comparison with Briner's award. As A. W. Burton, the Brigade District Commissioner in Victoria noted at the time, their 'outstanding example of heroism and selfless devotion to duty in the service of mankind [was] in the finest traditions of the Order of St John'.[24]

Briner's and Smith's medals were not the last which members of the Rescue Squads earned. As we saw above, two won British Empire Medals for their endeavours at the *Southern Aurora* crash the following year—Stewart Granger of the Footscray squad and Val Greene of the Ormond Mobile Home Nursing Unit. (The Mobile Home Nursing Units were sister groupings to the Rescue Squads.) And the year after that,

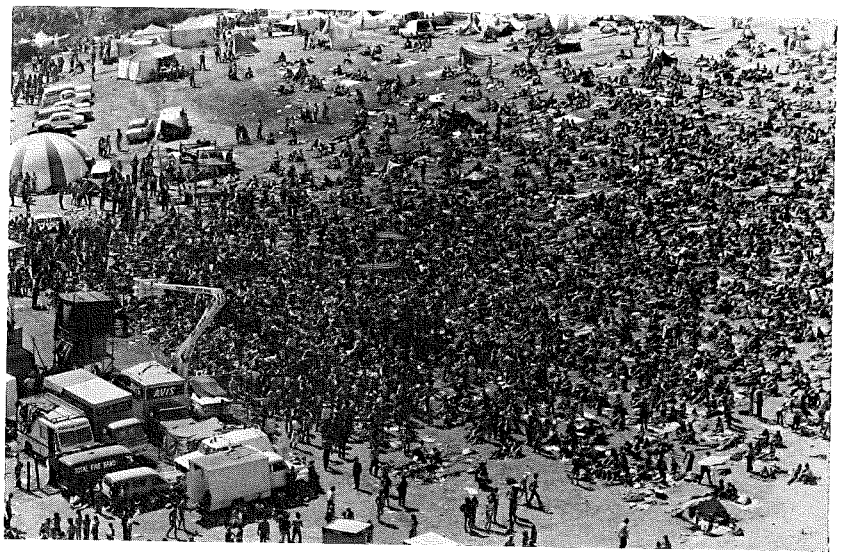
81 Members of the Brigade's Rescue Squads at the wreck of the *Southern Aurora*, Violet Town, Victoria, 1969

1970, two further British Empire Medals were gained—by Alan Sparkes of Ringwood-Nunawading Squad and Elaine Armstrong of the Mobile Home Nursing Units for their efforts following the collapse of the partially completed West Gate Bridge over the mouth of the Yarra River. One of the bridge's central spans had sagged and fallen on the morning of 15 October, pushing over one of its lofty riverside pylons on the way down, killing thirty-five men and injuring many others seriously. St John Ambulance Rescue Squad members were among the first people to arrive on the scene, which presented a Hiroshima vista of devastated steel and concrete. A number of them were from the nearby Footscray Squad. In due course eighty-five members of Rescue Squad and Mobile Home Nursing Units turned up to help retrieve and care for the injured, remove the dead from the tangled rubble, and treat the scores of workers who sustained minor injuries during the rescue operations. They kept at it for nine hours, until police called off the search.[25]

Work of a different kind followed some fifteen months later, in January 1972, when the Rescue Squads and Mobile Home Nursing Units provided the first aid facilities at the first of a series of annual Sunbury Pop Festivals. It was held on rocky farmland in the basalt downs at Melbourne's outer northern fringe, and it tried very hard to be something like the Woodstock Festival outside New York several years previously. With some justifiable hyperbole the Brigade annual report for that year described it as 'the most difficult duty ever tackled by the Brigade'. A

team of 135 Brigade members was on round-the-clock duty for the three days of the festival. They treated about 3000 casualties—more than the Brigade's official tally in Victoria for either the Royal Tour of 1954 or the Olympic Games of 1956. Among the cases treated were hundreds of the usual headaches, cut feet, sunburnings, nose bleeds, sprains, bruises, epileptics, asthmatics and diabetics, blisters, splinters and thorns, allergy rashes, drunks, insect bites, foreign bodies in eyes and ears, suspected fractures, tooth aches, abrasions, concussions, assault victims, and hysterics. There were also quite a few that indicated, perhaps, that the times were indeed a-changing. Some girls came up to the Brigade first aid posts or field hospital to request a 'pill' or sanitary pad they had forgotten to bring. One girl, thirty-two weeks pregnant, had gone into labour at 8.00 one morning and had tried to solve her problem by inserting a tampon. She finally came in at 8.00 that evening for help. The Brigade people got her to a hospital labour ward just as she was having her final contraction. (Three days later they were not surprised to hear from hospital staff that her 1.64-kilogram baby daughter was still covering its ears with its hands.) There were a few that needed treatment for over-ambitious experimentation with 'drugs, opiates, hash, speed, and acid'. There were a few also who came in with complaints described in the casebook as 'soreness of the pubic area'. A number had cuts and grazes resulting from nude swimming and diving in the nearby rockstrewn creek. There were several 'bleeding pierced ears' and even a few 'sunburnt tattoos' and 'sore new tattoos'. Similar complaints and similar numbers of casualties turned up at the succeeding Sunbury festivals in 1973, 74, and 75.[26]

By this time the Rescue Squads and Mobile Home Nursing Units were in decline. They had aroused controversy and their days were numbered. Some people within the Victorian District believed their presence was divisive—that they formed a youthful élite from which older, less active Brigade members were perforce excluded. Some argued that they were proving too expensive a venture: their vehicles, high-technology equipment and large scale operations, it was said, were a bottomless sink into which the hard-earned general funds of the Brigade were disappearing. Some thought their accounting procedures were not strict enough. Then there had been instances of animosity between the Squads and regular Brigade Divisions. And, moreover, there were accusations that they were intruding into a field of endeavour which police, fire-fighting authorities and other official civil defence agencies were better constituted to cover; and that they were consequently ruffling official feathers, to the detriment of the Order as a whole. There was some feeling that the Squad members, decked out in their army-style combat dress, pursuing their commando-style operations and speaking their military-style jargon, were too gung-ho altogether. Older Brigade members, wiser in the ways of the Order, regarded them as too fervently paramilitary for a Brigade which was still a civilian body, for all its uniforms, titles and insignia of



82 The Sunbury Pop Festival, Victoria, 1972. The white van behind the tent in front of the Avis truck is a Brigade 'mobile first aid unit'.

rank. Finally there was a suspicion among some senior officers of the Order that the waiting-list of would-be new recruits to the Squads contained too many who were joining for the wrong reasons – for excitement, adventure and glory rather than for the unobtrusive, selfless service of others which had always been the Brigade ideal. Phelan departed from office in July 1974. Thereafter the movement he had nurtured through to luxuriant growth withered away in about three years, lacking the inspired vitality he had been injecting into it for twelve years.[27]

The achievements of Victoria's Rescue Squads were undeniable, whatever the arguments against them. But they were not the Brigade's only spectacular post-war accomplishments. There were at least two others to rank beside the best the Victorians had attained. Both were brought about by natural disasters, as against the manmade havoc at a Violet Town or a West Gate Bridge. One was the Hobart bushfire holocaust in February 1967 and the other was Darwin's cyclone of Christmas 1975.

Hobart's disaster occurred on Tuesday 7 February 1967, a day of strong winds, high temperatures and low humidity. By 1.30 p.m. the temperature had reached 39° Celsius (103° Fahrenheit), the wind was gusting at 120 kilometres an hour, and the humidity was down to fourteen per cent. Together with the abundant vegetation surrounding Hobart, these were factors setting the fire danger level at 'worst possible', the highest point on the scale, and approximating the conditions that had produced the country's worst recorded conflagration – that in Victoria in January 1939 which killed seventy-one people, burnt out 13,000 square

kilometres of forest (seventeen per cent of the area of the State) and razed several towns. A few isolated fires had broken out around Hobart earlier in the day, but conditions were such that they were soon on their way to becoming one giant blaze. A Hobart academic, R. L. Wettenhall, who subsequently wrote a book about the fire, described what happened:

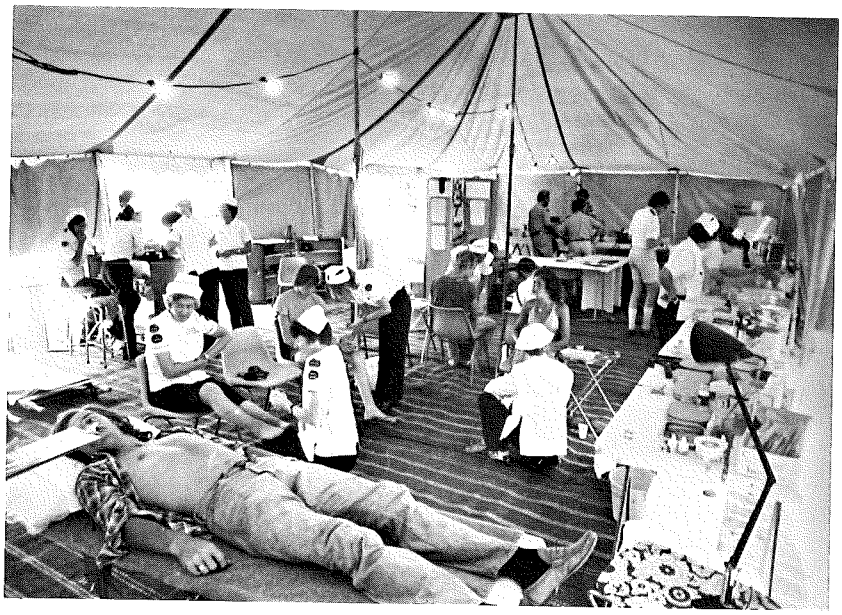
> Fires thought to be under control flared into raging uncontrollable infernos, and some new fires broke out. . . . In places the fire generated its own wind, and some massive fire whirlwinds developed. But the most frightening feature of all was the spotting, the throwing of embers and burning brands (driven by the searing wind), ahead of the main fire front to begin fresh fires anything up to five miles [eight kilometres] away. . . . Before long many of the fire fronts joined together, and jagged walls of flame advanced on farms and forests, country townships and right into the suburban fringes of Hobart. The huge mass of Mt Wellington was enveloped by fire, and the gullies which run up from the centre of the city below into the foothills, and which themselves now carried ribbons of suburbia, acted as conduits for wind and flame.[28]

To describe the scene as frightening was an understatement. A 2500 metre pall of thick smoke descended on the city, closing the airport. A Japanese ship entering the Derwent estuary is said to have turned about and headed for Melbourne, its captain convinced on seeing the whole coastline ablaze that no one could be left alive in the city. Spot fires destroyed buildings within two kilometres of the General Post Office. Three of the four local radio stations (including both those of the Australian Broadcasting Commission) were put out of action. The telephone connections to northern Tasmania and the mainland were cut, leaving Hobart isolated from the world outside. City offices closed down so employees could go home to protect families and homes. Within several days the smoke haze had spread across New South Wales and even to New Zealand—which was not really surprising considering that some 2025 square kilometres had been burnt out in just five hours. The statistics of devastation emerged later: fifty-four people died during the fire and another eight later as a result of burns; some 1300 houses and cottages were destroyed, together with 128 major buildings (factories, schools, hotels, churches), 5000 telephone and power poles, eighty bridges, over 62,000 head of livestock, 2000 farm buildings, 4800 kilometres of farm fencing, and 1500 cars and trucks.[29]

And what of the human experience? As Wettenhall observed,

> It was a time of terror and destruction, of individual bravery and initiative, such as the island community had never known before. . . . The record is full of pathos, of courage in adversity, and of that ability of most human beings to cope when faced with crisis, which so often—particularly in the group context—saves them from deep psychological hurt.[30]

Predictably St John Ambulance was there at the centre of things, helping people to cope. Along with the Red Cross and the Salvation Army it emerged as one of the major relief agencies. St John workers promptly opened a casualty clearing station in the Hobart Town Hall early in the



83 The Brigade's casualty clearing station at the 1974 Sunbury Pop Festival, Victoria.

afternoon of Black Tuesday, but they soon had to move this into the larger City Hall to handle the volume of cases. On duty were three medicos, eleven State registered nurses and twenty rank and file members. By late afternoon the next day they had treated well over five hundred casualties. In addition they maintained mobile first aid teams, which operated out of the Town Hall and rushed to new outbreaks of fire as required. In all they treated over 1700 casualties on the Tuesday and in the two or three days afterwards; and for several weeks after this they helped with the heavy burden of welfare work in the burnt out areas. Their contribution proved that, with the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, the non-government agencies could, in Wettenhall's words, 'fulfil [a] major role in fields of relief for which no [government] department had adequate resources or adequate organization'.[31]

Darwin's disaster was to be greater than Hobart's, though it was not, as Darwinites liked to imagine, 'the greatest natural disaster ever to occur in Australia'. There are different measures of enormity—lives lost, property destroyed, countryside devastated—and on most of them there have been worse calamities. Cyclone Tracy certainly killed sixty-five people and flattened a whole city in a night; but against this Cyclone Mahina is said to have left over 400 people dead along the north Queensland coast in March 1899, the Murrumbidgee flood claimed the lives of eighty-nine of Gundagai's 250 inhabitants in 1852, Black Friday in Victoria in December 1939 saw nearly a fifth of one State burnt and seventy-one

people killed, and there have been shipwrecks, train crashes and mine explosions scoring higher fatality rates than Cyclone Tracy could claim. For all that, superlatives of destruction do come readily to mind when one contemplates what happened in Darwin on Christmas Eve and early Christmas morning 1974.[32]

Cyclone Tracy did not really catch Darwin unawares, for the weather bureau had been issuing warnings about its imminence all day. Not all residents took these seriously, however. The time was inconvenient, to say the least, and not even the most malicious of fates could be conceived of as being unkind enough to interrupt the season's most serious drinking session. Moreover, several weeks previously there had been similar dire warnings about an approaching cyclone, but they had turned out to be false alarms when the cyclone had veered harmlessly away. The St John organization in Darwin, then a sub-district of the South Australian branch of the Order, had responsibility for four of the town's ambulance vans, which it operated using voluntary crews drawn from local Divisions of the Brigade. The St John people therefore had to take the warnings rather more seriously than many of their fellow townsfolk. They worked all afternoon preparing for the night ahead, readying themselves according to a disaster emergency plan drawn up earlier in consultation with the civil defence authorities. They checked their medical stores, vehicles and equipment; called extra staff on duty to assist the ambulance crews already rostered; and alerted all other Brigade members and associates to come into the St John Ambulance base and headquarters building in Ross Smith Avenue, Fannie Bay, as soon as the cyclone had passed. As night fell about eight of them settled down to await whatever the hours ahead held. By about 10.30 p.m. it was becoming apparent that Darwin *was* directly in Tracy's path, and that this was one cyclone which would not oblige citizens by swinging away out of harm's way. Several more people arrived as the night wore on, and so as the winds began rising to their howling crescendo in the half hour after midnight about a dozen people were present. The Darwin police had already rung, at about 11.30 p.m., to say they had recalled all their cars from the roads, and to advise the ambulance service not to accept any more calls unless there was an absolute emergency. The driving wind and rains, they said, had made it impossible for ambulances to be sent out safely. The St John people now battened down to sit the cyclone out.[33]

What happened to the St John staff from then on gives us a fair idea of what was taking place all over Darwin. As the wind and rain intensified the ground floor of the St John base began flooding, and by 12.30 on Christmas morning was awash, with about 7.5 centimetres of water flowing through, although this did not greatly inconvenience the staff upstairs. By 1.00 a.m. the upper floor was awash too and the power had failed: rain was 'falling' horizontally, and the water just poured in through the closed louvre windows as if they were running taps. At about

1.40 a.m. a large air conditioner in the wall of the upstairs communications room suddenly blew in and landed on the desk, narrowly missing the radio operator, Nurse P. King. For thirty minutes staff struggled to cover the gaping hole to prevent the whole wall from giving way. At about this time a call came in for an ambulance to attend someone bleeding badly from extensive wounds caused by flying glass in a house not far away in Fannie Bay. Two senior staff, Rod Bramley and Grant Keetley, set off in a van but were unable to locate the address because most of the street signs had blown away and were now part of the cloud of debris swirling furiously across the suburb. Bramley later recalled that they could easily see where they were going because of a shimmering glow he mistook for lightning before he realized it was from sheets of roofing iron being dashed along the pavements, striking up a continuous shower of sparks as they went. After Bramley and Keetley had returned to base they all decided to move downstairs because, even though the floor was now thickly covered with a layer of mud, they would have a better chance down there if the roof should blow away. As they were moving their communications equipment, gas lights and other items downstairs, the 33.5 metre radio mast collapsed across the rear of the roof and on to one of the ambulance vans. This was about 3.00 a.m., and the eye of the storm was directly overhead. The next two and a half hours were the most frightening: as the cyclone raged they had to fight to prevent the doors from blowing in, which would have allowed the winds to demolish the building.[34]

The winds died down by about 6.00 a.m. At about 6.15 they ventured outdoors, exhausted if not dazed like most of the rest of the citizens, to survey their damage. Apart from the collapsed mast and damaged van, one other van had a broken windscreen, the radio room was flooded, the telephones were out of order, and the louvre windows down one side of the lecture room had caved in. 'Otherwise the ambulance centre was still serviceable', one of them later wrote.[35]

Without knowing the extent of the damage elsewhere, they had spent the dying hour or two of the cyclone devising a plan of action 'if we were all here after it passed over'. Assessing their damage was the first part of it and, that done, they faced

> immediate problems: (1) Establish communications with Hospital, Police and Fire Brigade. (2) Establish communications between ambulance and base. (3) Crew all available ambulances. (4) Staff a First Aid post and casualty clearing centre. (5) Provide food, drinking water and sleeping quarters for crews. (6) Provide some form of sanitation. (7) Electricity for the Centre.[36]

They secured the services of two Department of Civil Aviation technicians who happened along and had their radio communication system operational by 8.30 a.m.; they sent one of their vans to police headquarters and another to the Darwin Hospital to link all three agencies together; they obtained some electrical generators to supply power; they

cleaned up the mess around them, nailed sheets of iron over the broken windows, and by 9.00 a.m. had set up a first aid centre in the ambulance crews' quarters. Within fifteen minutes this was crowded with patients who had found their way in to have various injuries treated. A subsequent report described the procedure of treatment that unfolded:

> Two doctors, a nursing sister and a medical student arrived at the [St John] Ambulance Centre and with the aid of members set up for minor surgery. Lacerations caused by flying glass or sheet iron were sutured, fractures immobilized and tetanus, typhoid and cholera injections administered. Patients requiring further treatment were conveyed by ambulance to Darwin Hospital. To prevent confusion and overcrowding of the Centre, patients not requiring hospitalization were moved to the Darwin Aviation Club and bedded down. A local chemist shop was handed over . . . and its contents of medical supplies distributed by members to major casualty centres. A kitchen was established on the top floor of the ambulance station and food and soup distributed among casualties.[37]

Government medical authorities quickly set up local schools as major casualty centres. St John members helped out in these, too, and their ambulances worked continually ferrying supplies, locating and bringing in those needing attention, and moving to the Darwin Hospital any who needed further treatment. Many streets were impassable because of the vast litter of debris. This slowed their task down considerably, forcing them to stay at it round the clock.[38]

How many casualties the St John people treated is uncertain. They were too busy to keep a record of the tally, but a later 'guesstimate' put the number at 2000 on Christmas day alone—excluding those picked up and transported to the clearing stations in the schools. The emergency first aid centre at their Fannie Bay base ran for thirty-six hours non-stop, well into the night on Boxing Day. During the afternoon on Christmas day they sought approval from the Department of Health to take over the control of the ambulances operating under departmental control. They were convinced they could make better use of the latter, which they thought were being seriously under-utilized. After a verbal fight with the bureaucrat concerned their insistence won the day. Having all the city's ambulances now operating under their aegis, they turned their atention to the massive airlift of injured citizens to the southern States. They set up a shuttle service, taking patients to the airport and bringing back the medical supplies coming in on the planes. By 8.00 p.m. on Boxing Day all urgent cases had been treated and evacuated, and the main first aid work was then to do redressings. Later that night they were able to close the centre down. Their catering crew under the direction of Mrs Terry Dahlenberg prepared their first square meal in over two days, and the dinner that followed was the first break most of them had had in that time. In addition to the dozen or so who had lived through the frenzied night at the base, there were many others who had arrived shortly after daylight on Christmas morning. Altogether some fifty-five people

worked day and night out of the base, putting in close to 3000 hours of duty between them.[39]

St John bodies in other States were prompt in offering aid to their Darwin colleagues, and to the wider Darwin community. Perhaps the most immediate assistance came from the South Australian branch of the Order, which had the closest links with the Northern Territory St John organization. Five days after the cyclone a team of twelve full-time St John ambulance officers from South Australia flew in under the command of Transport Superintendent Peter Gebert to relieve the overtaxed Darwin crews. Not all the latter wished to be relieved: with true Territorian sense of independence, they resentfully inferred they were being supplanted—that as volunteers rather than professionals they were not thought good enough to continue running the city ambulance service. The men from Adelaide stayed a month, and one of them, Terry Stal, remained on until August as acting Officer in Charge of the new coordinated service that had come into being at St John insistence. This period represented the first step in the process by which St John soon gained control of the entire Territory-wide ambulance transport system. The St John volunteers had acquitted themselves so well during the crisis that the Northern Territory government had little hesitation in making their Order responsible for the Territory's ambulance facilities.[40]

The New South Wales District of the Brigade took a novel approach to aiding the cyclone victims. The Deputy Commissioner, Les Carrington, after discussions with members of the Sydney Aboriginal community, prompted the District to make an appeal among Divisions for money and materials to help Aborigines who had suffered. In five days the Divisions sent in $6000 in cash and thirty-five tonnes of food and clothing. Later on the District ran a holiday camp for white and black children evacuated from Darwin, staging this at the Brigade's campsite at Blaxland.[41]

Cyclone Tracy was by no means the last occasion on which the Brigade distinguished itself, for while crowds continued to gather, St John kept on being there among them. One notable occasion exemplifying the service they were always able to produce was New Year's Eve 1979 at the Sydney Opera House. A huge crowd had gathered there early in the evening to see the New Year in by watching a Rock concert on a stage set up on the steps outside. About thirty Brigade members were present, expecting no more than the normal run of stubbed toes, faintings and cases of inebriation. By about 10.00 p.m., however, there were warnings that this was going to be more than the usual Opera House outdoor festival. Perhaps because of the sultry weather and the alcohol and drugs it had consumed the crowd was in a nasty mood. It hissed the bands on stage, fights broke out sporadically, police who tried to restore order were heckled. Many children were present, many unaccompanied by adults. Many louts seemed to have come along, too, wanting trouble. The

hissing took on an angry edge, then drink cans and bottles, some full, began landing on the stage. The fighting escalated; the refuse landing on the stage and being hurled back into the crowd flew thicker; police were being assaulted; people were being knocked unconscious, or badly bruised and cut by objects thrown both intentionally and at random.

The Brigade now had on its hands something it knew little of in Australia—an ugly riot. Brigade members got to work treating the injured. They appealed to the crowd for sufficient space in which to treat victims. All they got in reply was a hail of bottles, cans and rubbish. Undaunted they kept at their task as long as there was work to do—until about 2.45 on New Year's morning. In the space of five hours they treated some 387 casualties, forty of whom had to be sent on to hospital for further care. When their job was done they rounded up the children, some of them less than ten years old, who had sought St John protection when the rioting erupted. They drove their motley collection of children home and were upset to see that many let themselves into houses devoid of adults. 'Thank heavens St Johns got involved!' remarked the publisher, Ita Buttrose, in a column canvassing the implications of the riot in her journal *The Australian Women's Weekly* several weeks later.[42]

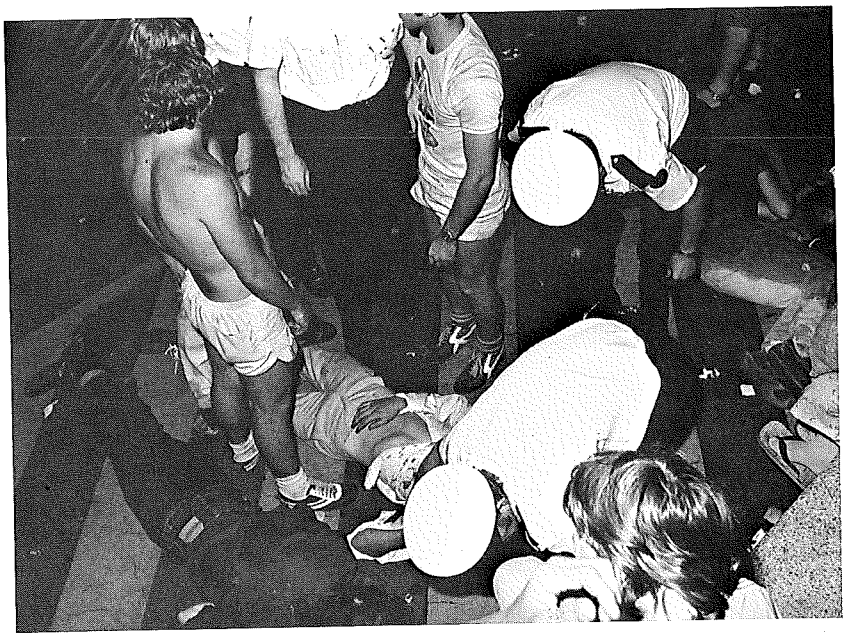
Every year in every State Brigade members served with similar devotion. Most of the time their efforts went unnoticed, but occasionally a passing journalist or television camera crew would catch them at their work. In 1980 it was two reporters from the *Age* who brought them into the limelight just as Melbourne was winding itself up for the Victorian Football League grand final. Their article, published the day the finals series began, under the headline 'Death strikes behind the play', was along these lines:

> It wasn't long into the second quarter of last week's game at the MCG, big Carl [Ditterich, the Melbourne captain] had started to throw his weight around, when the old man died.
>
> He collapsed in the aisle leading to the dressing rooms. Ambulance officers arrived, so too did the police. A bearded doctor pumped rhythmically on the man's chest, his head bobbing above the crowd, which had eyes only for the football.
>
> From the top of the pavilion you could see a woman tossing her head in anguish, shaking the arm of an ambulance officer and, finally, listening numbly to the doctor.
>
> Except for a small boy in a Collingwood guernsey who watched, grasping his football, the crowd watched Carl.
>
> And today some of those same, apparently uncaring people could find themselves experiencing the same public trauma at VFL Park or the MCG.
>
> Footy finals tend to kill people. Not many, of course, but enough.
>
> It's partly the time of the year. Desperate football tension and atmosphere. A long walk from the car on a warm day, and the statistical argument which says that when thousands of people get together there must be many already suffering heart disease.
>
> Two people died during the last round of home and away matches last week, and more had heart attacks. We can conservatively expect several dozen

84 St John at work during the evacuation of Darwin, December 1974. Mrs Val Ide of the South Australian Brigade's Brighton Nursing Division takes care of a young evacuee at Adelaide airport following the airlift south of Cyclone Tracy victims.

serious collapses in the next four weeks of finals and probably five or six deaths.

The cruel fact is that if you are going to collapse at the football, it is best to



85 Brigade members treat victims of the riot at the Sydney Opera House, New Year's Eve, 1979

do so at the finals. The emergency services, struggling through the home and away matches, are geared for the onslaught by then.

The number of ambulances at each finals match is doubled to two and expert resuscitations teams, a rarity during the season, are out in force with borrowed emergency equipment.

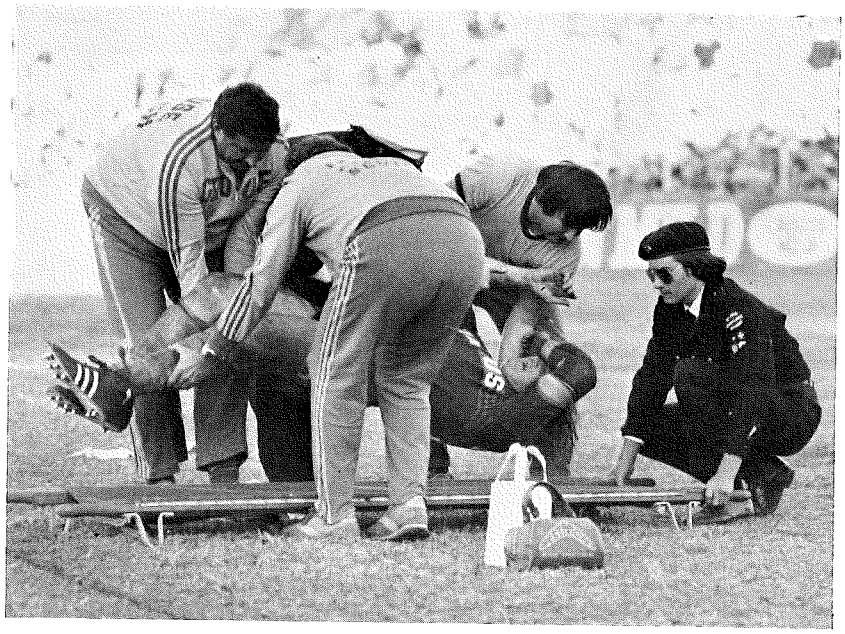
Apart from the two [Civil] ambulances at Waverley and the MCG today, there will be St John Ambulance officers and their doctors and nurses. There will be eighty of them at VFL Park and 120 at the MCG. They are all volunteers.

From gate receipts the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service will be paid about $300 a vehicle for the day. St John relies on good will and gifts. Last year it got about $1000 from the VFL and a smattering of gifts from individual clubs.

The District Superintendent for the St John Ambulance, Mr Roy Green, resists any temptation to criticise the amount of financial help his organisation gets from the VFL or the clubs. It is expected in the service that you give up all spare time and even pay for your own bandages.

The VFL's general manager, Mr Jack Hamilton, praises St John. He also confirms a donation of 'about $1000' this year.[43]

Typically the Brigade did not ask much, did not receive much, and was content most of all with knowing its members had been of use. Some might have criticised the organization for not promoting itself sufficiently, for not seeking subsidies from wealthy patrons. Such critics, however, would not have understood what it was that drove Brigade members to give up their time to scan the crowd for casualties while a hundred thousand others were absorbed in the spectacle on the field.



86 Keith Coorey (obscured) and cadet Doug Bell of the Parramatta Divisions have come to the aid of injured Parramatta footballer, Graham Olling, July 1979.

In this unobtrusive way the St John bodies lived on year by year to enter their second century in Australia. The country itself was changing and the times were uncertain. There was a role for the St John volunteer as much as there ever had been, even though the nature of the work and the public duties were changing with the country. Meeting ship loads of Gallipoli's victims had been the order of the day in 1915; a decade later it had been to stand by at the grand processions of royal dukes and heirs to the throne; later still there had been wartime duty with the Voluntary Aid Detachments or the Air Raid Precautions; and there had been Australia's last great celebration of Empire, the Royal Tour of 1954. Much of the routine work remained the same—attending Anzac Day marches, being present week by week at football or races, helping out at special functions like Scout jamborees and Eucharistic congresses. Every few years there was a disaster to attend, be it a train crash, a flood, a bushfire or a pile up of vehicles on some highway. Increasingly, as Australians' interests and preoccupations entered new dimensions, new forms of duty appeared. Fun runs, walkathons, pop concerts, protest marches on behalf of myriad causes, BMX carnivals and multicultural festivals were all within the St John ambit as the Order entered the 1980s. And whatever changes lay ahead one thing was certain: as long as there was a St John Ambulance in Australia its members would be among the people, seeking to save lives and minimize suffering.

DD

11

The early post-war decades

The best measure of the vigour of the St John bodies has always been the numbers of people taking first aid and home nursing classes, and the numbers of active Brigade members. According to that gauge, St John's early post-war decades were prosperous because, as we have seen, this was a time of growth and expansion. The steady upward trend of the graphs for Association pupils and Brigade strength indicated an organization reaching adulthood in full bloom of health and vitality.

There were, of course, other signs that St John was in its prime of life, for as it grew it began branching out into new activities. If the formation of the Priory in 1946 had been the granting of the 'key of the door'—a gesture by Grand Priory that its Australian offspring was at last of age—then the developments ensuing during the 1950s and 60s represented the assumption of an adult's responsibilities. Among these new endeavours were the establishment of an Australian agency for the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem, the standardization of the Order's administrative hierarchy from State to State, the development of a St John organization for Papua New Guinea, Australia's principal overseas Territory at the time, the setting up of a national secretariat and headquarters in Canberra, a further move into ambulance transport work, this time in South Australia and Tasmania, the final cutting of the leg-rope that had tethered St John to the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, the adoption of new methods and technology in first aid training, and the publication of the Order's first specifically Australian manuals for first aid and home nursing.

1 *The St John Councils*

The sort of management and administrative machinery that grew within the St John organizations was fairly similar from one State to another. Generally in each State there was a Centre committee (known as a council in Victoria and Western Australia) to run the affairs of the Association. Before the formation of the Priory in 1946 the Centre committee customarily had the State Governor as its patron. Some other leading citizen (a Chief Justice or a Lord Mayor, or the current head of a 'founding family') served as the president, which was generally a titular position, with the conducting of the annual general meeting as its main

duty. The Centre chairman was usually the chief executive officer, and ran the meetings of the executive committee, which were usually held monthly. The Centre secretary was responsible for day to day administration; and though in days gone by this had been an honorary position, in the post-war years all the States which had not already done so took on full time salaried secretaries as soon as the volume of training work justified this. The Brigade, the second of the Order's foundations into the field in each State, developed a rather different structure. Each State was a Brigade District and was always headed by the Commissioner (though if he had not yet been admitted to membership of the Order he was called an Assistant Commissioner), and his supporting staff of Deputy Commissioner, District Surgeon, District Superintendent, and District Officers in charge of Ambulance, Nursing and Cadet Divisions. As time went by some Districts took on a full time secretary, who was often a senior Brigade officer as well and who in some cases also doubled as Association Centre secretary.

How much contact there was between Association Centre and Brigade District varied from State to State. In some the two were closely linked: the Brigade provided the Association with many of its instructors and examiners, senior Brigade officers also held high office in the Centre committees, the same secretariat served both bodies, and they shared the same head office premises. In at least one State the Association was the dominant partner, the Brigade having developed as an Association appendage; and elsewhere they dwelt well apart, in separate premises and with little cross-fertilization—a situation which had displeased the emissaries from St John's Gate in the 1920s and 30s.

Varying property-holding arrangements had also developed from State to State. By the time the Priory formed, the St John bodies held considerable real estate and other fixed assets. In Perth and Sydney there were St John Houses in the city centres, each owned by the Association Centre. A number of Brigade Divisions in each State had also acquired their own halls and meeting rooms. There were other assets too—beach casualty stations, campsites, vehicles, medical equipment, furniture, and audio-visual aids. In the States where St John had charge of ambulance transport facilities—Western Australia and later South Australia—the suburban and country ambulance stations comprised a network of property holdings that were spreading across each State concerned; and these regional sub-centres were the bases from which Association teaching and Brigade public duties proceeded.

The formation of the Priory raised a number of issues in relation to the administrative structures and property rights of each State St John Branch. If Priory was now the supreme council for St John in Australia, for example, what powers should it have to instruct the St John bodies to conform to the administrative models it might ordain? And what about property? Was all property to be vested under the direct control of

Priory? Were the State, regional and local branches which had struggled to build up funds via their button days, raffles and concerts—often vigorously supported by 'St John Auxiliaries'—now to pass their hard won assets over to the nominal control of a remote body issuing demands from far away Sydney?

The attitude of some St John Branches to these questions was obvious in an exchange between Poate, the Sub-Prior, and W. C. Brear, secretary to the Commandery in Western Australia, at a 1949 meeting of the Priory Council. Poate's view was that 'all these [State branch] properties and monies should be vested in the Order'. He further thought that 'if the individual States are given the authority to manage their own affairs . . . they should not dispose of any property without explanation to and authority from the Priory'.[1] Brear sharply replied that, as far as his State Branch was concerned,

> the St John Association in Western Australia was the Order of St John until the Australian Commandery [had been] formed. The Association in Western Australia was the supreme body, the Brigade being more or less ancillary . . . It would be strongly opposed that property should be vested in the Priory of Australia, seeing that there is a Commandery of equal status in Western Australia, and any idea of transferring assets or attempting to control them would be unfavourably received. For example, it is intended to construct a £15,000 building at Kalgoorlie, and if there is any suggestion to move the control of finance to the Priory it would cause great antipathy towards the Priory. The attitude of Western Australia is that they be allowed to carry on the work as has been done for many years . . . It is not felt that money should be subscribed to an organization which is doing nothing. If called on to make payments to a Priory there will be objections.[2]

Poate then had to mollify the Western Australian contingent, pointing out that,

> as far as properties are concerned, as long as they are vested in a St John authority that is all that is necessary. It is considered that would comply with Regulations laid down in the new Charter that all properties must be vested in the Priory.[3]

In St John, as in the wider body politic, Australian federalism thus had its special constraints. While most States were happy to belong to Priory they did not wish to be dictated to, and any attempt by Priory to claim the right to direct them in the use of their assets would be viewed as an insufferable imposition.

The way out of such problems and towards greater uniformity of practice was the formation of a St John Council in each State, that is, a central body comprising representatives of both Association and Brigade, to be responsible for the affairs of the Order in the State and to be the agent in which all St John properties in the State would be vested.

The idea for St John Councils came from the United Kingdom, where they had begun being formed in the year or two following the war. When Poate first floated the idea of such Councils for Australia, in November

87 Sir Hugh Poate in 1957. Poate was the first Chancellor of the Priory in Australia of the Order of St John and the first Australian to be promoted to the rank of Bailiff Grand Cross of the Order, the highest in the Order

1948, he prefaced his proposal with the comment that Chapter General favoured it and that in addition to the St John bodies in the U.K. those in South Africa, Canada and New Zealand were also implementing similar schemes. Australia, he said, ought to step into line with Priories elsewhere. He then produced a set of draft regulations for perusal by the Priory Executive, which approved them and passed them on to the Priory Council for its consideration.

Poate's proposal met a mixed reception at first. Sir Samuel Burston,

the Brigade's Chief Commissioner, said the Brigade felt 'some diffidence' about accepting the regulations without further discussion. The Brigade wanted only 'an affirmation of the general principle' at this stage, he said. The motion subsequently adopted to approve the proposal was therefore couched in general terms, and contained an escape clause for unwilling States. It

> recommended the acceptance where practicable of the formation of a central body in each State to control the general policy and co-ordinate the activities of the Order of St John within the Priory in Australia, excepting the Commandery in Western Australia.[4]

In the debate preceding this resolution Col. Alexander Christie, secretary to the Brigade in Victoria, said the Victorians were generally pleased with the idea though they did not want 'an extra, top-heavy body over them to which they must hand over their assets, and which would then dole out funds to them'. A. R. Heath, a Brigade delegate from South Australia, said, 'We do not have difficulties in South Australia: Brigade and Association work in closest harmony; both bodies are strongly in favour of the formation of State Councils'. Capt. E. R. B. Pike of Queensland said, 'I agree the States should consider the closer working of the two bodies, and that there should be a Council in each State'. Dr Tom Goddard of Tasmania was not present but had sent a letter saying, 'In Tasmania we are wholly in accord that the Council should be the central controlling body'. Maj.-Gen. F. A. Maguire, the Hospitaller and Almoner, who had grown up in the Brigade in New South Wales, said he 'strongly supported the proposed formation of St John Councils through which the Association and Brigade could appeal to the public in the name of the Venerable Order of St John'. Dr C. A. Verco, representing the Brigade in New South Wales, also gave his support, saying his District was 'willing to accept the formation of a Council'. In Western Australia there was no problem, despite the trenchant views of Brear and others in relation to the rights of the Priory, because an analogous body was already in existence there: when the Commandery for Western Australia had been established in 1946 a 'Commandery Council' had come into being with the same functions as the St John Councils now being proposed for the other States. With most States in general agreement, only the Association in New South Wales continued to resist strenuously. The New South Wales Centre chairman, E. Newton Daly, argued the case like this:

> The executive of the Association Centre is unanimously of the opinion that the New South Wales Centre, which has successfully functioned for the past fifty-eight years as at present constituted, serves every purpose that is necessary for its proper working and co-ordination between the Association and Brigade and is not agreeable to the formation of a St John Council for the State of New South Wales.[5]

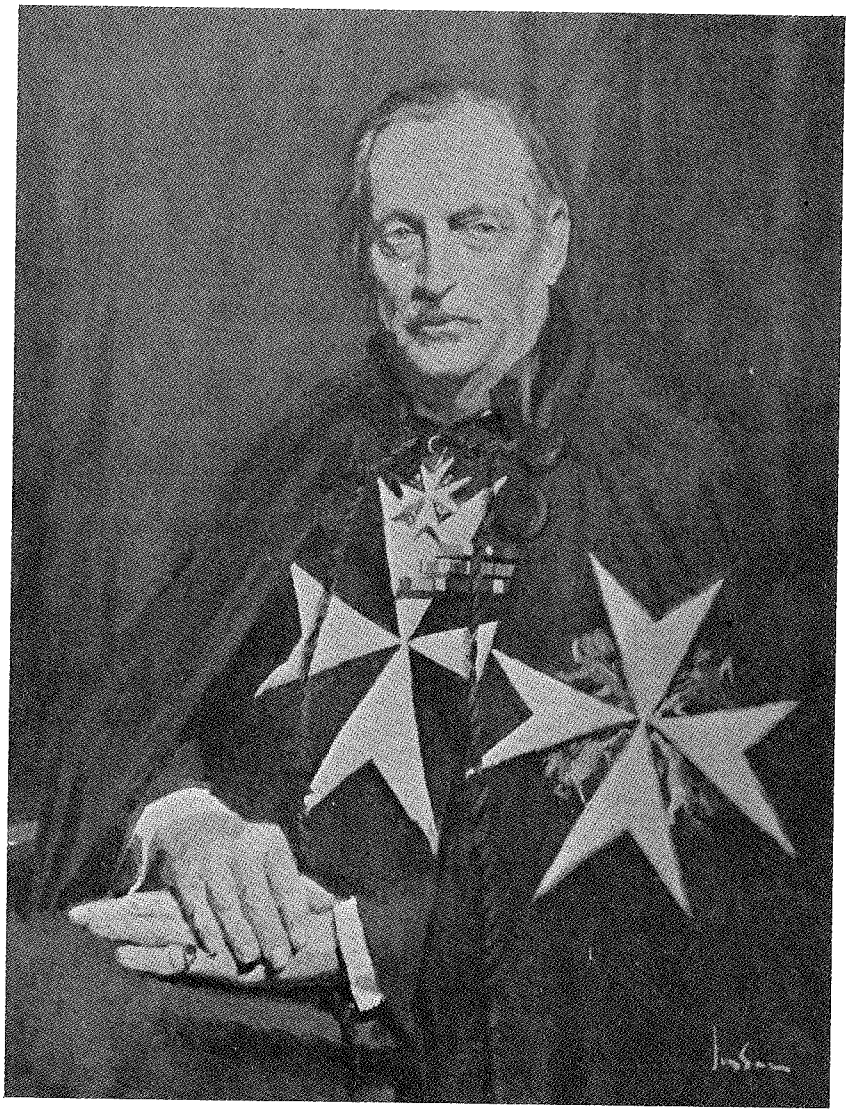
When the matter came to a vote only he and his fellow Association delegate from New South Wales, Dr Katie Ardill-Brice, voted against the resolution.

The dissenting view of the New South Wales Centre notwithstanding, Priory and the State Branches now proceeded to implement the proposal. State Branches discussed the draft regulations and suggested amendments. Poate was able to bring the amended draft regulations to a Priory meeting in June 1949. In speaking to them he referred again to practice overseas, where there were now some thirty St John Councils operating successfully, and he appealed to the need for better co-ordination. 'The logical thing to do in Australia', he said, was 'to bring the activities of the Order in each State under the one controlling body, so that in presenting our work to the public it would be "from the Order of St John"'. He went to pains to point out that 'it was not compulsory for each State to form a Council, but he hoped for uniform acceptance of the proposal within the Priory'. Priory Council duly adopted the regulations. A further Priory Council meeting five months later, in November 1949, learnt of the progress made towards introducing the scheme. South Australian delegates reported that their Council was now operating, 'the gap between Association and Brigade has now been bridged, and the work is all under the Order of St John now'. The Victorians said their Council was set up and 'now works harmoniously'. The Tasmanians said their Council had 'been working successfully for some time'. The Queenslanders said there was 'no chance of [the scheme] being implemented' in their State because the absence of a Brigade there was an obstacle. And E. Newton Daly reported that his Centre remained firmly opposed to the idea. Instead, Ardill-Brice informed the meeting, a joint Association-Brigade 'Advisory Council' had formed and was trying to co-ordinate the affairs of each foundation.[6]

Eventually both Queensland and New South Wales fell into line. Queensland set up its Council in 1952, a couple of years after Brigade divisions had been formed and the Queensland District had been instituted. New South Wales held out longer because the Centre there 'did not see any good purpose would be served by considering [the idea]'. So the cleavage between the Association and Brigade there which had earlier drawn unfavourable comment from Sir James Sleeman continued. It was not until 1965, by which time Ardill-Brice and Newton Daly had been dead for ten and seven years respectively, that the New South Wales Centre could be enticed into supporting the formation of a Council. The Centre did so at the urging of Col. (later Sir) George Stening, Poate's successor as Chancellor. Stening had been a protégé of Poate: he had come under Poate's influence in 1927 when he had been a resident graduate at Poate's hospital in Sydney, the Royal Prince Alfred; he knew at the time that Poate 'put on a strange uniform and did charitable work at weekends'; and at Poate's urging had himself linked up with the

Brigade. Stening had risen through the ranks in the New South Wales District to serve as Commissioner from 1946 until 1952; he had then joined the Priory executive as Director of Ceremonies, and subsequently served as Director of Ambulance (that is, the chief office of the Association) then Receiver General until he succeeded to the Chancellorship after Poate's death early in 1961. Having been both a Brigade Commissioner and the country's seniormost Association officer, Stening was perhaps better placed than anyone to effect a reconciliation between the two foundations in his home State.[7]

As they came into being a number of the St John Councils became incorporated under their relevant State companies acts, associations acts and ordinances, or charities acts, so that properties might be vested in them and so that they might acquire and disburse funds. Some set up holding companies to achieve similar ends. Some did not become incorporated themselves but had their Association Centres or Brigade Districts or both incorporated. Elsewhere all three—Council, Centre and District—were incorporated. By the 1980s the Australian St John Ambulance organization was a highly complex structure of no less than twenty-three separate St John bodies. In brief there were: the Priory of the Order of St John in Australia (registered under the Associations Incorporations Ordinance of the Australian Capital Territory), the Commandery in Western Australia of the Order of St John (no incorporation), the St John Ambulance Association Western Australian Centre (incorporated), the St John Ambulance Brigade Western Australian District (incorporated), the St John Council for Victoria (no incorporation), St John Holdings (Victoria) (incorporated), the St John Ambulance Association Victorian Centre (no incorporation), the St John Ambulance Brigade Victorian District (no incorporation), the St John Council for South Australia (incorporated), the St John Ambulance Association South Australian Centre (incorporated), the St John Ambulance Brigade South Australian District (no incorporation), the St John Council for Tasmania (no incorporation), St John Holdings (Tasmania) (incorporated), the St John Ambulance Association Tasmanian Centre (no incorporation), the St John Ambulance Brigade Tasmanian District (no incorporation), the St John Council for the Northern Territory (incorporated), the St John Ambulance Association Northern Territory Centre (incorporated), the St John Ambulance Brigade Northern Territory District (incorporated), the St John Council for New South Wales (no incorporation), the St John Ambulance Association New South Wales Centre (incorporated), the St John Ambulance Brigade New South Wales District (registered), the St John Council for Queensland (no incorporation), the St John Ambulance Association Queensland Centre (registered under the Queensland Charities Collection Act), the St John Ambulance Brigade Queensland District (registered, as was each individual Brigade division), the St John Am-



88 The second Chancellor of the Order of St John in Australia, Sir George Stening, from the 1978 portrait by Graeme Inson

bulance Association Australian Capital Territory Sub-Centre (incorporated) and the St John Ambulance Brigade Australian Capital Territory Sub-District (no incorporation). All this might have confused the outsider probing the Order's legal status in Australia, but it was probably no more labyrinthine an edifice than that of, say, the Scout Association, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army or other kindred organizations.[8]

From the outset the St John Councils worked well. They produced the co-ordination Poate had hoped for. They minimized the friction between

Association and Brigade in most States, reducing the likelihood of the personality clashes that occasionally arose between the principal figures in the two foundations from escalating into the sort of rancorous feud that ended in pitting Centre and District against each other—as had occurred in times past in New South Wales and South Australia. (Queensland was to be the notable exception here, as we shall soon see.) They generally ensured that the Order's influence remained paramount, and that its dignity was preserved in undertakings entered into in the name of St John. (There were, once more, (as we shall see) exceptions, but they were indeed exceptions.) There was, consequently, less chance that the Centre or District in any State could become the personal fiefdom of some dominant figure—as had happened once or twice before—or that the organization could be turned to the personal advantage of some individual, to the detriment of the Order's good name. The St John Councils also enabled the St John bodies in each State to face the public as a unitary community that spoke with one voice. This had the salutary effect of reducing the confusion in the mind of the public, who were sometimes uncertain exactly what 'St John's (sic) Ambulance' comprised. In those States where there was no St John involvement in ambulance transport, the public were at times unsure whether or not it was St John that operated their ambulance vans; and the public everywhere often failed to appreciate the nice distinction whereby it was someone from the Association who taught them first aid but somebody in a Brigade uniform who would come to their aid if they collapsed at a rugby league match or a Moomba procession.

The uncertainty was not only in the mind of the public. Many within the St John organization had only a hazy notion of how their Order was structured. The interlocking network of Priory and Priory executive committees, of State St John Councils, holding companies, Association Centres and Sub-Centres, and Brigade Districts, Corps and Divisions, not to mention ambulance stations in those States having them, must often have looked like a vast jigsaw puzzle to those at the grass roots level. While other national organizations were perforce complex, St John was one that often seemed to have made a virtue of complexity.

With this point in mind some State Branches of St John by the 1970s were looking for ways to simplify their affairs. It was Tasmania, so often the latecomer in St John matters in times past, that led the way this time. In 1973 the St John bodies there began moves to amalgamate the administration of the Council, the Centre and the District. This meant creating the one 'St John State Committee' to assume the major responsibility for executing Council, Association and Brigade policy instead of maintaining separate administrative hierarchies for each as was the case elsewhere, on the mainland. In terms of practice in the mainland States this was a revolutionary proposal. The functions of the new State Committee were to be

1. Overall direction of St John in the State. 2. Administration of a State Headquarters. 3. Administration of State finance. 4. All technical decisions. 5. Organization of all St John fundraising. 6. Ownership of all St John property through a company called St John Holdings and major capital goods (over $100.00). 7. Employment of all paid staff.[9]

It would consist of a chairman, a secretary-manager, a treasurer, and a board of 'directors' drawn from the Brigade, the Association and from each of the three principal regions of the State—the South, the North and the Northwest. This State Committee would delegate many of its responsibilities to subsidiary 'area committees', one for each of the three State regions, and they in turn would delegate to local committees. The St John Council would still continue to operate because 'Priory regulations lay down that a Council will exist in each State'. However, 'because many of its members are not active workers within the organization', the proposal was that 'it should delegate its executive functions to the small, representative, State Committee and itself meet only occasionally to satisfy itself that the organization is in a healthy condition'.[10]

The purpose of the change, according to its proponents, was both to streamline the whole St John edifice and to encourage closer co-operation between Association and Brigade. With the slogan 'If we do not integrate we will dis-integrate', they explained their reasoning like this:

> The spirit of the proposed reorganization is to foster co-operation between the foundations of the Association and the Brigade, and consequently greatly increase efficiency. Committees are small to increase efficiency and each foundation is equally represented. If the spirit of co-operation is achieved, one foundation will never dominate the other, and, in time, the distinctions between the two may disappear.
>
> Whilst very many Association members are also Brigade members, there are numbers of good, dedicated Association members who are not. It has been suggested that more would welcome involvement, particularly Nursing Sisters if they knew they did not have to join a uniformed organization.[11]

The last of these points was realistic, for there were in every State those who might feel great sympathy for the ideals of St John yet would not go so far as to don the Brigade uniform. Those who wore it proudly, on the other hand, often felt some resentment about the reservations of the former. While Centre and District remained apart there was always a fertile field for discord between them, but if that ground could be eliminated then one perennial source of dissension within the movement might vanish.

The new arrangements took force in Tasmania in 1973, and worked well thereafter. In the smallest State they were indeed the most rational approach to management, and as such provided a model for similar ventures on the mainland, where strained Association-Brigade relations continued in some States. Whether or not the Tasmanian reforms should spread across Bass Strait was a matter for debate. Some people thought

that, as in the United Kingdom, where amalgamation has occurred soon after the Second World War, the reorganization should occur Priory-wide. Others saw benefits in the *status quo*. Whatever point of view was better, uniformity would be hard to obtain. Given the peculiarities of Australian federalism within and without St John, and the enormous diversity of the St John movement from one State to the next, obtaining consensus would be a herculean task for the Prior or Chancellor bold enough to contemplate it.

2 *The 'other' foundation, the Ophthalmic Hospital*

One of the St John bodies little known to the ordinary Brigade or Association toiler in Australia was, understandably, remote from most rank and file St John members. Ironically it was the one with the closest ties to the ancient seat of the Knights Hospitaller. This was the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem.

The Ophthalmic Hospital's work was almost exclusively among the Arab population of Israel and the adjacent Arab states, and thus had little direct bearing on what the average member of a Brigade Division in, say, Toowoomba, Wollongong, Geelong or Whyalla might be doing. St John workers in such places had more immediate problems to worry about than the incidence of trachoma and glaucoma among Bedouins. They might have spared a thought for the high rate of these diseases among their own Aboriginals, but probably took the view that if the Arabs suffered from eye diseases then that was more a concern for oil-rich Sheikhs than for Australians. They may, therefore, have been surprised to know that not only did their Order work among the Arabs but that its Ophthalmic Hospital was indeed a foundation of the Order in its own right, and was accordingly equal in status to both the Association and the Brigade. Indeed the inauguration of this third foundation had come only five years after that of the former and seven years *before* the inception of the latter. Such was the complexity of the Australian St John organization that many of its lowlier members were probably unaware of the efforts in each State of a small devoted band of members who found their particular contribution to the work of the Order was in supporting the Ophthalmic Hospital.

In Chapter 3 we saw how the Ophthalmic Hospital had come into being in 1882, chiefly through the efforts of Sir Edmund Lechmere. Lechmere had a shrewd eye for opportunities to increment the Most Venerable Order's claims to being one of the direct lineal descendents of the ancient Knights of St John. It was he who had gained the St John's Gate building in Clerkenwell for his Order, and he had been quick to appreciate the symbolism of a foundation which would 'in modern times re-establish the link between the Holy City and the [British] Knights of St John'. He had accordingly persuaded his Grand Prior, the Prince of

Wales, to obtain the grant of a property to the Order by the Ottoman Governor of Palestine for setting up a hospital in Jerusalem. The hospital duly came into being under the direction of its first Warden, Dr J. Wardell. It began in a small way, operating out of what had been a Turkish home on the Bethlehem Road near the Jaffa Gate, and from the start specialized 'in the alleviation of the terrible sufferings caused by diseases of the eye', which were and continued to be prevalent among the local population.[12]

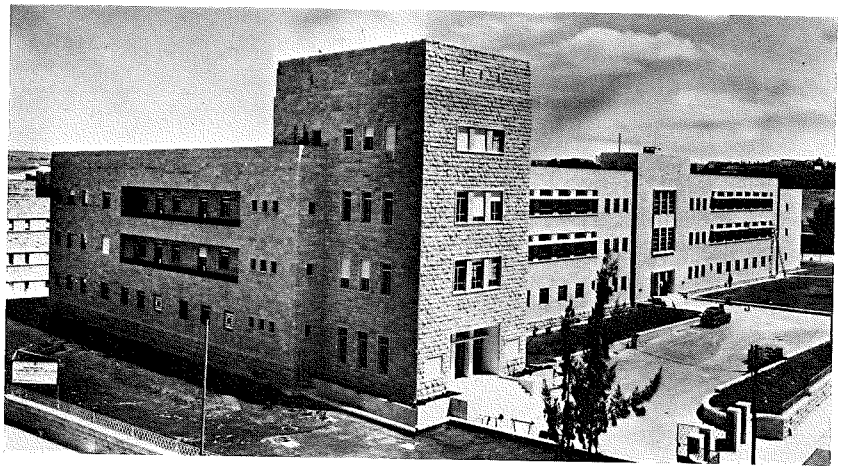
The Ophthalmic Hospital, as it soon came to be known as, enjoyed mixed fortunes thereafter. It ran successfully for the next thirty-two years, until 1914, when it had to close because its British sponsors found themselves on the opposite side to the local Turkish administration in the First World War. The Turks used the hospital building as an ammunition dump after that, then finally blew it up before evacuating Jerusalem. The British military commander, Lord Allenby, sanctioned its re-opening, on 11 November 1918, after he had taken over in Jerusalem. Rebuilding began at once, and Allenby himself officiated at the re-opening ceremony the following year. The restored building contained forty beds for in-patients, and in 1922 an out-patient wing was added. The staff—three British ophthalmological surgeons, a matron and two nurses assisted by Palestinian nurses—by 1927 were finding that the in-patient beds were 'always full', while the out-patient clinic was so popular they were experiencing 'the greatest difficulty in coping with the never-ending flow of patients'.[13]

This time the hospital had an uninterrupted run of thirty years, but in 1948 it found itself caught up in the Arab-Israeli war, and had to be temporarily evacuated. At the end of hostilities the armistice agreement placed it on the Israeli side of the partition line, thus separating it from Jordan and the Arab world, which still supplied the great bulk of its patients. In 1949, therefore, the hospital, opened a temporary annexe in the old part of Jerusalem, within Jordanian territory. In 1952 the Order decided to purchase a site on the Jordanian side of the border. By 1955 the purchase was finalized, and the planning and building of a new hospital could proceed. The grand new hospital and research unit, just outside the walled city and close to the 'no man's land' between Jordan and Israel, was completed and opened in 1960 by a representative of King Hussein of Jordan, a friend of the Order with whose co-operation it had been built. Dr Frances McKay, the Chief Superintendent (Nursing) of the Brigade in Australia, was present at the opening as representative of the Australian Priory. She wrote back to Australia that 'it was most heart-warming to be there for the opening of this splendid new amenity of the Order in almost exactly the same place as the Order had its inception 861 years ago'. The new buildings went into immediate active service, and the Order was soon claiming it enjoyed 'a reputation as one of the foremost ophthalmological hospitals in the world'.[14]

The Ophthalmic Hospital obtained its funds partly through donations from the surrounding Arab nations—a nice twist of fate, given the centuries of bloodshed between the ancient Knights Hospitaller and the Arabs—partly from private donations and bequests, and partly from revenues raised by 'Hospitallers' Clubs' and 'Linen Guilds' of Priories of St John around the world. Hospitallers' Clubs and Linen Guilds ran in Australia, too, in every State. Their establishment had been one of Poate's achievements in the early years of the Priory. The former, for men of the Order, raised cash donations for the hospital while the latter, for women, collected bandages and equipment, though as time went on and some of the Hospitallers' Clubs lapsed the Linen Guilds took over the burden of fund raising as well.

In May and June 1967 the Ophthalmic Hospital found itself embroiled in its third war. During the Six-Day War betweeen the Arabs and Israelis that year it took a direct hit when a shell penetrated the walls of the new building and exploded in a toilet. A number of expatriate staff members withdrew on the advice of their governments, but the Warden, Dr A. J. Boase, the Matron, Margaret Holloway, the Sub-Warden, an Arab doctor, Khalil Budeiri, the Superintendent, Issa Marogi, and the entire Arab nursing and clerical staff remained on duty throughout. Inpatients had to be evacuated, but the out-patients kept coming. Israeli troops occupied the buildings and hoisted their flag above them. They remained for several days, but allowed the hospital to remain in business. It was also now housing about 150 refugees in its basement, and was treating casualties brought in from the fighting. At the intercession of the British ambassador the Israeli military governor had the troops withdrawn, and the hospital was back in full operation again within a fortnight of the outbreak of the war.[15]

The main result of the war as far as the Ophthalmic Hospital was concerned was that once again it had ended up on the wrong side of the border, within Israeli-occupied territory. There were both advantages and disadvantages to this. On the one hand there were several million Arabs living in Israeli lands who now had access to the hospital, which had been denied to them before because they had not been permitted to cross the Israeli-Jordanian border to attend it. But on the other hand, access to it was now denied to the Arabs from Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi-Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrein and even Iran, who had previously constituted its clientele. At the same time, living and running expenses under Israeli rule were much higher. Whereas the administrators of the Ottoman Empire, the British Mandate and the Jordanian government had always allowed the hospital to import its supplies and equipment duty-free, the Israeli government would not grant that privilege. The war also caused a temporary lessening of the hospital's work-load: the 3380 operations (including 954 cataracts, 162 glaucoma, 34 retinal detachments and 11 corneal grafts) performed in the year following the war, 1968,



89 The new St John Ophthalmic Hospital, Jerusalem, at the time of its opening in 1960

represented only fifty-six per cent of the pre-war tally. Within three years, however, the hospital was treating some 6000 outpatients a month and performing about 7000 major operations annually, a significant increase over the pre-war figures.[16]

In Australia the official of the Order most concerned with matters concerning the Ophthalmic Hospital was the Hospitaller and Almoner, who was always a member of the Priory Executive. Part of the Hospitaller and Almoner's task was to maintain contact with both the hospital and its chief officer in Britain, the Hospitaller and Almoner of the Grand Priory. The other part of his task was to co-ordinate the efforts of the Australian Hospitallers' Clubs and Linen Guilds, who worked at raising funds for the hospital. The amount the Hospitaller and Almoner could send on to the hospital was rather limited by Australian currency controls, which restricted the type of aid going from Australia to *matériel*. As a tax-exempt charity St John could not send abroad funds it had raised tax-free in Australia, though it could send bandages, laboratory equipment and medical instruments. The hospital preferred not to receive the latter, however, because of the heavy Israeli customs dues they attracted; and so the Hospitaller and Almoner and his network of Hospitallers' Clubs and Linen Guilds had to seek other means for aiding the hospital after 1967.

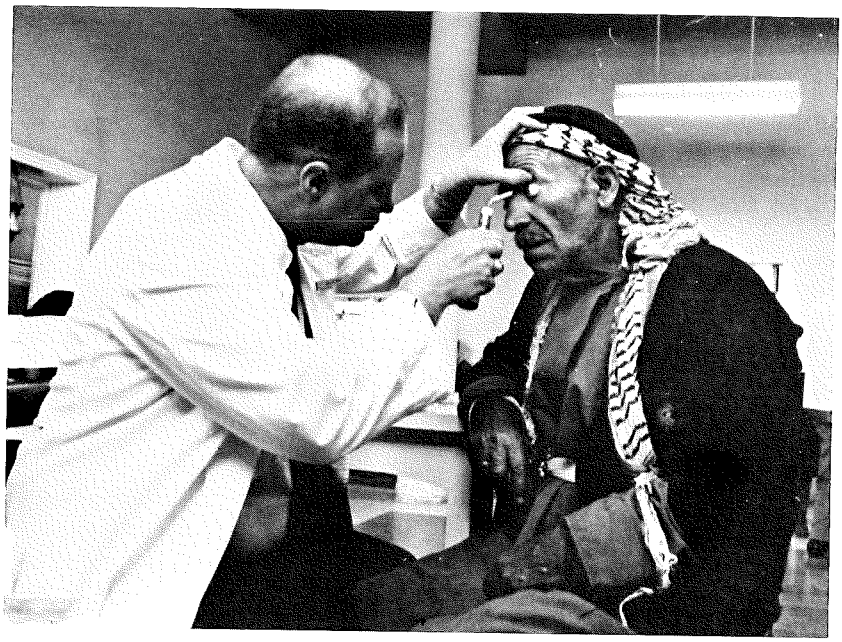
The scheme they devised was to send Australian ophthalmological surgeons and nurses to Jerusalem for a year's service at the hospital, paying the fares and subsidizing the salaries of the persons sent. The first appointee was Dr Geoffrey Vaughan, a registrar of the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital in Melbourne. The Hospitaller and Almoner, Dr Selwyn Nelson, located him in 1969 with the aid of the Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Melbourne, Prof. G. W. Crock. Vaughan took up duty in Jerusalem in 1970, and subsequently seven

other Australian ophthalmologists served at the hospital in the period up to 1982, in addition to three Australian ophthalmological nurses and one general nurse. The scheme Nelson began soon developed into one jointly sponsored by the Priory and the Australian College of Ophthalmologists, in which an annual travelling fellowship was offered to promising postgraduate ophthalmological trainees for service at the hospital. In becoming involved the College no doubt recognised the value of the scheme to the profession in Australia and to the wider Australian community. It could appreciate, as the ophthalmologists soon realized on taking up duty in Jerusalem, that an eye specialist at the hospital would see three or four times the case work encountered in an Australian ophthalmological hospital. The travelling fellows consequently returned home much more experienced in their profession than would have been possible if they had remained in Australia. In 1982 the scheme took a novel turn when one of the Arab surgeons employed at the hospital in Jerusalem, Dr Khaled Tucktuck, was brought to Australia for three months' training and experience at the Sydney Eye Hospital and the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital.[17]

Because of the constraints upon it, work for the St John Ophthalmic Hospital could never gain the prominence in St John affairs in Australia that other St John work could. The Order's second foundation could not, as a result, prosper from Australian involvement as could the first and third foundations. There was, moreover, influential opinion within the Priory that if the Australian St John bodies wished to do something about ophthalmological diseases there was ample scope for their energies *within* Australia. Some of the country's rural Aboriginal communities, it was argued, suffered a particularly high incidence of eye diseases like trachoma and glaucoma. Should not charity therefore begin at home? And could not the petro-dollars flowing in to the Arab governments be better invested in the hospital in Jerusalem than in the real estate market and casinos of Europe? It was a forceful argument, and few if any would deny it. Yet for all that, the token Australian commitment to the hospital was important, for it did give Australian members of the Order a small but direct link with the Holy Land and with the ancient traditions which many of them held dear. Perhaps, too, it was a salutary reminder that the charitable ideals of the Order were not restricted in their practice to one's own compatriots. Rather, the work should be humanitarian in the broadest sense, the charity being extended to people of all races, creeds and nationalities.[18]

3 *The Priory Headquarters in Canberra*

Canberra, as outsiders never seem to tire of informing its residents, is an 'ersatz' city. It exists solely for political purposes and would never have been built but for the Act of Federation binding the six States together.



90 A specialist at the St John Ophthalmic Hospital, Jerusalem, examines an Arab patient

Instead the Limestone Plains in all likelihood would have remained a succession of dry, rocky and windswept sheep paddocks in behind Queanbeyan, the tired town about half way between Goulburn and Cooma on the road across the southern tablelands of New South Wales. Accusations of artificiality are, however, probably more a device for taunting the locals than a substantial criticism. More than eighty years into Australian nationhood, the complaint against Canberra is passé, for the Commonwealth has acquired a degree of permanence and Canberra is the monument to that. The national capital with its various emblems of nationhood—the parliamentary and executive edifices, the War Memorial and the nearby military academy, the National Library, the High Court, National Gallery, university, embassies, official residences and sundry monuments—are all symbols of that permanence.

In the non-official world, too, Canberra serves to remind people all round the country of their national unity and durability. The National Capital Development Commission accordingly sets aside sites for institutions and organizations which feel they have an Australia-wide task to perform. The possession of a fine national headquarters in one of Canberra's leafy suburbs may not be exactly the *sine qua non* for national status, though this does perhaps indicate that the body concerned is conscious of Commonwealth-wide interests and is anxious to promote both these and its national image. It was perhaps inevitable, then, that

the Priory of the Order of St John would one day move to Canberra, there to erect its special shrine, its own version of St John's Gate. But if issues of national symbolism were important in bringing this about, there were also other practical reasons for setting up house there. Canberra after all was where the Prior of the Order, the Governor General, lived. As some of the Priors had proved during their terms of offiice, the Prior need not be a passive figurehead but could be an active participant in the life of the Order. There seemed, too, to be advantages in owning a home near those of the federal politicians and bureaucrats: proximity meant access to information that might otherwise be unavailable.

Before arriving in Canberra in 1967 the Priory Headquarters had changed addresses several times. When the Commandery for Australia (Western Australia Excepted) had been formed in 1942 it occupied a room at 225 Macquarie St., Sydney. There was little work entailed, and the Commandery Secretary, R. Griffiths Bowen, was able to remain on for two more years in his position as full time secretary of the New South Wales Association Centre, in St John House, Macquarie Place. The Macquarie St. office continued on as headquarters through the transition to Priory status until 1948, by which time more space was needed. The Chaplain of the Order, Archbishop Mowll, then offered accommodation in the Chapter House beside St. Andrew's Cathedral in George St. Priory Headquarters remained there for the next twelve years, until 1960, when a new Priory Secretary, Maj. J. F. Martin (who was also secretary to the State governor of the day, Sir Eric Woodward) moved it out to 298 New South Head Rd., Double Bay. Martin had succeeded to the secretaryship after Griffiths Bowen had retired in 1957, and after a New South Wales Knight of the Order, Noel Hayton, had spent a short time as Acting Secretary. He moved the Headquarters twice more, first to Bondi Junction and later back into the city and into St John House. He and it then remained there until the move to Canberra in 1967.[19]

Moving away from Sydney was no hurried step like some of the changes of address within Sydney had been. There had been pressure for some time to set up a permanent national Headquarters for the Order. In November 1961, for example, an anonymous donor in Melbourne had offered the Priory £10,000 to purchase a building somewhere in Melbourne for fitting out as its home. Some Victorian delegates to Priory were very keen for this offer to be taken up; but, acting with accustomed caution, the Priory Chapter delegated its authority to the Priory Finance Committee, which then looked into the offer and advised the donor that it would let him/her know within six months whether or not it wished to accept the gift. The new Receiver General (i.e. treasurer) of Priory, Commander (later Sir) Neville D. Pixley, who had taken office earlier in 1961, now discussed the offer at great length with his Finance Committee. They wondered whether they might accept the offer as an interim measure, say for five or ten years, but were fairly sure they should eventually see the

Headquarters set up in Canberra. In the end they opted to reject the Melbourne bait and plump instead for a base in Canberra. They accordingly asked the next meeting of Priory Council, in October 1962, to approve a move to Canberra 'in principle'. Priory Council concurred after several delegates had spoken to the effect that 'the future rightful national home of the Order should be in Canberra, and an approach should be made to the authorities for a grant of land'. Council accordingly appointed a further committee to examine the latter possibility.[20]

Events moved slowly for a while after that. Over the next year Stening, who strongly favoured the Canberra idea, took the matter up with St John's Gate. He was in London in June 1963 for his first meeting as Australian delegate to the Grand Priory Advisory Council, the quinquennial get-together of heads of Priories. He found he was 'not . . . able to accomplish anything' in that quarter, but back in Australia again he had helpful discussions with local Canberra St John workers and with government officials there. He discovered that the Canberra St John branch, which functioned as a part of the New South Wales St John organization, was thinking of obtaining its own block of land and of building there its own local headquarters so that it might eventually become independent of New South Wales. He also made inquiries through the Department of the Interior to sound out the Commonwealth government on the chances of being allocated a grant of land. He advised the next Priory meeting, which was held for the first time in Canberra, at the Australian National University, of what he had been doing. News of his various negotiations was greeted warmly by delegates, whose interest was no doubt quickened by the appropriateness of the setting. Stening probably knew his scheme would eventually be approved when one delegate said that he and his colleagues were of the opinion that 'the design of this building should be such that at some future date it could be incorporated into what could well be the St John's Gate in Australia'.[21]

The next year, 1964, the Priory meeting took place in Brisbane in June (rather than at the end of the year) to coincide with St John's Day, 24 June. This meeting

> resolved that steps should be taken to confirm with the Department of the Interior that the Order in Australia was unanimous in going ahead with plans to establish the Priory Headquarters in Canberra . . . as it is considered most desirable that our Order, embracing as it does the whole of Australia, should have its Headquarters in Canberra.[22]

The enthusiasm of the delegates had been much whetted by the negotiations Stening and Pixley had engaged in over the preceding eight months. They had held discussions with the Department of the Interior (which then controlled access to land in Canberra). They obtained the offer of a building block in a prominent position in the suburb of Forrest—on the corner of Canberra Avenue and Dominion Circuit, situated on the main southern and eastern approach to the city and only 500

metres from Capital Hill (the site of the future Parliament House). The block could be obtained on a ninety-nine year lease; it carried a covenant which required that the building placed there must have a value of at least £25,000; the building had to be completed within two years of taking up the lease; and there was great need for haste, for the lease had to be accepted within the week, by 1 July.[23]

Pixley had outlined to Priory Council the reasons why this was an offer they could not refuse, and he had an architect's sketches to prove how 'delightful' and 'desirable' a Headquarters building would be on that particular site. He left it to one of his colleagues on the Finance Committee, A. S. H. Gifford of Victoria, to hammer home one by one the arguments in favour of accepting:

> 1 Established status of our Order as a National Body . . . and we need Commonwealth Government recognition, then it will assist us in local State difficulties.
> 2 We have some obligation to try and develop the work of our Order in the Australian Capital Territory. We think there would be some support at Ministerial level.
> 3 . . . The tourist attraction would gain us friends and supporters. If we go ahead with it we would be making available a Public Service, to the Government and the people of Canberra. There is also a shortage of Halls in Canberra. It would be possible for us to have a Hall to accommodate about 250 people and parking for that number or more . . . There is reason we could make an approach to the Commonwealth Government for assistance. You could then get long term finance over forty years. We might obtain substantial sums from friends of the Order. Finally, we must make the decision now—sites are disappearing quickly.[24]

It was hard not to get caught up in the excitement of the moment. No one seemed to mind that Stening, Pixley and Gifford were urging them to a faster decision than their sedate Order was wont to take. Different delegates rose to speak of the proposals as 'a first rate long range plan', and then the meeting voted to accept the offer. On the motion of Sir Kingsley Norris, the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade, who congratulated all those present on having voted for 'a most momentous' resolution, they then elected a Steering Committee consisting of Stening, Pixley and Gifford plus all the chairmen of the State St John Councils to guide the scheme to completion.[25]

The project now moved ahead expeditiously. The Steering Committee engaged a Sydney architect, A. P. Nangle, who drew up plans for a building the total cost of which would be about £65,000. Nangle attended the next Priory meeting, in Adelaide in June 1965, to explain his blueprints. He spoke in these terms:

> Firstly I would like to congratulate the Order on being able to secure such a magnificent site in Canberra. It does provide a wonderful opportunity for a prestige building, and to bring before the authorities in Canberra and also to the ever-increasing number of tourists to Canberra, the important work the Order is carying on . . .

> In regard to the design of the building, I understand that the wish was expressed that it be linked with the great traditions of the Order, and in particular with the Headquarters of the Order at St John's Gate, London. I believe that the design does this but it is therefore mediaeval in character, influenced, of course, by present-day thinking.
> The entrance does express the St John's Gateway, London. It is intended that the entrance should house the foundation stone which is a stone from London, as well as a small angel [also from the stonework of St John's Gate], which are already in Australia. But I also believe that the design is dignified and impressive, and I think it would attract visitors in Canberra. The entrance, of course faces the main thoroughfare and dominates the particular facade, whereas the hall with its two-storey lighting dominates the mass of the building as a whole. The design is completely symmetrical, and being a corner site back from the boundaries, it will be seen from most directions, which means the facades have all to be finished facades . . . either of natural or reconstructed stone.[26]

There was only token questioning of his plan. Could such a building be done any more cheaply? Should the facade be of natural stone or some form of aggregate? Could there be some provision for a second storey, or a basement? But these were only minor queries, and the meeting received Nangle's proposals 'warmly', then authorized the Steering Committee to proceed with fundraising and construction.

For a time finance presented problems. Priory had only limited revenues. In 1950 it had received a highly generous grant of £37,500 from Grand Priory, a sum allocated to it from the large unspent pool of revenues raised during the Second World War by the Joint War Organization of the British Red Cross and St John bodies in order to aid the war effort. These funds were no longer required for the purposes for which they had been raised, and so St John's Gate had disbursed its share through its network of national branches of St John Ambulance. The grant from Grand Priory had been invested and by 1965 was returning an income from dividends of about £3070 a year. Levies on the St John bodies in the five eastern States (Western Australia as a Commandery was immune) returned about £965 annually. Collections from 'oblations' (a contribution asked of individual members of the Order of the grade of Officer and above) produced about £550 a year, and sundry donations yielded about another £180. All this added up to an annual income of rather less than £5000, against which administrative expenses (rent, postage, telephone, travel, printing) and salaries left a sum of about £1500 to be added to the 'Accumulation Account' of capital holdings, which in 1965 stood at about £50,800.[27]

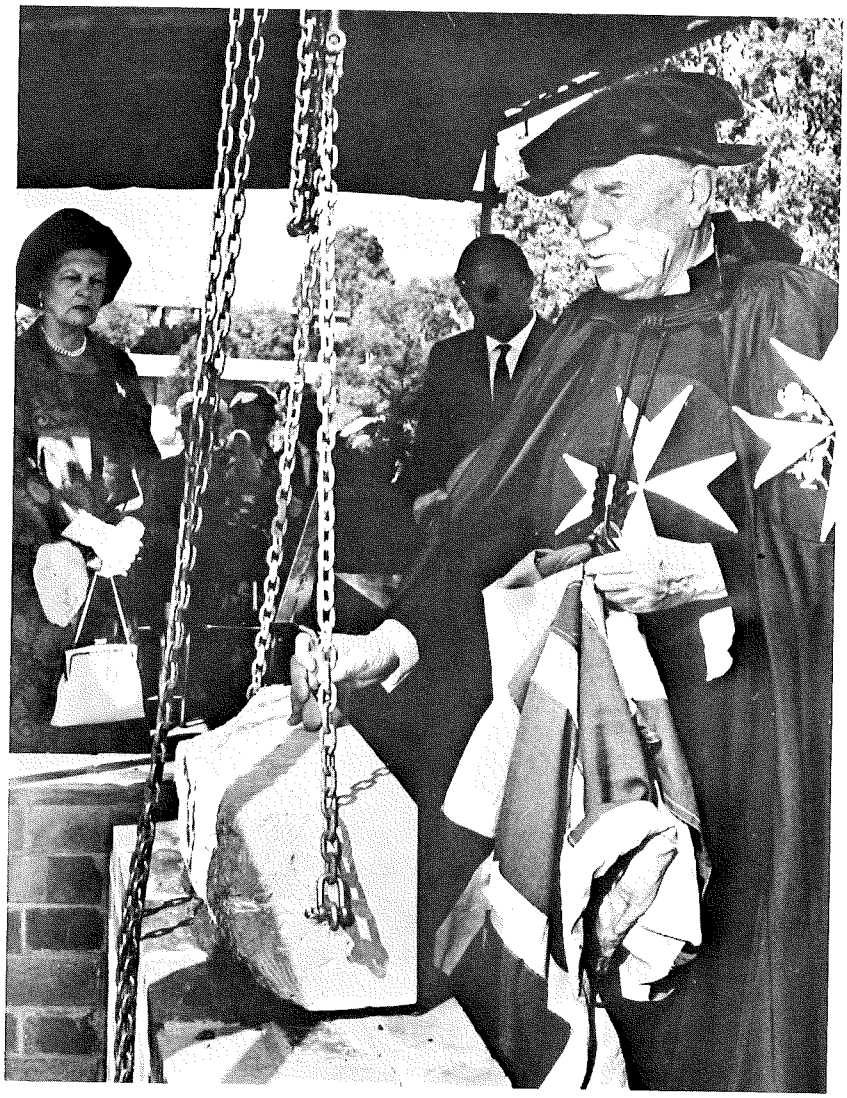
Some members of the Priory Council were all for using Priory funds to pay for the new Headquarters. Others thought that these should be kept intact, and that the required amount should be sought from the State Branches of the Order. The problem in the latter connection was that Queensland and Tasmanian finances were in a parlous state: the Queensland Branch was still in shock from its climactic divorce from the

* 'Shad' Sawtell & Drury Clarke—an understruck with chapel and storerooms. The height above the street level would allow excavation for this and even an underground car park adjoining. Nangle treated this suggestion abruptly, saying to this effect—'You have limited me to £65,000 and I have given you the best you can get for that money'.

QATB three years before, while the Tasmanian Branch was stunned at its recent loss of the State ambulance transport service and at the financial quagmire it had drifted into through its involvement with the service. Western Australian support was uncertain, for those in the Commandery seemed content with what they already had—the Commandery was after all a separate entity and it had its own headquarters building already. All this meant that the burden of paying for the grand scheme would be a burden to be borne by the wealthier States, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. When the actual costs were calculated there was some demurring. A couple of States wondered if they could raise even a hundred pounds or so. Some individuals worried that the whole scheme might be premature. Others were anxious because so many public charitable appeals had run in their home States of late that yet another appeal would fall flat, leaving the Order with huge debts.[28]

In the end Stening and Pixley called a special meeting of the Priory Council in October 1965 to sort out the financial difficulties. The meeting decided to conduct an appeal among St John members and friends in each State. The meeting also resolved to ask the Lord Prior of the Order, Lord Wakehurst, to lay the foundation stone in Canberra in the coming year, 1966. Wakehurst, who had been the Governor of New South Wales from 1937 to 1945, was, as we have seen, one of the principal figures in the establishment of the Commandery of Australia in 1941-42. He was due to make a return visit to Australia early in 1966, and so Priory Council thought it might use his trip to rally financial support from among St John adherents around the States. He duly arrived from Britain three months later, and on 2 February 1966 laid the foundation stone on the Headquarters site.[29]

The funding of the project was not finalized until the Priory meeting, four months later in June 1966 in Hobart. Costs now seemed much inflated, though this was principally because Australia had converted to decimal currency at the beginning of the year. The Steering Committee had been replaced by a Building Executive Committee, which was now authorized to instruct the architect to prepare tenders and appoint a builder. The all-up cost was still set at $130,000 (£65,000). To get work started there was a preliminary financial arrangement whereby New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia would each provide bridging finance of $20,000 (£10,000), to be recouped from the appeal; Priory would contribute $17,800 from its own investments; Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory were to put in whatever they obtained from their own appeals; and whatever else was needed would come from a bank overdraft. As things actually turned out, Stening and Pixley did most of the fund raising, and their home State, New South Wales, raised by far the largest share. The final cost for building, fittings, furniture and fees was $122,000, of which New South Wales contributed some forty-five per cent, Victoria about twenty-



91 The Lord Prior of Grand Priory, Lord Wakehurst, lays the foundation stone in the new Priory Headquarters building, Canberra, 2 February 1966. Lady Wakehurst is at the left.

eight per cent, the Priory about fourteen per cent, South Australia roughly ten per cent, and Western Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, Queensland and Tasmania the remaining three per cent between them.[30]

The construction of the new Headquarters got under way in mid-1966, and took about a year to complete. The secretariat took up residence there at the end of June 1967. The Priory Secretary who had seen the scheme through to fruition, J. F. Martin, declined to start life anew in

Canberra and chose to retire in Sydney. A new Priory Secretary, the Rev. Dr Peter F. Rudge, took his place, so it was he who opened the Headquarters for business.

To mark the occasion Priory decided to hold its 1968 meeting there. So significant was the event that members and workers for the Order came from all over Australia just be able to say they had been present. Many of them had never been in the national capital before and, like many a tourist in that part of Canberra, some lost their way in the maze of spokes and intersecting and concentric circuits, crescents and circles radiating out from Capital Hill. The new building was alongside the Burns Club, the refuge of the local Scottish community, which is distinguished by one of Canberra's best known landmarks—a large statue of the poet Robbie Burns, who sits outside in bronze, perpetually gazing (as he would scarcely have done in real life) at St Andrew's Presbyterian kirk two hundred metres up the road on the side of Capital Hill. Even with that bulky ornament to guide them some St John folk had trouble in locating their new Headquarters. Sir Kingsley Norris, for instance, was chauffered there by a Brigade companion who, after about twenty minutes of searching, remarked in wonderment that 'this must be the only city in the world with sixteen statues of Robbie Burns!'[31]

The official opening of the Headquarters took place on 29 May 1968, the day before the three-day round of committees that culminate in the meeting of the Priory Council and the Priory Chapter and which all together constitute the annual Priory meeting. That year's annual report of Priory gave an account of the opening ceremony:

> Many notable guests came to honour us . . . The Prior, His Excellency Lord Casey accompanied by . . . Lady Casey arrived, preceded by only a few minutes by the Deputy Prior of New South Wales, His Excellency Sir Roden Cutler and Lady Cutler. Other guests included His Grace the Primate of Australia, Archbishop P. N. W. Strong. The Federal Minister for Health, Dr Forbes, and several other Federal Members of Parliament. The Chief Justice of New South Wales and President of the St John Association in New South Wales, Sir Leslie Herron. Many of our benefactors also came, as well as many Members of the Diplomatic Service and community in Canberra.
>
> It was very pleasing to see so many members of St John who had made the trip to be with us on this day and had come many thousands of miles from all parts as far away as Western Australia and New Guinea. The Hall was packed and after all guests had been seated the Capitular procession of Priory Chapter in full ceremonial entered. The National Anthem was played. The Chancellor then addressed the Prior and handed to him as representative of His Royal Highness the Grand Prior [the Duke of Gloucester] the documents vesting the property in the Order. The Prior then formally took possession of the building and called on the Chaplain of the Order, His Grace the Archbishop, to dedicate the building to the Glory of God for the furtherance of the Venerable Order. The Prior then entrusted the title deeds to the Chancellor . . . and declared the building open to serve as Headquarters.
>
> Then the Chancellor welcomed all the guests and thanked them for their presence. He was supported by the Receiver General, Mr N. D. Pixley and Mr

× I, Henry Clarke, was Sword Bearer on this occasion and stood behind the Governor-General holding the sword aloft. The sun shone through the clerestory windows in the western wall and onto my face. It was an ordeal but I regard it a great privilege to have taken part in the ceremony.

A. S. H. Gifford. These officers spoke of the wonderful support that had been proffered in a practical and financial way for the purpose for which the building stood.

His Excellency the Governor General and Prior then replied to the speakers and read a message from Her Majesty the Queen expressing Her good wishes and congratulations . . . The Chancellor then requested the Prior . . . to send a loyal message in return. He said, 'On behalf of all members of St John in Australia . . . we request you to send to Her Majesty our message of thanks and appreciation and our unswerving loyalty' . . .

It was a marvellous gesture from Her Majesty who in addition had sent a picture of herself and one of Prince Philip just prior to the opening and which was installed above the dais.

The Chaplain now said the concluding prayers, after which a tour of inspection of the building took place. It was a perfect autumn day and the guests then moved across to the Burns Club who had made their building available for afternoon tea.

And so concluded a wonderful day in the history of St John in Australia.[32]

Three days later Casey was present again to preside over his last meeting of the Priory Chapter. There were, the congregation learned, still a few outstanding debts on the building—Pixley, for instance, had to report a $25,000 overdraft. Not much landscaping had yet been done, and the red clay of the site still looked raw. But in the minds of those present that might have been strangely evocative for it made the new structure look rather more like one of the ancient Order's crusader castles rearing up from the harsh wastes of the Holy Land. A fitting redoubt, to be sure, from which to sally forth in service of Sovereign and Order.

Now the Priory Headquarters was actually there, in all its concreteness, few in St John could doubt its value. They could now see the force of Stening's, Pixley's and Gifford's arguments, and could agree that, 'being a national movement, the Priory Headquarters should be in Canberra . . . where it could function in times of peace and war, or civil emergency or disaster'. If the achievement of Sir Hugh Poate (whose portrait and personal stained glass window depicting the Poate Arms now graced the new building) and Sir John Newman-Morris in the 1940s and 50s had been to show the State St John bodies that they could work together productively in a federation, then Stening's and Pixley's contribution in the 60s and 70s was implicit in the bricks and mortar of the Canberra building. They had succeeded in fostering and strengthening the national St John sentiment which Storie Dixson and others had laboured to awaken half a century before. Once the Priory Headquarters was there for all within the Order to see, the national spirit developed apace, particularly under the policy laid down by Stening for the later resident Priory Secretaries, S. T. Bendall (1971-75) and C. A. Campbell (1975-). As a result the Order's Canberra office increasingly became the focus of national policy and planning for the St John movement in Australia.[33]

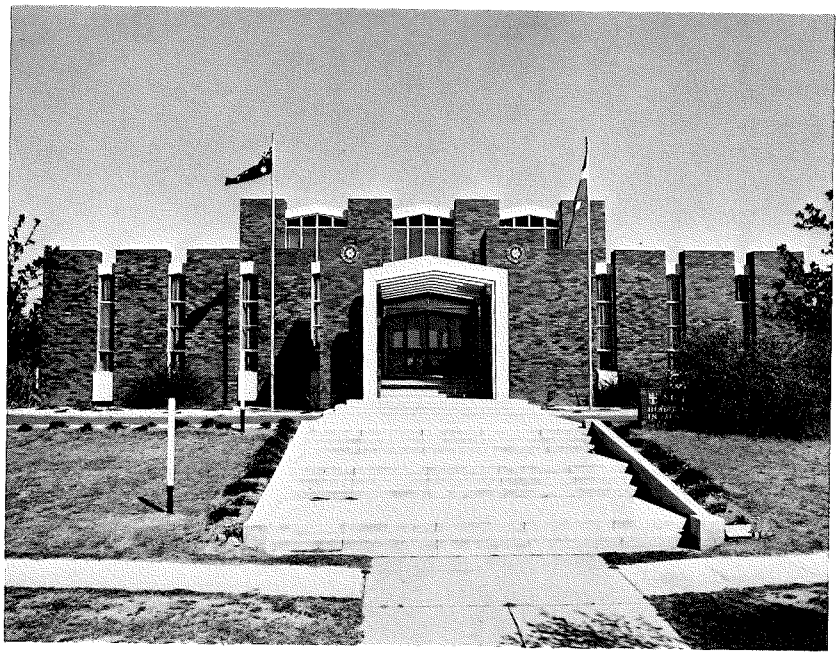
The Order, of course, could thrive only if its grass roots remained

healthy, and the mere ownership of a modern crusader castle in Canberra would not ensure that. St John's strength would always have to be the vital and committed people in its State Branches. It still relied on the vision, talent, initiative and devotion of local people meeting local challenges in every State and Territory. The leads it took still had to relate to local needs, and had to be pushed forward by local people who understood local conditions and were enthusiastic for the works they were promoting. Yet the organization had also become a national institution, so if it was to survive as such it also needed the sort of guidance its Canberra Headquarters could provide. The Priory Executive might often have seemed remote or irrelevant to the humble St John field worker; but if the Canberra office was fulfilling its function effectively then it was contributing something to the movement which few people in the State Branches could bring it. This was an overview of the entire nationwide St John network, and the means for co-ordinating its many endeavours to the greater benefit of the Order, its thousands of workers, and the Australian community generally.

4 *Papua New Guinea*

Papua New Guinea was Australia's great colonial experiment. The nation which received its independence from Australia in September 1975 had formerly been two separate Australian territories. The first, Papua, was a gift from Britain in 1906; the second, New Guinea, came to Australia after the First World War as a League of Nations Mandated Territory but after World War Two was retained under United Nations Trusteeship arrangements. For administrative convenience and because she saw her two adjacent territories sharing a joint future, Australia amalgamated the administrations of Papua and New Guinea shortly after the Second World War. She then governed them as one, calling them the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. In 1971 the emerging nation began taking very rapid strides towards the self-government that came to it in 1973. One of the important early steps along the road to self-government and then independence was in July of 1971, when the Papuan and New Guinean majority in the House of Assembly (parliament) chose Papua New Guinea as the name of the new State.

Papua New Guinea inherited many Australian institutions from its former rulers. Apart from the forms of government, administration, justice, education, defence, commerce and sport that were familiar to them at home, Australians left behind them the same array of voluntary service organizations found in Australia. Scouts and Guides, the Red Cross, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, the Salvation Army, the Country Women's Association, the Apex, Rotary and Lions Clubs, the Returned Services League and numerous others all found their way to Papua New Guinea. Not surprisingly, St John Ambulance was among them.



92 The Priory Headquarters, Canberra, opened May 1968

St John in Papua New Guinea, like many other Australian imports, was a recent arrival. Very occasional first aid classes had run in the Territories in the period before the Second World War: now and then some interested nurse or medico would form a class in one of the towns where there were enough whites to justify it—Port Moresby, Samarai, Rabaul—but there was no Territorian agency for St John. The classes were few and far between; the certificates were issued from elsewhere (usually the home State of the one who had organized the class); and whites only were trained. The local Melanesian populations were largely untutored; and while some of the brighter graduates from the mission primary schools received basic medical training as 'doctor boys' (that is government medical assistants—one of the few means of advancement open to Papuans and New Guineans), probably no one had ever thought of teaching ordinary villagers first aid. Consequently it was not until well after the war, by which time white racial attitudes had mellowed sufficiently and an increasingly large volume of Papuan and New Guinean children were passing through the expanding school system, that anyone got the idea of training the indigenous population in first aid.

The first person who seems to have taken first aid courses for Melanesians seriously was a pastor of the Seventh Day Adventist mission organization, R. E. Hare. The Adventists, with their strict views on diet and health education, and their Territory-wide network of missions, schools and colleges, were well placed to pioneer St John training in

Papua New Guinea. Hare, who eventually rose to be a Knight of the Order and a New South Wales delegate to the Priory Council, became a missionary for St John as well as his church. During the early 1950s he began promoting St John first aid classes among the Adventist missions across the Pacific. In 1953 he wrote to the New South Wales Association Centre to say that his classes that year had resulted in 200 Pacific Islanders receiving certificates, and that 'the work and enthusiasm of the natives receiving instruction is outstanding'. His classes that year had been in the Solomon Islands, the Cook Islands, and even distant Pitcairn Island. He used mission doctors as instructors wherever possible, but in the more remote outposts he dragooned the surgeons of passing ships to teach or examine classes. Preparing classes in such farflung locations presented problems other than that of finding qualified teachers and examiners: Hare's activities were taking him into regions considered by Grand Priory to belong to the 'sphere of influence' of the Priory of New Zealand; and so St John's Gate instructed the Priory of Australia that Australian certificates could be issued only in respect of classes run in Australian Territories. Hare was quite happy to accept this ruling, and henceforth concentrated his efforts in Papua and New Guinea, and in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate adjacent to the Australian Territory.[34]

In 1956 Hare wrote again to report on the latest results among his Melanesian classes. That year there had been 123 certificates for classes in Rabaul, Wewak, Inus (on Bougainville Island), Madang, Goroka and Kabiufa in Papua and New Guinea, Betikama (British Solomon Islands) and Aore (New Hebrides). Twenty-four of these certificates had been 'Vouchers' (that is the award made for a re-examination following the issuing of a first certificate), sixteen were 'Medallions' (two re-examinations following first certificate) and four were 'Labels' (three re-examinations), which meant that Hare had been building up a body of very well trained first aiders at the main Adventist mission stations.[35]

Dramatic proof of the practical value of his classes was the awarding of the Life Saving Medal of the Order to one of his students that same year. The student, John Nokas of Manus Island, had saved a school friend, Sindilin, who had been attacked by a shark. The two lads had been spearfishing together in deep water outside a coral reef one afternoon when the shark seized Sindilin by the right forearm, breaking both bones, stripping away the flesh and leaving the hand dangling by a few sinews. Nokas went to his friend's aid and shot at the shark with his speargun, supported his fainting friend, and tried to get him up on to the reef out of harm's way. The shark struck again, lacerating Sindilin's other arm, but Nokas managed to beat it off and to get his friend on to the reef, where he used the rubber bands of his speargun as a torniquet above the elbow of the right arm. This stopped the loss of blood. He tore his own laplap (loin cloth) into strips and bandaged the left arm. Then,

using the shaft of his speargun as a splint, he bound the broken arm, packing in the shredded flesh as well as he was able. He now carried Sindilin over the reef and swam him back across the lagoon to the shore. He found some schoolmates on the beach and got them to paddle Sindilin in a canoe the 6.5 kilometres round to their mission station. Nokas himself ran overland to get there first to alert the missionary. While the missionary waited for the canoe to arrive Nokas called for the men of a local village to prepare their large, ocean-going canoe to take Sindilin on the 32 kilometre journey down the coast to the hospital at the Manus Naval Base. Sindilin was put on a stretcher in the large canoe and, after the village men had paddled all night through a choppy sea, he was got there by daybreak. The doctor who received the party asked who had bandaged the lad's wounds. Nokas stepped forward. 'Where did you learn to do this?' the doctor asked. Nokas said he and his schoolmates had learnt St John first aid at their mission school. 'Good lad,' said the doctor, who knew only about the bandaging and not about the episode with the shark, 'you, without doubt, have saved your mate's life'. Sindilin's right arm had to be amputated at the elbow, and his left arm needed stitching, but he quickly recovered and, according to Hare, liked telling others he had been saved by 'St John'. Nokas's reward came later in the year, at the Kambubu mission college near Rabaul on the island of New Britain. At a special ceremony the government's District Commissioner, J. R. Foldi, presented him with his medal; and a large photograph of him wearing it was published in that year's annual report of the New South Wales Centre.[36]

Hare's work around the Adventist schools and colleges continued, but the following year, 1957, the New South Wales Association Centre established a more formal connection with St John work in Papua and New Guinea. In December of that year a group of interested Port Moresby folk formed a Territory Branch of the Association, which for the time being was to be attached to the New South Wales Centre. The arrangement the Branch made with the Centre was that it would retain the fees and funds it raised itself but the Centre in Sydney would issue the certificates it awarded. Dr T. K. Abbott was appointed chairman; the Territory's Administrator, Brigadier (later Sir) Donald Cleland, agreed to be the patron; and other leading citizens joined the executive committee. The committee proved energetic. It contacted all the government's fourteen District Medical Officers and all the government's white medical assistants (paramedics in charge of sub-district health centres) to advise them of the formation of the Branch and to ask their co-operation in running classes. 'Most . . . responded quite well', Abbott later informed the New South Wales Centre. In May 1958 Marjorie Higgins, the Centre Secretary, made the first of many trips to Papua and New Guinea. She visited the two main towns, Port Moresby and Lae, for consultations, and the new Branch was soon in business. That year it conducted

twenty-five classes with a total enrolment of 500 ('400 natives and 100 Europeans') in various locations around the Territory, as a result of which 300 pupils earned certificates. This did not include a further 150 certificates which Hare's students gained. Then in November 1958 a Brigade Division with twelve members formed under the leadership of a Mr Aldenhoven. Finally, after the government had made the Association a £500 grant which enabled the Branch to employ a part-time secretary, the members began to hope that 'in the not too distant future . . . New Guinea will be created a Centre as in other States of the Commonwealth'.[37]

Two years later, in 1960, Marjorie Higgins was back again. This time she ventured further afield, visiting Rabaul, Manus and Madang in addition to Port Moresby and Lae. In Lae she presented Medallions to thirteen New Guineans in a ceremony at the Malahang Hospital—evidence, like Hare's tallies of Vouchers, Medallions and Labels, that Papuans and New Guineans took their first aid training seriously. The Branch was now formally a Sub-Centre of the New South Wales Centre, and its chairman was Dr W. D. Symes, head of the medical training section of the Territory's Department of Public Health. The following year the Sub-Centre began negotiating with the government for a grant of land for a headquarters building, and the committee had hopes it would succeed in obtaining a 'prime site'. In his annual report to the Centre in Sydney Symes mentioned this and the fact that, although there was a problem in trying to interest the white community in St John work, 'the number of native trainees is very satisfactory'. That year, 1961, the classes yielded 434 certificates.[38]

The Sub-Centre made fairly steady progress during the 60s. By 1964 it was awarding well over 600 certificates annually; it had been granted a block of land by the Territory government; the plans for its headquarters building had been drawn up and approved, and the building was due for completion early in 1965. There were, however, problems that were more apparent in Papua and New Guinea than in Australia. The chief difficulty was one of personnel: in the Territory the shifting nature of the population was a more serious obstacle to St John work than down south. Employees, both white and black, were frequently transferred to postings elsewhere—which meant that the zealous first aid instructor or Brigade Divisional Superintendent might disappear overnight, as might the officer chosen as a replacement. Many of the expatriate population were footloose in any case: Papua and New Guinea attracted more than its share of drifters and adventurers who just happened by, thinking that the Territory would prove to be their personal land of opportunity. Occasionally they wandered into St John, particularly if they had had St John affiliations elsewhere; and when they did, their instability in one or all of their personal lives, their employment, or their St John work created problems. On more than one occasion Marjorie Higgins had to

fly to Port Moresby to help to sort out local St John entanglements. As a result both the New South Wales Centre and the Priory Council at times felt 'some anxiety as to whether the present form of working with Association and Brigade [in the Territory] is sufficiently satisfactory and in the best interests of St John'. On the other hand, the Sub-Centre was taking some worthwhile initiatives of its own. In 1963, for example, it began work on translating the first aid manual into Neo-Melanesian (Melanesian Pidgin) and Police Motu, the *lingua franca* of New Guinea and Papua respectively, so that 'a far greater contact would be possible with all sections of the community'.[39]

The new headquarters building, in Boroko, a suburb of the Territory capital, Port Moresby, was completed on schedule in 1965. The official opening took place on 30 October, and was performed by George Stening, who as Chancellor represented the Priory in Australia rather than the New South Wales Centre (even though the Centre paid for his plane fare). The week before the opening Stening had presided over the special meeting of the Priory Council called together in Sydney to clear up problems relating to the funding of the proposed Priory headquarters in Canberra. This special meeting of Council had also considered at length various difficulties emerging in St John in Papua and New Guinea. The local St John hierarchy in Port Moresby were keen to be independent of New South Wales as soon as possible, and so there had been some debate over whether they should be. New South Wales delegates said they 'did not want to throw New Guinea away' after their Centre's efforts there; and Pastor Hare had urged caution. 'If we go the whole way at present and form them into [their own] Centre, we may be going too far and too fast for them', he warned. Yet, even though the New South Wales Centre wished to fulfil the responsibilities it had undertaken in the Territory, it pledged itself to supporting what the Territorians wanted: if they wanted a separate Association Centre and Brigade District rather than the present Sub-Centre and Sub-District of New South Wales, and if that was best for the Order and for Papua and New Guinea, then so be it. Some Priory Council delegates wondered if Papua New Guinea had sufficient residents of high standing, both in the community and in the Order, to warrant forming an autonomous St John Council in Port Moresby. In answer to that doubt, the Hospitaller and Almoner, Sir Kenneth Fraser of Queensland, came to the defence of the Territorians, pointing out that this had not barred the formation of a St John Council in his own State. In the end the Priory Council voted to support the establishment of a Papuan and New Guinean St John Council 'in principle'; and it empowered Stening to effect the formation of one if, after his visit to Port Moresby, he thought such a step was in the Order's interests.[40]

Eight months later, at the Priory meeting in June 1966, Stening reported on his visit to Papua and New Guinea. As well as opening the new building in Port Moresby, he said, he had flown over to the New

Guinea side to look at St John work in the principal towns there—Rabaul, Lae, Goroka. His tour had underlined one the realities of the Territory, since 'transport was a very big problem . . . and a lot of places could only be reached by plane'. He had also discovered that, in a place where tropical diseases like malaria and dengue fever, hookworm and scabies infestations, yaws, leprosy, tuberculosis, and various skin irruptions that led to tropical ulcers were endemic in many communities, 'it was very apparent St John could do a lot of good by training people'. The actual headquarters opening ceremony had gone well. The headquarters building itself established a strong material link between St John and the health authorities, because part of it was to be used as a base for the government-run Port Moresby ambulance transport service. The opening had taken place in the presence of 'quite a number of Europeans and local people' who had seemed to appreciate his gesture in handing over to the local St John branch a flag of the Order 'as a token from Priory'. He had also taken up the question of a Papuan and New Guinean St John Council with the Administrator, Cleland, and had obtained from him a list of prominent citizens who might be approached to serve on it. He had also got the local St John committee to draw up a set of draft regulations to suit their local conditions. They had attacked this task keenly, and had produced a draft constitution which combined the efforts of Association and Brigade—something which no St John Council in Australia had yet ventured to attempt.[41]

When Priory Council heard from Stening what the Territorians had in mind for the Association and Brigade, opinion divided sharply. Some delegates could not envisage a world in which Association and Brigade might be one. Some thought the draft constitution gave too much control to the proposed St John Council, which, they feared, would usurp the powers of the Priory's Director of the Association and the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade. Others, particularly the New South Wales Association representatives, who still felt they knew more about what Papua and New Guinea needed than anyone else, spoke out for the locals. 'The people who would know what was best for New Guinea would be the people who had been there [by inference Association people in New South Wales] and the people who lived there', they argued, urging that St John in Papua New Guinea should be allowed to develop however it felt it should. After considerable debate along these lines the Council voted to endorse the establishment in Papua and New Guinea of a St John Council of the sort outlined by Stening.[42]

In the end all the discussion, constitution-planning, consultation and debate were needless. They had simply led the Order up a blind alley, for despite more argument and further proposals over subsequent years the St John Council failed to materialize. Cleland retired after fourteen years in office in 1966, and his successor, D. O. Hay, was soon preoccupied with more pressing problems than St John—political unrest (including

the murder of one of his District Commissioners) among the Tolai peoples round Rabaul; resistance among the peoples of Bougainville to the arrival of the mining company Conzinc Riotinto of Australia to work the copper ores of Panguna; rapid political change and the emergence of a Papua New Guinean opposition party in the House of Assembly; and the unpopularity of many of the Canberra policies he was expected to implement. After Cleland, the Australian Administrators thus had less time in which to give to St John activities the solicitous attention that Governors in Australia were wont to. Then there were problems in finding suitable people to serve on a St John Council. Increasingly, as the country moved towards independence, those who might have helped were less likely to. Most of the medical practitioners in Papua and New Guinea were government employees. After 1963 the government appointed no further permanent civil servants; henceforth all expatriates taken on by the government worked on short-term contracts. This had the effect of hastening the already rapid turnover of government personnel. The doctor posted to a Port Moresby clinic might be withdrawn and sent to Kainantu in the Highlands within a few months, and if the need arose he or she might be packed off to Kavieng or Lorengau in the Admiralty Islands several months later. The few private practitioners were concentrated in either Port Moresby, Lae or Rabaul, but they had such vast and lucrative practices that they had little time or inclination for St John work. Similarly there were few business people who could help. Most of them, too, came on short-term contracts to work for the Papuan and New Guinean branches of overseas companies, and, like their fellow expatriates in government employment, they constituted a floating population. There was an adage in Papua and New Guinea at the time which held that the expatriate population consisted of 'mercenaries, missionaries or misfits'. There was more than a glimmer of truth in it, and it boded ill for anyone trying to introduce Australian-style institutions into a country where such people still held sway. That, of course, was another of the problems St John had to face in Papua and New Guinea. The Territory was not Australia, even though it was governed by Australians and was home to perhaps as many as 30,000 Australians by the mid-1960s. As the Order was discovering, what worked well in Australia could not be assured of success in an Australian overseas territory.[43]

After Stening's visit to the Territory in 1965, the New South Wales Centre relinquished responsibility for St John affairs there. The Priory took on the task of developing the work there instead, with the Director of the Association (then Air Vice-Marshal E. A. Daley) and the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade (then Sir Kingsley Norris) taking direct control of the efforts of their foundations in the Territory. There was further talk in 1970 and again in 1973 of forming a Papua New Guinean St John Council, but nothing came from it. Eventually, in 1974, an Executive Committee was formed in Port Moresby to superintend the

operations of both Association and Brigade. By this time the country was self-governing, and a St John Council on the Australian model was no longer appropriate. As Stening pointed out to the Priory Council, 'the establishment of a St John Council for Papua New Guinea within the Australian Priory would create problems when Papua New Guinea was independent'. Instead, another sort of institution, a 'St John Council Overseas' or 'National St John Council' needed to be set up. This would be a body somewhat less than a Commandery or a Priory, but semi-autonomous for all that. It was the sort of structure that had come into being elsewhere in the Commonwealth of Nations as Britain's various 'non-white' Dominions had taken their independence; and, Stening pointed out, if Papua New Guinea got its National St John Council one day it would be a body answerable directly to Grand Priory and St John's Gate rather than to the Priory in Australia and to Priory Headquarters in Canberra.[44]

By this stage Priory had almost had enough of its commitments in Papua New Guinea. It had experienced trouble in finding and keeping suitable committed expatriate workers who were steeped in the ideals and traditions of the Order, or who were prepared to become so. The Papua New Guineans themselves had had too little time to become St John minded. They had not deeply absorbed the lore of the Order; its Western, crusading rhetoric did not flow readily from Melanesian tongues; and they had had too little time in the Order to establish their own traditions in it.

The problems inherent in transplanting to tropical soil a tree of European stock which had been acclimatized to Australia were evident in the speeches the delegates from Papua New Guinea made at Priory meetings. In 1973, for example, M. G. Smith, formerly the Superintendent of the Brigade's Goroka Division in the Eastern Highlands, pointed out that

> one of the Brigade's biggest problems was leaders. It was difficult to find suitable people to become leaders, and, once found, getting them to remain in one place. When he left Goroka last year there had been a Combined Division and two Cadet Divisions established. Now there was no Brigade at all. The man left in charge as Divisional Superintendent had been transferred to Port Moresby shortly afterwards; the treasurer to Lae and the secretary to another area. Of the few that remained, the leaders fought among themselves.
> Mr Smith said he had found a potential in the New Guineans for doing voluntary work. They helped each other and helped people in their own particular group. In Goroka about 3000 hours of voluntary work was being done a year. However, there was not any leadership from the top, and without good guidance the people lost interest very quickly. There was no example forthcoming from the European leaders.
> It was difficult to find doctors who would assist the Association or the Brigade. Most European doctors in Papua New Guinea were specialists, and the indigenous doctors were trying to get to the top. All were extremely busy.
> There would be insufficient leaders among the New Guineans to man the Association and the Brigade when the country became independent . . .[45]

There were sundry other difficulties at this time, too. St John affairs were being poorly managed; the organization ran into deep debt, and had to be bailed out by Priory; some employees ran up huge petrol and vehicle repair bills in the name of the Order, as a result of which the services of a senior Brigade official had to be dispensed with.

In the meantime the work had been going on fitfully. Representatives from the Papua New Guinea Branch had attended Priory meetings as observers since the late 1960s, and they brought varying accounts of how St John was progressing there. In 1968 they requested a grant from Priory to establish their work better. Priory obliged by giving $1000 and the promise of a further $1000 once the organization in Papua New Guinea had raised $3000 itself. The Deputy Commissioner (i.e. head) of the Brigade in Port Moresby, L. McArdle, was duly grateful. Under his control the Brigade made some gains. The number of Divisions grew from the original one in Port Moresby to six. (There were twelve by 1972, after which numbers dropped, though they revived to fourteen in 1975.) There were now Divisions in towns beyond Port Moresby, and for the first time, in 1968, the Brigade was proud that it had 'been able to serve all the major public occasions in Port Moresby'. In 1969 a Pidgin first aid manual appeared at last. Unfortunately it was not a great success: in a country with a largely subsistence economy and a high rate of illiteracy there were few within the Papua New Guinean community who had much use for it. Those who had the ready cash to buy it, and the ability to read it, were most likely to be 'urban sophisticates' who were sufficiently well educated to use the manual in English. Despite the halting progress which these accomplishments represented, those of the Order from Australia who travelled to Papua New Guinea (as thousands of Australians then did—Papua New Guinea was being loudly promoted by the tourist industry) usually came back much impressed with what they saw of St John work there. In 1973, for example, the Brigade's Chief Staff Officer in Australia, Norman Billing, spent a fortnight there looking at Brigade work. He said he had been 'amazed at the work done by Mr Smith in Goroka'. In Lae he had found that the local Division was running the government ambulance; and the work had recently spread to Wau (the timber milling and former gold town 130 kilometres into the hills south of Lae) and to Bougainville. Other visitors—the Chief Surgeon of the Brigade, Sir Geoffrey Newman-Morris, for instance—were equally appreciative.[46]

Nevertheless, there were some signal failures, and southern visitors probably glossed over these in their reports to Priory. Maladministration of St John affairs was one area of concern which undoubtedly received a thorough canvassing behind the closed doors of Priory meetings, even though there were only veiled allusions to it in Priory records. Some of the senior officers of the organization had accepted positions of responsibility in St John but were either too busy or insufficiently interested to

devote much time or effort to their duties. As a result the burden fell on lesser officers who might have meant well but lacked the influence or the ability to make St John the household word in Papua New Guinea which it was in Australia.

The problems with first aid manuals were another cause for disappointment. The failure of the Pidgin manual was one blow, but more were to follow. When the Priory in Australia finally produced the first Australian edition of the first aid textbook in 1969 (which, as we have seen, was a project that had been talked about ever since the early 1920s) it, too, was a failure in Papua New Guinea. Some 1500 copies of it sold in the first year, but most of these were probably bought by expatriate residents. Within a short time the St John organization in the Territory stopped using the Australian edition in classes attended by Papua New Guineans. Instead it reversed the usual custom by adopting a Red Cross manual, *Junior First Aid in Papua New Guinea*, which it found to be 'an excellent book'. This news, of course, produced great consternation within the Association in Australia, which was supremely proud of its pioneering accomplishment after all the years of talking. However, St John in Australia simply had to learn to be philosophical about a St John body doing the unthinkable by using a Red Cross text for, apart from the matter of cost and the language used, there was the matter of skin colours and the models used in the illustrations. Symptoms of injuries and maladies which were readily detectable in people with white skins—for whom the Australian text had been conceived—were less apparent in people with brown or black skins. According to the Papua New Guinean representatives at Priory meetings, Melanesians did not identify with the pictures in the Australian manual. They 'wanted illustrations that looked like their own people'. Association delegates to Priory Council readily agreed with these criticisms, and they could see that their beloved Australian edition should not just be 'a white man's book'; but, having laboured for six years to produce it, they could not easily have come up with a Melanesian version.[47]

In the end the Association reached a compromise with the Papua New Guinea organization whereby St John and Red Cross would jointly produce a Papua New Guinean manual, with a major contribution being made by people living in that country who were sensitive to its needs. St John now formed a joint committee with Red Cross to produce a text for Papua New Guinean conditions which would be written in simplified English. But even these brave plans became muddled. In 1975 Smith, by now the principal figure in St John affairs in Port Moresby, complained to Priory that the Red Cross had proved unhelpful, and promised help had not been forthcoming. (To be fair to Red Cross, that organization, like St John, was having its share of administrative and personnel problems in Papua New Guinea.) Then the notes for the proposed text had been stolen. Finally, because of their approaching independence the

Papua New Guineans wanted to appoint their own editorial panel: in the flush of nationalist pride sweeping the country in its year of independence, it was thought 'paternalistic' for expatriate whites to be writing books of instruction for indigenous Papua New Guineans. Priory was dutifully sympathetic about these setbacks, and 'reaffirmed [its] support for any future activities in Papua New Guinea'. That was the last Priory heard of the Papua New Guinean text. Within nine months, and before the next Priory meeting, the Papua New Guinean St John organization had become fully independent from the Priory in Australia.[48]

The last act the Australian parent performed for its Papua New Guinean offspring was to form a National St John Council, which took over from the previous Executive Committee of St John. The National St John Council assumed responsibility for all St John affairs in Papua New Guinea at the end of March 1976. Like the country itself, it was now entirely free of Australian control. Instead it was answerable directly to St John's Gate, as was the Priory in Australia. The Priory transferred all its property in Papua New Guinea to the new Council. Instead of a Prior there was a Patron, who in the first instance was the Governor General, Sir John Guise, and later was his successor, Sir Tore Lokoloko. The foundation chairman of the Council was Brigadier-General Ted Diro, the most senior officer of the Papua New Guinean Defence Force. Smith, who subsequently took out Papua New Guinean citizenship and changed his name by deed poll to Keake (a Melanesian name), became the salaried manager. Thereafter the St John movements in the two countries drifted apart. This was perhaps inevitable, given the contrasting natures of the societies they each had to work within. The one must cater to a highly urbanized Western people while the other must operate in a country which, despite the appurtenances of its modern political institutions and its burgeoning towns, was still largely peopled with tribal communities of subsistence agriculturalists. If the St John movement was to prosper among the latter, it would be as a result of the efforts of the Papua New Guineans themselves. Like the Australians before them, they now had a chance to add to the traditions of the Order, weaving into them new strands dyed with the tones of their own country. Whether or not they would succeed in doing so, however, was something which only time could tell.[49]

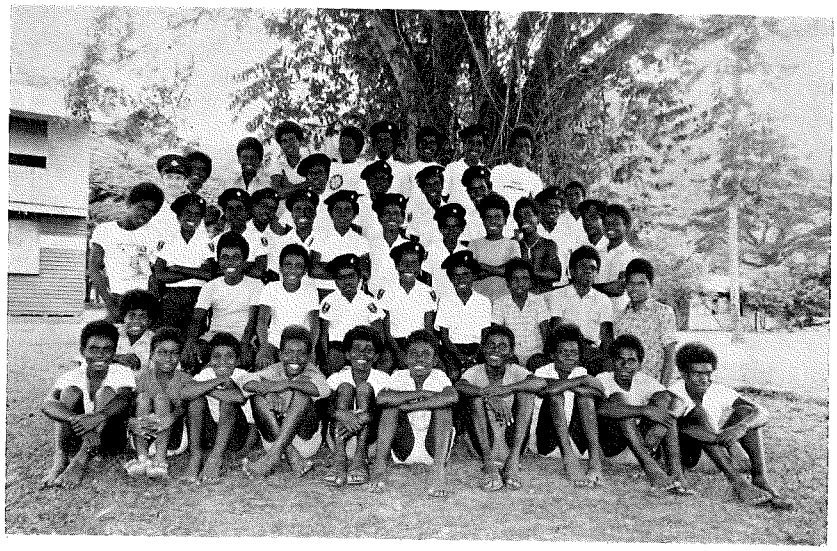
It remains a moot point whether or not the Australian organization could have done more for its Papua New Guinean offshoot. Given the constraints of personnel and finance, which had always limited the achievements of the Australian organization, it is hard to see what more it could have done. Similar constraints applied in Papua New Guinea as well, but the Australian organization could do little about that. The problem was that St John had arrived late on the scene in Papua New Guinea, and had come at a time of rapid change when all institutions

were in a state of flux. What the Australian organization needed in Papua New Guinea was fifty years or more in which to establish a sense of continuity in the Order there; but as things turned out it had less than twenty. Moreover it probably could not have gone to Papua New Guinea much earlier that it did. 'Nationhood' within St John in Australia was still a fairly novel idea in 1957; and the Priory at that time was experiencing some acute growing pains of its own. It was not, therefore, ready until well into the 60s to make any sort of commitment to Papua New Guinea. But however successfully the St John movement in Papua New Guinea might fare as it sought its own separate life, the Australian movement could reflect with some satisfaction that it had made at least some Papua New Guineans aware of a special and valuable tradition of service.

5 *Ventures into publishing*

Among the more successful of the post-war undertakings of the Order of St John were various ventures into publishing. Indeed, as the very imprint on this book indicates, the Order became a publishing house in its own right. Its productions were admittedly specialized. They were confined to a range of text books on first aid and home nursing, to in house journals like the annual reports of the Priory and State Branches, to the periodicals of the Brigade Districts (*White Cross* in Victoria, *Crusader* in New South Wales, *Spotlight* in South Australia, *News Centre* in Queensland, *The Brigade* in Western Australia, *First Aid Post* in Tasmania and *Points North* in the Northern Territory), to compendiums of statutes and regulations, and to numerous publicity brochures. Their sheer volume, however, which could be seen in the 85,000 or so text books sold annually by the 1980s, was proof that the Order could lay fair claim to being one of the moderately successful publishers. Like any of the country's big charities, St John in its federal and State Branches had found that it required a publicity 'machine' to keep its name before the public, to help in lobbying government and business, to attract recruits, and to rally its own members.

Publishing, in fact, had been one of the earliest activities of the State Branches of St John. The shortlived *St John Ambulance Gazette* in New South Wales (1902-04) and the *Victorian First Aid and St John Ambulance Gazette* (1918-19), if not the printed annual reports which most Association Centres issued to their members and the press from their earliest years, were evidence that the Order had a nose for publicity. Even individual Association sub-centres and Brigade Divisions became adept publicists; and Patrick Purtill's Darlinghurst Division in the 1920s was not alone in producing a flood of prospectuses, promotional pamphlets and printed annual reports. Consequently the antiquarian who goes rummaging through the archives of the State Branches of St John, turning up the scrapbooks, dead files and crates of ancient paper that litter



93 The Brigade's Cadet Division at St Joseph's High School, Kieta, Bougainville Island, Papua New Guinea, 1977

the basements of St John Houses across Australia, cannot but marvel at the huge volume of business St John has brought the Australian printing and photographic industries over a century.

Laying aside such ephemera, which any large organization generates, St John's principal contributions to Australian publishing have been its range of first aid and home nursing texts. As we have already seen, during the 1920s the ill-fated Central St John Council for Australia and the New South Wales Association Centre had each thought of producing an Australian version of the standard first aid text put out by the Association in England. Such proposals from the Dominions were quickly squelched by a St John's Gate which does not seem to have welcomed competition from abroad against what was undoubtedly a useful source of Grand Priory funds. Nor was St John's Gate above resorting to 'restrictive trade practices' in maintaining its monopoly. The stranglehold London held on text production and sales was not one it could keep up indefinitely, however: the pressure of the Grand Priory officers could only arouse resentment and stiffen the Dominions' opposition to texts conceived and written for English conditions. The English texts failed on many counts to give due emphasis to issues that first aiders in the Dominions thought essential. Treating ivy poisoning might be a useful topic in running classes for English schoolchildren who liked rambling around ivy-clad ruins; but it was not much use in coastal Queensland, where the treatment of sea wasp stings was a more frequent need. Similarly, Australian first aiders would see more tiger snake bites in a single summer than Britain's entire medical profession would see viper bites in a

decade. There were similar objections to English home nursing texts, which might, for instance, give useful hints on 'safety first about the home' without mentioning the ubiquitous Australian backyard barbecue, or without alluding to the risk in leaving infants in a motor car on a hot day.

By the late 1940s Australian dissatisfaction with the English texts was such that Priory Council was turning over the possibility of producing a specifically Australian first aid book in collaboration with Red Cross. Nothing much came of this talk, however, for word came through from London that a new edition of the text was coming out, and so the Australians elected to see what it would offer them rather than rush into an involved undertaking with Red Cross. Further grievances arose over London's methods of distributing its text books. Up till 1951 Priory thought it had a gentleman's agreement with St John's Gate whereby it had sole rights to market the texts, but in that year copies turned up on the shelves of Melbourne's largest bookseller. Poate took the issue up with St John's Gate, only to be informed that 'the London attitude was that they could not refuse an order from a bookseller who wanted books'.[50]

The Australian Branches of the Order went on using the English text despite their objections to it, and they accepted other manuals from England as well. In 1957 the Association in Australia agreed to adopt a new English text on occupational first aid, in which they planned to include their own Australian addendum. But shortly after the new text appeared Stening (as Director of the Association) declared it 'quite inadequate for this country'. Priory therefore voted not to use it, and instead adopted another English, though non-St John, manual on occupational first aid. Eventually, a generation later, the Australians produced their own impressive manual, *Occupational First Aid*, in 1981. This text, five years in the making, was produced through the Association by a large working party, with Dr Brian Purssey, Queensland Centre chairman, being the principal author and the co-ordinator.[51]

It seems strange that the Australian St John movement should have taken so long to replace inadequate English manuals with more appropriate local versions. The reasons, however, are quite simple. To reach agreement on any issue in a highly complex federal structure like St John in Australia, takes time. Issues usually arise at the grass-roots and are then referred upward to the State Branch level, and eventually through the Standing Committees of Priory to the Priory Council and Chapter meetings. If the matter of concern warrants it, special sub-committees or working parties will be formed to investigate; their proposals are then discussed in Priory and referred back to the States for comment before coming back to Priory for endorsement as policy. Along the way there is much discussion and consultation and, with Priory meeting only annually, a programme of action may take years to

implement. In the case of a textbook for the use of the general public there are additional complications. The text must be authoritative, which is a difficult aim, given the accelerative advances of medical science. Thus – to take a fairly obvious example – excising a snakebite and applying a torniquet was respectable medical convention until recent decades, when progress in toxicology demonstrated that a simple constrictive bandage, immobilizing the affected limb and keeping the victim lying down at rest were better treatments. Then there is a medico-legal question: if the book is sold to the public and its recommended treatments are proven injurious is not St John liable? Double checking of the treatments recommended and of the prose and diagrams of any text must therefore be punctilious. There is also the matter of rival manuals published by kindred organizations and commercial competitors. To maintain its authority in its field, St John publications must simply be the best. Then there is the matter of the changing nature of the maladies known to medicine. Herpes simplex became a household term only in the 1980s, in the aftermath of the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 70s. Tenosynovitis is now better described and understood than a decade ago, when it might simply have been dismissed as but a variant of tennis elbow. Stress fractures were not common knowledge until the fun-run and jogging craze took off in the 70s, at which time the emerging science of sports medicine was beginning to specialize in such complaints. Although the treatment of such illnesses was something for the medical specialist, understanding them and helping to care for the victims were skills the average first aider or home nurse might eventually have to acquire. If the St John texts were to be up to date they needed to keep abreast of new treatments and new problems. But the difficulty was that St John's federal structure was of necessity cumbersome, and the legal and medical imperative for accuracy was overwhelming. The consequence was that any new text published in less time than five years from its conception was likely to be a rushed job in risk of serious flaws.

With the wisdom of hindsight we can now appreciate that the wait-and-see approach Priory took in relation to texts emanating from the London headquarters of the Association in the late 1940s and 50s was also a factor making for tardiness in the production of Australian manuals for Australian needs. Undoubtedly Priory would have been better off sponsoring its own texts from the outset, yet such was its respect for St John's Gate that it deferred to the reputation of London. As each successive English manual appeared the Australians hoped that their needs would be better catered for. They were usually disappointed.

In October 1963 Priory at last decided that a more self-reliant approach was required. Self-reliance in this instance was hardly ambitious: all that was envisaged was an Australian supplement to the standard English first aid text. The Association Standing Committee decided, and prevailed upon Priory to agree, that it would appoint an editorial panel

to bring out a pamphlet setting out treatments for uniquely Australian contingencies—sea wasp stings, Sydney funnelweb and redback spider bites, wounds from cone shell and stingray spines, snakebite, and even bites by blue tongue lizards. The supplement was ready for use early the next year, 1964. Henceforth anyone taking the St John course in first aid received the English text plus the Australian supplement.[52]

According to the 1964 annual report by the Director of the Association, E. A. Daley, St John's Gate displayed 'great interest' in the Australian supplement. Not only that, but London did something it had never done before—it sent the drafts of its proposed new manual to the Australian Priory for comment. This produced, in Daley's words, a 'great exchange of ideas' between the Associations of England and Australia. The new, or '1965' English manual, with a rewritten Australian supplement, went into use early in 1966. Priory obtained London's permission to print it in Australia subject to payment of royalties. In the event the new English edition was widely felt in Australia to be 'unsatisfactory'; and, ~~once again~~, there were renewed protests about the St John's Gate habit of supplying the text to commercial booksellers in the States, whereas each Association Centre felt it ought to be sole distributor. Moreover there had been a great furore over the Australian supplement. Some within the Association thought this was 'sub-standard' on three counts—its scientific accuracy, its layout and its language. Some members of the Association Standing Committee feared that 'someone may suffer as a result of [its] treatments and there could be legal repercussions'. So great had been their dissatisfaction that the committee voted to withdraw the supplement from use, but, following a special plea from Stening, members agreed to retain it if it was rewritten. So sensitive had discussion on this issue been that the committee resolved 'that any record of such be expunged from the Minutes'.[53]

Dissatisfaction with the 1965 English first aid manual, with its Australian supplement, and with a St John's Gate which persisted in supplying the book to commercial booksellers over the objections of the State Centres, prompted the Association in Australia to produce its own first aid text. After these grievances received a thorough airing at the Priory meeting in Adelaide in 1965, the Association Standing Committee meeting in Hobart in June the next year voted

> that in future all St John textbooks for use in Australia should be produced in Australia, . . . and that an *Australian* edition of the first aid manual be printed for our own use . . . [In the meantime] the 1958 edition rather than the controversial 1965 edition would be a better book to use.[54]

THE 1958 ENGLISH EDITION

The committee also decided that, rather than toss material for the proposed Australian text back and forth around an editorial board, one person should have the task of writing it. This task fell to Dr Howard Toyne, a member of the committee. The committee asked him to work 'under the direction of the Director of the Association', Daley, and gave

him the power to co-opt any necessary assistance. It was perhaps a measure of the urgency of the matter that both Priory Council and Chapter endorsed the committee's decision without devising an elaborate set of checks and balances to ensure that Toyne would work according to their will.[55]

Toyne, a Melbourne surgeon, got down to work with a will. To emphasize his importance Priory designated him as 'Principal Medical Officer' on Daley's staff. An editorial panel was set up to assist him, and he was soon circulating draft copies of chapters for comment. At the 1967 Priory meeting Daley was able to report that 'great progress has been made and [the book] is entering the later stages of production'. It was ready by early 1969. The Deputy Prior for Victoria, Sir Rohan Delacombe, launched it in Melbourne—Toyne's and Daley's home town—on 29 May 'before a gathering representing many activities in the community, with a view to bringing the historical aspect and the St John teaching activities before as many people as possible'.[56]

The new Australian text was an instant and outstanding success. Fifty thousand copies were run off in the first impression. These sold out within several months, and another 50,000 were printed. By June 1970 the first 100,000 had all been sold and there were orders for a further 10,000. Thereafter annual impressions requiring print runs in excess of 50,000 were made for the rest of the decade, until the second and updated edition, also produced through the efforts of Toyne (who by now had succeeded Daley as Director of the Association), appeared in 1979. The second edition, *First Aid: the authorized Manual of the St John Ambulance Association in Australia*, like the first was a runaway success, with annual print runs that were the envy of commercial publishers.[57]

The Australian first aid manual was obviously a commercial as well as an educational success. It provided as welcome an income for Priory as the English edition must previously have given the London organization. Priory Council decided that royalties at the rate of 9¢ a copy (later reduced to 5¢), or $4500 for every 50,000 copies sold, would go into a fund part of which would help maintain the secretariat in the new Canberra Headquarters. Previously the Priory had existed on an exemplarily slender budget—revenues of $13,670 in 1968, which left a credit balance of $435 after meeting expenses. Three years later, in 1971, revenues amounted to $27,727, and the excess of income over expenditure was $2313. By 1979 revenues were $117,273, and the excess $14,903. Even allowing for the rapid inflation of the 70s it was clear that the Priory was comfortable it not actually well off. The new affluence came chiefly from the Association's publications account, which in 1971 contributed over $7000 towards Priory administrative expenses as well as to significant additions to the Priory portfolio of investments in stocks and shares. By 1979 the contribution to Priory administration was over $67,000. So the success of Toyne's manual exceeded all expectations.[58]

The Toyne manual was only the first St John venture into textbook production. Others followed in the 1970s and early 80s. In 1972 Toyne wrote a second first aid manual, *What is First Aid?*, this time for children, with humorous illustrations by the newspaper cartoonist 'Weg'. This, too, became a highly successful textbook, in teaching junior first aid classes. Then, in 1976, came the launching of the long-awaited Australian home nursing manual, *Care of the Sick in the Home*, by Sister Honor Morris of Adelaide. In 1979 a team of Association writers produced a further manual, *First Aid and Personal Health in Rural Areas*, an omnibus textbook for use in a trial course aimed at people in remote areas, for use in School of the Air radio programmes, and in a trial course of first aid for Aborigines. Purssey's *Occupational First Aid* came out the next year. In addition to these Priory-sponsored manuals, individual State branches of St John had begun their own programmes of educational publication. The State Ambulance Training Committee of the South Australian branch published its textbook for ambulance transport officers, *Casualty Care and Transport*, in 1975. The New South Wales Association Centre between 1974 and 76 embarked on an ambitious scheme for producing a ten-module audio-visual training programme in first aid, which entailed a series of co-ordinated film projector slides and tape recorder sound cassettes. The Victorian Centre also produced a set of film projector slides for training purposes, all of which depicted actual 'real-life' cases of first aid. All these presaged a wider interest by the Order in Australia in the field of health education. They were tacit recognition, perhaps, that the Order had to diversify and expand its interests if it did not want kindred organizations and commercial publishing firms to outstrip it in meeting the public need for health education.[59]

That producing manuals to satisfy this expanding market for health education programmes could be hazardous was something which Honor Morris's *Care of the Sick in the Home* exemplified. This textbook was one conceived at the same time as Toyne's First Aid. The same Priory meeting that authorized Toyne to start work on his *First Aid* in 1966 also gave Daley, as Director of the Association, the power to have the English home nursing text rewritten for Australian conditions. Daley did not prosecute this latter scheme as vigorously as he did the former; and whereas he was reporting great advances in Toyne's project by late 66 he could only say 'no specific progress can be reported as this juncture' in relation to the home nursing manual. Within the next six months, however, he appointed Morris as his 'Chief Nursing Adviser' and formed a panel of nurses representing each State Centre to assist her.[60]

Morris and her panel began working as a *panel*, and as a result they worked slowly. There were conferences to discuss what should go into the book and consultations with Toyne and other experts. Work progressed so slowly, in fact, that in 1969 Priory adopted the home nursing

textbook of the Canadian Priory, *Patient Care in the Home*, as a stop-gap measure. With the agreement of the Canadian Priory selected excerpts from this book were printed and bound in Australia. By the end of the next year, 1970, however, Daley was able to note in his annual report that 'Sister Morris and her Nursing Panel have reached an advanced stage in the preparation of the draft production for an Australian manual'. All this time delegates to Priory meetings had been urging the panel on, pointing out that 'if there was an Australian book there would be more people interested' in home nursing, which had always run a very poor second to first aid in popularity with the public.[61]

Priory's pleas for urgency notwithstanding, the promised manual plodded on very slowly, through 1971 and into 1972, when it was finally completed in draft. Then troubles arose. The Canadian book, *Patient Care in the Home*, had not lived up to expectations. Many instructors thought it was 'not up to the standard of their usual thinking', but the Association had produced 17,000 copies at considerable cost, and a number of people were of the opinon that these should all be sold—it was not expected that supplies would be exhausted before mid-1974—before Morris's book was printed. Then disagreements emerged within the panel of six nurses helping Morris. Two of them 'did not agree that the text and the approach were correct', declaring that if the book were published their names must be omitted because 'they had no wish to be associated with such a book'. These difficulties surfaced at the 1972 Priory meeting. Daley announced to the Association Standing Committee that 'in view of serious doubts expressed by medical people and nursing authorities regarding the suitability of the text, . . . no further money could be expended on the nursing manual'. Morris defended the text, pointing out that very few people had read it. Opinion against it, she maintained, was thus restricted to only several individuals. Not to go ahead with it would be a breach of faith with people in remote areas, who felt a particular need for it.[62]

Debate over the issue continued within the Association over the next year. Some Association members petitioned Daley and Stening about the decision to dispense with the Morris text, asking that the matter be reconsidered. The matter accordingly re-surfaced at the next Priory meeting, in 1973. Proponents of the Morris text argued that the book was of necessity detailed but was written clearly in terms the lay person could understand. Furthermore, lay people who had seen it had received it enthusiastically; the Canadian textbook, they said, was unsuitable, and its recommended procedures were often at variance with Australian practice; and without an Australian manual home nursing would languish in this country. Opponents maintained that the cost of producing the Morris text for its limited market would be too high, particularly in view of the commitment the Association had made to the printing of the Canadian book. Moreover the number of people seeking training in home

nursing had dropped over the years, which meant there was in any case a declining market. The Morris text, they also claimed, was too difficult for ready use by lay people, and it had its medical critics. The supporters and detractors fell into roughly two camps. One tended to consist of Brigade personnel, and they agreed with the Chief Commissioner of the day, Douglas Donald, that Morris's book was 'brilliant'. The rival faction, who tended to comprise non-Brigade people, fell in behind Daley and Toyne, who were frank about what they saw as the book's inadequacies. The debate was also one between two philosophies of instruction—between those who wanted a detailed, academic type of book and those who wanted a more readable and popular manual. The Brigade camp wanted the former sort of book—one with sufficient detail for teaching Brigade members; the Daley-Toyne group, on the other hand, wanted a manual that would encourage lay people outside the St John organization to undertake home nursing training. The argument between these two groups shifted back and forth, but was inconclusive. Although the Association Standing Committee finally voted to proceed with publication, this resolution was not endorsed by the wider Priory Council. Instead the Council supported a bland motion thanking Morris and her panel for their efforts but recommending 'no action on the financial aspects [of production] for the time being'.[63]

Lobbying for and against the Morris book continued over the next year, and the issue came up again at the next Priory meeting in Perth in 1974. Daley in the meantime had distributed Morris's draft text to the State Centres of the Association for their comment, and so the debate widened. Daley himself argued that 'it was considered by some people that the detail of the book was too deep for distribution to a wide cross section of the community'. He also said there was 'anxiety over the financing of it', particularly as 'the issuing of home nursing certificates has diminished over the last six years'. In answer Morris's defenders—Donald, Dr Peter Bush, the Victorian Commissioner, Dr J. M. Large, the Commissioner-elect for Tasmania, Dr Geraldine Archer, chairman of the Tasmanian Centre, and Dr Ian Thorburn, a Western Australian delegate—denied that the book was abstruse. It was, said Archer, 'an excellent manual for any intelligent woman'. Thorburn, in discussing its costs, said that 'with a wide distribution the book could pay for itself, just as the first aid manual paid for itself'. Morris herself said that her book should not really be compared with the first aid manual because 'no home nursing book would have the same [appeal] as a first aid manual'. Large claimed that 'if a book like this was not in print then the future of home nursing by St John would be in doubt'. After much discussion along these lines Priory Council resolved that, 'subject to satisfactory marketing arrangements being made, we proceed as fast as possible with the production of this book'.[64]

During this debate one other important issue began to emerge. It was

one to which Dr Large had alluded obliquely, and for St John, which depended as much on the efforts of women as it did on those of men, there were wide ramifications. It was not just that the future of home nursing training was jeopardized, as Large suggested, but also that behind this was the wider issue of women's rights. Large's comments, perhaps unwittingly, touched what for some female members of the Order was a sensitive nerve. Among some of the nursing officers of the Brigade in particular there was a feeling, not often articulated before, that their contribution to St John was not fully appreciated by the male-dominated hierarchy of the Order. From the all-male board of Priory Executive Officers down, there was, they felt, undue male influence in the affairs of the Order; and the corollary to that, they believed, was that women's views and women's needs were often overlooked. They could point to the fact that in the Brigade in Australia there had never been a female Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner or District Surgeon; and with the exception of Dr Katie Ardill-Brice no woman had ever chaired a State Association Centre. Nor had there ever been a female Priory Executive Officer.[65]

Some of the women who felt aggrieved that the male point of view generally prevailed in Priory affairs saw the imbalance between the effort in first aid and home nursing as evidence of male dominance. They believed that men naturally saw first aid as *the* priority activity, and undervalued the importance of home nursing as a result. The prominence given to Toyne's *First Aid*, and the reluctance of the Priory Executive to sponsor Morris's book with the same enthusiasm with which they had supported Toyne, demonstrated to these women the male bias of the whole organization. Indeed they wondered if some of the Priory Executive were at all worried that home nursing might disappear entirely as a St John concern. These grievances became more articulate the following year, 1975, which was, perhaps significantly, strongly promoted within Australia as International Women's Year. One of Morris's closest collaborators on her panel of six nurses, Norma Wreford, the Brigade's District Nursing Officer in Western Australia, was one whose thinking was clarified as a result of International Women's Year. She was voicing the feelings of others on the panel when she wrote to her superior officer in the Brigade in her District in early 1975. She wrote as follows:

> This year being International Women's Year naturally stimulates thought pertaining to women. In view of this I consider every effort should be made to ensure the publishing of the proposed Australian Nursing Manual as a contribution by St John to all women. Because of the male dominance throughout the Order, Nursing has been sadly neglected, mainly due to ignorance. Now with changing attitudes in society we could combat this ignorance by encouraging all Ambulance men to take Home Nursing courses and the Home Nursing Certificate together with first aid to be a compulsory qualification for ALL officers.
>
> The other area which has been completely ignored in Australia is the appoint-

ment of a Nursing Officer (a registered nurse) to the Chief Commissioner's Staff, and I recommend this anomaly be investigated.
If the Order had kept abreast with the times and promoted *Pro Utilitate Hominum* more effectively we would not have other agencies encroaching on our 'Objectives' today. Apart from Nursing the areas which demand attention are Child Welfare/Care and Hygiene.[66]

None of this meant that the feminist movement was bidding to take over St John Ambulance, but it did signify, to those acute enough to read the signs, that the women of the Order were growing restive in their accustomed role as handmaidens.

Argument over Morris's book continued at the Priory meeting in Sydney later that year, though this time the debate centred more on when the book should be published rather than if. Printing costs were expected to be $12,000 for 10,000 copies. There was discussion over copyright: when Morris suggested that she should hold it, Donald and Toyne pointed out forcefully 'the book has been written for St John and it should be the . . . property of St John'. There was further argument over the Canadian textbook, three years' supplies of which were still in stock. In the end it was decided that when Morris's book appeared the Canadian text should be the official textbook for junior classes until its supplies sold out. Finally, after the issue had been canvassed once more in the Association Standing Committee, it all came up for general discussion in the Priory Chapter when Geraldine Archer rose and moved a complex five-part motion, the main thrust being to the effect

that the Australian Home Nursing Manual as written by Sister H. Morris and as approved for publication by the Priory Chapter in 1974 be published; and that if the final draft as submitted by the nursing panel to the Director is not in the hands of the publisher by 31st December 1975, a report setting out the reasons why be sent to all State committees with further reports to be submitted at three-monthly intervals.[67]

Behind Archer's motion lurked a suspicion that the Association executive would need continual sharp prodding if it was to implement Chapter decisions faithfully. There was immediate strident contention over whether or not Archer's motion was in order. Controversy like this rarely rippled the sedate surface of the Priory Chapter, which was *the* supreme council of the Order in Australia. Over the years its meetings had become ceremonies in which resolutions agreed on in earlier committee meetings were ritually rubber stamped. The Priory Executive Officers were therefore reluctant to see the Chapter meeting become an open forum for airing divisive issues; and the book's opponents were not prepared to see the opposition steal a march on them by slipping a motion like Archer's on to the official record. In the chair at this chapter meeting was a new Prior, Sir John Kerr, attending his first Priory meeting after having succeeded the former Prior, Sir Paul Hasluck. After hearing the claims of either side, Kerr ruled that Archer's motion be proceeded with. The meeting then discussed the motion further, but to avoid further embar-

rassing factional scrapping in front of the Prior it agreed that 'because of the urgent nature of the motion, the matter [should] be discussed at an early meeting of the Association Standing Committee'.[68]

This special meeting of the Association Standing Committee took place four months later, in October 1975. In the meantime Daley had announced his retirement and had been succeeded as Director of the Association by Toyne. Following this meeting Priory finally took the plunge and committed itself wholeheartedly to publishing Morris's book, which she had decided to call *Care of the Sick in the Home*. The book duly appeared in print five months later, in March 1976. It had its launching in Perth on 15 June at a ceremony presided over by the Knight Commander and State Governor for Western Australia, Sir Wallace Kyle.[69] As her contribution to the occasion Morris read a poem by an unknown female author. It was one which had been found by a nurse in the geriatric ward of a hospital in Scotland. Morris chose to read this particular poem because it expressed something of the need of the patients she and her nursing colleagues had dedicated their lives to serving. The knowledge of that need, and their awareness of their responsibilities to patients everywhere, had helped sustain her and her fellow panel members over the preceding decade, at many points of which their project had often seemed doomed. The title of the poem was 'Look closer and see the real me', and the words went like this:

What do you see, tell me, what do you see?
Who are you seeing when you look at me?
A crabbit old woman, not very wise,
Uncertain of habit, with faraway eyes,
Who seems not to notice the things that you do,
And forever is losing a stocking or shoe.
Is that what you're thinking, is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, for you're not seeing me
I'll say who I am as I sit here so still,
As I rise at your bidding and eat at your will,
I'm a small child of ten, with a father and mother,
Sisters and brothers who love one another.
A young girl of sixteen with wings on her feet,
Dreaming that soon her true sweetheart she'll meet.
A bride at just twenty, my heart gives a leap,
Remembering the vows I promised to keep.
At twenty-five, now I have bairns of my own
Who need me to build a secure, happy home.
A woman of thirty, my children grow fast,
Bound to each other with ties that will last,
At forty, my grown-up sons will be gone,
But my man stays beside me to see I don't mourn.
At fifty, once more babies play round my knee,
Again we know children, my loved one and me.
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead,
I look at the future, I shudder with dread.
My children are busy with bairns of their own,

I think of the years and the love I have known.
I'm an old woman now, grace and vigor depart,
But thousands of memories live in my heart.
Inside it, you see, a girl still dwells,
And now and again my tired heart swells.
I remember the joy, I think of the pain,
And I'm loving and living life over again.
So open your eyes, please open and see.
Not a crabbit old woman look closer—'see me'.[70]

It probably brought a lump to the throats of those present, and if so it probably had achieved its purposes, for it was intended to remind them all that home nursing had always been an integral part of St John work. To those males present who thought that first aid was the principal task of the Order it was a testimony to something else—to the conviction of some women within the Order that home nursing was as worthy an activity as first aid, and that women's contribution to the reputation of the Order through home nursing was as valuable as anything the men themselves might do.

Now that *Care of the Sick in the Home* was finally in print it soon proved the doubters wrong. Even before its launching it was drawing favourable comments from the general public. One of the more lavish tributes came from the paediatrician, medical writer and broadcaster, Lady Phyllis Cilento, who reviewed it for the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* in May 1976. She wrote,

> I have just read the most fascinating book, *Care of the Sick in the Home* . . . You would not expect such a book to be 'fascinating', as you probably do not have to care for a sick person in your home at present. But in every family there are times when someone is sick or 'off colour'—when medicine had to be given, an injection coped with, a child observed, a report made to a doctor. This book tells you in detail how to do it correctly with the least fuss, and the least trouble to the patient.
> In our present society when hosptial beds—all too few—are occupied by surgical cases and those who need special nursing and medical care and observation, an increasing number of people are being nursed in their homes. The advice given in this book will be of tremendous value to members of the family, to friends and even neighbours in times of need.[71]

While its volume of sales was small by comparison with Toyne's *First Aid*, Morris's book was popular enough to warrant going into a second edition within four months of the appearance of the first, and two further editions by November 1979. That, perhaps, was the best reward for the doggedness Morris and her nursing colleagues had displayed over the preceding twelve or thirteen years. They were to have another reward several years later. This came when, under revised Brigade regulations, the text from the early 1980s was strongly encouraged for the instruction of male as well as female Brigade members.

These victories notwithstanding, the critics of Morris's book eventually had cause to feel that their stand had been justified. In the long term

the number of home nursing certificates being awarded continued to decline, and Morris's book was unable to arrest that trend. The success of the book depended mainly on the Brigade, which, by using the book in teaching its own personnel, ensured a certain level of annual sales. But that was not to say that Morris and her supporters could not be proud of having produced St John's first Australian home nursing textbook.

6 *Ambulance Transport*

Previous chapters have dwelt upon St John's involvement, sometimes successfully and sometimes less so, in ambulance transport work. This variable success continued through the post-war years, for in one State St John took control of the ambulance services, rationalized them and built them into one of the country's finest, but in another St John gained partial control, built the services up, and was then obliged to stand aside as a government instrumentality took over. In yet another State, Queensland, St John severed a connection long maintained between itself and the State ambulance service. So as St John ended its first century in Australia its record in ambulance transport work was uneven. In some parts of the country its name and ambulance transport were synonymous, the name a byword for excellence in humanitarian service; but elsewhere the memory of St John involvement brought twinges of bitterness.

(a) *South Australia*

By the 1980s the Order of St John was responsible for running the Statewide ambulance services of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. We have already seen how the Association in Western Australia took control of the Perth ambulance service in 1922; and we looked at the way tensions developed between the South Australian Ambulance Transport and the Brigade, as the latter attempted to extend its interests into transport work in the 1920s. The division of labour the SAAT and the Brigade subsequently agreed upon, whereby the Brigade confined its vans to the racecourses, lasted for eighteen years, until 1952, when the SAAT merged with St John, which then took control of the metropolitan and eventually the entire State ambulance system.

By the end of the Second World War the inadequacies of South Australia's unco-ordinated ambulance services were becoming something of a disgrace to the State. In Adelaide the SAAT was running eight vans, St John had two, the Northern Suburbs Ambulance operated one, the police-sponsored Civil Ambulance Service had two, one private operator ran his own ambulance van, and there were specialized services run by various other organizations—the railways, the hospitals, the Red Cross, the Crippled Children's Association. In the provincial centres and country districts local authorities and agencies maintained a variety of additional services. The newspapers delighted in writing exposés on the

shortcomings of these services: the dilapidated condition of many of the vehicles, delays in getting ambulances to the scene of accidents, and the arrival at the one accident of several vans called by different bystanders always made good copy.[72]

In response to this public criticism, St John officials, most notably Dr E. A. H. Russell, the Brigade Commissioner, and R. P. Goode, secretary to both Association and Brigade, held discussions in 1947 with Capt. T. Lonnen, the Chief Officer of the SAAT. The aim of their meetings was to see if the two bodies could amalgamate, with the SAAT becoming, say, the 'Ambulance Transport Corps' of the Brigade in order to improve the service. The following year, 1948, St John formed a sub-committee headed by Col. W. S. Hanson, deputy chairman of the Association Centre, to push this idea along further. Lonnen and his men were generally agreeable to the St John proposals, but there were certain conditions they insisted upon. They wanted St John to recognise their SAAT-issued first aid certificates; they wished St John to recognise their SAAT long service awards for purposes of seniority; and they wanted to wear their SAAT award ribbons on their Brigade uniforms. All these were contentious issues for St John, which was always very wary about recognising the awards of rival bodies. Russell and Goode took the matter up with Priory and obtained from Poate a provisional agreement to a number of Lonnen's demands. The matter had to be referred to St John's Gate for official approval, but in view of Poate's favourable response the SAAT in 1948 decided to join the Brigade as a transport unit. The lawyers for each body then drew up an agreement by which the merger could proceed, and both parties began looking forward to an early union. Negotiations then became stalled because St John's Gate wanted further details. A voluminous correspondence between London and Priory and between Priory and Adelaide ensued. Lonnen and his team began having second thoughts. Lonnen declared he would not sign the agreement, because although this allowed his men to join St John without loss of status or pay they would have to become subject to Brigade regulations, which meant that only St John exams could count towards the Brigade long service medal.[73]

In the meantime the St John Council for South Australia had come into being in early 1950, with an Adelaide businessman as chairman. This was E. W. Hayward, the head of the retailing firm John Martin Ltd., and he was to take a leading role in the subsequent developments. In March of 1950 the government set up an Advisory Council on Health and Medical Services to inquire into ways of providing the State with a better ambulance system. The government invited the St John Council to make submissions to the Advisory Council on how a Statewide ambulance service might operate. K. G. Shapter, secretary to the St John Council, prepared a submission. This gave a summary of the stalemate reached with the SAAT; it outlined how other States managed their ambulance

94 The St John Ambulance fleet, Perth, 1970-71

services; and it showed how with government financial aid St John could operate a Statewide ambulance system using both salaried and volunteer ambulance officers. Getting down to specifics it proposed that there should be fifteen ambulance vans in the metropolitan area operated by a permanent staff of fifty at a cost of £1500 per ambulance annually. The salaried staff would work on a 9.00 to 5.00 basis, with night time, weekend and holiday duties being carried out by certificated St John volunteers. The ambulance service throughout the State should be 'one and indivisible'; it should be under one control, responsible to the government; and St John, 'being an established body with the necessary knowledge and stability', should be the agency administering it. The SAAT should be taken over 'on an equitable basis' by the Brigade, of which it would then form the transport section.[74]

The Advisory Council saw merit in these various proposals but its report to the government in September 1950 recommended something different. Instead, the report said, the government should set up an Ambulance Board to conduct the Adelaide ambulance service; and there should be local district committees answerable to the Board for running the services in places beyond the metropolitan area. St John rejected these recommendations. Through Hanson's sub-committee it made representations to the government, arguing the case against a service conducted by a government Board. A Board-operated service would be more expensive, the sub-committee claimed, because if people knew the

government was involved they would make frivolous demands on the service, on the principle that 'the government can afford it'. The service, moreover, would not be effective in attracting the valuable volunteer input which St John was well able to supply. Faced with conflicting advice like this the government was unsure of what course to follow. It did what was easiest—nothing. In the meantime the two police ambulances had broken down and were off the road indefinitely, and so the newspapers were once more relishing their attacks on the State's ambulance facilities.[75]

It was at this stage that Hayward entered negotiations. Hanson died in early 1951, and so Hayward took his place on the ambulance subcommittee. Hayward was from a well-connected family and had personal links with a number of influential figures in government. The subcommittee consequently left the matter in his hands. He managed to steer the Chief Secretary, Sir Lyle McEwen, into a conversation on the matter of the ambulance services one day. McEwen admitted that the government was greatly perplexed by the problem and was not sure what it should be doing. He asked Hayward if St John could really make a success of the job if it was allowed to take control. 'Of course we could!' said Hayward. 'Then it's yours' replied the Chief Secretary. Hayward promised to write down on a single sheet of paper how St John would go about running the service. He went home, wrote an eleven-point plan, in essence a summary of the Shapter proposals, had it typed up the next morning, and gave it to McEwen that afternoon. McEwen glanced at the paper, then said again, 'It's yours'.[76]

The change in sponsorship of South Australia's ambulance system was not endorsed by legislation. Following through with the 'Old Boy' mode of action, the Premier, Mr (later Sir) Thomas Playford, now called a meeting of the St John, SAAT and police ambulance representatives. He reached a verbal agreement with them that the Shapter-Hayward proposals should be implemented. He promised adequate finance for St John to set up an improved, co-ordinated, modernized system, which to start off with would be based on the SAAT headquarters at Hindmarsh, with depots at Norwood, Thebarton, Glenelg and Unley, and would be extended progressively until it covered the entire State. The system would be controlled by the St John Council with the new Brigade Commissioner, Dr F. K. Mugford, in command. The previous Commissioner, Russell, had just been eased out when other senior St John officials, convinced that he would have proved obstructive, carried their misgivings about him to the Deputy Prior, the Governor, Sir Willoughby Norrie. They knew Russell was not wholly behind the scheme, for he took the view that, as a voluntaristic body, St John should not really be running a commercial ambulance service. Rather, he thought, it should be succouring the sick and injured voluntarily. Norrie had then summoned Russell to Government House to discuss the matter, in consequence of which

95 St John Ambulance officers Norm Oakes (left) and Ray Schilling remove an injured waterside worker from the hold of a ship, Port Adelaide, 1960.

Russell retired as Commissioner (though he stayed on, in the capacity of Priory Librarian, as South Australia's representative on the Priory Executive). With Russell thus departed from the stage, Hayward was able to announce publicly, in October 1951, that St John was establishing a co-ordinated ambulance service with a fleet of eighteen vehicles in the metropolitan area, and that he hoped the service would be in operation by the end of the year. The Northern Suburbs Ambulance then bid to come in too. February 1st was set as the day for the changeover. The official handover, planned for March, had to be postponed until September because of the death of George VI, though the service was running from the beginning of 1952. In time the service proved an outstanding success. By the 1980s it was one of the best in the country. By its large-scale use of volunteer staff after hours it managed to combine the Order's fundamental principle of voluntarism with modern demands for a highly skilled paramedical service, which it did better than any other Australian State. The opportunity for regular duty in the State's network of ambulance transport provided a great fillip to recruitment for the Brigade, to the extent that by the 80s the South Australian District of the Brigade was the strongest in Australia.[77]

The success of the ambulance service under a St John Council run by Hayward, who was the chairman from 1950 until 1976, owed much to his entrepreneurial style. Hayward proved adept at pulling strings in South Australia's political 'establishment' to the advantage of St John. His

freewheeling approach led him into trouble with the Order, however, and in particular with one of its principal figures in South Australia, E. A. H. Russell. Russell had striven for three years or more to achieve painstakingly through the formal channels of the State St John branch and the Priory committees what Hayward had accomplished in a half-hour chat with the Chief Secretary. In Russell's opinion Hayward's use of the Adelaide Old Boy network to by-pass the log jam in negotiations between St John, the SAAT and the Advisory Council on Health and Medical Services was against the interests of the Order. The Order was not a wheeler-dealer! Russell also felt that, as he was the Priory Executive Officer for South Australia, Hayward should have consulted him before making any deals with the government which could commit the Priory to a course it might not wish to follow. For his part Hayward believed in cutting through red tape, and in taking the unconventional approach, if that helped secure desirable goals.[78]

Perhaps a typical example of the Hayward style had been the way he had gone about organizing a public appeal for funds by the St John Council in the weeks preceding the hand-over ceremony in September 1952. He contacted the Secretary General of the Order in London to ask for the Grand Prior, the Duke of Gloucester, to send out messages of support which could be read at the appeal launching. He did not observe the usual convention of making such a request through the Priory in Australia. Hayward had been in England at the time and simply did what appeared to him to be the commonsense thing by making his request direct. He subsequently wrote from England to apologise to Poate 'for having taken a step of that character without referring the matter to Priory': but Poate was still displeased that, as he later explained to Priory Council, 'our Priory Executive Officer in South Australia had not been communicated with in any way with regard to any of these movements, and as a result we in Priory knew nothing'.[79]

Publicly Poate felt obliged to tell Priory Council that 'we object very much to the method adopted in developing this project'. Privately, however, he probably shared the views of several senior members of the Priory Council, one of whom, Col. Alex Christie, the veteran secretary of the St John Council for Victoria, said

> whilst we feel that a certain amount of censure is warranted on the St John Council of South Australia for neglecting to advise us, can we not also at the same time congratulate them on having done something positive?

Russell was present at this meeting. He took great umbrage at the 'ill advised' suggestion that 'South Australia be complimented on their action!' Vehemently he pointed out that

> for a lesser body, the St John Council for South Australia, to completely ignore Priory's Executive Officer in South Australia for months, and hence the Sub-Prior, and above all Her Majesty's representative in the Order, His Ex-

96 St John Ambulance officers in Adelaide take over a patient from the Flying Doctor. The man, who had been bitten by a taipan snake in western Queensland, had been taken initially to the hospital in Broken Hill, but needing specialized attention, had been taken on to Adelaide.

cellency the Governor-General, Sir William McKell, Prior, and approach Grand Priory without permission, should be treated with considerable concern. If not, with this action as a precedent, other subordinate bodies may overlook authority in Australia, . . . and approach Grand Priory directly, with further embarrassment to both Grand Priory and Priory Australia.[80]

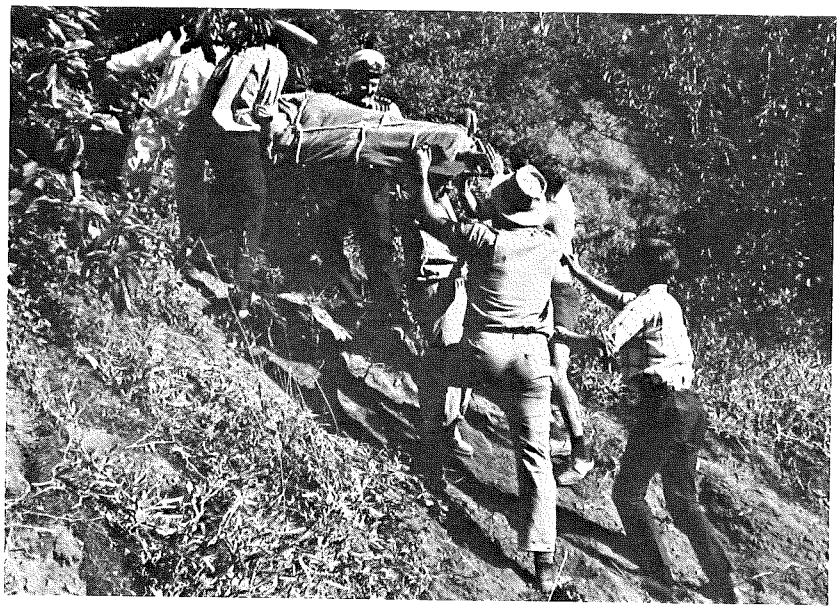
Priory Council debated this matter at some length then took the middle course by resolving to send Poate and the Chief Commissioner, Sir Samuel Burston, to Adelaide 'to thoroughly investigate the matter and ensure that [it] is carried through to success'. Poate and Burston duly went to Adelaide and endorsed the scheme, which was proving to be everything its backers had hoped. Hayward went on to become a Knight of the Order in 1959; in 1961 the State government made him a Knight Bachelor for his services to ambulance transport; and in 1963 the Order elevated him to a seat on the Priory Executive. Russell, on the other hand, toughed things out by staying on as Priory Executive Officer for South Australia until 1959, when his place was taken by Mugford, who had earlier supplanted him as District Commissioner.[81]

This episode perhaps more than any other in St John's career in Australia demonstrated the benefits to the Order in attracting to its upper level management people with business and political nous. Traditionally the Order had drawn its senior officers from the medical profession. This was well enough when there were medicos of the stature of Poate and Stening; but in other cases the St John truism, 'doctors make poor administrators', was unfortunately a maxim often seen to be correct. Russell was one such case for, although a number of the Brigade's officials and field workers keenly supported the SAAT merger, he could not extract St John from the impasse it had reached in its attempts to take over the SAAT. That was something requiring Hayward's boldness, and his ease of entry through the doors that counted.

(b) *Queensland*

If the Order's entry into ambulance transport in South Australia in 1952 had left some people scarred, then what happen in Queensland a decade later can only be said to have mutilated the chief protagonists. Even for an organization like St John, in which personality clashes and severe disagreements over policy were not uncommon, the final sundering of the ties between the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade and St John was more traumatic than anything which Priory or any of the State Branches had seen.

Previous chapters have related how the weak Queensland St John organization had been subsumed within the QATB ever since 1916, when the QATB had taken control of the Brisbane Association Centre. Since that time the QATB and Association leadership had been coterminous; the Association had been housed in QATB headquarters; its officers had been QATB personnel; and, typically, meetings of the Association Centre ran in the same room and at the same time as those of the QATB executive, with perhaps only a coffee break marking the formal end of one and the beginning of the other. So things continued until the late 1940s and early 50s, when two important developments occurred—the formation of the Queensland District of the St John Ambulance Brigade in



97 St John Ambulance officers evacuating the injured from a road accident in the Adelaide Hills, 1968. A truck loaded with fruit pickers had overturned and rolled down an embankment, killing three of the passengers and injuring twenty-two.

1949, and the establishment of the St John Council for Queensland in 1952.

We have already seen how an earlier Brisbane Division of the St John Brigade went out of business in the early 1920s because it tried to set itself up in opposition to the QATB in the Coolangatta area. No more was heard of the Brigade in Queensland until the visit of Sir James Sleeman in 1936. Although Sleeman accepted the QATB rationale for keeping male Divisions of the Brigade out of the State, he thought there could be no objection to Nursing and Cadet Divisions. This proposal received a boost in 1947 through the formation of the Priory. The Queensland delegate to Priory, E. R. B. Pike, who was jointly secretary to both the QATB executive and the Association Centre, began entertaining the idea of giving effect to Sleeman's recommendations—much encouraged, no doubt, by Poate and the other Priory Executive Officers. In 1948 the annual report of the Queensland Association centre stated the committee's intention of forming a Nursing Division whose members would be drawn from among former personnel of the Australian Army Medical Women's Service and the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachments. It announced that Matron Joan Abbott of the Greenslopes Hospital had been appointed Lady District Superintendent. Twenty-two women subsequently enrolled in the proposed Division during 1949 and underwent a home nursing course supervised by Abbott at her hospital.[82]

Pike died in 1949, leaving the infant Brigade branch fatherless. To replace him the Chief Commissioner, Burston, approached a former Army Medical Service colleague, Col. (later Brigadier Sir) Kenneth B. Fraser, a leading Brisbane surgeon. Fraser agreed, and took over that same year as the Brigade's Assistant Commissioner for Queensland. He took his duties very, very seriously. Within a year he had appointed his own District Superintendent, Mrs E. C. Davidson. He supervised the formation of further Nursing Divisions in Brisbane, Ipswich, Southport, Nundah and Toowoomba. He formed an active District executive committee, one of the members of which was Neville Pixley, who was later to be Priory's Receiver General, and obtained a grant of £300 from Priory to help in the establishment of further Divisions. The Divisions were active in performing public duties at the Children's, Brisbane General and Mater hospitals, at netball and hockey fixtures, and in the first aid room of the Queensland Turf Club. By 1952 Fraser had ten Nursing Divisions; that year the Nundah team won the Sleeman Shield for Queensland at the interstate home nursing competitions of the Brigade in Sydney; he was in the process of forming six new Divisions; and he was boasting that 'the public are beginning to know the black and white uniform'.[83]

1949.

It was at this stage that Fraser's ambitions for the Brigade began to worry the QATB hierarchy. In October 1953 F. W. Cash, who had replaced Pike as secretary to the QATB and the Association Centre, wrote to Fraser on behalf of the QATB executive to ask how he proposed financing the expansion of his Queensland District, and if he intended adding male Divisions. Cash's letter also drew attention to the fact that the vigorous expansion of the Brigade had a bearing on the State's Hospitals (Unauthorized Collections) Act 1936-46, which protected the QATB from fund raising by other, rival ambulance services. Fraser, whose peppery nature was a byword even among his closest friends and medical colleagues, replied with a provocative letter saying 'it is hard to imagine what could have engendered such an enquiry', and 'one is forced to the assumption that the QATB executive is disturbed by the existence of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Queensland'. Fraser was not a man to be meddled with lightly; but nor was Cash, who perhaps wisely on this occasion did not answer Fraser's letter. Several months later, in early 1954, there was trouble between a QATB official in Bundaberg and some women of the local St John Brigade Division, who believed he had addressed them rudely. Each side took its complaint to its headquarters, as a result of which Cash telephoned Fraser to sort the problem out. They quarrelled over the telephone, and thereafter they were severely at odds with each other. Further incidents followed, most notably when Fraser tried to form a male Division in Maryborough. Provocation came from both sides and in the end the executives of the two organizations were in conflict with each other, thus inflaming a dispute that had begun as just a disagreement between two individuals.

There was no QATB Centre in Maryborough.

98 Adelaide St John Ambulance officers take charge of the badly injured pilot of a crashed RAF 'plane who had been flown in from Whyalla.

It was not only the Brigade and the QATB which were standing up to each other as the 1950s wore on. So, too, were the Association Centre in Queensland and the Priory. Under pressure from Poate the Queenslanders had set up a State St John Council in 1952. The Council began functioning in 1953, and, as in other States, became the body responsible for all St John work in the State. A Brisbane businessman, C. B. Withy, became its president and A. J. S. Meyers, District Officer of the Brigade and a senior officer of the QATB, its secretary. Even though a number of QATB staff were members of the council, the fact that it also contained a number of men, like Fraser, who were not of the QATB meant that St John in Queensland was no longer under direct QATB control. The Association Centre, however, remained a QATB stronghold, with seven out of eleven of its executive committee positions, including the chairman, deputy chairman, secretary and treasurer, held by QATB men. The Centre had only reluctantly yielded to Poate's urging to set up the St John Council, and had probably only given in because it thought it could retain its dominance by relegating the council to the role of figure head. But that was not how the council developed for, with strong-minded non-QATB members like Fraser present, it soon asserted its independence.[85]

St John Council for Queensland

One way in which the St John Council demonstrated that it did not wish to be a QATB cipher was by nominating to Priory those within the

Brigade and Association who should be considered for the annual awarding of honours – that is, admission into or promotion within the Order. Previously this had been a function of the Association Centre, which by and large had used St John honours as a means of rewarding loyal service by QATB officers. In 1959 Cash, wearing his Centre secretary's hat, entered into correspondence with Poate, complaining about the way honours were being distributed in Queensland under the new arrangements. Like Fraser, Cash could write a provocative letter, and one of his accusing Poate of tactlessness angered the Chancellor. Poate, who was also corresponding with Fraser at the time, let Fraser know that he had received Cash's latest letter,

> which annoyed me intensely, but after a couple of days to simmer down I thought it unwise to reply, as he would love to enter into acrimonious debate which would get us nowhere.

He also advised Fraser that at the forthcoming Priory meeting, to be held in Brisbane, he was expecting trouble from Cash and his chief QATB-Association ally, J. A. ('Bert') Turner, a trade union organizer for the Storemen and Packers' Union and vice-chairman of both the QATB and the Association Centre. 'If either of them stir up any trouble', Poate warned, 'I will come fully prepared to let them have it straight from the shoulder'.[86]

Poate and Fraser were both firm friends and natural allies. Fraser had been one of Poate's students at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney in the early 1920s. Each was a surgeon of note. Both had fine records of wartime medical service. Since 1953, when Fraser had joined the Priory Executive as Hospitaller and Almoner, they had maintained frequent contact with each other. Both were also from the same kind of patrician family background. It was perhaps inevitable that such men should instinctively draw together when confronted by tough trade unionists like Turner and Cash (who, having been a secretary of the Hospital Employees' Union, also had a union background). It was equally inevitable that Turner and Cash would find common cause in taking on Fraser and Poate. In Cash, who was of English origin, the two Australian surgeons saw the archetypical 'British shop steward', and so to antagonism arising from the social class origins of the principal characters was added that of nationalities.

The conflict of personalities and rival organizations began coming to the boil in late 1959. Fraser had again tried to open up a male Division of the Brigade in Maryborough, and also in Mt Isa and Ravenshoe, by taking over railway ambulance units that wished to be allied with St John. Poate then received a letter from the QATB requesting him to disband the Divisions without delay. He sought legal advice from the Priory solicitor, to determine if the QATB had any power under the Queensland Hospitals Act to prevent the formation of Divisions of the St John

99 The Queensland District Commissioner, Sir Kenneth Fraser, meets officers of the Nursing Cadet Divisions at a review of 120 cadets at Bundaberg, 1965

Brigade. On being assured that the answer was 'no', he took the matter up with the Prior, Sir William Slim, asking him to acquaint the Deputy Prior in Queensland, Sir Henry Abel Smith, with the history of the matter, so that the Queensland Premier might be asked to recognise the St John Brigade under the Act. Referring to Turner and Cash, who were both members of the Order, he concluded by saying that 'from their actions it seems that they have completely forgotten, or conveniently overlooked, their Declaration of Allegiance to the Order when they were invested and signed the Homage Roll'. Slim was due to visit Brisbane in December 1959, and he duly took the issue up with the Queensland Governor as requested. As a result Cash was subsequently advised by the Minister for Health that, in the opinion of the Crown Law Office, there was nothing to prevent the St John Brigade from doing its voluntary work, and furthermore the government considered it an advantage to have in the community the pool of trained people which Brigade members represented.[87] If he knew what had been going on to prompt the Minister's letter Cash might have been awed by the Order's ability to marshall Vice-Regal power in its aid, though his subsequent campaigning on behalf of the QATB suggests that Cash was not a man who might easily be spellbound by dignitaries of any hue.

Abel Smith duly called both the QATB and St John factions to Government House in turn in March 1960 to explain their points of view. The QATB said their main objection to the presence of the St John

Brigade was that the Brigade's fund raising efforts would weaken their own, particularly if the Divisions tried raising large sums, say to build meeting halls. Fraser and Withy, who represented the St John Council, stated their opinion that

> the situation had arisen because the QATB dominated the St John Ambulance Association committee . . . and had used the Association to further their own selfish interests to the disadvantage of the Brigade, and had forgotten their oath of allegiance in so doing.

Abel Smith could only take so much of this. He reminded Fraser in particular that 'the proper objective was to search for common agreement on the major issues'. The Governor was in an awkward situation. He was at once the QATB Patron and the Deputy Prior of St John. He therefore could not be seen to be favouring one side against the other, and clearly had good reason to see harmony restored as soon as possible. His solution to the dilemma was to arrange a conference between the Queensland Minister for Health, Dr H. W. Noble, Fraser, and Hugh Millar, who was both president of the QATB and chairman of the St John Ambulance Association Centre, and a Knight of the Order to boot. The conference took place, with Noble acting as adjudicator and conciliator. Both Fraser and Millar were properly polite and objective, though Noble came to the conclusion that there was little likelihood of 'any satisfactory arrangement being achieved between the two bodies', while Fraser himself doubted 'that any good will come of further negotiations'. In relaying this information to Poate at the end of March, Fraser added a point he had been reiterating of late, viz.,

> that the failure of the St John Ambulance Association committeemen who are also QATB committeemen to fulfil their obligations as members of the Order is primarily responsible for the impasse that has been reached.

The QATB men believed their defence of their organization did not preclude them from maintaining faith with the Order, but that was not a viewpoint Fraser could accept.[88]

Poate by this stage had only ten months to live. His health had broken down at the Priory meeting in Brisbane in June 1959, and he had confided to one of his close associates on the Priory Executive that he had the terminal disease which eventually killed him in January 1961. With his life ebbing away he would, perhaps, have been wiser to hand over the Chancellorship to someone who could deal with the Queensland imbroglio better. Poate, however, was not one to shirk an unpleasant task, and it was not in his nature to hand over to someone else any messy uncompleted business which he saw as his duty to finish. So, even though, as his confidant later observed, 'the Queensland business was obviously knocking him about', he stayed at his post in the hope that he could restore order in Queensland before he died. But in his last months, unfortunately, he began talking, as did Fraser, of drumming out of the

Order the QATB faction for allegedly flouting their oath of allegiance—an extreme disciplinary measure never before invoked in the Priory.[89]

Not surprisingly, the dispute between Fraser and the QATB men on the St John Council, and between the Queensland Centre and both the St John Council and Priory, escalated steadily during 1960. The next step towards an all-out war came in April, when Withy asked Cash to provide the Association material for the next annual report, which in previous years had been jointly the report of the Council, the Association and the Brigade. Cash informed Withy that the Association would be bringing out its own separate report that year. In another of his long, vehement letters, Fraser informed Poate of this latest 'crisis', and recommended that Priory should retaliate by not accepting the Queensland Centre's nominations for honours that year. 'It is quite wrong', he wrote, 'to give people honours which involve vows of allegiance and promises to further the interests of the Order which by reason of their QATB affiliations they find it quite impossible to fulfil'. Poate now wrote a long letter to Abel Smith complaining about Cash, saying that in every other State the Brigade worked as a valued and respected ancillary to the ambulance transport services. He asked Abel Smith as Governor and Deputy Prior to use his influence to ensure a satisfactory solution. He also wrote to Millar to remind him he had once vowed 'to be faithful and obedient to the Order', and to ask him and other QATB members of the Order to 'broaden [their] horizon for the humanitarian work in which both the QATB and St John are interested'.[90]

Abel Smith passed on to the QATB Poate's idea that the St John Brigade could form a useful ancillary to the QATB. This simply produced the next step in the escalation, which came in late May 1960 when Cash, wearing his QATB secretary's cap, advised Abel Smith that the QATB remained opposed to the formation of male Brigade Divisions. But, to provide the ancillary the Governor was recommending, the QATB had decided to revive the Queensland Ambulance Association, an almost defunct body of 'honorary bearers' which had formed first in 1921 and had performed useful ancillary duties during the war. He then sent a circular to all Branches of the QATB to remind them of what the QAA was, and to direct them to start up local units. His circular suggested, without naming the St John Brigade, that the revival was being orchestrated to pre-empt 'the extension of ambulance work that the QATB has no control over'. Fraser and Poate called 'foul' and protested angrily to both Abel Smith and Millar when they heard of Cash's scheme. Millar wrote back apologetically to Poate, but claimed nevertheless that the QAA was much needed. Poate and Fraser privately agreed that Millar's and Cash's claims about the QAA were 'so much eye-wash'. 'The whole thing is a deliberate attempt to sabotage the St John Brigade', they said.[91]

Abel Smith managed to get the now very truculent parties to sit down together again in a conference at Government House in October 1960. Having got them together with the Premier, G. F. R. Nicklin, in the chair, he judiciously left the room. The meeting was as amiable as could be, but reached no agreement. The following month Fraser was up in arms again, this time over an article in the *Courier-Mail* which announced QATB plans to conduct a Statewide recruiting drive for QAA members. He again began floating the idea that the principal QATB figures—Millar, Cash, Turner—should be deprived of their honours in the Order. He also suggested that Priory should disband the Association Centre, thus breaking the QATB hold on it. Poate was inclined to agree. He now drew up a 'Memorandum Regarding the Relationship between the QATB and the Order of St John'. It was a circular directed to QATB personnel who were members of the Order to remind them of the 'solemn declaration' they had made on entering the Order; it said 'the St John Association has been made use of by the QATB largely for their own purposes'; it accused them of being 'unfriendly to St John'; it said the fact 'that Queensland should be the only part of the British Commonwealth that has not accepted and co-operated with the Order' was 'strange even irrational'. Fraser advised Poate early in December that the Association committee had discussed the memorandum, but that there was 'no indication that any of the men vitally concerned are prepared to divorce the QATB from the St John Ambulance Association without a struggle'. Cash wrote back to Poate saying his attitude was doing 'much harm', so it seemed that the affair was heading for a certain showdown. But then Able Smith persuaded them all to return to the conference table, and set a date for this in the coming February. The QATB, under Vice-Regal pressure, showed itself willing to compromise. Millar announced that he would move at the next QATB meeting to rescind the 1953 motion objecting to the formation of male Divisions of the St John Brigade. Cash and Turner said that if the government included a section in the Hospitals Act to reinforce the QATB's monopoly of ambulance transport their opposition to the Brigade would end. Fraser and Millar even began sending courteous letters to each other. Poate died at this stage—late January 1961—leaving everyone a little uneasy that they might have contributed something to his death.[92]

The spirit and harmony continued through February as the QATB rescinded its 1953 motion, as promised. For a while it looked as if the QATB and St John had finally buried their differences, but by the middle of 1961 Fraser began receiving reports from his Divisions that the QATB was moving on to the offensive again, pushing ahead with expanding the QAA in certain towns in opposition to existing Divisions of the Brigade, and also trying to woo Brigade staff into the QAA. This served to open the whole dispute up again. This time it spread to the newspapers, as Withy of the St John Council and Turner for the QATB each wrote in to

state the case for their sides. Fraser began bombarding the new Chancellor, Stening, with indignant letters, much as he had done earlier with Poate. Stening, however, was perhaps aware that Poate had erred in allowing himself to be led by Fraser. He kept him at arm's length, and allowed Fraser to wonder whether his own combative style had not been a contributing factor all the while. Fraser, taken aback, complained privately to the Chief Commissioner, W. W. S. Johnston. 'I am so fed up with the whole business', he wrote, 'that I feel like dropping out altogether'.[93]

Stening travelled up to Brisbane in November 1961 to examine the situation for himself. He had discussions with Abel Smith, members of the St John Council, the QATB-Association Centre faction, and Brigade members. He discovered that the chief problem seemed to be Fraser's personality. With Fraser he canvassed 'the possibility of his relinquishing his Commissionership', and when he proffered this solution to the QATB Millar told him 'there would be no further trouble'. So, as the price of peace, Fraser stepped down straight away, to be succeeded by a young Brisbane gynaecologist, Murray Elliott, though as Hospitaller and Almoner Fraser continued on as Queensland's Priory Executive Officer until his death in 1969. Stening reported to a Priory meeting in Hobart several weeks later that the situation in Queensland was still 'extremely serious': 'the existence of the Brigade could be jeopardized by any ill-advised action', and 'it would not take very much for the QATB to oust the Association from Queensland if some compromise were not reached'. All this notwithstanding, some action *was* necessary because the QATB group in the Queensland Centre had just put forward a controversial and provocative list of candidates for honours. At Stening's suggestion Priory voted to hold the Queensland awards in abeyance that year, until the current dissension was resolved.[94]

The blow-up Stening feared came several months later, at the next annual general meeting of the Queensland Association Centre, on 19 March 1962. In the chair was Turner as vice-chairman, in place of the late chairman, Hugh Millar, who had died recently. The meeting was 'stacked' against Turner and Cash, who were the only ones of the pro-QATB group present. Without the late chairman and another QATB man, who was absent, the pro-St John Council, pro-Priory group were in the majority. Turner called for nominations for the ten committee positions. The majority group nominated ten of their own. In the absence of further nominations these were declared elected. Turner, now the ex-vice-chairman,

> thanked the gentlemen for his exclusion from the committee and said he was preparing a report to the Grand Prior, the Duke of Gloucester, which would include a photostat of insulting letters received from the late Sir Hugh Poate and Sir K. Fraser which accused him of being disloyal to St John. He was made a Serving Brother of the Order for his services and wanted co-operation

and harmony but others wanted separation and there had been disharmony since about 1950. Mr Turner said as he was no longer a member of the committee he would leave the meeting.[95]

With his departure the forty-six year nexus between Association and QATB was broken. The meeting proceeded now to elect W. C. L. Howell, one of the leaders of the anti-Cash and Turner faction, as chairman. As secretary it elected A. J. S. Meyers *in absentia*. Meyers, though a loyal QATB man, chose to stick with the Association under its new management. Cash was thus excluded, too. The minutes of the meeting still convey some sense of the drama that unfolded as Cash, too, realized that his days as an Association power broker were done:

> The following remarks were made to the committee by Mr F. W. Cash . . . The substance of the remarks were as follows: — that he was in charge of the executive office and that he would not permit the St John Association to stay within his office. That the whole of the Association affairs would have to be conducted elsewhere as far as he was concerned. That we had divorced the Association from the QATB by our action tonight and that the mere fact of not re-electing the vice-chairman and honorary secretary as of the previous year had brought this about. The chairman tried to reason with Mr Cash and pointed out how many of the QATB members were on the new committee and that the constitution of the new committee was a matter for the members concerned. Committeeman Mr M. Wheat endeavoured to argue the point with Mr Cash but he proved quite incapable of accepting any point of view but his. Mr Cash was told quite plainly that both he and Mr Turner had had the opportunity, if they so desired, to nominate each other, and submit themselves to an election vote.[96]

The new Centre committee got down to work straight away. For a while they continued using the QATB rooms in spite of Cash's threats that he would not allow this. But then they were asked to vacate the premises by 5 October 1962. In September the new chairman, Howell, died. It had been he who had led the attack against Turner and Cash at the meeting in March. Then in November they lost another of their leading figures, J. S. Winders, who also died. Winders, who had been president of the Queensland Surf Lifesaving Association and a vice-president of the QATB, had served as a member of both the St John Council and the Association Centre committee for a number of years, and had been greatly respected by all sides as a 'wise counsellor'. The following month, December, the new chairman, J. S. ('Toby') Stodart had to call a special meeting of the committee. At this meeting committee members learnt that irregularities had been found in the Association's account books as a result of checking up in pursuit of 'complaints from various places of non-receipt of letters and monies forwarded'. They also heard a report of a special investigation into the accounts which had been conducted by a firm of accountants. After a 'full and free' discussion of the report, they voted to place the matter in the hands of the police.[97]

So ended what had been the most turbulent three years any branch of the Order in Australia had ever been through. Four of the principal

characters—Poate, Millar, Howell and Winders—were now dead. We can only guess at the extent to which the stress of these years had hastened their deaths. The reputations of a number of those remaining alive were much besmirched through having shown their faults to a wide public within the organizations. The ten-year dispute left few people covered with glory, either in St John or the QATB. Those who survived it were now seen by the opposite side as ruthless 'hatchet men', which meant that until all the various protagonists disappeared from the scene one by one over the next decade or so an atmosphere of distrust pervaded QATB-St John dealings. The two bodies were obliged to keep on dealing with each other, but while the suspicion lasted their relationship remained difficult.

Perhaps the only people who came out of the dispute with honour intact were Abel Smith and Stening. Abel Smith had done his best to reconcile both organizations. He persevered even when the effort must have seemed hopeless. As an English aristocrat he must often have wondered at the fractiousness of these Australians, who all claimed to be pursuing humanitarian ideals and to be doing what was best for their Order and their countrymen. Stening, for his part, had inherited a mess from Poate which he had then tried to tidy up in the swiftest and cleanest way possible. He could not prevent the final blood letting, when the Association Centre severed itself from the QATB, but his prompt, decisive action in arriving at what promised for a while to be a satisfactory solution showed he was a worthy successor to the Poate of former years. Poate had personally pushed for him to succeed to the Chancellorship. Stening's attempts to restore order in Brisbane, and his leadership in subsequent crises over the next two decades, until his retirement in 1982, were proof of the wisdom of Poate's choice.

As for Fraser, we have to feel sorry for him. He was prickly, abrasive, inflexible, uncompromising, altogether too ready to take offence at imagined slights to his dignity—and also very courageous. Within the Order, which he so resolutely sought to defend, were some who could only watch perplexed as his anger mounted.* One of his colleagues in the Brigade later described the Australian-born Fraser as 'an irascible Scot . . . Opposition brought out all the feuding traits of his race, and the implacable nature of the contestants assured that the struggle would smoulder on for years'. At the same time he was a tireless worker for, and a zealous convert to St John. His juniors in the Brigade thought him a great District Commissioner, and in any other State but Queensland he might have been an even greater Commissioner. Tending a crop planted in such unyielding soil, and then nurturing it from nothing to ten active Brigade Divisions in three years in spite of the hostility of the environment, was an accomplishment to be proud of. Had his great vitality been channelled more productively—as it might have been elsewhere, without the need to don a warrior's garb—both the Order and the community

* Bruny Burke.

might have had the full benefit of his talents. His subsequent contribution to the Order as the Hospitaller and Almoner was evidence enough of that. We must also admire Fraser's stamina. Almost single-handedly he had borne a sustained, decade-long campaign of provocation by some very able masters of the craft. Not many others could have stuck it out, and many would have been permanently warped by the experience.

Part of Fraser's problem was his rock-solid integrity and his total dedication to what he believed were his commitments under his oath of allegiance. These were admirable qualities. They were indeed those of the crusader. Yet perhaps things would have been easier for everyone if there has been more of the pragmatist and of the diplomat in his character. At the same time we might agree that the Order in Queensland needed a crusader of Fraser's mettle. So firm was the grip of the QATB on St John that it needed someone of Fraser's resolve to break it. This was certainly the view of one of his successors as Commissioner for Queensland, Dr. G. G. Drury Clarke, who later remarked that, 'considering the types who spearheaded the opposition, I am inclined to think Fraser was the solution'. It was Drury Clarke, too, who provided a fitting epitaph to Fraser's career in St John. After Fraser's death he recalled that whenever he had seen Fraser leading a capitular procession of the Priory with the ceremonial sword of the Order held aloft he was reminded of the aptness in this case of the Biblical verse, Matthew 10:34, 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I am come not to send peace but a sword'.[98]

In being fair to Fraser we should also appreciate the fact that his personality was only one factor in a complex set of circumstances. His personal clashes with Cash, Turner and Millar were only the sparks that set off the bushfire. There was ample tinder to feed the flames. The QATB principals were able men of humble birth who had battled upwards and fiercely believed that their first loyalty must be to the ordinary working men who comprised the bulk of the QATB membership. Consequently they had little patience for the lectures on honour and duty which a man of Fraser's 'establishment' background might wish to deliver. Added to this was the problem of voluntarism in ambulance work. In every Australian State which used volunteers this inevitably became a highly contentious issue. Full time, salaried ambulance officers became protective of their status as their craft developed from simple first aiding into a specialized paramedical profession. Increasingly they saw the part time volunteer not only as an amateur but also as a threat to their job security. The volunteer, in the full timers' view, was a potential 'blackleg'—a tool which management or government would employ to limit their attainment of just working conditions. In Queensland this fear of the amateur ambulancer beyond QATB control was greatly exacerbated by the decentralized nature of the QATB. Each local QATB branch was indeed a distinct Brigade in its own right, and was as a result obliged to raise much of its own revenue. QATB men were therefore doubly suspicious of

100 The Chief Commissioner for Australia, Sir William Johnston, leads Sir Kenneth Fraser (with sword) and the Prior, Lord Dunrossil, into St Peter's Cathedral, Adelaide, during the capitular procession of Priory Officials, June 1960.

possible rival organizations, like the St John Brigade, which could easily erode their sources of funds. Their one experience of the St John Brigade, around Coolangatta in the early 1920s, had been sufficient to show them that the Brigade could be a rival. With its Vice-Regal patronage and its 'establishment' connections it was the sort of organization which, if it got its toe in the Queensland door, could threaten the livelihood of QATB staff everywhere.

Fortunately for both organizations, by the end of the 1960s a strong understanding had developed between them. The position of the St John Brigade, that it had no ambition to set itself up in rivalry to the QATB, was one which the QATB came to accept. Thereafter a degree of cross membership grew to link them, and that helped promote bonds of fraternity and mutual trust.

(c) *Tasmania*

If in Queensland St John's problems arose from the involvement of the State's ambulance transport agency in the affairs of the Order, the problem for the Tasmanian branch of the Order was the reverse. As earlier in Western Australia and South Australia, St John moved into ambulance transport work in Tasmania by assuming control of the ambulance system of the metropolitan area, but unlike St John in the two mainland States it proved unequal to the task.

St John's participation in ambulance transport in the island State began formally on 23 February 1959, when the St John Council for Tasmania took control of the Hobart and district ambulance service. In doing so it assumed responsibility for a variety of previous local services, which it now unified and conducted as the agent of the Southern Tasmanian Ambulance Transport Service Board, one of a number of regional Boards set up to provide the State with ambulance transport.

This was not the first time St John in Hobart had thought of running a local ambulance service for, as other chapters have shown, plans for a similar arrangement had split St John in the early 1920s. This time the proposal for St John involvement had come from the Minister for Health, who held general responsibility for the State's thirty-three public ambulance vans and for the thirteen regional and local Boards that ran them. It was a chaotic system, and the Minister undoubtedly hoped that St John might bring some order to it, as in Western Australia and South Australia. Each of the thirteen Boards acted independently, without co-ordination. It was not uncommon, for example, for a Hobart van travelling north to pick up a patient to pass a Launceston van on its way south for another. The ambulances, moreover, were very poorly equipped—only two had radio; they were often unhygienic; few of the drivers had any formal qualifications for the job, and there was no uniform system for training them; the services had precarious revenues, and most ran at a loss.[99]

The local ambulance service is a subject than can arouse great passions in a community. It takes a brave public official, therefore, to shrug off criticism on such a sensitive issue. So it was that in 1958, following a spate of public complaints about the inadequacy of the services operating around Hobart, the Minister for Health approached the St John Council to see if St John would be interested in taking over. The St John Council, and in particular its chairman, Dr Trevor C. James, who was also chairman of the Association Centre and the Brigade Commissioner, accepted the Minister's invitation with alacrity. They hoped that the move into this new field would strengthen the Order in Tasmania, in the same way that the South Australian Branch was gaining strength annually through its involvement in ambulance work. The Council entered negotiations with the Health Department, as a result of which they were offered a property at 77 Argyle St., Hobart, for a peppercorn rental, for conversion to a headquarters for both the service and the Council, all at government expense. James and the newly appointed secretary to the St John Council, Trevor H. Jacobs, did a tour of the mainland ambulance services to study how they operated. There were lengthy discussions with the Post Master General's Department and Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd. about setting up a radio-telephone communications network. A new Chrysler ambulance was bought in Sydney, also at government expense. The Association began running special training classes for prospective

ambulance officers, as a result of which sixty-six full time and volunteer staff gained ambulance attendant's, ratio operator's and driver's certificates during the first two years of the scheme.[100]

To run the Hobart and district service the St John Council set up an Ambulance Committee, with James as chairman and Jacobs as secretary. James and Jacobs worked closely together. Since they were chairman and secretary respectively of the St John Council, the Association Centre, the Brigade District and the Ambulance Committee, and were both also members of the government's Ambulance Commission after its formation in 1959, they were the very pivot of St John and ambulance affairs in Tasmania. As we will soon see, this became one of the problems in St John's control of the service.

James and Jacobs both actively lobbied first the Health Department and secondly the Treasury to bring to the government's attention the need for a single, Statewide ambulance authority in order to achieve greater economy and efficiency. The government agreed with this viewpoint, enacted the necessary legislation, and set up the Ambulance Commission in late 1959. The Commission became the body to which all regional and local ambulance boards were answerable, and in the five following years it emerged as the main opponent of the St John service.[101]

From the moment it began the St John service was busy and grew steadily. In 1959 it had three ambulance vans, and six full time staff, it carried 2226 cases, travelled some 37,930 kilometres, and its volunteer staff logged over 15,000 hours of duty. Two years later it had seventeen ambulances, twenty-five full time staff, carried 5379 cases, clocked 185,530 kilometres, and its volunteers put in over 39,600 hours of duty. In 1961, too, the St John Council began operating the Devonport, Burnie and Launceston services for the local boards. By 1963 it had added the Glamorgan, Rossarden-Storey's Creek and Campbelltown-Ross services as well, all the vans of which carried the eight-pointed cross and the words St John Ambulance Service. In addition to the vehicles of these services there were a further six ambulances operated by the Ambulance Committee but not under the control of regional Boards. In a small State like Tasmania St John Ambulance had thus quickly become a highly visible organization. The service it provided, moreover, was of a high standard—by far the best the State had seen. The vehicles were well-equipped, modern, well-maintained and hygienic. The system of radio-communications, using the latest and best technology, brought co-ordination and swift despatch of ambulance vehicles, and the staff were keen.[102]

Progress was not without its costs, however, for within three years a number of problems began surfacing. There were, as had been usual elsewhere in St John, difficulties with personalities. Some of these centred on James and Jacobs. Some of James' medical colleagues resented

his dominance within the organization. They believed it wrong for any one person to chair so many committees. They felt that all his committees were suffering because he had spread himself too widely. He defended himself by saying he would be happy to share his load if there were shoulders broad enough to bear it. The critics also thought that, where he did delegate, he relied too heavily on Jacobs. Most people agreed that Jacobs was an excellent organiser who maintained high standards for the ambulance service. On the other hand his critics found serious fault. According to the report of an inquiry the St John Council conducted into the service in 1963, his detractors accused him of being 'dictatorial, exercis[ing] victimization, [being] extravagant, handl[ing] financial matters poorly, rub[bing] people up the wrong way, not put[ting] all the cards on the table . . .' Jacobs also had a serious falling out with Laurie Shea, a senior public servant in the State Department of Health, who was both a member of the St John Council and a government appointee on the Ambulance Commission. Their personal disagreement widened into a schism which became apparent to the public in August 1962 when the Hobart *Mercury* ran a series of page one stories on the rift it claimed had developed between the Ambulance Commission and the St John Council.[103]

Part of the problem related to the means of funding the ambulance services. The revenues of each of the regional Ambulance Boards came from three sources—first, contributions from the municipalities in the areas covered by each Board, ratepayers being charged a halfpenny in the pound on their land rates in return for which they received free ambulance transport; second, a fee for service which the St John Council had to charge non-ratepaying patients; and third, grants from the Ambulance Commission. Where the St John Council was unable to collect the fee for service, the regional Ambulance Boards were supposed to make up the difference. It was an unwieldy financial mechanism which, according to the critics, was not one that could support the high standard, high cost service James and Jacobs had introduced. Therefore, they said, the Ambulance Commission should take the service over and rationalize its funding. In answer to such criticism the St John Council had a trump card in its argument that the service was the most economical possible because of its use of volunteer ambulance officers. Only St John could provide such a large force of volunteers, the argument went, and were the Commission to take direct control 'the cost will jump by many thousands of pounds, as the volunteer service could not be expected to continue'.[104]

Other rumblings of discontent came from the full time salaried ambulance officers. Some of them resented what they saw as Jacobs' high-handed manner and his emphasis on military-style discipline. There was also the perennial problem of the threat to job security which the full-timers thought the part-time volunteers represented. Added to this was a

sense of scepticism among the salaried men that, whereas it took only thirty-one of them to run the service, the various ambulance boards, committee and commission comprised no less than twenty-seven members—so top-heavy an administrative burden that there was almost a one-to-one ratio between administrators and workers.[105]

The public learnt of these problems when the *Mercury* ran a series of stories about the friction between the Ambulance Commission and the St John Council, and announced that Shea (who was as yet unnamed) intended moving a no confidence motion in 'the leaders of the St John Council executive'—James and Jacobs—when the Council met on Friday evening 3 August 1962. Shea duly moved his motion, which the Council executive committee, chaired by the president, Dr J. L. Grove, debated heatedly for five hours at what the *Mercury* said was a stormy meeting. In the end the committee decided to defer the matter because of the absence of two of its members. Next morning the St John Council and the Ambulance Commission held a three-hour joint meeting to discuss the matter further. At the end of this the Lord Mayor of Hobart, Alderman (later Sir) Basil Osborne, who was both chairman of the Ambulance Commission and president of the Tasmanian Centre of the Association, made a public statement denying there was a rift between the Commission and Council. He 'expressed surprise at suggestions by the Press that there was disharmony between the two bodies'.[106]

Despite this purported accord, all was obviously not well, for on the following Tuesday the *Mercury* was able to announce that, as a result of the meetings over the weekend, Jacobs had been placed on three months' trial in his job. Moreover, the meetings had considered bringing in a firm of accountants to manage the financial side of the ambulance services, which had previously been a St John responsibility. At the same time there had been a strong reaction among the staff of the ambulance services, full timers and volunteers alike, to the suggestion that the Ambulance Commission should take direct control of the services. 'If Dr James and Mr Jacobs had been forced to resign on Friday night', the *Mercury* reported, 'the volunteers and ninety per cent of the paid staff would have refused to work under [the Ambulance Commission]'.[107]

Threats of a walk out by ambulance staff did not greatly worry Shea. Three weeks later, on 26 August 1962 at the next meeting of the St John Council, he pressed on with his motion of no confidence in James and Jacobs. This time the executive committee debated the issue for eight hours before rejecting it. Shea then announced that he would resign from the St John Council and would call for an inquiry into the running of the service at the next meeting of the Ambulance Commission. He said he was taking this action because of 'continuous complaints . . . concerning the financial management of the organization'. He also said that as soon as he had joined the St John Council, 'it was immediately obvious . . . that all was not well at St John'.[108]

For the rest of 1962, and for most of the next year, the St John ambulance services featured prominently in lead stories in the *Mercury*. A persistent critic was a Devonport politician, a member of the Legislative Council named McFie, who asserted in parliament that if he could not profitably run his local ambulance service for half of the £13,000 it was annually costing St John then he would 'eat his hat'. He accused St John of 'sheer neglect or incompetence' in the matter of finance, as evidence for which he cited a Devonport instance in which St John could allegedly account for only £100 of the £350 telephone bill of the local ambulance service. Another parliamentarian, springing to the defence of St John, pointed out that through its volunteer staff in the ambulance services St John was saving the State some £20,000 annually. Then there was a series of pin-pricking annoyances which the Ambulance Commission seemed deliberately to be inflicting on the St John Council. The Commission tried to move the Council out of the offices they shared together. Following this Shea announced that the Solicitor General had given a legal opinion that the agreements between the St John Council and the Devonport, Burnie and Launceston Ambulance Boards were all illegal. Subsequently the Solicitor General revised his opinion and declared the contracts legal. The Commission also advised the various Ambulance Boards to review their financial relations with St John, and to assume fuller control in this area. Then, at the Commission's urging, the PMG Department took away St John's radio licences on the grounds that the radio equipment belonged to the Commission. The licences were restored only when St John demonstrated that the Ambulance Boards owned the equipment, and had agreed to give St John full control over it. As if all that were not enough, the government was behaving very parsimoniously. That year, 1963, the St John Council had requested a grant of £6500 so that the services might break even. They received only £2000. The fact that the service would be forced to run at a £4500 deficit was, averred the *Mercury*, 'in some measure connected with the campaign' against the Council.[109]

By September 1963 the *Mercury* was talking of 'the existence of a whispering campaign and repeated efforts to undermine the position and status of the St John Council'. All this, it guessed, was calculated 'to create a climate favourable for a State takeover of all ambulance services' and to 'remove all St John Ambulance personnel from the operation of the Ambulance Boards'. A group of parliamentarians, according to the *Mercury*, were concerned at what was happening and were accordingly planning parliamentary action to protect St John. That there seemed to be a co-ordinated attempt to discredit St John became more credible with McFie's latest outburst in Parliament, on 3 October 1963, when he asserted that 'the qualifications for appointment as a St John Ambulance officer were to drink, associate with women, and be prepared to volunteer to repair and repaint the manager's house'. He claimed he had

a letter from a former St John employee who said these were the attributes required for advancement in the service, and that those who would not conform were victimized. Next day, in an interview with the *Mercury*, James added further support to the notion of a conspiracy against St John when he alleged the existence of 'a small group opposed to the St John Council' who were trying to 'damage its reputation' and who were 'using Mr McFie as their mouthpiece'. McFie denied James' charges. He said he had deep respect for the St John Ambulance Brigade—'a great body of volunteers who give their weekends and holidays to attend functions and administer first aid'. His sole concern in directing his parliamentary spotlight on St John, he said, was to bring attention to the lax administration and extravagant spending that typified the St John ambulance service.[110]

Alarmed by what appeared to be a concerted attempt to denigrate its efforts, and concerned at the financial quagmire into which it was drifting, the St John Council in 1963 engaged a consultant, S. W. Ross, to inquire into its general administration of the ambulance services. Ross looked into a number of matters, including the structure of the service, Jacobs' running of it, public relations, finance, the working of the Ambulance Committee, salaries, the operation of the superannuation scheme, staff transfers from one ambulance service to another, the accommodation problem, the dissatisfaction of some ex-members of staff, and the allegations McFie had made in parliament. In preparing his report Ross conducted forty-nine interviews and obtained a range of views on the problems of the services. His findings were fairly general and fairly bland. He found that James was overloaded with responsibilities, and accordingly recommended a spreading of his burden. Jacobs, he thought was 'a man of outstanding value but who, nevertheless, has some rough corners which would be better if they were rounded off.' He guessed that 'a course in Business Management and also probably a course with the Dale Carnegie Institute' would have the required smoothing effect. Finance was the most intractable problem. The St John Council had run a public appeal in 1963 that had flopped badly, raising only £11 in Devonport. Clients of the service were little help, either: thus, in 1963 the Tasmanian Football League made a record profit of £18,364, but made no contribution to St John for the ambulances that had attended its matches. To set the finances of the services on a sounder basis Ross therefore recommended that the government set up an independent committee of inquiry to review the system of funding.[111]

In March the next year, 1964, the *Mercury* was claiming in its front-page leaders that the ambulance services were in need of 'immediate and substantial financial aid' without which they were in danger of ceasing operations. It reported the fact that, following up Ross's recommendations, the St John Council was trying to secure permission to send a deputation to the Premier, E. E. Reece, so that it might request an in-

quiry into the finances of the ambulance service. Next day the Minister for Health announced that the government subsidy to the services would not be increased and—ominously—warned that

> it would be unfortunate if the St John Council endeavoured to force the government into increasing its subsidy for its own internal administration by threatening to withdraw its contribution to the operation of the ambulance services.

Then there were reports of a meeting of the St John Council a few days later at which it had been revealed that the Ambulance Committee had a drawer full of unpaid bills amounting to £3000. There was further talk, hotly denied by Osborne, that the Ambulance Commission was planning a takeover of the services. In June 1964 James announced his resignation from the chairmanship of the Ambulance Committee so that he could concentrate on his duties as Commissioner of the Brigade. During September there were reports of further discussions between the St John Council and the Ambulance Commission, the upshot of which was proposals for a new scheme for managing the services. According to the new arrangements the regional Ambulance Boards would assume financial and managerial control of their own services while St John would limit itself to providing the technical operation of the ambulances. This seemed to be a scheme that would suit all parties, and, most notably, it was the plan the Ambulance Commission was said to favour.[112]

Then Osborne dropped a bombshell. He announced on 2 October 1964 that the Ambulance Commission had decided to give the regional Ambulance Boards the full control of all aspects of their own services. In effect, he was saying, St John had been sacked. St John people throughout the state were deeply shocked. They described the decision as 'staggering', 'amazing', 'malicious', 'a double cross'. They said they had been harmoniously working towards a satisfactory division of labour with the regional Ambulance Boards, but now the carpet had been whipped out from beneath them. But Osborne was unmoved, despite his St John connections as president of the Association. He simply told the *Mercury* journalists that both the Ambulance Commission and the Boards were satisfied that it would be more economical for the Boards to run their own services.[113]

For a time the St John Council wondered if it might reach some agreement with individual ambulance boards to operate their services for them, but in the end it decided to withdraw from ambulance transport altogether by 1 July 1965. In April 1965 it gave the Ambulance Commission three months' notice of its intention to quit. Osborne appeared deeply puzzled by the St John attitude, allowing his audience of *Mercury* readers to infer that St John should be staying on under the new arrangement. Then the Commission announced that it would take the services over itself, but would first bring in an adviser from the Victorian Hospitals and Charities Commission to investigate them. The Tasmanian

Ambulance Service Employees' Association—the ambulance officers' union—called for a public inquiry; so did the Leader of the Opposition, W. A. Bethune; there were letters for and against the Ambulance Commission and St John in the *Mercury*; and so the controversy continued.[114]

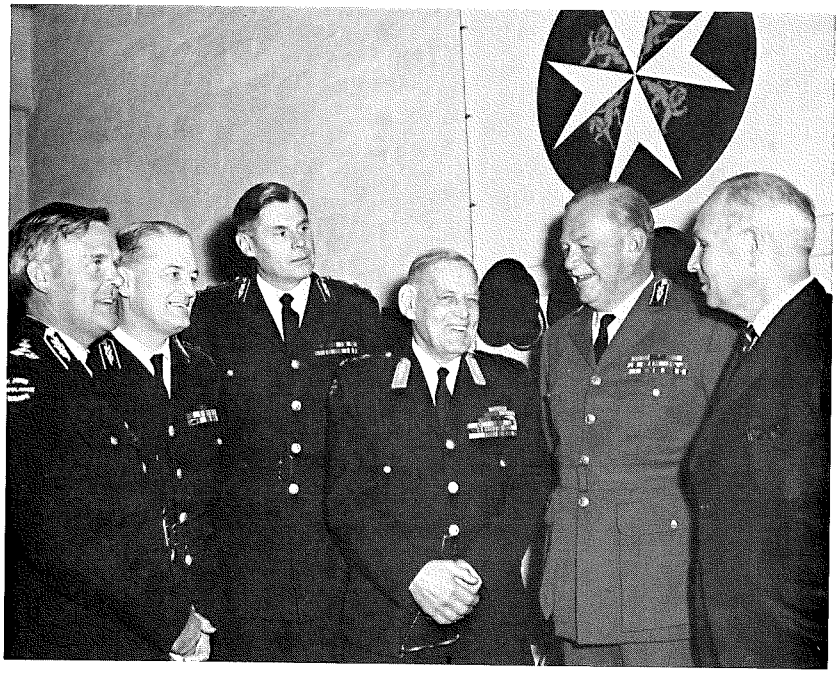
The Victorian consultant made his report seven weeks later. He found that the present St John system of control was 'unwieldy and expensive', and though its standards of service were as high as any in Australia he did not think this justified the delegation by the government of such a vital health service to 'an outside organization'. The latter point in particular stung the St John faithful. The St John Council protested that the consultant, A. Cumming, wrote his report after only three days of investigation, that St John had only taken on the service at the urging of the government, and that it had transformed the service from a hotchpotch of poorly run, inadequate facilities to one of the best in the country. But all this was in vain. The government or, more to the point, the Ambulance Commission, had obviously made up its mind. Cumming's report recommended virtually what the Commission had been angling for—government control of the services—so that there seemed little point in protesting further. The St John Council simply had to accept that its attempt to emulate its Western Australian and South Australian cousins had failed.[115]

Recriminations continued within St John in Tasmania for some time afterwards. Among the first casualties were James and Jacobs, whom many within the organization held responsible for having allowed the ambulance service to become so heavily mired in financial and administrative difficulties. James had been one of the best workers for the Order that Tasmania had produced. As Priory Librarian he had been Tasmania's Priory Executive Officer in addition to his numerous positions within the State Branch. He now retired from all his offices in the State Branch, though he continued on as Priory Librarian for another ten years, until his retirement from that position in mid-1975. Jacobs resigned from his various positions in St John in 1966. Many within the organization, even those who were most critical of James and Jacobs, felt bitter about the role played by Shea and Osborne. Some were still hoping for retribution years later. Some within the organization also found it hard to forgive the people they thought were responsible for the financial morass St John affairs had become. E. C. Gifford, a banker who took over as chairman of the St John Council in 1964 at the request of the Deputy Prior, Sir Charles Gairdner, recalled later that when he began trying to bring order to St John finances he asked the accountant to show him the accounts. He was led to a drawer jammed full of loose unpaid bills, many dating back twelve months. He took three years to sort out the mess. Some within the Branch also felt indignant about the way the St John Council had simply capitulated to the pressure from the

Ambulance Commission. St John, they believed, could and should have held on to the ambulance services, and could have made them run profitably, if the Council had been more resolute in defending its interests.[116]

Opinion over whether or not St John could have made a success of the ambulance services varied. Those who supported the services argued that St John needed ambulance transport as a challenge. The service it ran, they maintained, was a good one which helped attract enthusiastic, dedicated would-be ambulance officers into Brigade ranks. If the government had fulfilled its side of the original agreement, by not starving the service of funds, St John would have made a financial as well as a technical success of the operation. On the other hand, there were those revisionists within the Tasmanian branch who took the view that St John should not have become involved. St John in Tasmania at that time, they maintained, was too small an organization to take on such a costly responsibility. There were too few people to undertake the work, which as a result fell to a few dominating individuals. Moreover, they argued, St John should have not rushed into taking on huge responsibilities without clear undertakings from the government about the sources and levels of funding to be made available. There was further opinion which, in Tasmania as on the mainland, held that as a basically voluntary organization St John had no business in getting itself involved in large scale professional and commercial enterprises such as State ambulance transport services. These, the doubters believed, were properly the business of governments, which alone of all agencies had the resources to do the job adequately. Where governments were prepared to pass ambulance facilities over to St John it usually meant, as in Tasmania, that the governments concerned were trying to do things on the cheap, relying on the unpaid voluntary work St John took pride in giving to cut costs. Where, on the other hand, St John did run successful ambulance transport services it was because the St John Councils in question had become *de facto* 'departments of ambulance' for their respective governments. In so doing they had strengthened themselves but had lost some of the independence it was proper for the Order to maintain. At the same time, their large scale financial commitments made it easy for them to lose sight of the voluntaristic and humanitarian ideals that inspired the Order.[117]

Whatever the rights and wrongs of these arguments the fact remained that in Tasmania the Order could count even the failed St John ambulance service as a positive contribution to health services in Australia. Although it lost the service there it could take pride in having given the State its first effectively co-ordinated, modern and systematically organized ambulance service. Indeed many in the Order in Tasmania maintained that the State's ambulances were never run better than when St John was in control. So although the experience of losing the am-



101 The Brigade Commissioners, 1965: left to right, M. W. Elliott (Queensland), C. D. Donald (Victoria), J. M. Pedler (South Australia), Sir Kingsley Norris (Chief Commissioner for Australia), A. L. Dawkins (Western Australia) and T. C. James (Tasmania).

bulance services amidst great and damaging controversy had been bitter, there was some consolation in reflecting that the efforts of James, Jacobs and their supporters had not been entirely wasted. The Order in Tasmania, as in the mainland States, had done its bit to keep the faith by serving Australians.

12

Into the second century

A century in Australian English can mean several things. Apart from a hundred years it is a measure of the heat of a summer's day. When the temperature has risen to 100° on the Fahrenheit scale Australians know they should be careful about lighting fires in the open for fear of setting off a bushfire; and when the weather is as hot as that they know the time has come to down tools and head for the beach.

A century is also a cricket term—the number of runs every batsman would like to make. In a country of sports enthusiasts, where cricket is a major spectator sport, indeed the only game which can attract a crowd of a hundred thousand in *both* Sydney and Melbourne, cricket centuries have much to do with national pride. When Australian batsmen score centuries the national team is most likely to win Test Matches, the international contests that draw the largest crowds.

The title of this book, *A Century for Australia*, implies the cricket as well as the chronological sense of the word. This is intentional. A 'century for Australia' means the achievement of something worthwhile for the nation, something of which all Australians can be proud. It is tempting, therefore, to extend the cricket metaphor in relation to St John, to speak of an Australian St John team putting in a long and eventful innings, to talk about the way it emerged undaunted from some savage spells of bodyline bowling. That, however, would be to labour the point, to invite the riposte that any team which plays under Vice-Regal patronage in every match is bound to do well, particularly when the Head of the Commonwealth is the number one ticket holder.

In some respects, however, a sporting analogy is a particularly apt means for contemplating St John's needs and tasks as one century ended and another began. In view of the uncertainties the Order faced, the unpredictable nature of any individual's innings in a cricket match came readily to mind. No one could be sure how the pitch would play, and no one could be certain how the team might fare. But that was not to say the supporters could not wager on the likely outcome. In the speculation over what might happen certain eventualities enjoyed shorter odds than others.

The shortest odds were those quoted for new players. Recruiting and retaining new members had often caused concern in the past, but now things looked even more serious. The voluntaristic, charitable ideals the

Order had traditionally relied on to attract and inspire recruits enjoyed less currency than formerly. They no longer served as the great rallying cry they had been in the two World Wars. Many in the Order were worried that the young especially seemed unmoved by calls to service and appeals to honour and tradition. Older St John loyalists were disconcerted by the 'What's in it for me?' attitude of potential recruits, especially when the prospective recruits were members of the medical profession, which had customarily supplied the Order with many of its leaders.

There were other disturbing aspects of the problem of finding new blood. Leadership was one major difficulty. In the past St John had always managed to locate outstanding leaders, of the stature of Sir Hugh Poate, Sir William Johnston, Sir Samuel Burston, and other departed heroes. Yet as time went on people with their formidable talents seemed fewer and further between. In some instances, in some Branches where there were fewer effective leaders to draw from, the organization was forced to bring up its second-row leaders, with a consequent decline in those Branches' overall strength. The effects of such a process could be cumulative; and wherever there was a weak or ineffectual St John body this usually reflected a sad downward spiral in the quality of the leaders available.

Offsetting the effects of poor recruitment and poor leadership would therefore be one of the priority tasks for the Order as it moved towards the year 2000. How the problems should be tackled was uncertain. Obviously there was a need to locate talented, public spirited people, and then to apply strong pressure on them to link up with St John. There was also a need to streamline and perfect administrative training procedures, so that able and ambitious people could move ahead in the organization, contributing productively to the higher councils of the Order, without having to serve frustratingly long and futile apprenticeships engaged in tasks beneath their talents. There was obviously, too, a need to demonstrate to people outside that the Order, despite its long history and venerable traditions, was an attractively modern body which performed purposeful work highly relevant to the daily health needs of the community. All this called for skilful use of the publicity machinery available wherever St John was at work and emphasised the need to continue knocking on the doors of civic, business and political leaders. If this sounded like a distasteful degree of self-promotion, that was more a reflection on the nature of large national charities, rather than on St John in particular.

Another problem was the changing nature of the Australian community. By the 1980s about a quarter of the national population consisted either of post-war immigrants or their children. The majority were from a non-British background, and as time went on the European component dropped to below half the annual intake. The net result was that the country had moved well away from the pre-war situation, when the

102 Nursing and Ambulance Cadets of the Brigade formed up outside St John headquarters, Perth, awaiting the arrival of the Commandant-in-Chief of Ambulance and Nursing Cadets, Princess Anne, May 1975.

population had been overwhelmingly British by extraction. Attracting non-British newcomers to an organization of which the Sovereign Head and Grand Prior lived in England, and of which the headquarters and spiritual home were also in England, was therefore a problem. The Order embodied traditions of loyalty for which some among the newcomers felt little sympathy. With such people it was insufficient for the Order to make appeals to Australia's traditional ties of loyalty to a motherland with which they felt little affinity. Then there was a related linguistic problem. English remained the national language, whatever Australia's cultural mix; yet there were sizeable immigrant communities which were ill at ease in using it, and which St John could not readily reach as a result. The danger of all of this of course, was that St John, like, say, the Presbyterian Church, might increasingly become a body belonging to just one sectional group within the wider community. If St John came to be an organization of just the British-Australian community there was the possibility that its impact would decline as the national population diversified further.

A further, related issue was that concerning the original Australians, the Aborigines. As Aboriginal issues loomed larger St John could not afford to avoid them, however high the barriers of mutual misunderstanding between white and black Australians might become. During the late 1970s and early 80s some worthwhile pilot schemes for involving

103 Members of South Australia's Motor Cycle Division of the Brigade attending a speedway casualty at Rowley Park, Adelaide.

Aborigines in the work of the Order were undertaken in both the Northern Territory and South Australia; if these were not to smack of tokenism, however, further schemes of that nature would be necessary. Certainly the often-stated claims of Aboriginal activists, about the higher infant mortality, poorer nutrition, and more serious endemic disease among the Aborigines compared with the white community, were a special challenge to an organization like St John, with its range of programmes in first aid, home nursing and hygiene.

Another challenge related to the position of women in the organization. Whatever the composition of its grass roots, as it entered the 1980s St John remained very much a male dominated body. Only slightly more than a quarter (27 per cent) of the membership of its Priory Chapter, its highest council in Australia, consisted of female members. None of the thirteen members of its Priory Executive were women. None of the chairmen or secretaries of the eight State and Territory Association Centres were women. Only one out of six of the top Priory Brigade officers was a woman; none of the eight District Commissioners was a woman, and only five out of the twenty-one most senior Brigade officers in the State Districts were women. Only very muted complaints about this situation had been heard in the past, and it seemed fairly certain – given the dedication and loyalty of women at the grass roots – that any future protest would not be vociferous. Yet if this was so the Order, to outsiders at least, would begin looking more and more like a male club. Moreover

104 One of the Brigade's 'mobile first aid units' in Sydney, with the Brigade District Treasurer, John Spencer, and District Secretary, Ruth Bray

it might be argued that, in an age where media image had become important, appearances were worth bothering about.

Image is a precious asset and has to be protected carefully, because it is also a fragile one. That it must be guarded well became obvious in the furore that swept through the Order in 1977, when the public learnt through the columns of a national newspaper that a group of senior officers of the Victorian Branch of St John had participated in a $14,000,000 tax avoidance scheme in order to raise funds, amounting to about $175,000, to help purchase a new St John House. The Order reacted with shock and horror as it realised the implications of the name of St John being associated with those at the dubious end of the money market. As Stening remarked when he called an extraordinary Priory Chapter meeting to discuss the issue,

> Our honour has been damaged and steps are necessary to restore our standing and image within the community. St John has enjoyed a position in the community of service to man, voluntary in nature, honest and cheerful in its manner of doing its duty. It has stood in a position of envy as it has Royal Patronage and Government support. It has also had an enviable position of being able to receive support from leaders in the professions, in commerce and industry. It has the respect and good humoured benevolence of the man in the street. It is referred to, almost lovingly, as the Zam Buks in uniform, and in those States where we operate the ambulance services, St John is a household word. It is respected for its teaching work, for the dedication of its voluntary instructors and the imparting of the principles and practice of First Aid in the

105 A Prior and a Deputy Prior: Sir Roden Cutler, Deputy Prior of the Order of St John and Governor of New South Wales, and Sir John Kerr, Prior of the Order and Governor General of Australia, about 1974

community . . . All these things took time to achieve, but the national image grew and the Order was becoming much more consolidated in its structure . . . Generally it was felt that . . . our image was respectable, honourable and worthy of membership . . . We will have to work for a long time to lift up our

> position and standing in our society again. There must be no possibility of any act that is done by any St John member being labelled snide or open to criticism.[1]

Delegates to the Chapter meeting spoke angrily of the way in which 'discredit had been brought to the name of St John by . . . involvement in a scheme to avoid tax'. They were fiercely resentful to think the reputation of the Order might have been tarnished. They resolved, that

> the Chapter speaks for the Order as a whole when it says that St John would not and should not stoop to use its position as a public benefactor to enable people to escape their taxation commitments, and Chapter directs the Executive to take such action to ensure that this situation does not arise again.[2]

The sense of indignation behind this resolution had, furthermore, been heightened by fear that the Order's involvement in the tax avoidance 'industry' might have jeopardized the tax-exempt status it had long enjoyed with the Department of Taxation. So it was likely that St John in future would be even more jealous of its reputation than before.

Cashing in on the Order's image was not a trick the promoters of tax avoidance schemes had discovered. Down the years a long procession of entrepreneurs had tried hitching their fortunes to the good name of St John, seeking commercial advantage through association with its respectability. Most recently there had been cases in which the manufacturers and peddlers of various products—patented safety mechanisms, antiseptics, salves and medicines, medical appliances—had endeavoured to win St John endorsement for their wares. Often the products were worthy, and a handsome return for St John was usually offered. The Order had, however, guarded its honour well, seeing in the acceptance of money for favours an insidious form of institutional prostitution. Its proud record of commercial chastity had remained unsullied until the eruption of the tax avoidance issue, and it was for this reason that the very idea of what had transpired in Victoria was profane to most people within the Order.

While image and reputation were among St John's most valuable assets, they were not *the* most precious of the Order's attainments. Behind image there had to be substance. Supporting the reputation there had to be a continuing record of service. So St John's best form of currency would always have to be its capacity to deliver its utilitarian and practical aid to those in need. The organization's main task during its second century, as during its first, would continue to be the high quality teaching of basic medical skills to a widening circle of the lay public, and the administering of a high standard of first aid and nursing wherever these were occasioned by the gathering of crowds. Keeping up with advances in medical science and technology, presenting educational materials in attractive, comprehensible forms, remaining attuned to changing medical needs, and maintaining initiative and drive in meeting the public's first aid needs would have to remain St John's primary and priority functions. That was not to say, of course, that in the future it

106 St John Ambulance Brigade Cadets, Pauline Allen and Particia Frank of the Northern Territory, practise spiral bandaging.

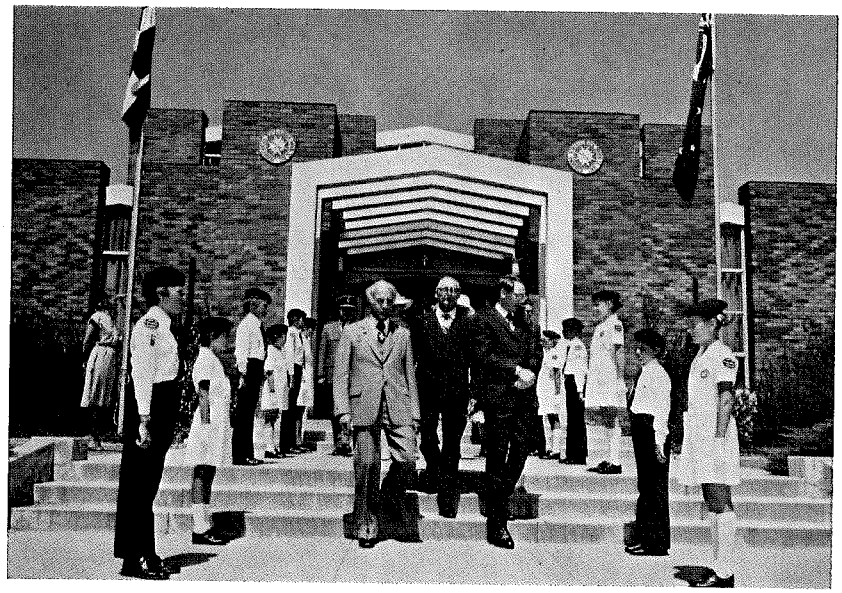
could not diversify into other areas, as, for example, some of the State Branches had taken on responsibilities for ambulance transport. It was conceivable that the Order could branch out into, say, child care, into 'keep fit' and 'quit smoking' campaigns, care of the aged and terminally ill, and other allied fields of medicine. But first aid and home nursing had always been St John preoccupations, these were what St John did best, and it was unlikely in the forseeable future that there would be a diminished demand for them.

A further problem relating to this issue of image and substance arose from the Order's chivalric heritage. An organization like St John, which not only maintains a strong tradition of ceremony but also works partly through a uniformed Branch, the Brigade, always faces a danger of attracting adherents who are drawn in for the wrong reasons. Those who hankered after the days of Crusader glory, of knightly feats of arms and of heraldic splendour, and who occasionally drifted into St John hoping that there they would find chivalric derring-do still alive, were bound to be disappointed. Part of the lore of the ancient Knights Hospitaller was indeed still maintained by the Order, but it was only a part and not the whole. The tradition which the Order valued most, and was therefore concerned to maintain, was that of Christian charity—good works that were unassuming, unpretentious and self-denying. The ceremonial Tudor hats and capes marked with the Maltese cross; the capitular processions into the cathedrals of Australia's capital cities; and the Brigade uniforms with insignia of rank, constituted a body of ritual which impressed outsiders. It was also deeply inspirational to those within St John. Similarly, to earn the Order's medals and awards, to be admitted into its full membership, and to advance through its ranks towards its

knighthood and damehood, were attainments to motivate the insider and to impress the outsider. But the truth of the matter was that all the ceremony was essentially peripheral. The rituals were not the central concern of St John, but merely symbols. They signified the hard labour the Order's workers must unremittingly put in at the coalface of the community's medical needs. Anyone joining St John in the expectation of easily acquired honours and awards would, therefore, be swiftly disabused.

The dangers of what might happen if ritual became the central concern were exemplified by the non-recognised Orders of St John. There were several of these in Australia, describing themselves variously as 'the Knights of Malta', 'the Knights of St John', 'the Knights Hospitaller', and so on. Some of these orders emanated from the United States of America, and none of them were recognised by the Alliance group of Orders, that is *The Most Venerable Order* (our Order), the Catholic *Sovereign Military Order of Malta* and the *Johanniterordern* of north-western Europe. In Australia the unrecognised orders were small, fractious and schismatic, and most of them had had chequered careers. Some of the founding figures of these flitted from State to State, and frequently had only post office box addresses. Occasionally they managed to attract some local attention by raising money for charity, by persuading public figures to accept their honours and awards, and by staging colourful ceremonies of investiture for their most recent recruits. They awarded their 'knighthoods' freely and made extravagant claims about their chivalric traditions. These non-Alliance orders were a thorn in the flesh of our Order, partly because of the confusion they caused in the mind of the public, partly because of the damage they did to the St John reputation, and partly because members of our Order rejected their purported legitimacy. But most of all our Order looked askance at the non-recognised orders because it saw their gorgeous parade of crimson ceremonial robes as a charade. To play act at chivalry, to don the costumery of nobility without engaging in sustained charitable toil, was, in the view of our Order, a travesty of the ancient hospitalling ideals it proudly stood for.

There were other snares in the way of the Order, and these, too, required vigilance. One such trap was the very success of some of the St John projects. By the 1980s the organization had acquired, in its popular educational programmes, its textbooks and its ambulance transport services, business interests that might be the envy of other recession-hit industries and entrepreneurs. To run these enterprises each State Branch of the Order was obliged to hire salaried professional managers. As its business commitments grew it took on more and more business administrators, company secretaries, senior executives and other denizens from the realm of corporate affairs to package and distribute its highly marketable products. The difficulty here was that managerial drive did



107 The Grand Prior, the Duke of Gloucester (left of centre), the Prior, the Governor General of Australia, Sir Zelman Cowen (right of centre), and the Chancellor, Sir George Stening (centre), leave Priory Headquarters, Canberra, following an investiture of Knights and Dames of the Order, February 1979.

not always mesh smoothly with the power supply of a vehicle fuelled by voluntarism and run for the primary purpose of dispensing charity. The vehicle nevertheless needed expert drivers and streamlined contours if it was to function efficiently. Without these it would soon stall, for it was not the sort of machine that amateurs could operate, no matter how well-meaning they might be. Reconciling hard-boiled managers and idealistic volunteers to each other, so that they might work in harmony for the smooth implementation of the Order's schemes, was therefore an important objective. Humanizing the people who came to St John from the business world, and imbuing them with the humanitarian ethos of the Order, was one half of that task. The other half was to convince the well-intentioned but sometimes unorganized volunteers of the need for efficiency, for retraining, for new techniques and new technology, and for flexibility in a changing society.

The problem of the professional *vis-à-vis* the amateur was seen in sharpest focus in the States and Territory where St John had responsibility for ambulance transport – Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. In the first two the professional ambulance officers became industrially militant during the 1970s. Most of them linked up with trade unions, the Western Australians with the Miscellaneous Workers' Union and the South Australians with their own Ambulance Officers' Association. On a number of notable occasions they resorted to

the familiar tactics of industrial protest—working to rules, stop-work meetings, sit-ins and, on several notable occasions, even strikes. Many St John traditionalists deplored the emergence of trade unionism within the organization, particularly when one of the root causes was an issue dear to St John hearts, that is voluntarism. This was a matter never far from the surface because of the professional officers' disquiet about the threat to their job security which they felt volunteer ambulance officers posed. This was an anxiety the traditionalists had difficulty in comprehending. St John was an organization built on voluntarism, they reasoned, yet here were St John people protesting about it! At the same time, if the Order wished to manage a sophisticated modern business enterprise like an ambulance service it was fruitless to deny the legitimacy of ambulance officers' rights to protect their working conditions. Falling back on hackneyed phrases and stereotypical notions about greedy proletarians chiselling extra dollars from management by withholding a vital public service was unproductive. But on the other hand there was a real danger that if the volunteers were eliminated altogether the ambulance services might price themselves out of the market. There were limits to which governments could subsidize them. So the Order continued in the firm belief that the well-trained, highly skilled volunteer would always be a necessary ancillary in any ambulance system, and particularly in the ones operating under the St John banner.

The most pertinent question to be asked of the ambulance services, however, was whether St John should be involved at all. Some within management, and within the ambulance officers' unions, would have preferred to remove the Order from the scene altogether. Running the ambulance services as direct government agencies would make the chain of command clear-cut; and it would limit the ability of some governments to prevaricate over bearing the cost burden; it would solve the problem of the volunteer; it would free those lacking a St John background from the need to keep on looking over their shoulders at the Priory. Some of the managers and unionists found that having to deal with the Order and being required to bow to its traditions were a distraction from the essential issues of business organization and management-labour relations. Ironically, they had a number of supporters within the Order who inwardly believed that, despite the success of the ambulance operations in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, the Order should not conduct such large scale enterprises. As a voluntary charity, they thought, St John should confine itself to its accustomed role of teaching and performing voluntary first aid and nursing duties. There would always be ample scope for these endeavours, they believed, and so the Order should be content with giving its best in its customary activities. On the other hand, there were those who believed that St John was well-placed to run ambulance transport services. They fervently believed that the marriage of the St John principle of voluntarism to am-

bulance work was the best way to serve both the public and the Order. They were also inclined to think that where St John supplied well-trained volunteers to ambulance services there was a higher standard of service than in the States where it did not.

Other difficulties arose over St John's relationship with kindred charitable and service organizations. The Order preferred to play down the troubles it occasionally encountered with bodies like the Red Cross, the Royal Life Saving Society and the non-St John ambulance services. St John could not expect that it would exercise a monopoly even in its traditional fields of service. To suit their own needs, other kindred bodies would always want to offer their own services to the public—in first aid, nursing, resuscitation, and the performance of voluntary ambulance-type duties. So the Order faced a real danger of having its accustomed areas of competence eroded, of being left with only unsatisfying residual tasks to perform. How to handle the competition without being vindictive, how to co-operate with rivals without losing ground, and how to continue all the while to offer and deliver the best of service would therefore remain major preoccupations.

Still further problems arose from the structure and the nature of the Order. Like the nation itself, the Order in Australia was a federal body, and like the Commonwealth it was subject to two conflicting stresses. One was the pressure to centralize, to give the Priory greater influence, greater authority. The other was the centrifugal force by which each State Branch wished to retain autonomy and to go its own way. Many grass roots workers for St John probably remained little aware of these tensions, but ultimately they were significant because they had an effect on policy and practice at both the national and State levels of the Order. These were not the only tensions, however, for one perennial cause for concern was the difficulties between the Association and the Brigade; between those who taught and those who practised; between those who did not wear uniforms and those who did; between the professional medical expert and the lay practitioner. In the United Kingdom, and in several of the States, such tensions had been reduced by merging the two foundations, by using the one term, St John Ambulance, to describe them both. Such solutions did not always work out well, for the fact remained that some within St John put on uniforms and went out to do public duty, whereas others did not, preferring to remain in the office or classroom. In some States the Brigade dominated the Association; in others the reverse was true; and elsewhere the St John Councils over-awed them both. The challenge for the Order, then, was to strive towards greater cohesion while still encouraging productive initiative among its numerous constituent bodies.

Many were the problems and difficulties the Order of St John thus faced as it entered its second century in Australia. In the foregoing paragraphs we have considered only some of the more pressing ones.

There were others. There was, for example, the sensitive question of dealings between the Order's Australian Branch and its St John's Gate headquarters. Previous chapters have shown how the authority of London and the aspirations of the Australian organization could become a vexed issue. It was not one that became less complicated as time went by. From time to time, too, some within the Order queried the assumptions underlying its chain of command. They wondered if democratic principles ought not be written more explicitly into its Statutes. Others within the Order feared what Australia's political future might hold. They worried about the adjustments the Order would have to make if the republican movement were to achieve its goal. Such problems abounded, and consequently those who thought seriously about the future of the Order in Australia had good cause for concern.

But if there were some doubts over St John's future in Australia there were also some encouraging signs as the organization entered its second century there. Despite the dents its confidence had suffered during recent years, all was not gloomy. The brightest spot in the scene ahead was the sheer dedication of many of the Order's field workers. The 90,500 hours of voluntary duty which 700 Brigade members notched up in the Northern Territory in 1981—nearly 130 hours each—was one such sign. This had been symptomatic of the enormous vitality of the organization in the Northern Territory. Since Cyclone Tracy had flattened Darwin in late 1974, St John had made enormous strides in the Northern Territory. Its new St John Council, its Association Centre, its Brigade District, its Territory-wide ambulance transport system, which was integrated with the operations of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and its rapidly expanding network of modern St John bases, were evidence of a great enthusiasm for St John work among the Territorians. Those who had grown weary serving St John and a thankless public in southern cities could be refreshed just to hear about the 'get-up-and-go' of their Territorian colleagues.

Another ray of hope was the work of some of the Cadet Divisions of the Brigade. The keenness of, say, Dom Bruno Knopp's ambulance and nursing cadets at Salvado College, New Norcia, was a byword throughout the Brigade in Western Australia and beyond. Since Dom Bruno had founded his first Cadet Division at New Norcia in 1972, the Salvado College cadets had built up an impressive tally of practical first aid and nursing attainments. They raised money to buy their own ambulance van, which saw regular service at the astonishing range of public duties, training exercises and camps which they attended. Among the achievements they could boast of were an emergency child birth in 1977, and a case in 1979 in which, late one night and in driving rain, they had rendered first aid and comfort for three hours to a severely injured driver trapped under his overturned truck.

Similar enthusiasm was apparent in Mrs Margaret Nunn's ninety-

108 St John Ambulance officers and police work to extract five seriously injured victims of a road accident in Darwin, 1981. Three ambulances and the St John advanced life support vehicle were in attendance.

strong Tea Tree Gully Nursing Cadet Division in north-eastern suburban Adelaide, which had formed in 1968. So high was the reputation of this Division in its local community that in 1982 it had a two-year waiting list for prospective members. Members of the Division regularly went on duty at the local nursing home and in the casualty ward of the Modbury Hospital. At the nursing home they helped shower, bathe, dress and feed the patients, read to them and take them for walks. At the hospital they helped with making beds, taking temperatures and blood pressures, and sitting and talking with patients. They also helped members of the senior Divisions at a host of public duties such as the Anzac Day parade, the Royal Show, gymkhanas, rodeos, basketball matches, school fetes, and by baby-sitting the children of members of the senior Divisions so that their parents could go on duty. Like Cadet Divisions elsewhere, they kept their keenness and efficiency up through attendance at regular parades, training camps, home nursing and first aid competitions.

Then there were the vigorous Cadet Divisions of the Northern Territory. The Territorian cadet movement was flourishing by the 1980s, though it was a fairly recent innovation. In 1981 it grew by four Divisions, which represented an overall increase in strength of twenty-eight per cent, to 430 members. This probably made it one of the most popular youth movements in the Territory.

All this was evidence on top of the usual indicators of the success of the Order—its annual statistics—that as St John entered its second cen-

tury there was a resurgence in interest in its work. The graphs for Brigade membership, classes taught, certificates awarded and hours of public duty performed were nudging upwards encouragingly, after having dipped alarmingly earlier in the previous decade. What the statistics clearly indicated was that the public had a need for St John's voluntary services, and that St John had the ability to respond accordingly.

But gratifying statistics and youthful enthusiasm were not all that counted. Equally important was the fine tradition of service being handed on by the passing generation. Throughout the country there were thousands of loyal servants of the Order who had given a lifetime to furthering its cause. Their efforts and their achievements could not easily be forgotten. To single out individuals for praise in a book like this is unfair, for every State, and every generation, produced its own share of inspired leaders and hardy toilers. Loyal individuals gave the Order its continuity, and the strength of St John relied on a multitude of them, each one bearing his or her own particular share of the burden, to sustain its effort. Organizations that achieve the eminence of the Order of St John survive largely because of the dedicated endeavour of their grass roots membership. Although mentioning particular individuals does an injustice to the host who remain nameless, it is perhaps appropriate to end this book by referring to just one person whose long record of service—for this writer at least—exemplifies the St John spirit. This person was the late Roy Trewhella, who died aged seventy-eight in January 1982.

Trewhella was born at Eaglehawk on the Bendigo goldfields in Victoria. Like his Cornish ancestors, he was a wiry, lively, leathery little sprite of a man. His father was a miner who died at the age of forty-seven of 'miners' phthisis'—the lung disease afflicting many of the underground men who daily breathed in the abrasive quartz dust they produced as they hacked and drilled their way through the hard rock. Trewhella could remember the family doctor getting the sons of the family to take outside, burn and bury the bits of lung tissue their dying father had coughed up. In 1911 the family moved to the Kalgoorlie goldfields in Western Australia, where the father struggled on working for a few more years before coughing himself to death. Roy Trewhella started his working life as a Kalgoorlie butcher boy, but after a couple of years he followed his father underground at the Lake View and Star mine, for which he worked for the next half-century, the last thirty years of this as the mine safety officer.[3]

Trewhella's links with St John began in 1921, when he saw the results of a disaster at the Golden Horse Shoe mine. A cage with seven men in it plummeted a thousand feet (366 metres), killing six of the men and severing the leg of the lone survivor. He took his initial first aid course soon after this, then began helping to instruct St John classes in 1923. He joined the Lake View and Star Division of the Brigade in 1932, rose to be

109 The Brigade's annual inspection at New Norcia, Western Australia, 1980: Bro. Bruno Knopp, organizer of the New Norcia ambulance service and founder of the Salvado College Cadet Divisions is at left. With him, left to right, are a Benedictine brother, Keith Dear, District Officer of Ambulance Cadets, the Commissioner, Dr Miles de Courcy Clarke, Joy McDowell, District Superintendent (Nursing), and Viola Pentland, District Officer of Nursing Cadets.

its superintendent, and remained its leader until 1967, when he became Brigade Corps Officer for the goldfields region. He had a fund of stories about St John life on the goldfields in the early days. When he was a lad, he recalled, every mine had a first aid team. There were weekly competitions between them on a Sunday morning, and these were as popular with the miners and their families as football and beer drinking. Trewhella was on parade with the Lake View and Star Division the day the Chief Commissioner for the Brigade Overseas, Sir James Sleeman, arrived in 1936. The men thought they presented a proud spectacle in their Sunday best and with their white arm bands emblazoned with the Red Cross. Sleeman, however, seemed greatly displeased to find a Division which not only had no uniforms but also had the effrontery to wear the wrong sort of cross. He was so put out he spoke sternly about deregistering them. (It must only have been with hindsight that he came to see the true value of Kalgoorlie miners). Much mortified, the Lake View and Star men abandoned their Red Cross arm bands in favour of Maltese cross brassards, and set about raising money to buy their uniforms.

Trewhella continued teaching and examining first aid classes and coaching first aid teams for fifty-seven years. He was still at it when illness forced him out in 1980. Over the years he had taught hundreds of classes and thousands of pupils for the Association, to school and college

students, to groups from the Scout and Guide Associations, to firemen and to miners. He also gave thousands of hours of voluntary duty as a first aid officer to racing clubs, football clubs, and the voluntary fire brigades. As a mine safety officer his skills were often in demand because his methods were effective if unorthodox. His workmates swore by his healing touch, and he was proud of what he felt was the sensitivity of his fingers. He therefore used a lot of massage in his treatments. He was also a careful and shrewd observer of medical conditions. At the Lake View and Star mine he adopted the practice of bringing injured men up from the shaft in the feet-first position. To begin with the miners had been angered by this practice, grumbling that 'Trewhella'll treat you like an animal if you get hurt'. He persisted with this method, however, because he had noticed how injured men rushed head-first to the surface from deep underground were invariably unconscious, and even more at risk, by the time they got there. He surmised that this was because of a depleted blood supply to the brain, a result of having been whisked aloft head-first. He therefore tried out the idea of strapping the men upside down on the stretchers used in mine rescue work. The first time he tried it was with a man who was already unconscious after having been trapped under a fallen boulder at the 1210 metre level. At the 605 metre level a doctor was waiting to examine the man. The patient had regained consciousness before he reached the doctor, and was loudly abusing Trewhella, who was accompanying him up the shaft. 'He's OK now', Trewhella could assure the doctor, 'but we'll keep on taking him up feet-first'.

Trewhella was admitted into membership of the Order as a Serving Brother in 1950. He rose to the rank of Commander, but not as far as the Knighthood. The latter point was a great disappointment to him privately, when he reflected that there were others probably less worthy who had advanced more easily. He was awarded the Brigade's long service medal (given after twelve years' efficient service) in 1944, and was subsequently awarded five bars (given for each additional five years' service). After more than half a century of loyal service in the name of St John he felt deeply shocked by the tax evasion scheme mentioned earlier in this chapter. He and two companions from his old Division clubbed together to donate $50 to the Priory in the hope that this would help it out of its problems. That was the last service he was able to perform for his beloved Order.

In Roy Trewhella's life and record of service were encapsulated all the ideals of self-effacing but enterprising voluntary aid to one's fellow humans which the Order stood for. Each new St John generation has managed to produce its legion of Roy Trewhellas. That, perhaps, was the most comforting thought for those who worried about the Order's second century in Australia. If there should happen to be young Roy Trewhellas somewhere among the cadets of, say, Dom Bruno's New

110 St John Ambulance headquarters, Darwin, Northern Territory, 1981. This was the first of a series of ambulance centres planned for Northern territory towns following St John's assumption of responsibility for ambulance transport in the Northern territory. The Prince and Princess of Wales opened the centre in Alice Springs in March 1983.

Norcia Divisions, in Margaret Nunn's Tea Tree Gully Cadet Division, or the large and lusty Casuarina Division in Darwin, then there was a good chance that the St John team would complete a second century for Australia.

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Abbreviations used in Endnotes

For ease of reference a number of abbreviations have been used in the endnotes. In many cases groups of abbreviations occur together. For example,

MB SJAA PC, 9 August 1898;
AR 1925 SJAB NSWD, 15;
AR 1912 SJABO GP, 473.

From the list of abbreviations below, it will be seen that these groups of abbreviations signify respectively,

Minute Book, St John Ambulance Association Perth Centre, entry for 9 August 1898;

Annual Report for 1925, St John Ambulance Brigade, New South Wales District, page 15;

Annual Report for 1912, St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas, Grand Priory reports issued from London, page 473.

The abbreviations used in the endnotes are as follows:

AC	Adelaide Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
AR	Annual Report
C	Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
CATB	City Ambulance and Transport Brigade (of Sydney)
D	District (of the St John Ambulance Brigade)
GP	Grand Priory reports (issued from the St John's Gate, London, headquarters of the Order of St John)
LC	Launceston Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
MB	Minute Book
NSWC	New South Wales Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
NSWD	New South Wales District (of the St John Ambulance Brigade)
PC	Perth Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
PD	Perth District (of the St John Ambulance Brigade)
QATB	Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade
QC	Queensland Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
QD	Queensland District (of the St John Ambulance Brigade)
SAC	South Australian Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
SAD	South Australian District (of the St John Ambulance Brigade)
SJ	St John Ambulance
SJAA	St John Ambulance Association
SJAB	St John Ambulance Brigade
SJABO	St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas
STC	Southern Tasmanian Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)

STD	Southern Tasmanian District (of the St John Ambulance Brigade)
TC	Tasmanian Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
TD	Tasmanian District (of the St John Ambulance Brigade)
VC	Victorian Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
VD	Victorian District (of the St John Ambulance Brigade)
WAC	Western Australian Centre (of the St John Ambulance Association)
WAD	Western Australian District (of the St John Ambulance Brigade)

Notes

INTRODUCTION

[1] Sir Harry Luke, *An examination of certain claims to be an Order of St. John* (London, The Grand Priory in the British Realm of The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, 1965).

[2] *Royal Charters (1955 and 1974), Statutes and Regulations, Order of St John* (London, 1974), Clause 4, p. 11.

[3] Rod Bramley, 'The Northern Territory: a brief look', *Response* (Institute of Australian Ambulance Officers), January-February 1982.

CHAPTER 1

Sources

The early centuries of the Order's development have been much written about. Having no Latin, and without access to early source materials, I have been forced to rely entirely upon secondary sources in this chapter. My principal sources have been the first two volumes of Steven Runciman's encyclopaedic *A History of the Crusades*, perhaps the most authoritative modern treatment of the subject, and Sir Edwin King's monumental *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*. Both Runciman and King make extensive use of the great mediaeval history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem by William of Tyre, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, drawing much of their material from this contemporary source. King also drew much of his information from the 'cartulary' of the Order—its collection of charters and titles confirming its various privileges and benefices. He also made extensive use of the four-volume history of the Order by the early eighteenth century historian, the Abbé René Aubert de Vertot. Vertot, who had been commissioned by the Order to produce its history, published this work, *History of the Knights of Malta*, in 1728. Other subsequent historians of the Order, for example H. W. Fincham in *The Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem* and Frederick W. Ryan in *'The House of the Temple': A Study of Malta and its Knights in the French Revolution*, also rely heavily on Vertot.

[1] See for example works such as S. Fowler Wright's two-volume novel, *The Siege of Malta* (London, Frederick Muller Ltd., 1942), claimed by the author to have been 'founded on an unfinished romance by Sir Walter Scott'; Roger Peyrefitte, *The Knights of Malta* (London, Secker and Warburg, 1960); Ernle Bradford's 'documentary novel', *The Great Siege: Malta 1565* (Penguin Books, 1964); Geoffrey Trease's novel for children, *The Seas of Morning* (Puffin Books, 1976); and, not the least among them, Barbara Cartland's romance, *The Dream and the Glory* (London, Pan Books, 1977).

[2] E. J. King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land* (London, Methuen & Co., 1931), pp. 26-8, gives an English translation of the Bull.

[3] *ibid.*, pp. 19-22; S. Runciman, *A History Of The Crusades Volume II: The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East 1100-1187* (London, Penguin Books Ltd., 1971), pp. 156-7.

[4] King, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
[5] *ibid.*, p. 18.
[6] *ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
[7] *ibid.*, p. 5; J. Forrest-Hamilton, *The Order of St John with special reference to The Priory of Scotland* (Glasgow, Order of St John in Scotland, 1950), p. 6.
[8] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
[9] *ibid.*, pp. 7-8; S. Runciman, *A History Of The Crusades Volume I: The First Crusade and the Foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (London, Penguin Books Ltd., 1971), pp. 1-2.
[10] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-10; Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. I*, pp. 28-9.
[11] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11; Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. I*, pp. 35-6.
[12] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12; Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. I*, p. 48; D. Henry, *The Knights of St. John with other Mediaeval Institutions and their Buildings in St. Andrews* (St Andrews, W. C. Henderson & Son, 1912), p. 13; W. Porter, *Malta And Its Knights* (London, Pardon and Son, 1871), pp. 3-5; H. W. Fincham, *The Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem and its Grand Priory of England* (London, Order of St John, 1933), p. 2; E. D. Renwick, *A Short History of the Order of St. John* (London, Order of St John, 1971), pp. 7-8.
[13] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. I*, pp. 38-51, 114-5; King, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[14] Renwick, *op. cit.*, p. 8; Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. I*, pp. 49-50; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-1; E. M. Tenison, *Chivalry And The Wounded: The Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem* (1014-1914) (London, L. Upcott Gill & Son Ltd., 1914), pp. 10-11.
[15] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. I*, pp. 106-13; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.
[16] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. I*, pp. 114-5; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.
[17] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. I*, pp. 121-33.
[18] *ibid.*, pp. 284-8; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
[19] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, pp. 156-7; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-3.
[20] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-4; Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4; Tenison, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.
[21] *The New English Bible, The Gospel according to Matthew*, ch. 11, verse 11.
[22] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, pp 156-7; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13, 22-3.
[23] *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (Washington, McGraw-Hill, 1967) vol. 1, p. 1060; vol. 2, pp. 283-4.
[24] 'Bull of Pope Paschal II confirming the foundation of the Order', reprinted in English in King, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-8.
[25] *ibid.*
[26] A. Mifsud, *Knights Hospitallers of the Ven. Tongue of England in Malta* (Valletta, Public Library of Malta, 1914), p. 4.
[27] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 1*, pp. 292-3; King, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
[28] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-6. F. W. Ryan, *'The House of the Temple': A study of Malta and its Knights in the French Revolution* (London, Basil Oates and Washbourne Limited, 1930), pp. 3-4.
[29] 'Rule of Raymond du Puy', reprinted in English in King, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-8.
[30] *ibid.*
[31] Commissioner for Lands and Surveys Palestine, *Palestine of the Crusades: a map of the country on scale of 1:350,000 with historical introduction and gazeteer* (Jaffa, Commissioner for Lands and Survey Palestine, 1937).
[32] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, p. 157; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-2. For a novel view of the purpose and history of the Templars, see M. Baigent, R. Leigh and H. Lincoln, *The Holy Blood And The Holy Grail* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1982).
[33] W. K. R. Bedford and 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 (London, F. E. Robinson and Co., 1902), p. 8. King, *op. cit.*, p. 33, puts the date of the first military engagement by the Hospitallers at 1123, when they were called on to help fight off an invasion of the Kingdom of Jerusalem by Egyptians.

[34] King, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

[35] *ibid.*

[36] Runciman, *op. cit., Vol. 2*, p. 158.

[37] Commissioner for Lands and Surveys Palestine, *op. cit.*

[38] Bedford and Holbeche *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[39] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[40] Fincham, *op. cit.*, p. 4; King, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

[41] King, *op cit.*, p. 37.

[42] Innocent IV's Bull relating to the surcoat is reprinted in English in King, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

[43] Alexander IV's Bull granting a distinctive dress to the Knights Hospitaller is reprinted in English in King, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-9.

[44] King, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

[45] *ibid.*, p. 38.

[46] *ibid.*, pp. 41-3.

[47] *ibid.*, pp. 58-60.

[48] *ibid.*, p. 58.

[49] *ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

[50] *ibid.*; E. E. Hume, *Medical Work of the Knights Hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), pp. 13-16.

[51] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 160-1; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-6; Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Fincham, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[52] Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

[53] *ibid.*; and Forrest-Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-10. King, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-8 n. disagrees with the claims of the Scottish historians of the Order, maintaining that the earliest date that can be authenticated for the Torphichen Preceptory is 1153—Malcolm IV's confirmation of its possession by the Hospitallers. His denigration of these claims and his staunch defence of an earlier English than Scottish foundation of the Order seems to arise from English chauvinism. Obviously, if the Torphichen estate was confirmed to the Order in 1153, it must have come into their possession at some time earlier.

Bedford and Holbeche (*op cit.*, p. 36), earlier English historians of the Order than King, support the Scottish claims to an 1124 foundation of the Hospitallers at Torphichen under the patronage of David I. So does the American historian of the Order, Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-4.

[54] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-8; E. J. King, *The Grand Priory of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England: A Short History* (London, Order of St John, 1924), pp. 9-10; Fincham, *op. cit.*, p. 14; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 36.

[55] King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*, pp. 77-8.

[56] Runciman, *op. cit., Vol. 2*, pp. 376-7; King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*, pp. 4, 51, 54.

[57] King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*, p. 54.

[58] *ibid.*, p. 54.

CHAPTER 2

[1] Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, Volume 2: The Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 416-7; E. J. King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*, p. 107.

[2] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 432-5; Runciman, *op. cit.*, pp. 432-5.
[3] Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, Volume 3: The Kingdom of Acre*, p. 479; King, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
[4] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-6.
[5] *ibid.*, pp. 115-6.
[6] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, pp. 447-50; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-9.
[7] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, pp. 452-4; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-20.
[8] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, pp. 454-8; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-7; E. M. Tenison, *Chivalry and the Wounded*, pp. 21-3.
[9] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, pp. 459-60; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-8; Tenison, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[10] King, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
[11] Runciman, *op. cit.*, p. 460.
[12] King, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
[13] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, pp. 463-5; King, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
[14] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, p. 467; King, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
[15] E. E. Hulme, *Medical Work of the Knights Hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem*, p. 21; King, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
[16] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 2*, p. 473.
[17] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-5.
[18] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, p. 75.
[19] *ibid.*, pp. 49-54; King, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
[20] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 56-7; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-52. Runciman and King disagree significantly over the losses Saladin suffered in the battle of Arsuf. Runciman says that the losses on either side were small; King maintains that the Christians lost 700 but killed 7000 Saracens.
[21] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-40, 142.
[22] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, p. 61.
[23] *ibid.*, pp. 59, 73-4.
[24] E. J. King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*, pp. 106, 164-5.
[25] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-64.
[26] King, *The Knights of St. John in the British Empire*, p. 25.
[27] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 186-7; King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*, pp. 206-7.
[28] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 224-7; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-4.
[29] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 224-7; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-4.
[30] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 324-6; King, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[31] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 324-6; King, *op. cit.*, p. 264.
[32] Boisant de Lixieux, *Histoire de l'Ordre de St. Jean*, cited in King, *op. cit.*, p. 264; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-6.
[33] King, *The Knights of St. John in the British Empire*, p. 31.
[34] *ibid.*, pp. 35-8; Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 416-23.
[35] King, *The Knights of St. John in the British Empire*, pp. 35-8; Runciman, *loc. cit.*
[36] King, *loc cit.*; Runciman, *loc. cit.*
[37] Friedrich Engels, quoted in L. S. Feuer, *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy* (London, Collins-Fontana Books, 1969), pp. 12, 448.
[38] King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*, pp. 299-300; Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 477-80.
[39] King, *loc. cit.*; Runciman, *loc. cit.*
[40] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 472-5.
[41] *ibid.*, pp. 472-5.
[42] *ibid.*, pp. 43-7, 66-7.
[43] King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*, pp. 39-40.

[44] King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*, pp. 72-5; Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.
[45] King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*, pp. 39-40.
[46] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-5, 41-2; Tenison, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-2; Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.
[47] King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*, p. 40.
[48] *ibid.*, p. 40.
[49] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[50] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-1, 47-55; Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, p. 435.
[51] Hume, *loc. cit.*; Runciman, *loc. cit.*
[52] Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
[53] King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*, p. 85.
[54] Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, p. 435.
[55] *ibid.*, pp. 437-8; King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*, pp. 40-5; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[56] Runciman, *loc. cit.*; King, *loc. cit.*; Bedford and Holbeche, *loc. cit.*
[57] Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.
[58] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-7; Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11; Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6.
[59] Hume, *loc. cit.*; Ryan, *loc. cit.*; Mifsud, *loc. cit.*
[60] *Catholic Encyclopaedia (1962) vol. 8,* p. 219.
[61] Vertot, *L'Histoire des Chevaliers de Malthe*, Book III, quoted in King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land*, pp. 163-4.
[62] *ibid.*, pp. 163-4.
[63] *New Catholic Encyclopaedia (1967) vol. 5*, pp. 1033-4; King, *The Knights of St John in England*, pp. 82-3.
[64] *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (1967), *vol. 6*, pp. 1025-7; *vol. 3*, pp. 931-2; *vol. 11*, p. 13; King, *The Knights of St John in England*, pp. 76-82; *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*, pp. 98-104; S. T. Bindoff, *Tudor England* (Penguin, 1951), pp. 90-5; G. L. Mosse, *The Reformation* (New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1956), pp. 67-73; G. R. Elton, *England under the Tudors* (London, Methuen, 1958), pp. 130-49.
[65] *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (1967), *vol. 5*, pp. 1033-4; King, *The Knights of St John in England*, pp. 82-3.
[66] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-6; King, *The Knights Hospitaller in The Holy Land*, p. 158; Runciman, *op. cit.*, *Vol. 3*, pp. 53, 59, 170; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
[67] King, *The Knights of St John in England*, pp. 63-5.
[68] *ibid.*, pp. 63-5; and *Knights of St John in the British Empire*, pp. 85-8.
[69] King, *The Knights of St John in England*, pp. 63-5; Tenison, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[70] King, *The Knights of St John in England*, pp. 68-74; *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*, pp. 89-97; Tenison, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-9; Fincham, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-4; Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-54; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-9.
[71] King, *The Knights of St John in England*, pp. 68-74; Tenison, *loc. cit.*; Fincham, *loc. cit.*; Hume, *loc. cit.*; Porter, *loc. cit.*; Bedford and Holbeche, *loc. cit.*
[72] King, *loc. cit.*; Tenison, *loc. cit.*; Fincham, *loc. cit.*; Hume, *loc. cit.*
[73] King, *The Knights of St John in England*, p. 74.
[74] Porter, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
[75] *ibid.*, pp. 52-3.
[76] *ibid.*, p. 54; King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*, p. 97.
[77] For a consideration of the interaction between the religious Reformation and the development of expansive capitalistic enterprise, see, for example, S. N. Eisenstadt, 'The Protestant Ethic' in P. Worsley (ed.), *Problems of Modern*

Society (Penguin, 1972), pp. 532-42; and also R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Penguin, 1938), pp. 75-89.

[78] Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[79] *ibid.*, pp. 28-9; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-71; Fincham, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9; Mifsud, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[80] Bedford and Holbeche, *loc. cit.*; Hume, *loc. cit.*; Fincham, *loc. cit.*; Mifsud, *loc. cit.*

[81] Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-5.

[82] 'Malta: History', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1969), *Vol. 14*, p. 713

[83] *ibid.*, p. 713; J. P. Kotroman, 'Knights of Malta, Past and Present', *Apollo Miscellany, 1951*, p. 4.

[84] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

[85] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-1.

[86] *ibid.*, pp. 175-7.

[87] Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-4.

[88] Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

[89] *ibid.*, p. 187.

[90] Numerous reproductions of the artwork relating to the Knights are contained in Hume, *op. cit.*, Mifsud, *op. cit.*, Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, and the three books by E. J. King.

[91] Photographs of the buildings of the Knights in Valetta are reproduced in the books listed in the previous note.

[92] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

[93] *ibid.*, pp. 169-71.

[94] *ibid.*, pp. 173-4.

[95] Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-8.

[96] Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-7; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-80; Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-61.

[97] Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 179; Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-3; Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-5.

[98] Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-9.

[99] *ibid.*, pp. 86-9.

[100] *ibid.*, pp. 113-7.

[101] Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[102] *ibid.*, pp. 93-174. Hume treats the medical practices of the Order at great length.

[103] *ibid.*, pp. 149-54.

[104] *ibid.*, pp. 149-54.

[105] *ibid.*, pp. 169-73.

[106] *ibid.*, pp. 173-5.

[107] *ibid.*, pp. 186-8; Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-4.

[108] King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*, p. 120.

[109] Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-11.

[110] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-6; Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-42.

[111] Fincham, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-9.

[112] King, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

[113] Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-6.

[114] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-4; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-7; Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-251.

[115] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-4; Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-4, 258-9.

[116] Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 259-71.

[117] *ibid.*, pp. 272-80.

[118] *ibid.*, pp. 325-46; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-4, 201-4.

[119] Ryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-46; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-4, 201-4.

[120] Ryan, *loc. cit.*; Hume, *loc. cit.*

[121] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-6.

CHAPTER 3

[1] W. K. R. Bedford and R. Holbeche, *The Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem*, p. 46; H. W. Fincham, *The Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem and its Grand Priory of England*, p. 14; A Mifsud, *Knights Hospitallers of the Venerable Tongue of England in Malta*, p. 67; E. D. Renwick, *A Short History of the Order of St. John*, pp. 43-6.

[2] W. Porter, *Malta and its Knights*, pp. 226-7; J. Forrest-Hamilton, *The Order of St. John with special reference to The Priory of Scotland*, pp. 13-15; Renwick, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[3] Porter, *loc. cit.*; Forrest-Hamilton, *loc. cit.*; Renwick, *loc. cit.*

[4] Porter, *loc. cit.*; Forrest-Hamilton, *loc. cit.*; Renwick, *loc. cit.*

[5] Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, p. 45; Fincham, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-30.

[6] Fincham, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-17; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-50; Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-30.

[7] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

[8] Forrest-Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12; E. M. Tenison, *Chivalry and the Wounded*, p. 52; Renwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-50; Fincham, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-1.

[9] Fincham, *op. cit.*, p. 22; E. J. King, *The Knights of St. John in England*, pp. 75-6.

[10] E. E. Hume, *Medical Work of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem*, p. 73.

[11] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-75, reports the revenues and expenditure of the English Commanderies as revealed by the commissioners sent out by Henry VIII in 1535. The amounts and proportions given in this paragraph have been derived from them.

[12] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

[13] *ibid.*, p. 197; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, p. 58; Fincham, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Renwick, *op. cit.*, p. 52; E. J. King, *The Knights of St. John in the British Empire*, pp. 100-2; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-1.

[14] King, *The Knights of St. John in England*, pp. 33-45; Fincham, *op. cit.*, p. 21; Renwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-9; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-6; Tenison, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[15] E. J. King, *The Knights of St. John in the British Empire*, p. 60.

[16] For brief accounts of the rebellion from the point of view of historians of the Order, see the references listed under notes 14 and 15.

[17] King, *The Knights of St. John in the British Empire*, pp. 98-9; Renwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-1.

[18] King, *The Knights of St. John in the British Empire*, pp. 100-13; Renwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-3; Fincham, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-3; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-63; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-2; Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-208. For a discussion of the history of the Bailiwick of Brandenburg, see Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-20, and Hume, *op. cit.* pp. 299-303.

[19] King, *The Knights of St. John in the British Empire*, pp. 106-7; Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-8.

[20] King, *loc. cit.*; Mifsud, *loc. cit.*

[21] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, p. 206; King, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

[22] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-13; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-13; Renwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-4; Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 82; G. R. Elton, *England under the Tudors* (London, Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1958), pp. 214-23.

[23] Mifsud, *loc. cit.*; King, *loc. cit.*; Renwick, *loc. cit.*; Hume, *loc. cit.*;Elton, *loc. cit.*

[24] Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-20; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-34.
[25] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 82, 112-3; Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-74; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-6; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-7.
[26] King, *loc. cit.*; Mifsud, *loc. cit.*; Bedford and Holbeche, *loc. cit.*
[27] Mifsud, pp. 74-6.
[28] *ibid.*, pp. 33-5, 184-5; Forrest-Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19; King, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
[29] Mifsud, *loc. cit.*; Forrest-Hamilton, *loc. cit.*; King, *loc. cit.*
[30] Mifsud, *loc. cit.*; Forrest-Hamilton, *loc. cit.*; King, *loc. cit.*
[31] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 85, 180-1; Mifsud, *op. cit.*, pp. 220-8.
[32] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 195, 201-4; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-6; Forrest-Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-3.
[33] Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 206.
[34] *ibid.*, pp. 204-7; Porter, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-31.
[35] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-4; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-7; Porter, *loc. cit.*
[36] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-8; King, *loc. cit.*
[37] For a discussion of the Order's twentieth century charitable endeavour see Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-93 passim. For a brief recent review of the ceremonial and diplomatic life of the Order see James Hanson, 'Knights of Malta, mini-nation based on chivalry', *Smithsonian* 12(10) January 1982, p. 112 ff.
[38] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 208, 315; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-5; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-40.
[39] Hume, *loc. cit.*; Bedford and Holbeche, *loc. cit.*; King, *loc. cit.*
[40] Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-11, 315-6; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-5; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-41.
[41] Hume, *loc. cit.*; Bedford and Holbeche, *loc. cit.*; King, *loc. cit.*
[42] Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-8; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-2.
[43] Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[44] *ibid.*, pp. 205-6.
[45] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-3.
[46] *ibid.*, pp. 142-3.
[47] Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, p. 109; Joan Clifford, *For the Service of Mankind: Furley, Lechmere and Duncan, St. John Ambulance Founders* (London, Robert Hale, 1971), pp. 58-9.
[48] Clifford, *loc. cit.*
[49] The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta in Australia, *Inaugural Oration, Sydney, 9 November 1976*, p. 10.
[50] F. Boase, *Modern English Biography* (London, Frank Cass & Coy., 1965), vol. 2, pp. 715-6; Renwick, *op. cit.*, p. 59; King, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
[51] Boase, *loc. cit.*; Renwick, *loc. cit.*; King, *loc. cit.*; N. Corbet Fletcher, *The St John Ambulance Association: Its History, and its Part in the Ambulance Movement* (London, The St John Ambulance Association, 1929), which is the most thorough of the histories covering the years of the Duke's rule as Grand Prior, is one that does not mention him. Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, is another. Bedford, the genealogist of the Order at the time his book was published in 1902, would have been a contemporary of the Duke, and so it is surprising that he overlooked him.
[52] Clifford, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-65; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
[53] Clifford, *loc. cit.*; Bedford and Holbeche, *loc. cit.*
[54] Clifford, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-37 summarizes Furley's early life; Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-77 also makes frequent reference to him.
[55] Clifford, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[56] Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

[57] *ibid.*, pp. 10-11; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-7; Clifford, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-36, 71-3.
[58] Clifford, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Bedford and Holbeche, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-11.
[59] R. T. McNally, 'Humanitarianism', *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* (1969), vol. 7, pp. 229-30.
[60] Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-11; Clifford, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-1.
[61] Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-12.
[62] *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
[63] *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
[64] *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
[65] *ibid.*, p. 17.
[66] *ibid.*, pp. 18-20.
[67] *ibid.*, p. 20; Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 319-24; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-73.
[68] Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Clifford, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-4; King, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-5; Fincham, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-3.
[69] Clifford, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
[70] Fletcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-7, 29.
[71] *ibid.*, pp. 23, 34.
[72] *ibid.*, pp. 27-8.
[73] *ibid.*, pp. 20-1, 30, 32; R. E. Wright-St. Clair (ed.), *The Order of St. John in New Zealand* (Wellington, Priory in New Zealand of the Order of St. John, 1977), p. 22; King, *op. cit.*, p. 182; Order of St John, *Report of Chapter General* 1888, pp. 149-56.
[74] AR 1898 SJAA and SJABO GP.

CHAPTER 4

[1] Unless otherwise indicated the material in the following section has been derived from entries in *The Australian Encyclopaedia* (Sydney, The Grolier Society of Australia, 1977) and from C. M. H. Clark, *A History of Australia IV: The Earth Abideth For Ever 1851-1888* (Melbourne University Press, 1978). The factual material has appeared often in both general and specialized history texts.
[2] Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 336.
[3] *Encyclopaedia of Papua And New Guinea* (Melbourne University Press and the University of Papua and New Guinea, 1972), vol. I, pp. 115, 404, 485-6; vol. II, pp. 1000-1.
[4] *ibid.*, I, pp. 115, 404, 485-6; II, pp. 1000-1.
[5] Jack Pollard, *The Ampol Book of Australian Sporting Records* (Sydney, The Pollard Publishing Co., 1968) was the source for the sporting statistics and dates in these two paragraphs.
[6] Wentworth wrote of Australia becoming 'a new Britannia' in his poem *Austalasia* in 1823. C. M. H. Clark discusses it in *A History of Australia II: New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land 1822-1838* (Melbourne University Press, 1968), pp. 48-9. It forms the *liet-motif* of Humphrey McQueen's *A New Britannia: An argument concerning the social origins of Australian radicalism and nationalism* (London & Melbourne, Penguin Books, 1970).
[7] William Johnston 'Dr James Edward Neild and the Early History of the St John Ambulance in Australia', *Medical Journal of Australia*, 5 October 1963, pp. 567-8.
[8] *ibid.*, pp. 567-8.
[9] Annual Reports, SJAA (Victoria) 1886-1900.
[10] Annual Report, SJAA (New South Wales) 1911, p. 17; Johnston (1963), p. 565.
[11] Annual Report, SJAA (Grand Priory) 1888, pp. 25-32, 149.

[12] Johnston, *op. cit.*, pp. 563-4.
[13] Perrott to Neild, 20 February 1882, Records on formation of Victorian Centre, Archives of St John Council for Victoria.
[14] Robertson to Neild, 11 June 1883, Records on formation of Victorian Centre, Archives of St John Council for Victoria.
[15] Neild and Warren, circular letter dated June 1883, Records on formation of Victorian Centre, Archives of St John Council for Victoria.
[16] *ibid.*
[17] *Argus* 14 June 1883, newsclippings in Records on formation of Victorian Centre, Archives of St John Council for Victoria.
[18] *Argus* and *Daily Telegraph* 23 June 1883, in Records on formation of Victorian Centre, Archives of St John Council for Victoria.
[19] Clippings from three unnamed newspapers 27 June 1883, in Records on formation of Victorian Centre, Archives of St John Council for Victoria; Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 566.
[20] *Argus* 7 July 1883, newsclippings in Records on formation of Victorian Centre, Archives of St John Council for Victoria.
[21] *Argus* 30 October 1883, in Records on formation of Victorian Centre, Archives of St John Council for Victoria.
[22] AR 1886, SJAA VC, pp. 3-4.
[23] Johnston, *op. cit.*, pp. 566-7; AR 1886, SJAA VC, p. 3.
[24] AR 1887, SJAA VC, p. 4.
[25] AR 1887, SJAA VC, p. 4.
[26] *ibid.*, pp. 5-6; AR 1888, SJAA VC, p. 5, and AR 1890, p. 5.
[27] AR 1888, SJAA VC, p. 6.
[28] AR 1889-90, SJAA VC, pp. 6-7.
[29] AR 1888, SJAA GP, pp. 11-12; *The St. John Ambulance Gazette* (Sydney) 1(3) 21 July 1902, pp. 17-20, 1(4) 20 August 1902, pp. 26-7; B. Fegan, unpublished papers, 'Visit of Lord and Lady Brassey 1887'.
[30] *ibid.*
[31] *The St. John Ambulance Gazette* (Sydney) 1(4) 20 August 1902, p. 27.
[32] *ibid.*, 1(3) 21 July 1902, pp. 18-19.
[33] *Register* 6 June 1887; Fegan, *op. cit.*; AR 1888 SJAA VC, p. 7.
[34] AR 1896, SJAA VC, and 1896-7.
[35] Annie Brassey to Editor *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 July 1887, Records on formation of N.S.W. Centre, SJAA NSWC; *Sydney Morning Herald* 13 July 1887, pp. 9, 13; 14 July 1887, pp. 4, 8.
[36] *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 July 1887, p. 4; AR 1911, SJAA NSWC, p. 17.
[37] *ibid.*; Fegan, *op. cit.*; AR 1888, SJAA GP, pp. 11-12.
[38] AR 1888, SJAA GP, pp. 11-12.
[39] AR 1887, SJAA VC, p. 6, 1889-90, p. 6.
[40] AR 1887, SJAA VC, p. 6.
[41] AR, SJAA VC, 1892, 1893, 1893-94.
[42] AR, SJAA VC, 1897-98, 1900-01, 1907-08.
[43] AR 1897, SJAA VC, p. 8.
[44] AR 1898, SJAA VC, p. 8.
[45] AR 1907-08, SJAA VC, pp. 4-5.
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[47] *ibid.*, pp. 1-3.
[48] *ibid.*, pp. 1-3.
[49] *ibid.*, pp. 6-7; Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes, 1885-1980', pp. 1-2.
[50] *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

[51] *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
[52] *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
[53] Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Association: its beginning in South Australia', p. 2.
[54] AR, SJAA, AC, 1887, 1890; Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes', p. 2.
[55] AR 1897, SJAA AC.
[56] AR, SJAA AC, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901.
[57] Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Association: its beginning in South Australia', 11-13.
[58] *ibid.*; AR, SJAA AC, 1896.
[59] Figures of the totals of pupils and certificates have been derived from statistics in the annual reports of both the Adelaide (1885-1909) and Victorian (1884-1908) Centres.
[60] Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Association: its beginning in South Australia', pp. 4, 15.
[61] *ibid.*, p. 4.
[62] *ibid.*, pp. 11, 11a, 11b.
[63] AR, SJAA AC, 1888; Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes', p. 1; 'The St John Ambulance Association: its beginning in South Australia', p. 11.
[64] MB, SJAA LC 1887-93, press clipping for 31 March 1887.
[65] *ibid.*
[66] Minutes, 4 April 1887, MB, SJAA LC 1887-93.
[67] AR, SJAA VC, 1888, p. 5; 1890, p. 9.
[68] MB, SJAA LC 1887-93, Minutes for 30 March and 8 May 1888.
[69] *ibid.*, and Minutes for 20 May 1892.
[70] MB, SJAA LC, Minutes for 18 March, 4 June, 17 June and 29 August 1889, and 29 May 1890, and 25 March 1891.
[71] MB, SJAA LC 1887-93, Minutes for 10 July and 11 and 21 December 1891.
[72] MB, SJAA LC 1887-93, Minutes for 28 July 1890 and 27 March 1891.
[73] MB, SJAA LC 1887-93, Minutes for 20 May, 11 and 13 June, and 18 September 1891.
[74] MB, SJAA LC 1887-93, newsclipping of 22 December 1891.
[75] MB, SJAA LC 1887-93, Minutes for 10 February 1893.
[76] J. L. Sleeman, *Report on the Inspectional Tour of Australia*, London Grand Priory of the Order of St. John, generally referred to as the Sleeman Report, 1936, p. 51.
[77] AR 1908, SJAA GP, pp. 75, 76, 168.
[78] *Brisbane Courier* 28 July 1887, clipping reprinted in Annie Brassey, *The St. John Ambulance Association* (1887), scrapbook of Library of Order of St John, Clerkenwell, pp. 10-11.
[79] *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
[80] *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
[81] *ibid.*, p. 1.
[82] Fegan, 'Visit of Lord and Lady Brassey 1887'; C. G. Drury Clarke, addenda to W. A. Carvolth, *Brief History, First Aid Movement, 1892-1973* (Brisbane, Queensland Railway Ambulance Corps, 1973), pp. 2-3.
[83] *ibid.*
[84] AR 1908, SJAA GP, p. 168.
[85] *ibid.*, p. 168.
[86] *ibid.*, pp. 168-70, 173.
[87] *ibid.*, p. 76.
[88] AR SJAA NSWC 1895-96, p. 7; 1896-97, p. 7; 1907, p. 10.
[89] AR 1908, SJAA GP, p. 168.

[90] Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Association: its beginning in South Australia', p. 15.
[91] S. C. Warrian, *Notes on the Inauguration of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade from Sept. 1892 to Jan. 1897*; Q.A.T.B., *A Short History of the Queensland Transport Brigade* (1929); J. A. Ryan, *History of the Queensland Ambulance Service 1892-1950, History of Rockhampton Ambulance Brigade 1901-1950*, pp. 4, 5, 7, 10, 11.
[92] *ibid.*; St John Ambulance Association (Queensland Centre), *Jubilee Report 1909-1959*.
[93] Figures derived from AR's 1900 of SJAA, AC, VC, NSWC.
[94] *Sydney Morning Herald* 18 July 1887, clipping reprinted in Brassey, *op. cit.*
[95] *Sydney Morning Herald* 16 July 1887 in Brassey, *op. cit.*
[96] Typewritten notes by Lucy Scott, c. 1897 bound in with vol. 1 AR's of SJAA NSWC.
[97] AR 1891, SJAA NSWC.
[98] Leaflet bound with AR 1891 in vol. 1 AR's of SJAA NSWC.
[99] *ibid.* Biographical details of P. G. King from *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.
[100] AR's of SJAA NSWC 1891-92, 1892-93, 1893-94, 1894-95.
[101] AR 1894-95 SJAA NSWC, p. 5.
[102] AR's of SJAA NSWC, 1891-92 to 1894-95.
[103] AR 1900-1901 SJAA NSWC, p. 20.
[104] *ibid.*, p. 26.
[105] *ibid.*, p. 24.
[106] AR 1893-94 SJAA NSWC, pp. 4-5.
[107] AR 1895-96 SJAA NSWC, pp. 7, 15.
[108] *ibid.*, p. 16.
[109] AR's of SJAA NSWC, 1896-97 and 1897-98.
[110] AR's of SJAA NSWC 1897-98 and 1898-99.
[111] AR 1891-92 SJAA NSWC, p. 3.
[112] AR 1892-93 SJAA NSWC, p. 5.
[113] AR 1894-95 SJAA NSWC, pp. 5-6.
[114] Quoted in Annie Brassey, letter to editor, *South Australian Register* 13 June 1887, in Brassey, *op. cit.*
[115] B. C. Cohen, 'Early history of the St. John Ambulance in Western Australia', revised by L. G. B. Cumpston and L. M. Corbet, 1980, pp. 4-5.
[116] *ibid.*, p. 3.
[117] MB SJAA WAC 1891-92, introductory statement.
[118] *ibid.*, Minutes of 15 March, 4 April, and 8 August 1892.
[119] AR 1900 SJAA WAC, reprinted in AR 1900 SJAA GP, pp. 228-9.
[120] *ibid.*, pp. 228-9.
[121] MB SJAA WAC September 1897-December 1900, Minutes for 9 August 1898.
[122] *ibid.*, undated Minutes affirmed 18 January 1899; AR 1900 SJAA WAC.
[123] MB SJAA WAC 1897-1900, Minutes for 14 June 1899.
[124] AR 1900 SJAA WAC.
[125] *ibid.*
[126] Newsclipping, source and date unknown (*Western Ausralian*, 6-7 July 1900?), included with Minutes confirmed 12 July 1900, MB SJAA WAC 1897-1900.
[127] AR 1901 SJAA WAC, reprinted in AR 1901 SJAA GP, pp. 217-8.
[128] AR 1908 SJAA WAC, reprinted in AR 1908 SJAA GP, pp. 173-5.
[129] Speech by G. A. Lloyd, reported in *Sydney Morning Herald* 16 July 1887 and reprinted in Brassey, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER 5

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[2] AR 1899-1900 SJAA NSWC.
[3] *ibid.*, pp. 28-9.
[4] *The St. John Ambulance Gazette* (Sydney), 20 September 1902, p. 37.
[5] Unnamed, undated newsclipping, scrapbook of F. A. Read, records of SJAB NSWD.
[6] AR 1900-01 SJAA NSWC, pp. 14-15.
[7] *ibid.*
[8] *ibid.*
[9] *ibid.*, p. 9.
[10] *ibid.*, p. 7.
[11] T. Storie Dixson *A Short History of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Australia, More Especially in New South Wales* (Sydney, the St John Ambulance Brigade, 1918), p. 4.
[12] *ibid.*, p. 7.
[13] *ibid.*, p. 10.
[14] Editorial, *The St John Ambulance Gazette*, 16 June 1902.
[15] T. Storie Dixson *Address on the Development of First Aid Work* (Sydney, St John Ambulance Association, 1922), p. 7.
[16] Storie Dixson, *op. cit.*, 1918, pp. 8-10; AR 1912 SJABO GP, p. 475.
[17] Storie Dixson, *op. cit.*, 1918, p. 8.
[18] *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.
[19] *ibid.*
[20] *ibid.*, pp. 4-5, 10-11.
[21] Civil Ambulance & Transport Brigade, AR 1899-1900, pp. 3-9; Civil Ambulance & Transport Corps, AR 1914, pp. 5-9.
[22] AR 1912 SJABO GP, pp. 473-8.
[23] *ibid.*, p. 473.
[24] AR 1911 SJAA NSWC.
[25] *ibid.* 6
[26] AR 1912 SJABO GP, p. 473.
[27] AR 1913 SJAA NSWC.
[28] B. Cohen, 'Early history of the St. John Ambulance in Western Australia', p. 14; MB SJAB PD, Minutes for 23 December 1904.
[29] AR 1905 SJABO, p. 426.
[30] *ibid.*, p. 426.
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[32] AR 1908 SJABO, p. 461.
[33] *ibid.*; MB SJAB PD, Minutes for 23 June 1905, 11 May 1906, 4 March 1907.
[34] AR 1906 SJABO, p. 442; MB SJAB PD, Minutes for 11 January, 12 May 1905, 11 May 1906; AR 1905 SJAA WAC.
[35] MB SJAB PD, Minutes for 12 October 1915.
[36] AR 1910 SJAA WAC, pp. 18-19.
[37] AR 1906 SJABO, p. 442; AR 1905 WAD, in AR 1905 SJAA WAC.
[38] AR 1909 SJABO, p. 486.
[39] AR 1912 SJABO, p. 482; AR 1917 SJAA WAC, pp. 17-18.
[40] T. Storie Dixson, *op. cit.*, 1918, p. 16.
[41] AR 1912 SJABO, p. 483.
[42] W. C. Brear, 'Diamond Jubilee of the St. John Ambulance Brigade in Western Australia (1904-1964)', p. 2.
[43] AR 1909-10 SJAA VC, section 'Ambulance Service'.

[44] AR 1908-09, SJAA VC, section 'American Fleet'.
[45] *ibid.*; SJ Council for Victoria, 'Notes concerning the formation of the St. John Ambulance Association, Victoria Centre, and the foundation and growth of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, Victoria District, 1883-1969'.
[46] First Aid Volunteers' Association, *Constitution and Rules*; AR's 1912, 1915, 1917; 'Syllabus for June 1918; collection of arm bands, badges and photographs of H. L. Perriman.
[47] *ibid.*
[48] AR 1909-10 SJAA VC, section 'St John Ambulance Brigade'.
[49] AR SJABO, 1911, 441-2; 1912, 479-81; H. L. Perriman, 'Notes on early history of the St. John's (sic) Ambulance Brigade in Victoria'.
[50] *ibid.*
[51] Metropolitan Ambulance Division, form 'Registration as a division of the Victoria District' dated 14 June 1910.
[52] Brighton Nursing Division, form 'Registration as a division of the Victoria District' dated 3 October 1910.
[53] *The Victorian First Aid and St. John Ambulance Gazette* 1(1) 7 April 1918, lists inside front and rear covers.
[54] Statistics derived from AR 1905 SJAA GP, P. 67.
[55] B. Fegan, 'The St. John Ambulance Brigade: its beginning in South Australia', 1; MB SJAA SAC, 25 July 1906.
[56] *ibid.*
[57] Fegan, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3; MB SJAA SAC, 20 November 1910.
[58] Fegan, *op. cit.*, p. 3; MB SJAA SAC, 23 February, 17 May, 14 June 1911; SJABO, AR's 1892-1912.
[59] Fegan, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
[60] *ibid.*, pp. 4-6; AR 1914-15; SJAA SAC, p. 20, 1915-16, pp. 11-12.
[61] AR 1915-16 SJAA SAC, pp. 11-12.
[62] *ibid.*
[63] AR 1908-09 SJAA NSWC, p. 11; T. Storie Dixson, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
[64] AR 1906-07 SJAA NSWC, p. 11.
[65] AR 1909 SJABO, pp. 483-4.
[66] MB SJAA TC 1909-39, entries for 2 December 1909, 1 February 1910, 17 August 1914.
[67] Sleeman Report, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
[68] *ibid.*, entries for 3 May 1917, 26 September and 11 November 1921, 16 January and 6 March 1922, 7 February, 23 and 30 April 1923; MB SJABO STD, newsclipping from Hobart *Mercury* 10 April 1935, entries for 24 April, 8 May 1935.
[69] MB SJAA TC 1909-39, entries for 7 February, 23 April and 30 April 1923.
[70] *ibid.*, entries for 4 October, 7 and 14 November 1928.
[71] *ibid.*, unattributed newsclipping from Hobart *Mercury* 4 October 1928.
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[73] *ibid.*, unattributed newsclipping dated 31 October 1928.
[74] *ibid.*, see all entries from 29 January 1917 to 30 April 1923.
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[76] AR 1902-03 SJAA VC; F. Raven 'The Spirit of Chivalry Survives: Victorian Civil Ambulance Service' *The Hospital Magazine* (Melbourne, 1963), pp. 5, 7.
[77] AR SJAA VC, 1904-05, 1913-14; Raven, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 9, 11; A. H. Hansford *In Those Days 1913-1934* (Melbourne Victorian Civil Ambulance Service, 1934), pp. 2-4.
[78] AR 1909-10 SJAA VC.
[79] AR 1908-09 SJAA VC.

[80] *ibid.*
[81] AR SJAA VC 1908-09, 1909-10, 1910-11; Raven, *op. cit.*, p. 9. the AR for 1910-11 has an excellent full-page photograph of 'the Lady Carmichael'.
[82] Figures derived from AR SJAA VC, 1910-11, 1911-12.
[83] Figures of costs derived from balances sheets in AR SJAA VC, 1907-08, 1911-12. See also Hansford, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5, and Raven, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.
[84] Hansford, *loc. cit.*; Raven, *loc. cit.*
[85] *ibid.*
[86] Hansford, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7; Raven, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 13, 15, 17.
[87] AR 1916-17 SJAA VC.
[88] AR 1917-18 SJAA VC.
[89] Hansford, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
[90] Newsclipping from *Daily Telegraph* 10 March 1904, CATB file, SJAB NSW Records.
[91] D. R. Smith to G. Lane Mullins 26 April 1904; Mullins to Smith 24 May 1904, CATB file.
[92] *ibid.*, and *Rules of the Civil Ambulance and Transport Corps*, CATB file.
[93] W. H. Morgan to T. Storie Dixson 17 January 1913; AR CATC 1914; AR Eastern Suburbs Ambulance Service 1919; all on CATB file. THE AR's depict the badges the CATC used in conjunction with SJAB badges.
[94] Newsclipping from *Daily Telegraph* 10 March 1904; Storie Dixson to Chief Commissioner SJABO, 18 February and 26 July 1913, CATB file.
[95] Storie Dixson, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.
[96] *ibid.*
[97] T. H. Henderson to B. R. Rainsford, 7 May 1917, CATB file.
[98] Newsclipping from *Daily Telegraph* 21 May 1914, B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1910-15.
[99] Newsclippings from *Daily Telegraph* 23 and 26 May 1914, Rainsford scrapbook 1910-15.
[100] J. Cameron to Rainsford, 3 May 1917; see also A. J. Craymer, no date, to Cameron, W. G. Oaxley to Cameron 16 April 1917, and H. E. Walley to Storie Dixson, 12 May 1917, CATB file.
[101] Storie Dixson, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[102] *ibid.*
[103] W. H. Morgan to Storie Dixson, 17 January 1913, CATB file.
[104] J. C. Dalton to Storie Dixson, 17 December 1918, CATB file.
[105] Figures derived from Eastern Suburbs Ambulance Service, AR 1919.
[106] Newsclippings from *Daily Telegraph* and *Sydney Morning Herald* 2 August 1919, Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.
[107] *ibid.*
[108] Storie Dixson to R. Havelock Charles, Chief Commissioner SJABO, 5 October 1922, CATB file.
[109] Commissioner for N.S.W., letter of 14 May 1923 (no addressee); and to Chief Commissioner, SJABO, 16 November 1921.
[110] Storie Dixson to R. H. Charles, 5 October 1922, CATB file.
[111] *ibid.*
[112] AR 1912 SJAA NSWC.

CHAPTER 6

[1] C. M. H. Clark *A History of Australia V The People Make Laws 1888-1915* (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1981), p. 375; The *Argus* 3 August 1914, quoted in Clark *Sources in Australian History*, London, Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 523.

[2] Clark, *op. cit.*, 1981, pp. 375-6.
[3] *The Labor Call* 13 August 1914, quoted in Clark, *op. cit.*, 1957, pp. 525-6.
[4] AR 1914-15 SJAA VC, pp. 5-6.
[5] AR 1913-14 SJAA WAC, 9.
[6] B. Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Brigade: Its beginning in South Australia', pp. 6-9; newsclippings from Adelaide *Advertiser* and *Register*, scrapbook for August 1914, SJA SAC.
[7] MB SJAA Southern Tasmania 1909-39, Minutes for 17 August, 25 September, 16 October 1914.
[8] T. Storie Dixson *A Short History of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Australia, 1918*, p. 17; Dr C. G. D. Clarke, personal communication.
[9] AR 1914-15 SJAA NSWC, pp. 5-6.
[10] *ibid.*, pp. 11-19.
[11] AR 1913-14 SJAA WAC, p. 9.
[12] AR 1914-15 SJAA SAC.
[13] Figures and the graph derived from them based on statistics in the annual reports of SJAA NSWC, VC, WAC and SAC for 1910 to 1915.
[14] Figures derived from statistics in the annual reports of SJAA NSWC, VC, WAC and SAC for 1913 to 1915; State population figures extrapolated from statistics in Australian Commonwealth Yearbook.
[15] Newsclipping from *Daily Telegraph* 23 August 1915, in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook for 1915-18.
[16] Fegan, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.
[17] *The Victorian First Aid and St. John Ambulance Gazette* 1(1), 7 April 1918, p. 1.
[18] Newsclipping from *Daily Telegraph* 28 June 1915, in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook for 1915-18. One aspect of the wartime propaganda produced for official purposes was the series of posters by well known Australian artists—Norman Lindsay *et al.* One such poster, designed by the artist J. S. Watkins and published by the Queensland Recruiting Committee, was typical of the *genre*. It depicted the maidenly figure of a woman about to be attacked by fiendish-looking German troops, and carried the slogan 'Women of Queensland, remember how the women and children of France and Belgium were treated. Do you realise that your treatment would be worse? Send a man today to fight for you'. The Library of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, holds a collection of such posters.
[19] AR 1913-14 SJAA NSWC, p. 5.
[20] AR 1915-16 SJAA WAC, p. 5.
[21] See, for example, the syllabus contained in SJAA NSWC annual report for 1918.
[22] AR 1914-15 SJAA NSWC, p. 5
[23] T. Storie Dixson, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-24.
[24] Figures derived from statistics in annual reports SJAA NSWC, 1900-01, 1012-13, 1913-14 and 1914-15.
[25] The *Argus* 6 June 1916.
[26] *ibid.*
[27] Storie Dixson, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
[28] *ibid.*, pp. 14-17; AR 1915-16 SJAA VC; AR 1916-17 SJAA NSWC: newsclipping from *The Sunday Times* 14 April 1918, 'Red Cross Society: How Australian Movement Started', in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1915-18.
[29] AR 1915-16 SJAA VC; Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas to Deputy Commissioner New South Wales District, 22 October 1915, Mrs F. Hoyle file of historical materials, SJAB NSWD: Australian Military Forces, *Scheme for the organization of voluntary aid in Australia*, no date; *The Victorian First Aid and St. John Ambulance Gazette* 1(1) 7 April 1918, pp. 6-7.

[30] Newsclipping from The *Sun* (Sydney) 19 July 1915, in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1915-18.
[31] Newsclipping from the *Sydney Morning Herald* 1919, 'Work its own reward: the reality of social service: activities of the VAD's', F. A. Read scrapbook, SJAB NSWD: The *Argus* 6 June 1916, 'St. John Ambulance: Annual Demonstration'; newsclippings from *Evening News* 14 July 1915, *Daily Telegraph* 23 August 1915, *Sunday Times* 1 August 1915, B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1915-18; B. Fegan, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-12; AR 1917 SJAA WAC, p. 17.
[32] Newsclipping from *Sydney Morning Herald* 1919, 'Work its own reward', in F. A. Read scrapbook.
[33] Newsclippings from *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 April and 5 May 1915, B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1915-18.
[34] Fegan, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.
[35] *ibid.*
[36] AR 1917 SJAA WAC, pp. 5, 7.
[37] Newsclippings from *Sydney Morning Herald* 3 November 1915 and *Daily Telegraph* 5 November 1915, in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1915-18.
[38] Newsclipping from *Sydney Morning Herald* 3 November 1915, B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1915-18.
[39] AR 1917 SJAA WAC, p. 17; *The Victorian First Aid and St John Ambulance Gazette* 1(1) 7 April 1918, p. 4.
[40] *The Victorian First Aid and St John Ambulance Gazette* 1(1) 7 April 1918, pp. 4-5.
[41] *The Ladies' Sphere* 15 March and 15 April 1919, 15 June 1920, newsclippings in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.
[42] *ibid.*
[43] *ibid.*
[44] Newsclippings from *Sunday Times*, no date, and *Daily Telegraph* 13 September 1919 in B. R. Rainsford scrapbooks 1915-18 and 1918-20; notes on Dr K. Ardill-Brice in Mrs F. Hoyle file of historical materials, SJAB NSWD.
[45] Fegan, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.
[46] AR 1915-16 SJAA WAC, p. 13.
[47] Order of service for memorial service in honour of W. T. McDonald; newsclippings from *Daily Telegraph* 6 and 25 September 1916, *Sydney Morning Herald* 6 October 1916, all in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1915-18.
[48] Order of Service for War Workers' Thanksgiving Service and newsclipping from *The Ladies' Sphere* 16 December 1918, in B. R. Rainsford scrapbooks 1915-18 and 1918-20.
[49] Newsclippings from *Daily Telegraph* 21 September 1919; *Sydney Mail* 23 July 1919; *Sunday Times* 20 July 1919; *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 July 1919; The *Sun* 20 July 1919, all in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.
[50] *ibid.*
[51] Newsclipping from *Daily Telegraph* 16 December 1919; invitation to Glebe Division 'Welcome home of members', in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.
[52] *The Victorian First Aid and St. John Ambulance Gazette* 1(1) 7 April 1918, pp. 2-3.
[53] The *Sunday Times* (Sydney) 20 July 1919, p. 18.
[54] *The Standard International Encyclopaedia* vol. 1, p. 1272.
[55] *The Victorian First Aid and St. John Ambulance Gazette* 1(1) 7 April 1918, p. 2.
[56] *ibid.*, p. 3.
[57] AR SJAA SAC 1909-10 through 1918-19; SJAA VC ditto.
[58] AR 1918-19 SJAA VC.
[59] *The Victorian First Aid and St. John Ambulance Gazette* 1(1) 7 April 1918, p. 2.

[60] AR SJAB SAD 1919 in AR 1918-19 SJAA SAC.
[61] Newsclipping from *Sydney Morning Herald* 29 November 1915, in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.
[62] Newsclippings, *The Ladies' Sphere* 16 December 1918; *Daily Telegraph* 31 January 1919; *Evening News* 4 April 1919; *Daily Telegraph* 9 April 1919; *Evening News* 19 April 1919; *Daily Telegraph* 22 April 1919, all in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.
[63] Newsclipping from The *Sydney Mail* 7 May 1919; and from *Sydney Morning Herald* 1 September 1919, in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.
[64] Newsclipping from The *Sun* 21 June 1919, in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.
[65] Newsclippings from *Sydney Morning Herald* 21 April, 15, 17 and 22 May 1919; *Daily Telegraph* 12 and 16 April 1919; The *Sydney Mail* 7 May 1919, all in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.
[66] The *Sydney Mail* 7 May 1919, p. 14, newsclipping in B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1918-20.

CHAPTER 7

[1] Heather Radi, '1920-1929', in K. Crowley, *A New History of Australia* (Melbourne, Heinemann, 1974), 357 ff.
[2] Figures derived from statistics in annual reports 1915-16, 1919-20 and 1920-21 of SJAA, VC, NSWC, SAC, and WAC.
[3] Newspaper clipping from *Daily Telegraph* 1921, B. R. Rainsford scrapbook 1919-21.
[4] AR SJAA NSWC, 1923-24 and 1924-25.
[5] AR 1922-23 SJAA NSWC, p. 10.
[6] AR 1926-27 SJAA NSWC.
[7] AR 1925-26 SJAA VC.
[8] B. Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Association: its beginning in South Australia'.
[9] AR 1922-23 NSWC SJAA, 10-11; 1923-24, 12, 14.
[10] *ibid.*
[11] *ibid.*
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CHAPTER 10

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[3] Ratios derived from figures in Annual Reports, Priory, years cited.
[4] Figures and percentages derived from Annual Reports, Priory, years cited.
[5] Views on problems of recruitment and retention obtained from many discussions with senior Brigade members in every State over the period 1980-82.
[6] Figures from which the graph derive come from Annual Reports, Priory, years cited. Comments on voluntarism and the Brigade influenced by R. Bluck 'Implementing change in voluntary organizations' (unpublished paper submitted to Department of Administrative Studies, Faculty of Economics and Politics, Monash University, 1979), and B. Stirton, 'How I see the future of the Brigade',March 1980.
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[25] *White Cross* 12(1) June 1970, pp. 17, 19; 12(3) December 1970, pp. 7-8, 11, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93.
[26] Annual Reports 1972-75 SJAB VD; personal papers of P. Bush: 'St John goes to Pop (and Pot)', 'Sunbury in retrospect: Victoria's Pop happening', 'Sunbury 1974: summary of injuries treated at first aid posts', 'Report—Sunbury Pop festival 1975'.
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CHAPTER 11

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CHAPTER 12

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[3] Details about Roy Trewhella are from personal communication with him, 6 September 1981; also personal communication with Noel Colyer, 6 September 1981; and Trewhella's Brigade and Priory record cards.

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