SOUTH AUSTRALIANS AND St John Ambulance

IAN HOWIE-WILLIS

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1885 – 1985



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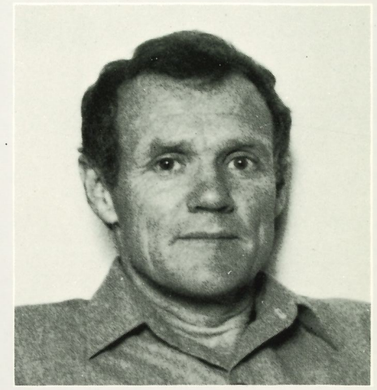
The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem sponsors the St John Ambulance organization. The Order traces its ancestry to the Eleventh Century, to the period before the first of the Great Crusades.

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 St John Ambulance Association teaches First Aid, Home Nursing and other preventative care-related subjects to over 21,000 South Australian's annually. The 4500 uniformed members of the St John Ambulance Brigade annually perform 600,000 hours of voluntary service at public events and on ambulance transport duty. The St John Council operates the State's ambulance service, transporting nearly 200,000 patients each year. The ambulance transport service is unique in that regular and volunteer officers crew the ambulance vehicles.

In this book, which marks the Centenary of St John in South Australia, Dr Howie Willis traces the events that have occurred since a group of concerned Adelaide doctors in the new colony, saw the need in 1885 for people to be trained in caring for the injured, from which has developed a modern and major service caring for the health and welfare of South Australians.



Ian Howe-Willis is not a South Australian, but, being half Cornish by descent, he feels at home in the State where the Cornish imprint is most apparent. He grew up in Melbourne and has spent most of his adult life teaching, studying and writing in Victoria, Papua New Guinea, England and Canberra. He has written three previous books of history, including *A Century for Australia: St John Ambulance in Australia 1883–1983*. The latter seems to have been what prompted the St John Council for South Australia to ask him to write this book. He and his wife are both teachers in Canberra's government school system; they have two daughters and a son; and they live in Wanniassa, one of Canberra's newer southern suburbs, where they maintain a native garden. Their house is on a hill within sight of the Murrumbidgee River, to and from which he jogs in the hope that he will never need external cardiac compression – though if that *is* necessary he hopes a St John-trained first aider gets to him first.

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The Centenary History of the Order of St John in South Australia



by IAN HOWIE-WILLIS
assisted by Beryl Fegan, D.St.J.

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the State Bank Staff Charity and Presentation Fund
made the publication of this book possible,
and is gratefully acknowledged.

To Beryl Fegan
and all those other South Australians
who, like her, have spent their lives
serving the humanitarian ideals
of St John Ambulance

St John Council for South Australia Inc.
Greenhill Rd., Eastwood, Adelaide 5063

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and Ian Howie-Willis

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Foreword

SOUTH AUSTRALIANS AND ST. JOHN AMBULANCE 1885-1985

The Centenary History of St. John Ambulance in South Australia

The Order of St. John has ancient connections. It traces its beginnings to the time of the Great Crusades in the Eleventh Century. From its earliest days it has a continuing history of charitable services. Today, in its role of providing care for the sick and injured, it sponsors the St. John Ambulance organisation.

A meeting to inaugurate the Adelaide Centre of the St. John Ambulance Association took place on 15th December 1884 under the chairmanship of the Governor Sir William Robinson. In the century since its inception, the South Australian branch of the Order has trained some quarter of a million people; its Brigade members have treated approximately half a million casualties on voluntary public duty and its ambulances have travelled roughly ninety million kilometres in transporting about four million patients.

To mark this century of services to the citizens of the State the St. John Council for South Australia commissioned Dr. Willis to write this book. It was a happy choice, for here was a professional historian who had already spent considerable time researching the Order's South Australian endeavours for his previous book.

The St. John Council has given Dr. Willis a free hand. It wanted an objective view of the Order's growth in this State, and it was prepared to lay trust in the fact that while he might be critical he would be fair, and that the organisation would consequently emerge from his examination with credit. I do not think the Council will be disappointed, for his analysis shows that, on balance, the merits of the Order's service to South Australians far outweigh the difficulties and controversies in which it sometimes has been involved.

This book, I believe, will prove to be of interest to a wide audience. Members of St. John Ambulance, outside this State no less than within, will learn much about their organisation from it. At the same time we all will

profit from understanding more about the Order of St. John; an unobtrusive yet great national institution which, after a century, continues to safeguard our health and welfare.

Sir Donald Dunstan, KBE, CB, KStJ,
Deputy Prior for South Australia,
The Order of St. John,
Government House,
Adelaide,
June 1985

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Glossary

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEA: the Ambulance Employees Association of South Australia, an ambulance officers' trade union.

AGWA: the Australian Government Workers Association, a trade union with membership partially drawn from among ambulance officers.

The Association: the St John Ambulance Association, the foundation of the Order of St John responsible for education and training in first aid, patient care 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 voluntary first aid service at public gatherings.

Cadet Division: see under *Division.*

Centre: a regional branch of the Asociation. In Australia each State constitutes a region, and so the South Australian branch of the Association is a Centre.

Centre Chairman/person: the person appointed to head the committee running an Association Centre.

Chancellor: the chief executive officer of the Priory (q.v.).

Chapter: see under *Priory Chapter.*

Chapter General: the supreme council of the Order of St John, with headquarters at St John's Gate (q.v.), Clerkenwell, London, which, subject to the powers of the Sovereign Head and the Grand Prior, governs the affairs of the Order.

Chief Commissioner: head of the St John Ambulance Brigade within Australia. When the Priory of the Order in Australia (q.v.) was set up in 1947, Sir Samuel Burston of Adelaide became the first Chief Commissioner; and Dr S.L. Dawkins of Adelaide had been the Commissioner for the Commandery of Australia (q.v.), which preceded the Priory.

Combined Division: see under *Division.*

Commandery: an establishment of the Order of St John with a substantial degree of autonomy, usually of a discrete territorial unit, e.g., Western Australia, which constitutes a Commandery of the Priory of the Order in Australia. Before the establishment of the Priory, the St John organization for the eastern States (including South Australia) constituted the Commandery of Australia.

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 St John or *Dame of the Order:* a woman holding that high rank within the Order; of equal status to a Knight of the Order (q.v.).

Deputy Prior: the Governors in each State of Australia are Deputy Priors of the Order and act as deputies for the Prior (q.v.) within their States.

Director of the Association: the head of the St John Ambulance Association in Australia. In 1984 Professor V.R. Marshall of Adelaide was appointed to this position, being the first South Australian to hold it.

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

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

Division: the normal operational 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 unit of men;

Nursing Division: a Brigade unit of women;

Combined Division: a Brigade unit 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).

(See Appendix 6 for a summary of the Brigade Divisions that have formed in South Australia.)

FMWU: the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union, a trade union drawing its membership partly from amongst ambulance officers.

Grand Prior: subject to direction by the Sovereign Head of the Order, the Grand Prior exercises supreme direction and executive control over the Order, and is the head of the Order worldwide. The position is customarily filled by a member of the British royal family and at present (1985) is the Duke of Gloucester.

Knight of St John or *Knight of the Order:* a man holding that high rank within the Order, and of equivalent status to a Dame of the Order (q.v.).

Lord Prior: deputy of the Grand Prior (q.v.) and the senior executive officer of the Order of St John worldwide.

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

Nursing Division: see under *Division.*

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, to the Brigade, or to its other endeavours.

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

Prior: the head of the Priory (q.v.), customarily the Governor-General of Australia.

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

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 and enterprises.

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

St John Council for South Australia: the representative body responsible for policy and the general administration of St John Ambulance activities within South Australia.

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

UEP: Upper Eyre Peninsula.

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

Acknowledgements

Many people have had a hand in the production of this book, and their contribution deserves special mention here.

Pride of place belongs to two people – my co-worker, Miss Beryl Fegan, D.St.J., and the late Don Williams, K.St.J. The idea for such a book as this began with them. They persuaded me to make it a reality, and encouraged me as I went about doing so.

Beryl Fegan's service to the Order of St John stretches back some fifty-six years, to a time that comparatively few people at present alive in South Australia would remember, and she has known most of the principal characters in the St John story since then. She has seen the organization she has spent her life serving grow from a handful of people who taught and practised first aid into one of the State's principal health services. Her own numerous writings on the organization have charted its development during the past century, and served as the basic material from which this book grew. Beryl Fegan is a tireless researcher, a diligent correspondent, an exacting critic and an inexhaustible mine of information on St John in South Australia. Were she not all of these, this book would have taken much longer to complete, and its quality would have been much poorer.

Don Williams suggested that I should tackle the book. He first floated the idea to me when I was in Adelaide working on the centenary history of the Priory in Australia of the Order of St John, in January 1982; and although I was too preoccupied with other matters to be greatly interested at that stage, he was not one to lose sight of goals, and kept nudging me gently until he had my commitment. I am very sorry he did not live to see the final product, and I would like to think he would have approved of it. He and Hazel Williams made each of my visits to Adelaide a particular pleasure, and their hospitality was memorable.

Frank Davison and Glen Woods were the project facilitators. Frank, as co-ordinator of the committee arranging St John's centenary year celebrations, superintended the production of this book, and also read and made helpful comments on the manuscript – as did Beryl Fegan, Don Jellis, and Charles Campbell, the Priory secretary in Canberra. Glen, as secretary to the St John Council, made the arrangements for my visits to Adelaide as well as answering queries, keeping me on the job and acting as a reference service. Don Jellis, John Rawes, Louise Badcock, and Brian Sullivan patiently explained the workings of the St John management to me. Peter Gebert, John McGreevy, Ray Schilling and Don de Giglio explained ambulance operations to me. Brian Ancell, Glyn Davies, John Pedler, Jim Fotheringham, Brian Fotheringham, Eva Bush, Bill Broderick,

Eve Gove, Ralph Anderson, Gwennyth Metcalf, H.L. ('Dutchy') Hollands, Wally Thompson, Ella Tyler, Clare Milne, Margaret Nunn and Des Owens all helped explain aspects of Brigade life and history to me. Brian Fotheringham obligingly answered medical queries, supplied me with helpful reference material, and was always ready to receive 'phone calls pleading for information – a service Glyn Davies performed tolerantly as well. Ken Harris supplied me with information about the St John Ambulance Brigade band. Eric Ridgway, Bill Ness, Don Jacquier and Roy Callaghan helped me appreciate the special needs of the country ambulance services, and instructed me in the way St John had developed in their own home areas, at Bordertown, in the Clare valley and at Whyalla. Don Thomas, Mabel and Dudley Benier, Jean Hancock, Lorna Gay and Colleen Pedler also helped explain how St John activities had developed in Whyalla, while Don Jacquier, Roy Callaghan, Ross Joy and David Remphrey discussed with me the operation of the air ambulance service based on Whyalla. Robert Britten Jones, Jack Revitt and Ian Anson guided me in my search for information on the St John Ambulance Association and training programs, and Ian Anson also discussed ambulance unionism with me as well as preparing a detailed chronological list of Association officials. Elspeth Doman, Janet Taylor and Hazel Williams explained the history and workings of the St John Auxiliary to me. Louise Badcock and Jenny Barber helped greatly by locating photographs; and Ray Schilling, Morrie Denham, Peter Lafsky and Vic Kollosche helped by identifying these, while Ken Willoughby located training manuals I wished to consult. John Cornwall and John Burdett spared me time to discuss the inquiries into the St John Ambulance Service by Professor Louis J. Opit and the select committee of the Legislative Council. Ken Shapter, Phil Ferrier, and Don Jellis, each a successive general manager for the St John Council, took me through the development of that position, while Eric Ridgway, the late Don Williams and the late Sir Edward Hayward performed a similar service in relation to the position of Council chairman. Elizabeth Willis loaned me notebooks of her grandfather, Dr T.W. Corbin. During my visits to Adelaide I was entertained royally on many occasions, and in this connection I must thank Hazel Williams, Betty Davison, Thelma Rawes, June Jellis, Estelle Ancell and Jo Ridgway – all of whom were very tolerant about the dinners their husbands asked them to put on at short notice for yet another St John stranger. A special expression of appreciation goes to Margaret Richardson, the research assistant for this project, for her many hours of obliging and uncomplaining effort in doing clerical work and compiling the appendixes. I also thank the staff of St John House, Eastwood, for their interest in my project and their cheerful co-operation during my visits to Adelaide.

My family also deserve a mention here. My parents, Jim and Mavis Willis, my wife, Margaret, and my children, Rosie, Tony and Kate, gave

encouragement and support, and uncomplainingly put up with my neglect of them during my weeks in Adelaide, not to mention my months of gazing at a word processor.

Ian Howie-Willis,
Canberra,
January 1985.

Introduction

South Australians are perhaps more familiar with the Maltese Cross emblem of the Order of St John than almost any other people in the world. There are few settlements in the State where the eight-point white cross on black background is not on daily display.

It would be difficult for South Australians *not* to be aware of St John's presence among them. The Order's State fleet of three aircraft and 260 ambulance transport vehicles, operating out of ninety-two metropolitan and country St John Ambulance centres, travels over 5.6 million kilometres in transporting some 200,000 patients annually. Over 21,000 members of the public join St John Ambulance training classes in first aid, resuscitation and patient care each year. And the 4700 uniformed St John Ambulance volunteers put in 190,000 hours of unpaid first aid and patient care duty at various public gatherings during which they treat almost 17,000 cases. These figures do not include the additional 460,000 hours of voluntary service Brigade members perform on the St John organization's ambulance fleet.

The statistics of St John service to South Australians are impressive, demonstrating that each year the Order's influence reaches into all corners of the State. Thus, while one in sixty of the State's 1,300,000 people will take a St John training course almost one in six will either be carried or treated by someone wearing a St John Ambulance uniform; and this will happen in places as far apart as Nullarbor in the far western desert country above the Great Australian Bight, Mount Gambier in the well-watered pasture lands near the Victorian border in the far southeast, and Coober Pedy on the hard-bitten opal fields up towards the Northern Territory. At the same time, since one in five of the State's population belongs to the St John Ambulance subscription scheme (which, because family members are covered too, means that forty-three *per cent* of South Australians are in the scheme), the organization has a visibility few other public bodies enjoy. The Order of St John, which sponsors the various St John Ambulance activities and is therefore responsible for all this busyness, has thus cast its South Australian net wide. Not surprisingly, then, in South Australia the term 'ambulance' for many people also means 'St John'.

'The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem' – the complete title of the organization South Australians know simply as St John or St John Ambulance – is one of the older institutions of a State that would celebrate its sesqui-centenary the year after the Order's hundredth year there. The latter, of course, is a lengthy period in the life of any Australian State but is not a long time in the history of the Order itself.

The Order is one of a group of associated Orders of St John tracing their ancestry back to the ancient military Order of Knights Hospitaller which emerged during the Great Crusades of mediaeval Christendom against Islam. The Order is thus one of those institutions which help tie Australians of all races and creeds to roots in older nations elsewhere. Yet though the roots might lie in foreign soil the Australian and especially the South Australian outgrowths have developed sturdily. This book, which marks the centenary of St John operations in South Australia, endeavours to show how that has come about.

CHAPTER ONE

History and the Order of St John

In tracing lineages dates are indispensable. As Australia's legion of amateur genealogists know well, dates are the coathooks of history. Without dates to hang events from one cannot easily authenticate claims about ancestors.

Unfortunately, the further back the lineage extends the more difficult the dates are to find. One is then driven into gross generalizations. 'In the sixteenth century . . .' and 'two or three hundred years ago . . .' are not very useful historiographical terms, even though they might conjure up an aura of fuzzy antiquity. Dates lend precision, helping one gain a more accurate perspective on the events through which one's ancestors lived.

As with genealogy so with institutional history: the more ancient the organization the less exact and the further apart are the milestones marking its earlier progress. To make extravagant claims about an institution is easy, but proving them less so. Thus, St Peter may well have been the first Bishop of Rome and the first Pope too, and Alfred the Great may well have founded the Royal Navy (as well as burning cakes); but though each man was the font from which an inspiring tradition flowed these 'facts' about them are more the stuff of legend than of history. What is lacking from claims like these is the specificity of a precise chronology which would enable historians to verify or discount the legends, to draw a line between the historical and the apocryphal.

Possibly humans need the myths which the tales about remote heroes embody. If that is so then they will steadfastly transform today's events into tomorrow's myths as their needs dictate. And if this is true of institutions as well as of heroes, the student of long-established organizations must be wary. A modicum of scepticism will be necessary because the further back one goes along the lineage the more likely it is that the events will have been mythologized.

The very long history and the fondly maintained traditions of the Order of St John exemplify these problems of institutional history. Those who read the histories of the Order soon become familiar with the claim its adherents make about it. It is, the traditions maintain, 'the oldest Order of Chivalry in the world'; its early emissaries, the ancient Crusading Knights Hospitaller, helped 'stem the tide of Islam'; its venerable mottoes *Pro fide* (For the faith) and *Pro utilitate hominum* (For the service of humanity) have inspired countless thousands of devotees to selfless charitable service down a thousand years of history; it is, in modern garb, the same body that held

out against the Turks, first on Rhodes and then on Malta; and so on and on. But where do actual event and legend merge, and at what point does myth take over?

Certain it was that a charitable Order of monks emerged in the Holy Land in the decade following the Crusaders' capture of Jerusalem in 1099; and, equally certain, they had taken on a military function as well and now paralleled the other great contemporary Military Order, the Knights Templar, by about 1130. Correct it is, too, that wherever their home base in the Mediterranean basin – Jerusalem, Acre, Cyprus, Rhodes or Malta – they always fulfilled a charitable and medical in addition to their military role. And they undoubtedly endured and survived two of the renowned sieges of military history, against the Sultan Mohammed the Great on Rhodes in 1480 and against his grandson Suleiman the Magnificent on Malta in 1565. The traditions of the Order dwell on the glory and nobility and self-sacrifice which succeeding generations of its members have seen in such events. But the traditions overlook the sordid and inglorious – the blood the Knights spilt needlessly, their fanaticism and intolerance, and their arrogance and cruelty in serving their own ends. The history of the Order of St John, then, is not only of interest for the events that form its chronological milestones, for it is also the history of the development of a mythology.

What are the milestones, then, and what the mythology? As the following account shows, they are at times hard to separate.

Among the first of the milestones was that of 15 February 1113, when Pope Paschal II issued a Bull placing under Papal protection and formally constituting as a separate Order a party of monks who for half a century or more had been conducting a hospice for pilgrims in Jerusalem. The founder of the new Order was one Brother Gerard, who with his brethren ran the hospice or 'hospital' (– it provided medical care as well as shelter for poor pilgrims –) under the auspices of the Benedictine Order. The hospice stood on a site immediately to the south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, said to be built over the tomb of Christ.

Gerard, whose country of origin is uncertain, had joined the brotherhood of 'hospitallers' at the age of about forty, about the year 1080, and had risen to be its rector by the time of the First Crusade some nineteen years later. When Gerard had arrived the hospice was running under the patronage of pious merchant princes of the Republic of Amalfi, then at the peak of its influence. It was because of this link that the hospitallers had begun using as their badge the eight-point cross which was the State emblem of the Republic. (Perhaps erroneously, this is now known as the 'Maltese' cross because of the Order's 268-year sojourn on Malta.)

Among various legends about the origins of the hospice is that claiming it to be a foundation of Pope Gregory the Great (A.D. 590-604), who about the year 600 had entrusted an Abbot Probus with the task of establishing it.

If that was how the hospice began and it was indeed so old, it must certainly have gone through fluctuating fortunes over the intervening centuries. in the 500 years or so since then Jerusalem had experienced invasions by, in turn, Persians, Romans, Saracens, Turks and most recently the Crusaders. Needless to say, each new invasion usually proceeded amidst a clamour of looting, pillaging and massacre.

The First Crusade, which captured Jerusalem from the Seljuk Turks in July 1099, brought the hospitallers to prominence. The Crusaders' leader, the great Godfrey de Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, is said to have been so impressed with their good works that he supported them generously, bestowing both gifts and concessions upon them. Crusaders and pilgrims returning to Europe also spread word of the debt they thought Christianity owed the hospitallers for their ministrations to needy Christians in the Holy Land. Donations of property and cash began flowing to the hospice, so that by the end of the first decade of the new century the hospitallers possessed estates across the nations of Western Europe.

Perhaps it was their new prosperity that prompted the brethren of the hospice to seek to regroup themselves as an Order in their own right. With properties spread over half a continent they had become the envy of less well-endowed sections of the Church, and especially of the Bishops and the secular clergy. To protect both their assets and their right to use these as they saw fit, they petitioned Pope Paschal for reconstitution as a separate Order. His Bull of 1113 obliged them by not only guaranteeing to them their properties and revenues under his protection but also by giving them the right to elect their own leadership.

In becoming an Order distinct from the Benedictines, they made other changes. Firstly, rather than the Benedictine rule, with its emphasis on the contemplative monastic life, they adopted the Augustinian rule, which stresses the dispensing of charity (and thus a public life), since this was more in keeping with the tasks they saw ahead for themselves. Another significant shift was in their choice of patron saints. Previously their patron had been St John the Almsgiver (a Patriarch of Alexandria of the early Seventh Century); but now they adopted St John the Baptist, patron of a former Greek Orthodox monastery they had recently occupied in Jerusalem. St John the Baptist, as both cousin and baptiser of Christ, was in the very first rank of God's elect – altogether a more fitting figurehead for an ambitious Order with a pronounced sense of its own destiny.

The first Superior of the Order was Gerard, who had shepherded the brethren we may now refer to as the Hospitallers through these episodes of rising fortune. He died several years later, aged about eighty, in 1118. He was beatified soon after, and as 'the Blessed Gerard' remains to this day one of the principal icons of the Order.

The Blessed Gerard's successor as Superior, or Grand Master of the Order as the term later became, was Raymond du Puy, a French nobleman who guided its affairs for the next forty years, setting it on a course it

would follow for almost another eight centuries. The Statutes he formulated for the Hospitallers demanded that they not only perform their good works but should regard the sick and the poor as 'our Lords' – thus giving charity and medical work a primacy in the life of the Order which it always retained no matter how its fortunes fared. It was Raymond, too, who gave the Order the aristocratic ethos and hierarchical structure it embodied henceforth: under him it developed a threefold system of rank, with the members divided between three classes of membership – knights (the highest rank), clerics and serving brothers – with promotion to the uppermost level dependent on the aspirant's ability to 'prove nobility'.

The most radical of Raymond du Puy's innovations, however, was the military role he persuaded the Hospitallers to assume. This was a move he saw as necessary to preserve the so-called 'Latin', or Crusader, Kingdom of Jerusalem ruled over by the de Bouillon dynasty. The Kingdom had never gained a firm foothold in the Holy Land, and was always in danger of baing pushed back into the sea by the Moslems. To help save the Kingdom – and the Holy Land for Christianity – Raymond won the support of his brethren, a number of whom were former Crusaders, for taking up their swords against Islam. In agreeing to do so they joined the other great contemporary Military Order of monks, the Templars, as the principal military buttress of the Kingdom.

The story of *Outremer* – the Crusader Kingdom of Christendom 'beyond the seas' of Europe – is a sorry one. The Kingdom tottered on for almost 200 years until in 1191 its remnants were driven from Acre, their last redoubt in the Holy Land. It is a tale told too many times before for repetition here.[1] Suffice to say that from massive 'crusader' castles built up and down the length of modern-day Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria the Military Orders waged relentless war against the Moslems. They shed much blood and sacrificed even more of their own in doing so, in an ultimately futile attempt to preserve the Holy Land for Christ and the faith.

Not surprisingly these were centuries fit for myth-making, and gave rise to some of the Order's most enduring legends. The tales extolling the self-sacrificing dedication of the Knights Hospitaller of this period are legion. Inappropriately, some within the Orders of St John today still find inspiration in the chivalric rhetoric of the Crusading tradition. Those who do should perhaps heed the judgement of Steven Runciman, the great modern historian of the Crusades, who laments the fact that the Crusades 'called forth so much courage and so little honour: ... high ideals besmirched by cruelty and greed, enterprise and endurance by a blind and narrow self-righteousness'.[2]

If there *was* something admirable about the Hospitallers' Crusading epoch, it relates to the worthier traditions they established in *Outremer* – the charitable work they never ceased performing there, and the medical care they continued providing.

Although their martial exploits soon overshadowed their original reputation for charity, hospitalling was an obligation members of the Order took seriously. Each of the Priories, or national foundations of the Order, fulfilled various charitable functions. They gave alms to the poor, they sheltered pilgrims, and nursed the sick. The huge Conventual (that is, headquarters) Hospital, built in Jerusalem during Raymond du Puy's rule as Grand Master, was the centrepiece of their medical work. Even by the standards of today's towering metropolitan hospitals it was large. In 1160, the year of Raymond's death, it is said to have housed 2000 beds, usually fully occupied. By contrast, South Australia's largest hospital, the Royal Adelaide, has fewer than 900. While its standards of hygiene might not have compared so favourably, contemporary witnesses gave lavish praise. Moreover, the Hospitallers never lost sight of their charitable and medical functions, unlike their comrades in arms, the Templars. The latter, having outlived their usefulness with the end of the Crusades and the collapse of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, were eventually proscribed and their vast properties across Europe abolished. Charity and medical work for the Hospitallers, on the other hand, continued to be a prime *raison d'être.* For that reason perhaps they managed to survive even after their expulsion from the Holy Land.[3]

The Hospitallers' medical activities continued during their protracted retreat westward across the Mediterranean from Palestine. After the loss of Acre they found refuge on Cyprus for fifteen years. Then, wanting their own island territory, they occupied Rhodes in 1306, imposing their rule on the unfortunate native Rhodians. In Rhodes, too, where they remained as the sovereign power until expelled by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1522, they built a succession of hospitals, or *Infirmaria.* These employed specialist staff of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries; and they were conducted according to strict rules governing matters such as patients' diet, regular bathing, daily ward rounds by the specialist staff, changing of bed linen, the isolation of infectious cases, and the keeping of comprehensive medical records. In addition, the Order maintained a Public Health Commission to supervise municipal health practices. The Grand Master himself was personally responsible to the Order for the care of the poor and sick, and so charity and health measures were under his overall supervision. Over its centuries of experience in these endeavours the Order had learnt to maintain as high a standard as was then attainable in public health and preventative medicine. In this respect at least the Hospitallers' accomplishment was tangible, and their deeds required no gloss of myth and legend to perpetuate their attainments.

After the loss of Rhodes, in 1522, the Order was homeless again until in 1530 the Hospitallers occupied Malta through an arrangement with the Emperor Charles V. By now known more familiarly as the Knights of St John or simply as the Knights of Malta, they remained there in their new home for the next 268 years, again as the sovereign power, until Napoleon

ousted them in 1798. In the invervening years they had survived the Great Siege by the forces of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1565 – a time of such peril for them that the Anglican Queen of England, Elizabeth I, had overlooked sectarian antagonism for a time by having prayers recited in the churches of her realm for the Catholic defenders of Malta. Subsequently, as one of the foremost naval powers in the Mediterranean, they also helped to stop at last the westward and northward thrust of Islam. After that threat receded, their strategic and military purposes diminished; and with that one of their principal reasons for existing disappeared. By the time Napoleon arrived to send them homeless abroad once more they were thus a territorial anachronism, a remnant from an age gone by, and very much out of place in Revolutionary Europe.

This is not to say that the Order's medical and public health practices, like its sovereignty, had become outdated. To the contrary, this aspect of the Hospitallers' functions remained progressive. During their time on Malta their medical works gained in renown throughout Europe and beyond. Their great hospital, the *Sacra Infirmaria di Malta* or Sacred Infirmary, became one of the leading Western centres of medical practice, teaching, research and publication. Visitors marvelled at it. One wealthy young Englishman, Edward Brown, making a grand tour of the Mediterranean in 1676, wrote of it as

> a noble Building; to speak the Truth, the very Glory of Malta. Here the sick are provided for much better than they could be in their own Houses; there are but two in a Room, which is large and commodious, every Patient having two Beds for change, and a Closet with a Lock and Key to himself. The sick are served by the Knights in Person, their Diet is prescribed by the Physicians, and brought up in Silver Dishes; such exact Order being observed, and every Thing being performed with such Magnificence, as surprises Strangers, and gives them a high Idea of the Charity of this illustrious Order.[4]

More than a century later two other Englishmen visited the Sacred Infirmary. The first, John Howard of the Royal Society, inspected the hospital in 1789, later criticising it strongly for what he thought was its general lack of cleanliness – a criticism he also made of other great hospitals elsewhere. Four years after that his countryman, Sir Richard Hoare, found otherwise. 'The public Hospital is a handsome edifice,' he wrote, 'and the institution itself is noble and charitable, . . . the sick [being] treated with the utmost attention'. Howard was writing some seven decades before the advent of Florence Nightingale and the era of hospital reform. From the evidence available the *Infirmaria*'s medical practice and attainment seem to have been at least as good as the best elsewhere, so perhaps Howard was a little hard on the Order.[5]

Driven from their most recent home, the Knights of St John trod their several ways into the wilderness. One party of them found thrir way to Russia, to the court of Tsar Paul I. A year and a half earlier, in 1797, he and the last-but-one Grand Master of the Order had signed a Convention

shortly before the death of the latter. This agreement instituted a Grand Priory – major national branch of the Order – in Russia, and conferred upon the Tsar the title 'Protector of the Order', which honour had last been bestowed nearly three centuries before, upon Henry VIII of England. The Knights who now congregated at the St Petersburg court of their Protector felt humiliated by the too-willing capitulation to Napoleon of their most recent Grand Master. Disregarding the time-honoured formal procedure for selecting a new Grand Master, they declared their hapless erstwhile Grand Master deposed and elected Tsar Paul in his place. To appoint an Orthodox, married non-cleric as Superior of a Catholic Order of celibate monks was, to say the least, extraordinary. Tsar Paul, however, was an obsessive admirer of the Order's chivalric tradition and probably failed to notice the irony. His increasingly irrational behaviour had begun causing concern among his subjects, a party of whom murdered him in his bed a little over a year later, in 1801. With that the Grand Mastership, and the Order too, dropped out of sight and into a confused period of recess during which rival factions of the surviving Knights wrangled among themselves over how and where and under whose control they should revive the Order.

Various groupings among the factions made fitful attempts over succeeding years to resuscitate the Order and to secure for it another permanent home. One group in 1803 gained the support of Pope Pius VII in re-establishing the Order at Catania in Sicily. This city remained the Order's nominal base until 1826, when it moved to Ferrara, and then on to Rome in 1834. In Rome the Knights eventually regrouped and recovered their charitable tradition if not their sovereign control over territory of their own. As The Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem it is now one of the three major associated Orders of St John claiming legitimate descent from the ancient Hospitallers and the Knights of Malta. In the immediate post-Napoleonic years, however, the factional contention between the groupings of Knights preoccupied those still adhering to the Order.

The strongest of the factions consisted of those French Knights who had survived the Revolutionary 'Terror' and had emerged from the Napoleonic years as the most cohesive group within the remnants of the Order. Anticipating the carving up of Europe shortly to proceed at the Congress of Vienna, they won the blessing of Pope Pius VII in 1814 in setting up a 'Capitular Commission' of the Order to represent it at the Congress, to guide its affairs thereafter, and to secure a new island home. The last of these hopes came to nought in 1824 when the Catania faction, jealous of its titular status, reasserted its authority and ordered the Capitular Commission to close itself down. As we shall see, this was a demand the French Knights were unwilling to accept.

So many books have recounted the manoeuvres of the Order during the troublous post-Malta decades that only an outline is warranted here.

Briefly, then, the French Knights who had formed the Capitular Commission wished to strengthen themselves against the Catania faction. One of their stratagems for doing so was the restoration of an English branch, or 'Tongue', of the Order, which they hoped they might then rally in support of their own faction. (A Tongue in the Order was a group of Priories sharing the same language. Thus, the Tongue of England consisted of the Priories of England, Scotland and Ireland, while the Tongue of Italy was made up of the Priories of Lombardy, Rome, Venice, Pisa, Capua and Messina.) The Tongue of England had disappeared during the Protestant Reformation of the mid-1500s. It had been a victim of Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, which began in 1536, followed by an Act of 1540 expressly suppressing it. Though Mary I had revived it for a time her half-sister Elizabeth I renewed their father's policy of suppressing religious houses that refused to recognise the Monarch as head of the Church in England.[6]

To attempt the reactivation of an organization so thoroughly dead for so long seems in retrospect to have been a cynical or, at best, a desperate ploy. Yet many in England welcomed the schemes of the French Knights. Despite the religious upheavals which had Protestantized Britain, there had always been Britishers who admired the Knights of Malta. Some had accepted honours and titles from the Order, and bore these proudly as evidence of their chivalric worthiness. it It was such 'English gentlemen of rank and distinction' (– to use the Knights' own class-conscious term –) whom the French Knights hoped to mobilize to the French cause by bringing back the Tongue of England from the dead. Eventually their manoeuvrings bore fruit: after much discussion back and forth across the English Channel, a London committee got down to the task of superintending the revival, which occurred formally on 29 January 1831. On that date the committee elected the Chaplain to King George IV, the Reverend Dr Sir Robert Peate, as the first Grand Prior of England for nearly 300 years.

Negotiations between the revived Tongue and factions of the Order in Europe continued throughout the 1830s and 40s, for one problem no one could resolve to the liking of all parties was the Protestantism of most English candidates for membership of the Order. In the meantime the Order's Convent, or headquarters, had relocated permanently in Rome; the dissident French Knights had either died or accepted the supremacy of the Convent leadership; and the Capitular Commission had at last been dissolved. The Convent feared that if Protestants were admitted to membership too easily they would swamp the Order, and so it threw up a series of barriers to protect its Catholic integrity. Further discussions to find ways over these obstacles dragged on into the 1850s. Finally, in 1858, the Convent announced that it disavowed the French Knights' initiative in reactivating the Tongue of England, and therefore rejected any claim to legitimacy the latter might proffer.

A denial like that might have convinced less doughty aspirants to the Hospitaller legacy that their hopes were futile. However, the odd assortment of self-important exclusivists, antiquarians and philanthropists who had gravitated to the reborn Tongue were not about to have their suit so lightly dismissed. They did what pride demanded, declaring themselves to be 'The Sovereign and Illustrious Order of St John: Anglia', and as such an independent and rightful Order of St John.

Without much other purpose than to satisfy its members' nostalgia for an age of chivalry gone by, 'The Order of St John: Anglia' might have passed quietly away within a decade or two. It did not do so, however. By one of those fortuitous outcomes of happenstance which bring together the right people with the right vision and the right combination of energy and ability, the upstart Order was saved from the obscurity that might otherwise have enveloped it.

The time was right because it was the mid-Nineteenth Century, and the Industrial Revolution had been gathering momentum for a century or more. Organizations premised upon the dispensation of charity, as even a body as recondite as 'The Order of St John: Anglia' was, had myriad opportunities to do their good deeds amidst the human desolation being created by unfettered industrial capitalism, mechanized war and the final crumbling of Europe's *ancien regime*. The crowded industrial cities, the ports burgeoning through trade with empires overseas, the new unplanned mill towns filling rapidly with factory fodder drawn from uprooted rural workers, refugees from political and social change elsewhere, and soldiers demobilized from recent wars – all provided a fertile field for humanitarian endeavour.

The corner of the field the new Order elected to occupy was also right. Its chosen activity – ambulance skills for the lay person – was everywhere required. The world was becoming more dangerous decade by decade: the mechanized workplace was physically more hazardous than the manual; the roads were becoming more congested, and so terms like 'traffic accident' joined the lexicon of everyday speech; the rail networks spreading over the face of each country created new and additional menaces; and war, with its ever more lethal array of munitions, was producing unprecedented legions of wounded. First aid to and transport of the wounded were therefore worthwhile skills to promote.

The final key factor was that the right people were present. The right combination of advantageous social standing, imagination, enterprise and organizational flair was there in the persons of four men who joined the Order during the 1850s and 60s. The first was Sir William Drogo Montagu, seventh Duke of Manchester, who in 1861 became the fifth Grand Prior of the Tongue of England since its revival thirty years before. He might have been earnest and plodding rather than brilliant, and his reputation might have suffered by his wife's liaison with the fellow Duke she married after his death, but he had the Victorian virtues of probity,

conscientiousness and sobriety; and any organization actively headed by such a Duke was one to be taken seriously. If the Duke lent respectability and prestige to the Order, then it was the dynamism of the other three – Sir Edmund Lechmere, Sir John Furley and Col. Francis Duncan – that succeeded in pushing it to the forefront among charitable institutions. In view of what has previously been written about these men, it need only be said here that, while they had been drawn to the Order as members of the British upper classes with antiquarian interests and philanthropic inclinations, between them they saw the need for ambulance skills to be spread among the lay public, they had the energy to push the Order into sponsoring practical schemes for doing so, and they had the administrative talent to make an outstanding success of these.[7]

The earlier efforts of the four were towards marshalling the support of the Order behind Henri Dunant's infant Red Cross movement, for which the Order acted as the British branch through the 1860s. They then persuaded it to help sponsor an Anglo-American Ambulance Unit which aided both combatants during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. The latter was an encounter notable for revealing the horrifying extent of the carnage to be wreaked by modern munitions. To Furley, who had joint-command of the Anglo-American Ambulance Unit, it also showed that the lives of many wounded might needlessly be lost through inexpert handling but might also be saved through following simple rescue procedures.

In this way the war therefore focused the attention of the Order on what was now coming to be known as 'first aid to the injured' – giving the appropriate treatment on the spot pending the availability of expert medical help. And, since many lives had been lost in the war because of the rough way the wounded had been manhandled in getting them to medical posts, the corollary to first aid was safe transport of the injured to wherever that help was available.

After the war the Order supported Britain's first ambulance transport service, which used a two-wheeled stretcher or litter based on a design the Prussian Army had been recently employing. It then developed its own improved litter for use in such services. This model, or 'St John Ambulance', proved so popular it was soon in use all over the country. The Order then began giving instruction to the public in how to use the 'ambulances', and how to treat the cases they might be called on to carry. To promote such work it established an 'Ambulance Department' in 1875, with Duncan as the Director. Two years later, on 10 July 1877, the Ambulance Department spawned a further body, the St John Ambulance Association, to be its educational wing. The Association soon proved to be the most successful of all the Order's endeavours. More than any of its other enterprises this became the catalyst for transforming into a modern mass movement a parent organization which might otherwise have remained an exclusive club for high-born personages wanting to relive ancient mythologies.

The Association, which thus gave the Order new purpose, was the brainchild of Furley, Lechmere and Duncan, 'the great triumvirate of the ambulance movement' as they soon became in the modern legends of the Order. In founding the Association they wished primarily to sustain the sort of enthusiasm for 'ambulancing' which the Franco-Prussian War had stimulated, but as well as creating a pool of lay medical skill that might be drawn from in further wars they wished to build a structure 'for the benefit of civilians in time of peace'. Furley in particular was dissatisfied with mere charity of the 'Red Cross' type, that is collecting bandages and medical supplies for use in national crises. What was needed, he argued, was for lay people to possess solid practical medical knowledge and skills so that in emergencies they could treat injuries competently and effectively. The objectives of the new body should therefore be (1) instruction of pupils in first treatment of injured persons, and (2) spread of useful ambulance material', the latter meaning items such as the St John litter and the so-called 'St John' triangular bandage (which has many applications in first aid but was a Swiss invention popularized by the German Army).[8]

The Association aimed to open up Centres, or educational and supply bases, around the country in order to achieve these objectives. It also sought to win the support of the major teaching hospitals and the Army medical units in teaching, then examining classes recruited from the general public. Successful graduates from the classes would then be awarded certificates attesting to their proficiency and valid for a year. The first lecturer at the first Centre, Woolwich, was Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd of the Army Medical Department. His textbook was the reference book used in training Army medical personnel, but the following year, 1878, the Association published his own specially produced manual, *Aids for Cases of Injuries And Sudden Illnesses*, for use in its classes. This book was the first of many subsequent Association texts, and was the direct ancestor of the manual now used in all St John-sponsored first aid classes in Australia.

Shepherd's classes and those that soon followed were a runaway success. Within six months the Association was teaching first aid to 1100 students in twelve Centres. The rapid increase perhaps indicated the Association's ability to promote its objectives, but the achievement would have been unlikely were it not for the great public thirst the classes seemed to be satisfying. Significantly, among the most successful of the early Centres were those in parts of the country where the need for practical medical skills was greatest – in hazardous industrial and urban locations like the colliery towns, the railroad centres, and among the police forces. Employers in such places were soon sponsoring the establishment of Association Centres in response to pressure from their employees.

Over the next three or four years Centres of the Association sprang up throughout Britain. The ideas it was promoting caught on in Russia, Germany, and the United States as well, with Furley and the Association's foundation president, Sir Herbert Perrott, acting as the conduit through

which kindred bodies in those countries borrowed from St John experience. Then, in December 1881, the Association opened formal negotiations with the British colonies and dominions overseas in order to spread its message among them too. The Australian colonies, as we will soon see, were to be among the first beneficiaries.

When the Australian Centres of the Association began opening for business, one of their selling points was the ancient lineage of the Order sponsoring the new movement. Probably few people in Australia, indeed few in Britain either, would have known how tortuous the connection with the ancient Knights Hospitaller was. That they did not had much to do with Lechmere, one of whose special contributions to the new Order was to add to its name a patina of antiquity that lent it an aura of seeming authenticity calculated to still the fears of those who might have worried that this was not *the* Order of St John. Part of the embellishment he thus added was the acquisition in 1873 of the remnants of the buildings in the London district of Clerkenwell of the former Grand Priory of England. All that was left of this splendid seat of the ancient Tongue of England was the gatehouse and a chapel. Lechmere could see the symbolic value of locating the headquarters of 'The Order of St John: Anglia' at St John's Gate, as it was now known, for would anyone challenge thr rights to possession of a modern resident claiming kinship with countrymen of the same name who had occupied the premises in an earlier century? Perhaps only the small body of British members of the *other* Order of St John, the Catholic body now domiciled in Rome, entertained doubts. The *new* Order, through the success of its St John Ambulance Association, was acquiring a *de facto* legitimacy in the minds of the public, and at the same time was gaining a reputation for solid achievement that really had no need for mythmaking.

In the end, indeed very soon, the new Order won the legitimacy it craved. Following the success of the St John Ambulance Association, it established two further modern 'foundations'. The next, in 1882, was the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in the old quarter of Jerusalem – another symbolic gesture by Lechmere, who had persuaded the Ottoman rulers of the city to cede the site to the Order. With such a base in the birthplace of the original Order, the new Order could claim to be even more tightly linked to the legacy of the ancient Hospitallers. Then in 1887 came the institution of the St John Ambulance Brigade, the organization for uniformed first aid volunteers which gave the Order a public visibility it had previously lacked. Its mounting tally of good works carried out in its name by the three foundations soon brought it Royal patronage. On 14 May 1888 Queen Victoria granted it a Royal Charter of Incorporation, under which she and succeeding Monarchs became its Sovereign Heads. Her son and heir, the Prince of Wales, became its new Grand Prior, the first of a continuing succession of five Princes and Royal Dukes who have occupied that position in the past century. The Charter also bestowed upon

it the title 'The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem', and its 'Maltese' Cross emblem was modified by the addition of 'the Queen's Beasts', lions and unicorns, at the axis of the cross.

An Order of St John the organization undoubtedly now was in its own right, whatever it might have been before. With a Royal seal of approval its continuing success was more or less assured. Lechmere and his colleagues, we may assume, looked back on their handiwork with a sense of satisfaction. They might even have pondered the fact that the parent Order in Rome had really conferred on them a blessing in disguise when it disowned them thirty years before, for their new Order was now free and unfettered to develop the modern task of hospitalling which it had discovered for itself. As it did so its own separate history would flow on, swelling into a stream rich in legends of its own, to inspire succeeding generations of its adherents.

CHAPTER TWO

The St John Ambulance Association Adelaide Centre, 1884-1900

South Australia was one of the first of Britain's many overseas colonies to be graced with a Centre of the St John Ambulance Association recently founded by the revived English branch of the Order of St John. Melbourne, Bermuda, Bombay and Gibraltar were the 'first generation' of the colonial Centres, in 1883. Adelaide and Hong Kong followed the next year, 1884; then in 1885 a rash of new Centres opened in other far-flung outposts of Empire – Christchurch, Bangalore, Kimberley, Singapore, and (though not yet of the Empire) Jerusalem.

Strangely, the South Australian branch of the Order's proliferating overseas transplantings chose to count its genesis not among the 1884 ('second generation') establishments but among the 1885 crop. Why this was so is not clear. As we shall see, the public meeting which agreed to form the Adelaide Centre took place at the very end of the year, in mid-December 1884, while the first tangible results of that meeting – the first St John-sponsored lecture on first aid in South Australia – followed in the next month, January 1885. The reasons the new South Australian offshoot might have had for thus dating its appearance from the first month in one year rather than from the last month of the year before, as it was entitled to do, have been forgotten. A month, of course, is neither here nor there when we are talking of the here-and-now; but in the case of a century-old institution like St John in South Australia the difference between an 1884 and an 1885 foundation is appreciable: as the modern-day standard bearers of such a body sit down to plan its centenary celebrations, a month can mean the difference in belonging to one 'era' rather than another.

The choice of 1885 rather than 1884 is also perhaps symbolic. St John Ambulance in South Australia has proved to be a practical, action- and achievement-oriented body. To date its existence from the time it actually got down to its tasks among the community, rather than from when it began talking of doing so, is therefore in character. Furthermore, even though this might seem odd for an organization claiming a heritage of almost a thousand years, St John in South Australia has been typically more concerned with its present and future than its past. Its concern for the here-and-now is such that, contrary to what some might think, an argument over an 1884 or an 1885 birthday is a matter it would happily leave to antiquarians.

Whatever it was that persuaded the Adelaide Centre to count its years from the later of two possible birth dates, and regardless of the meanings we might attach to this, one thing is certain – the St John organization in South Australia is strongly stamped with the imprint of local history. To argue like this that a public institution reflects something of the community in which it functions is perhaps to labour a self-evident point; yet in the case of South Australia and of St John Ambulance in that State the point is worth making, for a people can easily lose sight of the threads that constitute the fabric of their society. However much centralists might deplore the fact, the overwhelming reality of Australian society is that it is federal – one brought about by the union of six sovereign States and several lesser Territories, each with its own separate traditions. The strands thus woven together are many and varied, each part of the country having contributed its own special hue to the skein; ;and while the outsider might detect a seeming uniformity about Australians, their country and its legacy, nuances are certainly there for those sensitive enough to see.

As the traveller moves around Australia he or she will notice the differences. There are dissimilarities, for example, in communal attitudes, preoccupations and styles, indicating deeper underlying variations in historical experience. To cite but one such tonal shift, the registration plates issued for motor vehicles in South Australia from the 1970s announced that this was 'The Festival State', an allusion to Australia's only regular State-sponsored festival of the arts – the Adelaide Festival. While South Australian number plates thus proclaim that State's interest in culture, those on Queensland vehicles, by contrast, suggest that simple hedonism (or perhaps cashing in on it) is the concern of 'The Sunshine State'. At the same time, New South Wales plates and the slogan 'The Premier State' say something of the conviction of many 'Sydneysiders' that the nation's first and biggest city is the only place in the country (if not the world) that matters.

We could go on like this, elaborating upon the contrasting complexions of Australians State by State, but our concern in this book is with one State alone. In particular we will be examining the way in which that State's separate history has shaped the development there of one of its major public institutions, an organization originally imported from afar but now so thoroughly acclimatized that it is as typically South Australian as an institution could be. But what is 'typically South Australian'? The answer has much to do with history.

1. *South Australia in the Nineteenth Century*[1]

South Australia has *always* been different from its sister States, and the difference began when they were but distant outposts of Empire.

To start with an oft-cited example (though one Victorians might dispute), South Australia alone of the six States has no convict legacy, never

having been host to a settlement of felons transported from Britain. It began as an experiment in the rational, systematic colonization of new territory by free settlers, an application of the ideas of Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Rather than being opened as dumping grounds for the mother country's social refuse, Wakefield had maintained, British colonies should be populated by free settlers to whom Crown lands should be sold to fund the immigration of free labourers. During the early 1830s several organizations bid unsuccessfully to win from the British government the right to put his ideas into practice in South Australia, but it was not until 1834 that members of a newly formed 'South Australian Association' persuaded Parliament to pass a South Australian Act which set up a Colonization Commission to run the proposed colony along Wakefieldian lines in partnership with the Colonial Office. A panel of Commissioners took up office in 1835 and proceeded to appoint the principal officials – Capt. John Hindmarsh as Governor, James Hurtle Fisher as Resident Commissioner and Col. William Light as Surveyor-General. Hindmarsh, who had been preceded by eleven shiploads of settlers from Britain and other Australian colonies, arrived in South Australia at the end of December the following year, 1836, to proclaim the new province. By March of 1837 Adelaide was surveyed and its land parcelled out; immigrants continued arriving in droves; but events were not unfolding as rationally as might have been wished by Wakefield, who had grown disgruntled and had withdrawn from the venture even before the proclamation of the new settlement.

Disagreements between Hindmarsh and Fisher might have been expected, given the poor definition and overlap of their functions, but the conflict between them was so severe the Commissioners in London dismissed them both and appointed Col. George Gawler to fulfil the combined roles of each.

Gawler fared little better than his predecessors. Immigrants still flooded in, many of them Germans seeking refuge from religious intolerance in their homelands. The population passed 14,000 in 1840, yet the colony was heading for bankruptcy. Administrative costs were swallowing a large portion of the funds coming from land sales, only a fraction of which was available for sponsoring immigrant labourers. The luckless Gawler was made scapegoat and sacked; the British government brought the province under its direct control as an ordinary colony; it paid off the colony's debts; and it sent out as the new Governor Capt. George Grey, who had helped engineer Gawler's removal.

Regardless of the new Governor's standard of ethics, and notwithstanding the fact that Gawler might even have set the colony along the right track, under Grey South Australia began making headway that had not been apparent before. By 1844 it had achieved self-sufficiency in wheat production, and had begun exporting its surplus. Silver, lead and copper had been discovered, and mines had begun operating in the Adelaide Hills,

at Kapunda and Burra. The population had passed 22,000. Adelaide had the first elected municipal government in the Australian colonies; and the makings of parliamentary government were there, albeit in the form of a nominated Legislative Council. Elected members joined the Council several years later, though it was not until 1857 that a fully responsible parliament came into being. In that year a House of Assembly was formed, based on full manhood suffrage, triennial elections and the secret ballot. The Legislative Council, with a £50 property qualification for membership, remained an exclusive club for the leading lights of what, even then, had become an 'Adelaide Establishment'. However, even this conservative body was capable of innovation, and while it was still the sole parliamentary institution it had laid down one important principle – the separation of Church and State. This had come about via a decision it took to end State aid to church schools, the first time a British legislature had made such a move.

In the period to the mid-1880s the colony prospered, despite its failure to find local gold-bearing ores to fuel a boom like that next door in Victoria. Exploration revealed the northern grazing lands, and although the pastures might have been sparser than elsewhere they were profitably occupied. Wheat remained the major agricultural product, with a run of good seasons encouraging farmers to cultivate dryer lands under what later proved to be the erroneous principle that 'rain follows the plough'. Simultaneous with these developments was the introduction of the locally devised Torrens system of land titles, which spread to other colonies and beyond. Copper added further to the prosperity. The Moonta-Kadina-Wallaroo mining and smelting operations bagan in 1862, attracting a wave of Cornish and Welsh immigrants, and turning a £2 million profit in the first decade. A railway network spread out from Adelaide, which by 1883 held a third of the colony's 213,000 inhabitants. The parliament had maintained its reputation for progressive legislation, for example by establishing a Ministry of Education in the mid-'70s, by sponsoring a system of compulsory secular education, and by opening a Teachers' Training College and Australia's third university.

The prosperity ended in the mid-1880s as South Australia entered six or seven years early the severe depression which afflicted the eastern colonies from the early '90s. Drought brought bankruptcy to many settlers, particularly those who had followed the optimistic adage about rain going where the plough was. For the first time in the colony's half-century emigration exceeded immigration. Queensland's population and Victoria's wheat production passed those of South Australia. And once again the colony approached bankruptcy as the government deficit neared £14 million.

Out of all this misfortune some good emerged. The colony had never enjoyed the boom that neighbouring Victoria had; but then neither was the 'bust' that followed so shattering. Having been forced to live with less,

the government perhaps took financial management more seriously, and instituted a number of economic reforms which helped the colony recover. It introduced a direct tax on incomes and an unimproved land tax. It embarked on various schemes to relieve impoverished settlers, substituting long-term leases for land purchases, and granting loans to selectors. It sponsored water conservation, irrigation and drainage projects; and it built new rural ports and railways. Political and social reforms followed. The colony led its sisters in introducing compulsory industrial arbitration, the referendum, and votes for women. And as the 1880s became the '90s it became one of the strongest advocates of the Federal movement.

When Federation eventually came, a year after the turn of the century, South Australia entered the new Commonwealth of Australia as one of its smallest and poorest constituent States. With fewer than ten *per cent* of the national population of 3.8 million it lacked the numerical and economic strength of its bigger sisters. It nevertheless had a reputation for being among the more 'progressive'. Its record of free settlement, of religious freedom, of tolerance of peoples of diverse national background, and of innovation in government, agriculture, industry, public works and education was a proud one. Though its achievements might have been but modest, among Australian States it stood out as being more enlightened. Being different from their fellow citizens in other States was thus a tradition in which South Australians could take pride.

2. *The foundation of the Adelaide St John Centre*

The opening of colonial Centres of the St John Ambulance Association seems to have come as an initiative from the St John's Gate, London, headquarters of the Association. In December 1881 the 'Head Centre' decided to begin 'negotiations for the formation of [Centres] in Australia and other Colonies'. Probably this decision was in response to inquiries from overseas medical practitioners, including some in Australia, who had heard about the work of the Association and wanted to be involved in it.[2]

The Adelaide Centre, which opened three years later just as the colony was about to slide into depression, was the second in Australia. The first, in Melbourne, had opened eighteen months earlier, in June 1883. Neither Centre represented the first Association work in Australia, however. A Newcastle (New South Wales) doctor, Samuel T. Knaggs, had already run a first aid class under St John auspices for a group of railwaymen at the Eveleigh railway workshops in Sydney some time during 1881. He had been in London earlier in the year, had obtained permission from St John's Gate to conduct the class, then brought back first aid manuals and bandages for doing so. And even before the formation of the Victorian Association Centre a Melbourne surgeon, Dr Robert Robertson, who later taught Victoria's first formal Association class, had given a public lecture on first aid in Melbourne in 1881 after having written to St John's Gate for details of the Association syllabus.

It was probably in consequence of requests like those by Knaggs and Robertson that the 'Head Centre' had decided to extend its activities to the colonies. At the end of 1881 Col. Francis Duncan, Director of the Ambulance Department of the Order, wrote to a number of doctors in Melbourne, and possibly in the capitals of other colonies as well, advising that the Association intended spreading its work to Australia. He requested their help in teaching and examining the classes that would duly form. The recipient of one such letter, Dr James Edward Neild, then began taking the steps that eventually led to the formation of the Victorian Centre.[3]

In South Australia the original impetus to begin Association work came not from medical practitioners, as in New South Wales and Victoria, but from an army major, Arthur Carew Hunt, a British officer attached to the South Australian military force. We know little about him except that he had been a member of the Association in England, and had been involved in the foundation of an Association Centre at one of Britain's Mediterranean stations (Gibraltar? Malta?). He was active during the first six years of the Adelaide Centre, of which he became the foundation secretary. He retained that position for only six months, but remained on as a member of the Centre Committee until 1891; he opened a Port Adelaide sub-centre of the Association in 1886; he travelled to Broken Hill in 1888 to encourage the mine managers to start up a sub-centre there; and he had moved to Sydney by 1890, for his name appears in the list of foundation committee members of the New South Wales Centre of the Association, which formed that year. He must have had some 'pull' in Adelaide because he persuaded a large and representative body of influential citizens – doctors, lawyers, merchants, politicians – to take part in a public meeting he organized to inaugurate the Adelaide Centre. This meeting, chaired by no less than the Governor, Sir William Robinson, took place in the YMCA Hall on Monday afternoon, 15 December 1884.

Hunt's public meeting attracted considerable attention in *The South Australian Register* the next day. A detailed 2000-word report of the speeches and resolutions, topped off by a 400-word editorial, informed the public that the assembled dignitaries had voted to form a Centre of the St John Ambulance Association and had elected a Committee to superintend its affairs. The list of Committee members read like a colonial *Who's Who*: the president was the Governor himself; the vice-presidents were the Chief Justice, Sir Samuel Way, Sir Henry Ayers (the president and a foundation member of the Legislative Council, a former Premier and Chief Secretary, pioneer developer of the colony's mining ventures, a member of the boards of various public bodies and business firms, and now best remembered as the man after whom white explorers named Ayers Rock), Sir John Colton (former Premier and Chief Secretary, businessman, philanthropist), Sir Samuel Davenport (landowner and pastoralist), and Dr William Wyatt. (The latter, having come to the colony in 1837 to be Protector of Aborigines and City Coroner, and being credited as the first man to amputate a leg in South Australia, was not only one of Adelaide's

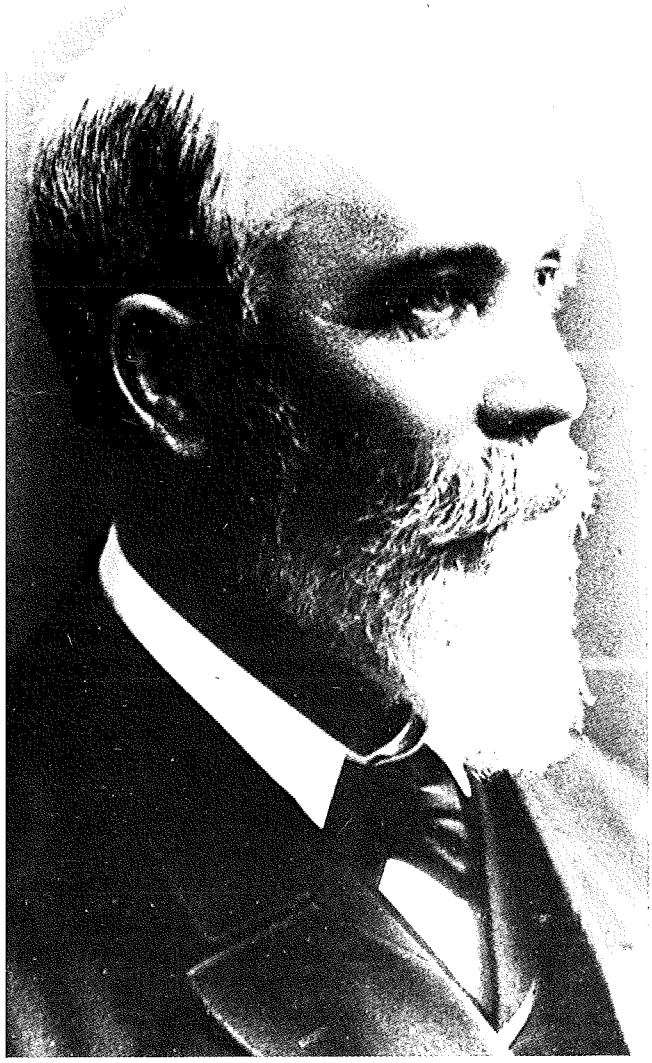


Sir William Robinson, Governor of South Australia 1883-89 and foundation president of the St John Ambulance Association Adelaide Centre.

medical pioneers but must have been one of its citizens of longest standing as well.) While these might have been titular positions, with the burden of work falling on the rest of the Committee, the names of the occupants says something both of Hunt's influence and the reputation of the Order. Lesser organizations and founders might not have been so fortunate in winning such eminent support. The other, or 'working', members of the Committee comprised an executive which supervised the Centre's day to day activities. They were a mixed bunch of parliamentarians, medical practitioners and businessmen. They were R.D. Ross, M.L.A. (chairman); M. Salom, M.L.C. (vice-chairman); two other members of the Legislative Council, D. Murray and Dr Allan Campbell; five other doctors in addition to the latter, Drs Dunlop, Way, Paterson, Ellison and Clindening; two businessmen, Frederick Wright and C.H. Goode; with Hunt as secretary, and F.P.G. McCrae as treasurer.

Those who spoke at the inaugural meeting were fulsome in their praise of the Association. The longest speech was that of Hunt, who spoke first at the invitation of the Governor. He opened by reading a letter from the Grand Prior of the Order, the Duke of Manchester, who at the time was in Australia on one of his occasional trips looking over his investments, and was staying in Melbourne as a guest of the Victorian Governor. The Duke had written to say he was 'glad to learn that hopes were entertained of establishing a branch of the Association in Adelaide ... [and] hoped Major Hunt might be successful in what enabled so much good to be done at so small an expenditure'. Hunt then outlined the history and aims of the Association, taking care to point out that, while 'its object was to distribute to all classes of society knowledge of the treatment of cases of sudden illness or accident, ... the treatment was to be purely preliminary'. He stressed the last word, saying 'it was not intended to tread on the heels of the noble body of medical practitioners': 'the object was not to rival but assist the efforts of physicians and surgeons'. He went on to say that on a recent visit to London he had been at a conference chaired by the Queen's physician and attended by 'the principal surgeons of the largest London hospitals'. These distinguished medical men had been unanimous that 'St John Ambulance Association instruction was actively saving the lives of people hurt in accidents'. Week by week, Hunt concluded by telling his audience, the Association's work was spreading; and he drew loud applause with the observation that 'he was sure there was no part of the British Empire in which it would meet with more warm hearted sympathy than in South Australia'.[4]

The next speaker, Dr Campbell, who was Hunt's principal ally in introducing South Australians to St John, proposed the motion 'that a Centre of the St John Ambulance Association be established in Adelaide', which Sir Samuel Davenport seconded. In speaking to his motion Campbell noted that in London the Association drew support from and benefited all classes and ranks – 'railway porters, police, fire brigades, and



Dr Allan Campbell, co-founder of the St John Ambulance Association Adelaide Centre and its most active early promoter.

the public in general'. The meeting then elected the Committee; Hunt read another letter, from the secretary of the Adelaide Hospital, who offered the hospital's outpatients' room for use by the Committee; and then the Governor spoke. He gave a pithy little talk, the substance of which has probably been repeated to every one of the thousands of first aid classes taught in Australia in the century since then. Lamenting the fact that there were usually few present who could offer skilled help at the scene of an accident, he pointed out that more often than not the bystanders' ignorance created alarm and confusion. Unfortunately, he said, a common outcome was that 'a patient was injured rather than helped by the treatment he received before he was taken to hospital'. *The Register* endorsed the sentiments of all the speakers the next day in its editorial, which ended with the observation that 'South Australians have never been far behindhand in helping on a good thing', and so probably 'the movement which was yesterday initiated will be highly successful in every way'.[5]

The inaugural meeting of the Adelaide Centre was rather more successful than the Centre's next activity, which the St John organization in South Australia remembers as its birth date. This was a second public meeting in the YMCA Hall, chaired by Sir Samuel Davenport, on Wednesday evening 21 January 1885. The reason for the meeting was a lecture by Dr Dunlop, 'First Aid to the Injured', intended as the first in a series on the work of the Order. 'The attendance was very meagre', *The Register* noted next day. The few interested or dutiful enough to sit through a hot midsummer Adelaide night listening to an earnest medico heard Dunlop go through the history of the Order and the Association. He told them that in the year just passed the latter had awarded over 9000 certificates in first aid, and that the new Adelaide Centre would soon be swelling this worldwide tide by running a free class for police, fire brigade and railways officials and factory hands. These people would be given a weekly one-hour session of instruction for five weeks, then examined, and, if successful, would receive a certificate. This would ensure that within the community there was a body of people strategically placed to aid the injured. Thereafter the Centre would form branches around the colony, from which the general public could receive first aid training for half-a-crown (2/6 – $0.25), and a like sum for the examination afterwards. Pupils would learn 'the proper way to set fractures, stop bleeding, resuscitate the apparently drowned, and all other matters pertaining to ambulance work'.[6]

As if the last point were not enough to convince his sparse audience that the Centre was thinking big, Dunlop went on to outline further Association objectives. Those pupils who passed the initial examination in first aid and then passed two subsequent annual re-examinations would receive a medallion which would prove that the owner 'was in a position to take charge of affairs at any accident'. The Centre would also provide stretchers at key points around the city for use at accidents; and it hoped that in time there would be sufficient medallion-holders for someone with medical skills to be present at all street accidents. The Centre would also conduct special courses of ten lectures on nursing for women, at a cost of 10/6 ($1.05), to qualify them for duty in a sickroom. Such training, Dunlop assured the audience, 'could never be undertaken by men' because 'the patience and gentleness of a woman was necessary for the recovery of a patient'. He, and possibly all within St John, suffered from the accepted wisdom of the age, of course. Dunlop also exhibited a tendency to talk in clichés, a point underlined by his closing remark, which urged the audience to support the new Centre 'as there was no more noble work than aiding the sick and the suffering'.[7]

Given the banality of this start to Association work in Adelaide, it was perhaps as well that Dunlop did not continue with his series of lectures on the Order's functions. Instead the Centre got down to the business of recruiting and teaching its first pupils. The first class formed in February

1885. Twenty-four men joined it and fifteen subsequently passed the examination. Among the latter were J.P. Roberts, who later served as Centre secretary for twelve years from 1888, and John Witherick, who was a member of the Centre Committee from 1886 until 1902. In 1886 Witherick also organized the first 'practice class' of certificated pupils from the first aid training courses. Practice classes were semi-formal groupings of people who wished to keep up their ambulance skills. They met regularly to practise first aid on each other, listen to lectures on medical topics and promote Association work. They formed in several Australian colonies, in some of which they became the nucleus around which divisions of the uniformed wing of the Order, the St John Ambulance Brigade, later formed. Witherick's practice class seems to have been the first in Australia if not in the wider organization, and was probably the model followed by later practice classes elsewhere. By finding loyal disciples like Roberts and Witherick among its pupils, the Adelaide Centre had thus done well from its first class.

The Centre also did fairly well in the panel of six medical practitioners it persuaded to teach its first two classes, each of them giving one lecture in the course of six. They were Drs Campbell, Dunlop, Joseph Cooke Verco, Benjamin Poulton, Edward Willis Way and Henry, while the examiner was Dr Thomas Wilson Corbin. Little is known about Dunlop and Henry (– not even their initials –), but the others made up an eminent team. They were among the leaders of both Adelaide society and the South Australian medical profession, members of a colonial upper class which in the last decades of the Nineteenth Century believed it had a responsibility wider than that of retaining its own advantages. In particular it felt it had a duty to alleviate suffering among the poor, whose numbers swelled as the depression deepened.[8]

Campbell (1836-1898) soon emerged as the Centre's leading personality. He was a Glasgow Scot, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh; he had migrated to Adelaide because of ill-health at the age of thirty-three; and had opened a homeopathic surgery with his brother. A public-spirited fellow, he was concerned at the squalid living conditions of the poor, and particularly at the high death rate among their children. This had led him to organize and lead the party of notable citizens who founded the Adelaide Children's Hospital in 1876, a contribution now commemorated in a stained glass window at the hospital. (The window bears his name and depicts the scene of Jesus 'suffering' the little children. Whether its inscriptions, 'the beloved physician' and 'the children's friend', refer to Christ or to Campbell is not certain.) Campbell's interest in social welfare led him into numerous other ventures apart from the Children's Hospital and St John. He was the founder of the Trained Nurses' Association, and was a member of the Board of Health, the Society of the Arts, the Board of Education and the University Council as well as of the Legislative Council. If Arthur Carew Hunt had provided the drive for the formation

to the State like that, stretching back a half century, he must have been a front-running candidate for an award.[10]

Poulton and Way, like Verco, were among the foremost members of the South Australian medical fraternity. Poulton, a graduate of the University of Melbourne had come to the Adelaide Hospital as a junior house surgeon in 1883. In many respects his career ran parallel to Verco's. He was secretary to the first Inter-Colonial Medical Congress; he lectured in medicine for twenty-eight years at the University; he served a term as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine; and he also put in a term as president of the local branch of the B.M.A. Way came to Adelaide from Exeter as a child, and was a brother of the Chief Justice, Sir Samuel Way. After school at St Peter's College he returned to England for his medical education at St Guy's Hospital. Back in Adelaide again he held positions as Honorary Physician at both the Adelaide and Children's Hospitals; he became a member of the University Council; and he, too, served a term as president of the South Australian branch of the B.M.A.[11]

Corbin was born in 1843 in Derbyshire of Huguenot stock who had reached England via the Channel Islands. He grew up in London, where he became apprenticed to a medical practitioner at the age of sixteen. He continued his training at St Bartholomew's Hospital, and after graduation worked for a time in the hospital ship *Dreadnought* at Greenwich. He came to South Australia at the age of twenty-two, practised at Burra for a year, spent two more years as house surgeon at the Adelaide Hospital, then had four more years of country practice at Riverton before finally settling in Adelaide. For a time he was an Honorary at the Adelaide Hospital, and later on was the second president of the South Australian branch of the B.M.A. – a position that seems to have become almost *de rigueur* for doctors with a St John background. Like Campbell, Corbin was concerned by the unsanitary conditions in which the working classes were often forced to live, and had seen the results of this in the outbreaks of typhoid in unsewered Burra, where a number of miners lived in dwellings dug into the side of the creek bank. First aid and nursing training, with their emphasis on hygiene, seemed to him an excellent lever for raising the health levels of the poor.

Unlike his colleagues in the Association Centre, Corbin was not primarily a teacher. Instead, he examined the classes they taught. He was the sole examiner whom the London 'Head Centre' accredited to set and administer the written, oral and practical tests the pupils had to undergo if they wished to gain the Association certificate. He examined every class taught in the Centre's first eighteen months, though later, as classes multiplied around the colony, he was empowered to appoint deputy examiners. He retained the position of Chief Examiner until his death in 1919. Also unlike his colleagues, he does not seem to have taken an early interest in St John committee work. He joined the Centre Committee only in 1910, and was satisfied with becoming deputy chairman only. The



The memorial stained glass window, now in the chapel of the Adelaide Children's Hospital, installed in memory of Dr Allan Campbell.

of the Centre, then Campbell was the one who sustained it. As one of its early vice-presidents he either chaired its public meetings when its Vice-Regal president could not be present, or he delivered the main speech if the president was there. He became the Centre's first Life Member in 1886; and in 1892 received a then rare distinction when St John's Gate admitted him and Drs Corbin and Poulton to membership of the Order with the rank of 'Honorary Associate' (later called 'Officer Brother') – the first South Australians the Order so honoured.[9]

Verco was a native South Australian, born in the Adelaide suburb of Fullarton in 1851. He worked for a time in the South Australian Railways Department before going abroad to study medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London. On his return to Adelaide in 1878 he worked as a general practitioner before becoming an Honorary Physician at both the Adelaide and Children's Hospitals. At the age of thirty-six he was president of the first Inter-Colonial Medical Congress of Australasia; he was one of the founders of the Medical School, and of the Dental School as well, at the University of Adelaide; he was the first Dean of the University's Faculty of Dentistry and was twice Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, in which he lectured for twenty-eight years. In addition to all this, he was twice president of the local branch of the British Medical Association (now the Australian Medical Association). Few people could therefore have been surprised when he was knighted in 1919: with a record of medical service



Dr Thomas Wilson Corbin, co-founder and principal examiner of the St John Ambulance Association Adelaide Centre.

Centre must nevertheless have regarded his early work as examiner highly, because he was made a Life Member of the Association in 1890 and (as we have seen) an 'Honorary Associate' of the Order in 1892.[12]

The same panel of doctors who taught the Centre's first class also taught the second. This was the initial class for women, which began in July 1885. The lectures took place in the outpatients' room at the Children's Hospital. Sixty-seven women enrolled, of whom fifty-one took the examination and forty-five passed. As with the first men's class, there were several people among the graduates whose ability, initiative and dedication to the Association were windfall profits for the Centre. Annie Duncan was one such St John disciple to emerge from the women's class. She subsequently moved to Launceston, where she became one of the promoters and the foundation secretary of the first Tasmanian Centre of the Association, in 1887. She retained that position until she left Australia for Britain in 1892, after which the Tasmanian Centre swiftly allowed itself to become defunct. Although this Centre had been affiliated with the Victorian Centre at first, Annie Duncan's notes on the Adelaide Centre had provided it with a guide in its formative stages.[13]

Another person from the first women's class who did her own share of St John pioneering was Frances Wright, whose four daughters also graduated from the same class. She was the wife of Frederick Wright, J.P., who with Hunt and Campbell had been one of the group that took the lead in promoting the early Adelaide Centre. Wright became the Centre's second chairman, and also its treasurer, about 1887 and held both positions until his death in 1900. Frances Wright's special contribution, as we will soon see, was the organization of a 'Ladies' Committee' of the Association, and a practice class for women.

In the first year of its activities the Adelaide Centre seems to have arranged four additional classes to those described above. The third class was for twenty-six men, eleven of whom were graduates from the first class, among them Roberts and Witherick. When it formed is unknown, but it struck trouble when the time for its examination arrived. Someone pointed out that Association rules required twelve months to elapse before a person holding a certificate could take an examination for the next. The examination of the eligible remainder took place in September; but while their theoretical knowledge satisfied Corbin their practical work did not. He therefore re-examined them a month later, and this time they all passed. The fourth class, too, ran into difficulties. The pupils were a combined group of policemen and railwaymen, who began their course about July 1885 with Dr Henry as their lecturer. He was soon complaining to the Centre Committee about their poor attendance at his lectures. They responded by refusing to take the examination, on the grounds that his lectures had been 'too few and divided'. The fifth class, this time for thirty-one railwaymen alone, formed about August and took the examination in November, with only ten men passing it. The sixth class was for women, and was the first in home nursing. Only women who already held a first aid certificate could join the home nursing course. Thirty-one graduates from the initial women's class did so, and all of them passed the examination on 9 December. Annie Duncan and Frances Wright were among them.[14]

Even at this early stage, a year after the Centre formed, some interesting trends were becoming apparent in the training statistics. One was the greater attraction the classes seemed to have for women. There had only been two classes out of six for women, but already it seemed that, when given the chance, more women would enrol than men, more of them would stay on to complete the course, more of them were prepared to take the examination, and more of them were likely to pass. Thus, of all those who enrolled for classes in the first year, rather less than half the men stuck it out to graduation while more than three-quarters of the women did.

Why the women should have been generally keener and more capable than the men is not clear. Was it because, as Dr Dunlop seemed to believe, women were inherently more suited than men to caring for the ill? Was

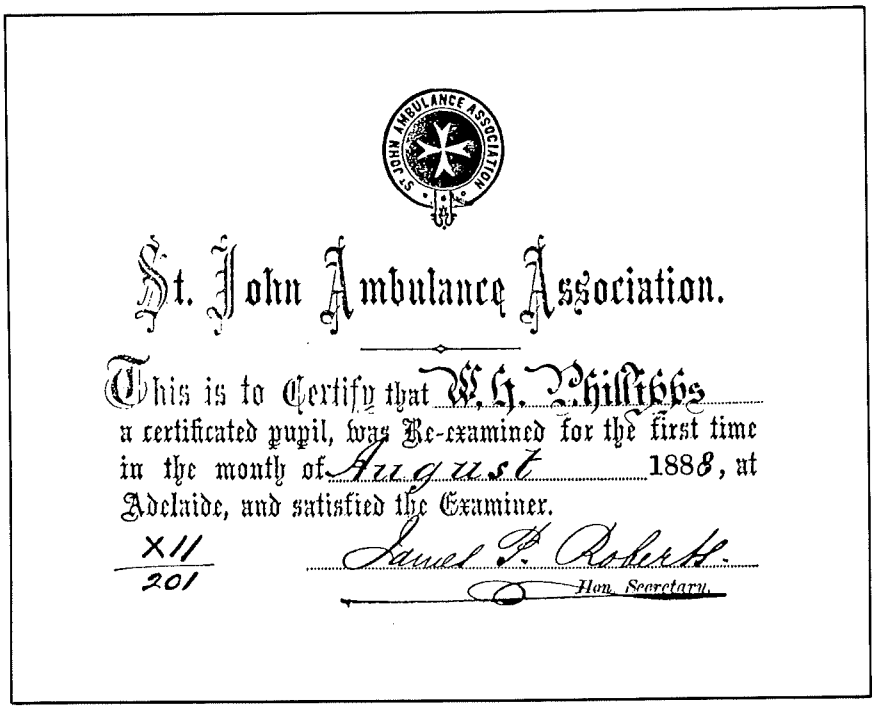
it that they had a greater pecuniary interest in completing their training? (For some unknown reason the Centre charged men only 5/– ($0.50), but charged women 10/6 ($1.05).) Was it the fact that, in an age when the woman who sought work outside the home was the exception (save for women in the lower classes), first aid training offered a welcome chance to escape from the confines of home, and to learn something useful at the same time? Or was it the case that the women were willing to work hard to acquire ambulance and nursing skills to compensate for educational and occupational opportunities that were more limited than those for men?

Whatever the reasons were for the greater success of the women's classes, the Adelaide Centre was replicating something similar to the experience of the Association in England, where women at first had outnumbered men in the classes by four to one. The latter point had aroused widespread comment, and had even led some critics to deride first aid training as 'an ephemeral feminine fashion'.[15]

The eagerness and diligence of the South Australian women seeking Association training also attracted public comment. Corbin remarked upon their zeal in his examiner's report to the Centre Committee. The Committee was so impressed it passed his letter on to *The Register*, which published it in full, together with the questions he had set for their written test, which, Corbin said, had been 'most searching and careful'. His report emphasized the point that he had been struck by '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'.[16]

The Register was always generous in the space it gave the Adelaide Centre. The detail in which it reported St John affairs was such that, a century later, anyone reading its accounts of Centre meetings may vicariously experience what to contemporary observers must have seemed portentous events. One such occasion that comes vividly to life through the cramped columns of *The Register* was the Centre's first graduation ceremony, for the successful candidates from the first men's and first women's classes. The presentation of certificates took place on Monday 22 September 1885 in the YMCA Hall. *The Register* gave the ceremony 1500 words and an editorial the next day. Its report included the names of all sixty graduates and the comments of *all* the speakers, right down to the last burst of applause and 'hear, hear!' from the audience. Thus, *The Register* informed readers that Dr Campbell had presented the certificates in the place of the Governor, who was ill. He had brought the audience right up to date with the latest and most exciting St John developments. In England, he said,

> a striking phenomenon of the St John movement was that the working people could not be brought together during the week, therefore Sunday lectures were given – (Hear, hear) – ... [and] not only that, but the examination was held on a Sunday (Applause).[17]



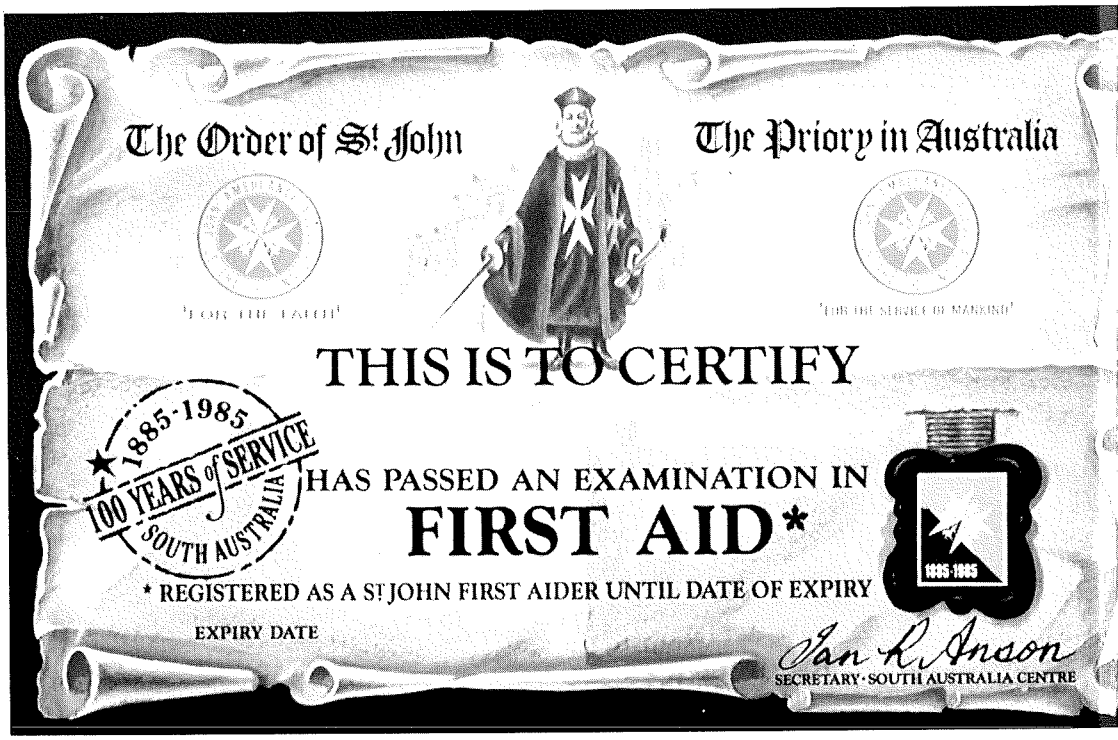
St. John Ambulance Association.

This is to Certify that W. H. Phillipps
a certificated pupil, was Re-examined for the first time
in the month of August 1888, at
Adelaide, and satisfied the Examiner.

XII
201

Samuel P. Roberts
Hon. Secretary

First aid certificates, 1888 and 1985. That for 1885 is made out to Sir W. Herbert Phillipps, who served as a committee member of the Adelaide Centre 1889-1934, as chairman-treasurer 1900-05 and as deputy chairman from 1919 until his death in 1934. That for 1985 was specially produced to mark St John's South Australian centenary year.



The Order of St John

'FOR THE FAITH'

The Priory in Australia

'FOR THE SERVICE OF MANKIND'

THIS IS TO CERTIFY

1885-1985 100 YEARS of SERVICE SOUTH AUSTRALIA

HAS PASSED AN EXAMINATION IN

FIRST AID*

* REGISTERED AS A ST JOHN FIRST AIDER UNTIL DATE OF EXPIRY

EXPIRY DATE

1885-1985

Ian R. Anson
SECRETARY · SOUTH AUSTRALIA CENTRE

Further applause greeted the news that in England first aid competitions were taking place between teams of police, railways and civilian graduates, and that the Centre was hoping to arrange something similar in Adelaide. Next, and with all the solemnity befitting a degree presentation ceremony in some ancient university, Campbell handed out the certificates. The rites then ended with a speech by the Hon. D. Murray, who thought it 'gratifying' to know how popular the classes had been. It was, he said, 'of immense advantage' that such a large number of people had become so 'useful in emergencies', both in their own homes and in the wider community.[18]

Teaching, examining and presenting certificates were not all the Centre accomplished in its first year. It had also begun expanding beyond the city, founding a series of 'sub-centres' from which teaching could proceed in the suburbs and country towns. A sub-centre did not necessarily mean a permanent establishment. Rather, it meant that there was someone available locally who was prepared to act as secretary, recruit classes from the surrounding district, arrange for a medical practitioner to teach them, and find some local venue suitable as a classroom.

The first of the sub-centres was at Port Adelaide, and once again Arthur Carew Hunt was responsible for initiating it. Hunt probably saw that the docklands would be a fertile field for St John activity – an area of frequent accidents and injuries. He gained the interest of a Port Adelaide medical practitioner, a Dr Mitchell, and encouraged the formation of a local committee. About thirty men attended the first meeting of the 'Port Adelaide Branch', or sub-centre, held in the rooms of a local businessman, J.H. Wright, on 20 January 1886. The sub-centre began work straight away. Twenty-nine men enrolled in its first class, and nineteen of them took and passed the examination on 2 March 1886. Two further classes ran from the sub-centre during that year – twenty-six out of thirty-four men took and passed their examination on 18 May, and eleven out of twenty-four took it and passed on 1 July.

As the experience of these Port Adelaide classes indicates, the numbers who actually graduated were often only a minority of those who had enrolled. Only the keen would persevere, and there might be many reasons why a class member might not last the distance. The candidate might not find the lectures interesting enough, or might not like the lecturer's teaching style; work or the class member's personal affairs might prevent regular attendance at lectures; some people just disliked doing examinations; and others were simply satisfied to learn from the lectures without bothering to obtain the certificates beyond the examination.

Other sub-centres followed Port Adelaide. Riverton got going in September 1886, then in 1887 came Tanunda, Glenelg, Mt Barker, Mt Lofty, and Port Augusta. A Mt Gambier sub-centre also opened in 1887, but as a branch of the Victorian rather than of the Adelaide Centre. Mid-way between Adelaide and Melbourne, and *de facto* as much a part of

Victoria's Western District as of South Australia's South East, Mt Gambier was a town of two minds. When the Adelaide Centre learnt that its St John loyalties lay in Melbourne, the Committee resolved to send the sub-centre 'a friendly letter . . . suggesting the desirability of . . . being transferred from the Melbourne to the Adelaide Centre'. Mt Gambier replied that it was quite content to retain its Melbourne links; and not until 1909 would classes under Adelaide control be taught there. But in the meantime, even without Mt Gambier, the Adelaide Centre was successfully spreading its influence around the colony via its sub-centres; and as more of these opened the name of St John became a permanent part of the South Australian lexicon.[19]

In addition to its sub-centres, the Adelaide Centre also sponsored a number of 'detached' classes. These were classes organized by private individuals with no particular affiliation with either the Centre or a sub-centre but who for some reason wished to have first aid taught. A number of detached classes in the early years were run for organizations and institutions – the police, the railways, the tramways, the fire brigade, the YMCA, army barracks, business firms, schools. An institution which thus formed particularly strong St John links was the South Australian Literary Societies Union, a workers' self-improvement organization, four branches of which (Northern, Eastern, Southern and Western) all began arranging first aid classes for their members in February 1888. The secretary of the Union, G.F. Hussey, later joined the Centre Committee, in 1899. Later still, in 1915, he took over as the second Commissioner of the recently formed South Australian branch of the St John Ambulance Brigade, the uniformed wing of the Order. (His title was actually 'Assistant Commissioner', the unqualified title of 'Commissioner' then being reserved for the national head of a Brigade organization 'Overseas', that is in one of Britain's Dominions.)

The Police and the Railways Departments also became regular clients of the Centre, despite the fiasco of their combined class which Dr Henry had tried to run in July 1885. The Centre was always very keen to have the police and railwaymen on its books, seeing them as a key link in bringing ambulance skills to the locations of most likely need. To entice police and railways enrolments it therefore offered cut-rate bargains to the Departments concerned: in 1888 the Committee reduced the normal tuition fee from 5/– ($0.50) to 1/6 ($0.15) for classes of police and railwaymen. A further inducement for police to undertake first aid training came in 1892 when the Police Commissioner approved a suggestion from the Centre Committee that officers who had passed the first aid examination should be allowed to wear a cloth Maltese Cross badge on their uniforms.[20]

As well as opening sub-centres and running 'detached' classes, the Centre in its first couple of years also began casting around for means other than first aid training through which it might foster public interest in

ambulance work while promoting its own reputation in this field. A number of schemes developed.

One of the first was in 1887, when the Committee arranged for an 'ambulance' – a two-wheeled litter – to be stationed at the Children's Hospital, North Adelaide. Later, in 1891, when the police had acquired an 'ambulance van' – presumably a horse-drawn ambulance – the Centre equipped it with a box of bandages and splints. In 1888 the Centre decided to write to all people graduating from its classes, asking them to become permanent members of the Association by contributing 5/– ($0.50) a year. It also began political lobbying on its own behalf. As early as September 1886 it had sent a deputation to the Chief Secretary (who was an Association vice-president) asking for government assistance, basing its claim on the public service it was performing by teaching the police and railwaymen. Perhaps to the surprise of Committee members, he agreed to earmark £100 for the Centre on the next estimates. Perhaps, too, he was surprised at his own generosity, for he later reduced the sum to £50 on a *pro rata* basis, 'to be allowed in equal proportion to the amount collected by the Association independently'. (In 1896, during the depression, another Chief Secretary stopped paying the subsidy altogether, though in 1900 a further deputation to yet another Chief Secretary succeeded in having it restored.) Then, in 1892 it invited a deputation of two of the parliamentary members of the Trades and Labour Council, A. Kirkpatrick and J. McPherson, to attend one of its meetings in order to promote to them the idea of first aid training for the trade unionists among the sixty unions then affiliated with the T.L.C. This move eventually led to a T.L.C. member joining the Committee.

And finally, in 1894, the Centre engaged a canvasser to visit factories to sign up recruits for first aid classes, and to obtain the support of factory managers in encouraging their employees to enrol. Who the now forgotten canvasser was is unknown, but he (or perhaps she) must have had some modest success. At least two firms, the Glanville Sugar Refinery and Burford's factory, cooperated to start with, then A.M. Simpson & Son joined in too. The principal of the latter firm had joined the Committee in 1885, and served successively as committee member, deputy chairman and vice-president until his death in 1917, when his place on the Committee was taken by his son, A.A. Simpson, who served as committee member, chairman and vice-president until his death in 1940. The Simpson firm, which began as tinsmiths, would later be known to South Australians as Simpsons Ltd., makers of the refrigerators, washing machines and sundry other household appliances that in a later era would be found in homes across the nation. The firm later gave a lead for others to follow in 1901 when it began defraying the class fees of employees wishing to learn first aid. This practice later still became commonplace as firms recognised that sponsoring employees for first aid training was probably a cheap form of insurance which helped keep workers happy and possibly



Alfred Muller Simpson, deputy chairman of the Adelaide Centre from 1885 until his death in 1917 and founder of A.M. Simpson and Son, tinsmiths, which later developed in Simpson Ltd., one of South Australia's principal manufacturing firms.

improved the firm's safety record. Employees did not always avail themselves of the chance for free training, however, and so employers found it worthwhile to follow the practice of the Police and Railways Departments by tying to the program incentives like extra pay and promotion.[22]

Quite early the Centre also developed a keen nose for publicity. *The Register* was but one of the journals giving regular coverage of Association affairs. *The Advertiser* gave like treatment, as did the provincial press. The amount of detail given to the Centre's doings surprises the present day reader of the yellowed pages of the newspapers of a century ago. Adelaide and South Australia were then much smaller, and less was therefore happening to fill the long and compact broadsheet columns of *The Register* and *The Advertiser*, so that organizations like St John could look forward to generous treatment. Even despite this the generosity of the coverage is still surprising, however.

The report of the Centre's second presentation of certificates, on 10 September 1886, shows how intimate the detail could be. By this stage the secretary was E.W. Van Senden, the third secretary after Hunt and Dr Dunlop, who had succeeded the latter in June 1885 but had resigned a week later. Van Senden hit on the idea of turning the occasion into a fund-raising concert, combining the speeches and presentation with musical items. The meeting, in the usual venue, the YMCA Hall, was, *The Register* said next day, 'a large and brilliant gathering'. Campbell made the main speech, during which he urged the graduates to join the practice



Edward Willis Van Senden, committee member of the Adelaide Centre from 1885 until his death in 1917, secretary 1885-87, chairman 1908-11, and organiser of the Centre's annual demonstration in 1886.

classes to maintain their recently acquired ambulance skills. He also served warning that 'the time would not be far distant when no education would be considered complete without a certificate from the Association'. Sir William Robinson, who presented the certificates, said little. He had now spoken at so many St John meetings, he told the audience, that 'anything he might say would only be a repetition of [his] previous remarks'; and so 'he had therefore stipulated that no speech was to be expected from him'. The one gubernatorial aphorism he allowed the audience was to the effect that 'the confidence, self-reliance and courage' which the graduates would acquire from their training must be 'of the greatest interest to themselves as well as to the community generally'. He then presented the certificates to the sixty-one graduates and announced that Campbell's services to the Association had earned him Life Membership of the Centre.[23]

The Register's reporter dwelt even more lovingly upon the musical items than on the speeches, suggesting that beneath the journalist's serge suit was a critic clamouring to emerge. Miss K. Wright, one of the daughters of Frances and Frederick, performed the first item, an 'Impromptu' by Chopin. This was 'a composition which requires much skill to exhibit its beauty', the reporter-critic said, hinting that Miss Wright's talents might be more suited to the drawing room of her parents' home as Chopin should only be tackled 'by those who have perfect command both of technique and style'. The next performer, Mr D.W. Reed, fared just a little better from the critic. He 'sang two songs in his usual correct mode but in the second his vocalization was not so effective as it would have been had he not played his own accompaniment'. A Miss Stevenson, who sang next, displayed 'a voice of good quality' but was 'influenced by that timidity which prevents an amateur ... from displaying the talent possessed'. Next, 'Herr Pittmann and his talented daughter' played a violin and piano duet 'so much to the satisfaction of the audience as to secure the imperative encore', then the star of the evening came on. This was Miss Van Senden (a daughter or sister of the Centre secretary?), 'whose reputation in the concert room [was] so well known as to need but little mention'. Her *Register* critic noted that although 'it [was] sometimes noticeable that in this lady's singing there is want of animation', her rendition of excerpts from 'Giulietta e Romeo' was 'remarkably free from this defect' and 'were sung with special regard to sentiment'. Half the report occupied itself with such minutiae, suggesting that, in the journalist's opinion at least, the Centre's contribution to Adelaide's cultural life was as important as its additions to the city's reservoir of medical skills.[24]

The Association won its greatest publicity to date the next year, in June 1887, with the arrival in town of Lord and Lady Brassey. Sir Thomas Brassey (1836-1918) had been a Liberal M.P. raised to the peerage in 1886 for his contributions to Britain's naval might. He had been Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1880-84, Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty 1884-85 and was the founder and publisher of *Brassey's Naval Annual.* Later

St. John Ambulance Association.

ADELAIDE CENTRE.

Distribution of Certificates

BY HIS EXCELLENCY SIR WM. ROBINSON, K.C.M.G.,

AND

CONCERT

In aid of the funds of the Association, to be held

On Wednesday, Sept. 8, 1886,

AT THE

Y.M.C.A. HALL, GAWLER PLACE.

PROGRAMME.

OVERTURE—"Impromptu." ... ... *Chopin*

MISS E. WRIGHT.

SONG—"My Love is Come." ... ... *Marzials*

MR. W. D. REED.

SONG—"Ah se tu Dormi Svegliati." (Giulietta e Romeo.) ... *Vaccaj*

MISS VAN SENDEN.

DUET—"The Angel." ... ... *Rubenstein*

MISS STEVENSON AND MISS VAN SENDEN.

Distribution of Certificates by His Excellency Sir Wm. Robinson, K.C.M.G.

DUET—PIANO & VIOLIN—"Cenorentola." ... *Osborne & De Beriot*

MR. AND MISS PUTTMANN.

SONG—"You'd Fain be Hearing." (Ballo in Maschero). ... *Verdi*

MISS STEVENSON.

DUET—

MISS VAN SENDEN AND MR. W. D. REED.

SONG—BALLAD

MISS VAN SENDEN.

God Save the Queen.

Doors Open at 7.30; Commence at 8 o'clock.

TICKETS, 1s.

E. W. van Senden, Hon. Sec., Selborne Chambers, Pirie Street.

Frearson's Printing House, Grenfell Street, Adelaide.

Program for the concert and distribution of certificates, September 1886.

on he was Governor of Victoria 1895-1900 and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports 1908-13. He was the proud owner of a large and luxurious yacht, more a sailing ship really, the *Sunbeam*, on which he and his wife Annie took an annual overseas vacation, to the Mediterranean, to the Americas, and in 1887 to Bombay, Borneo and Australia. Brassey was also a member of the Association's 'Head Committee' at St John's Gate, and Annie had become a St John acolyte, with all the zealotry of the convert. In England they had begun raising money for regional Centres of the Association in 1881 by throwing open the *Sunbeam* for public inspection. They did the same on their overseas tours, on which Annie developed a reputation as a determined and persuasive proselytizer both for both the Association's work and for her own claims to be (– albeit self-appointed –) its chief advocate. When they were at home at their manor at Catsfield, near Battle in the Sussex-Kent borderlands, she spent her time marshalling the local population of farm labourers, servants and villagers into a veritable legion of latterday Hospitallers, to whom she set the general's example by not asking them to do anything she would not do herself. She accordingly took every course and gained every certificate the Association offered, and kept them all current by regularly undergoing re-examination.[25]

The Brasseys descended on Adelaide, the first stop on their Australian tour, in June 1887. In each colony they visited they were Vice-Regal guests, and Lady Brassey customarily inveigled the Governor to throw open Government House for a public meeting. At these meetings she would speak on the reasons why a local Association Centre – if none existed – should be set up forthwith, or, if one had already formed, why the local population should support it more generously. She seemed to enjoy greatly taking the credit for actually founding the Centres herself, and in some later reports of the 1887 tour the public meeting she called in Adelaide for 6 June 1887 was billed as the Centre's 'inaugural' meeting. The meeting took place on a Monday afternoon at Government House. Sir William Robinson was in the chair, and about 200 people, including most of the leading citizenry, were present to hear her talk about ambulancing experiences and to watch her present certificates to the latest batch of graduates. As was her wont, she had made sure that the local press sent along their best reporters, and that the meeting received generous coverage, including a verbatim transcription of her own speech. In his usual manner, Robinson's speech amounted to only several dozen words, which nevertheless drew applause when he promised the audience 'a very interesting and earnest address from the guest of honour'. He drew further applause when, without saying that she rather than he had requested that she speak, he added that everyone 'appreciated her kindness in coming and consenting to distribute certificates'.

Annie Brassey's speech, in contrast to the Governor's, was about 2500 words in length. Although she gave the same basic speech in each place she

visited, its spontaneity seemed not to suffer from its having been so well rehearsed. It consisted of numerous anecdotes of accidents and injuries she had personally witnessed, and which she recounted with relish to prove the value of first aid training. One benefit, she said, was to enable a person to overcome feelings of squeamishness at 'the sight of blood gently oozing or swiftly spurting ... from nasty looking wounds'. The major profit, however, lay in the practical knowledge and skills the trainees acquired, consequently becoming an asset rather than a liability whenever there was an accident. She made her own record of cases treated sound like the diary of a casualty ward surgeon, with yarns like these:

> The child, about five years old, of a lady living 42 miles from a town had his thigh badly crushed by the fall of a heavy piece of furniture. Though it was late at night and very dark, her husband being away, she had to take the poor little boy in a buggy driven by a blackboy over rough roads to the doctor, and she told me herself she would have given anything to have known how to bind the poor child's leg up in the best possible way to give him the greatest ease for his painful journey. The limb was so completely smashed that it was described to me as feeling like a bag of crushed ice when lifted up. A man fell off one of the high timber-carts in a forest 20 miles from town while holding a sharp axe in his hand. In trying to save his face he put out his right hand, the result being that two fingers were nearly severed. Owing to the absence of prompt and useful aid, the doctor when he arrived, after considerable lapse of time, though he was taken with the least possible delay, much feared when I saw him that he might lose his hand, if not his arm. These two latter cases happened in one week in a neighbouring colony, and I think may well be adduced as proof of the advantages of the instruction of the St John Ambulance Association.[26]

Some of Annie's best stories were of accidents to herself. She alluded to one of these in telling her audience what to do if someone's clothing caught on fire:

> The great thing is to throw the person down – which gains time, as the flame rises upwards and burns harmlessly in the air instead of burning the person – and seize the first thing you can and throw over him. I feel strongly on this subject because I have been so badly injured myself that for six months I was not able to feed myself, and for a year could not use my hands with any degree of comfort, and feel sure my life would not have been spared but that I threw myself on the ground with a rug over me, and a friend covered me with bedclothes, mattress and all, and stamped violently upon me.[27]

On top of these were further tales to show that a knowledge of first aid was as useful to animals as it was to humans:

> Several times I have known of horses out hunting, through over-reaching or otherwise, severing one of their big arteries, and the prompt application of a tight bandage has produced the desired effect of stopping the bleeding. The last time this happened I was out driving, being an invalid myself at the time, at a meet of the hounds. I came across a poor horse standing in a pool of blood

> in the middle of the road in a large park, rapidly becoming very faint. His mistress and her groom were looking at him in despair, not knowing how to get him even half a mile to the nearest stable. It was the work of a moment to get out and tie a pocket handkerchief round his leg above the fetlock joint as tightly as possible, and then twist it still tighter with the aid of a short stick. The astonishment of the lady and her groom when they saw the bleeding almost immediately stop was quite a study. When the handkerchief was returned to me it was accompanied by a note from the owner of the horse thanking me for saving the life of a valuable animal.[28]

Her speech done, Lady Brassey presented the certificates, a number of which were for medallions, that is, the third certificate, or two successful re-examinations after the initial certificate. (For many years the Association's medallion formed the qualification for entry into the ambulance transport services of a number of Australian States, and only in recent decades has it become superseded as they set up their own training schemes for ambulance officers.) Those receiving the medallions were from the first men's and first women's classes, and probably went to people like Witherick and Frances Wright. Lady Brassey then commended the work of Witherick's practice class, which, she said, was 'a new feature in the work' she had seen nowhere else. Indeed, she thought so highly of it that she had its constitution printed in a pamphlet she had published as a record of her tour. Further speeches followed, from Van Senden and Campbell, who thanked her for the gift of eleven large anatomical charts and a cheque for ten guineas ($21), in return for which she and Lord Brassey were made Life Members of the Centre.

During their stay in South Australia Lady Brassey and her daughters made a four-day side trip to Silverton and Broken Hill to inspect these new mining towns. Sir William Robinson loaned the Vice-Regal carriage for the train journey as far as Terowie. A second train took them to Cockburn, from where the manager of the Broken Hill mine collected them in a convoy of horse-drawn wagons. They saw over the mine workings, descended the McCulloch shaft to the 216-foot (66-metre) level, inspected the ore body, looked over the smelting works, and were generally fêted as if they were royalty. Annie impressed on the mine management the importance of first aid training in such a remote corner of the country, and no doubt told them they should establish a Broken Hill Centre, or at least a sub-centre of the Adelaide organization. (It was probably as a result of these admonitions that Hunt journeyed to Broken Hill a few months later to help set up St John activities there.) Her missioner's task thus accomplished, the party set out on the dry, dusty trek back to the railhead of the Adelaide line, a trip which proved 'long and dreary over plains covered with salt bushes, enlivened only by the occasional sight of large teams of oxen'.[29]

After Adelaide the Brasseys moved on by train to Melbourne, then continued barnstorming on through Sydney, Brisbane, Rockhampton,

Thursday Island and Palmerston (Darwin). Everywhere they went they dazzled the locals as much as they had the Adelaideans. Where Annie found no Association Centres in existence, she extracted promises that these would be formed forthwith, and indeed in two States the St John branches still (but mistakenly) date their formation from her visit.

The relentless campaigning of her Australian tour was probably a factor in Lady Brassey's death very soon after. By the time she had reached Brisbane she was suffering from a heavy cold that got worse the further north the *Sunbeam* sailed. She died on the way to Mauritius, seven days out from Darwin, on 14 September 1887, and was buried at sea the same day, three months after her visit to South Australia. A fortnight after her death Frederick Wright, as chairman, informed the annual meeting of the Adelaide Centre that the recent visit of Lady Brassey, 'well known as an enthusiastic advocate' of the Association, had proved 'of lasting benefit to this Centre'. He did not know of her death yet, for news about it took further time to reach Adelaide.

Lady Brassey's worldwide contributions to the Order and to the Association in particular were acknowledged nine months later in the first Annual Report of the Chapter General (governing council) of the Order following the granting of its Royal Charter. The Annual Report likened her globetrotting mission for the Association to the Great Crusades, and quoted the words she had used in urging the editor of *The South Australian Register* to give full coverage to her Government House meeting on 6 June 1887. She had borrowed the words from Col. Francis Duncan, one of the Association's co-founders, but Chapter General seemed to think them a suitable epitaph for one who had made the promotion of first aid training her life's work:

> 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.[30]

'The true Hospitaller spirit' had possibly moved her as deeply as the social prominence which she seems to have craved, but in leaving those words behind in Adelaide she had perhaps done something to confirm a tradition that continues a century later.

3. *Emerging difficulties*

The founding fathers of the St John movement in South Australia would have been justified in feeling pleased with what they managed to attain in the movement's first fifteen years. To have founded an active Centre, to have established for it a routine of purposeful work, to have gained the support of influential citizens, and to have attracted much favourable publicity were all worthwhile. These were at least modest accomplishments, and perhaps ensured that St John Ambulance work in South

Australia would be more than just a passing fad. At the same time, some problems began emerging for the Centre in the period up to the turn of the century, and these needed resolution if the organization was to thrive in the way its founders hoped it might. There were several main difficulties which must be overcome if that were to happen.

First, and despite the keenness of those who took courses of training, and in spite of all the publicity in *The Register* and other newspapers, there was really only slight public support for the classes. Public interest as measured by numbers taking classes was slender at best. Second, there was the problem of retaining the interest of the graduates in Association work, and related to this was a further problem concerning the position and status of women within the organization. Then there was the question of financing the Centre, an urgent issue in a period of major depression like the late 1880s and the '90s; and finally there was the matter of the medical profession, and of how far doctors might be expected to support Association work voluntarily.

From the outset the Association Centre in Adelaide was an assiduous compiler of statistics. How many classes it ran in a year, how many enrolments these attracted, how many pupils were presenting for examination, how many actually passed, how many subsequently underwent re-examination, and at what sub-centres were all matters that seemed to fascinate successive chairmen and secretaries of the Centre. (The student of St John history should be grateful for this fascination: the statistics are so faithfully and comprehensively recorded year by year in the *Annual Reports* they are an historian's treasure trove.) The preoccupation with figures followed on from various imperatives. For a start, St John's Gate itself set a pattern for its far-flung network of Centres to emulate. The Association 'Head Centre' required Centres to submit returns of their activities, and subsequently published these in its own *Annual Reports.* Then, too, impressive tallies of figures served several purposes on the home front. Not only did they provide a Centre Committee with a ready measure of its achievement, they also provided a useful lever for gaining community support and for winning government subsidies. The Centre that could demonstrate to a Cabinet that it was providing an essential public service, as measured by an index like 'graduates:population' or 'enrolments per head of population', was one with a good argument for a subsidy.

In the first couple of decades of the life of the Adelaide Centre statistics did not, however, furnish the Committee with sure grounds for debate. The figures showing its attainments were rarely encouraging until late in the first decade of the new century. Until then attracting students was one of the Centre's chief problems, and most of the *Annual Reports* expressed the Committee's frustration at not finding the solution. The graphs of classes taught, of enrolments, and of certificates awarded all show wide fluctuations over the early years. For example, after reaching an early peak

of 240 in 1890 the annual number of graduates dropped off sharply as the depression bit deeper. The high point would not be surpassed until 1908. The worst year was 1892, when only one class seems to have formed, at Murray Bridge, but no pupil seems to have actually taken the exam. That year the Committee voiced its disappointment through the chairman's report to the annual meeting:

> Your Committee regret that they are not able to report such progress as they hoped for ... Several hundreds of pamphlets setting forth the objects of the Association were distribut[ed] amongst the members of [the public]. Thus far the results have been disappointing ... Your Committee want to see more than this; they want the growing youth of the town and suburbs, as well as those in the country districts, to take up the movement with full heart and earnestness to qualify themselves ... And as regards the house and domestic aspect ... we want one girl or one woman in every household to fit herself to respond with nerve and helpfulness to meet the inevitable claims which come upon one and all of us daily.[31]

The distribution of brochures and pious injunctions to the lay public to avail themselves of Association tuition were not, however, successful in bringing in pupils in the volume the Centre desired. Throughout the 1890s the refrain of the *Annual Reports* consisted of variations on the same tune. In 1894 it was: 'Your Committee has found it difficult to maintain a fair amount of public interest in the work of the Association'.
In 1895 the complaint went:

> Still only the fringe of the community has been touched, and there is ample scope for more work.

Then it was:

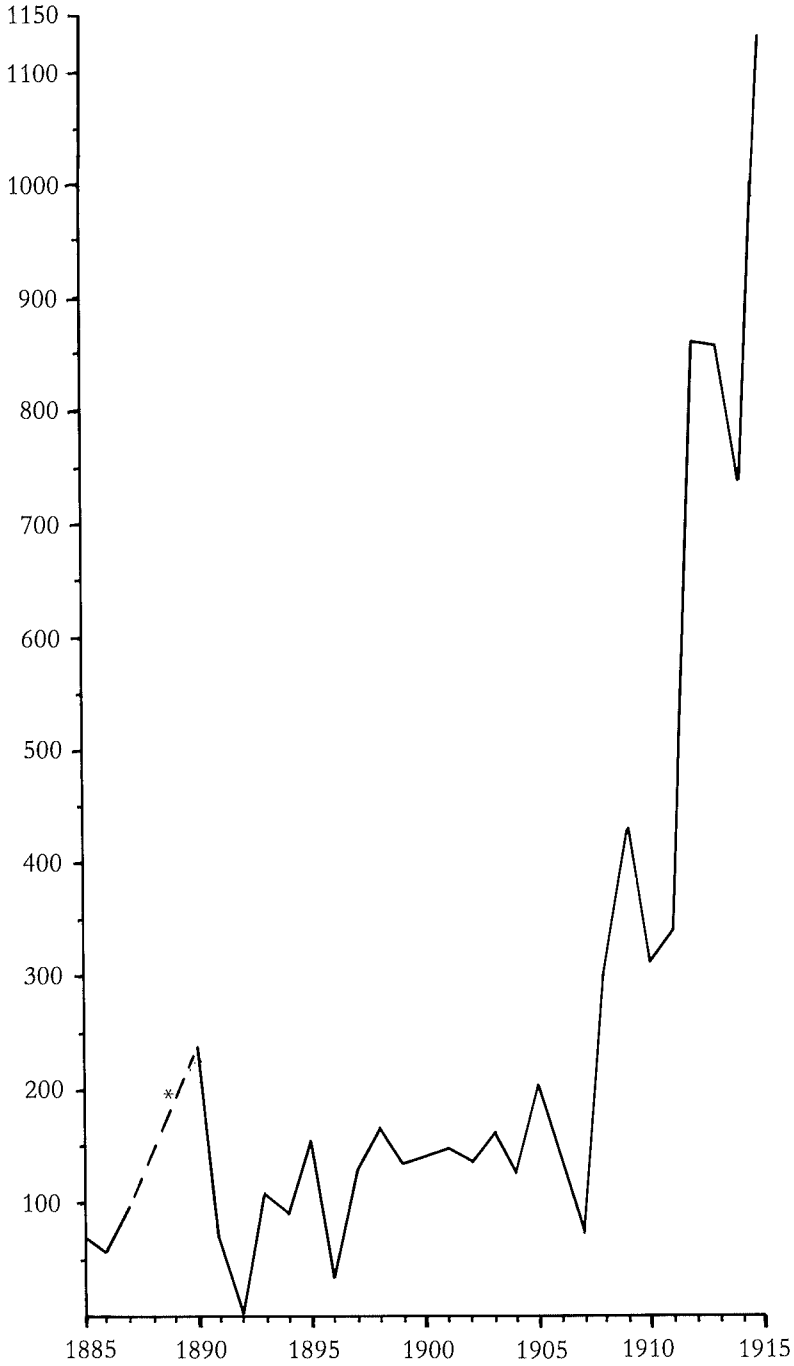
> The record for the year can hardly be considered satisfactory. It has been difficult to sustain interest in the objects of the Association, especially during the summer season, which has been of unusual and prolonged heat. Many also of our young population have left the colony during the past to push their fortunes in West Australia (1896).

And again, in 1897:

> It is a matter of regret to your Committee that up to the present time they have not succeeded in arousing amongst the working community, especially those engaged in factories and workshops, satisfactory interest in the objects and teachings of the Association ... As yet the existence of the St John Ambulance Association, its objects and its motto of "First Aid to the Injured", seems unknown to the great body of our working men.[32]

After the nadir of 1892 the numbers had in fact recovered, even though they continued to worry the Committee. They fluctuated around a mean of about 130 graduates a year until 1907-08, when the volume of those graduating increased rapidly to peak at an exceptional 1304 in 1916 during a wartime rush for training. The following graph indicates the trend.

Certificates awarded, 1885–1915



*Figures for 1888 & 1899 unknown

The Centre Committee would not have needed a graph to tell it how far away it remained from the target it had set itself in 1892, of having a first aider in every home. By the turn of the century, fifteen years after its foundation, it had awarded certificates to a total of only 1614 people. On average this was fewer than 110 a year. Even less spectacular was the annual batch of graduates when seen as a fraction of the population. Thus, in 1900 the ratio of graduates to population was an insignificant 1:2387, whereas fifteen years later, after the wartime run on training had begun, the ratio was a rather more respectable 1:382 but still light years away from 'one to every home'. By 1899 the Committee thought it could detect some improvement. The *Annual Report* that year found satisfaction in the knowledge that 'there [were] now 1474 of our pupils scattered around Australia who have been instructed and hold certificates from this Centre'. Perhaps the self-congratulation was excusable at the end of a long, hard depression; but no one going through the class statistics up to the turn of the century could rightfully have claimed that the 'throughput' had been inspiring.

The question that nags at the student is why, when the publicity was so good, was the performance so poor? The depression obviously had something to do with it: the deepest troughs coincided with the worst depression years, and the under- and unemployed could probably find better things on which to spend five shillings than learning first aid. Another likely reason is that Association training for the time being remained a middle class endeavour, despite the fact that working class jobs were more dangerous and thus implied a more urgent need for first aid knowledge. The amount of 'book' learning and the writing skills required to pass the Association examinations seem to have been considerable, and this could well have deterred potential recruits with only a rudimentary education. The low pass rates for railwaymen and dock workers in the early years enables us to infer that the Association courses probably proved difficult for unskilled labourers. At the same time, the Adelaide Centre remained an 'Establishment' body with impeccable connections to the colonial elite. It was an organization in which the socially prominent or ambitious might feel at home but in which the humble and lowly might feel uncomfortable. The latter, moreover, possibly did not read *The Register* or *The Advertiser* and so would have come to realize only slowly what they were missing by not signing up for a St John course. Perhaps that sort of information needed a couple of decades or more to filter down to those sections of the community who stood most to benefit from what the Association was offering. Perhaps, too, working people needed that span of time to realize that St John was as much for them as it was for the residents of the more 'genteel' suburbs. If so, the Centre could only achieve limited success until these processes had worked themselves through.

If persuading members of the public to enrol in Association classes was the Centre's most urgent task, then the next problem was that of retaining

the interest of those who underwent the training. At first this was not difficult for, having gained one certificate, many graduates were keen to go on to earn the second and then the third, thus qualifying for the medallion. But what did one do once one had attained that level of competence? The St John certificate did *not* qualify one as a trained nurse, and in Adelaide (if not in other capital cities) there was no ambulance transport service yet to employ the holders of St John medallions. Did the graduate simply move back into his or her routine daily life, hoping that the newly acquired first aid knowledge would eventually prove useful in some emergency at home or at work? For some graduates an affirmative answer to this question was insufficient. They wanted both to maintain their ambulance knowledge, to improve the efficiency of their skills, and above all to put their ability to use.

It was this wish that prompted Witherick and his colleagues to set up their practice class. But even practice classes had limitations: one could not indefinitely retain interest in first aid if one only ever practised bandaging, splinting and carrying the 'injured' at simulated accidents. After the initial rush of enthusiasm one was likely to drift away when these exercises trailed off into monotony. Consequently practice classes were usually short-lived. Witherick's practice class was perhaps typical: the Centre heralded its formation in 1886, but after 1896 it seems to have disappeared from sight. Neither the grandiose statements of objectives nor the detailed sets of rules promulgated in the constitutions of the practice classes were able to breathe longer life into them. What they needed, of course, was purposeful work to do, work that gave their members 'real life' experience in putting first aid theory to use. In South Australia the mechanism for creating such opportunities for Association graduates would not be set up unil 1914-15, when the first Divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade formed in Adelaide. Until that time the Adelaide Association Centre had to be content to see its best graduates drift away after obtaining their medallions. It was a pity that so much good will and talent were lost for want of a means of channelling it. The Order had founded the Brigade in 1887; and if the latter had arrived in South Australia as promptly as had the Association it would have filled the gap that no practice class could.

The demise of the women's practice class exemplifies the way in which talent and enthusiasm could dissipate through the lack of a framework for containing them. At the same time it provides a window on the strongly patriarchal nature of the St John organization in the late Victorian era, if not later on.[33]

The women's practice class dated from August 1887 when a Miss McMinn had endeavoured to establish a practice club for women in North Adelaide in August 1887. Perhaps little came of her plans, for in May the next year the Centre Committee asked Frances Wright to convene a meeting for certificated women with the aim of forming a practice class. Frances Wright was obviously a forceful personality and a

capable organizer. In March-April 1888 she had written to the all-male Centre Committee with suggestions for setting up a 'Ladies' Committee'. Her letter followed a decision by the most recent Committee meeting, in February 1888, that women could not join the committee of an Association sub-centre though they would be permitted to form a 'ladies' sub-committee' at a sub-centre to promote the recruitment of female enrolments from the surrounding area. The letter asked for permission to form a central women's committee composed of delegates from each of the women's sub-committees of the suburban sub-centres – much as male representatives from the sub-centres were now serving on the Centre Committee. What Frances Wright was in effect suggesting, though she might not have realized it, was the creation of a separate women's branch of the Association which would parallel the official or men's organization. The Centre Committee, chaired by her husband, possibly realized the radical potential of her proposal; and, rather than agree to it, diverted her energies elsewhere by asking her to institute a practice class for women, and then to form a women's sub-committee from among those attending the class.

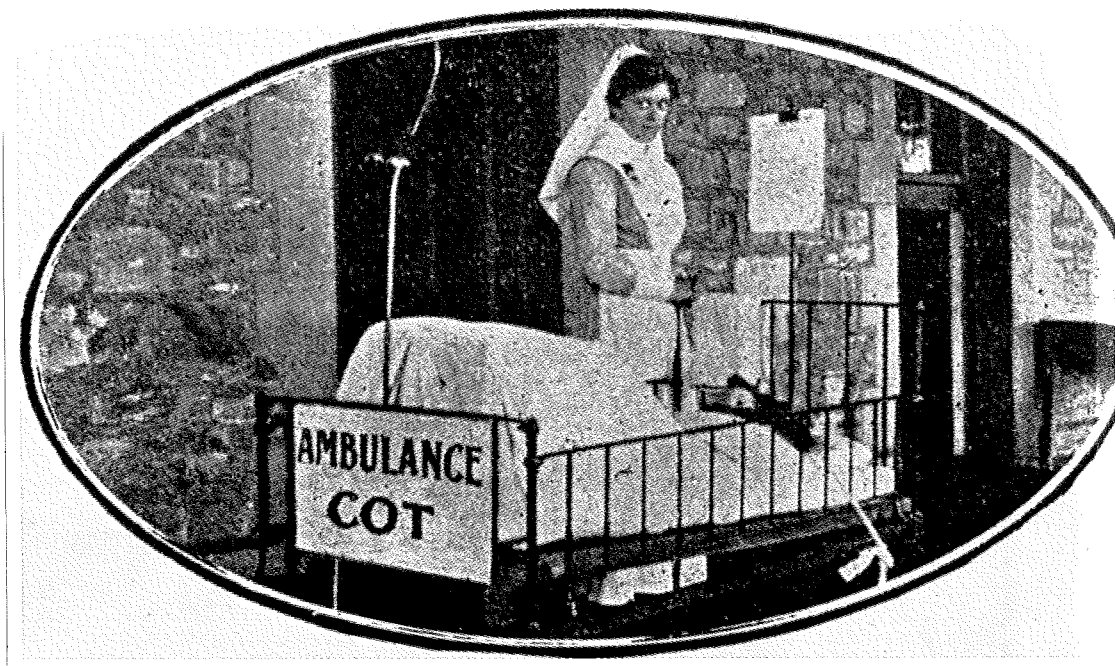
Frances Wright agreed to the Committee's request, and advertised in the press for certificated women willing to join a practice class and sub-committee. At this stage Dr Allan Campbell tactfully suggested that the female energy of the Wright coterie might be profitably harnessed if the women formed a 'mission' to spread first aid and nursing knowledge among the poor. He further suggested that the women might seek the co-operation of the Christian churches in establishing such a mission. 'If the work were carried on quietly and the one object kept steadfastly before the members, a great deal of good could be accomplished', he hinted. Whether or not the women recognized that they were being humoured is not clear. What *does* seem clear a century later is that Campbell and his Committee colleagues were trying to distract the women from the separate role Frances Wright had proposed for them.

The women's sub-committee duly formed in August 1888, with Frances Wright as president and a Miss Tompkinson as secretary; and perhaps to emphasize its own separateness it had its own letterhead with the Maltese Cross and the inscription 'Ladies' Committee'. Over the next few months the sub-committee also began calling itself variously the 'Ladies' Ambulance Association' and the 'Ladies' Ambulance Mission'. Possibly this was yet another danger sign for the Centre Committee, an indication that the women needed more formal supervision. The Frances Wright group came under discussion at the Centre's May 1889 meeting, when the Committee resolved that they were entitled to their own letterhead, bearing the inscription 'Ladies' *St John* Ambulance Mission, N.A. [for North Adelaide]'. The emphasis here has been added advisedly: the inclusion of 'St John' in the title was intended to indicate that the group operated under the auspices of the Association, and was not therefore an

unconstrained, freelance body. To impress that point even more firmly on the women, Campbell now became the Mission's president, Frances Wright its Vice-president, Mrs E. Miller its secretary-treasurer, with six other women (including Miss McMinn) making up the rest of its committee. Their rules underlined the fact that they had been brought to heel: apart from limiting their objectives to the rehearsing of instruction received at Association classes, and to 'spreading among the poorer classes ... some knowledge of First Aids and Nursing', the rules required that 'six gentlemen members of the ... Association be honorary members' of the Mission. With Campbell and six other men present as watchdogs for the Centre Committee, the Mission now concentrated on the sort of good works beyond which all men of the day knew women should not aspire, viz., raising money for charity by running stalls at fêtes.

The women proved exceptionally capable in that residual role. In 1895, for example, their stall of jams, potplants and cakes at the annual Children's Hospital fête raised £31/10/0, which enabled them to endow an 'Ambulance cot' at the hospital – a gesture they made in acknowledgement of having been allowed use of Hospital rooms for their meetings. (The cot was maintained at the hospital until 1934.) By contrast, and as a measure of the scale of that sum at the time, the entire revenue of the Centre for that year minus the government subsidy was £32/14/8. The women's takings for just one afternoon were perhaps a testimony to the talent from which even greater profits might have flowed had the Committee offered the women a larger role. In view of Frances Wright's success in rallying that talent, it was not surprising that in 1892, at the insistence of her colleagues in the Mission, she became the first woman in South Australia to be

The 'Ambulance Cot' maintained at the Adelaide Children's Hospital from 1895 until 1934 from funds raised by the women's sub-committee.



admitted to membership of the Order as an 'Honorary Associate' (Officer Sister). Her husband and J.P. Roberts, the Centre secretary were also admitted that year, thus preserving the unequal balance between the sexes.

What happened to the Mission in the end is unknown; so too is how much actual 'mission' work it did among the poor. After 1896, when the Centre's *Annual Report* commended the endowment of the cot at the Children's Hospital, the Mission is not mentioned again in the Centre's records. What possibly happened was that Frances Wright and her circle of women lost interest in their minor handmaiden's duties in the St John organization. Surprisingly, in 1897 the Committee was expressing its dismay that, despite the large numbers of women who had gained certificates, few female graduates were bothering to spread their knowledge among the working women of the industrial suburbs. 'Where this experiment has been tried', the *Annual Report* observed, 'it has been gratefully received and heartily appreciated'.

Why, then, were the women keeping their knowledge to themselves; and why were they letting the 'mission' work slide into desuetude? Perhaps the banality of charity fund raising, and the subsidiary function that implied in an organization where a woman's voice could not easily be heard, were in the end unsatisfying. And possibly women felt uncomfortable in an institution so thoroughly the province of men. It was not until 1926, over forty years after the Centre's inception, that women joined the Centre Committee. In that year two women, one representing the YWCA and the other the Girl Guides Association, joined the twenty-four men who by that time comprised the Association executive.

But probably the chief reason why female graduates lost interest was simply the lack of an effective formal structure enabling them to employ and add to their ambulance skills through continuing experience in 'real life' situations. Practice classes and the occasional demonstration of first aid techniques at Centre annual meetings were insufficient to maintain interest. Nor was the poorly conceived and nebulous 'mission' work they were meant to do among the poor a satisfactory outlet for people with specific skills. It was not until the establishment of the first Nursing Divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Adelaide in 1914–15 that a clearly defined and satisfying role for women emerged. Only then did it become possible to harness and sustain women's interest in St John work beyond the completion of their initial training.

Looking back over nearly a century, the modern observer may wonder at the frustration a Frances Wright might have experienced. She was among the first to qualify for the medallion, which by the standards of the day meant that she had acquired the highest qualification possible in ambulance work, only to discover that it led nowhere but to the cake stalls of charity fêtes. Men who earned the medallion could at least find practical expression of their skills through their work, whether that be along the tracks of the South Australian railways, or the docks at Port Adelaide, or

as a police officer attending a traffic accident. Until the Brigade arrived in Adelaide the woman with ambulance skills could only aspire to being useful in her own home. The student of St John history may also wonder at the loss to the organization which the under-utilized ability of a Frances Wright represented. If her drive and organizational skills had been put to effective use, by bringing her on to the Committee and giving her responsibility for recruiting pupils for instance, the organization might not have languished during the lean depression years. It might, moreover, have come close to its goal of 'a first aider in every home'.

And finally, the late Twentieth Century observer of the St John of the previous century may be saddened to reflect that Frances Wright was allowed to drift away from the organization, unnoticed apparently, and unmissed. Until her death about 1922-23 her name continued to appear at the foot of the first page of the *Annual Reports*, in the place set aside for the brief list of South Australian members of the Order. During all this thirty-year period she was the only woman among about eight South Australian 'Honorary Associates'. When any other member of the Order died – Campbell, her own husband, Corbin, Poulten, Van Senden, A.M. Simpson – the *Annual Report* would announce the fact, and run a short obituary. But when she died there was no announcement, save for an asterisk against her name to indicate that she was a 'deceased' member. Everyone in St John, presumably, had forgotten who she was and what enthusiasm she had aroused among other women nearly four decades previously. It is, of course, possible that she had been a domineering woman who, if given free rein, would have led the Centre off in directions the leadership recognized as dead ends. If so, the Committee was probably correct in side-tracking her into harmless endeavours. Whether that were the case or not, one is still left with a tinge of regret, a suspicion that she and the women around her could have contributed much more if given the chance.

Finding recruits for classes and retaining their interest after graduation were but two of the problems the Centre faced in its early decades. There were others which, even if not as perplexing, hampered progress. Finance was one such difficulty. The Centre began with only meagre funds, and it had few sources of income. In the years it could be obtained, the government subsidy of £50 was usually one of the main items of revenue. Tuition fees were the other staple. In a 'good' year, when enrolments were up, as in 1894-95, they might bring in as much as £70, but in a 'bad' year they might return less than £40. Donations, subscriptions and Life Memberships brought in varying amounts, usually about £30 a year until the early 1890s; but the depression tightened purse strings everywhere, and after 1892 these sources of revenue dried up for another decade. Van Senden's concert in 1886 took nearly £20, but that was a 'once only' event, and it was not until 1901-02 that the Centre began running an annual revenue-raising 'demonstration', or concert and exhibition of ambulance

work in connection with the presentation of certificates. The demonstrations were a handy source of income when they got going, usually returning £30 or more. The only other income came from selling badges, medallions and first aid manuals, but the returns on these were usually insignificant.

There were numerous claims against this revenue. Depending on the number of classes taught, lecturers' and examiners' fees took anything from £30 to £100, and this was generally the largest item of expenditure. Rent, telephone, postage, printing of the *Annual Report*, hire of classroom space, the secretary's honorarium, clerical assistance and the purchase of supplies from St John's Gate were other regular expenses. Once they had all been met, little remained of the year's takings, especially as the depression wore on. By the early 1890s an accumulated reserve of about £160 had built up in the Centre's savings bank account. By the end of the century this had shrunk to £28. After that low point, the government restored the annual subsidy. Thereafter the Centre's funds gradually built up to safer levels again.

From the safe vantage point of some ninety years later one may wonder how severe the lean years were for the Association in South Australia. The Centre Committee of the time left behind the impression that it had had a struggle. The 1896-97 *Annual Report* put it this way:

> The withdrawal ... of the modest subsidy has been severely felt by the Centre, and its powers of usefulness considerably impaired. In view of the recurrent bad seasons, and continued depression throughout the community, your Committee have ... carefully abstained from asking subscriptions from the public towards the maintenance of this almost self-supporting organization, but the funds which have been so carefully husbanded now are fast diminishing, and ... it will be necessary if the government subsidy is withheld [again] this year to appeal to the general public.[34]

The Centre certainly emerged from the slump thinner, though still with some flesh on its bones from having fed on its nest egg. It had not really faced the threat of bankruptcy and closure, although like other small-scale charities partially dependent on government generosity, it had perhaps wobbled a little with the removal of that prop. In the end it managed to get by, and it did not have to launch an appeal, which might not have yielded much anyway.

Whether the Centre could have accomplished bigger things if the government had been more generous, as the above lament implied, is uncertain. As we have seen, it was not notably successful in attracting pupils to its classes; and so, to have sat on a larger savings bank account need not necessarily have increased its throughput of pupils. The modern observer therefore wonders why the Centre cried poor so loudly, and is left pondering the question of whether in doing so it was simply learning to behave like a charity. Charities are not only about altruism and humanitarian concern to alleviate suffering. They also have much to do with playing

on the sympathies of governments and the public to win financial support. Through gaining sympathy and support they are able to prosecute their chosen good works. Furthermore, they need to become adept manipulators, promoters of the special virtues of their own causes over all the other competing causes. Perhaps, then, when the chairman publicly bemoaned the Centre's straitened situation in 1896-97 this was an indication that St John in South Australia was beginning to mature as a charitable organization, that it was learning how charities must operate. And perhaps, if charity were thus akin to gamesmanship, that was why the government felt it could safely withhold a £50 handout for the time being.

The fourth difficulty the Centre experienced was unexpected. It related to the group the Association customarily relied on most heavily – the medical profession. In every Centre the success of Association work generally depended on the willingness of the local medical fraternity to be involved, both as administrators and as teachers, and typically as volunteers. As we have seen, the Adelaide Centre was no exception for it was the very leaders of the profession who gave the Association its early impetus. However, for some reason not altogether clear, the Adelaide Centre from the outset had adopted the practice of paying its lecturers and examiners, who were, *ipso facto*, all medical practitioners.

The South Australian custom of paying St John lecturers and examiners contrasted with the general rule of thumb in other Australian colonies, where a fee was duly offered but, as befitted gentlemanly conduct, was most often declined. The other Centres somehow managed to convey the impression to their lecturers and examiners that, being charities rather than profit-seeking bodies, they preferred the doctors' assistance to be voluntary. In South Australia, however, the Centre was punctilious about paying the fees, and even when a doctor refused his fee the Centre would send it on to him anyway. The fees changed over the years: teachers received two guineas ($4.20) a lecture at first, and examiners received a like amount for each class examined; later on it was five guineas ($10.50) for a block of six lectures, but still two guineas per examination. For the Centre, however, the principle of paying up remained the same.

During the depression years some on the Committee expressed the view that the Centre would not be so hard up if South Australian medical practitioners, like their counterparts in New South Wales and Victoria, worked voluntarily for the Association. In South Australia, however, the Medical Board seems to have acted as the guardian of the interests of medical practitioners by insisting on their being paid for work like that done for St John. In South Australia, moreover, there was a 'Medical Defence Association' towards which the Centre must also keep its weather eye turned. In such a climate voluntaryism could not flourish readily, and so the Centre had to be content to pay for services rendered.

Over the years the Centre Committee held various consultations with both the Medical Board and the Medical Defence Association to seek a

way past the protective barriers to the voluntaryism it hoped might be beyond. The breakthrough appeared to come in 1904, when the Medical Defence Association decided, in response to the latest pleas from the Centre Committee, to 'allow ... members to lecture [St John] classes gratuitously if they so desire[d], or at reduced rates'. The Medical Board agreed to this. As a result, the Committee was able for the first time to place on record its 'indebtedness to those medical gentlemen who have so generously given their time and labour to the instruction of classes in the city and throughout the State'.[35]

The problem did not end there, however, and it took quite a few more years for the Association in South Australia to establish the voluntaristic principle prevailing elsewhere in St John. As late as 1912 doctors were writing letters of complaint to the Centre, protesting about delays in sending them their fees. That year the Centre secretary, Bentley S. Connor, gave the Committee his unvarnished views on the State's medical profession:

> There is no doubt that the S.A. Medical Fraternity are very mercenary and have been the means of keeping back the work of the Centre practically since its inception. With few exceptions all lecturers have been paid [five guineas] and the examiners [two guineas], and I would here remind the Committee that in the other Centres the lecturers are not paid, only the examiners. Many more classes would be possible if the lecturers would accept, or be allowed to accept by their union, a smaller fee on a sliding scale.[36]

And, as if *that* was not putting the situation bluntly enough, a similar outburst came three years later from G.F. Hussey, who the very day after he delivered the following salvo during the 1914-15 annual general meeting was raised to the Brigade Commissionership. He said he had noticed that

> about £360 was given last year by the Association practically as a subsidy to the medical profession in this State in fees. In Sydney and Melbourne the lectures were given free ... It had even been recommended to him that a protest should be made to the headquarters of the Association in London about the doctors here charging fees. He personally thought they might act gratuitously, as the instruction was for the benefit of the community, and not the persons directly concerned.[37]

Continuing in this tone of high indignation, he argued that the Association should be spreading its tuition among 'the poorer people in the community' rather than teaching those wealthy enough to afford its high fees for classes. If the doctors taught voluntarily, he suggested, the Centre could afford to lower its fees to levels 'the workers in the factories' could afford.

How the medical members of the Committee received these expressions of opinion is forgotten, though if they believed in the idea of voluntaryism which suffused the St John organization elsewhere they might have agreed with their Centre secretary and Brigade Commissioner.

By the time Connor and Hussey were pouring this sort of scorn on the State's medical profession, the Adelaide Centre was well established, indeed entering a phase of major expansion. It had taken many hard years to get the Centre to that point, with little in the meantime to justify the faith of the Centre's founding fathers in launching their humanitarian enterprise. The progress had been fitful, for reasons both external and internal to the organization. But it had survived, proving that it was rather more than an 'ephemeral female fashion'. In so doing it had also found a permanent niche for itself in the life of the State.

CHAPTER THREE

From Federation to the end of World War I

1. *Brighter prospects for the Adelaide Centre*

The new century brought a change of direction for the Adelaide Centre of the St John Ambulance Association. To start with, there was a change of leadership, and of locations.

Frederick Wright, chairman-treasurer for the past thirteen years, died in March 1900. Another businessman, Mr (later Sir) W. Herbert Phillips, took his place. Phillips had been a member of the Centre Committee since 1899. He now served as chairman-treasurer for the next five years, until 1905, when he became a vice-president of the Centre, a position he still occupied at his death thirty years later.

The secretaryship changed hands as well. James P. Roberts had resigned at the end of 1899 after twelve years as secretary in order to take a long overseas holiday, but stayed on until the Centre Committee found a replacement. They did so at the end of March 1900, when they appointed Charles C. Driffield to fill the vacancy. One of the new secretary's first tasks was to take the Centre to a new address. Roberts's own rooms in Tower's Court, Victoria Square West, had doubled as both Centre office and classroom; but Driffield set up a new office several blocks away at 22 Currie St., while the classroom moved to the offices of Thos. Jackson in King William St.

In appointing a new secretary the Committee aimed higher than previously. It allowed Driffield a larger honorarium than it had given Roberts, perhaps in the expectation that it could demand more from him in return. Roberts had received an annual sum of ten guineas ($21), but for Driffield the Committee raised the amount to £20 as well as paying him a five *per cent* commission on all amounts he collected for the Centre above the revenue from class fees and the government subsidy. It also allowed him up to £4 for advertising the classes in the Wednesday and Saturday editions of the daily newspapers. A condition of his appointment was that he canvass for donations and subscriptions. This was an activity to which he seems to have been well suited. During the depression of the 1890s donations and subscriptions had disappeared as a category of Centre revenue, but during his first year in office Driffield raised £10/3/6 from that source. The Committee thus had good cause to be pleased with his appointment, and by the end of 1900 was congratulating itself on the fact

that 'the position of the Association [had] improved in every respect, especially in regard to finances'. In the second of his two years as secretary he raised revenue from donations and subscriptions to £30/14/6, or more than fifty *per cent* above the amount of his own honorarium. Perhaps it was not altogether surprising, then, when he resigned soon after, 'owing to promotion to an important position in a commercial house': an ambitious 'operator' like him could clearly do better for himself in business than in charity.[1]

Driffield's two years as secretary benefited the Centre's office procedures as well as its finances. He introduced modern office technology into the Currie St. headquarters, making innovations his predecessors seem not to have considered. At the beginning of his term of office the Committee had allowed him to purchase a 'composition roll', the turn-of-the-century ancestor of later duplicating machines, so that he could run off circulars; then in February 1901 the Committee let him have the telephone installed, the Department of Telegraphs having agreed to connect the Centre to its 'phone system at domestic rates. A government-run telephone exchange had been operating in Adelaide since 1883, but previous St John secretaries had got by without their offices being connected to it. Now, by calling Adelaide 840, any member of the public could be in touch with the secretary; and he, without leaving his office, could reach the business firms to whom he was vigorously promoting the classes and from whom he was soliciting donations. Possibly it was because of such modern technological marvels that the new broom sweeping through the Centre was able to double the Association's cash reserves from £65 to £112 in his first twelve months' service. Though the restitution of the government subsidy of £50 had been mainly responsible for this improvement in fortunes, it was probably as a result of the revitalization of the Centre under its new management that the Chief Secretary, J.G. Jenkins, had agreed to begin paying the subsidy again.

A further sign of the new vigour within the Association was the staging of the first of a series of annual St John 'demonstrations', which Driffield organized in October 1901 at the Adelaide Town Hall. Previously the mid-year annual general meeting of the Centre had included exhibitions of bandaging and stretcher drill by groups of graduates from the first aid and home nursing classes. In 1901, however, the Committee, probably at its secretary's urging, chose to run the demonstration as a separate event. Under Driffield's direction the demonstration became a gala occasion. It took the form of ambulance contests between teams drawn from various agencies with an interest in ambulancing – the police, the nurses of the Children's Hospital, the Army Medical Corps, the private schools and colleges, and Our Boys Institute. Driffield persuaded business firms to chip in £19/16/0 towards the expenses, which included the printing of invitations and tickets, the hiring of a professional singer, and £9/10/0 for

silver medals for the winning teams. The last of these went to the police team, who won the resuscitation contest, the Army squad for the treatment of wounds competition, and one each for bandaging to a Children's Hospital nurse, a college student and a member of Our Boys Institute. Driffield had sought and gained free use of the Town Hall, and he even managed to persuade an orchestra to perform free of charge. He had sent out special invitations to prominent citizens, whom he sat in the front rows of the dress circle, and there were about 150 other complimentary tickets. Ordinary unprivileged citizens had to sit in the body of the hall and pay 1/6 (15 cents) for seats near the front and 1/– (10 cents) for those further back. How many actually attended is not known though ticket sales suggest that 600 or more people might have been present. The demonstration was hardly a financial success as it returned a profit of only ninepence (7 cents) after meeting expenses of £30/13/9, but as a public relations exercise it was probably a feather in Driffield's cap and a coup for the Centre.[2]

The Committee staged similar demonstrations annually thereafter until 1909, combining them with the presentation of certificates and medallions and a speech by the Governor of the day, who continued to accept office as Centre president. In 1905 the venue changed from the Town Hall to the Jubilee Exhibition Building, but wherever the annual demonstrations took place they won valuable publicity for the Centre, helping to imprint the name of St John on the public mind and catching the attention of prospective pupils. In reporting on them to the annual general meetings successive chairmen customarily observed that they had been 'a conspicuous success' and had met with 'the hearty approval' of 'a large and representative audience'. They also became more rewarding financially, to the extent that by the end of 1906 sufficient profit was flowing from them to enable the Committee to donate five guineas ($10.50) towards the cost of sending the Army Medical Corps' No. 6 Field Hospital as the South Australian team to New Zealand to compete in the first aid contest at the Christchurch Exhibition.[3]

One of the largest and more profitable of the demonstrations was that on 5 February 1909. It took place on the Adelaide Oval in the presence of the Governor General, the Earl of Dudley, and the Lieutenant Governor, the Chief Justice, Sir Samuel Way, and no less than 6000 spectators. The chairman of the Centre by this stage was E.W. Van Senden, who as Centre secretary twenty-three years previously had organized the Association's first grand public spectacle in South Australia, its concert in September 1886. He was later able to tell the annual meeting that the latest demonstration had shown a worthwhile profit of £8/13/3 after meeting expenses of £61/11/6.

The Centre seems to have stopped holding demonstrations for a couple of years after that. It staged two further demonstrations, in October of

1911 and 1912, but although well attended these ran at a loss of over £20 and after that it seems to have run no more. Perhaps the effort of staging such a huge spectacle only to incur a loss deterred the Committee. Possibly, too, now that the annual enrolments in classes had taken a healthy upturn, with the numbers of pupils nearly 800 and the number of graduates just on 400, there was less urgent need for the publicity the demonstrations had been bringing. At the same time, the Centre secretary, now Captain Bentley S. Connor, probably was too busy organizing the greatly increased numbers of classes to plan grand public exhibitions of first aid skills. Whatever the reason, the Centre just seems to have stopped mounting the annual demonstrations. Nothing like them took place for another twenty years or more, until the St John Ambulance Brigade, by then in healthy existence, began holding its annual South Australian District parades at the Torrens parade ground in the early 1930s.[4]

By the time war came in 1914, engulfing most Australians in a wave of patriotic fervour, the Adelaide Centre had succeeded in establishing itself as one of the State's respected institutions. Constantly prodded by the Centre Committee, the public had been enrolling in its classes in annually increasing numbers, as the previous chapter pointed out. An able and energetic secretary was guiding its day to day affairs, and it had begun attracting a steady and continuous flow of enrolments from government utilities and civil defence agencies – the railways, police, tramways, and fire brigade. Its financial fortunes had improved considerably, much helped by a generous subsidy the government obligingly paid it. Indeed, at the end of 1911 the government had raised the annual subsidy to £150, an increase of 300 *per cent.* This followed the representations by a deputation the Committee had sent to argue that, since the Centre was training so many more government employees, a raise was overdue. (The subsidy was to remain at the new level for another twenty years, until the stringencies of the Great Depression caused a considerable paring back.) With the increase in the subsidy the Centre's assets and liabilities account began showing a healthy annual credit balance of around £180.[5]

Perhaps a sign of the Centre's rising fortunes was a further change of address. from the Santo Building in Waymouth St., from where Connor had been managing its affairs since 1902, to premises in the heart of the city, in the Mutual Life Building. A location in the home of one of the city's most august financial institutions was perhaps symbolic of the elevated status to which St John Ambulance was rising in city and State alike, a sign that in South Australia it was beginning to achieve something of the dignity its parent Order had attained 'At Home'. Yet prestige was not everything, for what was ultimately more important was usefulness. The St John classes and the skills these promoted were daily proving their utilitarian value, and that above all was ensuring the continued success of the Adelaide Centre.

2. *Founding the South Australia District, St John Ambulance Brigade*

The emergence of the Brigade in South Australia was a development we should now examine because, apart from the sudden upswing in enrolments which marked the first half of Bentley S. Connor's twenty-three year reign as Centre secretary, it was the chief feature of the expansion of the State's St John branch in the decade and a half immediately before the First World War.

The first Australian Brigade organization had evolved in Sydney in the period 1900-03, thirteen years or more after the Brigade's foundation in England and eight to ten years after the first of its colonial branches had opened in Dunedin. The Sydney branch had grown out of the Association practice classes and sub-centres, and the events triggering its transition from these loose-knit bodies into more tightly organized Brigade units were two of Sydney's great public occasions. These were the celebrations to mark the inauguration of the Australian Commonwealth on 1 January 1901 and the subsequent visit on 28 May of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York (later King George V and Queen Mary), who were in Australia to open the federal parliament in Melbourne. Each event brought excited 'Sydney-siders' into the streets in their tens of thousands. The Principal Medical Officer of the New South Wales Military Force, who had responsibility for planning the first aid arrangements, called on the New South Wales Association Centre for help. The Centre fairly leapt to accept this invitation, and recruited 160 male and female volunteers from its practice classes and sub-centres to line the route of the public procession on each occasion. They efficiently dealt with hundreds of cases of fainting, heat exhaustion, sunburn and hysteria, thus publicly attesting to the efficacy of the ambulance skills the Centre had been teaching. When the Centre subsequently wrote up its account of each event in its *Annual Report* it did so under the heading 'St John Ambulance Brigade'.[6]

The first formally constituted divisions of the Brigade in Sydney did not emerge for another two years. There were various reasons for the delay. Firstly, it took time to persuade people to group themselves together and be trained sufficiently to go on public duty. Then raising money for uniforms and equipment took further time. In Sydney, if not in other parts of Australia later, there were other reasons for the delay which probably had much to do with resistance among members of the practice classes and sub-centres to the idea of wearing a uniform and being organized along quasi-military lines. The division, or basic Brigade unit, is analogous to and structured like the Army platoon, and the insignia of Brigade rank are similar to those of the Army. A number of Brigade officers, moreover, held Army rank because they also belonged to militia units. Not surprisingly, then, life in the Brigade closely resembled life in the militia, to outward appearances at least; and so there was more than a sneaking

suspicion among some Association workers that membership of the Brigade might later lead to military conscription. The Brigade leadership therefore had to work hard to allay such fears, and to persuade the members of the practice classes and sub-centres that the Brigade was a civilian body without military strings.[7]

The first formally constituted Brigade division in Australia was at Glebe, the dockside suburb at the southeastern edge of central Sydney. It developed out of the local Association sub-centre and was registered – Brigade parlance for formal constitution – in March 1903. Other New South Wales divisions soon followed, bolstering the District, or Statewide Brigade organization, over which presided a Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Superintendent. The Commissioner and his Deputy were analogous to the chairman and vice-chairman of a board of managers, or (given the Brigade rank structure and uniforms) an Army general and brigadier. The Chief Medical Officer (later called the District Surgeon) was the expert on medical matters, while the Chief Superintendent was the principal administrative officer. For a couple of years the New South Wales District was the only one in Australia, until in 1904 a Western Australian District formed. At this point the St John's Gate headquarters of the Brigade in London conferred the title 'Commissioner for Australia' upon the New South Wales Commissioner, while the State or District Commissioners were known thereafter as 'Assistant Commissioners'. No one in the Brigade outside New South Wales liked this arrangement much because it meant extra work and delay. St John's Gate demanded that all correspondence between the Australian Brigade Districts and London should move through the Commissioner for Australia. The Districts preferred dealing direct with London, and therefore found this requirement both irksome and inconvenient.

The first Commissioner for Australia was Captain (later Colonel) G. Lane Mullins of the Army Medical Corps, an Irish-born medical practitioner long resident in Sydney. (He was actually the second of the Brigade's Commissioners in New South Wales, the first incumbent having lasted only a year.) He took his new title seriously, believing that, as well as overseeing Brigade activities in New South Wales and Western Australia, he should foster the formation of branches of the Brigade in those States which lacked them. Much of his effort in this direction seems to have been focused on South Australia, where the results of his efforts were very slow in becoming apparent. It was possibly because of his failure to spread the Brigade beyond New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria (where the first divisions formed in 1910) that St John's Gate abolished the position of Commissioner for Australia in 1912. To be fair to him, London's expectations of Mullins had probably been unreasonably high. In London it was difficult to appreciate the constraints imposed by Australia's vast distances and poorly developed communications system. No part-time voluntary worker like Mullins could be expected to travel

the land in order to encourage State Centres of the Association to sponsor the formation of Brigade units. He therefore did what distance, time and cost demanded – he did his job by mail, which in South Australia's case was not very effective.

Mullins tried very hard with South Australia. He made repeated efforts over some seven years to persuade the Adelaide Association Centre to take up his suggestions for a South Australian Brigade organization. His first attempt was in 1904, soon after he had been elevated to the position of Commissioner for Australia. At its June meeting that year the Centre Committee had before it a letter he had written asking if it would sponsor the formation of South Australian divisions of the Brigade. The Committee appointed a sub-committee consisting of the chairman (now W.B. Wilkinson), the secretary (Connor) and three others to look into the matter. They were obviously not in favour of taking up Mullins' suggestions, for at its July meeting the Committee decided on 'advising [him] with regret that it was impossible to form divisions of the Brigade at the present time'.[8]

Why the Committee's attitude towards the Brigade should have been so negative is not clear. The Centre had already entered correspondence with St John bodies and ambulance authorities in other States to ask how they managed their affairs. In 1902, for example, the Committee had exchanged letters with Queensland's Maryborough Ambulance Transport Brigade over the way that body supported and organized itself. The Maryborough A.T.B. was one of the affiliates of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, the umbrella organization for the numerous autonomous regional ambulance transport services in that State. Full time ambulance officers of the Q.A.T.B. were all holders of St John Ambulance Association certificates, though the various local brigades, like that at Maryborough, had no formal connection with the St John Ambulance organization. Whereas the St John Ambulance Brigade by its very nature was a body of volunteers who engaged in part-time first aid duties at public gatherings, the Q.A.T.B. units consisted of salaried ambulance officers whose primary concern was ambulance transport. The Centre Committee in Adelaide might not yet have recognized these distinctions between voluntaryism and professionalism, and between first aid and ambulance transport work.

Perhaps these distinctions were not completely clear to Lane Mullins either. As Commissioner for Australia he presided over an organization which at that time in New South Wales fulfilled both functions. The New South Wales District of the Brigade contained both a 'Civil Ambulance Transport Corps', the local Divisions of which ran a professional ambulance transport system in Sydney, and a volunteer wing of Divisions providing a first aid service at public gatherings. The Adelaide Centre Committee might therefore have been concerned that, if it acceded to Mullins' request, and set up a Brigade organization in South Australia, it

would become responsible for both sorts of activities, the professional as well as the voluntary. In particular, it possibly feared, it might be saddled with the effort and expense of setting up the metropolitan ambulance transport system which Adelaide still lacked.

In March 1905, eight months after the Centre Committee had turned down Mullins' request, it asked one of its members, C.H. (later Sir Charles) Goode, who was travelling to Western Australia, to consult with the Perth Association Centre to find out how that Centre operated. Three months later Goode reported to the Committee that in Perth he had held discussions with Dr George F. McWilliams, who was both chairman of the Perth Centre and the founder and first Commissioner of Brigade in Western Australia. From McWilliams he had learnt that in Perth the Fire Brigade conducted an ambulance transport service using an ambulance van operated by Association-trained firemen, while Association-trained police had charge of ambulance litters at city police stations. How much he learnt about the Brigade is uncertain. His main interest seems to have been Perth's ambulance transport arrangements and not the Brigade, which in Perth was still very small (one division only) and young (founded only in December of the year before). On the basis of the information Goode brought back from McWilliams, the Committee decided that its chairman, Wilkinson, should meet with the chairman of the Adelaide Fire Brigade to inform him of the responsibility for ambulance work his Perth counterpart had undertaken.[9]

Two months after the Centre Committee had listened to Goode's report about St John in Western Australia, it received another letter from Mullins, in August 1905, asking it to consider further the possibility of forming a South Australian branch of the Brigade. Connor informed the meeting that he had already written off to McWilliams in Perth to ask how the Brigade functioned there. That was where the matter rested for the time being, because nearly a year later, at its July 1906 meeting, the Committee had yet another Mullins letter before it, again 'requesting that a branch be formed in Adelaide'. This time the Committee instructed Connor to 'prepare an estimate of the cost and to present it to the next meeting'. At the same July meeting the Committee also received another inquiry about the Brigade. This was from one A.S. Lindsay of Parkside, asking if a branch of the Brigade would be formed locally. The Committee instructed Connor to reply that 'the matter is being considered'.[10]

At this stage the Centre Committee possibly did not know who A.S. Lindsay was, perhaps beyond the fact that he had gained his initial certificate in first aid in 1903-04, had done the re-examination in 1904-05, and had gained the medallion by passing the second re-examination in 1905-06. Little is known about him still – not even what his initials stood for – but he was to become the key figure in the eventual establishment of the Brigade in South Australia. The same Committee meeting in July 1906 that received his inquiry about its intentions in relation to the Brigade

also agreed to contribute towards the cost of sending the No. 6 Field Hospital of the Army Medical Corps to the Christchurch Exhibition. The third of Lindsay's Association certificates, his medallion, had come from a course, taught by Surgeon-Captain A.H. Bennett, which he had taken with other members of this medical unit. In April the next year, 1907, Lindsay, now calling himself 'Warrant Officer Lindsay of the No. 6 Field Hospital', wrote to the Committee again, this time to thank it for its help in sending his unit's first aid team to New Zealand.

Some time later that year Lindsay seems to have gone back to Christchurch to live, for the December 1907 report which the Brigade Commissioner for New Zealand wrote to St John's Gate mentions the fact that he was promoting 'Second Officer A.S. Lindsay' to the position of District Chief Superintendent of the Brigade's Canterbury and West Coast District. This District, centred on Christchurch and comprising eight divisions, was one of the four then in New Zealand, the others being Wellington, Auckland and Dunedin.

In the two years Lindsay occupied his very senior position within the Brigade in New Zealand he proved himself to be a capable and effective officer. The number of active Brigade members in his District grew from 220 to 500; the number of divisions from eight to nineteen, and the Corps into which these were organized from one to three, taking in divisions in Christchurch and its suburbs, the Christchurch tramways, New Zealand Railways, and several country towns. He organized a conference and school of instruction for the Brigade officers of his District in 1908, and a weekend training camp during 1909. The Divisions in the District built up extensive supplies of medical equipment. They extended their public first aid duties to take in a wide range of sporting fixtures and began regularly attending horse racing and trotting meetings, rugby matches and bicycle races. Members of the divisions were kitted out with uniforms (whereas previously they had gone on duty in civilian clothing with a Maltese Cross armband). The members of the Greymouth Nursing Division raised enough money to purchase an ambulance wagon for their town. Members of the Timaru division, which he had founded, won the prize for the ambulance competition in the military tournament at Timaru in 1909. During Easter 1909 members of the Christchurch Corps took part as medical auxiliaries in the Army's annual manoeuvres, and in May that year they were inspected at one of their parades by the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward. All of this, even if not directly attributable to Lindsay, suggests that he was a talented organizer with an enthusiasm for St John work. The St John organization in New Zealand obviously appreciated his endeavours, for the 1909 *Annual Report* of the Christchurch Association Centre mentions the fact that at the Centre's annual general meeting in April that year, 'an illuminated address was presented to the District Chief Superintendent, Mr A.S. Lindsay, appreciative of his past services, by officers and members of the Christchurch nursing division'.[11]

In the three years, 1907-09, during which Lindsay was living at 136A Worcester Rd., Christchurch, the Adelaide Centre seems to have done little more about setting up a local Brigade organization. Apparently the only development in that quarter was a further letter from Lane Mullins – his fourth – with his by now routine inquiry 'if the Adelaide Centre could form a branch of the Brigade'. The Committee received this letter at its October 1909 meeting, but does not appear to have acted upon it. Nothing more happened for another year, until the monthy Committee meeting in November 1911, which Lindsay attended at the invitation of the chairman, Van Senden. He gave the meeting an outline of the work of both Association and Brigade in New Zealand, and promised to discuss this further with Van Senden and Connor. The next meeting of the Committee, in January, decided to ask Lindsay to become a Committee member. He agreed. By now he had been admitted to membership of the Order as a Serving Brother, presumably in recognition of his services to St John in New Zealand, and on the Committee of the Adelaide Centre he was one of five members of the Order out of a complement of twenty-four.

At the next monthly meeting, in February, Van Senden mentioned that a sub-committee had once looked into the question of a South Australian branch of the Brigade. He next read some papers Lindsay had prepared, 'showing the objects of, and advantages occurring from, the Brigade'. He then moved 'that a branch of the St John Ambulance Brigade be established in South Australia', which the Committee agreed to unanimously. That done, Van Senden moved 'that Mr Lindsay's name be submitted to His Excellency the Governor for appointment as Assistant Commissioner', a motion the Committee also carried. Dr Corbin then proposed that Dr A.H. Hamilton be asked to become District Chief Surgeon (i.e., principal medical officer). Hamilton had been an honorary physician at the Adelaide Hospital, and for the past nineteen years had been one of the Association's examiners. In concluding its business for the day, the Committee then instructed Connor to write to the heads of the Police, Railways and Tramways Departments and the Fire Brigade to ask for their help and co-operation in establishing the Brigade in Adelaide.[12]

Five weeks after this the Centre's *Annual Report* for 1910-11 announced the decision to set up a local Brigade branch. The announcement amounted to several lines only, and noted that the Committee was fortunate in having secured Lindsay's services because of his 'many years' as a District Chief Superintendent in New Zealand. 'Many' in this case meant less than three, though perhaps the exaggeration was excusable in view of the Committee's pleasure at having found someone who already knew how the Brigade functioned and was experienced in organizing its activities.[13]

The Committee met again in May 1911, and once more the formation of a local branch of the Brigade was the main item of business. There was a letter from Lane Mullins 'noting the intention of the Adelaide Centre to

form a division of the Brigade locally'. (Oddly enough, the letter said nothing about the pleasure its author must have been feeling in knowing his seven-year wish was at last being fulfilled.) There was also a parcel of papers on the workings of the Brigade from the secretary of the New South Wales Centre, B.R. Rainsford (who the following year became N.S.W. Brigade secretary as well). Another letter was from Dr Hamilton, who said he wished to decline the offer of appointment as District Chief Surgeon, in view of which the Committee decided to ask Dr Poulton to accept the position instead. The Brigade was again under discussion at the June 1911 Committee meeting. This time the Committee had before it another letter from Mullins, who assented to the formation of the South Australian District under Lindsay's leadership. At the same meeting Lindsay gave his first report as Assistant Commissioner. He said he had been in touch with the railways, police, tramways and fire brigade authorities about the possibility of their sponsoring Brigade divisions among their workers, but did not elaborate on the outcome of these representations.[14]

After this the Brigade in South Australia seems to have stood still for more than a year. Neither Lindsay nor the Centre appear to have achieved much more in that time in getting active divisions formed. The District, it would seem, existed on paper but not in flesh and blood. Lane Mullins' last report to St John's Gate as Commissioner for Australia, written at the end of February 1912, shortly before his position was abolished, noted that the Brigade had been doing good work in New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania. However, he 'regret[ted] that the formation of a District in South Australia [had] not yet been accomplished', and concluded by saying, 'we may hope for a better result in the coming year'. The Brigade in South Australia rates no further mention in St John records until 11 September 1912, when Lindsay advised the Centre Committee of the formation of the first local Brigade division, consisting of twenty-three members of the Municipal Tramways Trust (the chairman of which was a member of the Committee). He also said he had addressed a meeting at Hindmarsh 'at which it [had been] practically decided to form a sub-centre'.[15]

We do not know what caused this fifteen-month delay in adding substance to the notional District, and there is no obvious reason why events should have moved so slowly. Towards the end of 1911 Lindsay had suffered some bereavement, because the December Committee meeting received from him an acknowledgement of a letter of condolence it had apparently sent him. Was he so affected by his loss that he retired from the scene temporarily? Another possibility is that Lindsay found that South Australians were rather more apathetic towards St John work than were the New Zealanders among whom he had recently enjoyed conspicuous success. This seems unlikely, however. The keenness of South Australians for first aid and ambulance work was evident in the steeply rising curves in the Adelaide Centre's graphs for enrolments and certifi-

cates. And the large attendances and enthusiastic ambulance competitions at the annual Association demonstrations showed that the people were prepared to support St John endeavours. A more likely explanation is the sheer time and effort required to convince people that the Brigade was necessary. People might be eager to enter a class, but less enthusiastic about entering a long-term commitment that involved a regular week night parade and practice session and public duty at the weekend. Many potential Brigade recruits were factory and transport workers, and shift work presented problems for them. It helped if employers, like the railways and tramways authorities, allowed their workers time to attend training; but such concessions took time to negotiate. Overcoming such difficulties, as later experience in South Australia showed, sometimes took a long time, and a couple of years could elapse between the staging of a class and the initiation of its graduates into a new Brigade division.

A further possibility is that Lindsay lacked the influence and social position necessary to mobilize an hierarchical body like the Brigade in a conservative post-colonial society whose leaders still aped the class-conscious ways of 'Home'. In other States the Brigade's founders were all prominent medical practitioners, respected members of 'Society', and lieutenants-colonel in Army medical units. Lane Mullins in New South Wales, McWilliams in Western Australia, and George Horne in Victoria all fitted that pattern. And Dr T. Storie Dixson, who took over as head of the New South Wales District when Mullins became Commissioner for Australia, was not only a renowned Sydney physician but a leading member of the New South Wales medical 'Establishment' and a scion of one of the State's socially prominent families. It was through Dixson's influence that Tasmania's first Brigade unit, the Hobart YMCA Division, had been formed. When such men made requests City Fathers, Departmental Heads and Cabinet Ministers took notice; but who would bother listening to a mere Warrant Officer, one, moreover, who was probably only a militiaman? In New Zealand, where the Brigade had been established for some fifteen years by the time he got there, it probably mattered little that Lindsay was of lowly station. His duties as District Superintendent would have been mainly administrative, requiring him to operate within a structure already built. Mingling with the social elite, asking favours of those in high office, persuading newspaper editors to grant generous publicity were matters that possibly did not concern him much in Christchurch. They were facets of Brigade 'work' of which his Commissioner and Chief Surgeon would most likely have taken care. In Adelaide, however, things were rather different. There Lindsay would have had the responsibility for those more subtle aspects of the Brigade's task in setting itself up – the social and political, as well as the administrative. Without 'pull' or power in Adelaide 'Society' his Brigade position would have meant little.

Whatever the reason for the hiatus in the development of the Brigade, nothing much happened for another three years after the decision to

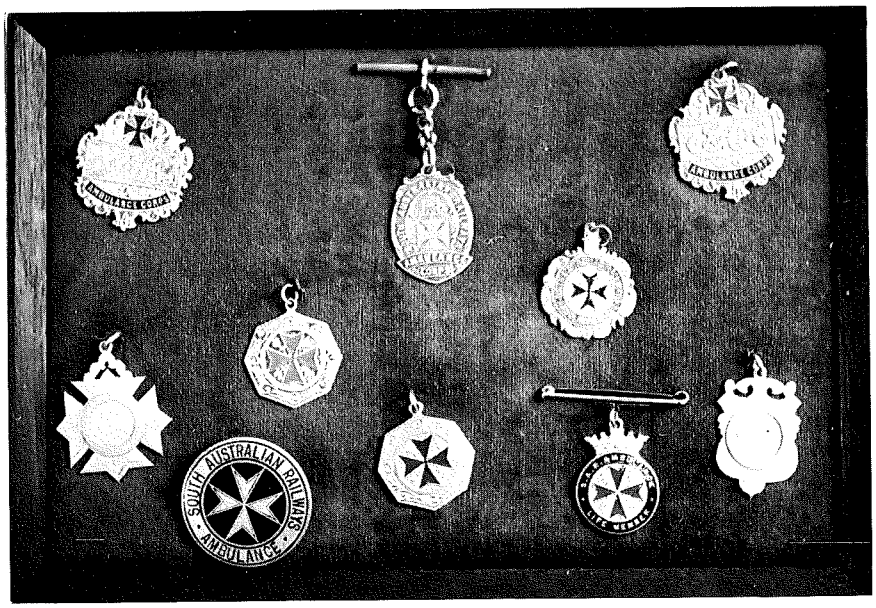
introduce it to South Australia. Apart from the few words Lindsay said at the Centre Committee meeting in September 1911, about forming a tramways division, nothing further was said about the Brigade at Committee meetings for two more years. Indeed little more is heard of Lindsay in that time either. Then at the end of March 1914 the Centre's *Annual Report* for 1913-14 carried the following notice:

> ST. JOHN AMBULANCE BRIGADE
>
> The attention of Secretaries to Racing, Football, &c., Clubs is drawn to the fact that units of the St. John Ambulance Brigade have recently been established in South Australia, and that officers and members of the Brigade are prepared whenever possible, to place their services (*voluntarily*) at the disposal of such clubs at their various fixtures, to render every assistance in cases of accident and sudden illness, and to carry the instructions of such medical practitioners as may be present. To secure the services of members of the Brigade at public functions, athletic fixtures, &c., it is necessary for the Secretary of the body concerned to communicate with
>
> The Assistant Commissioner,
> St. John Ambulance Brigade,
> Mutual Life Chambers,
> 44 Grenfell St., Adelaide,
>
> advising him *fourteen* (14) *days prior* to the date of the fixture, and of informing him of the number of men required, and at the same time sending an equivalent number of passes to admit those detailed for duty to *all parts of the ground, reserves, &c.* In the event of the Brigade members being unable to attend on the dates requested, all passes will be returned with an intimation to that effect.
>
> It is especially to be noted that members of the Brigade cannot accept remuneration for services rendered under any consideration. Subscriptions or donations to assist in furthering the Brigade work may, however, be forwarded to the officer aforementioned.[16]

Presumably Lindsay actually had promises of some divisions by this time, although they were not yet registered as such. What they were, however, is not clear.

A couple of months after the publication of the above notice in the 1913-14 *Annual Report*, Lindsay held an important meeting in the 'ambulance room' (i.e., first aid post) of the North Terrace railway station. This meeting, on 12 May 1914, was with representatives of the Railway Ambulance Corps, that is the body co-ordinating the activities of the various first aid units operating within the South Australian Railways. The meeting agreed that these units should group together to form divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade, of which there would be five – Adelaide, Islington, Mile End, Port Adelaide and Glenelg. These railways divisions would comprise a distinct Corps of the Brigade, and the Railways Ambulance Officer, R.V. Bulman, would be its Chief Superintendent.[17]

The railways divisions began functioning as a Brigade Corps straight away. The Adelaide Racing Club had accepted an offer they made to provide five first aiders (one from each railways division) at all its future



Proficiency and life membership badges of the South Australian Railways Ambulance, the members of which provided the nucleus for the first St John Ambulance Brigade organization in South Australia.

race meetings. The first public duty came only two days after the meeting between Lindsay and the railwaymen, when on Saturday 30 May 1914 a team of railwaymen provided the first aid service at the A.R.C. Birthday races. The fact that they were there representing the St John Ambulance Brigade was signified by the Maltese Cross badges they wore on both sleeves, and which they continued wearing until they were able to obtain the regulation Brigade uniform. The following Monday *The Advertiser* noted approvingly that 'their services were required in the hurdle race, in which there was an accident, and they were promptly on the scene'. The Brigade in South Australia, it seems, was at last in business. Unfortunately *The Advertiser* did not describe how Lindsay directed operations. This was a pity, for he must have created quite a spectacle. One Brigade story about him which survives has it that he used to ride around the race track on horseback, keeping an eye out for mishaps. Ever the complete latterday Knight Hospitaller, he would dash to the scene on his charger whenever he detected trouble, his stretcher bearers hastening after him on foot as fast as their cumbersome equipment would allow.[18]

Lindsay does not seem to have given the Centre further information about the Brigade's progress until a Committee meeting on 23 September 1914, seven weeks after Australia formally entered the First World War. He then told the Committee he had addressed meetings in Adelaide and in the suburb Rose Park to explain the work of the Brigade, in

consequence of which some new divisions had formed. As well as the three divisions of the Railways Corps, Adelaide, Glenelg and Islington (Port Adelaide and Mile End were not mentioned), with a combined strength of fifty-eight, there were four 'unattached' divisions, that is units not connected to any particular industry or employer but based instead on a locality. The latter were Adelaide, with twenty-four members; Port Adelaide, also with twenty-four; Adelaide No. 1 Nursing (i.e., women's), with thirty-five; and Adelaide No. 2 Nursing (also known as YWCA), with forty. There was thus a total membership of 181. Lindsay told the Committee that his Brigade members had attended the recent Adelaide Show as well as a number of race meetings, and 'at these gatherings serious and slight injuries had received first aid treatment'.[19]

Lindsay had clearly been busy over the past few months, racing to make up for the two or three years when his District had only existed on paper. 'The preliminary work of organizing had been exceptionally heavy', he told the Committee at its meeting on 23 September. He also said he hoped that 'as soon as a full administrative staff can be appointed the work will be considerably lightened' – by which he seemed to be suggesting that he was in the process of selecting suitable people as officers. The records make only several references to him after that. First, the Minutes of the same September 1914 meeting of the Committee indicate that he was appointed to a sub-committee of four to investigate the continuing problem of the lack of a metropolitan ambulance service. Then, at the December 1914 meeting, Connor advised the Committee that, because Lindsay, now a Lieutenant, had recently gone overseas with the Australian Military Forces, the Assistant Commissionership was vacant, and so the Railways Ambulance Officer, Bulman, had been appointed to it temporarily. By this stage the Brigade was probably making fairly confident progress. Its members would have been developing the same routines that typified Brigade work elsewhere – regular divisional parades and training sessions, coupled with attendance at their public first aid duties and fundraising to purchase medical supplies and uniforms.[20]

Lindsay quit the scene almost unnoticed. This time there were no speeches and no illuminated address, as there had been when he had left Christchurch six and a half years before. The *Annual Report* of the Adelaide Centre, published several months after he had gone away with the Army, did not wish him *bon voyage*, as it did in the case of a prominent member of the Centre's panel of examiners. The omission seems odd. Lindsay had been a member of the Centre Committee for the past five years, and surely that should have earned him a few words of farewell. Was it simply a case of 'out of sight out of mind'? Was it a matter of class consciousness on the Committee's part – of making a point of singling out socially prominent medicos for mention, but of overlooking the less exalted? Was the Committee displeased with him for having taken so long to accomplish the task it had set him at the beginning of 1911? Perhaps the Committee

reckoned that no thanks were due to Lindsay because the war rather than he was chiefly responsible for the sudden surge of public interest in ambulance work on which the new Brigade divisions were now riding high. Possibly the Committee was so engrossed with the urgency of its wartime duties that it simply forgot the efforts of a humble lieutenant.

We can only speculate about these explanations for the Centre's failure to acknowledge Lindsay's contribution to St John Ambulance objectives in South Australia. Whatever the reason was, the modern observer finds it hard to excuse the Committee's apparent ingratitude to the only one of its members who seems to have regarded the establishment of the Brigade in South Australia as an important priority. It is of course possible that Lindsay was guilty of some grave error or indiscretion, so that tact and the honour of the Order ruled out any public expression of the Committee's appreciation of his labours. Yet there is nothing to suggest that this was the case. To the contrary, Lindsay appears to have retained the confidence of the Committee until the end. The former Warrant Officer, we might therefore surmise, was just a loyal toiler who neither asked for nor received recognition for his efforts. If so, he was in the best tradition of the ancient Hospitallers, though that was hardly an excuse for the Committee's omission in not acknowledging its debt to him in its accustomed way.

The present day observer is left wondering why the Centre dithered and delayed for the decade needed to get the Brigade going in South Australia. Setting up the Brigade in regions where it was not present *was* a priority, at least from the point of view of the Chapter General of the Order (its governing council in Britain) and its St John's Gate executive. Association Centres elsewhere – Sydney, Melbourne, Perth – took the Brigade seriously, seeing its voluntary work as both a logical and necessary extension of the principles taught in Association classes.

Again, we can only speculate on why the Adelaide Centre failed to make the same conclusions about Brigade work as had the Centres in other States. Perhaps this failure had something to do with the elitist nature of the Centre, with its faith in being 'well-connected', with having direct access to 'Establishment' politicians, bureaucrats, educators, businessmen and medical practitioners, not to mention the Vice-Regal incumbent of the day. Centres everywhere sought out influential citizens for the help they could give: parliamentarians could provide grants-in-aid; lord mayors could offer town halls for annual displays; medicos could lend their knowledge and skills in teaching and examining; leading churchmen could spread the word widely among their flocks; captains of industry and directors of large public utilities employed the largest numbers of workers, among whom first aid skills were of more immediate use; and school principals could also provide pupils in large numbers. Going to 'the top' of 'Society' seemed the logical way to achieve most quickly the Association's stated aim of a first aider in every home. Attracting the socially prominent was therefore sensible, and where Association Centres did not do so they

sometimes failed. In the Adelaide Centre, however, there seems to have been a more pronounced preoccupation with cultivating 'Social' connections; and in courting 'Establishment' figures the Centre perhaps lost sight of the need to see that the skills the classes taught were being put to good use, the purpose for which the Brigade had been founded.

Perhaps, too, the Centre's failure to give the Brigade priority arose from its interpretation of the principle of voluntaryism. Everywhere else in Australia voluntaryism was implicit in St John work, the medical practitioners who taught and examined classes donating their time and effort towards the worthwhile end of spreading first aid knowledge. That was not the case in South Australia, however. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Centre from its outset had strictly observed the practice of paying its teachers and examiners, all of whom had to be medical practitioners. Despite the fact, as we also saw, that this was a practice much criticised by some members of the Centre Committee, St John in South Australia had not been running the voluntary service on which other State Centres prided themselves. Rather, the Centre there was conducting a business in the guise of a charity. Committee members certainly occupied their positions in a voluntary capacity, though it could be argued that the good reputation they acquired by doing so was for many of them a useful form of reward. St John rhetoric stressed selfless service, but in South Australia at that time this did not mean the same voluntary service as it did for St John workers elsewhere. *Pro utilitate hominum* ('for the service of humanity'), a motto of the ancient Knights Hospitaller cherished by adherents of the latterday Order, might have tapped a wellspring of altruism among the medical practitioners of other States, where dedicated medical practitioners like Mullins, Dixson, McWilliams and Horne were spending many hours of their own unpaid time on Brigade work. In South Australia, however, there was a Medical Defence Association to keep doctors from breaking rank, and medical 'trade unionism' thus militated against the sort of voluntaryism sustaining the Brigade elsewhere.

With Lindsay gone, control of the Brigade in Adelaide passed *'pro tem.'* to Bulman, as we have just noted. Bulman enjoyed the keen support of the Centre Committee. In the 1914-15 *Annual Report*, the Centre chairman, H.D. Gell (who had succeeded Van Senden in 1911 and was to continue on in office until 1925), spoke of Bulman warmly, albeit in respect of his position of Railways Ambulance Officer, as 'the right man in the right place'. Referring to Bulman's achievements in his railways job, Gell said that 'the ambulance work in the South Australian Railways Department was unequalled for excellence in any such service in the Commonwealth'.

Bulman had probably first come into contact with St John via one of the classes the Centre ran specially for railwaymen in the period before 1910. He earned the Association medallion in 1911-12 at the age of 29, and the following year gained the 'Label', the Association's highest award, presented after three re-examinations (and in South Australia awarded



Delegates to the Australian railways ambulance conference, Adelaide, 1922. The conference chairman was R.V. Bulman, South Australian Railways ambulance officer and sometime acting Assistant Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in South Australia. He is sitting centre, front row.

only seven times previously). He had become Railways Ambulance Officer even before winning this high award, and one of his first duties in the position brought him to the notice of the Centre Committee. This was in October 1912, when he had helped A.N. Day, the secretary to the Railways Commissioner, arrange a field day of the Railways Ambulance Corps at Ambleside in the Adelaide Hills. The Committee used its next *Annual Report* to congratulate Day and Bulman for having staged such 'a splendid exposition of ambulance work under everyday conditions'. Much of the field day had been given over to competitions between teams of railwaymen drawn from the various workshops and depots. The main event was a contest for an ornate shield of polished wood and silver, replete with Maltese Cross, and presented by the Railways Commissioner. On this occasion the Port Pirie team (led by W.H. Rodda) won it, with the Islington Locomotive team (F.C. Nalty) second and Victor Harbour (H.H. Kaiser) third.[21]

Close links had developed between the railways ambulance service and St John Ambulance since the first South Australian railwaymen had undergone Association training almost thirty years before. In 1908 the general traffic manager for the railways, J.B. McNeil, had joined the Centre Committee, and in 1910 A.N. Day also joined him. The invitations to do so were in recognition of the fact that the railways had been the Centre's principal client. In the ten years from 1903-04 to 1913-14 railwaymen gained no less than fifty-five *per cent* of the 3900 certificates the Centre awarded. As that decade went by they had comprised an increasingly large

proportion of the annual output of graduates. In 1903-04 they represented thirty-four *per cent* of the graduating pupils; in 1911-12 the figure was fifty-three *per cent*, in 1912-13 a huge eighty-five *per cent*, and in 1913-14 eighty-three *per cent*. The following year, 1914-15, the war sent the general populace scurrying to St John for training. The number of graduates almost doubled that year, but railwaymen still made up thirty-eight *per cent* of the total.[22]

This rapid expansion of the St John role in training railways personnel seems to have coincided with Bulman's appointment as Railways Ambulance Officer. In these years the Association must almost have resembled one of the Railways Commissioner's training branches. With Bulman's appointment as evidence of its commitment to ambulance work, the Railways Department had encouraged the trained first aiders among its engine drivers, signalmen, fettlers, porters and clerks to form themselves into units of the Railways Ambulance Corps. By 1914 there were some sixteen of these units in the metropolitan area, centred on the stations and workshops at Adelaide, Islington, Mile End, Port Adelaide, Glenelg and Woodville; and as we have just seen, they had formed the nuclei of Lindsay's proposed first Brigade divisions.[23]

Bulman went on to a distinguished career in St John. He taught and examined in first aid for both the railways and St John for nearly forty years; he joined the Centre Committee in 1923; he was admitted to membership of the Order as a Serving Brother and the following year was promoted to Officer Brother, after which he refused further promotions; he became a Life Member of the Centre in 1943; and in 1941 when the Australian Commandery of the Order came into being, he was one of two South Australian Brigade delegates. In this last position he was the person instrumental in promoting the idea of interstate Brigade first aid competitions as a means of raising the standards of Brigade work; and he drew up the regulations the Commandery adopted for running these. At the time of his death in 1946 there were few others in Australia with either his length of experience in first aid or his record of service to St John.

Bulman's stint as Assistant Commissioner was hardly an auspicious introduction to his long and worthy Brigade career. After less than two months in the position, he resigned from it in February 1915. Pressure of work in his railways job was the reason he gave, though he offered to carry on until the Centre Committee found a replacement. He turned down several requests by the Committee to reconsider his decision, but seems to have continued on for several months until about May. It was not his last go at being Commissioner, for he subsequently spent several periods as Acting Commissioner when his successors, George F. Hussey and Dr S.L. Dawkins, were away on leave. By that time he had come back into the active administration of Brigade affairs as District Superintendent.

After Bulman quit there was a period of a month or so when the Brigade was leaderless. During this time the Centre Committee was casting

around frantically for a replacement. The urgency of the matter arose from the fact that, with the first convoys of wounded from the Gallipoli campaign due back soon, the Brigade would need capable leadership if it was to rise to what that occasion would demand. The Committee's first choice was a Mr Kirkham Evans, secretary of Our Boys Institute and a Committee member of five years' standing. When he declined the position the Committee offered it to F.C. Chapple, Headmaster of Prince Alfred College and a member of the Committee since 1899. He, too, declined. A Port Adelaide man, G.H. Walton, wrote in to say he 'would be pleased to accept the position', but the Committee were little interested in him and offered the job to Hussey.

In many respects Hussey was an obvious choice. He was the superintendent (that is, head) of the recently founded Adelaide Central Ambulance, or men's (in contradistinction to the Nursing, or women's) Division of the Brigade. He had been a member of the Centre Committee since 1899, and had St John connections going back to 1887, when he had begun organizing first aid classes for the Literary Societies Union. We have already seen something of Hussey's combative style in our glimpse of him at the 1915 annual meeting of the Centre, when he attacked the doctors who accepted the fee for teaching or examining an Association class. We will be seeing more of his provocative ways later on, for he was to remain Assistant Commissioner (the title then used for the head of an Australian

The Brigade's Glenelg Ambulance Division about 1916, with the Assistant District Commissioner, G.F. Hussey at the centre, front row.



Brigade District) for the South Australian record period of sixteen years. In June 1915, however, the Committee seemed willing to overlook his talent for controversy. By that stage it was becoming increasingly desperate in its search for a suitable leader to guide the infant Brigade during the busy time ahead.

No sooner had Hussey taken over as Assistant Commissioner than he, his fellow Brigade members, and probably all within St John in South Australia, learnt something of the arcane lore of the Order that sponsored their activities. Hussey had been in his new position for only seven months when, in January 1916, the Centre Committee received word from the St John's Gate headquarters of the Brigade 'Overseas' (as distinct from the Brigade 'At Home', that is in Britain) that the recommendation for his appointment had been received in London. There was a hitch, however. The Committee discovered, to its surprise, that 'only those who are members ... of the Order can be given the full rank of Assistant Commissioner'. At this stage Hussey had been involved in St John activities for almost thirty years, but that was still not enough! He had to be admitted to the Order before St John's Gate would set the seal on his appointment! There was one way round this difficulty, the Deputy Commissioner of the Brigade 'Overseas' advised. The Committee could put Hussey's name up for 'recognition', that is nominate him to Chapter General for admission into the Order, so that if he were admitted he could assume the title of his office. In the meantime he would have to be referred to as an '*Acting* Assistant Commissioner'.[24]

This was no trifling matter of semantics, but a grave matter for connoisseurs of the legal niceties of the Order's Charter and Regulations. Jumping someone up the queue of those waiting to be admitted to the Order, as the 2.I.C. of the Brigade 'Overseas' was suggesting should happen in Hussey's case, was an issue of some moment. South Australia at that time had only five members of the Order in all. Moving Hussey up probably meant advancing him over the heads of others equally worthy, even though there could have been few with his tally of years spent serving St John. A special Committee meeting therefore must be convened to consider the proposal. This took place on 26 January 1916. What Committee members said at the meeting is unknown, but in the end they decided to put Hussey's name forward, as suggested. The recommendation was passed on to London, which sat on the matter for nine months, no doubt until Chapter General had considered it; then at the end of October 1916 London advised that Hussey had been duly elected as a Serving Brother. His formal investiture took place at Government House on 2 March 1917, when the Governor, Sir Henry Galway, presented him with his insignia of rank – the Maltese Cross of the Order suspended from a black silk ribbon – in a ceremony attended by the other South Australian members of the Order. He was now of the 'elect' – on the 'inside' of St John affairs, whereas previously he had only paced the perimeter.[25]

Hussey was probably as well suited as anyone else in the Adelaide Centre to be the Assistant Commissioner. He was public spirited, he had the capacity for enterprising leadership, he had shown a long-term commitment to the Centre and to the voluntaristic principles espoused by the Order. In addition he already had some brief experience of Brigade life. He was one of a group of businessmen who had formed the Adelaide Central Division in November 1914. This division, of which Hussey was the elected superintendent (or 'platoon' commander), started with twenty-five members and met in the YMCA rooms in Gawler Place. A number of its members had been Brigade members in Britain, and others had served in medical units during the Boer War. They all regarded themselves as belonging to an auxiliary of the Army Medical Corps, and several of them soon left the division to join medical units departing for overseas battlefields. As superintendent of the new division, Hussey of his own volition in early May 1915 had taken himself off on a special trip to Sydney and Melbourne to look at Brigade organization and practice in the New South Wales and Victorian Districts. On his return he gave the Centre Committee a full report on his interstate visits, which possibly helped convince his fellow committeemen that his interest in the Brigade warranted offering him the Assistant Commissionership, even though his combative nature might have counted against him.[26]

The Brigade organization which Hussey inherited was still rudimentary, but it was at least established. It was, moreover, functioning reasonably well despite the dislocation Lindsay's sudden departure and Bulman's resignation had caused. His first annual report, at the end of March 1916, nine months after he had taken over, described his little army of first aiders. The ranks had thinned somewhat because some members had left for military service. Strength was down to 168. There had also been some shuffling between divisions, the number of which was down to six. Islington Railway, Port Adelaide, Adelaide No. 1 Nursing and Adelaide No. 2 (YWCA) Nursing were still in business, and had been joined by Adelaide Central. Adelaide Railway Division was not mentioned, nor was Glenelg Railway though a 'Glenelg' division was. As for their work, Hussey reported that

> members of the male divisions attend race meetings held by the Adelaide Racing, Tattersalls, Adelaide Hunt, and Port Adelaide Clubs, and have been able to render first aid in many cases of accident on the course. Street accidents have also been attended by the Brigade men. Members of the nursing divisions are offering their services in connection with the Red Cross Convalescent Hospital. Adelaide Central No. 1 and Adelaide No. 2 YWCA Nursing Divisions have visited several country towns, and given demonstrations of first-aid efforts, resulting in arousing interest in ambulance work, and in augmenting the funds of the Red Cross Society – in one instance (McLaren Vale) £24 was the nett result.[27]

All this was no doubt commendable effort, but Hussey's report hardly left the impression that the infant Brigade was taking adult strides yet.

'Several' members, he said, were now wearing uniforms purchased with grants from the racing clubs, but most seemed to be without them. 'Members cannot be expected to purchase their own uniforms at a cost of £4', the report pointed out, because 'they give their services free and so it is necessary to rely upon financial help from friends of the work'. Hussey seemed to think it fitting for Brigade members to be mendicants, like the ancient Hospitallers. He concluded his report by decrying the general unwillingness of most graduates from Association first aid classes to link up with the Brigade. 'There ought to be a division of the Brigade in every town, and several in the city of Adelaide', he claimed, perhaps unaware that this reproachful tone (which also typified his subsequent reports) could possibly drive as many people away as it might attract.[28]

If the Brigade did not expand rapidly in South Australia during the wartime years, as it did in other States, neither did it decline greatly. It continued on more or less at the same level as when Hussey took it over: membership fluctuated, but Brigade strength remained much the same at the end of the war as it had been at the beginning. From 181 in September 1914 it had dropped to 168 in March 1916, peaked at 200 a year later, and was at 174 in June 1919. Numbers of divisions had fluctuated too. The seven divisions of 1914 had dropped to five in March 1917, though by June 1919 there were eight, including three new divisions, Adelaide Railway (presumably revitalized), Great Northern, and Snowtown-and-Brinkworth, the last two being the first country divisions. The basic work remained much the same, too. The men's divisions gave most of their time to meetings of the metropolitan racing clubs, but also began attending country race meetings, at Gawler, Peterborough and Onkaparinga. The staple fare of the women's divisions at this stage was war work for the government's Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) scheme, which we will consider below. Both men's and women's divisions also did first aid duty at occasional public gatherings like the annual shows of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society, apart from which they worked to raise money for their uniforms and medical supplies.

Hussey was considerably vexed to think that, in attending these various fixtures, his 'troops' had to pay their own fares. In 1916 he applied to the Commissioner of Public Works for free rail passes for Brigade members travelling to attend their public duties. The Commissioner refused this request, much to Hussey's annoyance. Two years later the issue was still causing him 'much concern', particularly in relation to country race meetings. The 1918 *Annual Report* set out his grievance:

> The members voluntarily give up their time and services without fee or reward whatsoever in the amelioration of suffering, and it is only reasonable to ask that the authorities should grant them free travelling when on duty and in uniform.[29]

The mendicant turned away empty handed might mutter peevishly, but not so his followers. Rank and file Brigade members probably paid their

own way uncomplainingly. Having a chance to put their first aid skills to use was chiefly what mattered to them. As we are about to see, the war opened to them a range of new opportunities for that, and their response in contributing to the war effort was notable. At the same time they also began taking direct action in doing something about the continued failure of government and city fathers alike to provide Adelaide with an ambulance transport service.

3. *The First World War*

The First World War, as historians and journalists in search of an 'angle' continue to point out, was the first great national occasion shared by the peoples of the States comprising the Commonwealth of Australia. One historian, Bill Gammage, puts it this way: 'Australians hailed England's declaration of war on Germany with the most complete and enthusiastic harmony in their history'.[30] There were dissenters, of course, who deplored their fellow citizens' militaristic fervour; but probably few of these were in St John Ambulance. As a loyalist body, whose Sovereign Head was the King, whose Grand Prior, the Duke of Connaught, was a brother of the previous King and uncle of the present, and whose local president was the State Governor, St John was in the forefront of the organizations to rally round the flag the moment war was declared.

St John Ambulance was thus unashamedly patriotic. In South Australia no less than in other States St John people never doubted the righteousness of the Empire's cause. No sooner had war been declared on 4 August 1914 than the Centre Committee decided to run special classes for those wanting to be wartime medical auxiliary workers. It also lodged advertisements in the local press for people who, having undergone its program of training, would be prepared to travel overseas as auxiliaries with the Australian Army Medical Corps. Among the applications it received were seventy from men and women who already held certificates.

But even among loyalists there are differing degrees of patriotism, and that of the South Australian St John bodies was more restrained than the fervour of St John elements in other States. In South Australia, for example there seems to have been little of the jingoism that emerged from within the Brigade in Sydney. It was there in June 1915 that the District Commissioner, Dr Thomas Storie Dixson (who had undertaken his lengthy postgraduate training in Germany), warned Brigade members that the dreaded Huns had 'set their hearts on obtaining certain British possessions, such as New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia', and that Australians 'would have to set their teeth if they were to hold their country'. In South Australia the patriotism of the St John adherents was of more subdued a hue; and perhaps that reflected something of the differences between the Australian States. Vilifying the Germans might raise cheers at a Brigade rally in New South Wales; but in South Australia,

where a German and Lutheran influence was pervasive, a less vociferous loyalism typified the St John commitment to the Empire At War.[31]

There had never been any doubt within St John over what its duty should be during a war. The Association had always known it should be one of the key agents of civil defence, training the civilian population to meet the medical emergencies which war might throw up. The Brigade, too, was certain of its role: it should be a civilian auxiliary of the medical units of the armed services, feeding into the latter trained and disciplined medical assistants, and ready to back up the military medical services wherever needed.

Something of the spirit abroad within St John came out in a letter-to-the-editor which Sergeant Doe of the Brigade's recently formed Adelaide Central Division sent to *The Daily Herald* in November 1914. Appealing for new members to boost the Brigade's war preparedness, he wrote as follows:

> There is another way by which men may be prepared for the noble work of attending the wounded and rendering valuable first aid which has saved thousands of lives, not only in war but in our everyday life. I allude to the St John Ambulance Brigade one of the objects of which is to prepare men to fill in the gaps of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Recently established in Adelaide is a Division of the Brigade, with a number of members who are thoroughly enthusiastic in the good work making headway. Although only established a few weeks three members have already been accepted for active service, and there are several more awaiting a call. Quite a number of the members have served in various divisions in England and some served with the Royal Army Medical Corps in the South African war, so the division is able to obtain good practical instruction in drilling and first aid. We want every man with a First Aid certificate to come along and join. It costs nothing, only a little time for practice and drill. The benefit to our fellow creatures is immeasurable.[32]

The public failed to respond to Doe's appeal. As the previous section pointed out, new members did *not* come flocking into the Brigade divisions in Adelaide.

People did, however, come forward in unprecedented numbers to avail themselves of first aid training. In the last chapter we saw how from about 1908-09 the graph for annual enrolments in first aid and home nursing courses had begun rising steadily, a rate of increase which continued up to the outbreak of war. During the first months of war, in the period up to the landings at Anzac Cove, the rate of increase climbed even more steeply. Overall enrolments, the numbers seeing their courses through to completion, taking the examination, and earning the certificate all showed the same trend, as the following graph shows.

These indices of Association effort peaked in the year following the Gallipoli debacle, when Australians learned to their cost what mass slaughter industrialized wars could wreak. Significantly, in that year every

index was more than double that of two years previously. It was as if the danger to troops in the front line was in direct proportion to the willingness of those at home to have themselves trained in medical skills. The loss of relatives, friends, neighbours and workmates from every suburb, town and village across the State, and the fear of what might still lie ahead, prompted South Australians to come to St John as they had never done before. Every first aid class the Association taught was full in the critical year, 1915-16, and even more classes could have been taught but for the shortage of doctors both to teach and examine those wanting to enrol. After rising to a peak in that year of fear and danger the indices dropped back by the end of the war, to the levels of the pre-war period, as people became weary with the war and the emergency conditions it had led to.

The years of maximum effort, 1914-15 and 1915-16, left the Association surprised at what it had accomplished. In those years sub-centres opened in distant country towns that had never before seen the works of St John Ambulance. Previously the Association in South Australia had been a creature of the capital city. It had rarely extended itself beyond the suburbs and a few towns fairly close to Adelaide. Now, however, sub-centres opened much further afield, in places as far apart as Quorn, Peterborough and Terowie well to the north of Adelaide, Tumby Bay and Port Lincoln on the lower Eyre Peninsula, Yankalilla to the south of the capital on the Fleurieu Peninsula, Oodnadatta in the far northern semi-desert, and Naracoorte in the bottom southeastern corner of the State. The spread across country districts was nowhere as thorough or as even as the Association Centres 'next door' were managing to achieve in New South Wales and Victoria, and the great majority of the classes were still being taught in Adelaide and its hinterland; but, for the first time in its forty-year career the Centre was teaching regularly beyond the capital city.

Other worthwhile trends in training developed during the wartime years. One was that many more people stayed on to finish their courses once they had enrolled. In pre-war years the numbers completing courses was usually less than seventy-five *per cent* of those who had enrolled. Pupils fell by the wayside for various reasons – a poor lecturer or disrupted series of lectures, poor motivation, inconvenient times or locations of the classes, illness, dislike of examinations, and sometimes (particularly in the more remote areas) the Centre's own failure to find an examiner. During the war people seemed more determined to find ways round these problems, and so the rate of completion climbed appreciably. For most of the wartime period, 1914-15 to 1918-19, the average rate was 95.5 *per cent.* After the war, as with the other measures of achievement, the rate dropped back to the pre-war level.

A further trend deserving comment were the ratios of women's classes to men's, and of female enrolments to male. The previous chapter made the point that, in the very early years of the Adelaide Centre, women had

proved themselves the keener and more able students of first aid. That was only in the very early years, however. Later on, as working men – on the docks, the railways, the tramways, and in the police force and fire brigade – came to appreciate the value of first aid knowledge on the job, the number of men enrolling and graduating from the classes far outweighed the number of women. During the war, on the other hand, the number of women graduating from the classes for a time outstripped the number of men doing so, as the following table shows:

Women graduates as a percentage of total graduates

1913-14	1914-15	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	1920-21
13.4%	65.6%	52.7%	18.9%	37.6%	48.8%	19.2%	9.4%

The reason for this is fairly obvious. Men wanting to help the patriotic cause only had to enlist. Women, however, could not join up for armed service unless they were trained nurses. An alternative for a woman wanting to 'do her bit' was to do a course of first aid training, then make herself available to a Voluntary Aid Detachment for service in one of the military hospitals or convalescent homes. The result for St John Ambulance was an upsurge in women's classes in both first aid and home nursing.

The wholesale increase in training, not surprisingly, greatly heartened the Centre Committee. Its pleasure shone through in the speech the Chairman, H.D. Gell, delivered at the annual general meeting in the Grenfell St. head office of the Centre on 16 June 1915. In moving the adoption of the *Annual Report* he said

> 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 study. [The Committee] rejoiced to know that nearly all the men who had left South Australia in connection with the [military] ambulance [units] had been originally trained in classes under the Association. There was no doubt they would be able to do a lot of good in tending the wounded soldiers. (Hear, hear.) The passes had been so numerous this year that they represented one-sixth of the total number during the 31 years of the Centre's work. The ladies had been especially successful in their studies. (Hear, hear.) ... With the arrival of the wounded soldiers from the front, there would be a great need for the services of the Brigade, and it was a question for consideration whether the equipment available, including that of the Army Medical Corps, would be sufficient to meet the demands. He was pleased to see that the Red Cross Society was engaged side by side with the Association in rendering aid to the soldiers at the front. (Hear, hear.) They owed a debt of gratitude to their secretary [B.S. Connor], who was an indefatigable worker, [and] they should if possible increase [his] honorarium. (Hear, hear.)[33]

The lavish praise bestowed on all heads so freely was, perhaps, a measure of the Committee's sense of fulfilment. To feel that one was doing vital work for one's country and fellow citizens, to be acquitting oneself well at a time of trial, and to be daily vindicating one's reason for being – all

this would have been sufficient to make even the unpatriotic glow with self-satisfaction.

The accomplishment was one of which the Centre could be justifiably proud. The record volume of students trained was certainly a major achievement for the war effort. It was indeed the principal accomplishment in the career of the Adelaide Centre to date. As the chairman, Gell, had pointed out, the number being trained represented a large proportion of the total number of pupils who had been through the Association's books since 1884. Moreover, the 3918 certificates the Centre awarded during the wartime years represented a ratio of one trained first aider for each 118 of the State's population. (The ratio for the 6546 who had simply completed training without gaining a certificate was even better – 1:71.) This was still a long way short of a first aider in every home; but it was the closest the Centre had so far come to that distant goal, and it did bring the goal within sight.

The other principal St John achievement during the wartime period was the tradition of unobtrusive but practical community service which the Brigade's South Australia District established for itself during these its earliest years. The Brigade members began showing that they were not simply quaint folk who liked dressing up in military-style uniforms to play a public game of 'doctors' at race meetings, Royal Shows and street processions. Rather, they were a dependable body of people who could be relied on to do a good job whenever occasion demanded. A 'good job' in the case of the Brigade implied several things. First, it meant giving swift, effective, sympathetic and reassuring help to those in need whenever someone was injured or became ill at the public gatherings Brigade members attended. It also meant just being present on such occasions, reassuring the crowd by looking smart and proficient. The second of these roles was no less important than the first, for whenever crowds gather someone among them usually falls ill or gets hurt, creating consternation all around. The sight of a Brigade uniform among them sets them at ease, allowing them to enjoy the spectacle they have come to watch safe in the knowledge that if someone suddenly needs help an 'ambulance' is close at hand.

Much of the Brigade's wartime work was at the patriotic demonstrations and carnivals arranged to raise money for the war effort and for war-related charities. In November 1915, for example, men of the Adelaide Central Division were on duty at the Glenelg Oval at a fund-raiser for the District Trained Nurses Society. The nurses had set up various simulated accidents and a temporary emergency hospital to demonstrate procedures like roller bandaging, application of hot foments, dressing of wounds, changing sheets beneath a patient, and administering medicine. They also showed the public how to improvise if caught short when medical emergencies arose. One example of such ingenuity was a cradle made from a circular hatbox, though probably that particular



Men and women of the Brigade with a decorated horse-drawn wagon loaned by Graves Hill & Co. used in a fundraising demonstration at Woodville in April 1918.

demonstration did not include a staged emergency childbirth beforehand – as it might have done in a later era. The same day the Adelaide Central men were out at Glenelg the men of the Islington Division were on duty twenty-two kilometres to the north, at a rifle field day at Outer Harbour. Public entertainments were more simple in an era before the cinema, motor races and rock concerts. Yet the cuts, abrasions, headaches, bruises, sprains, fainting attacks, insect bites, blisters, heatstroke and sunburn were probably little different then from now; and even an innocuous public fund-raising demonstration by nurses would yield its tally of such injuries and illnesses.

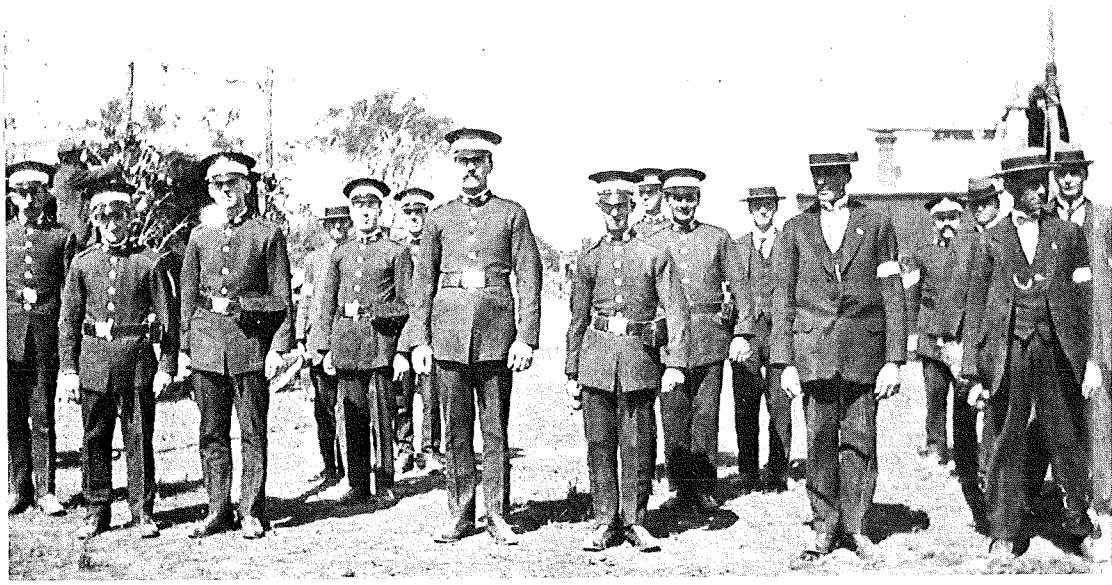
Some of the most popular of the wartime entertainments were the street processions of decorated floats to raise money for patriotic causes like the comforts fund, Belgian relief, the Red Cross, and the repatriation of wounded servicemen. On such occasions Brigade members would not only be on duty along the route of the procession; they would sell badges and buttons for the cause being promoted, rattle collection boxes, and get up their own float. The firm of Graves Hill & Coy. always loaned two of its lorries for the Brigade floats. The Rundle St. emporium, James Marshall's, supplied the furniture to go on the lorries, from the trays of which members of the women's divisions demonstrated home nursing procedures, while those from the men's divisions showed off first aid techniques. One sure means of getting a cheer from the crowd for the Brigade floats was to have convalescent soldiers acting as the patients. The men of the Adelaide Central division always brought their two-wheeled

litter to these street processions. It was one they had made for themselves, probably using old bicycle wheels. When not in use at their public duties, the litter was kept at the central police station so that police could use it in emergencies.[34]

One of the Brigade's more notable wartime contributions came in the wake of the Gallipoli campaign. Seriously wounded men evacuated from the fighting around the already fabled Anzac Cove were sent back to Australia by hospital ship. At first the ships went to Sydney for disembarkation, and the men sent from there to their home States by train. Later on, as the tide of wounded swelled, they were also landed in Melbourne and Adelaide for the rail journey home. Both women and men from the Adelaide Brigade divisions acted as escorts for the wounded on the Adelaide-Melbourne and Melbourne-Adelaide trips, accompanying some 300 injured Diggers while the scheme ran.[35]

This project was responsible for ending a taboo which had previously governed the formation of Association classes in Australia. This was the requirement that women only might join the Association's home nursing classes. Before the hospital ships got back to Australia the Association executive in Adelaide queried Red Cross headquarters in Melbourne to see what special training the Red Cross was recommending for Victorian men chosen to escort the wounded Anzacs. They were possibly surprised to learn that none other than the Association's own home nursing course was the standard. The Adelaide Centre then ran at least two men's classes in home nursing in Adelaide in the year following the Gallipoli campaign. Twenty-eight men underwent training, and twenty-five passed the examination. The project had not only opened up the home nursing course as a program worthy for men, it had probably also been the factor that had clinched the Assistant Commissionership for Hussey. The imminence of the arrival of the first contingent of wounded in mid-1915 had made

Men of one of Adelaide's new Brigade Divisions form up, possibly at a wartime fundraising carnival on the Glenelg oval, late 1915.





Women of one of Adelaide's Nursing Divisions of the Brigade (probably the No.2, or YWCA) in their new uniforms, April 1917.

urgent the matter of appointing a new Brigade leader. The Centre Committee could see that the success of the St John contribution to the scheme really depended on the co-operation of the Brigade. Having someone to direct Brigade effort was therefore necessary, and so the Committee decided on Hussey rather more hastily than it might otherwise have done.[36]

There were other equally worthy wartime efforts by Brigade members. Nurse Bevilaqua, superintendent of the Adelaide No. 2 (YWCA) Nursing Division, for instance, had a block made up for printing cards which showed the pressure points of the body. Her division gave a demonstration of first aid, for which they charged sixpence (5 cents) admission. This raised £2/18/6 – enough to cover the cost of printing 40,000 cards. They sold these to the public for a penny each, and gave one to every soldier leaving for the front. Whether the resultant knowledge of pressure points (something the Association no longer teaches) saved any lives, or stopped much bleeding, is hard to say; but the incident showed something of the enterprising spirit on which the Brigade prided itself.[37]

Brigade enterprise was evident in other directions, too. Brigade members made much of their own equipment, and what they could not make they bought with hard-earned money. In 1916-17, for example, the women of the No. 2 (YWCA) Nursing Division worked hard to raise money to instal street first aid cabinets at key points in central Adelaide. These cabinets were of cast steel, and with permission of the Municipal Tramways Trust were fastened to tramways standards, one at the

southeastern corner of Victoria Square and the other at the junction of Currie and King William Sts. The cabinets were the division's answer to the city's poor ambulance transport facilities. The idea behind them was that they would be kept stocked with medical supplies; police and St John officials kept hold of the keys; and when someone was injured nearby first aid materials would be easily accessible. The women of the division ran street stalls and gave first aid demonstrations to raise the money to build and equip the cabinets. On one occasion the Wellington Square Methodist congregation helped their fundraising efforts by staging a fête, part of which was a 'nursery rhyme' carnival. In what must have been a novel departure from their normal worshipful routines, the Wesleyans dressed up as nursery rhyme characters to give their audience vocal items interspersed with first aid displays by the women of the division. They charged sixpence admission, and raised £20, which means that some 800 people must have paid to enter succeeding sessions of these frolics. Unfortunately, all this effort was not to much avail, even though the first aid cabinets were duly installed. Vandals broke them open and scattered the contents within the first week. The women restocked them and fitted



Members of an English Brigade Division replenishing a roadside first aid cabinet, probably early 1920s. The Brigade in both Adelaide and Sydney experimented unsuccessfully with this idea during the First World War.

new padlocks, but they were to be such a frequent target of louts with nothing better to do than smash up public amenities it is doubtful if they ever really served their intended purpose. One of the men's divisions took them over in 1919, but with no better luck; and in 1923 the division gave in and removed them altogether.[38]

For one reason other than the installation of the first aid cabinets, 1917 was a memorable year for the women of the No. 2 (YWCA) Nursing Division. That was the year they went into uniform, and doing so for these women meant the attainment of something special. Much was expected of the Brigade member who chose to do her St John work under YWCA auspices: she had to be prepared to make do with little, and she had to retain her YWCA loyalties while labouring for St John. Beryl Fegan, on whose historical research this book relies heavily, has written about the division's first couple of years as follows:

> The nursing divisions had to raise money for their own equipment, and this included bed and bedding and roller bandages as well as the first aid equipment. ... The [YWCA] Division accepted an offer from the men of the Islington Division to make them a stretcher for 14/6 ($1.45). They also looked into the cost of a small tin box for use as a kit, because at first they had relied mainly on smelling salts for cases of fainting and on the men for any other equipment. At the end of 1916 they sent to England for a uniform sample and by April 1917 they wore uniform for the first time on public duty. It was an indoor uniform comprising a white pique dress, white apron, stiff collar and cuffs and a Sister Dora cap. Their first aid equipment was then carried in the apron pockets and usually consisted of roller and triangular bandages, safety pins, smelling salts, and dressings. A proper first aid kit was first used in 1918. The No. 2 Division was formed as an activity of the YWCA ... as a wartime service, but it meant that its members had to join in other YWCA activities and to conform to its rules. At one time this meant having a quarter hour of physical activities at the commencement of each meeting, and at another time they were required to start with a quarter hour of Bible study. In addition members were expected to teach first aid to the Junior Club members of the YWCA and to workroom girls in their lunch hours. Members of the YW committee would look in on their meetings and sometimes ask them to give a demonstration to one of the other groups.[39]

Two of the YWCA Division's early 'divisional surgeons' (i.e., medical training officers) achieved local fame, allowing members of the division to share their reflected glory. The first of their surgeons was Dr Phoebe Chapple, daughter of F.C. Chapple, the headmaster of Prince Alfred College. After war broke out Dr Chapple left Adelaide for war service in England, where she worked as a surgeon in a hospital for wounded soldiers at Aldershot. She later entered the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps as a captain, when that body formed for service in France; and it was there that she won the Military Medal for an act of gallantry. This had occurred after her unit had taken shelter in trenches during a Zeppelin raid. A direct hit on her trench killed nine of the forty women sheltering there, and





wounded many others. With few materials available she treated all the injured on her own.

The YWCA Division's other famous surgeon was Dr Jospeh Cook Verco, who had been on the Association's first panel of lecturers back in 1885. He came out of retirement to help the division out, probably at the urging of his wife, who looked on the YWCA as her 'favourite' charity. Verco was widely regarded for his teaching ability, and so the YWCA Division invited along their sisters in the Adelaide No. 1 Nursing Division whenever he was to give a lecture. The women learnt more than medical skills on these occasions, for Verco's custom was to start each meeting with a session of Bible study. Verco received his knighthood while still acting as divisional surgeon, and was said to have been the first medical man to be knighted in South Australia for purely medical and scientific service. He and his wife took a parental interest in the division; and it must have been like a family reunion for them all when they conducted a special meeting of the division to welcome Phoebe Chapple back home to the division in October 1919.[40]

Few members of the public would have known about it, but the Brigade's two Adelaide nursing divisions were probably among the hardest working of all the women's wartime auxiliaries in South Australia. Apart from their regular Brigade work (divisional parades, public duties and fundraising), which continued whether there was a war or not, forty women from the divisions put their names down for service with the government's Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) scheme. The 'V.A.D's.', as they came to be known in both this war and the next, were semi-official medical auxiliary units composed of men and women (but mainly women) with first aid training. Most of them came from St John or Red Cross ranks, and they worked as voluntary aides in military hospitals and convalescent homes, or in other branches of the services that dispensed comforts to the troops. Some of the Brigade women worked in the convalescent hospital the Army opened in Woodville; and many worked as escorts on the trains shuttling wounded veterans between Melbourne and Adelaide.

The VAD scheme provided an unusual opportunity for two complementary but rival organizations, St John and the Red Cross, to work together in harness. The Red Cross Society was a newcomer to South Australia, a local branch having been set up only in early 1915. At first there was a strong St John voice in the branch, since Gell, Connor and Dr R. Brummitt (one of the Association's examiners) joined its committee, but such harmony had not always existed between the two bodies elsewhere. Indeed, dissatisfaction within the Order of St John at Red Cross

◄ Top: Troops repatriated from the war zones watching an entertainment provided by the VAD at their reception centre, Outer Harbour; bottom: they sit down to a lunch served by VAD members, early 1918.

attempts to cope with injuries during the Franco-Prussian war had been one of the factors prompting the Order to found the St John Ambulance Association. The problem was, and in many respects still is, that both St John and Red Cross each pride themselves on being *the* expert in organizing lay persons for effective medical action during emergencies. The combination of a limited potential clientele and a scarcity of patrons usually ensures keen competition between them. During wars, however, conditions are hardly normal. They each have such ample work to do that co-operation between them is the best means of getting it all done. So close did the co-operation become via the VAD scheme during the First World War and the Second that many volunteers were not quite sure whom they were working for – St John Ambulance, the Red Cross or the VAD. A further clue to the closeness of the bond was the Brigade stationery: during both wars its letterhead bore the Red Cross as well as the Maltese plus the phrase *'A part of the Red Cross Organization of the British Empire'*. We cannot be quite sure if the Red Cross regarded the kinship as being that close, but there is no doubt that St John people valued the fraternal bond. At the end of the war Gell was probably speaking for all St John VAD workers when he wrote in the 1918-19 *Annual Report* that

> the organic union of the St John Ambulance Association and the Red Cross during the period of the Great War has been of inestimable value, making for economy and efficiency, with mutual benefit to all concerned.[41]

The VAD's, whether affiliated with St John or the Red Cross, got little in return other than the sense of having given worthwhile service. To belong to a VAD unit they had to pay a 2/6 (25 cent) subscription, and had to attend regular practice sessions. Any expenses they incurred they had to meet themselves, except if travelling interstate (as when on escort duty), in which case military authorities paid. They had to be ready for duty at a moment's notice, and if going on escort duty they must be prepared to be away for two or three days at a time.[42]

Apart from these military duties the St John VAD's helped out during several other local emergencies. During 1918, for example, an outbreak of food poisoning among staff at the Children's Hospital seriously depleted the nurses' ranks. St John women serving with the VAD's filled the gap, day and night, for several days while the emergency lasted. Then during the first part of 1919, with the war barely over, they helped out again during what has arguably been Australia's greatest natural disaster – the epidemic of 'Spanish' or pneumonic influenza. Some 13,000 Australians died as a result of this scourge in less than a year. The war took roughly 60,000 Australian lives in four and a quarter years, which means that the Australian death rate from 'Spanish' 'flu was higher than that from the war. In other States St John volunteers caught the virus and died as a result of working as aides in the emergency hospitals set up to nurse the great flood of 'flu victims which the established hospitals could not handle. We are

unsure if any St John workers in South Australia met a similar fate, though many members of the nursing divisions volunteered and were accepted for duty in the emergency isolation hospital set up in the Old Exhibition Building on North Terrace. In addition several went to the country to help out at the Burra and Wallaroo hospitals. With all this varied VAD work behind them at the war's end it was not surprising that many of the St John women later received the VAD medal for 1000 hours of war work.[43]

When peace finally returned near the end of 1918 Australians welcomed it thankfully. The public thanksgiving services held in towns and cities right across the nation were a sign that the people were weary with the war and with all the suffering, bereavement and political animosity it had occasioned. A further sign particularly pertinent to the St John bodies was one we have already noted – the slump in the numbers coming forward for training in St John classes. The latter was to be expected and not to be mourned: although the wartime emergency had been good for St John business and had given the organization a sense of purposefulness, the St John bodies no longer required a war to sustain them. The war had given Association and Brigade both experience and self-confidence. In the peace ahead these 'profits of war' would be useful as St John Ambulance sought a wider role in South Australia.

4. *Ambulance transport services in Adelaide*

Ever since their formation in England in the 1870s and 80s the St John Ambulance Association and St John Ambulance Brigade had always taken a keen interest in ambulance transport. Both Association and Brigade looked on their own activities as 'ambulance work'. Teaching first aid (the Association's specialty) and systematically applying first aid knowledge in real life (the Brigade's chosen role) were to them integral parts of a process ending in the carrying to hospital of people unfortunate enough to have been injured.

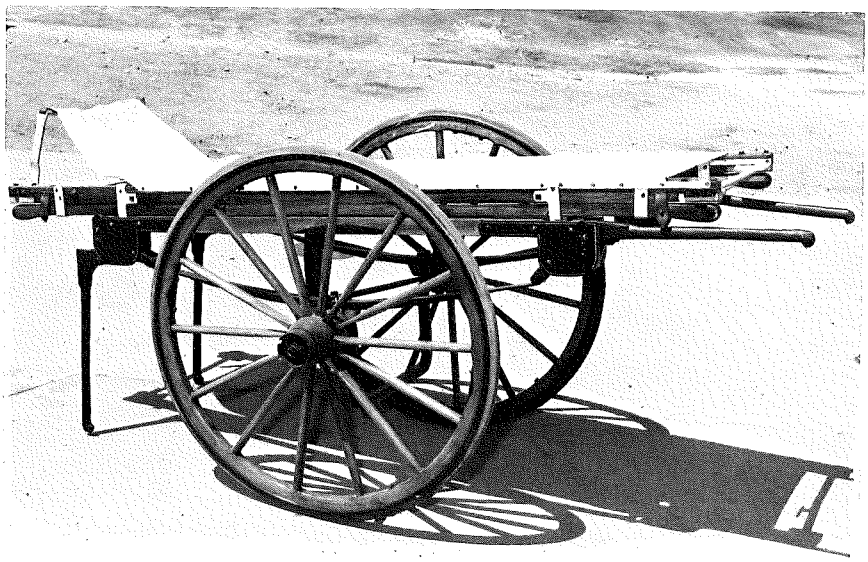
The notion that ambulance transport was a different activity to first aid was an idea which early Association and Brigade adherents would have had difficulty understanding. Ambulance technology was then still in its infancy. 'Ambulance' in the 1870s and 80s meant the two-wheeled litter, a stretcher mounted on wheels which an attendant pushed – hence the very word 'ambulance', borrowed from the French *ambulant*, an adjective meaning 'itinerant', 'strolling', 'something walked with'. It was from this source that the name 'St John Ambulance' also derived: the Order of St John had designed its own two-wheeled litter, and its first courses were intended to teach the public how to use this device, known as the St John ambulance to distinguish it from similar vehicles. Only later did 'ambulance' come to mean a horse-drawn wagon fitted with stretchers; and only in the first decade of the new century did the word begin being applied to motor vans.

Similarly, if the concept of the ambulance as a high-technology, radio-controlled life support system was alien, so too the idea of the present day ambulance officer was still in the future. In the very few places where he was found – women did not 'man' ambulances then – the ambulance operator was simply a strong man who (if his patients were fortunate) had some first aid knowledge. The birth of the modern ambulance officer was still many, many decades away: the professsional paramedical specialist whose highly developed and highly specific skills in moving the ill complement those of the medical practitioner had not yet been conceived.

The lines we now draw between first aid and ambulance work, between emergency medical treatment by the trained amateur and by the fulltime professional, were not therefore distinctions which earlier generations made. One could be an 'ambulancer' simply by taking the St John Ambulance first aid course. And since St John was training 'ambulancers', it had a direct interest in public ambulance transport facilities.

There were various facets to this interest. Where such facilities existed under the control of some other agency, St John wished to improve the standards of training and the competence of the operators, and it wished to ensure that the training was done via the Association. That was the line St John at first followed in Perth and Brisbane. Where several agencies had started up their own services and were running in competition with each other, St John could step in to co-ordinate their effort. That was what St John did in Sydney. Where there were no facilities at all, St John could launch into creating them itself, which is what the Victorian branch did. Or it could try to encourage other agencies – the police, the fire brigade, the railways, municipal councils, the public hospitals – to take on the task of developing the facilities. This was the approach St John in South Australia tried, and it was the least effective. No other agency was greatly interested in taking charge, or in incurring the likely costs such a responsibility would impose. The result was that Adelaide went without anything resembling an ambulance service until 1916, by which time the other State capitals had had ambulance transport systems for anything up to thirty years.

Although the Association Centre held back from sponsoring the development of ambulance transport in Adelaide, the subject was one that greatly exercised the mind of the Centre Committee. The Committee indeed was *obliged* to ponder the matter because the fourth of the objectives it had set for itself when it formed in 1884-85 was *'the development of an Ambulance Corps for the Transport of the Sick and the Injured'*. The Committee actually took some positive steps towards that goal when it persuaded its Ladies' Sub-Committee to raise £15 to purchase an ambulance litter for the Children's Hospital in 1887. It also had plans for purchasing litters to be placed at the central railway station and the North Adelaide police station, but nothing seems to have come of these.[44]



The original St John ambulance: an Ashford litter. This one was in use in Kapunda.

From the early 1890s successive cohorts of Committee members considered ways and means of providing Adelaide with a more comprehensive ambulance service than that which a few centrally located litters might constitute. These discussions went on spasmodically over a period of nearly thirty years. The first time the subject arose was in May 1891, when the Committee agreed to provide a box of bandages and a set of splints for a horse-drawn wagon the police were using as an ambulance. At this stage the Committee was glad to co-operate, happy to leave ambulance transport entirely to the police so long as the Police Commissioner ensured that a regular quota of policemen joined Association classes. About three years after this, in February 1894, the Committee showed how happy it was with the police-run horse ambulance during the discussion of a proposal put to it by Lt.-Col. J.C. Dalton. Dalton, a member of the Executive Committee of the Association 'Head Centre' in London and a later Chief Commissioner of the Brigade 'Overseas', had written to suggest that the Association in South Australia 'should form an ambulance corps and provide ambulance conveyances'. However, Dr Poulton spoke so eloquently about the effectiveness of the present arrangement with the police that his fellow Committee members agreed 'no further steps [need] be taken'.[45]

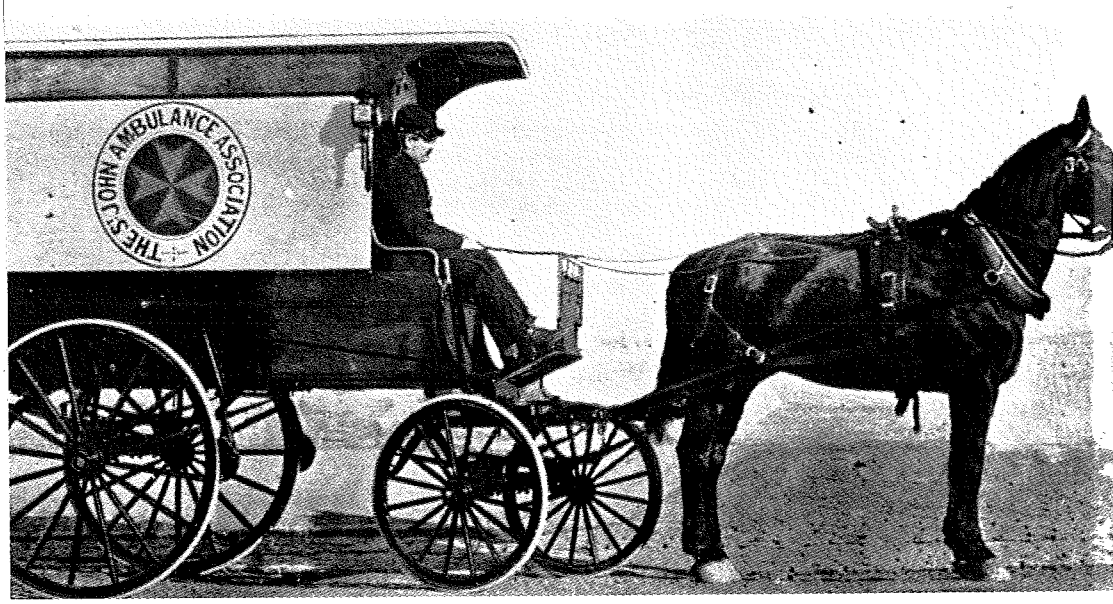
The next year the Committee were again thinking about ambulance facilities, this time for the port area and the railways. In those days interstate and overseas passenger vessels hove to at offshore anchorages, both passengers and cargo then being lightered ashore to the jetties at Largs Bay

and Semaphore. This practice yielded a regular crop of injuries, particularly during rough weather, and so in March 1895 the Committee voted £5 towards the cost of providing stretchers at each jetty. Several months later, in August, the Committee accepted an invitation from the railways authorities to visit a recently established 'ambulance room' at the Adelaide station, where stretchers and medical supplies were stored and railwaymen were able to practise first aid in their spare time.[46]

After this the Committee seems to have lost interest in ambulance transport for several years. There are few further references to ambulance transport in the Centre records until 1902, when there was the exchange of letters with the Maryborough Ambulance Transport Brigade in Queensland which a previous section outlined. A further three years then elapses before the next mention – that in relation to C.H. Goode's excursion to the Perth branch of St John which the same section discussed. As we have seen, all that came of Goode's report was that the Centre chairman, W.H. Wilkinson, paid a call on the fire brigade chairman to let him know that in Perth it was firemen who were running the city's ambulances.

Several more years went by with the Centre making little progress towards the achievement of its fourth objective. It did send away to Sydney and Melbourne for quotes on the cost of supplying stretchers, and even to St John's Gate for further quotes on the cost of Ashford litters and horse-drawn ambulances, but having received the quotes does not seem to have done much with them. In 1909 the Committee also received a request from the mayor of Port Adelaide, who wanted help in obtaining a horse-drawn ambulance and a litter. They decided to defer this matter to their next meeting, but seem to have managed not to have discussed it again. The next talk of ambulances came a couple of years after this, when

A horse-drawn ambulance wagon of the type used in Adelaide by police from the mid-1890s until after the end of the First World War. (The wagon pictured here was possibly one of those run by the St John Ambulance Association Victorian Centre).



A.S. Lindsay was trying to get his first Brigade divisions formed in 1911. One of the proposals for the Brigade when it eventually got going was that it might be able to station a horse ambulance somewhere in central Adelaide and to pay a couple of Brigade members to operate it fulltime. At much the same time that Committee members were canvassing this idea, their chairman, H.D. Gell, was saying that, because the increasing volume of motor traffic 'meant greater danger in regard to accidents', he considered 'it would be necessary for the government to introduce some scheme of street ambulance to afford speedy relief in cases of emergency'.[47]

In May the next year, 1912, the Centre Committee appeared willing to grasp the nettle itself. They announced their intention at the annual meeting of establishing their own horse ambulance in the city. The service would be public, and would be available day and night. All this was expected to cost 'several hundred pounds', but the Committee thought the Centre could just bear the expense. The government had increased its annual grant to £150 only the year before, and the Committee was holding on to this with the aim of putting it towards the cost of the ambulance service. Other funds in hand and another £150 from the government in the coming year should be enough to get the service going. One Committee member, W.H. Phillips (a later Centre chairman), thought the Centre would economize if it opted for a motor van rather than a horse ambulance; but his was a lone voice. He might have done more to convince his fellow committeemen if he had mentioned that the neighbouring Association Centre in Victoria had been doing such brisk business with the motor ambulance it had purchased in 1910 that it was about to obtain two more. Melbourne was bigger than Adelaide, of course, and its St John Centre wealthier than its South Australian counterpart; and that was why St John people in Melbourne could dream of more and more motor vans, while those in Adelaide were content with visions of horses and carts. One nevertheless finds it hard to understand why, if the Adelaide Centre were really keen to see better ambulance facilities in the city, the Committee did not act with greater purposefulness.[48]

At the time Adelaide Centre Committee members were thus furrowing their brows over the problem of their long awaited horse ambulance, there were actually two other horse ambulances plying Adelaide streets. The police were still running theirs, and there was a private one owned by the firm of coach builders, Duncan & Fraser. The latter had come into service as a result of a vow by one of the firm's partners, Robert Duncan. Some time previously, when he had been suffering from typhoid fever, he was moved to hospital in a badly sprung wagon. When he finally got there he had been so badly bounced about on the way that he promised, 'If ever I get out of this place alive I will build an ambulance of my own'. Possibly none of the Centre Committee members had ever been jolted ill to hospital in a bumpy cart; and they certainly lacked his resolute purpose. If

that were not so, Adelaide might have got its ambulance service much earlier.[49]

In the end nothing came of the Committee's decision to purchase an ambulance. Time went by; successive Committee meetings failed to canvass the issue further. Then Gell announced that he had been talking to Duncan & Fraser about the cost of maintaining their ambulance. By this time the firm was no longer running its ambulance, which it had passed over to another firm, Graves, Hill & Co. Gell said he now thought that, 'owing to the cost of upkeep etc. the Centre would be unwise to undertake the work'.[50]

In the absence of any really positive move by agencies (like St John) and authorities (like the government and City Council) who might have been expected to sponsor an ambulance service, some local groups began taking an interest in ambulance work. One community to do something practical about introducing its own ambulance scheme was at Port Adelaide. There the local municipal council, led by its mayor, J.H. Clouston, set up a committee in 1913 to raise funds to purchase a stock of thirteen hand litters with detachable stretchers to be placed at the wharves and other danger spots around the municipality. These were the very latest in 'hand ' ambulances. Each stretcher had an adjustable spreader to keep it rigid so it might be safely lowered into the hold of a ship; and each came equipped with a set of splints and a medicine chest. Clouston's ambulance committee had raised the large sum of £473/19/3 to buy the litters, which cost £25 each. Most of the money came from the shipping and stevedoring companies, and with minor amounts from trade unions and friendly societies. It also arranged for two Association classes with a combined enrolment of sixty-eight local men to be taught in Port Adelaide so there would be a body of citizens to operate the litters. The next year even more Port Adelaide men (– no women yet –) joined St John classes. Altogether there were six classes with a total enrolment of 183. Clouston was hoping that from among this number there would be sufficient for a Brigade division. Less than half (only eighty-eight) of those who enrolled sat the examination, and only seventy-nine passed. That would have been ample for two divisions, but when a Port Adelaide division formed, about September 1914, it had a strength of only twenty-four. (It proved a relatively short-lived division: Hussey had it disbanded in 1926 'owing to lack of interest and failure to attend practices'.) These Port Adelaide initiatives had so impressed the Centre Committee that in 1913 it had invited Clouston to become a member. He took up this offer, and remained on the Committee for the next eight years.[51]

Another body which did something practical about the lack of an ambulance service was the Railways Department. As previous sections have shown, St John and the Railways Commissioner and his employees had become allies in promoting anbulance work along the State's railways. The Department probably feared that, without an ambulance service, utter

chaos would most likely follow a rail disaster like those already experienced in New South Wales and Victoria. During 1914 it had a railway carriage converted into a mobile hospital complete with operating table. The idea was for the 'hospital car' to be rushed to the scene of rail accidents. The Railways Commissioner issued an invitation to the St John Centre Committee to inspect the hospital car, which they did on 7 August. The Minutes of their next meeting recorded the fact that they were 'extremely pleased' with what they had seen, though some of them thought the Department should equip the hospital car with swinging hammocks. The latter idea no doubt came from committeemen with visions of the hospital car pitching and rolling like a storm-tossed ship as it dashed away from an accident with its complement of injured. The Railways Commissioner subsequently wrote to say that hammocks were not necessary: the hospital car was not intended for carrying patients: in the event of serious accidents it would be sent to the scene with medical staff, who would provide treatment and perform operations on the spot, the patients being removed in other suitable carriages later. Fortunately South Australia did not have a rail disaster in the years before ambulance facilities came into being, and so perhaps the hospital car ended up being mainly for display and training exercises.[52]

At the outbreak of war Adelaide still had no ambulance facilities other than the two horse ambulances run by the police and Duncan & Fraser, the Port Adelaide Council's thirteen hand litters, and several other hand litters at various points in the city centre. By this time the public was growing restive. Street accidents were rising as motor traffic increased. The newspapers began pointing to what they claimed was the scandal of a capital city with no ambulance service, drawing unfavourable comparisons with the already well developed facilities in the other mainland capitals. Letters-to-the-editors gave the views of ordinary citizens, particularly after reports appeared detailing the suffering accident victims had endured while someone went searching for a hand litter or the horse ambulances.

St John had actually made some minor forward moves in the past two or three years. In September 1914 the Centre Committee appointed a small sub-committee headed by Dr Brummitt to look into the issue again, and to consult with the government. During the course of an interview Brummit and Dr Corbin were conducting with the Chief Secretary in December they were surprised to discover that the government already owned a motor ambulance, obtained at a cost of £800, and under the control of the Central Board of Health. It was not being used and had simply been standing idle in a Pirie St. garage since its purchase several months before. Brummitt and Corbin went to inspect the vehicle early in the next year, 1915. They reported their findings to the Committee, which resolved that 'a letter be addressed to the Hon. the Chief Secretary, asking that he allow the ambulance to be at the call of this Centre in time of emergency'. At the same time the Committee delegated to Brummitt and

Corbin responsibility for drawing up a workable scheme for its use. The Chief Secretary replied to this request several months later, no doubt after duly weighty deliberations with officers of the Central Board of Health. His answer was along the lines that the Chairman of the Board thought it 'undesirable that the control of the Board's ambulance should in any way be taken out of the hands of the Board'. He did not quite slam the door in the Committee's face, however, for he asked for further particulars of the scheme they had in mind for using the vehicle.[53]

The proposal the Committee now came up with, possibly on the advice of Brummitt and Corbin, was an odd one, though bearing in mind the 'dog-in-the-manger' attitude of the Board it might have been a realistic compromise. They suggested that 'the motor be placed under the control of the Commissioner of Police, and be at the call of [both] the Board and the Association'. How one ambulance might have been operated by no less than three agencies, and how squabbles over their competing claims for its use might be avoided, do not seem to have been issues about which the Committee had thought carefully. The Chief Secretary no doubt recognised the patent absurdity of the plan. He seems to have done what was easiest – he simply ignored the Committee's request. That was where the matter now rested. Adelaide was still without a motor ambulance; the two horse ambulances continued providing their minimal service; the Central Board of Health held on to its ambulance, maintaining it in mint condition by keeping it off the road as much as possible; while the St John Centre pondered the problem further. And so life in Adelaide went on as usual for another year or so, with never an ambulance bell to disturb the sedate calm of the city's streets.[54]

In the meantime the public and the press were becoming increasingly irritable about the failure of the government, the responsible government departments, the municipal authorities, and welfare agencies like St John and Red Cross to do anything positive about the city's dearth of adequate ambulance facilities. A series of accidents in early 1916 aroused particularly strong public reaction. The first, on 3 February, involved a tram conductor who died (leaving behind a widow and two young children) after his legs had been crushed between two trams in South Terrace. He had been changing the trolley pole at the back of his tram when a second tram crashed into his. A Mr A.E. Carpenter of Glenelg, who had a St John first aid certificate, chanced to be nearby to render first aid to the conductor. He later described to *The Advertiser*'s reporter how the lack of an ambulance had probably been a factor contributing to the conductor's death. At the same time he managed to slip into the report a strong 'plug' for the Association. It went like this:

> Mr Carpenter stated that there were several policemen present, but none knew what to do with the injured man. One of the constables informed Mr Carpenter that the members of the force were willing to learn ambulance

work, but there was no encouragement to do so; and an examination [in first aid] had not been held [for them] for three years.

'I took charge of the injured man', said Mr Carpenter ... 'I asked a constable to bring an ambulance outfit from the police station, which was only a stone's throw away, but he said there was no outfit available. The police afterwards supplied a dilapidated stretcher that was next to useless. I had to get handkerchiefs from the crowd and bind the sufferer's legs to some boards. When the police ambulance arrived a constable got a dirty glass of water from inside the vehicle, filled it with dirty brown water, and gave the man a drink.

'The arrangements in this city are prehistoric when compared with those in Sydney and Melbourne, and places not even as large as Adelaide.

'Why do not people assist the St John Ambulance Association in this city, as they do elsewhere? In reply to 250 circulars sent to prominent Adelaide citizens asking for support to place the Association on a sound basis, only £10 was sent. This is not encouraging, but the Association intends to do what it can to improve the present disgraceful conditions.

'If we had a big motor ambulance stationed in the city, with two capable officers, who devoted the whole of their time to the work, the vehicle could be rushed to the scene of an accident at a few seconds' notice. Many lives would thus be saved.'[55]

All this could have been an *ex cathedra* pronouncement by the Centre chairman himself, but even if it had been it probably could not have had any greater effect in stirring up public comment. The newspapers were full of follow-up stories over succeeding days. One correspondent, 'A.W.', wrote in to say that the solution was for every tram to carry a first aid kit and a stretcher. A police constable from Perth who happened to be in Adelaide at the time was interviewed by *The Advertiser* about his home city's ambulance transport arrangements. He said he 'could not believe how far Adelaide was behind Perth in providing ambulance facilities'. In Perth, he said, the old horse ambulances had been replaced with a motor van 'stabled at the Central Fire Station, ready to hustle to the scene of an accident at a moment's notice'. Then *The Advertiser* tackled the Chief Secretary, A.W. Styles, over the reasons why the police were no longer taking the St John course and examination. He was unable to give an answer but said he would instruct the Police Commissioner to take steps to ensure that all police knew something about first aid.[56]

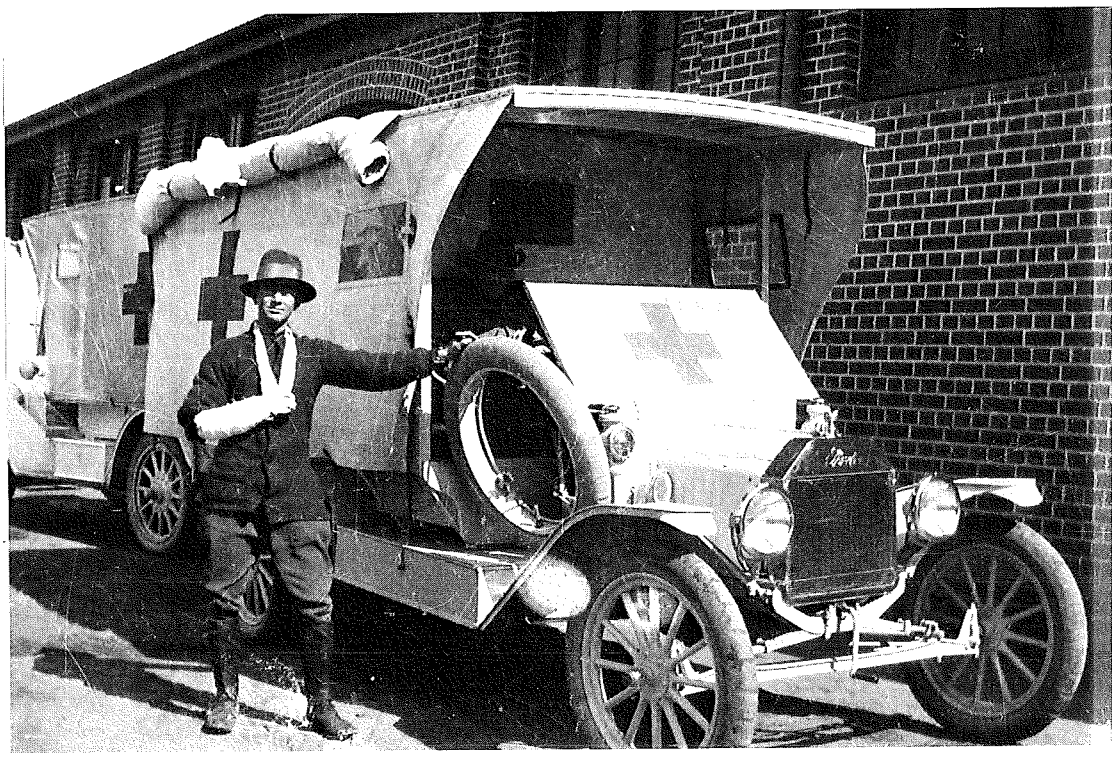
Less than a fortnight after the tram conductor's death, another accidental death claimed the attention of the press. A man died of his injuries after falling from a window of a city hotel. An ambulance was called but arrived very late. The next day *The Advertiser* indignantly observed in its editorial that 'Mr Cohen would probably have lived if the ambulance had been promptly on the spot, instead of having reached it in remarkably laggard fashion'. Ambulance facilities in Adelaide, the editorial pointed out, were 'discreditably inadequate'. Ironically, the editorial argued further, 'South Australia has surpassed every other part of the Empire – relative to population – in the purchase of ambulances and their dispatch to the

battlefields'. Warming to this theme of overblown parochial pride, the editorial writer went on to claim that 'perhaps nowhere else would the victim of an accident be so sure of obtaining speedy first aid as he would be in Adelaide'. How foolish, then, for the authorities not to build upon 'the kindly instincts of all classes of the people' by providing better ambulance facilities![57]

The logic of *The Advertiser*'s argument would have scored low points in a high school 'clear thinking' test, but the exasperation that prompted it undoubtedly communicated itself to the government. This became obvious several weeks later when Styles announced to the press that the police would take over the motor ambulance of the Central Board of Health, and that policemen would be trained as ambulance drivers 'in order for the ambulance to be available in case of accident at a moment's notice'. Thus began a thirty-six year interlude during which the police ran central Adelaide's motor ambulances.[58]

The addition of one motor vehicle to Adelaide's slender ambulance resources failed to effect a dramatic improvement. Further newspaper reports of delays with ambulances continued, setting off chain reactions of editorials and letters-to-the-editor which indicated something of the dissatisfaction of the public. A street accident in May 1917 produced a typical flurry. It involved a woman who had been struck by a motor car at the corner of Rundle and Pulteney Sts. Two passers-by gave her first aid, trying to stem the flow of blood from her shattered thigh, while other

An ambulance of the No. 3 Field Ambulance, Keswick Barracks, 1915, and one of the many purchased by the Army as a result of donations from the South Australian public.



onlookers went to fetch whatever ambulance facility was available, stretcher, litter, horse or motor ambulance. She was kept lying on the cold road for half an hour until the ambulance arrived. The ambulance could have arrived a little earlier but was held up, waiting while a street procession moved past. Letters-to-the-editor were numerous. The one probably read most carefully by members of the Centre Committee was from a Hedley J. Hale of Malvern. Much of his letter deplored the 'woeful' way in which Adelaide's ambulance facilities lagged behind Perth's. In Perth, Hale claimed, an ambulance always arrived on the scene within ten minutes of an accident occurring. His concluding sentences were what would have caught the Committee's eye:

> Get busy, St John Ambulance Society; the public will back you to a man. Let Adelaide be brought up to date in this matter, and save needless suffering, and perhaps lives![59]

The Committee failed to heed this advice. 1917 turned into 1918, and still the Committee received complaints about the city's inadequate ambulance facilities. Its typical response was to deplore the situation but to hold back from taking decisive action itself. During the last year or so it had lost enthusiasm for the idea of sponsoring an ambulance transport service itself. The reason for this became clear at its meeting in April 1918. A.N. Day, one of the Railways Department representatives on the Committee, pointedly asked 'if it was the intention of the Centre to do anything with regard to starting a Transport Corps'. Gell, who was Centre treasurer as well as chairman, replied that, 'apart from the initial cost, the annual upkeep would be from £700 to £800 at least; and as there were police and privately owned ambulances he thought the Centre was not called upon to move in the matter at present'. This time it was money rather than timidity deterring the Committee. Motor ambulances were by now *de rigueur*; but they were of such a cost that a voluntary body like St John could not hope to set itself up as an operator. With an annual income of little more than £200, and few prospects of catching the eye of millionaire benefactors, the Centre had to be content to watch others develop the city's ambulance facilities. The Centre had wasted its earlier chances of becoming *the* sponsor of ambulance transport in Adelaide, and now the opportunity had passed. Later on, several years after the war was over, there would be a St John involvement in motor ambulance transport. That was to be Brigade rather than an Association initiative, however, as the next chapter will show.[60]

The present day observer looking back at these events has to wonder why, during a quarter of a century of talking about the possibilities of starting up an ambulance service, the Adelaide Association Centre never quite got round to doing so. The obvious reason was money, or, more accurately, a lack of it. When the idea first arose for discussion, in the early 1890s, economic depression was cutting back on the Centre's initiatives.

The withdrawal of the government subsidy and the effect that had on Centre finances moved the prospects of a St John ambulance service into realms of fantasy. Revenues improved later on, after the turn of the century, but, arguably, not to the level that could have supported an ambulance transport scheme.

Other reasons suggest themselves, too. Unlike the Centres in Melbourne and Sydney, the Adelaide Centre remained a small operation limited by the small size of the local population. That constraint did not stop the Perth Centre from taking control of the local ambulance service at the end of the war; but then the St John people in Western Australia took over a service which someone else had already established and which was running well. Starting from scratch, as the Adelaide Centre would have had to do, was perhaps a more difficult undertaking.

A further reason was the cautiousness of the Centre Committee, most members of which were either prudent businessmen or government officials. Such leadership made a fault of prudence, for while they might not have rushed headlong into new schemes neither did they seem to prize the entrepreneurial flair that drives an organization into new and profitable ventures. There were other examples of this lack of a spirit of adventure. The issue of ambulance transport was only one. Another equally serious instance was the ten years or so it took the Centre Committee to get the St John Ambulance Brigade going in Adelaide.

And finally there was the war. During the war the main preoccupation of the Centre was the training of the large volume of people moving through the Association training classes. The Centre secretary, Connor, who was only a part-time 'honorary', would have had his work cut out keeping up with the numbers wanting to enter courses, those already under training, and those finishing off with their examinations. He could not have had much time left over for dabbling in untried schemes like the ambulance service his Committee members kept discussing. There were limits on what he could accomplish, and these probably did not extend to the establishment of costly ambulance transport facilities. But despite the failures signified by this non-involvement in ambulance transport, St John in South Australia was stronger at the end of the war than ever before. It had built well during the wartime period, providing a sound base from which structures more imposing would rise. The twenty-year peace lying ahead was to be a period when much further building would ensue.

CHAPTER FOUR

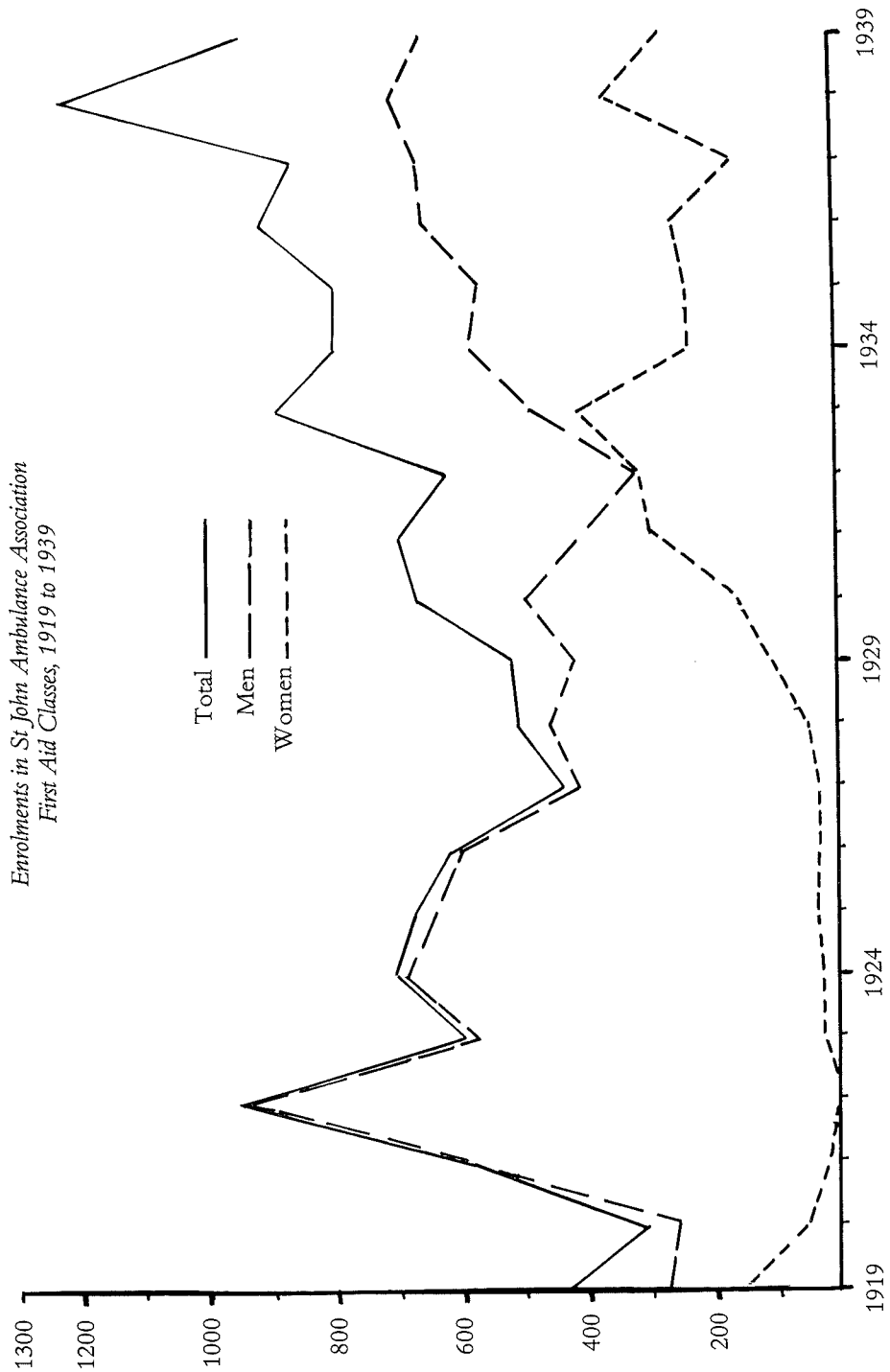
The 'Twenties and 'Thirties

1. *Postwar problems*

As the 'teen years became the 1920s, many South Australians, like citizens elsewhere among the victorious nations, felt confident that the war they had just won had ended war. They were not therefore inclined to continue with schemes they associated with the wartime emergency. Postwar ennui was not solely responsible for the falling enrolments that now beset St John, however. The 1918-19 epidemic of pneumonic influenza also played a large part. Some 560 South Australians were among the epidemic's 13,000 Australian victims. South Australians then comprised about nine *per cent* of the national population; and with only 4.3 *per cent* the State obviously fared better than others. This was a result partly of the widely dispersed and sparse population, and of the comparative smallness of the urban centres: larger and more densely populated New South Wales and Victoria suffered worse. Measures taken against the 'flu (for example, the cancellation of large public gatherings) also helped contain it – and also kept St John teaching to a minimum.

The effects of postwar lassitude and of the 'flu epidemic showed up in the statistics for St John Ambulance classes. In the first full year following the armistice of November 1918 the total of 303 enrolments in first aid courses was less than a fifth of those in the peak year, 1915-16, and was the lowest since 1906-07. Enrolments in home nursing fell to an even lower level: from a high point of 462 in 1915-16 they dropped to nil in 1919-20. Except for 1906-07 this was the only year since the turn of the century that no home nursing class had run.

Enrolments in first aid classes picked up for a couple of years after bottoming out in 1919-20, but there was still cause for concern. The 1921-22 figure of 947 was certainly more than three times that of the low point two years before, yet it was still some 600 short of that achieved a decade previously. The 947 was also a tally consisting only of male pupils, for no women at all enrolled in 1921-22, in either first aid or home nursing. In one important respect, then, this was the 'worst' year on record as it seems to have been the only year in St John's South Australian century that no woman joined a class. The next year, 1922-23, twenty-two women enrolled for first aid training, and another twenty-three the year after that; but there were still no home nursing enrolments, and until 1927-28 there were never more than thirty females a year to join St John classes. At the


Enrolments in St John Ambulance Association
First Aid Classes, 1919 to 1939
Total
Men
Women
1300
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
1919
1924
1929
1934
1939

same time, enrolments in men's classes began sliding again after 1921-22, reaching a low of 402 in 1926-27. The trend can be seen in the graph on the opposite page.[1]

The enrolments graph was not the only index of achievement to show a downturn. Centre finances were tied to enrolments, and they too joined the downward drift. If the public showed an inscreasing disinclination to undergo St John training, that would inevitably show up in the Association bank account. Not surprisingly, then, the Centre's end-of-year credit balance shrank from £270/18/7 at the end of the war to £65/7/6 in 1925-26, as this graph indicates:



Adelaide Centre, St John Ambulance Association bank credit balance, 1919 to 1939

By the small sum of one shilling and fourpence the 1925-26 credit balance was the Centre's lowest to date. The 1900-01 balance of £65/8/10 had been almost as low, but that had been after a prolonged economic depression and the withdrawal of the government subsidy; and even during the Great Depression of the 1930s (when the subsidy was cut again) the balance was never to be lower than £93.[2]

Anyone listening to the chairman's speeches at the annual general meetings, or reading his comments in the *Annual Reports*, would not have gathered that the Centre was wasting away like this. The chairman was still H.D. Gell, who had been in the position since 1911. At annual meetings he customarily spoke with pride in the Centre's accomplishments during the year past and with hope for the one ahead. In moving the adoption of the report for 1923, for example, the theme of his comments was 'a quiet but



Harry Dickson Gell, committee member of the Adelaide Centre 1887-1929 and its chairman 1911-26.

efficient work' which had made 'further progress'. This had been one of those years showing a serious drop in performance: there had been 350 fewer enrolments in first aid classes and certificates awarded were 130 down on the previous year; one women's first aid class of 22 had formed, an improvement on the nil of the year before but again a year when no home nursing was taught. Both he and his deputy, A.A. Simpson, expressed pleasure in 'the interest being sustained in the movement'. Simpson had recently been in England, where he had been looking at St John Ambulance work. 'Comparing the work done in South Australia', he assured the meeting, 'he saw no reason for local discouragement'. He drew applause when he pointed out that, because 400 certificates had been awarded, 'a still greater amount of appreciation had been achieved'. In reassuring their fellow Committee members like this, Gell and Simpson customarily paid generous tribute to the secretary, B.S. Connor. The success of the Centre, they would make clear, owed much to his 'zeal ... and wholehearted work'; and annual meetings generally ended with a round of applause for him and a note of appreciation for his efforts being recorded in the Minutes.[3]

All was not well, however. Some within the Centre were beginning to see that Gell's optimism was unwarranted and that Connor was no longer the reliable workhorse he had been when he had first taken on the job nearly a quarter of a century before. It was becoming apparent that there was a problem with the Centre's leadership, and that Gell and Connor were no longer able to give the organization the impetus it needed to prosper. Gell, who had been a magistrate and was a former mayor of Glenelg, turned eighty in 1925, and was ailing. He had been a member of the Centre

Committee since 1887; and he had been one of its deputy chairmen from 1890 until he took over as both chairman and treasurer in 1911. In 1925, because of ill health, he gave up the latter position to F.W. Russack, the head of the Commerce department at Adelaide High School, but he held on to the chairmanship for another year. Illness forced him to delegate to Simpson the conducting of both the 1925 and 1926 annual meetings. During the latter year he at last retired 'upstairs' from active duties to become one of the Centre's four figurehead vice-presidents. He took no further part in Association affairs, and died a couple of years later, in early 1929. Simpson, the son of an earlier chairman and a deputy chairman since 1920, succeeded him.[4]

There were further changes at the top in 1926. In July that year Connor, secretary for the past twenty-four and a half years, departed suddenly, in disgrace if not actually amidst a scandal. An accountant, L.G. Cant, took his place. After Connor had gone no one seems to have had much to say in his favour. His sturdy efforts during the busy wartime years were now forgotten as the blame for the Centre's decline was attributed to him. At the end of 1928 a visiting delegation from St John's Gate was informed that he had 'let [the organization] down very badly'. It was said that he had left Cant 'a very difficult task to undertake' because he had allowed the Centre's finances to run down until it was 'practically insolvent'. The suddenness of Connor's departure and the absence from the *Annual Report* of the customary tribute to his past services suggest that he had been guilty of more than mere dereliction of duty. The Committee's Minutes for the July 1926 meeting refer to 'unfortunate circumstances' having caused Connor to 'vacate' his position, but what these were is not clear. They certainly had something to do with poor financial management, for when Cant took over the office he found 'a large number of outstanding accounts, which, when paid, made an overdraft of £10'. The Centre's 'London account', that used for purchasing text books and materials from St John's Gate, was in a particular mess. It was £49/6/5 in the red, an amount equivalent to seventy-five *per cent* of the £65 bank credit balance which the annual statement of accounts purported to show. Some of the monies owing to London dated back to 1910.[5]

That the decline of the Centre generally and the financial mess in particular were entirely Connor's fault seems doubtful. He had not been the treasurer: until the year before that had been Gell's job. Nor had he been the auditor, because from 1890 until 1922 that had been one Thomas Padman, who had been succeeded by an accountant called J.B. Pitcher. The classes had certainly not prospered under his guidance over the past four years or so, and the Committee subsequently seemed perturbed that women's classes especially had hit an all-time low. What seems fairly likely, however, is that the leadership of Gell and Connor had become too entrenched in the fifteen years or so they ran Association affairs in tandem. After their exertions of the wartime years they had probably grown too

weary, too complacent, too conservative and too old to revitalize the Centre in the more difficult years of peace. Looking after a Centre in peace was really more challenging than doing so during a war. During the war people had actively sought St John's services with little prompting; but with the distractions of peacetime competing for citizens' attention, it required imagination and initiative to keep the name of St John continually in the public's mind. And so perhaps Connor's departure was inevitable, financial crisis or not, if 'new blood' was to join the Committee to bring new life to the Centre.

The trouble with the Gell-Connor leadership was basically its lack of a spirit of adventure. Under them the Centre was content to limit itself to Association work pure and simple, which to Gell and Connor seems to have meant teaching the first aid and home nursing courses, to nominating candidates to St John's Gate for admission into membership of the Order, and to affirming the Centre's loyalty to the Crown and the Vice-Regal incumbent of the day. This narrow approach led to a suspicion of new ventures, an unwillingness to embark into new endeavours. The ultra-cautiousness typifying the Gell-Connor managerial style had been evident in various directions. It had revealed itself notably in the Centre's tardiness in sponsoring the foundation of the Brigade in South Australia. It was obvious in the Centre's reluctance to do anything positive about Adelaide's poor ambulance transport facilities – issues examined in the last chapter. And it had most recently been apparent in the Centre's refusal to participate in the Central Council for Australia, the first federal organization for Australian St John Ambulance bodies – an issue we will examine shortly.

Some Centre Committee members were unhappy with the Centre's narrow preoccupations. Their irritation occasionally erupted, for example in exasperated questions about whether or not the Centre intended doing something more than just talking about the city's ambulance transport facilities. G.F. Hussey, the Brigade Commissioner, was one who from time to time made his dissatisfaction known. At the Centre's annual meeting in June 1921, for instance, he complained that Association training was reaching too few of the general lay public. Even in spreading first aid knowledge, its primary function, the Centre was taking too limited a view by concentrating on the training of railwaymen, police, firemen and tramways staff. In his usual blunt manner he pointed out that

> at present it seemed the Association was being run largely for the benefit of the Railways and other Government employees. A knowledge of first aid was very desirable, and, while the Centre were very pleased to see so many employees in the Public Departments taking it up, they would also like to have increased attention [given to training] the general community.[6]

George F. Hussey, a committee member of the Adelaide Centre 1899-1931 ► and the Brigade's Assistant Commissioner for South Australia 1915-31.



As we will see, it was Hussey, too, who led his South Australian Brigade District into the Central Council for Australia when the Centre declined to affiliate.

Being the Brigade Assistant Commissioner, Hussey of necessity was concerned with immediate tasks. He had to find ways and means of enticing graduates from first aid classes into the Brigade, of keeping up the efficiency of his 'troops', of finding the wherewithal to keep them equipped, and of providing the public with a service wherever it was needed. These practical problems possibly gave him a well defined view of what the community's need was, and of what St John priorities should therefore be. Without his appreciation of the potentialities of the organization, his more complacent and more parochial fellow members of the Centre Committee could perhaps be content with the circumscribed role the Association had been playing.

The present writer is speculating here, guessing at reasons why the Gell-Connor axis was reluctant to launch into new ventures. However, what does seem clear is that Hussey's complaints about the Centre's *modus operandi* were the signs of a rift which in the early 1920s had begun opening between the Association and the Brigade in South Australia.

The split was partly historical, partly structural. The Association was by thirty years the earlier of the two St John bodies to be established in the State. It therefore looked on itself as the 'senior service' – rather much as the Navy regards itself as a more venerable institution than either the Army or Air Force. And while Hussey as Commissioner was a member of both, the Association Centre and Brigade District were separate and semi-autonomous bodies. They had different objectives, and each was responsible to different leaders in Adelaide as well as further up the chain of command in London. As the Brigade grew in experience, self-confidence and strength, it came to resent the Association's condescension, and began wishing to be treated as an equal, a status the Statutes of the Order guaranteed.

At the same time, important differences in style were emerging between the Association Centre and the Brigade District, and these made for an uneasy relationship between them. The Centre, as a previous chapter pointed out, began as, and remained, a creature of the Adelaide 'Establishment'. Its senior members were Governors and Lieutenant-Governors, Chief Justices and Chief Secretaries, Lord Mayors and Police Commissioners, British Medical Association presidents, Great Public School headmasters, and the principals of leading legal, financial and commercial firms. Its inclinations were patrician and royalist, and nowhere was this more apparent than in the obsequious pride its *Annual Reports* took in congratulating those of its members who received Imperial honours. In 1919, for example, the Committee used the latest *Report*

> to record their pleasure in the honours of Knighthood and Companionship of the Order of St Michael and St George conferred on Dr J.C. Vercoe and Mr

A.A. Simpson respectively by His Majesty the King. His Majesty was also graciously pleased to sanction the promotion in the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England of Lady Galway [the State Governor's wife] as Lady of Grace.[7]

Centre officials seemed fascinated by Imperial, civic and military titles and post-nominals, for their correspondence and records were punctilious in duly listing these whenever the recipients' names were mentioned. Thus, it was always 'His Excellency the Governor Lieut.-General Sir G.T.M. Bridges, K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.', 'His Honour the Chief Justice Sir George Murray, K.C.M.G.', and 'Mr A.A. Simpson, C.M.G., C.B.E. (Officer of the Order)'. Perhaps this adherence to protocol was merely conventional, yet the slavish repetitiousness of the honorifics suggests that Centre officials loved dwelling upon the status and precedence these represented.

The Brigade, by contrast seems to have been a rather more plebeian body. Its members came mainly from Adelaide's lower-middle and working classes. Their preoccupation was practical community service, carried out among common people like themselves, rather than aspirations towards inclusion on the invitation lists for Government House garden parties. The backgrounds of their first three Commissioners, Lindsay, Bulman and Hussey, hints at the social complexion of the South Australian Brigade District in its first ten to fifteen years. Lindsay, an Army sergeant-major; Bulman, a minor official in the Railways Department; and Hussey, a craftsman, the partner in a printing business, a trade unionist and pioneer of workers' self-improvement schemes – all were men of humble origins who seem to have seen the Brigade as an instrument for safeguarding the welfare of ordinary citizens.

The Brigade, moreover, was a *voluntary* body. As Hussey frequently pointed out, its members gave their time and efforts free. If there were to be rewards these had to be intrinsic to the service they gave, consisting of a sense of satisfaction in belonging to a publicly acclaimed organization, and of pride in the usefulness of the work it performed. Association workers, on the other hand, were often (though, to be fair to some of them, not exclusively) mercenaries. Medical practitioners who were Association members were happy to forego their lecturers' and examiners' fees, but the doctors who did not belong to the Association continued to accept payments throughout the recent War and now kept taking these through the Great Depression and into the 1930s – in accordance with the practice of their 'union', the BMA, but in contrast to the custom of their colleagues interstate. The black worsted Brigade uniform, which Brigade members wore with pride and had struggled to buy, was perhaps a symbol of the separate paths the Association and Brigade were following in South Australia. Association workers wore no uniform, other than than the businessman's well-cut three-piece suit. The uniform was therefore important. It signified that the unpaid amateurs of the Brigade were treading the high road of the Hospitaller tradition, while the professionals hired by the Association were pursuing a lower, meaner path.

The Association Centre in South Australia contrasted with other State Centres in more ways than its reliance on 'mercenaries'. It was, for instance, more parochial, lacking the vision of Centres elsewhere. This was evident in its attitude towards the Central Council for Australia, the first attempt by State St John bodies to erect a federal structure. The present writer has elsewhere traced the evolution of the federal movement in St John[8] and so it is necessary here only to outline that development.

The possibility of some supra-State organization for Australian St John bodies had probably occurred to various prominent St John personalities before. As we have seen, they corresponded from time to time when matters of mutual interest arose, and they occasionally visited each other when travelling interstate. No firm proposals for closer co-operation grew from these spasmodic contacts until 1915-16, when the idea of a federal body to unite the various State St John organizations arose in Victoria. The local Centre there floated the notion of an interstate conference in Melbourne of all the State Association Centres preliminary to the setting up of a national St John organization. The Victorian secretary circulated the proposal to the Centres in Sydney, Hobart, Adelaide and Perth (the Centre in Brisbane seems to have been moribund at the time). The 'Head Centre' at St John's Gate in London had to approve it, of course, but in May 1916 its Chief Secretary wrote to the State Centres to say that 'the movement on foot to form a Federal Council . . . had the heartfelt support of his Committee'.[9]

The proposal for an interstate conference did not get far. 1916 was the wrong year for such ideas: it was the busiest year on record not only for St John in South Australia but in the other States as well. Overworked Centre secretaries did not have much time for grandiose plans, even if they could overcome their parochial suspicion of schemes that came out of other States. New South Wales, wanted further information before it would commit itself, wary no doubt of anything emanating from Victoria, especially if it smacked of empire-building. Tasmania, plagued by its perennial north-south rivalry, declined the invitation lest either Hobart or Launceston should presume to speak for the whole island. Western Australia, ever reluctant in federal matters, was firmly against any suggestion for a union, preferring its splendid isolation on the far side of the Nullarbor. The Adelaide Centre, at least, took the matter seriously, calling a special Committee meeting to consider it. The Committee did not exactly slam the door in the Victorians' faces. It decided that 'the time was not opportune for such a conference', but advised the Victorians that 'in the event of any of their Committee visiting Adelaide, this Centre would extend them a welcome and give them all information possible, and ask that the same consideration be given to any Adelaide members visiting Victoria'.[10]

With the war past, there was a further attempt at federation, this time a Brigade initiative prompted by Dr T. Storie Dixson, Commissioner of the

Brigade's New South Wales District. Storie Dixson called together a national conference of Brigade leaders, which took place in Melbourne on 10 April 1920. Representatives came from all States except Tasmania. Hussey and Bulman represented South Australia. The press in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney gave it generous coverage, reporting its resolutions in detail. Central to these was a request to London for the setting up of an Australian Priory, that is an autonomous national governing council to unite the Australian St John bodies and to give them a large measure of independence from the Grand Priory of the Order at St John's Gate. Despite the publicity, little came from the conference. Its main benefit lay in building the foundations for the later growth of a national consciousness within the Brigade and the Order generally. If the leadership of the State organizations were ever to overcome their insularity, they needed further and more frequent contact like that afforded by Storie Dixson's conference.[11]

The sense of common purpose Storie Dixson's conference engendered did not extend to the Adelaide Centre of the Association. The Centre Committee convened a special meeting to consider the conference resolutions. It agreed to some of the minor proposals, such as continuing the co-operation that had developed with the Red Cross Society during the war. But when it came to the proposal for a Priory it drew back, saying it was 'unable to agree'. It therefore resolved to advise Storie Dixson, all the State Association Centres and St John's Gate of its decision here.[12]

Dissent like this was probably enough to convince the London leadership of the Order that Australia was not yet ready for a Priory. St John's Gate now offered something less than what the Australian Brigade leaders had requested – a 'Central Council for the whole of Australia', the structure and powers of which were not specified. The offer from London led to another conference to consider it, again in Melbourne, in October 1921, but this time of State Centres of the Association. Hussey was apparently the only delegate representing the Adelaide Centre. Neither Gell, Connor nor Simpson, nor any other of the Centre's leading lights, seems to have accompanied him, presumably because they either did not think the matter sufficiently important or were happy to leave it all to him. With or without a high-level South Australian delegation, the conference went ahead and elected a provisional executive consisting of Storie Dixson as president, J.H. Lord (secretary of the Victorian Centre) as secretary, and A.H. Hansford (chairman of the Victorian Civil Ambulance) as treasurer. The provisional executive now set out to produce a draft constitution for the proposed Central Council. This was ready, and dispatched to State branches of the Association and Brigade for their consideration, by the end of the year.[13]

Once again the Adelaide Centre held itself aloof. Hussey had come back from the conference enthusiastic about the proposed Central Council for Australia. At the December 1921 meeting of the Centre Committee he

strongly advocated the Centre's affiliation with the new federal body. His was a lone voice. After debate around the issue a motion was put to the effect 'that this Centre does not concur', though after further debate an amendment was carried deferring further action until a special Committee meeting could consider the matter.[14]

The special meeting of the Committee took place early in the new year, on 19 January 1922. Only six of the twenty-three Committee members turned up for it. On Hussey's motion the meeting was adjourned because of the poor attendance and the importance of the matter. It reconvened eight days later. This time nine were present. Again Hussey spoke in favour of the Central Council, but Simpson spoke against it – the first time the records hint at what was to become a bitter feud between them. Gell, too, spoke against affiliation, saying he objected to the powers the draft constitution gave the new body, and in particular its power to make recommendations to London. He said he had recently been speaking to the chairman of the Western Australian Centre, which had decided not to join the Central Council, and he shared Gell's views. One of the deputy chairmen, Sir Frank Moulden (a later Lord Mayor of Adelaide), then moved 'that the constitution of the Central Council as laid down ... does not meet with the approval of the Adelaide Centre, and that the Adelaide Centre cannot see its way clear to join on the terms proposed'. No one seems to have considered the possibility of negotiating further with Storie Dixson to find a way around the Centre's objections. Moulden's motion was then carried eight to one, with Hussey's being the only dissenting vote. Despite this South Australian rebuff to the federalists within St John, Hussey remained a staunch advocate of the national body. His attitude was probably confirmed later that year when he received a letter from St John's Gate, from no less than the Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, Maj.-Gen. Sir R. Havelock Charles, 'expressing regret that all States could not agree to the formation of a Central Council and give it a trial'.[15]

Progress in establishing the Central Council for Australia stood still for a couple of years after this. St John's Gate and the Chapter General of the Grand Priory needed time to deliberate upon the matter in customary leisurely style. Their discussions possibly went on to greater lengths than usual out of concern that Western Australia and the Adelaide Centre had chosen not to affiliate.

The next federal move came in August 1924, when Storie Dixson and other senior St John Ambulance representatives from New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland were in Adelaide for the Australian Science Congress, and took the opportunity of being in town together to call an interstate St John conference. It took place in Connor's office, with him, Gell, Simpson, Mr Lavington Bonython (a Committee member), Dr S.L. Dawkins (District Surgeon of the Brigade in South Australia) and Dr C. Duguid (a Committee member) representing South Australia. (Why Hussey was not there too is not clear.) The conference discussed various

matters of interest to all States – the possibility of legislation in each State to ensure that first aid kits were carried in motor vehicles, their dissatisfaction with the British first aid manual they were all obliged to use, and the production of an Australian first aid textbook, or at least an Australian supplement to the British manual. The issue of the Central Council does not seem to have arisen, and perhaps this was just as well: only six months before an updated form of the draft constitution for the Central Council had been discussed at an Adelaide Centre Committee meeting, which voted to 'adhere to the resolution passed at the special meeting on 27 January 1921'. Discussion of such a divisive issue might have spoilt the harmony and good will in which the conference seems to have proceeded.[16]

In December 1924 St John's Gate at last approved of the constitution for the Central Council. The constitution gave the Council the primary function of 'co-ordinat[ing], protect[ing] and advanc[ing] the interests of the Order and the work of [its] Ambulance Department ... in every way possible'. With the hope of living up to that lofty ambition, the Central Council held its inaugural meeting in Sydney in June 1925. All States except Western Australia were represented (though Tasmania only by proxy), with Hussey, the sole South Australian, there to represent his Brigade District but not of course his Association Centre. He reported on what had taken place at the next Committee meeting of the Adelaide Centre. Storie Dixson, predictably, had been elected chairman. Various minor matters had been discussed, the most notable having been the supplement to the British first aid manual which Storie Dixson had written – and which the Central Council had declined to endorse. Hussey had come back from Sydney enthusiastic about what the Council promised St John bodies. Again, but once more in vain, he urged the Centre to affiliate along with his Brigade District, which he had been determined to bring into the Council – whether or not his junior officers liked the idea.[17]

Not a great deal more about the Central Council for Australia was heard in Adelaide after this, probably because the Council did little to justify Hussey's faith in it. Early in 1927 the new Centre secretary, Cant, visited Sydney, and while there interviewed Storie Dixson. The latter, he reported to the Centre Committee in April 1927,

> argued very persuasively in favour of the South Australian Association affiliating with the Central Council. He pointed out that the expense was trifling, mainly postage and stationery. Meetings were held only once in a few years and delegates' expenses need not be very heavy. He felt sure the additional amount could easily be found.[18]

If Storie Dixson thought that the main thing keeping the Adelaide Centre out of the Central Council was the expense of belonging, he had obviously misread the South Australian response to the Council's formation. But as well as arguing about costs, he no doubt promoted to Cant an idea he had

pushed elsewhere. This was the point that a benefit from all the State St John bodies' affiliating with the Council would be their greater independence from London. The obligatory ties with St John's Gate caused various difficulties, both administratively and in policy issues. The long delays in getting action from London on issues that were urgent in Australia; the frequent breaks in communication as mails either went astray or were held up; the disagreements between a colonial 'head office', which often seemed not to appreciate the needs of its farflung outposts, and its Australian branches – all these, to Storie Dixson and his supporters, were good reasons for lessening the dominance of London.

The Central Council ran a meeting in Adelaide on 23 June 1928, but nothing is known about it, and it is nowhere mentioned in South Australian St John records. It planned to run its next in Canberra in 1931, but this seems not to have eventuated. After its inaugural meeting it did little but write letters to St John's Gate and the State branches, and these not very often. It certainly enhanced Storie Dixson's already considerable reputation within St John in Australia, making his name the only one known to St John people in every State. That was all, however. St John's Gate thought little of it, and was probably disappointed that its minimal achievements simply made fatuous the grand objectives proclaimed in its constitution. Somehow it survived formally on paper until May 1933, when London advised the State branches that it had been disbanded. By this time Storie Dixson and nearly all the other leading figures but Hussey were dead, and it had long since stopped corresponding with either London or the State branches. Its only really positive attainment was on several occasions to have brought together St John people from different States, showing them that they had interests in common. Its failure had probably been inevitable. Time and distance had weighed heavily against it: running an organization in a continent-sized territory without rapid means of communication was just too difficult. Then, too, the men running it were septuagenarians, all at the end of their St John careers and no longer as energetic or resourceful as they had once been. It had no funds and no authority over State branches, and for that reason was bound to be ineffectual. Finally, it failed to gain the cooperation of important sections of the St John community – both the Association and Brigade in Western Australia and the Association in South Australia; and so while federation had come about in the national polity, the St John bodies were not ready for that step yet.

We can hardly blame the Adelaide Centre for the failure of the Central Council for Australia, even though its repeated refusal to affiliate was a contributing factor. The Council was probably doomed from the outset by geographical factors, by its leadership and their powerlessness, its poorly defined role, and the provincialism of some St John bodies. Its demise was no great loss, though in South Australia the indirect effects of its failure seem to have been more serious than elsewhere. The legacy of the Centre's

non-affiliation, as we shall soon see, was an intensification of the feud between Hussey and Simpson, the acrimony of which was to be distressing for everyone deeply involved in St John affairs in South Australia in the late 1920s and early '30s.

The unwillingness of the Adelaide Centre to co-operate with the Central Council indicates something of the self-centred insularity of the Association leadership in the years following the First World War. Over the decade, 1916-25, during which the federal idea had been maturing, the Centre had drawn back every time the subject of a wider St John organization had arisen. The faults of the leadership numbered more than an unswerving parochialism. The same timidity and narrow sense of purpose which had earlier marked the Centre's reluctance to sponsor Brigade activities and to initiate a scheme for ambulance transport remained as hallmarks of the postwar leadership. Those defects, too, had become apparent in the Centre's response to the challenge presented by federalism.

The troubles the Centre was experiencing as the 1920s wore on were exacerbated by the disagreements between Simpson and Hussey, and by Hussey's increasingly irascible behaviour. These difficulties came to a head in 1928 with the imminent arrival in Adelaide of a delegation from St John's Gate led by Sir John Hewett, a senior officer of the Grand Priory.

The delegation had been partly Simpson's doing. He had been in England in 1923, and had visited the Grand Priory headquarters at St John's Gate, where the Order's leaders were talking about sending out one of their number to check up on its colonial branches. When he brought this news back to the February 1924 meeting of the Centre Committee, the Committee decided to write to St John's Gate and to the other State Centres to say they would welcome such a visit. Three years later, in 1927, with the tour of inspection seemingly no nearer, Simpson, by now Centre chairman, offered to pay first class steamer passage for 'an influential representative from St John's Gate' to tour Australia. He had also persuaded the State government to grant the visitor a free pass on the State's railways, and had got the other State Centres to gain the same concession from their rail authorities. That initiative was the coaxing the Order's leaders in London needed. By early 1928 the membership of the delegation had been settled, and the Australian St John branches were preparing for its arrival in the coming December.[19]

In Adelaide Simpson and the Centre Committee took charge of the arrangements for the South Australian leg of the tour. Hussey, however, thought the matter should be managed differently, with a joint Association-Brigade committee comprising three members of each Foundation being responsible. This seems to have been his way of underlining the fact that the Brigade was an equal partner of the Association in St John endeavours, and that he as Brigade Commissioner was of equal status to Simpson as Association chairman. At the September 1928 meeting of the

Centre Committee he moved a motion to set up such a joint committee. When Simpson disallowed this, Hussey left the meeting in a huff. Discussion continued without him. The meeting decided to write to him to suggest that a Brigade guard of honour be present to welcome the delegation when it arrived at the Adelaide railway station, and to point out that he should have remained in the meeting to confer on these arrangements. The Committee then appointed a sub-committee consisting of Simpson, Moulden, Russack, Bulman and Hussey to superintend the arrangements for the visit. This gave the Brigade two of the sub-committee's five members, but neither that nor the suggestion of a Brigade guard of honour could win Hussey over.[20]

Hussey now refused to co-operate with the sub-committee or to fall in with the plans it made. He refused at first to sanction a welcoming Brigade guard of honour, though in the end he relented. Hewett warmly approved of the guard of honour, not knowing the drama behind it. Then, when Bulman arranged for one of the Railways divisions of the Brigade to give a first aid demonstration at a garden party Simpson had arranged for the delegation at his own home, Hussey refused to allow them to wear their Brigade uniforms. Bulman had them give the display wearing Railways uniforms instead. This sort of pettiness and spitefulness did Hussey little good. Both his senior Brigade staff and the rank and file members were embarrassed and angered by his conduct. At a conference of St John workers which Hewett later attended, they made their feelings known. Hewett later reported their displeasure to St John's Gate. He also said he had received a letter from the Brigade's District Surgeon, Dawkins, complaining about Hussey. Dawkins' letter said 'the feeling of many members towards [Hussey] was not good'.[21]

Hewett came away from South Australia perplexed by the rift he had happened upon. His report to the Grand Prior, the Duke of Connaught, noted his concern:

> It is difficult to suggest a means by which the relations between the Centre and the District can be put right, since they are responsible to two different authorities, but it certainly appears to us that it is incumbent on the Chief Commissioner in Australia [Storie Dixson] to go into the present question of the present state of the Brigade, which we cannot regard as satisfactory. The strength of the Brigade, which formerly consisted of 12 Ambulance [men's] and 2 Nursing [women's] Divisions has fallen to 7 Ambulance and 1 Nursing Division.[22]

There was little doubt that Hussey's cantankerous behaviour was having a debilitating effect on the Brigade. In June 1928, only six months before Hewett's arrival, the Brigade in Adelaide had set up a 'transport committee' in the hope of moving into ambulance transport. This committee, consisting chiefly of representatives of Railways divisions of the Brigade, wanted Bulman, who as Railways Ambulance Officer and Brigade District Superintendent worked closely with them, to be their chairman. Hussey

insisted that as Commissioner he himself should fill the position. Hussey discussed this problem with Hewett, who unwisely commented to the effect that 'the colonel is always head of his army'. Taking this as justification for bloody-minded arbitrariness, Hussey now suspended Bulman from duty as District Superintendent. Bulman's co-operation with Simpson in entertaining the Hewett delegation had no doubt hardened Hussey's determination to show all and sundry who was boss. Bulman might have been willing to accept Hussey's action in dismissing him, but he refused to step down as chairman of the transport committee, which Hussey had hoped might happen. He argued that, because the committee had purchased an ambulance vehicle, and he had gone a guarantor for the loans, he had an obligation to remain chairman. Hussey answered this move by resigning from the transport committee, and then declining as Commissioner to sanction the appeal the committee planned to raise the money to pay off the loan.[23]

The transport committee now appealed to Storie Dixson as Commissioner for Australia (a title he had assumed with the creation of the Central Council for Australia). They received no reply. This was because Hussey, through whose hands Brigade regulations required that such a petition must pass, had not sent their letter on. Two further efforts to get a letter to Storie Dixson through Hussey also failed. Bulman showed how grave the matter was by undertaking what was then a major journey, travelling to Sydney to plead to Storie Dixson direct. Storie Dixson assured him that he was still the South Australian District Superintendent because he, Storie Dixson, Hussey's superior officer, had not endorsed the suspension.[24]

None of this made much difference to Hussey. He simply by-passed Bulman, using another officer as *de facto* District Superintendent. Bulman was a widely popular figure in St John circles. As well as having been a leading figure in the Brigade since its South Australian inception, he was highly regarded in the Association Centre because of his promotion of first aid training in the Railways Department, and had been a member of the Centre Committee since 1924. Brigade members sympathised with him in his troubles with Hussey, and divisions were soon petitioning Hussey to call a general meeting of the District to clear Bulman's name. Some of them tactfully hinted to Hussey that he ought to resign. For example, during 1929, after he had written to the various divisions asking if they were 'satisfied with the way the affairs of the Brigade [were] administered', the Nursing Division had replied that 'it [was] too much to expect a man of his years to cope with the enormous amount of work that must fall on his shoulders if the Brigade [were] to advance here as in other States'. Hussey, however, ignoring the tide of resentment rising against him within the Brigade, chose not to act on such suggestions. He continued on bypassing Bulman till the end.[25]

Fortunately for the Brigade, the end was not too long in coming. Hussey retired early in 1931, possibly because Storie Dixson had informed him he

would not be reappointed when his commission came up for its triennial renewal. He resigned from the Centre Committee at the same time (as against serving out the rest of the year), which suggests that he might have departed the scene aggrieved. Simpson paid him a fleeting tribute at the Centre's next annual meeting, saying he had given St John 'many years of valuable service'.[26]

'Many' in this case meant well over forty. Hussey had been among that select group of pupils who had gained their first aid certificates in the Centre's first year of operations, 1885; and he had begun organizing classes for fellow members of the Literary Societies Union in 1887. He would have met or known all the Centre's early leading figures – A.C. Hunt, Sir William Robinson, Drs Allan Campbell, T.W. Corbin and B. Poulten, Lady Brassey, John Witherick, J.P. Roberts, C.H. Goode, E.W. Van Senden, A.M. Simpson, Frederick and Frances Wright. In 1928 he had gained one of the first two Brigade long service medals to be awarded in South Australia, given for twelve years' service; and in 1928, too, he had been promoted to the rank of Officer within the Order - at the same time as Simpson.

Despite this long and distinguished record, Hussey, like Gell, had become a negative object lesson to succeeding generations of St John leaders. He exemplified the principle that it is possible for a leader to stay on too long. Although he may not actually have become the 'King Lear' of St John in Australia, he had demonstrated that by not making way for younger, more vigorous, more effective officers, a leader can actively harm an institution he loves and has spent a lifetime serving. His more recent conduct also said much about a perennial problem for voluntary agencies like St John – the difficulty presented by the loyal worker who makes too large an emotional investment in his or her commitment to the organization. The danger such people present is that eventually their personalities cannot be extricated from the organization. Trying to separate the one from the other when the situation demands it may therefore be destructive for all concerned.

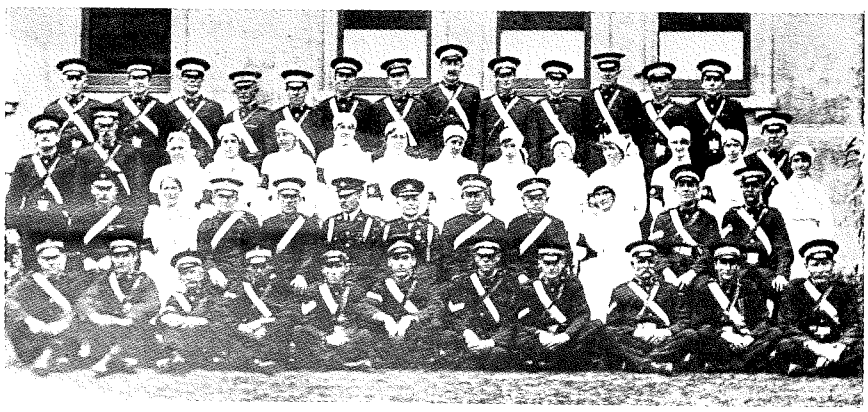
The state of the Brigade under Hussey, then, was yet another of the difficulties St John experienced in South Australia during the 1920s. The problem was basically the same as that afflicting the Association – an elderly, entrenched, enervated leadership which had run out of ideas. In Hussey's case the achievement even before the onset of lassitude had not been spectacular. When he had taken over the Brigade District from Lindsay and Bulman in 1915 it had a strength of perhaps 170 in all divisions. How many members there were when he retired sixteen years later is unknown. In 1927, possibly as a result of the widening rift between him and Simpson, the Centre's published *Annual Reports* stopped including the Brigade's annual report as a supplement, a practice followed almost since the Brigade's formation. Brigade reports did not reappear in the Centre's *Annual Reports* until the year after Hussey stepped down. As the *Annual Reports* are our only source of information about Brigade strength

at that time, we do not know how many 'troops' mustered for Hussey's successor, his District Surgeon, Dawkins. They are unlikely to have been numerous: in the eleven years until 1927 in which the *Annual Reports* ran a Brigade supplement, its strength had only gone past 200 once, in 1916-17 following the year of peak enrolments and interest in St John. After that year the number averaged about 180, or roughly the same strength as when Hussey had been appointed. In early 1929, however, Hewett noted with some consternation that membership was falling, and was down to only 130.[27]

If Brigade membership is any guide to the vitality of a District, the most to be said for Hussey's leadership is that the District stood still while he was in charge. The situation changed markedly after his departure. A year after his retirement District strength was past the 300 mark, and by the end of the decade it was nearly 840. (The graph on the next page shows the trend.) By that time each passing year saw the opening of new divisions in Adelaide's suburbs and in the country towns. This was in contrast to the Hussey years, when the closure of moribund divisions was more common than the formation of new ones. The difference, it seems, was the appointment of a younger, more able, and more energetic leader.[28]

St John's problems did not end with the change of leadership in the Association and Brigade, as Simpson took over from Gell and Dawkins from Hussey. The organization still had the Great Depression to live through, and that was to produce its own particular setbacks.

The graphs we looked at earlier tell something of the story. Thus, the Association's bank credit balance dropped sharply from 1930 to 1933, from £234/6/10 in 1929-30 to £93/6/0 in 1932-33, after which a slow recovery took place over the next six years. In the worst two years, 1931-32 and 1932-33, the Centre actually suffered a deficit of expenditure

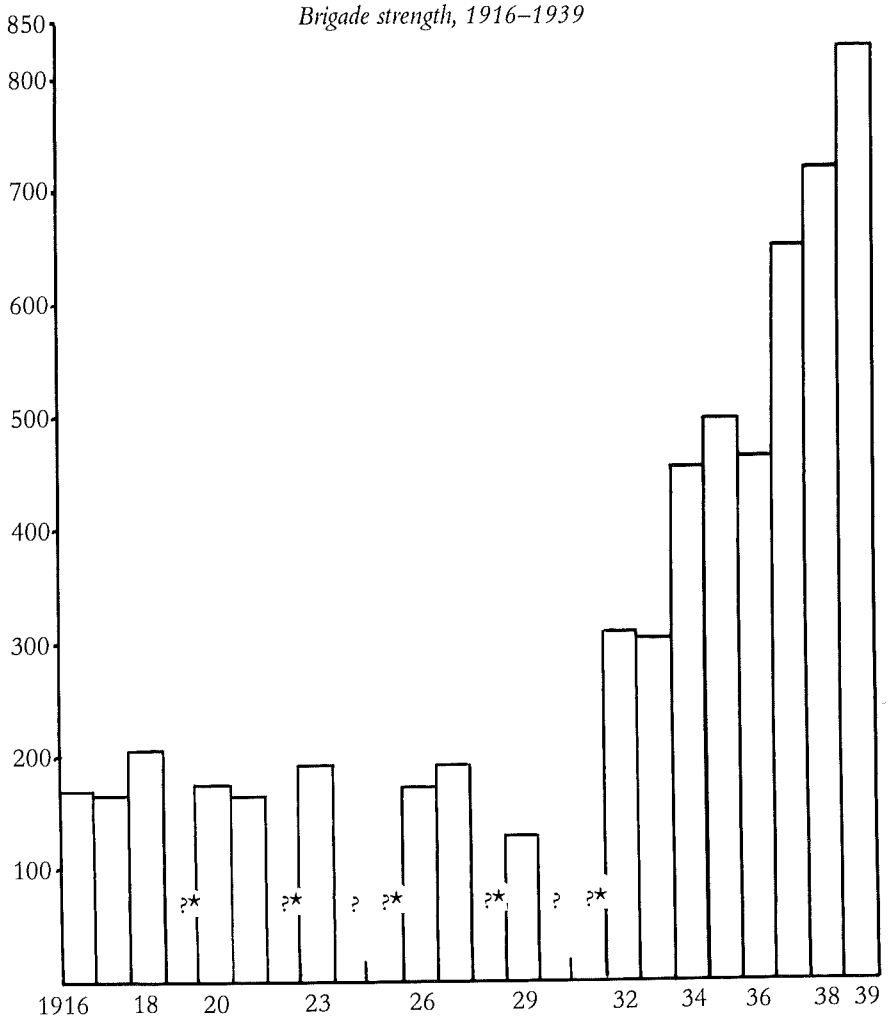


St John Ambulance Brigade South Australia District, 1921. Seated in the centre of the second front row is G.F. Hussey, Assistant Commissioner, and immediately left of him is R.V. Bulman, District Superintendent.

over income, of £13/10/2 and £3/6/7 respectively in those two years – the first time that this had happened in over thirty years, since that other great depression, of the 1890s. A series of cuts in the government subsidy accentuated the shrinking of the Centre's cash reserve. The subsidy had remained steady at £150 for the eighteen years up to 1929-30; then it was reduced to £100 in 1930-31, and to £90 in 1931-32. It remained at that level for the next five years, until 1936-37, when it was reduced again, to £75, or half the original level. The next year it was raised back to £100, at which level it remained until the war.[29]

The numbers of those enrolling in and graduating from the training classes show a similar pattern of decline in the early 30s followed by a recovery in the six or seven years leading up to the Second World War.

Brigade strength, 1916–1939



★Figures for these years unknown

The graphs for enrolments and graduations do not, however, plunge as steeply as those for the Centre's finances. The reason for this is that the Centre Committee, commendably concerned for the plight of the poverty stricken, cut the tuition fee. The Committee was still obliged to pay the fees of the doctors who wished to be paid for lecturing and examining classes; and in 1930-31 these amounted to £126/11/0 or fifty-four *per cent* of the Centre's income of £232/14/1. Carrying that burden, the Committee obviously could not offer free training for the poor, much as it might have liked to have done so. It seems to have done the next best thing – lower the tuition fee and subsidize the classes by drawing on the cash reserve until good times returned. It was a sensible decision, and was perhaps a sign that the post-Gell leadership was learning to be adventurous. Its effect was undoubtedly salutary: overall the decline in enrolments was only about eleven *per cent*, and in graduations was about seven *per cent* – figures that otherwise could have been considerably higher.[30]

One unusual feature of the graphs for enrolments and graduations deserves comment: men's classes declined over the worst two years of the depression, and fairly sharply, but women's classes *increased* steadily during the worst years, then fell away later as men's classes recovered. In the worst year for enrolments and graduations, 1931-32, the numbers of women enrolling and graduating actually surpassed the figures for men – the first time this had happened since the year of maximum wartime effort, 1915-16. Why such a turnabout happened is uncertain, though one may speculate. Possibly the high rates of unemployment kept men away from St John Ambulance because jobless men were too dispirited to sign up for a class, or because they had left home temporarily in search of work, while those lucky enough to keep their jobs were too busy keeping life and limb together to be bothered about training. Women, apparently, were moved differently. For them a St John class could have been a way of making do, of saving on family medical expenses by becoming self-reliant, and of insuring against the risk of costly injury or illness within the family.

The Centre Committee was pleased with its own performance during the lean years, despite the falling off in income and training activities. In July 1930, for example, Simpson assured the Centre's forty-fifth annual general meeting that the past year had been a good one 'in spite of the adverse circumstances due to the general impoverishment of the community'. He pointed out that class membership was still at an appreciably higher level than four years previously, when effort had been running down badly at the tail end of the Gell-Connor regime. The following year his speech to the AGM was similarly buoyant:

> Considering the condition of the State the past year as far as the Centre is concerned has been eminently satisfactory. We have kept up the numbers of our classes splendidly.[31]

By the next year's AGM there had been a change of chairmen. The new chairman, Charles R.J. Glover, who was also Adelaide's Lord Mayor,



Dr C.E.C. Wilson (left), Adelaide Centre chairman, and Dr S.L. Dawkins, Brigade Commissioner, with Lady Elibank, a visitor from England, 1938.

nevertheless spoke with his predecessor's optimism. This time the confidence was well founded: classes had begun picking up again – responding, no doubt, to Glover's action in cutting the tuition fee. Glover remained chairman for only sixteen months. He resigned and was replaced by Dr Charles E.C. Wilson in November 1933. Wilson continued and extended Glover's plan for helping the unemployed. The Centre's first action under Wilson's leadership was to make an offer to the Youth Employment Council 'to undertake classes for unemployed boys and girls in all suburbs and country areas. Wilson's Centre and Dawkins' Brigade co-operated in this scheme, which ran in Adelaide's industrial northern, western and southern suburbs, and in country centres like Tailem Bend, Murray Bridge, Port Pirie, Peterborough, Quorn, Port Augusta and Port Lincoln – everywhere, indeed, where Dawkins had been opening new Brigade divisions or reviving moribund ones. The classes seem to have been run for free, made possible by the use of Brigade volunteers as lecturers and demonstrators.[32]

Several notable benefits flowed from all of this. Firstly, and in a way only ever seen in the wartime years, the South Australian public were witnessing the fact that St John Ambulance was a vital organization. In recent years St John had looked more and more like a congregation of ancients who liked rubbing shoulders with the social elite. Now, in its willingness and enterprise in doing something practical to help the

unemployed, it was showing itself to be the friend and helper of those down on their luck, in truth a caring organization that felt for the common people. A second benefit appears to have been the final establishment of the principle of voluntaryism in Association teaching. From about this time the Centre seems to have stopped paying lecturers' fees, though a sum of £40 to £50 was annually paid to examiners right up to the war. This, of course, meant a substantial saving in expenditure, but also meant that the Association in South Australia had finally stepped into line with Centres elsewhere, where voluntaryism had always guided Association practice. But perhaps the most welcome outcome was the new spirit of co-operation between the Association and Brigade. For the first time, most probably, they recognized each other as comrades in the same work rather than as opponents doing different jobs in isolation from one another. In *that* achievement, if not in others, some good had therefore come out of the depression.[33]

2. *English emissaries and ambulance crusades*

The visit of Sir John Hewett mentioned in the previous section was not the only tour of Australia by a St John's Gate official in the inter-war period. A second and more extensive inspection took place seven years after Hewett's. This was when the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, Col. (later Sir) James Sleeman, spent six months in Australia and New Zealand in 1935-36. Between them Hewett and Sleeman blazed an Antipodean trail which many other dignitaries from the Grand Priory have since followed, thus maintaining at least one bond between Britain and Australia as other ties have loosened.

Senior officials at St John's Gate thought such visits were worthwhile in stimulating 'colonial' interest in St John Ambulance work. They regarded Hewett's as especially important as it was the first round-Australia tour by one of their number since that by Lord and Lady Brassey some forty years previously, and it followed 'repeated requests' from Australian St John bodies for such a visit. The St John's Gate term for these tours of inspection was 'Ambulance Crusade', 'crusade' here meaning something similar to what revivalist Christian preachers understand by the word. Over the years since Annie Brassey's relentless touring aboard the *Sunbeam*, Grand Priory had dispatched a succession of 'crusaders' to distant parts. India, South Africa and Canada had all been honoured by the arrival of emissaries from St John's Gate, and one Harold Boulton, M.P. had given the St John bodies in New South Wales a quick looking over in 1910; but South Australia had been left off the crusading circuit ever since 1887.

The St John leadership in South Australia in particular looked on Hewett's tour as a crusade in the evangelical sense. In 1925, Hussey in bemoaning the fact that, while many people graduated from Association classes, few subsequently joined his Brigade, endorsed the proposal then

under discussion for bringing someone out from Clerkenwell. He said he was all in favour of 'some capable member of the Order from St John's Gate [being] induced to come to the Commonwealth and put the aims of ambulance work before the public, such as we had when Lady Brassey visited Australia'. Few within St John in Adelaide apart from himself could remember those far off days, but everyone grew to appreciate his point as time went by.[34]

By 1927-28 the Centre was struggling to lift its statistics of achievement from the trough into which they had dropped during the last Gell-Connor years, and the matter of revival had become more urgent. Simpson expressed something of the prevailing mood at the forty-third annual general meeting in August 1928, the day before he left for Sydney for discussions with Storie Dixson to finalize arrangements for the forthcoming Hewett delegation. He spoke as follows:

> We look for much good from the visit.... Our efforts may greatly benefit if the visit should arouse a wider interest in what we are endeavouring to do.... The visit will be a most important event in the history of First Aid in Australia, and if the opportunity is properly utilized, it may mean much for the Commonwealth. What a healthier and happier community we might become if through this visit First Aid was generally [better] appreciated.[35]

The Hewett crusade, as we saw above, was largely a South Australian initiative, and mainly Simpson's, but it probably had its earliest roots in Storie Dixson's interstate Brigade conference in Melbourne in April 1920. The chief proposal to come out of the conference was that for an Australian Priory. Such a suggestion at that time was radical: there were no Priories of the Order outside of Britain. Indeed apart from the Grand Priory, the body corporate of the whole Order, there was one only other Priory, that is an independent national St John organization operating in association with Grand Priory. This was the Priory of Wales; and it had only come into being in 1918, with Edward Prince of Wales as its Prior, or head, and the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, as its Chancellor, or chief executive officer. With the assertive Australians asking for the same rights within the Order as the Welsh, one might suppose that the St John's Gate leadership would have been anxious to learn first hand more about St John in Australia to see if it warranted Priory status.

When A.A. Simpson visited Clerkenwell in 1923 he found the Order's leadership there thinking about sending one of their number to Australia to check on St John activities in each State. Back in Adelaide, at the February 1924 meeting of the Centre Committee, he mentioned the matter; the Committee were keen about it; and they voted to advise London and the other State Centres that they would apreciate such a visit. At least one of the other State Centres, New South Wales, indicated immediate interest, but said it would be unable to contribute towards the cost. Further correspondence between the States over the next few months

showed that all Centres favoured the idea. Further support came from the St John Ambulance conference Storie Dixson conducted during the Australian Science Congress in Adelaide during August 1924. The conference discussed the proposed visit, decided that a delegate from Grand Priory should be invited out, and that the Governor General (then Lord Forster) should 'be respectfully asked to carry this into effect'. Apparently he obliged, because London soon advised that 'a representative would endeavour to visit Australia the following year'. With the machinery of protocol thus set in motion, the Adelaide Centre was able to conclude its final meeting for the year by recording its hope that a tour would go ahead 'in the near future'.[36]

The emissary did not arrive for another four years, and in South Australia at least the idea seems not to have been mentioned again for more than two years. This was the period, of course, when the Centre was running down badly at the end of the Gell-Connor regime, and not much was happening in the Adelaide Centre. The next time the subject is mentioned in the records is at the time of Simpson's offer of a free berth aboard a steamer to the prospective visitor, in April 1927.

Simpson's interest in the visit seems to have been rekindled by the visit to Adelaide in 1926 of Sir Evelyn Cecil. Cecil, General Secretary to the Grand Priory during the First World War and now a member of the British House of Commons, was touring Australia as a member of a party from the Empire Parliamentary Association. He had obviously looked up St John people in each State he had visited, and had reported back to St John's Gate that the Australians were still keen to welcome a representative should one be sent. He and Simpson seem to have exchanged a few letters on the subject, and it is likely that as a result of these the latter made his offer of a free passage to overcome any doubts London might have had about the cost of sending one of their number half way round the world on an Antipodean odyssey. It still took another eighteen months to get the visitor out of London and on the way to Australia, and when he came it was not alone but as head of an entourage that included his daughter, Mrs Lorna St John Atkinson, Major Colin MacRae and his wife, Lady Margaret MacRae (*née* Crichton-Stuart), and the MacRae's young daughter.[37]

Why a team was sent out rather than an individual is not clear. Perhaps it was a case of 'overkill' on the part of Grand Priory, or an effort to appease the Australians for having had to wait so long, or just a matter of taking the opportunity to give some high placed members of the Order a pleasant summer away from the bleakness of a British winter, subsidised by the Australians. Whatever the reason, there could be no denying that the delegation was senior in rank within the Order. Hewett himself was a member of the highest grade of the Order, a Bailiff Grand Cross – one of a select handful of dignitaries who had reached that level. (An idea of its rarity can be gained from the fact that in a century of Australian St John

history from 1883, only two Australians ever rose that high within the Order. These were the first two Chancellors of the Australian Priory, Sir Hugh Poate and Sir George Stening.) He was also the Bailiff of Egle, one of the Grand Priory's four 'Great Officers', that is its seniormost executives, who in precedence rank after only the Sovereign Head – the Monarch of the day – and the Grand Prior, who since 1888 has always been a Prince or a Royal Duke.

Aged seventy-four and weighing 108 kilograms (17 stone, as one irreverent Sydney newspaper delighted in telling its readers), Hewett was perhaps undertaking an ambitious assignment in travelling so far. Exotic experiences were something to which he was well accustomed, however. After Winchester College and Oxford he had joined the Indian civil service at the age of twenty-three, when the Raj was at the height of its ascendency, and remained in it until his retirement some thirty-five years later. In that time he held a variety of appointments, including time as a magistrate, as private secretary to the Viceroy, as a member of the Plague Commission, secretary to the Opium Commission, eight years as secretary to the government of India, and president of the Durbar Committee for the coronation of George V. Loyal servants like this made the Empire possible and, because the Empire was generous in honoring faithful service, it is not surprising that Hewett had been knighted twice. He was both a Knight of the British Empire and a Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India. The latter award is a measure of the value the Empire placed on his services: it was the highest honor to which a member of the Indian civil service could aspire. It was awarded very rarely, and then usually only to retiring Viceroys and to the most senior and distinguished of civil servants. Hewett had topped all this off after his retirement to England by entering parliament as the member for Luton.

Like their leader, and the rest of the St John's Gate 'Establishment', Hewett's fellow delegates were from the British upper classes and held high rank within the Order. His daughter, Lorna Atkinson, was a Dame of Grace and a senior officer of the Brigade 'At Home'. Colin MacRae, aged fifty-nine, a former officer of the 42nd Royal Highlanders (the Black Watch) and a traditional laird on the Isle of Bute, was a Knight of Justice. His wife, Lady Margaret, a daughter of the Marquess of Bute and president of the Catholic Women's League of Scotland, was a Dame of Justice. The difference between 'of Justice' and 'of Grace' might appear trivial to outsiders, but to those rank-conscious members of the Order who savour the fact that St John is an order of chivary the distinction is significant: 'of Justice' means that the Knight or Dame concerned is able to 'prove' his or her nobility, and is thus entitled to display heraldic arms, whereas the Knight or Dame 'of Grace' is not. It follows then that Knights and Dames 'of Justice' take precedence over those 'of Grace'. At a time when only four or five Australians had ever become Knights or Dames of St John, the members of Hewett's team would therefore have looked like grand



Sir John Prescott Hewett, Bailiff of Egle of the Order of St John, leader of the Order's delegation from its St John's Gate, London, headquarters to Australia and New Zealand, 1928-29.

celebrities to the ordinary Australian St John worker. Perhaps that explains why they were treated reverentially wherever they went, in South Australia no less than elsewhere.

The delegation left England aboard the Orient liner *Oronsay* in late October 1928, bound for Gibraltar, Ceylon, Australia and New Zealand, in each of which they were to inspect branches of the Order. They reached Fremantle exactly a month later, on 27 November. After nine days in Perth, where their first view of Australian St John work impressed them greatly, Hewett and his daughter took the train to Adelaide (the MacRaes having already gone on by sea). They enjoyed their trip along the Transcontinental Railway. Hewett later wrote that

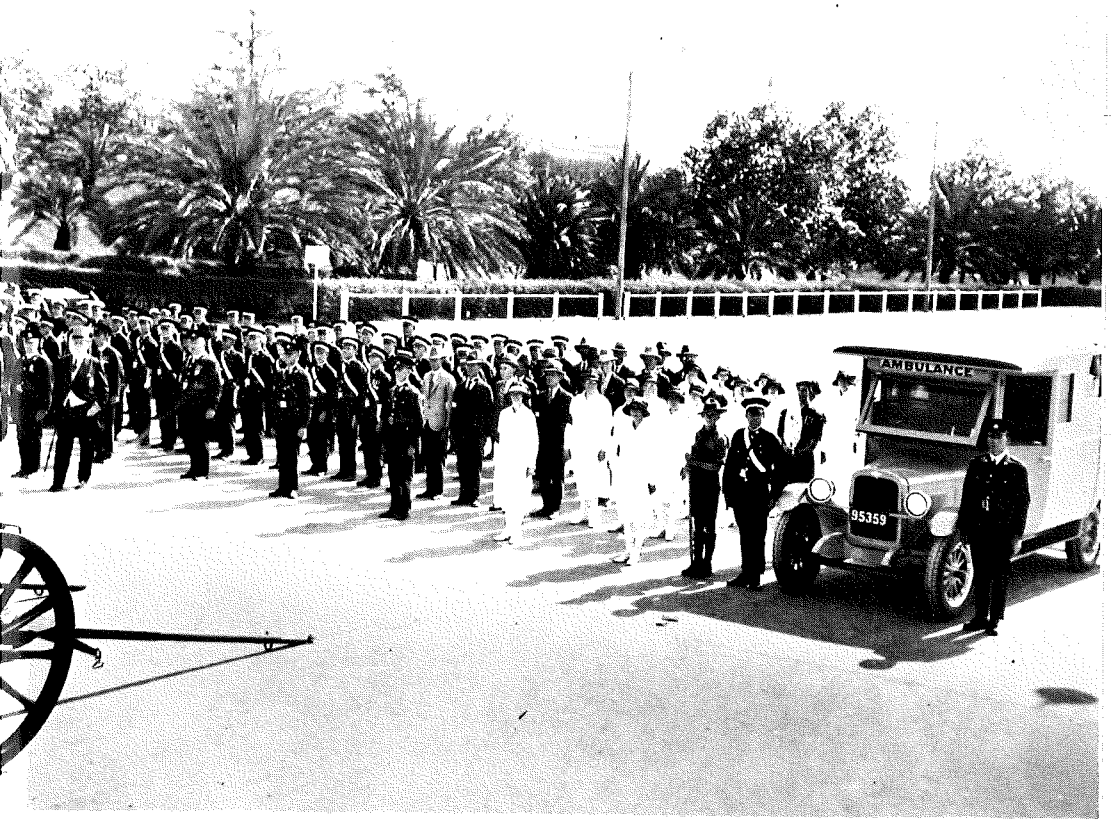
> it is a wonderful experience to pass through the great Australian desert or Nullarbor plain.... The country is dead flat, the soil a dark red, and the only vegetation is saltbush which grows very sparsely to the height of 10 in. to 14 in. [about 25 to 35 cm.] This is a marvellous contrast to the wonderfully fertile country through which we passed for a long time before we reached Adelaide shortly before 9 p.m. on 7th December.[38]

In Adelaide the local St John leadership was waiting to meet them – Simpson, Hussey and the rest, together with the Brigade guard of honour which Hussey had at first refused to supply. After the formal greetings were done they were driven off to Government House, where they were to be the guests of their old friends, the Vice Regal couple, Sir Alexander and Lady Hore-Ruthven (who were later, as Lord and Lady Gowrie, to occupy the more exalted Government House in Canberra).

The next day, Saturday 8 December, they recommenced the busy schedule of receptions, parties and meetings which their long train journey had briefly punctuated. Even before Hewett and Atkinson had arrived, MacRae had begun the delegation's round of Adelaide engagements by giving an address on the history of the Order to the Rotary Club. Their first function all together was the garden party at Simpson's home which Hussey had chosen to boycott. The next day, Sunday, Hussey had 100 members out of his Brigade strength of 130 on parade for a review. MacRae did the inspection, and complimented the 'troops', particularly the women of the Nursing Division, on their marching. Photographs suggest that this was an impressive occasion, though Hussey felt constrained to apologise for what he said was a poor turnout of the male divisions. Pride of place in the parade went to the new 4-berth Chevrolet ambulance van the Brigade had acquired several months earlier for its race course duties. On the third day, Monday, Hewett and MacRae conducted a conference of the Association Centre, while Atkinson addressed a meeting of the Lyceum Club and Lady Margaret MacRae retired to her room suffering from heat exhaustion. That evening the two women attended a meeting of the Brigade's Nursing Division, of which there was now only one (the two original Divisions having amalgamated several years before). The

women of the Division gave 'an excellent display of bandaging etc.'; Atkinson gave an address on the work of the Nursing Divisions of the Brigade 'At Home'; and Lady Margaret presented prizes to the winners of a bandaging competition. (This was one of the few activities in which Lady Margaret participated. She spent most of her time in Australia confined to her quarters, suffering from the heat of the Australian summer, to the extent that in Melbourne the MacRaes withdrew from the delegation and returned to Scotland, where the climate was rather more bracing.) The fourth and final full day in Adelaide began with a meeting between Hewett, MacRae, Atkinson and the secretary of the South Australian branch of Red Cross, after which the men went on to a luncheon at the Commonwealth Club, where Hewett addressed the hundred members who had gathered to hear him. That afternoon all four members of the delegation attended a reception given by the Lord Mayor, J. Lavington Bonython (a prominent member of the Centre Committee), and they all made speeches. Later on the two men and Atkinson attended a conference of Brigade officers; and in the evening there was an 'entertainment' at a new Brigade drill hall, which Hewett formally opened. The next day, Wednesday 11 December, they all left for Melbourne by train. Before departing, Hewett held final discussions with Simpson, Hussey and others, while Atkinson met with Girl Guide officials to sound out the possibilities

Brigade review in honour of the Hewett delegation, Adelaide, 1929. Hewett is the man with the top hat and cane at front left. At the right is the Brigade's recently acquired Chevrolet ambulance van.



for starting up cadet divisions of the Brigade from within the Guide movement, as had happened in England. Although the delegation's four and a half days in Adelaide seem to have been largely spent in social engagements, Hewett was a shrewd observer. From the report he wrote he had obviously used his informal discussions to good effect in learning much about the troubles that had been afflicting both Association and Brigade. The report, made confidentially to members of the Order's Chapter General, provides a lively view of St John in Adelaide and of Adelaide society in general at that time.[39]

Were a few days' socializing and talking worth the effort which so many South Australians had put into the visit? There were certainly both short- and long-term benefits. Among the more immediate results was a welter of highly favourable publicity. The delegation had brought its own press publicity 'kits' with it, and these were distributed to the newspaper reporters, who followed them everywhere they went, giving them superstar treatment. The publicity continued well after the delegation had departed. For example, Radio Station 5CL allocated a 15-minute weekly time slot, 11.45 till 12.00 on Friday mornings for six weeks, for a broadcast by the Centre secretary, Cant, on Association and first aid matters. The Centre Committee felt it had profited from the discussions it held with the delegation, and by the chance these afforded to make known in London its views on a range of issues of particular concern in South Australia. The latter related to the special difficulties of carrying out St John work in a vast territory with a sparse and unevenly distributed population: South Australian distances and settlement made St John's Gate regulations about minimum class sizes, the segregation of men and women for instruction, and the necessity for medical practitioners alone to teach and examine classes, all seem inappropriate. The Committee was also pleased that enrolments showed an immediate sharp upturn. The year following the visit, 1929, was, of course, the year marking the onset of the devastating depression; and so at the annual meeting in July Simpson felt justified in saying that 'the past year's record has been very encouraging in spite of the drawbacks of a rather poor harvest, and the reduced prices for the products on which our community depend'. And finally, there was an intangible benefit which all within St John felt, and that was the effect the delegation had had on morale. It was Simpson, again, who reflected the general view when he said that the

> visit was not only an inspiration to those who were directly interested in First Aid, but it brought us closer together with the venerable order to which the Ambulance Association owes its origin, and it was important that our fellow citizens should realize the great interest that is taken in our work in England.[40]

Simpson, like many other South Australians at the time, was proud to be a citizen of an Empire as well as of a State and a nation. St John Ambulance was one of the links binding the Empire together and to its Motherland.

In strengthening these emotional ties, the Hewett mission had obviously crusaded effectively.

For Simpson personally there was a further benefit. In June the following year he was promoted within the Order to Knight of Grace, in recognition of his services to the Centre, and to the St John movement in Australia generally through his initiatives in ensuring that the tour took place. He was the first South Australian to climb to that pinnacle of attainment in the service of St John. He stepped down as Centre chairman the next year, 1931, making way for C.R.J. Glover, the incumbent Lord Mayor. He had been deputy chairman and chairman for fourteen years, and his father (A.M. Simpson) had been deputy chairman for thirty years before that. He was only in his mid-fifties – youthful for an Adelaide Centre chairman – but he thought it wise to stand aside because, as he said in his retirement address, 'there is always a risk of ossification if we do not make ample provision for the infusion of fresh blood'. The Simpson dynasty continued, however, for he accepted nominal office as one of the Centre's three vice presidents, a position he retained until his death in 1939; and his son, F.N. Simpson, now joined the Committee as a deputy chairman.[41]

The next itinerant ambassador from St John's Gate, Sleeman, was to have a more profound effect on St John in South Australia and in the wider nation than his predecessors. Sleeman's tour of Australia and New Zealand, from December 1935 until May 1936, after a further two months *en route* in South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), was a crusade with the connotations of both the mediaeval military campaign and the modern evangelical mission: he came to conquer and convert in the name of Order and Empire. He was an apostle for the one and a soldier for the other; and in his own mind, and probably in those of the people he came to visit, the two roles coincided happily. Some of this was apparent in the punishing routine he followed: whereas Hewett and company spent two months on either side of the Tasman Sea, he stayed for six; and in any week of those six he probably attended as many functions as did the entire Hewett delegation in a month. In his eight months touring the white dominions of the southern hemisphere he attended nearly a thousand functions, at almost every one of which he would have given a speech on the theme of serving the Empire through working for St John.

The idea of a second ambulance crusade only seven years after Hewett's seems to have come from St John's Gate. Hewett had recommended to Chapter General that the Chief Secretary should undertake a follow-up visit soon, preferably later in 1929. 'Soon' in the St John's Gate lexicon often meant 'an indefinite but long time later', the Great Depression was already causing hardship, and no benefactor like Simpson made offers of free fares; and so perhaps seven years was not an unduly long time for the Australian St John branches to wait. In the end it was not the Chief Secretary who came but the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas.

This second tour within a decade seems to have been arranged with the Brigade in mind. The St John's Gate executive had most likely realised that Association work was well established in each State by this time. The need for first aid and home nursing training for lay persons was now so well established in the public mind that to stay in business Association Centres only had to keep up with the popular demand. Brigade work, on the other hand, had not taken off to the same extent. In Queensland there was no Brigade establishment, and Tasmania's was in its early infancy. The Brigade in the other States was a metropolitan institution. In provincial centres of heavy industry and mining – Newcastle, Wollongong, Kalgoorlie, Geelong and Port Pirie – the dangers of the workplace gave local communities a heightened awareness of safety; and in such towns the Brigade might be expected to prosper. Elsewhere outside the capital cities Brigade divisions had a more tenuous existence. They either struggled on against public apathy, formed and lapsed again as local interest waxed and waned, or never got going at all. People outside of the big cities were prepared to join Association classes, but it required something extra then to persuade them to don the Brigade uniform and thus commit themselves to the regular practising and application of their ambulance skills. An important part of Sleeman's task both as Chief Commissioner for the Brigade Overseas and as ambassador for St John's Gate was therefore to stimulate enthusiasm for Brigade work around Australia, and so to help the Brigade acquire the same degree of permanence which the Association Centres now enjoyed.

For Brigade members, the arrival of the Chief Commissioner was perhaps the most important event yet in the history of the Brigade in Australia. The Brigade had two 'armies' – the Brigade 'At Home', that is in Britain; and the Brigade 'Overseas', in the dominions and colonies. Each 'army' had its own 'field marshall', its Chief Commissioner, whose 'generals' were the District Commissioners – men of Hussey's and Dawkins' rank. Sleeman's tour was therefore of special significance, as it gave most rank and file Brigade members their one chance in a lifetime to meet their Commander in Chief.

Sleeman was well cast in the role of Commander. He came from a family of career army officers, the sort who had won and maintained the Empire. He had entered the army himself at the age of nineteen during the Boer War, in 1899, and took part in most of its subsequent campaigns. During the First World War he was second in command of his regiment for two years in France and Flanders. He was then attaché to the Japanese fleet on war service, in the course of which he was mentioned in despatches twice and presented with the Japanese sword of honour. He spent the last years of the war as director of military training for New Zealand; and when the war finished he stayed on in New Zealand for almost three years as chief of staff of New Zealand forces. Retiring back to England, he settled down to the life of a country gentlemen in the



Sir James Sleeman in his uniform of the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas.

Cotswold Hills near Gloucester. There he spent his time writing books and supporting worthy causes. The former included works on history, travel and military matters. Among them were *Thug or a Million Murders* and *La Secte secréte des Thugs* (accounts of his grandfather's suppression of thuggee, the secret cult of murder in India, during the 1830s); *First Principles of Tactics and Organization* (which went through six editions); and *Tales of Shikari or Big Game Shooting in India.* His causes were many – the part time 160th (South Wales) Infantry Brigade (of which he was Commanding Officer); the 6th (Glamorgan) Battallion of the Welsh Regiment (of which he was honorary colonel); the Scout Association (whose highest award, the Silver Wolf, he held); the Royal Geographical and Zoological Societies (of each of which he was a Fellow); the League of Mercy (of which he was president for Herefordshire); the St John Ambulance Association (of which he was president for Gloucestershire); and of course the St John Ambulance Brigade. Along the way he had also collected an impressive array of awards – a chestful of campaign ribbons; a C.M.G., a C.B.E. and a M.V.O.; the obligatory K.St.J. ('of Justice'); Freedom of the City of London; and several more exotic honours, for example memberships of the Japanese Order of the Sacred Treasure and of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, as a Knight Commander.[42]

Some of these accomplishments might have been more modest than the high sounding titles suggested; but it all made for good newspaper copy around Australia, especially when Sleeman appeared in his ornate black Chief Commissioner's uniform of silk-embroidered frock coat with high collar, and tall cocked hat with cascading black ostrich plumes. Yet Sleeman's was an imposing presence, even without the uniform and its medal ribbons. He epitomized the Imperial values of the age in which he had grown up: he fervently believed in the military virtues of discipline, obedience and loyalty; he insisted on smart uniforms, with punctilious attention paid to wearing them correctly; he had a stern and crisp military manner; he bore himself erect like a guardsman on parade; he had a profound conviction in the righteousness of the Empire, and a deep sense of the Order's duty to uphold it. If the St John's Gate hierarchy had intended sending out to Australia an exemplar of the virtues they held dear, and one calculated to impress Australians, they could not have chosen better than they did in Sleeman.

Sleeman was not, however, the unbending Blimp which such a description may suggest. He had a personal warmth which won him friends permanently wherever he went; and in every Australian State there are St John veterans who still recall his visit with pleasure. He was also a sensitive, perceptive witness to things Australian in the hard years following the Great Depression, and the report he wrote provides a clear reflection on 'the way we were' as the country struggled out of the wreckage which the depression years had wrought. Sleeman was, moreover, the complete diplomat: he had a happy knack for resolving conflicts

which in some cases had grumbled on for years; he used his time with Centre and District leaders, with rank and file members of the St John organization, and with the many civic, community and political leaders he met to learn about Australia; and he was ever on the alert to seek out and suggest possibilities for a wider St John role within the community. He took a lively interest in all he saw; he gave generous praise where he thought it due; and he soon came to admire Australians and the contribution they were making to the Empire-wide St John effort. Australians, he came round to thinking, were a special breed of people: the Australian climate and outdoor way of life, he guessed, were working wonders in producing a superior people, a race of 'Greek Gods' as he put it on a number of occasions. His Australian audiences no doubt loved hearing musings like this. Even if Sleeman's other qualities had not, then his admiration for Australians ensured that his tour would be a success.

The Chief Commissioner travelled extensively in each of the six States, but it was in South Australia that he seems to have been most at ease. There were several reasons why. In the first place his family background was Cornish, a fact of which he was enormously proud. Cornwall has always been the 'last' county of England, a long peninsula trailing off into the Atlantic like a gegraphical afterthought; and the native Cornish, proud to be the one Celtic remnant in a land overrun by Anglo-Saxons, have always regarded themselves as a people separate and distinct from the 'foreigners' living further east and north in Devon and beyond. In South Australia, with its 'Little Cornwalls' in every place where there had been copper mining, he was delighted to find 'Cousin Jacks and Jennies', Cornish 'kinfolk', wherever he went. Then, too, there were the South Australians he had fought with in the South African campaigns. For a time he had fought alongside a unit of South Australians, and he thought them fine troops. Meeting up with some of them again, and swapping old soldiers' yarns, let him relive his days of greatest military glory. And finally, his host, the State Governor, Sir Winston Dugan, was an old friend, having been his Commanding Officer in the Flanders campaign. As friend, comrade and fellow Knight of the Order (and a decade later the foundation Prior of the Australian Priory), Dugan helped him feel that this remote and unlikely outpost of Empire was almost as much 'At Home' as Clerkenwell or the Cotswolds.

Sleeman visited South Australia twice. He spent a night and a day there at the end of December 1935 on his way through to New Zealand by sea, then returned in mid-April 1936 to spend a further fortnight carrying out his inspection. On the first visit a joint Brigade-Association welcoming party led by Dawkins met him at the docks. Dawkins, now with five years' highly productive experience as Brigade Commissioner behind him, had become the principal St John figure in the State. The Brigade had developed rapidly under his leadership, and now it was the Brigade rather than the Association which was the driving force in St John affairs in South

Australia; and it was to be the Brigade Commissioner rather than the Association chairman who was to be Sleeman's guide in the tour ahead. That the tour was to be a Brigade rather than an Association event was obvious at Port Adelaide at 4 p.m. on Boxing Day as Sleeman's ship berthed. Lined up behind Dawkins on the wharf was a Brigade reception committee consisting of Dr H.H.E. Russell (District Surgeon), Dr A.L. Dawkins (son of the Commissioner and himself a later District Commissioner, though in Western Australia rather than his home State), and District Officers Lt-Col. P.G. Bice, A.E. Meaker, Eric (later Sir Eric) Millhouse, and R.P. Goode. Goode, who was also Centre secretary (having succeeded L.G. Cant in 1931), and Mrs A.A. Simpson, wife of the former Centre chairman, were the sole Association representatives.[43]

Sleeman's next day was busy. It started with a conference with St John officials to sort out his itinerary for his return trip the following April. Sleeman was struck by the evident harmony now existing between the Brigade under Dawkins and the Association under its chairman of the past three years, Dr Charles E.C. Wilson. He had read Hewett's report carefully and had been wondering what wrangles might now be twisting the Brigade-Association link. He was therefore pleasantly surprised to discover that 'the happiest feelings' now suffused Brigade-Association dealings. This he attributed to the change of leadership since the withdrawal of Hussey, who had been killed in an accident six months before, and the retirement of Simpson, now inactive and seriously ill for some time. Then came the obligatory trip up Mt Lofty ('the most exquisite view', Sleeman later wrote), and lunch at Government House with the Dugans. Other guests at lunch were Dawkins and his wife, Wilson and his wife, and W. Forgan Smith, the Premier of Queensland, who for some unexplained reason was in town. Then it was back aboard the *Nestor* at Port Adelaide for Melbourne, Sydney and New Zealand.[44]

Sleeman returned to South Australia by train from Melbourne on Easter Saturday, 11 April 1936. On the train with him was the Rev. Dr John Flynn ('Flynn of the Inland', founder of the Flying Doctor Service), with whom he had struck up a friendship during several meetings at social gatherings during the tour. Also aboard were Bice and his wife, who had gone to Melbourne to accompany Sleeman back to Adelaide aboard the 'Overland'. At the Adelaide Station a Brigade reception committee and guard of honour were waiting. Sleeman gave a short address 'delivering the greetings of H.R.H. the Grand Prior'; inspected the guard of honour; and was then whisked away for audiences with Dugan, and the Catholic Archbishop of Adelaide, the Rt. Rev. Dr Andrew Killian. (Sleeman was a practising Catholic; and while he stressed the point that 'the Order is a Christian organization not a sectarian one', he nevertheless paid a courtesy call on the Catholic Archbishops of each State capital when that could be arranged. In the case of the anti-Imperial Irish patriot, Daniel Mannix, in Melbourne, however, he does not seem to have gone out of his way for

an audience.) Killian, he later reported with pride, 'expressed his high sense of gratification with the work being done by the Association and Brigade'.[45]

That afternoon Sleeman went off on a tour of the Brigade's beach first aid posts, which local divisions had opened up at Brighton, Glenelg, Henley Beach, Grange, Semaphore and Largs Bay. At each place the local division paraded for his inspection, showed him over the facilities, pointed out its heavy case load as recorded in its case record book, and no doubt felt nervous at being visited by such a grand luminary. In return he gave a speech, conveyed the greetings of the distant Grand Prior (who, we might guess, would have been pleased to know his name was being invoked so often), admired what he saw, and complimented the 'troops' on the high standard of their work. At Glenelg, for example, he noted with satisfaction that 285 serious cases had received treatment in the past four months. 'I was as amused as I was interested', he later wrote, 'to find that one of the cases was that of a young man who had been severely bitten on the thigh by a girl'. He then allowed himself some uncharacteristic levity by adding that this case did not 'indicate any carniverous inclination on the part of Australian womanhood'.[46]

Sleeman was both a good guest and good traveller. He took a lively and appreciative interest in all he was taken to see, he had an eye for local colour, and later commented upon it all in the diary he kept to help him with his subsequent report. Thus, at Glenelg he enjoyed visiting 'the Old Gum Tree', an historical spot ... where just 100 years ago – for this is the Centenary year – Captain John Hindmarsh, R.N., proclaimed the colony of South Australia'. At Henley Beach he observed that 'there is a tendency for young men resident on the coast of Australia to prefer the more spectacular surf life saving to ambulance work, there are sufficient of our members to carry on the work'. At Grange, 'a very delightful seaside resort', he noted that

> the hut [i.e., first aid post] was donated by an Afghan, Mahommet Allum, an ex-Camel driver and later a 'Healer', who showed by this valuable gift his appreciation of our work. It was a curious thing to find in Australia a building presented to a Christian Order by an Afghan.[47]

At Largs Bay, the last call for the afternoon, the Mayor of Port Adelaide, H.W. Bray, turned up to make a speech of welcome. Sleeman replied with a speech of his own, on the history of the Order. What his audience of curious local residents made of it we do not know, though Sleeman later said he was pleased with the warmth of the reception.

The round of engagements continued that evening. Before it began, Sleeman was glad of the chance to rest up in his rooms at the Adelaide Club, where he was staying temporarily while his hosts, the Dugans, were up-country on an official tour of their own. He had delivered eight speeches so far that day, and needed some time out before the next. The

evening's principal event was a visit to a race meeting of the Trotting Association, at which he was to present the trophy to the winner of the main race. He was pleased to discover that

> our Brigade 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. So highly is our Brigade work appreciated by the racing communities that I have met instances during this tour in which jockeys, riding in steeplechases, have refused to start until assured that our Brigade men were posted at every jump. Such appreciation in Adelaide takes the pleasant form of substantial donations to the Brigade.[48]

At this point it would be easy to lose track of our visitor, so many and frequent were his engagements from here on. We will therefore follow him day by day, as follows:

Easter Sunday, 12 April 1936

On this second day of his inspection Sleeman attended Mass at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in the city, and spent the rest of the day catching up on an acccumulating pile of correspondence and report writing. In the evening he dined with the Dawkins 'at their delightful home, which afforded an opportunity for discussing the problems of our work'. He was obviously forming a high opinion of his local District Commissioner's abilities and commitment to St John, and was impressed by the fact that in, the five years Dawkins had been in charge, District strength had more than trebled. The improvement in the Brigade's fortunes, he guessed, had been 'largely due to the personality and keenness of Dr Dawkins and the loyalty and support received from his staff'.[49]

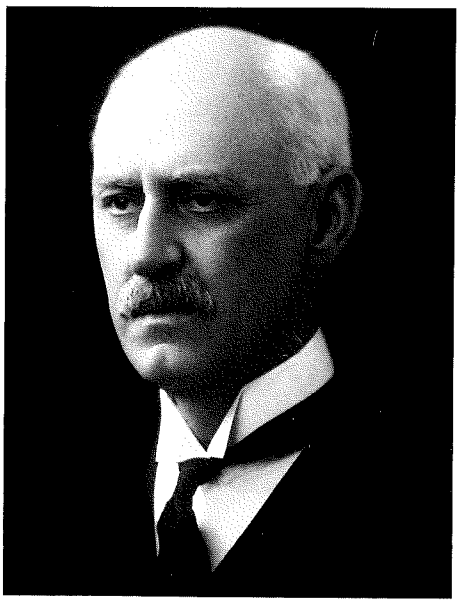
Easter Monday, 13 April 1936

On this day Sleeman was the guest of the Railways Commissioner, C.B. Anderson, at the Onkaparinga Races at Oakbank. Ever the interested traveller, he noted that 'this old-established race meeting is held in a natural amphitheatre, while it still possesses one of the original jumps in the shape of a fallen eucalypt tree'. A record crowd of 60,000 was present, though certainly not to see Sleeman in his finery. No doubt they all got their money's worth, for the races that day were marked by a series of spectacular spills. When the Chief Commissioner inspected the Brigade's first aid room he found six jockeys and several spectators being treated, among them a woman whose arm had been broken when she had somehow managed to catch her handbag in the stirrup of a passing horse during one of the races.

At lunch Sleeman was joined by the State Premier, R.L. Butler; the Chief Secretary, Sir George Ritchie; the Lord Mayor, J.R. Cain; the chairman and secretary of the Onkaparinga Racing Club, H.D. Young, M.L.C., and S.J. Pullman; Dawkins; and Senator A.J. MacLachlan. Later on in the afternoon he met a senior Police officer, Inspector W.F. Johns, whom he congratulated 'upon the magnificent work done by the South Australian Police in relation to our Brigade work; the only State in Australia in which a Division of our Brigade is formed by members of the Police Force'. All these contacts gave him 'an excellent opportunity of meeting many representatives of South Australia, and of explaining the work of the Order'.[50]

Tuesday, 14 April 1936

Sleeman began the day with a combined Brigade-Association meeting at Government House, chaired by Dugan. Present were Sir George Murray, the Chief Justice and president of the Association Centre; Wilson, Dawkins, H.H.E. Russell, Millhouse, and Bulman; and several interested outsiders – Anderson (Commissioner for Railways), R.W. Chapman (a professor at the University), and a parliamentarian, R.D. Nicholls. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the formation in South Australia of a Commandery, that is a self-governing body above both Association and Brigade to superintend all St John activities within the State. Dugan began the meeting by asking Sleeman to state St John's Gate policy on the establishment of such autonomous entities within the Order.



Sir George Murray, Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor of South Australia, and Adelaide Association Centre president, 1928-42.

As spokesman for St John's Gate Sleeman was deliberately unencouraging. He said the Grand Priory was quite happy with the governance of St John bodies in Australia at present. In other words Grand Priory thought Association and Brigade in Australia should remain separate for the time being, and it did not matter that there was no umbrella organization to gather them in, either in South Australia or nationally. He pointed out that the failed Central St John Council for Australia had made Grand Priory wary of trying to centralize St John activities in Australia. Someone then asked the leading question, why it was that South Africa and New Zealand already had Commanderies, and had thus become self-governing within the Order, when Australia was being denied that privilege. Sleeman tried to explain that St John in those countries was the result of a different evolution to that of the Australian St John bodies. He made the point 'far better to remain without a Commandery than establish one prematurely, only to court failure'. If the St John community in Australia really wanted a Commandery, he continued, they should think the implications through more thoroughly in both Association and Brigade. Then, having sorted out their own local difficulties, they should get together with representatives of the other States to achieve a national as well as a South Australian consensus. All this seemed a poor reflection on Australians generally, and on South Australians in particular, *vis-a-vis* the other white dominions of the Southern Hemisphere. Lively discussion followed. Dugan let it go on for a time, then tactfully ended the debate by suggesting that they do as their visitor had proposed.[51]

It turned out to be a busy day. After the meeting Sleeman, Dawkins, Wilson, Russell and Bulman lunched at Parliament House as Butler's guests. Sleeman noted in his report that he was 'very remarkably struck with the personality and vision of the Premier'. Butler, he wrote, 'showed the utmost interest in the work of the Order [and] was far more cognizant of its value than the great majority of those in high authority met with during my tour'. From lunch he went on to visit the Brigade headquarters, in rooms at the Adelaide Railway Station made available by Anderson for a token shilling a year. Bulman and the Brigade secretary, Miss Jean McMillan, showed him around, and he deemed it 'admirable accommodation'. Then came a civic reception at the Adelaide Town Hall, put on by the Lord Mayor, Cain. As well as the ubiquitous Dawkins, Bulman, Wilson, Russell, Anderson and Murray, whose presence at nearly all of his engagements said something for the great importance the St John bodies attached to the trip, he met 'many leading citizens of the City of Adelaide'. These included Sir Angas Parsons, a Supreme Court judge and president of the St John Hospitallers' Club (that is its fund raising auxiliary); Mr Justice Richards; and the Catholic Archbishop, Killian, again. Cain in his speech of welcome said the Brigade was such a worthy institution its work should be subsidized by both State and Federal governments. The latter was an idea the Lord Mayor had picked up from the guest of honour himself, for it was one Sleeman had been floating in several quarters.

Hearing it come from the lips of someone so high placed was nevertheless something that pleased him.[52]

In the evening Sleeman dined out at the Oriental Hotel with Dawkins and his retinue of Brigade officers, then went on to his second and third Civic Receptions for the day, this time at Woodville and Thebarton, at each of which he met the local municipal dignitaries, listened to speeches of welcome by the Mayors, delivered his customary greetings from H.R.H. the Grand Prior, and gave his usual speech in reply on the history and work of the Order. At Woodville he was especially pleased to find that among the Brigade members drawn up and awaiting his inspection was a detachment of Cadets – 'one of the few Cadet Divisions yet formed in Australia', he observed, 'which is an indication of the progress being made in this State'. What he possibly did not realise was that the canny Dawkins had only recently delegated to Dr E.A.H. Russell (brother of the District Surgeon, H.H.E. Russell) the task of hastily forming several Cadet Divisions so the District might boast to the Chief Commissioner that it was doing something about the Cadet movement, which had been founded in Britain over a decade before.[53]

Wednesday, 15 April 1936

This was a relatively easy day. It started with Sleeman working at his desk in Government House from 6.00 till 11.00 a.m., followed by another drive up Mt Lofty, this time with Sir Langdon and Lady Bonython. He lunched at the Adelaide Club as guest of Sir Angas Parsons. In the party on this occasion were Sir Langdon Bonython, Professor Kerr Grant, Eric Millhouse, H.H.E. Russell, Col. S.R. Burston and Mr Justice Mellis Napier. The last two among this eminently 'Establishment' company went on to greater glory within the St John movement. (Each became a Knight of the realm as well as of the Order. In 1942 Napier succeeded Sir George Murray as both Association Centre president and as Chief Justice of the State, and in 1950 became the foundation president of the St John Council for South Australia. 'Ginger' (later Sir Samuel) Burston was then head of the Army's medical services in South Australia and a District Officer in the Brigade. He had started his medical career as a junior partner to Dr John Corbin, son of Thomas Wilson Corbin, one of the founding fathers of the Adelaide Association Centre. He subsequently rose to be Director-General for Australia of Army Medical Services , and succeeded Dawkins as the Brigade's District Commissioner in South Australia in 1945 when the latter became principal Commissioner for Australia, and succeeded him again in 1947 in that top position.) After lunch Sleeman toured the University with Kerr Grant, the high point of the visit being his introduction to Sir Douglas Mawson, 'the celebrated Antarctic explorer'. That evening the Hospitallers' Club entertained him at the Piccadilly Restaurant, where 200 guests had turned up to welcome him and hear him speak on, predictably, 'the history and work of our Order'.[54]

Thursday, 16 April 1936

By now each new day for the Chief Commissioner must have resembled the one before. He began this one with visits to the Association headquarters for discussions with Wilson, then went on to visit the ailing A.A. Simpson at his home. He tried to lift Simpson's spirits by pointing out that St John urgently needed a 'dignified headquarters' in Adelaide, a building which could bring Association and Brigade together in one place, thus overcoming a geographic isolation from each other which could only accentuate their separateness. Acquiring such a place was a task worthy of the former chairman's talents, Sleeman suggested. Then came a luncheon at the South Australian Hotel, put on by Sir George Ritchie, the Chief Secretary, and attended by Brigadier A.M. Martyn, the officer commanding Army Forces in South Australia, and the usual contingent of St John people. After lunch he visited the Wayville Showgrounds to take in the Centennial Exhibition marking the State's centenary, and was shown around by the exhibition president, J.A. Rinder. After that it was back to Association headquarters for another meeting, and then two civic receptions in the evening.

The first reception was at Prospect and the second at Unley; and, as usual, he was greeted by the Mayor and councillors at each place, after which he inspected the local Brigade divisions and watched their first aid demonstrations. Both divisions impressed him as 'smart, well-uniformed and disciplined . . . – a credit to the city'. And at each place he had to sit through a mayoral supper, during the course of which 'many felicitous speeches were made and replied to'. Little wonder that he later concluded his report by noting how he had felt on such occasions. He said he had nearly reached his limit of endurance often when,

> almost overwrought with fatigue at the completion of [one engagement, he had] arrived at the next, to be met by a fresh and enthusiastic Reception Committee, positively straining at the leash to compress into every minute of [his] 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.[55]

Fortunately, he said, the 'antidote' to the exasperation he could not help feeling at these times was usually close at hand – 'the great stimulus of witnessing splendid work'.

Friday, 17 April 1936

Perhaps aware that they were driving their guest a little too hard, the St John leadership assigned him a lighter load on this day. They took him up to the Barossa Valley to look over Seppeltsfield, which, they assured him, was 'the most famous wine industry in the Southern Hemisphere'. Back in

town again that evening there was a dinner at the Adelaide Club, then two civic receptions, first at Port Adelaide and later at Glenelg. At each of the latter a large crowd turned out to meet him, and to watch him inspect the local Brigade divisions.[56]

Saturday, 18 April 1936

Sleeman began his day by stepping into 'alien' territory, visiting the Hindmarsh headquarters of the South Australian Ambulance Transport Inc., which (as the next section will show) had recently been feuding with the Brigade over who should be the premier ambulance transport agency within the city. He was pleased with what he saw, and told the management that 'the Order was satisfied by Ambulance Transport done by organizations other than its own providing that such work is efficient'. Then came a tour of the Adelaide Hospital, for which his guide was the medical superintendent, his distant cousin, Dr J.G. Sleeman, who had been on the staff since leaving England eleven years previously. Lunch was at the South Australian Tattersalls Racing Club with the Premier and Lord Mayor, after which he inspected the twenty Brigade men on duty at the races that afternoon and looked over the eight-bed casualty room they maintained at the race course. After this he was conducted on a tour of the ring of parklands surrounding the inner city, where 'dozens of different games were in progress, ranging from cricket to football, baseball, hockey etc.' At each game he found 'members of our Brigade ready for any accident, all smartly uniformed, and setting a high standard of first aid duty'. His report susequently set out his opinion that 'in no other part of the Empire is the work of the Brigade better appreciated by sporting bodies than it is in South Australia'. For this he gave Dawkins credit, and said 'unquestionably' it had been he who had brought the Brigade in South Australia 'to such a high peak of efficiency'.[57]

Sleeman topped off this pleasing day's insights into local ambulance work by participating as guest speaker in a national broadcast from Station 5CL. His topic was, as usual, 'the history and work of the Order', and it was the seventh time he had thus spoken nationally via ABC radio. Why the ABC were so keen to repeat this speech so often is uncertain. Was broadcast material so scarce, and were Australians really so interested in this obscure Order of chivalry and this representative of the English gentry, that so much repetition was warranted? Was Sleeman such a 'natural' when it came to performing through the medium of radio, so adept at playing with aplomb the role of celebrity, that the ABC and its listeners just kept demanding more? Or did his presentation of the Order's history help comfort them, letting them feel that in those uncertain times the Order was helping bind them in protective union with Motherland and Empire? No sound recording of his message seems to have survived, which is a pity: if we could listen to it today we might be able to understand why his message had such appeal.

Sunday, 19 April 1936

This was *the* great day, the climax of Sleeman's visit to South Australia.

It began with a hurried trip down to Murray Bridge with Dawkins and Burston. There was the usual civic reception by the Mayor, and later an inspection of the local Brigade division. The latter took place at the Sturt Reserve before a large crowd. As was his wont, Sleeman took great interest in local colour, and on this occasion it was his hosts' account of Charles Sturt's expedition through this area 106 years before. Thrilling to their 'white' version of that journey, he felt honoured that his inspection 'took place ... where Captain Sturt, who discovered and traced the Murray River, landed, an historic spot in Australian history, gallant men who made this passage through the unknown when the surrounding country was filled with hostile blacks'.[58]

Dawkins and Burston got him back to Adelaide just in time to take part in the Anzac memorial service, during which he laid a wreath on the War Memorial on behalf of the Order. That service over, the South Australian Railways Band led the way as Sleeman headed a contingent of Brigade divisions in a march to the memorial to the South African War. Here veterans of that colonial adventure were lined up waiting to greet him. Among them were three men who had taken part with him in a fifty-mile (80 km.) ride to Prieska in Griqualand West in March 1900, when only 1200 of the 3000 troops who had set out finished the journey. After more wreath laying, he was driven to the University Oval for a grand parade of Brigade divisions.

On the oval were 400 Brigade members, all spick and span and awaiting his inspection. Somehow he managed to shake hands with every one of them during the afternoon; and so impressed was one division – Norwood – by this feat that the next day they presented him with an inkstand in memory of the occasion. The public had turned out to see it all, for 'the large grandstand was packed to capacity, while hundreds of other interested spectators lined the ground on all sides'. This, he seemed sure, 'indicat[ed] the interest taken in ambulance work in Adelaide'. Whether or not it did indicate that, or simply reflected a depression era wish by people to take advantage of free entertainment in the form of St John pageantry, there was no doubt that the Brigade was putting on a good show. With the Railways Band out front, followed by the Band of the Sturt St. School, members of which had recently been incorporated into the Brigade as a Cadet Division, Dawkins led the divisions in a march past the saluting base, where Sleeman took the salute. The ceremonial included some intricate counter-marching, which he thought 'an admirable demonstration of drill and discipline'.[59]

There were things about the parade more pleasing to the Chief Commissioner than the drill. Especially important was the presence amongst the adult divisions of a contingent of Cadets under the command



The Brigade marches along King William St., 1937. The newly formed Police Cadet Division is at the centre, led by a drummer.

of Dr E.A.H. Russell. On several occasions throughout the tour Sleeman had expressed disappointment at the poor development of the cadet movement in Australia, where there were only twenty Cadet divisions so far compared with New Zealand's eighty. In commending the recent formation of Cadet units in Adelaide, he said he was at first puzzled that the otherwise correctly attired boys were wearing 'long 'uns', in contrast to the short trousers worn by the Cadets 'At Home': 'shorts [are] objected to by lads who grow very tall for their age', he explained, 'several boys of 16 years being over six feet in height, which testifies to the excellence of the Australian climate'.[60]

Equally pleasing to Sleeman was the presence of a recently formed and 'admirable' Division of policemen, seventy-strong and Australia's first. 'I have never seen a more alert and capable body of men', he wrote later; 'it was indeed the best division for drill and first aid seen during my whole tour'. This he attributed to the general excellence of the State's police force: 300 potential recruits vied for every vacancy occurring in police ranks, he reported, and so the force was recruiting 'the pick of Australian manhood'.[61]

Next items on the program were the presentations and investiture. Sleeman was called on to present the trophies won at the recent Brigade first aid and nursing competitions; and after that he presented 'Presidential Badges of the Association' to the Lord Mayor, Cain, and to the Mayors of Glenelg (W. Fisk), Thebarton (J. Langdon), Port Adelaide (H.W. Bray), Norwood (W.S. Hanson) and Unley (represented by Ald. Kneebone). This was no doubt a token of appreciation for the hospitality they had been showing him, though the citations went to the effect that they had 'shown the utmost interest in the work of the Order, while their interest has considerably encouraged ambulance activity'. Sleeman then addressed the large assemblage, yet again on the history and work of the Order, but this time leavened with flattering comments on 'the high standard of excellence displayed in the parade'. The climax of the afternoon now came as he invested two Brigade officers as members of the Order. They were Dr L.J. Dunstone, a Divisional Surgeon, and Miss Vi Watson, 'Lady' Corps Officer, who became a Serving Brother and Serving Sister of the Order. Sleeman later described the ceremony:

> It was fortunate that this could be done so publicly for the comparative rarity of membership of the Order in Australia makes the Order little understood. I, therefore, took particular care to carry out this ceremony with all the ancient ritual and impressive dignity possible, and in the robes of the Order. With spectators present, unfamiliar with both our history and our robes, it might be thought that my appearance in these unusual garments would give rise to a certain levity: instead – as had proved the case in South Africa, New Zealand, and Sydney – it was obvious that all present were deeply impressed for they followed the ceremony with hushed silence. This is indicative of the true soul of the Australian people, who revere ancient custom and tradition as much as those who live in older countries, providing always that it is linked with some useful purpose.[62]

We cannot be sure if the hushed silence represented South Australian reverence for esoteric ritual or just amazement at the sight of Sleeman in elaborate uniform *plus* long black cloak and Tudor bonnet. What is fairly likely is that he made it all look most impressive.

The climax of the afternoon thus having been reached, prayers were recited by the Rev. Guy Pentreath, 'a [Cornish] Brother Jack' (and, as headmaster of St Peter's College, a member of the Association Centre Committee), following which the day's entertainments concluded 'with the National Anthem heartily sung'. The day for Sleeman personally ended with a change of lodgings, from the Adelaide Club to Government House. The Dugans were now back in residence, and he was looking forward to his time with them. 'Only those who have suffered from a long surfeit of official travel can appreciate the pleasant harbourage which is offered by a stay at Government House', he wrote in testimony to their hospitality.[63]

Monday, 20 April 1936

The high point of Sleeman's South Australian tour having been the parade and inspection of Brigade divisions on Sunday 19th, his second week passed more quietly than the first. On Monday 20th he addressed a luncheon meeting at the Commonwealth Club, his speech being broadcast nationally. During the afternoon Lady Dugan had arranged for a long meeting between him, Dawkins, Wilson and Rev. John Flynn on means by which St John might assist the Flying Doctor Service – something Flynn was very keen to promote. Flynn had impressed Sleeman deeply, and the latter thought the aerial medical service 'one of the most vital ambulance requirements in the Empire today'. That evening the Nursing divisions staged a mock bus accident for him at Brigade headquarters. 'What added greater realism', he reported, 'was that red paint, most liberally used, intensified the injuries, which were dealt with extremely rapidly and well by the Nursing sisters present'. The day concluded with a civic reception at Norwood, put on jointly by the Mayors of Norwood and St Peters; an inspection of the recently formed Norwood Cadet Division; a display by members of the Norwood Ambulance Division; and then a supper provided by the Mayors. Sleeman complimented the Mayor of Norwood, Col. W.S. Hanson, on the high degree of civic awareness of first aid hereabouts: 'one of the most marked features of my tour in this fine State', he said, 'has been the interest taken in the work of the Order by the Mayor and Councillors in every city and town I have visited'.[64]

Tuesday, 21 April 1936

On this day Sleeman had only one call to make. He was Pentreath's guest at St Peter's College. where he addressed the 700 students. For a change his topic was 'the problems of the Empire', and he stressed 'the interdepen-

dence of the Mother Country and the Dominions Overseas upon one another'.

Wednesday, 22 April 1936

Sleeman began this day with a tour of the Railways ambulance facilities at the Islington workshops and the Adelaide Railway Station, with Bulman as guide. Lunch was with the Dugans and John Flynn, 'this great personality in Australian life' as Sleeman called him. Flynn seemed to be the Australian who made the greatest impression on Sleeman during the course of the long tour, and they plainly liked each other's company. They had met by accident or by design in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, and now twice at Government House in Adelaide. After this last meeting Sleeman wrote that 'it was with great regret that I parted for the last time with "Flynn of the Inland", whom it had been a great privilege to meet, and for whom I shall ever entertain a deep respect'. He was therefore very pleased before he left Adelaide to receive a note from Flynn saying 'may God bless you and your great organization in the paths of practical chivalry'.[65]

Thursday, 23 April 1936

Sleeman's engagements in Adelaide were now completed; and this day he left for Western Australia via Port Pirie and Port Augusta. Originally he had planned to sail around to Perth, but Dawkins persuaded him to go overland to see more of the countryside. He travelled up to Port Augusta by motor car, a Railways inspectors' vehicle making its maiden journey. As the Railways medical officer, Dawkins had arranged this. Dawkins also accompanied him as far as Port Pirie. Along for the ride, too, were Goode and A.R. Heath, a Brigade member who had acted as Sleeman's staff officer throughout the South Australian leg of the tour. Sleeman made a point of pronouncing his satisfaction with the Railways vehicle: 'I was glad to see that this was an English car (a Morris 21)', he wrote, 'as throughout my tour whether in Africa or New Zealand or Australia fully 97% of the cars I travelled in had been of American manufacture'.

At Port Pirie Sleeman was shown around the BHP smelter by Dr L.G. Tassie, the local Brigade Surgeon, and by District Officer G. Dey, who was the BHP ambulance officer. That evening there was the usual civic reception, hosted by the Mayor, W.H. Threadgold, and an inspection of the local Brigade division. In his speech Sleeman departed from his usual theme to expatiate on the shortcomings of modern youth:

> The younger generation of today so often appeared to have a wrong sense of values, being conspicuously absent from ambulance or other useful demonstrations, although the arrival of a film star would result in a crowded hall and a queue of excited youth a mile long. This mild satire was highly appreciated, ... and a special article in the newspaper next day highly commended me for

> speaking out so strongly, a cry taken up through other States in Australia. I [then] spoke for an hour on the history and work of the Order; such being the interest of my listeners that, even then, they wanted more.[66]

Friday, 24 April 1936

This was Sleeman's last day in South Australia. It began with a drive to Port Augusta 'over a road as nature made it'. In Port Augusta almost the entire local population was waiting at the civic reception given by the acting Mayor, L.G. Riches, M.P. Lined up with the latter were all the local dignitaries – the RSL branch president, the Scout Commissioner, the Commonwealth Railways officer – and the local Brigade leadership, the Divisional Superintendent, J.M. Wilkinson, and the Divisional Surgeon, Dr E.L. Symons. They all 'extended their warmest thanks for including Port Augusta in my tour', Sleeman wrote, perhaps unaware that bemedalled Imperial celebrities like himself were a rarity at the head of Spencer Gulf. The 'felicitous' speeches that followed confirmed the townspeople's sense of privilege at having been so honoured, stressing as they all did the town's 'deep loyalty to the Grand Prior'. This rather touched Sleeman, coming as it did from an isolated town on the edge of a desert far from Queen Victoria's sole surviving son, the octogenarian Duke of Connaught in London. 'The pulse of Empire beats most firmly in the Australian breast', he wrote later, 'however much some may attempt to disguise any feelings of sentimentality'. These protestations of Empire loyalty having been duly expressed, Sleeman met and inspected the local Brigade division. Even though the division lost some points in Sleeman's estimation by not appearing in the regulation uniform, he was impressed. It was, he reported,

> composed of railway men of a fine type, whose First Aid work was excellent. This was not surprising, seeing that all have been called upon at some time or another to give unassisted First Aid in the lonely stations at which they have been posted, sometimes over six hundred miles from the nearest doctor.[67]

That was Sleeman's last engagement in South Australia. At 11.00 that evening he boarded the Trans-Continental train for the 1000-mile (1600 km) run to Kalgoorlie, over the border in Western Australia. He did not enjoy the trip, finding 'little . . . to wax lyrical about save the immensity of the journey'. The only diversion was at Tarcoola, where he met A.K. Harris, an Association personality whose repertoire of first aid skills included the regular treatment of 'snakebite, scorpion stings and redback spider bites'. Here, too, he met an Aborigine who demonstrated boomerang throwing until one struck Sleeman on the ankle, causing him to limp back aboard the train in irritation. No doubt vexed by this, Sleeman sat down to write a vindictive paragraph about having met 'the true Aboriginal, who will persist in haunting the outskirts of civilization, although decimated by disease when they do'.[68]

A half century later present-day South Australians are no doubt puzzled at the depth of their grandparents' wellspring of Empire loyalty which Sleeman somehow managed to tap. The Chief Commissioner was not royalty, and came only as the emissary of an obscure albeit venerable member of the Royal Family. Indeed Sleeman was not even of the nobility, being minor gentry only. Nor was the Order he represented yet at the forefront of the State's community life. Why, then, did South Australians, and Australians everywhere, make so much of his visit? Today no clear reason presents itself, though perhaps the answer lies in the climate of the times. The months of Sleeman's visit were portentous, for the rumblings of the storm ahead were already ominous. George V, had died in January 1936 and had been succeeded by Edward VIII, whose liaison with Mrs Simpson was already common gossip, and before the year was out the new King would abdicate. This Royal game of musical chairs might have called forth reaffirmations of loyalty from some of the Monarch's South Australian subjects, but it was only a sad sub-plot to the drama developing across the Channel in Europe. Just before Sleeman had arrived in South Australia Hitler's troops had reoccupied the Rhineland; and only three months later Franco's civil war in Spain erupted. Talk of war was in the air: indeed Sleeman's discussions with government officials in Adelaide had been partly taken up with what the St John organization could do to train the civilian population for wartime eventualities like poison gas attack. In so effusively greeting the Chief Commissioner with declamations about their loyalty to H.R.H. the Grand Prior, the government and civic officials might therefore have been seeking in advance shelter from the storm to come. By pledging themselves and their people to the Empire through their dutiful and generous hospitality to this son of Empire they were perhaps expressing an unconscious hope that in the dangerous days ahead the Empire would shield them once more, much as they thought it had always done.

Whether or not South Australia's got what they expected from the Empire is a matter for debate, but as far as St John people in the State were concerned, the benefits of the Sleeman visit were obvious. Dawkins had 'no doubt that personal contact in this way, from such a distinguished overseas representative of the Order, will do much to further our work in this State'. The subsequent increase in Brigade strength bore out this optimism: in the year following Sleeman's visit District membership grew by 187, or by forty *per cent.* Association classes did not profit to the same extent, for total enrolments in the year after the visit actually dropped back by a small margin of forty-seven (to 861) before recovering again – but after all the tour had been mainly a Brigade event, and so it might have been expected that most of the profit would be to the Brigade rather than to the Association.[69]

One of the principal benefits to the St John movement in South Australia was the publicity which Sleeman managed to generate. While he

was in Adelaide he spoke twice on national radio; he and the Order were the subjects of numerous approving editorials; and everywhere he went his movements were reported in the daily, suburban and provincial press, with the result that the name of St John was now more securely fixed in the mind of the public than ever before. Much of this had been carefully orchestrated by Dawkins, who had a keen sense of what the press thought newsworthy, and had arranged Sleeman's itinerary so as to gain maximum local interest, which in turn would yield the most favourable press coverage. Dawkins made sure, for example, that Sleeman's numerous civic receptions took place in those municipalities where strong Brigade divisions had developed. There were thus civic pride in and gratitude to the local division, and no doubt Dawkins intended that the Brigade should capitalise on these. Good publicity for St John was only part of the profit from favourable press comment. Equally important was the good will Sleeman created. The civic fathers who fêted the Chief Commissioner undoubtedly enjoyed the momentary prominence they had gained throughout the State via St John. Undoubtedly, too, they were subsequently even more favourably disposed towards St John, and as a result would have been more amenable to the sort of requests which St John as a voluntary organization periodically made upon agencies of local government.

Personal rewards in the form of promotion within the Order also flowed from Sleeman's tour as they had from Hewett's. Dawkins, as might have been expected, was the principal benefactor. When Sleeman shook his hand as they bade each other farewell at Port Pirie, he 'complimented [Dawkins] on [his] work and the arrangements made for the visit, and concluded by saying on his return to London he would recommend [Dawkins'] promotion to Knight of Grace'. Sleeman kept his word: when St John's Gate announced that year's honours Dawkins headed the list for South Australia, becoming the State's second Knight of the Order after A.A. Simpson. Fourteen other South Australians were on the list with him, either gaining admission or promotion. This was by far the largest number the Order had ever honoured in the State in one year, and as a result the still small and select body of South Australians who could boast membership of the Order rose by seventy-seven *per cent*, from eighteen to thirty-three.[70]

One definite benefit from the tour was the raising of morale among St John personnel. Like the enhanced public reputation which the name of St John now enjoyed, this was one of the tour's intangible by-products, but one which was nevertheless important. St John workers who had met Sleeman and had been congratulated by him for their smartness, loyalty or efficiency remembered the occasion for the rest of their lives. The approbation of so eminent a personage as the Chief Commissioner, the personal emissary of the Grand Prior himself, was a reward sufficient to inspire rank and file St John workers for years to come. They typically

responded by redoubling their efforts, more convinced than ever of the value of what they were doing, each in his or her own way becoming lifelong 'missionaries' for the Order.

The compensations for committed service of this sort were also intangible. The principal reward was of course a sense of self-esteem and of fulfilment through having been of use to the community. Dawkins indicated something of this spirit when Sleeman had hinted that there was a knighthood in the offing. Dawkins said he had replied, 'I appreciated very much the compliment that [the Chief Commissioner] had paid me, but I would like to point out that I did not work for such rewards, nor did I expect any such recognition [because] to me the work had been a great pleasure'. Admission into membership of the Order was a reward, but thus to join the elect was not something which rank and file St John workers could realistically expect. The elect were still highly select; and 'Establishment' figures – Sir J. Langdon Bonython, Sir H. Angas Parsons, Lady Dugan, and Col. (later Sir Samuel) Burston *et al.* – were more likely to gain preferment than were loyal toilers in Brigade divisions in the industrial suburbs.[71]

But perhaps the most important result of the Sleeman tour was to move the Australian St John bodies firmly in the direction of federation. Sleeman helped them channel their collective wish for greater autonomy while making them better aware of the unity among them which St John's Gate would require before assenting to the establishment of an Australian Commandery of the Order. Everywhere he went in Australia the subject of an Australian Commandery had arisen, as it did in his meeting with the South Australian St John leadership at Government House on Tuesday 14 April 1936. On each occasion he gave a similar unequivocal reply – no Australian Commandery without a greater spirit of co-operation and a greater commitment to the federal body than had marked the State bodies' response to the Central St John Council for Australia. While thus representing the Grand Priory's position frankly, Sleeman had also played the diplomat to perfection by reporting faithfully to Grand Priory on what he had learnt in Australia. What he had discovered was encouraging. In every State there were sufficient ambitious, able and dedicated St John workers whom the Order might trust to make a success of a national St John body. Dawkins, Burston, Wilson, the Russell brothers, Goode, Bulman, Bice and Millhouse of South Australia were typical of the 'younger' generation of workers now taking over the leadership of the Australian St John bodies; and with leaders like these an Australian Commandery might be expected to add to the Order's worthy and precious reputation.

South Australia was one State which took Sleeman's counsel to heart. Several months after he had returned to England, the South Australian St John bodies sent Burston (by now Assistant Commissioner and second in command to Dawkins) to Sydney for discussions with Association and Brigade officials there on ways and means of setting up an Australian

Commandery. As the next chapter shows, these efforts came to fruition five years later, in 1941, when St John's Gate finally sanctioned the establishment of the Commandery. This was a move which opened the way for the Order to transcend its State-bound operations, and eventually to become a national organization.

The benefits flowing from the Sleeman visit were thus varied. They were also so many that the Grand Priory's grandiloquent term for such tours of inspection – 'Crusade' – is the word which comes most readily to mind. As the world drifted into war again there was one remote corner of the British Empire which was the better prepared for it as a result. The great boost which the Chief Commissioner had given the St John bodies in South Australia meant that when the war came the State had at least one loyal, trained and disciplined body of workers at its disposal for helping the community through the crisis. As the next chapter shows, the South Australian St John organization rose to the occasion, justifying the faith in its workers which Sleeman had often expressed.

3. *The Brigade's ambulances*

In the previous chapter we saw how the Association Centre under the chairmanship of H.D. Gell often lamented the poor development of Adelaide's ambulance transport facilities yet characteristically refrained from taking effective direct measures to improve things. We also saw how the Brigade's decision to set up its own ambulance transport committee opened up a rift in Brigade ranks between G.F. Hussey and R.V. Bulman which only closed again when Hussey withdrew from St John affairs in 1931.

During the postwar years the Association showed that it was as reluctant as ever to enter the field, despite urging and encouragement from a number of interested agencies. In September 1919 the Centre Committee deputed A.A. Simpson, Hussey and Bentley Connor to report on the possibility of obtaining a motor ambulance van from the Army, which was then disposing of surplus vehicles left over from the war. Ironically the Army had originally purchased some of its ambulances with funds raised by public subscription in Adelaide. As the press pointed out whenever canvassing the city's minimal ambulance facilities, Adelaideans had been generous in providing these military ambulances but their political leaders were nowhere near as bountiful in the matter of civil ambulances.

As might have been expected, nothing much came from the Simpson-Hussey-Connor sub-committee even though the ex-Army ambulances were probably going at cut-rate prices. As on previous occasions, the initial cost of purchasing several vehicles together with the expected overheads deterred the Centre Committee. Its view became apparent several months later, in March 1920, when the Principal Medical Officer of the Fourth Military District inquired whether 'the Association had any intention of

forming a motor ambulance section, and if so whether arrangements could be made for the conveyance of military cases'. The Committee's reply was that the expense of inaugurating an Association-sponsored ambulance service prevented such a move, and in any case the presence of police and private ambulances precluded Association involvement.[72]

Only two months after rejecting this overture from the Army, the Committee was approached again about the possibility of its entry into transport work. This time the inquiry came from the Australian Natives Association, which wanted to see more ambulances on Adelaide's streets. The ANA query set off a flurry of discussion and letter-writing within the Centre, but ultimately the result was as before. Gell argued against involvement, pointing out that 'the initial cost would be about £2500 plus cost of upkeep, rent and wages'. Hussey argued for a St John commitment. He said he had already written to the secretary of the State branch of the Red Cross asking if it could help bear the cost of a St John ambulance service. This idea of joint sponsorship appealed to other Committeemen, and they resolved to write to the Red Cross endorsing Hussey's letter. A couple of months later, in July 1920, the Red Cross replied with a most generous and encouraging offer: they said they would provide an amount up to £1500 for the purchase of an ambulance van and a motor cycle side-car ambulance if the Association Centre could find funds to operate these vehicles for a year. They also said that they would probably be able to increase the amount to £2500 if a second ambulance van were needed.[73]

Despite the generosity of this offer, the Committee drew back once again. At the invitation of the Police Commissioner, Committee members had inspected the police ambulance facilities, and had come away satisfied that the police service was adequate. It consisted of three motor ambulances and one horse wagon; there were four drivers, three of whom had first aid certificates; the service ran around the clock, with at least one driver on duty at any hour of day or night; the ambulances were centrally located, and could reach the city centre in five minutes; a direct telephone line was being installed; and there were about six calls a day. Impressed by all this, they agreed with Gell that 'there can be no dual control', and that instead of the Centre entering the field, it should support the police service. At their August 1920 meeting they therefore decided to advise the Red Cross they 'regrett[ed] that they [were] unable to accept the Red Cross's kind offer . . ., but that they would endeavour to strengthen and assist the present police organization'. At the same time, they decided to seek the co-operation of the patriotic Wattle Day League, which had raised funds during the war for the purchase of Army Ambulances, in approaching the Commonwealth Government with a request for it to hand over two ex-Army ambulances to the Police Department.[74]

The police service did not improve greatly. Citizens had numerous complaints against it. There were said to be long delays – half an hour or more – in getting its ambulances to accidents; and in the meantime the

victims, who were often bleeding heavily and suffering from fractures, had to lie on the road. On one occasion it took four hours to get a seriously injured man from Outer Harbour to the Adelaide Hospital. Often there was no ambulance available, and accident victims had to be moved to hospital by the nearest available means; the ambulances were poorly equipped, with not even a rug to cover patients; the drivers gave no treatment, and simply lifted patients aboard. One case often mentioned when the shortcomings of the police service was under discussion had occurred in 1919. This had been a fire in a restaurant in King William St. Kitchen staff had been using lighted methylated spirits in a shallow pan to singe the feathers from poultry, and had been trying to pour in more spirit when the container exploded. The room burst into flame; the door jammed shut; and the seven workers suffered dreadful burns before they could be dragged outside. Bystanders called for police ambulances, but when none had arrived within half an hour they took the victims to hospital in a private motor car. Six of the victims subsequently died.[75]

Public dissatisfaction with the inadequate ambulance transport facilities in and around Adelaide led to a number of ambulance schemes developing in the early 1920s. The one which grew into the largest began in 1921 under the name Hindmarsh Volunteer Ambulance, though later in the 1920s it adopted the name South Australian Ambulance Transport (SAAT). It developed as a wing of the Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade, and shared the Fire Brigade's depot in Piccadilly Circus (now Hindmarsh Place), hard up against the Hindmarsh Stadium. The Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade had begun operations in the same year as had the Association Centre, 1885. Its move into ambulance work followed prompting by a St John man, Hector Rundle Barker MacArty. In 1920 he was part of a group of citizens who held a public meeting to see if an ambulance service could be set up in the Hindmarsh area. The Hindmarsh District Council was persuaded to purchase an ambulance vehicle with the aid of public collections. MacArty and a fellow St John man, Bert Hall, were appointed to operate it. The task proved too large for MacArty and Hall, who approached George J. Plenty Snr., Chief Fire Officer of the Hindmarsh Volunteer Fire Brigade (a position he had held since 1913, having first joined in 1889), to see if his organisation would be interested in helping out.

The Hindmarsh decision to take on MacArty, Hall and their ambulance came after a volunteer fireman had been injured on duty, and there had been no one to treat him and no ambulance available to take him to hospital. The firemen raised sufficient funds to purchase a second motor ambulance van, which was handed over to them by Lady Weigall, wife of the the Governor (Sir William Weigall) in 1921. Other St John-trained men joined MacArty and Hall, and from then on the connection between St John and the Hindmarsh operation continued. (MacArty stayed at Hindmarsh until 1929, when he retired to the Coorong. Here he set up his own ambulance station, which he paid for himself and ran voluntarily,

treating over 500 cases during the next eleven years.) The Hindmarsh service prospered. By 1936 it was running ambulances out of five depots around the inner western, northern and southern suburbs; and it had a staff of over 100 permanent and volunteer drivers and attendants, most of whom were able to serve either as ambulance officers or firemen, and a number of whom were St John men. For a time relations with St John were strained. During the early 1930s it formed its own first aid volunteer service, the South Australian Ambulance Brigade, including a corps of cadets, in competition with the St John Ambulance Brigade, which, it felt, had begun encroaching on its territory by using the St John vehicles for general transport work. And, again competing with St John, it started conducting its own public first aid classes and awarding its own certificates. Not surprisingly, the rivalry between the two organizations became intense. This point was apparent in the literature put out by the Hindmarsh body: its brochures bore the slogan 'the first Ambulance Transport Brigade to be established in South Australia – *founded, controlled and operated entirely by South Australians*', the latter phrase being a swipe at the English connections of the St John bodies.[76]

In Port Adelaide, too, local effort in 1921 led to the establishment of an ambulance transport service for surrounding suburbs. A committee of concerned citizens raised enough money to purchase a motor ambulance

The Hindmarsh Volunteer Ambulance, early 1920s. Left to right are F. Bartholemeus, the salaried driver, and volunteer bearers E. Stroud, W. Anderson, W. Fraser, —, and the officer in charge, G.J. Plenty.



for the port area, and reached an agreement with the Fire Brigade Board for the vehicle to be garaged at the Port Adelaide Fire Station, where it would be operated and maintained by the firemen. The committee agreed to pay the Board £132 to keep the scheme going, and the arrangement lasted for sixteen years. It ended in 1937, when the Board gave three months' notice that it intended to withdraw the services of the three firemen who operated the ambulance. The committee was unable to pay the salaries of three permanent drivers, and consequently persuaded the SAAT at Hindmarsh to take the service over. This new agreement provided for the committee to hand over its vehicle to the SAAT and also supply a new one at a cost of £500 on the condition that the SAAT provided the Port with a continuous service day and night, and kept a vehicle based there during daylight hours.[77]

A third scheme in 1921, for setting up a city ambulance service, involved the St John Ambulance Brigade. The Australian Natives Association and the Red Cross, apparently undaunted by the Association Centre's disconcertingly timid response to their approaches to it the year before, now joined forces in setting up a committee, with support from Lady Weigall, to raise funds to purchase a motor ambulance to be controlled and operated by the Brigade. At some point during 1921 (exactly when is not clear) the committee had decided to call the proposed service the 'South Australian Ambulance Transport Service: Adelaide and Suburban Districts'. This, of course, was almost the same as the name later adopted by the Hindmarsh Ambulance; and the reasons for this will soon become obvious. The committee had also appointed an executive to run the SAATS:ASD. The chairman and treasurer was none other than G.F. Hussey, M.P., J.P., the Brigade Commissioner; the deputy chairman was a Mr J.H. Kay; and the secretary, A.W. Baker, was secretary of the Brigade's Adelaide Central Division. The executive produced a short brochure setting out the SAATS:ASD objectives, and this left no doubt that the Brigade was in charge. The brochure appeared on a quarto page of Brigade notepaper, with the Brigade's long letterhead prominently displayed. The latter read,

The Grand Priory of
The Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England.
Ambulance Department.
The St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas
Within the Commonwealth of Australia
South Australia District
(A Part of the Red Cross Organization of the British Empire).
South Australian Ambulance Transport Service
Adelaide and Suburban Districts.

All this having taken up a third of the page, the brochure proceeded to set out thirteen objectives for the SAAT:ASD, number four of which was as follows:

> To provide a FREE Ambulance Transport Service for the sick or injured requiring removal to a public hospital.

This was the only objective referring specifically to ambulance transport. The other twelve, the first of which read 'To enlarge the sphere of activities of the members of the St John Ambulance Brigade', were simply a restatement of existing Brigade goals. If the new service were to take off, then, St John would clearly have the ambulance transport service it had been talking about on and off for the past thirty years.[78]

The SAATS:ASD executive ran a meeting in the Lord Mayor's parlor at the Adelaide Town Hall on 14 December 1921 to launch the project, and invited along representatives from Adelaide's various municipal councils. Baker later sent out a circular summarizing what the executive had proposed. This said that they were planning to operate a free service within a radius of ten miles (16 km.) of the city centre. Using three vehicles, it would run around the clock. The initial cost of purchasing vehicles and buildings would be at least £7500, to be raised by donations and through an appeal which it was hoped Lady Weigall would launch. The committee had already begun seeking donations from commercial houses, friendly societies and trade unions. In making these approaches they had 'met with ready sympathy and support', and the trade unions in particular had 'responded magnificently'. The cost of running the free service, it was hoped, would be met by a contribution from the municipalities within the radius of the scheme; and it was hoped that they would chip in with an eigthth of each penny (0.125¢) of their revenues from rates. On the other hand, if rates-based funding were not possible, an ambulance committee could be formed in each municipality to raise the necessary funds.[79]

The SAATS:ASD did not really live up to these brave hopes. Indeed it ended in wishful thinking about what might have been – like all other St John flirtations with ambulance transport proposals to date. In May 1922 Hussey announced triumphantly that the Brigade had already collected over £300 towards its target of £7500. This goal was plainly a long way off; but in the excitement of the moment, and no doubt optimistic that his Brigade would succeed where the Association had failed, Hussey perhaps thought it closer than it really was.[80]

Fired by enthusiasm at the prospect of doing 'real' ambulance work Brigade members fell in behind their Commissioner, and threw themselves into the task of enrolling subscribers so as to raise money to purchase the first ambulance. Members of the Nursing Divisions were prominent in these efforts. First they ran a fête; then, with the goal nearly in sight by late July 1923, they raised the final amount by going out on to the streets to sell buttons. They also agreed to make curtains and other trimmings for the vehicle when it was ready, and to provide the afternoon tea at the ceremony to mark the opening of the service. With £600 in hand the SAATS:ASD executive placed with the Lion Motor and Engineering Works at Goodwood an order for an ambulance to be built to the design

of the SAATS:ASD's honorary consulting engineer, a Mr Wege. It was to be a four-berth vehicle built around a 27-horsepower English 'Standard' chassis, and 'embod[ied] the latest English and Continental ideas for the utmost dispatch of injured or sick patients to hospital'. It was duly built, and handed over to the SAATS:ASD on Saturday 27 October 1923 at a ceremony presided over by the Lord Mayor, C.R.J. Glover.[81]

The new ambulance was to begin operations the Tuesday after the hand over, but then things went awry. Weeks went by without the ambulance leaving its garage, and Brigade members began asking questions. After three months, still with no further word from the SAATS:ASD executive about when the ambulance would go into use, the Adelaide No. 2 Nursing Division, which had collected the greater part of the £600 purchase price, wrote to Baker, the SAATS:ASD secretary, for an explanation. Their letter said 'their members were continually being placed in an awkward position by subscribers asking why the ambulance was not being used'. The letter remained unanswered. The division then contacted Baker by 'phone, and it was only then that the whole sorry story emerged. It was a tale of mind-bending muddle and legal complexities. Wege, the consulting engineer, had gone bankrupt. The accountant appointed to settle his financial affairs had impounded the ambulance until it was proved that an amount still owing on the vehicle was not an asset of the Wege estate. There the matter remained deadlocked, and in the end the service never opened.[82]

In October 1924, a year after its ambulance was supposed to have begun work, the SAATS:ASD held a meeting to vote itself out of existence. J.H. Kay, the deputy chairman was appointed liquidator, and it was agreed that after payment of the cost of liquidation and of outstanding debts (if any), the whole of the remaining assets should be donated to the Hindmarsh Volunteer Ambulance (HVA). The balance sheet at this stage showed a credit balance of £282/3/2. Nursing Division members, who had borne most of the burden of fund raising, were not prepared to see the fruits of their efforts become a gift to a rival body. They therefore sought an opinion from their solicitor, who advised them to retain what they had raised because the scheme for which the money had been collected had failed. They were, however, prepared to hand the money over to the HVA if that body were willing to 'grant concessions'. They accordingly entered discussions with G.J. Plenty Snr. of the HVA, but when he showed himself inclined to haggle over the extent of the concessions they decided to put the money into a fund to pay the ambulance transport costs of the poor.[83]

The principal asset which the Hindmarsh Volunteer Ambulance gained from the winding up of the SAATS:ASD was its unused motor ambulance. When they took the vehicle over it still had the inscription 'South Australian Ambulance Transport Service' emblazoned across its panelling. This phrase plainly rang with a nobler sound than did 'Hindmarsh Volunteer Ambulance', and it no doubt encapsulated the ambitions of G.J. Plenty and his followers. The Hindmarsh service accordingly adopted the

identity of its defunct rival. Under the name South Australian Ambulance Transport it continued on as the largest of Adelaide's various ambulance services until 1952, when, in a different era and under changed circumstances, the St John organization was given the task of unifying the city's previously unco-ordinated ambulance transport system.[84]

Less doughty a character than George Hussey might have dropped out of sight after the fiasco of the SAATS:ASD. Hussey, however, seems to have been one of those people who remain unmoved by their greatest failures and humiliations. As we have seen, he stayed on for another seven years as Brigade Commissioner despite its dwindling strength, his rejection by many of its remaining members, and the severe denting the Brigade's reputation must have suffered through the collapse of the SAATS:ASD. And, as we have also seen, he was not yet done with hopes for immersing his Brigade in ambulance transport work.

The Brigade's next step towards such an involvement came soon after the demise of the SAATS:ASD. Probably responding to pressure from the racing clubs, whose meetings provided its main regular duties, the Brigade began hiring a motor ambulance from the Hindmarsh-SAAT service each time it went on duty at a city race meeting. The vehicle concerned was probably the one recently passed over to the Hindmarsh body. This arrangement worked fairly well for several years, but in 1928 the Brigade's Metropolitan Railway Division decided after discussions with racing officials that it wanted to obtain its own vehicle for use at the races and on its other public duties. The Division's superintendent, G. Burns, wrote formally to Hussey to advise him of this. Hussey took the view that this was a matter for the Brigade generally rather than for just one Division. He accordingly convened a meeting of all Divisional Superintendents in early June, 1928. After prolonged discussion they agreed to go back to their Divisions with a proposal for both the Divisions and individual members to lend money to buy an ambulance, which would be run by a Transport Committee comprising representatives of each Division.[85]

The Divisional Superintendents reported back on their members' response to these proposals at a meeting five weeks later, on 14 July 1928. The meeting delivered Hussey a mighty slap in the face. To start with, the Nursing Division refused to have anything to do with the idea, taking the view that their hard-earned contibution to the SAATS:ASD scheme had been squandered. Then the Superintendent of the Adelaide Railway Division, which was promising the largest loan, £100 said his members would have nothing to do with the scheme if Hussey were to be chairman of the proposed committee. They wanted Bulman to chair it instead. The other Superintendents agreed, and proceeded to instal Bulman as chairman of the Transport Committee which they now set up. Hussey had to be content with *ex officio* membership of the new body. The first meeting of the Transport Committee soon after this turned out to be an event of high drama. The Minutes described it thus:

> Mr Hussey came in after Mr Bulman had taken his place at the head of the table and had his papers spread out in front of him. Mr Hussey demanded the right to take the chair because of his position as Assistant Commissioner [Hussey's formal title]. The men, however, had sought advice on this question and had their belief confirmed, i.e., that the head of an organization did not necessarily have to chair a committee formed for a specific purpose within that organization. Therefore, when Mr Bulman picked up his papers and went to the other end of the table, the Superintendents followed and grouped around him. Mr Hussey still demanded his right to take the chair, so one by one the men left the room.[86]

This was effectively a vote of no confidence in Hussey's leadership of the Brigade. A less tenacious Commissioner might have resigned on the spot. Hussey, however, was not given to meek acquiescence. As the previous section showed, he tried to redeem his wounded pride by riding out the opposition, his determination to do so opening up the rift between himself and Bulman which we have already discussed.

Considering these difficulties with their Commissioner, the members of the Transport Committee got down to business with remarkable expedition. They arranged loans to cover the £417 cost of the vehicle they had decided upon. This was a Chevrolet van (124-inch or 3.15-metre wheel base) adapted to hold two fixed and two portable berths. They planned to run an appeal to raise funds to help pay off the loans, dispatching Brigade members equipped with specially printed collection books to solicit donations from the public. The van was handed over in late September 1928. The inscription on its panelling read 'St John Ambulance Brigade – Adelaide Corps'. (In March 1930 this was altered to 'St John Ambulance Brigade Transport Service', the purpose no doubt being to indicate the wider horizon which the Transport Committee by then could see opening up before it.) The committee laid down a scale of charges for hiring the vehicle out to country race meetings, and for transporting patients within the metropolitan area. The former ranged from five guineas ($10.50) for meetings at Gawler to seven guineas ($14.70) at Murray Bridge. The latter varied from 12/6 ($1.25), for trips up to two miles (3.2 km.) from the city centre, to £1/2/6 for trips five miles (8 km.) out, with 1/6 (15¢) a mile extra being charged for journeys above that mileage. The committee also arranged for those who volunteered as drivers to be tested; it appointed mechanics; it gained permission to house the ambulance in a disused railways garage; and it laid down a set of rules governing matters like the speed at which the vehicle could be driven.[87]

The final arrangement to be made before the vehicle went into action was for the committee members to mark the inception of the service by having themselves photographed with the new ambulance, on Saturday 22 September 1928. This undoubtedly illuminating document does not, unfortunately, seem to have survived. The ambulance does appear, however, in an equally enlightening photograph taken eleven weeks later.



Dr Sidney L. Dawkins, the Brigade's District Commissioner for South Australia, 1931-46 and the Commandery Commissioner for Australia, 1941-46.

The latter shows Hussey and Sir John Hewett with the Brigade on parade, shortly after which Hussey dismissed Bulman as District Superintendent and resigned from the Transport Committee – events we examined in the previous section.

The Transport Committee was determined to make a success of its service. It seems to have done so, despite Hussey's mounting hostility to it. Even though he refused on three occasions to sanction the appeal it wished to run to help pay off the loans, the committee managed to meet its obligations to creditors. In March 1930, eighteen months after the service had begun, Bulman resigned as chairman, the loans for which he had stood guarantor having been repaid. The committee did not wish to accept his resignation, and was all for writing to St John's Gate direct to vent its grievances against Hussey. Bulman persuaded the committee against doing that, and stood by his decision to step down, saying he could help the committee out unofficially. The committee let him have his way, and appointed an acting chairman, but in an attempt to prevent any possible takeover by Hussey it put a resolution on its books saying that, if the Commmissioner or his representative should be appointed chairman, all money it owed should be repaid within a month. Such a precaution was hardly necessary. The end of Hussey's fifteen-year reign was now close. He

severed all his St John connections several months later, at the beginning of 1931. Dawkins took his place and, as we know from hindsight, the success of both the Brigade and its ambulance service was now assured.[88]

Dawkins was well suited to his new position as the Brigade's Assistant Commissioner (a title he retained until 1934, when St John's Gate raised him to the full rank of Commissioner – a dignity never granted to Hussey). He and Bulman had become acquainted, and at the instigation of the latter he had begun lecturing and examining classes of railways employees for the Association in 1913. He later took an appointment as medical officer to the Railways Department, and in 1922 accepted an invitation from Hussey to become the Brigade's District Surgeon. When he took over from Hussey, three of the five Brigade Divisions comprised railwaymen, and so he was already widely trusted in the body he must now lead. In October 1930 the Transport Committee had asked him to attend one of its meetings, at which he was invited to take the chair. Several months later, and now he was head of the Brigade, the committee requested him to become its chairman. He accepted but said that, as he was confident of its abilities, he would not attend its meetings unless there were special reasons for doing so, and at other times he wished Bulman to chair meetings for him.[89]

This system of remote control by the new Commissioner was not as loose as appearances might suggest. It was part of the onset of a phase of aggressive expansion the Brigade now entered under its new leadership. To help him run the Brigade Dawkins brought in a team of competent, well known and well connected professional men as his senior officers – Col. P.G. Bice, Eric Millhouse, Dr H.H.E. Russell, the Association secretary, R.P. Goode, and later on Capt. G. Dey of Port Pirie Smelters, Dr E.A.H. Russell and Col. S.R. Burston, all of whom we have already met on previous pages. He began opening new Divisions, and as he did he reorganized the Brigade, grouping Divisions into regional corps. After the recent years of bickering and steady decline under the former Commissioner, the new vigour and sense of purposefulness of the Dawkins leadership was refreshing.

The Brigade's change of style was nowhere more obvious than in its infant ambulance service. In October 1931, only eight or nine months after taking over as Commissioner, Dawkins persuaded the Transport Committee to purchase a second ambulance, a converted Hudson van which it obtained for only £60. Two months after this the committee readily fell in with a suggestion of his that it should wind itself up and pass its control over to the Brigade leadership. To supplement the service it was now offering, the Brigade began hiring a private ambulance owned by a Mr J.H. Myren; and through its strong Railways links it also had access to two Railways motor ambulances. In addition the Brigade had begun fostering links with the police ambulance service, the latter now called the 'Civil Ambulance', a name change made in 1922 after members of the public

had objected to the term 'Police Ambulance'. Consequently Brigade members were now regularly doing duty as voluntary attendants on the two Civil Ambulance vehicles. Dawkins had a keen nose for publicity, and he made sure that the Brigade's contributions to the city's improving ambulance facilities were well advertised. In 1932, for example, he started the practice of beginning the Brigade's annual parade with a march through the city streets, the procession including the Brigade's own two ambulances together with those belonging to Myren, the Railways and the Civil Ambulance, all borrowed for the occasion to add emphasis to the Brigade's renewed commitment to providing the city with the best in ambulance transport. At his direction, too, advertisements began appearing in the daily press, advising the public that by 'phoning Central 4711 they could obtain one of two Brigade ambulances 'available day and night', each attended by 'two fully certificated St John men'.[90]

The new Brigade assertiveness certainly pleased its members, but created new problems with the Hindmarsh-SAAT service. With its rival now treading turf it regarded as its own, George Plenty's organization began a counter attack. Grouping its volunteers together as the 'South Australian Ambulance Brigade', the SAAT began sending them out to do field duties at football matches and other sporting events, thus invading a field previously occupied solely by the St John Ambulance Brigade. The invasion continued as the SAAT began offering free first aid classes in competition with those of the Association, the fee for which was 7/6 (75¢). SAAT classes used the Association's textbook – a move probably made necessary because SAAT officers, having trained on the the Association manual, were familiar with it.[91]

Dawkins countered this offensive first by extracting promises from the racing clubs that only his Brigade could furnish the ambulance facilities at their race meetings. He then pushed the Association Centre into lobbying the British Medical Association. Goode, who was soon to become Brigade as well as Association secretary, managed to persuade the BMA to agree to its members foregoing payment for lecturing Association classes. Dawkins and Goode also endeavoured to get the BMA to instruct its members to charge fees for any lectures they gave to SAAT classes. Dawkins was not prepared to leave matters there. He next sought and was granted a meeting with the Chief Secretary at which he proposed that the Civil Ambulance, Railways, Port Adelaide, Myren and St John ambulances should all be brought under under the one umbrella, which the Brigade would, of course, hold.[92]

With both sides resorting to guerilla tactics like these the work of each could only suffer. They eventually came to appreciate this point after almost three years of sniping at each other. Following some four months' negotiations they managed to reach a compromise in November 1934. Under its terms the SAAT agreed to leave first aid training to the Association and to let the Brigade be the sole provider of a voluntary first

aid field service. Thus, the SAAT would henceforth restrict itself to transport work. The St John concession was to withdraw the Brigade vans from the general transport service they had been offering. From now on the Brigade would use its vehicles only in connection with its duties at race meetings, the annual Agricultural Shows and similar large scale public entertainments. In addition it undertook not to purchase further vans, and agreed to give the SAAT right of first refusal if it decided to sell the two it already owned. The two organizations now gradually came, albeit uneasily, to see each other as allies, a situation neither of them might have thought possible several years previously.[93]

There matters rested for another decade or more until, in a second postwar era, public dissatisfaction with the standard of Adelaide's transport facilties again became strident. As a later chapter shows, that finally pushed the government into action it had consistently refrained from taking for more than half a century. Its solution was to pass the capital's ambulance facilities over to St John as a job lot. By that time the St John bodies had proved themselves worthy of such a signal honour.

The long drawn out episode of the St John attempts to influence the shape of Adelaide's transport services in the four or five decades up to the Second World War is a mirror reflecting an unflattering image of the organization. A further four or five decades later the observer can now only wonder at the unjustified optimism, the grand ambitions, the corporate timidity, the bungling and stumbling, and the viciousness of the fratricidal infighting that variously punctuate the story. One also wonders how an agency with such an inglorious record in the field ever came to be entrusted with the development of one of the State's crucial public utilities. Finally, one cannot help but be struck by the marvel a later generation of St John workers wrought, after such inauspicious beginnings, by moulding this into a facility that justifiably served as a model to ambulance operators in the nation's other States and Territories. Later chapters will endeavour to suggest answers to such questions.

4. *The Brigade under Dawkins' leadership*

The 1920s portrait of the St John bodies which previous sections of this chapter have outlined is not heroic, for the timidity, narrowness of perspective and petty squabbling characterizing some episodes of the St John career during that decade were hardly worthy. Frankness in depicting a likeness may be a virtue for an artist, but there is nevertheless a danger in highlighting all the 'warts'. The blemishes that mar an otherwise honourable countenance may obscure the worthy features, making an unjustly harsh impression on the casual observer. That is true of this portrait in particular, and it would be wrong for the reader to conclude from the foregoing that the St John bodies did little but quarrel and equivocate as they faced the challenges of the earlier inter-war decade. For

all the problems they presented, the years between the two world wars were a time of growth and development for Association and Brigade alike. And so, to correct an impression the above descriptions of St John's difficulties might wrongfully have created, we will conclude this chapter by looking at some of the successes.

The most obvious success was the increasing workload of both Association and Brigade. Although statistics of Association enrolments and Brigade strength – the most reliable indicators of achievement – fluctuated widely, the overall trend of the graphs was upwards. Thus, whereas the Association was enrolling one person out of every 1349 of the State's population in 1919, by 1929 it was enrolling one for each 859, and by 1939 the ratio was one for every 751. These figures were unexceptional by later standards: they hardly compared, for example, with the proportion of roughly one to 110 of the mid-1980s. They nevertheless indicated that Association enrolments were growing at a faster rate than the State's population. This in turn meant more and more South Australians were seeking training, availing themselves of the expertise which the Association's instructional staff had been building up over the years. If 'market response' was any indicator of buyer satisfaction, then, we may conclude that the Association's pupils believed they were getting value for money, gaining useful skills of benefit to themselves and their fellow citizens.[94]

By the end of the 1930s the Association Centre had a network of lecturers and examiners spread across all but the most sparsely populated areas of the State. At the onset of the Second World War the Centre was used to coping with large intakes of pupils. It had little trouble in handling the sudden spurt in enrolments which now occurred; and later it took in its stride the enormous increase in classes set off by the people's fear of an imminent Japanese invasion. As we will see, the crisis brought unprecedented numbers of South Australians into Association classes. They would not have realized it at the time, but their eagerness to seek St John training was signalling two facts to posterity. Firstly, they were acknowledging the Association's expertise in its chosen field, in which its high standing was by now widely recognized; and secondly they were paying tribute to the good reputation the St John bodies had continued earning for themselves even in the most difficult of the inter-war years.

The Brigade could also have produced graphs to indicate its widening influence. In 1919 there was only one Brigade member for every 3333 of the South Australian population. Twenty years later the ratio was one to 717. Again this is not as good as the mid-80s figure of one to 500, but it is close enough to show what enormous progress the Brigade made in those two decades; and the scale of the improvement suggests that by the late 1930s the Brigade had already carved out for itself the niche it now occupies in the communal life of the State.[95]

The previous discussion of the St John entry into ambulance transport in the early 1930s made clear that the Brigade's rapidly improving fortunes

arose from S.L. Dawkins' accession to the Commissionership. The Brigade's renewal under his control exemplified what often happens in voluntary organizations when an entrenched, ageing, unimaginative and debilitated leadership is replaced by one keener, younger, more vigorous, more capable, more adaptable, and more ambitious. So dramatic was the revitalization in this case, and so pronounced were its effects, that Dawkins' eleven years as Commissioner were *the* outstanding feature in all of St John's fifty-five year career in South Australia up till the Second World War.

There is little doubt that the dynamism with which the Brigade became charged during the Dawkins leadership was what provided the initial momentum for its spectacular growth during the war and well beyond. A half century later, by the mid-1980s, the South Australian Brigade District was easily the strongest within the Australian Brigade organization. With nearly 4500 members it had far outstripped the next largest, the Victorian District, by a margin of almost 1500, and could claim almost a third of the Brigade's national strength. These figures meant that, in a State with only about nine *per cent* of the nation's population, the Brigade's South Australia District was a giant by comparison with its other Australian Districts. If for no other reason than the thrust he gave his District in that direction, Dawkins had plainly earned the Knighthood within the Order which came his way following the Sleeman tour.[96]

Something of the vitality of the Brigade under Dawkins could be seen in the pressure of requests for its services coming from the South Australian public. Knowing it was reliable and would perform well, more frequent calls for its presence at their fixtures came from the organizers of

Superintendent George Burns leads his Brigade division past the Governor and the Commissioner, Dr S.L. Dawkins in the Brigade's annual parade, early 1930s.



sporting contests, street parades, shows, fêtes, carnivals, rallies, religious festivals, youth camps, patriotic demonstrations, public ceremonies, and all like gatherings marking the communal life of a numerous people. The result was an increasing workload, and the formation of new Divisions to handle this. Because it was seen to be energetic and enterprising it had little trouble attracting new recruits, and could thus accept an even heavier burden of public duties. With its services in such popular demand, its members could feel proud to reflect that they were making a vital contribution to the welfare of their fellow citizens. Morale therefore rose among them, in consequence of which they were even more willing to commit themselves to lives lived for the Brigade. Success in this way bred success. The Brigade's efficiency and effectiveness became self-fulfilling prophecies.

To the ordinary resident of Adelaide in particular the manifestations of this dynamic interaction between Brigade and the South Australian community were simple. It just meant that in public places he or she saw more and more of Brigade members as years went by. Eventually the black uniform with white trimmings, and the ubiquitous first aid kit with Maltese cross, were as familiar a part of the local scene as the scrubby ridges of the Mt Lofty Ranges hemming the city in from the east.

Behind the new success of the Brigade was a strategy Dawkins followed to give the organization greater appeal. This involved reorganizing Divisions on a suburban basis. Previously the Divisions had been concentrated in the city and inner suburbs, and a number had been attached to branches of the Railways. Dawkins believed that if the Brigade decentralized and moved out into the newer suburbs of postwar settlement it would make more impact and attract greater support through becoming identified with particular local communities. Decentralization promised a second benefit, too: it would lessen the wasteful rivalry between Divisions which occurred when, too closely juxtaposed, each tried to outbid the others for funds and public duties. Dawkins was a great believer in the systematic approach to such problems. He therefore called on one of his District Officers, Stan Symons, who worked for State Survey Department, to help him map out a scheme for locating Divisions in such a way that each was placed within a discrete set of municipal boundaries, surrounded by its own territory to take care of, raise funds in, recruit its members from, and develop a local identity with.[97]

He began the reorganization in 1933 by disbanding the Islington, Metropolitan Railways and Adelaide Central Divisions, their members forming the nuclei of new Divisions. The Prospect and Walkerville Division was set up to cover the northern suburbs; a Norwood and St Peters Division formed to cover the eastern suburbs; the Western Suburban Division was renamed Thebarton and Torrensville to give it clearer local identity; Unley now began meeting in that suburb, rather than in the city, so as to cover the southern suburbs; and further new Divisions

opened at Woodville, Port Adelaide, Glenelg and Brighton. As far as possible further new Divisions would henceforth be located in particular suburbs.[98]

At first the reorganization met with opposition. Those within disbanded Divisions were no doubt proud of belonging to the 'oldest' of the Brigade's South Australian units, and resented being shut down, separated from old comrades, and deployed elsewhere. The grumblings about new brooms sweeping too clean were soon silenced, however, as the benefits of decentralization began revealing themselves. Dawkins was actively promoting the reorganization to the communities in which the Divisions were being placed, gaining concessions for each unit. In 1934, for example, he put on a party at his own home for the Mayors of the municipalities concerned – Sir Jonathan Cain (the Lord Mayor) and the Mayors of Norwood, St Peters, Unley, Woodville, Glenelg, Port Adelaide and Thebarton. He subsequently paid a visit in return to each, attending their Council meetings to plead for assistance. Each Council co-operated, granting a meeting hall on municipal premises to the new local Division. To cement Council and local support Dawkins had each Division issue an annual invitation to its Mayor and Councillors to inspect it at a special parade and to watch it give a first aid demonstration. In addition each Division had to 'adopt' the sports grounds within its municipality, and then submit a weekly report to Brigade headquarters on the public duties it had performed at these.[99]

As part of the reorganization Dawkins brought system to the Brigade's administrative procedures. What he inherited from Hussey was rudimentary – a tin trunk of miscellaneous forms and correspondence. One of his first actions on taking over was to persuade the Association's part-time secretary, R.P. Goode, to take on the task of becoming the Brigade's foundation secretary as well, with the rank of District Officer. Exactly what administrative arrangements the Brigade had followed previously are uncertain. In all probability Hussey simply ran things himself from his home at 12 Pier St., Glenelg – the address appearing on Brigade literature during the Hussey years. Goode, who served as Association Centre secretary from 1931 until 1946, had been one of the principals of Mathew Goode & Son, a long-established firm of importers which had collapsed during the Depression. He subsequently opened an accountancy practice, into which in 1934 he invited a young company secretary, Ken Shapter, whom he had earlier employed but who had been unemployed for three years since the importing firm had folded. Shapter was later to succeed his employer as Centre secretary, and in that capacity we will see much more of him later on.[100]

Dawkins ran the Brigade from Goode's Grenfell St. office of the Association during most of his first four years as Commissioner, but by this time the volume of Brigade business was sufficient to warrant the setting up of a separate Brigade office with a full time secretary. He therefore



Jean McMillan (left) and Rita Beck (right) lead the St Peters Nursing division past the Adelaide Town Hall on the way to the Brigade's annual church parade, about 1937.

moved the Brigade into its own premises in October 1934, and appointed a separate secretary (though Goode stayed on as one of his District Officers for the remainder of his term as Commissioner). The new office was in the Railways Institute, then behind the Adelaide Railway Station amidst a collection of iron buildings known as 'Tin Town'. It occupied part of a large room the Nursing Divisions used for their meetings, and which they had to share with Legacy. Dawkins arranged for some Brigade men to come in and erect partitions to lend the headquarters area the appearance of an office. As secretary, on a retainer of £1/10/0, he appointed the secretary of the No. 1 Nursing Division, Jeanie McMillan, who had come into the Brigade after taking an Association home nursing course. Office facilities were minimal at first, as McMillan recalled thirty-four years later:

> The only property of the Brigade at that time was a large square table, a few chairs, an old typewriter and Brigade records. It was due to the efforts of Col. P.G. Bice, who endeavoured to secure some office furniture etc., some of it still at the present [i.e., 1968] Headquarters in Austin Street, Adelaide. I endeavoured to improve the Headquarters by working cushions and curtains in white with the Brigade monogram, plus a few pictures.[101]

But no matter how primitive the Brigade's central office organization might at first have been, the Dawkins administrative innovations just had to be an improvement upon the arrangements of the Hussey regime.

As the Brigade took on a higher profile in the community its membership multiplied. With more recruits stepping forward new

Divisions became possible. The next to open was a Nursing Division at Brighton in 1934. Then came the first three Cadet Divisions, Norwood, Prospect and Port Adelaide, in 1936. An exception to the rule of regional identity that year was the formation of the large Police Division, whose seventy-two members Sleeman had so much admired. Cadet Divisions followed at Unley and Woodville in 1937, and the first Cadet Nursing Division came the same year, attached to Adelaide No. 1 Nursing Division. New Cadet Divisions followed in 1939, at Glenelg and Riverton; and that year, too, came new Nursing Divisions in Adelaide and Glenelg, and the formation of a second non-regional Ambulance Division – the City Motor Cycle Division, for motor cycle enthusiasts who wished to perform their duties at the speedways.[102]

In their new locations the Divisions found a highly varied routine of tasks came their way, these in addition to the previous staple duties of yesteryear, the race meetings, the Agricultural Show and the Anzac Day parade. The duty book of the Prospect Ambulance Division for 1937 shows the range of venues the average Division might cover. Beryl Fegan has summarized it thus:

> Besides taking their turn at racing, trotting and hospital duties the men also covered the League football matches on the Prospect and Adelaide ovals, the Church Association matches, soccer, rugby, lacrosse, hockey and baseball matches on the North Park lands from Jeffcott St. to Frome Rd., and also at the Walkerville, Broadview, Kilburn, Gaza, Devon Park and Teachers' College ovals. Also wrestling at the City Baths, cycling events, accompanying a Sunday school picnic to Belair National Park, attending Kangaroo Club concerts at West's Theatre, the 5KA Christmas Pantomime, 5AD and 5DN concerts, as well as the Royal Show.[103]

These were still depression days in Prospect, and a number of the Division's members were still unemployed. They were therefore available for weekday duties either in their own area or in that of another Division. Brigade work undoubtedly helped them retain self esteem as they helped out at functions run by churches, business firms and other local bodies.

It was not only in the city that the Brigade uniform became a familiar sight. In country towns as well Brigade Divisions also became established. As well as pushing the Brigade out into the suburbs, Dawkins began a drive to open Divisions in country towns. Thus in 1933 new Ambulance Divisions opened at Port Pirie, Quorn, Port Lincoln, Peterborough, Millicent and Beachport. In 1934 a Mount Gambier Division opened; then came Gawler in 1935, Riverton in 1936, Penola in 1937, a Port Pirie Nursing Division in 1938; and a rush of new Divisions in 1939 as the world slid into war – Ambulance Divisions at Whyalla, Gladstone, Booleroo Centre, Salisbury and Glossop, and Nursing Divisions at Gawler, Lobethal and Berri. In time the country Division became as much a part of the local scene as those other institutions around which life in country towns revolved, as ubiquitous indeed as the shire council, rural fire brigade,



Brigade men help an injured player from the field in the preliminary football final between South Adelaide and Norwood at the Adelaide Oval, 1937.

hospital board of management, Country Women's Association and Returned Servicemen's League.[104]

The Brigade uniforms and the first aid kits were present at many, if not all, of the great public occasions in Adelaide during the 1930s. One of the more memorable occurred in September 1932, when the city honoured one of its most famous sons on his seventy-fifth birthday. This was the 'cattle king', Sir Sidney Kidman, perhaps the largest landholder of all in a nation with vast pastoral estates. The celebration took the form of a rodeo on the Jubilee Oval. Shortly after 11.30 a.m. on the morning of the rodeo a thousand spectators were already milling around the gates, which were not due to open until 1.00 p.m. The police had the gates opened earlier, and by 1.30 the grounds were almost full. The gates closed at 2.00 p.m., with thousands still arriving. The crowd around the gates could not be moved aside to allow Kidman to enter with his escort of horsemen when he arrived soon after. The spectators blocking the entrance were allowed on to the oval so as to clear his path. Others, seeing the latecomers would

be getting the best view, climbed the picket fence, and they were joined by still more until spectators ringed the inside of the arena ten deep. The crowd occupied every vantage point possible – up trees, on the roofs of surrounding buildings, and one man died after falling through the roof to the concrete floor of an old shed. Twelve Brigade men and two women had been rostered for duty that after noon, but, seeing the huge crowd before them, they sent an urgent appeal out for every available Brigade member to come to the oval to help out with the flood of cases that was now expected. Thirteen men and ten women answered the call, and literally had to fight their way into the oval. The spectators around the oval would not be shifted, despite threats by police and the organizers to abandon the rodeo. As a result stockmen found it impossible to prevent terrified cattle charging into the crowd at intervals. The weather, moreover, was sultry and hot. The team of thirty-seven Brigade members were kept busy for hours treating victims of fainting, heat exhaustion, trampling, and more serious injuries. The organizers, who were donating the profits to the Australian Inland Mission, gave the Brigade members £50 of the proceeds in acknowledgement of their capable, untiring efforts throughout the long afternoon.[105]

The next year, 1933, the Brigade was on duty again when the contest of most notorious reputation in Australian sporting history occurred. This was the legendary 'Battle of Adelaide', the third Test match of the 1932-33 Ashes series between England and Australia, an event in the national mythology ranking only several places behind those other battles – Gallipoli, the Eureka Stockade and the destruction of the Kelly Gang at Glenrowan. The English captain, Douglas R. Jardine, in the words of one sports historian, 'seemed to typify the snobbish, upper-class Englishman who held Australians in contempt'. A large and angry crowd came back to the Oval for the Test to see if Jardine would persist with the 'bodyline' tactics used with devastating effect by his fast bowlers, Larwood and Voce, against Australian batsmen in previous matches of the tour. If it was drama Adelaideans wanted, they got it, and helped create it. On the second day, shortly after lunch, with the Australian team chasing an English score of 341, the Australian captain and opening bat, Bill Woodfull, fell after a short-pitched ball from Larwood struck him above the heart. Play stopped until he recovered, then as he took the crease again Jardine repositioned the leg-side fieldsmen, indicating that Larwood's intimidatory bowling would continue. The tumult that rose from the crowd was made by South Australian voices, but it was the roar of an enraged Australia. Eyewitnesses said later that if one person had run on to the field to swing a punch at Jardine, the rest would have followed. Had that happened the Brigade members present might have had more than the usual cases of fainting, heat exhaustion and sunstroke to deal with.[106]

The Adelaide Oval was scene of other more tranquil public events in South Australian and Brigade history. Beryl Fegan, who joined the No. 1

Nursing Division as a young woman in 1929, was present at many of them, and her writings later described them. The 1930s, she said, were

> the days of big rallies and displays, usually of children or young people, many held on the Adelaide Oval. There was then no casualty room at the Oval, but one of the rooms under the stands would be put at the disposal of the Brigade. Nursing members would have to carry not only their own kits but also linen and sheets for covering benches, sometimes a hand basin, several thermos flasks of either hot or cold drinks, according to weather. At one of the first of these, a Girl Guide rally on the Adelaide Oval on Anzac Day 1931, one Nursing member made improvised stretchers out of hessian bags for a cost of 3/- (30¢). The men provided the stretcher bearers. A donation of 4/- (40¢) was from this rally.[107]

As the organizers of such events no doubt came to realize, the Brigade, with their improvised materials set up in makeshift quarters, looked like the bunch of well meaning amateurs they were, yet they gave good service. If, moreover, a dozen or so Brigade members could be engaged for an afternoon for a handful of pennies, no harm was done; and at least no one could accuse the organizers of having failed to provide 'ambulance' facilities. Requests for their services at large scale gatherings therefore mounted, and they returned to the Adelaide Oval on numerous subsequent occasions. Beryl Fegan describes some of them like this:

> In 1934 the Girl Guides staged a most spectacular, yet touching farewell to the Governor's wife, then Lady Hore-Ruthven [later Lady Gowrie, after her husband, Sir Alexander, had been raised to the peerage and translated to Canberra as Governor General]. With every child dressed as a flower, the whole of the Adelaide Oval was transformed as a flower garden, with the guest of honour and official party moving slowly up and down the paths in a mini car converted into a large butterfly. Nursing members again manned a room using their own materials, but others, with Ambulance [Division] men, provided stations around the edge of the oval where buckets of water were provided as well as kits. This eased the pressure on the room.
>
> Later that year there was another pageant by school children for the Duke of Gloucester's visit; but the one which really stretched the resources of the Brigade was in 1936, South Australia's Centenary Year, when hundreds of children arrived in fancy dress representing the various countries of the British Empire, each group having to put on its own display. It was by far the most ambitious display of its kind ever put on by school children, and taking a whole year of planning and preparation. It was staged twice, but unfortunately the first day was hot and humid, the stands and grounds packed with spectators. To get all children there on time an early start had to made with bringing them in. . . . Many people had started to gather outside the gates by 7.30 a.m., and as the temperature rose to 101 degrees Fahrenheit there were many cases of fainting amongst spectators, and the fifty men on duty were kept busy attending to them as well as carrying children to the casualty rooms. It was estimated that 200 children had fainted before the pageant officially began; after that it became impossible to count the numbers, but the four rooms



The future Grand Prior, the Duke of Gloucester, meets Brigade members at Glenelg during his visit to South Australia in 1934. He is shaking hands with the Brigade secretary, Jean McMillan. Left of her is Vi Watson, later the District Superintendent (Nursing). In uniform immediately to the left of the Duke is the Association secretary, R.P. Goode, and at the extreme left is the Commissioner, Dr S.L. Dawkins.

> under the grandstands held as many as fifty children at a time. Thirty-one students from the Teachers' Training College assisted the 20 Nursing members on duty, and water fatigues were everywhere with 300 buckets of water placed around the oval. There had been an appeal to the public for lemons to make drinks for the children, and so many were received that several cases of them were afterwards sent to the Children's Hospital. . . . Fortunately the second day was cooler, and, being a Saturday, more [Brigade] members could go on duty, and there were not the huge crowds of children as spectators. The conditions on the Friday brought praise and publicity for the work of the Brigade. Also it was gradually being realized that there was a need for casualty rooms at all ovals, though it was to be some years before this was achieved.[108]

At the end of the pageant the Divisional case books showed a total of 1257 casualties treated. And that was before the over-extended Brigade members had found themselves too busy to maintain the tally.

The Centennial Year gave the Brigade members by far their heaviest workload to date. One of the principal public celebrations that year was in September. It was a Floral Festival, with a street procession of decorated floats. It seemed that most of Adelaide's inhabitants had managed to squeeze themselves into North Terrace and King William St., and the day

was hot. The Governor, Sir Winston Dugan, noticed Brigade members battling to set up their casualty station at the intersection, and so he sent out an invitation to them to use Government House grounds instead. They subsequently treated ninety cases of fainting there, and another seventy in a pharmacy at the corner of Gawler Place and Rundle St., where they had a second station. The tally of casualties treated throughout the long day was 670. They were better prepared for the final public celebration of the Centenary, the Pageant of Progress, on 22 December. They arranged fifteen casualty stations along the route of the street parade, staffed by seventy-five Brigade members. Again, most of Adelaide streamed into the city to watch the procession go by, and to keep the citizens under control the police had sworn in a large body of auxiliaries for the day, each of whom earned 15/- ($1.50). The day was hotter than for the Floral Festival, but because the crowd was better controlled the Brigade had only 142 cases to treat, mostly faintings and nose bleedings. Other major events during the year were an All Australian Catholic Education Congress which included two large outdoor meetings, a Boy Scout Corroboree, and a National Thanksgiving Service organized by the Army and Navy, each of which produced its own yield of cases for Brigade members. By the end

The Brigade's tent on the beach at Glenelg, late 1920s-early 30s. Vi Watson, later District Superintendent (Nursing) is on duty.



of the year the Brigade had attended no less than 1745 separate functions, its members putting in a total of 6629 attendances, during which they treated 9518 casualties. The year was thus a 'good' one. If the Brigade's previous performances had not done so, then certainly those of 1936 established the Brigade's presence firmly in the public mind.[109]

The Brigade not only gained higher visibility through attending crowded rallies and street parades. They took up other forms of service in the late 1920s and early 30s which kept their uniform and name well in public sight. Among the more important means for doing so were the beach casualty stations between Brighton and Largs Bay which Sleeman admired. Then there was the similar service Brigade members provided at the Morialta and Burnside waterfalls picnic areas at weekends during summer months. Regular duties at these venues were an initiative Hussey introduced in 1929, though this particular service lapsed after several years. These near-city resorts became particularly popular during the Great Depression. Few people had cars; the railways and tramways introduced concession fares of ninepence (8¢) return to the nearer resorts; a day or an evening at the beach or a hillside resort was the cheapest form of mass diversion available; and so Adelaideans went to such places in their tens of thousands, particularly during the summer.

At first Brigade members simply patrolled the beaches. The men would go out, giving treatment on the spot where possible, but bringing to the women anyone requiring more extensive treatment. The women worked at a blanket spread on the sand and marked by a pennant. People who had been hurt were frequently reluctant to seek help, fearing the curious gaze of the crowds which inevitably gathered. In 1932 the Brigade obtained tents for each beach to enable those on duty to work in privacy. Tents were not the answer, however: they were hot; they were difficult to erect, dismantle and store; they could not be made sandproof; and they sometimes blew away. The Mayor of Glenelg, W. Fisk, later that year came to the rescue of the Brigade detachment patrolling his beach. He persuaded his Council to approve the building of a permanent casualty station for the Brigade on municipal land on the foreshore at Glenelg. He also arranged the finance to build it. It was ready by December that year, and in its first season, the five month period until April 1933, it had heavy use. Nearly 140 duties were performed and 1087 hours worked there, during which 275 cases were treated. More than half a century later it was still in heavy use, by which time several hundreds of thousands of South Australians had probably been treated there. The idea of the permanent Brigade beach casualty station caught on, and, as we have seen, by the time Sleeman arrived on the scene three years later each of the principal beaches had one. By then the Brigade was as much a part of the Adelaide foreshore scene as the picnic hamper and beach umbrella.[110]

Even a cursory glance at old Brigade scrapbooks shows that the public greatly appreciated the service the Brigade was providing along Adelaide's



The Brigade's newly opened casualty station at Glenelg beach, with Superintendent B. Swann of the Glenelg Nursing Division in charge, about 1933. The wall plaque commemorates the contribution of Glenelg's mayor, William Fisk, in having the station opened, and below that is a portrait of King George V in the robes of the Sovereign Head of the Order.

long beachfront. From time to time the newspapers of the day did feature articles on them, and the scrapbooks contain many of these. The pronouncement by *The Glenelg Guardian* about the local beach casualty station, in 1935, 'this room is a God-send!' undoubtedly reflected at least a local consensus of opinion. Three years later it was one of the dailies which ran a feature on the casualty stations. It spoke of a 'chain of safety which is the St John Ambulance Brigade' being 'strung along the seafront from Largs to Brighton', and then went on to describe some of the cases recently treated at the Largs station:

> The record of cases shows that sunburn, cut toes, splinters, fishhooks in feet and hands, and treatment for knocks from swings, fractures and abrasions are the main items. Sisters in charge say that broken glass on the beaches is becoming an increasing menace to the safety of both adults and children.[111]

There were further innovations, other than the beach casualty stations and a more effective Brigade structure, during the Dawkins decade. Among them was the establishment of the Hospitallers' Club. an idea Dawkins had picked up during a long tour to England which he undertook at the beginning of his Commissionership, in 1931, and which included an almost obligatory visit to St John's Gate. The Dawkins tour began as a crusade, but was really as much a pilgrimage. Even though he had only formally been Acting Assistant Commissioner for a month or so, the Brigade ran a farewell social for him on 27 February in the Railways Institute at the Adelaide Railway Station. Then on 5 March Brigade members formed a guard of honour for him at Outer Harbour as he went aboard his ship. That he went off in such style is perhaps an indication of the reverence in which his junior officers already held him: neither Hussey nor A.A. Simpson, who had earlier gone 'on pilgrimage' to St John's Gate, were accorded a send-off like his. When he reached London he spent much time with Sleeman, who was his direct superior officer in the Brigade, the position 'Commissioner for Australia' having more or less lapsed as Storie Dixson had become less active with advancing age. (The latter died early the next year). Sleeman invited both Dawkins and his wife, Mrs G.M. Dawkins (later to become a District Officer then 'Lady' District Superintendent of the Brigade in South Australia), to a dinner meeting of the St John's Gate Hospitallers' Club at which he met the elite of the Order, most of them titled members of the English nobility and/or military 'Establishment'. The Dawkins came away with only a hazy idea of the purpose of the Hospitallers' Club, thinking its objects were merely 'social and educational'. They were apparently unaware that its primary function was fundraising for the third of the Order's three modern Foundations after the Association and Brigade, the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem. Colonial *ingénues* she and her husband might have been, but Mrs Dawkins knew a good idea when she saw one. Why not a similar select club for people 'of standing in the Order' in Adelaide, one for socially

prominent people who might also be 'willing to help gain support for the Brigade'?[112]

When they returned to South Australia they convened a meeting of 'friends and other Brigade members' to see if an Adelaide 'Hospitallers' Club' could be formed. It took place, appropriately, in the Liberal Club, and decided to adopt the Dawkins' proposal. The objects of the club would be to promote Brigade interests; to assist the Brigade with 'social responsibilities', which no doubt meant currying favour in high places; and to subscribe 2/6 (25¢) per member annually to cover administrative costs. Only much later did it come to realize that, to use the title of its London namesake, it really ought to raise funds for the Ophthalmic Hospital – a function it was quite happy to take on. For the time being, however, it was happy enough to be an exclusive little venue through which the St John leadership could occasionally meet with prominent and influential members of 'Society', so as to enjoy each other's company at the same time as helping St John along.[113]

Foremost among the activities of the Hospitallers' Club were the running of grand dinners at palatial hotels in honour of notable benefactors of the St John movement. Among the most memorable of these was one at the Hotel Richmond in 1934, and the guests of honour were the Hore-Ruthvens (not yet the Gowries), who were leaving the State after six years in Government House. Hore-Ruthven was a Knight of the Order, an honour bestowed on him at St John's Gate before taking up the South Australian Vice Regal appointment. He was also the patron of the Association Centre, the first Governor to hold that office. (Previous Vice Regal incumbents had accepted the position of Centre president. Hore-Ruthven had broken that tradition by declining the presidency, suggesting that he become patron instead, an offer the Centre dutifully accepted, pleased no doubt to retain the Vice Regal link under any name.) All the Governors after him were Knights of the Order, and the British ones had all been promoted to or admitted at that rank within the Order before reaching South Australia. The St John's Gate hierarchy perhaps thought it politic if the incoming State Governor was, by virtue of his high rank within the Order, bound to uphold its interests on taking up office in South Australia. At the Hore-Ruthven farewell dinner the club president, Millhouse, was in the chair, and it was he who proposed the toast to the guests of honour. Sir Henry Newland, the doyen of the city's surgical fraternity, proposed the toast to the Order, to which the Association president, the Lord Mayor, Glover, and Dawkins responded in turn.[114]

Another notable Hospitallers' Club dinner in 1934 came later in the year, when the club welcomed the incoming Vice Regal couple, the Dugans, at the South Australian Hotel. Then in 1936 it was the turn of The Piccadilly Dining Rooms for the meeting in honour of Sleeman, while in 1942 the South Australian Hotel was again the setting, this time for a dinner to mark the establishment of the Australian Commandery of the

Order. In addition to the dinners the club ran a variety of functions to make money – balls, afternoon teas, morning coffees and card parties. Some of these took place in members' homes, some in the Adelaide Town Hall, and some even in Government House. During Dawkins' time as Commissioner the Brigade benefited by £1000 or more from the club's genteel fundraising efforts. Exclusivity was plainly an item having great commercial potential in Adelaide. Perhaps one of the Dawkins' contributions to the Brigade was that they were the first to exploit it.[115]

Profitably hitching the pretensions of those in 'Society' to the Brigade was a Dawkins achievement impinging but little on the efforts of rank and file members, most if not all of whom were of humble origin and innocent of 'Social' ambition. Of more moment to them were other innovations, notably competitions and Cadets. Each was likely to have been an initiative which Sleeman would have urged upon Dawkins during their discussions in London in 1931. Competitions in first aid and nursing techniques and drills had long been a part of St John endeavours, and were seen as a means of sharpening skills and stimulating members' interest. No one, however, seems to have thought of regular District-wide competitions until Dawkins introduced them in 1934. The program of events included contests for individuals and teams of four in both 'ambulance work' – first aid – and nursing. The winners received trophies donated by leading commercial houses. District competitions thereafter became a regular part of the Brigade calendar. Cadets, as we have seen, were an aspect of Brigade work Sleeman was particularly keen to promote in Australia, and throughout his travels in Australia he repeatedly drew attention to the weakness of the Cadet movement in Australia *vis-a-vis* the Brigade 'At Home' and in New Zealand. With Sleeman already in Australia, and still no Cadet Divisions within his District, Dawkins, we may imagine, would have been unwilling to court his stern superior's censure by having failed to take what the latter plainly regarded as a crucial step. He therefore rushed the first three Cadet Divisions into existence so as to have them on parade, spick and span in smart new uniforms, for the Chief Commission-

Nursing (left) and Ambulance (right) Cadets march along King William St., Adelaide, on the way to their annual church service, 1937.



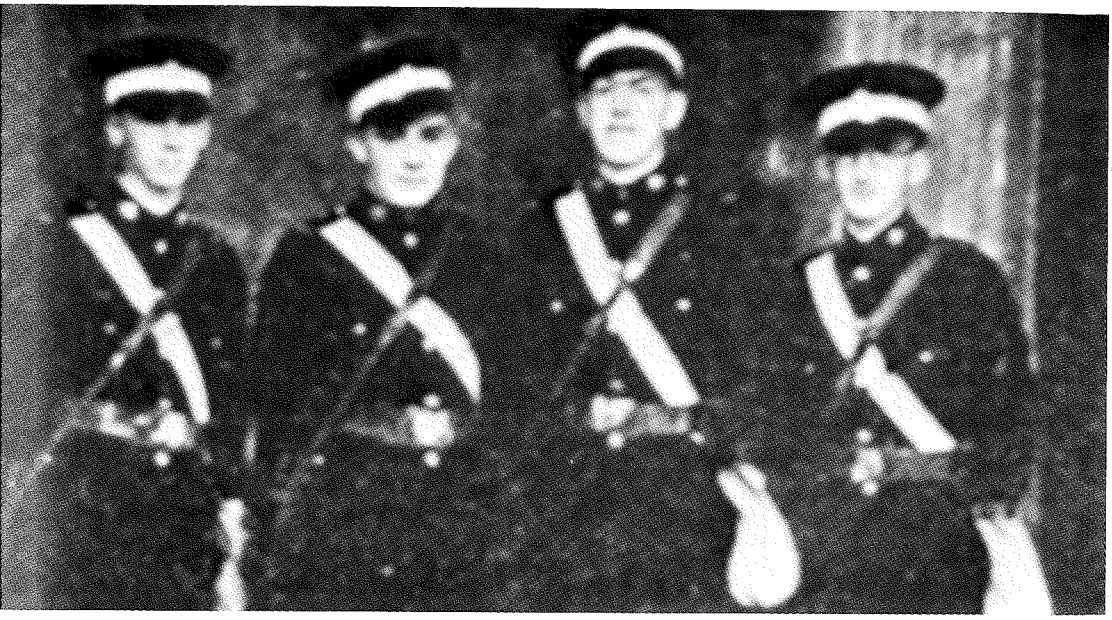
er's grand review of the massed Divisions at the University Oval on Sudnay 19 April.[116]

To Dr E.A.H. Russell, himself a later Commissioner but then a District Officer, Dawkins assigned the task of forming the first Cadet Divisions. Russell went from Division to Division trying to raise interest in the idea of a juvenile unit being attached to each. His urgings produced results only in Norwood, Prospect and Port Adelaide, the Divisions of which were able to muster fourteen, eleven and seventeen lads respectively. One of the Norwood recruits later wrote about it:

> Training began under Ambulance Officer (later Cadet Superintendent) B.I. March, assisted by the officers and NCO's of the adult Division. The pressure was really on. This year was special, we were to be reviewed by the Chief Overseas Commissioner himself. [Divisional] Superintendent John Moores wanted the Cadets fully qualified and in correct uniform for the Review and that was simply that. The exams were held, the results rushed through, the lads measured for their uniforms which were delivered the day before the Review. On the big day District Officer Dr E.A.H. Russell . . . took charge of the Cadets. Proud as Punch at the near impossibilities he had carried off, the good doctor forgot his words of command, and with an embarrassed 'Come along lads, follow me' strode on to the parade ground with the 'lads' almost running to keep up with him. Thus Adelaide saw Cadets for the first time. Soon they were to become a familiar sight with the many public duties connected with the Centenary Celebrations.[117]

Dawkins, having met his deadline, and perhaps having assured himself of the Chief Commissioner's approval, might well have heaved a sigh of relief. However, having brought the Cadet movement into South Australia, he was not prepared to sit back and let it fade away. He and Russell now encouraged other Divisions to take the lead of Norwood, Prospect and Port Adelaide. The first Cadet unit for girls, attached to the No. 1 Nursing Division, was fourth into the field, in July 1937. The reason for the late start here was that, with the heavy burden of public duties they had to carry during Centenary Year, the women of the Nursing Divisions simply had no time spare for bringing a Cadet Nursing Division into being. Unley and Woodville each sponsored the formation of Cadet Ambulance Divisions the same year. Glenelg followed in 1939, the same year that the first country Cadet Division formed, at Riverton.[118]

By this time the wisdom of Sleeman's insistence on the introduction of juvenile units was evident. Four of the original Cadets at Norwood moved up into their adult Division in 1938. Three of them, Ern Temby, Norm Marsh and John Morrison, went on to become senior Brigade officers and members of the Order, and at retirement could boast a hundred years of active Brigade duty between them. They were the first trickle of a later steady and continuous stream, even though some Divisions had a poor record of helping senior Cadets make the transition to an adulthood in St John. Within a couple more years former Cadets were answering a higher



Privates Ponton, Morrison, Marsh and Temby newly graduated from the Cadet to the adult division of the Brigade's Norwood and St Peters division, 1939.

call to service. As one of the original Cadets later remarked with more than a tinge of sadness,

> the youngsters of 1936-37 became the young men of 1939-40. Many of them served with the Armed Services. Some did not return. . . . One wonders how many ex-service people owe their lives to some Navy, Army or Air Force Medical Corpsman who learned the better part of his job as a St John Ambulance Cadet.[119]

Some of those who went away would have taken part in a successful experiment the Brigade undertook during the Christmas holidays of 1938-39. This was the first District annual Cadet camp, at Kingston Park, an innovation so successful it has continued to the present day. E.A.H. Russell was in charge, and, as the *Annual Report* later advised, 'lectures, practical work and recreation combined with the lasting friendships formed, made the venture both profitable and enjoyable'. It was, most likely, the climax to a short Brigade career for some who would soon be overseas.[120]

By the time the war came Dawkins had been leading the Brigade for nine years. He continued leading it throughout the war, until S.R. Burston succeeded him in 1945. From October 1941 until then he was also the Australian Commandery Commissioner, that is the chief Brigade officer for the Commandery of Australia, the federal body which all State St John organizations except Western Australia set up during 1941-42. He remained Commandery Commissioner until 1947, when the Priory was established, then retired from the scene, Burston taking over as Chief Commissioner for Australia. Dawkins was one of the architects of both the Commandery and the Priory, and it was most likely that his well known successes in South Australia would have persuaded his colleagues in

Commandery and Priory to offer him the honour of becoming the foundation Chief Commissioner in the first truly effective federal organization of the Australian St John bodies. The successes had been notable. As we have seen, he so revitalized his Brigade District that he permanently altered the balance within the South Australian St John movement. Instead of the Brigade being a minor appendage of the 'Senior Service', the Association, it now loomed so overwhelmingly large in St John affairs that it eclipsed its parent body. Indeed, the public probably forgot that there was a St John Ambulance Association: St John Ambulance in South Australia henceforth meant the Brigade to most people.

Dawkins was not without his faults, nor was his Brigade. A couple of instances come readily to mind. One might, for example, question the sedulous courting of the titled, wealthy and influential that was so much a part of the Dawkins style, and which revealed itself in the formation of the Hospitallers Club. This was, of course, an important ingredient in the success of the Dawkins Brigade; and it is no doubt true that one of the reasons why the Brigade failed to progress under his predecessor was the previous Commissioner's lack of access into Adelaide 'Society'. Developing strong 'Establishment' connections might be a necessary strategy for a voluntary organization wishing to extend its influence, yet in some ways the humble style of Hussey now seems more palatable than the 'Social' ambition of his successor.

Another chink in the armour of the Dawkins Brigade was its authoritarian nature. He, of course, had no monopoly on dictatorial conduct, as seen in Hussey's stubborn determination to prove that 'the Colonel is head of his Army'. Yet as the 1930s wore on Dawkins' increasingly despotic manner alienated some members. His demands for their unswerving loyalty, his apparent belief that disagreement with him meant insubordination, and his reluctance to admit errors were unwelcome. Despite its rank structure and chain of command, the uniforms, its drills and parades, and its rhetoric of duty, discipline and efficiency, the Brigade was *not* a branch of the Armed Services. It was a *voluntary* body of civilians with only a limited tolerance of autocratic control from above. His failure to recognize this after the onset of the war was to create problems. As war added to the Brigade's duties and responsibilities he expected his 'troops' to make a total personal commitment to the Brigade, to carry a punishing burden of voluntary duty beyond the capacity of many. As we will see, the difficulties arising as they made their resentment known were to reveal less attractive facets of his leadership.

Despite these less welcome aspects, the Dawkins Brigade was an exemplary organization, a model of enterprise, efficiency and dedicated service of community needs which voluntary organizations in all States and subsequent decades might usefully emulate. It was Dawkins' personal achievement that in less than a decade he had built such a body from the unlikely ragged raw materials with which he had begun in 1931.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Second World War

1. *Wartime work and voluntaryism*

South Australians tuned into the ABC radio station 5CL on Sunday evening 3 September 1939 heard their Prime Minister, R.G. Menzies, explain that the country was once again at war. Those who missed the broadcast were able to read what the Prime Minister had said in the verbatim report all the daily newspapers ran the next morning. Britain had been forced to call a halt to Hitler's ambitions, the Menzies speech pointed out, and 'there was never any doubt as to where Great Britain stood'. Nor could there be any doubt that 'where Great Britain stands, there stands the people of the entire British world'.[1] The point hardly needs emphasis, but nor was there any uncertainty about where the St John bodies in South Australia stood: as in the last war, they stood upright for Empire, wearing their loyalty like a crown.

If the St John commitment to the war effort had not already been clear, then the whole State learnt about it on Tuesday 19 December 1939, when Dr S.L. Dawkins broadcast a Christmas message to St John workers, from 5CL again. His speech ran along these lines:

> I speak to you as members of the Brigade, loyalty to which must be encouraged so that your sense of responsibility in these critical times may be deepened and strengthened.... You owe loyalty to your Divisions, then to the Brigade throughout the State, which is itself a unit of the great Order of St John of Jerusalem in the British Empire, that great Empire which is now passing through such critical times....[2]

Dawkins was followed by his recently appointed Assistant Commissioner, Sir Stanton Hicks, whose message laid even more stress on the loyalist sentiments the commissioner had just expressed:

> This is an opportunity for me to emphasise the national significance of the Order of St John in the British realm. In times like these it is doubly important for us to realise how much we members of the nation and realm are dependent upon one another, and there is perhaps no institution which more than our own lays emphasis upon that interdependence of members of the human family. Another point I would like to emphasise is the fact that government ... is a matter of self-discipline, and arising from this quality of man are his institutions, which are ultimately the cornerstones of government. Our own ancient and honourable Order is one of these great institutions, and... I would like to draw your attention to ... the important aspects of our national life – the larger family life, if you will, of the British people.[3]

After that, no one in the State could doubt that where the Empire went so, too, went St John.

This sense of oneness of Order, nation and Empire so emphatically articulated by the Brigade's leadership received a further confirmation several months later, when a message arrived from the Chief Commissioner of the Brigade Overseas, Col. James Sleeman, the memory of whose visit was still fresh in South Australian minds. Sleeman wrote to spur Brigade members on to greater efforts:

> All members of the Brigade Overseas [are] fully prepared and eager to give ... service and [are] conscious of the vitally important part which they are playing in the defence of civilization.
>
> Having so recently completed an official tour of most of the British Empire, I am in a position to make this statement with confidence, after having witnessed in almost every Dominion and Colony the magnificent spirit which animates our members. I am equally sanguine that however arduous the service, or extreme the call, all will play their part with that same fine loyalty and courage which has characterized the work of members of our historic Order thoughout its history.
>
> There is indeed a curious similarity between the work which modern war will call upon us to do, and that for which the Order was originally formed. For just as in the infancy of our movement the Knights and members of the Order of St John were banded together to protect the traveller and to heal the sick, so we who serve that same Order eight centuries later find ourselves engaged in the task of protecting those pursuing their peaceful vocations who may fall victims to oppression.[4]

The Chief Commissioner's letter was *not* enlightened by a scholar's awareness of the discontinuities in the career of the British Order of St John. Historical verisimilitude, however, was probably an unimportant consideration in the shouting out of an imperial rallying cry; and there was no mistake that this was a call to arms. Published as a 'Special Brigade Order' in *"The Bayonet"*, a monthly Army journal which generously allocated three or four pages of every issue to the Brigade for reports of Brigade activities, both letter and its place of publication stressed a point St John leaders throughout Australia had often made in the past. This was that the whole St John organization was standing by at the disposal of the government, ready, willing and eager in time of war to fall in as a civilian reserve behind the medical units of the armed services.

Nearly half a century later, and in a much changed world, one finds it difficult to appreciate what a deep font of inspiration for St John workers the idea of the unity of nation, Empire and Order provided. Later generations, tempered by the scepticism bred from the experience of another four or five decades of wars both hot and cold, may marvel at the unquestioning patriotism of the decades when their grandparents were young. In 1939 and 1940, however, reflections of this nature were not only unnecessary but inconceivable, at least to the well disciplined loyalists

making up the St John organizations in South Australia. Like their St John comrades in other States and Dominions, they dutifully fell in behind the banners of Order, Country, King and Empire, and were proud to be seen doing so.

A formal declaration of war did *not* cause a flurry of activity within the South Australian St John bodies to make themselves ready for the trial ahead. The threat of imminent war had been canvassed so frequently in the newspapers and over the radio during the past three or four years that when their Prime Minister's announcement of war came they were at least psychologically prepared for it. That they were already gearing up for their wartime tasks had become obvious to the public at least a year and a half previously, in March 1938. That month an inspector of the South Australian Education Department, one Miss Adelaide Miethke, had gained a column of space in *The Advertiser* with her views on the subject of 'Women And Defence', the substance of her message being that

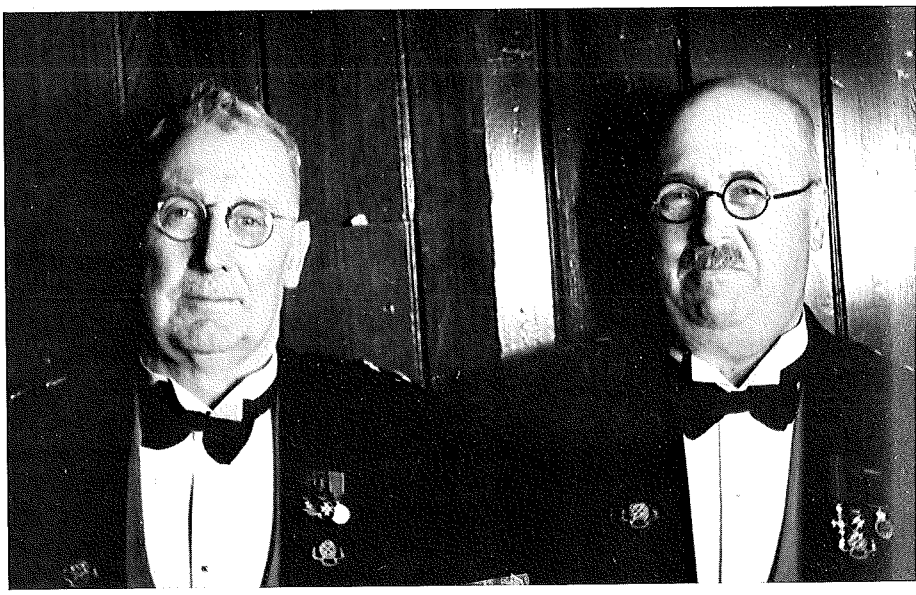
> women's hatred of all forms of aggression should not allow them to take for granted that war would continue to pass this country by, or prevent them from disciplining and training themselves to be dependable citizens in time of need.[5]

She then went on to outline a plan for organizing groups of women for 'instruction in the measures which have been developed for the protection of the civilian population'. Among these, she said, 'first aid and nursing, of course, [were] of primary importance; and training in anti-gas measures and the use of gas masks [was] now regarded as vital'.[6]

Miss Miethke's comments drew a testy reply in the next day's newspaper from Dr H.H.E. Russell, who was State Controller of the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachments as well as Brigade District Surgeon:

> Dr Russell said he was pleased to hear that the women of this State were alive to the necessity for being prepared for a national emergency, but he advanced the opinion that there was no need to form any new organization to put their proposal into effect.
>
> There were two organizations in existence, [he] said, where women might fit themselves for national emergency. One was the St John Ambulance Brigade, which had been in existence in South Australia for many years . . . and the other was the Voluntary Aid Detachments. . . . These two organizations worked together with the same objects, the teaching of first aid, home nursing, hygiene and sanitation, invalid cookery, first aid in chemical warfare, drill and so on. . . .[7]

Russell, and also Dawkins and the Association chairman, Dr Charles Wilson, whom *The Advertiser* quoted on this matter, too, made a point of mentioning how the Brigade and VAD organization had been in a state of war preparedness since 1935 at least. Russell pointed out that there were now eight VAD units in the State, with a combined membership of 150, many of this number being in both a Brigade Division and a VAD. They



Dr S.L. Dawkins, the Brigade's District Commissioner, and Dr H.H.E. Russell, its District Surgeon and State Controller of VAD units.

had attended a course in gas warfare; a number had gone on to pass Red Cross medal examinations in first aid, nursing, chemical warfare, military organization and hygiene; they were now qualified to instruct the civilian population; and should Miss Miethke care to affiliate and help the Brigade-VAD effort, she would be most welcome. Dawkins said the Brigade had been training its members in anti-gas precautions since October 1935, in co-operation with the Commonwealth Department of Defence. Wilson rounded off the salvo by saying that in Britain the St John organization was using the War Office manual for anti-gas measures and first aid for aid raid casualties, and had been given joint responsibility for air raid precautions work. Had he chosen to, he could also have said that, only the day before in the Rex Theatre, the Association had shown a series of documentary films, produced by the Association in Britain and dealing with anti-gas precautions, to an audience of 400 people associated with public services and utilities.[8]

Anti-gas training measures, fortunately, were needless – as we now know with the benefit of hindsight. With war clouds gathering over Europe in the mid-1930s, however, it seemed sensible for military and civil defence agencies to be taking whatever precautions seemed most likely to avert the danger to civilians of widespread injuries of the sort that had made chemical warfare notorious during the First World War. The St John bodies, following the lead of their British counterparts, saw training in anti-gas and air raid precautions as areas in which they could make a special contribution. They accordingly tried to attract government support in mounting a thorough and continuing program of public instruction. Governments, however, seemed peculiarly lacking in interest. In publicly voicing the frustration the St John bodies felt at the official response, Dawkins later said that when they had approached the State government

for assistance in running training programs in precautionary measures they had been told 'the government looked upon anti-gas and air raid precautions as a Federal matter as gas attacks could not take place unless the country were in a state of war, while the Commonwealth authorities were of the opinion that this responsibility rested with the military forces'.[9]

The ball having thus been lobbed over the Army's side of the net, no one was sure who should be training the civilians. In 1937 Wilson had been in England, where he had undergone a course in anti-gas training, and through him the Association obtained a demonstration kit of bottles of poison gas odours. The British government had proved unco-operative here: it would allow neither gas masks nor gas demonstration kits to leave the country. How Wilson managed to obtain his kit is therefore uncertain. Somehow the St John bodies had already managed to obtain a number of gas masks, and with these they had been training Brigade members in anti-gas drills since 1936, in the hope that the trainees would later form a team for instructing the public. In addition to this the women of the No. 1 Nursing division, who registered themselves as a VAD unit in 1936, set up their meeting room in 'Tin Town', behind the Adelaide Railway Station, as a gas decontamination centre, and began rehearsing for a wartime role they were no doubt glad they never had to play. In July 1937 the State government, having presumably decided that war was likely, that chemical weapons might be used, and that it had some responsibility to be ready for such an eventuality, decided to set up a sub-committee of the Chief Secretary's Department to consider the question of gas warfare classes. The Association was invited to nominate a delegate to join the sub-committee. The Centre nominated Wilson, who was still in England. He joined the sub-committee on his return, and had a hand in producing the report it issued in March 1938. He tabled the report at the next Centre Committee meeting; and, though its proposals are now forgotten, it probably recommended that the Association should be one of the agencies for instruction, for St John training in anti-gas measures continued, and by 1939 over 700 South Australians had gone through the St John program.[10]

Members of the Brigade's Police division practise gas mask drill, 1936.





Members of the Brigade's Police Division practise gas mask drill, 1936.

As well as the anti-gas course, the St John bodies wished to offer the public training in air raid precautions, or ARP as it became widely known. They had been talking of the need for such instruction ever since their interest in anti-gas measures had first developed, and indeed the two subjects complemented each other. With State and Commonwealth governments shuffling around the responsibility for initiating action, little seems to have happened until the months immediately preceding the declaration of war. By this time the Commonwealth Government Printer in Canberra had managed to produce an ARP manual – almost a direct copy of the British text which the British St John organization had been using for several years in its classes. The work of training the public in ARP by now had devolved upon the main official civil defence organizations in each State. In South Australia this was the State Defence Council, the Commissioner for which was Col. P.G. Bice, one of the Brigade's District Officers. The latter point perhaps help explain why the Council gave the Association and Brigade the responsibility for instructing its air raid wardens in the first aid and stretcher drill they they were required to undergo during their ARP training. Both Association and Brigade fell to their new task with a will, and by Christmas 1939 had already trained a thousand men for the State Defence Council. A close bond continued between the Council and St John as long as the threat of air raids remained, with the Association training ARP personnel and the Brigade supplying many of the orderlies in charge of the official ARP first aid posts.[11]

The most sustained prewar St John activity towards war preparedness was through the Red Cross VAD movement. The women of the Nursing

Divisions, as a previous chapter showed, had served as 'VADs' during the previous war, working as volunteers in the military hospitals and as escorts for wounded soldiers returning home by train. Their efforts in the military hospitals and convalescent homes continued after the war and into the mid 1920s. In 1926 the Red Cross announced plans for reorganizing the VADs, and appointed H.H.E. Russell as its State Controller. Russell was one of those rare people with a foot in both Red Cross and St John camps. He had been lecturing and examining for the Association since 1920; in 1926 he joined the Centre Committee; and in 1930 he succeeded Dawkins as Brigade District Surgeon. His task as VAD Controller was to build the movement up again. It had languished during the postwar years, to the point where the Brigade women were about the only members remaining.

The VAD reorganization proceeded in a leisurely manner, war, presumably, seeming far from imminent in 1926. Russell did not form the first of the reorganized VAD units until 1929. He started off by persuading the Nursing Division to reaffiliate. (By this stage there was only one Brigade Division for women, the No. 1 and No. 2 Nursing Divisions having amalgamated in 1923.) He visited the Division, explained the objectives of the VAD movement, which was principally to have available a trained nursing reserve which would pass under military control in the event of war or national emergency. The women agreed to his request for

The Governor, Sir Winston Dugan inspects members of the Brigade's VAD unit no. 400. With him is their commanding officer, Vi Watson and Dr H.H.E. Russell, State Controller of VAD units and the Brigade's District Surgeon.



them to join up as a body, and they now became the first of South Australia's revitalized VAD units, of which there would be nine more by the outbreak of war. Because of the Red Cross numbering system, South Australia being the fourth military district, the Brigade's unit was known as the No. 400 Detachment. Twenty-five women from the Nursing Division joined it, under the command of Miss Vi Watson, a Brigade stalwart – a foundation member of the No. 2 (YWCA) Nursing Division, one of the principal instigators in the setting up of the Brigade's beach casualty stations, and later (1936) one of the Brigade's first three female District Officers in South Australia. Thereafter, and until the Red Cross allowed the VADs to wither away in the postwar decade, there was a high degree of congruence between the Brigade and VADs: indeed, to be a member of a Nursing Division was almost the same as being in a VAD.[12]

The first duty of Detachment No. 400 was to teach first aid to school branches of the Junior Red Cross. A variety of tasks followed. In 1930, for example, the members began duties at the Adelaide Hospital, working as weekend relief staff. They also spent considerable time training the members of newly formed Detachments. They also assisted in Red Cross publicity work by giving demonstrations of practical first aid and nursing work. In addition there was a ceremonial aspect to their duties: they joined with other VAD units in Red Cross reviews, parades and street processions; they took part in the VAD first aid and nursing competitions which the Red Cross later ran. They had to do stretcher bearer duty at various public functions; and because the Brigade reserved this for Ambulance (i.e. men's) Divisions, this was a new skill they had to master – which they did with coaching from senior Brigade officers. In 1935 they did the course on first aid for chemical warfare, and were the first to do so. In 1936 they began a longstanding involvement with the Health Department's immunization program, at first in the Hindmarsh and Unley districts but later elsewhere. This program began with the innoculation of school children against diphtheria, the task of the VAD women being to prepare the syringes for the doctors, and to hold and reassure the children while they received their 'shots'. A further task was to help recruit and train the Voluntary Service Detachments, or VSDs. The latter were an adjunct of the VAD movement, set up to cater to women who wanted to be involved but who did not wish to undergo the program of examinations required for VAD membership.[13]

When the war began VAD duties proliferated. For women who belonged to both Brigade and VAD there were, in addition to their regular St John work, numerous other tasks. Among their wartime VAD jobs were help with the troop immunization program, work as sick bay attendants at the Woodside and Wayville Army camp hospitals, duty at the Queen Victoria Maternity Hospital, work as attendants in the government's X-Ray programs, and assistance for the doctors who carried out the medical examination of children under the care of Legacy. As well as tasks

like these there was the heavy round of participation in a host of patriotic occasions - street marches, reviews, parades, and various fundraising activities for the war effort – fêtes, button days, street stalls, the rattling of collection tins on street corners, and other like means for persuading the public to dip into its pocket in aid of a worthy cause.[14]

All this imposed a heavy burden on those women who were in both Brigade and VAD. It also raised the question of priorities – which work, St John or Red Cross, should come first? After much discussion the women decided the issue on age: those under thirty-five would put their VAD commitments first; those over would concentrate on Brigade duties. The divided loyalties for those who were in both organizations produced other difficulties. First there was the matter of uniforms. Each VAD member had to equip herself with a pale blue Red Cross uniform, and, if she were attending a duty after work, that meant picking out the correct one of her two uniforms to take with her in a suitcase. Beryl Fegan has described the inconvenience which wartime voluntary duty sometimes entailed:

> As at that time most people worked on Saturday morning, [going on duty] meant that those members living any distance out of town had to bring their uniform to their place of work and find somewhere to change and have a sandwich before going to practice or inspection, and then pick up their street clothes afterwards. They then went home by public transport, once more carrying clothes plus kits or any other materials they had taken.[15]

Uniforms became a particularly sore point for Brigade women early in the war, when, at a joint St John-VAD parade, the Governor's wife, Lady Muriel Barclay-Harvey, commented adversely on the drab appearance of Brigade women in their grey greatcoats by comparison with VAD members in theirs of smart navy blue. The 'Lady' District Superintendent, Mrs G.M. Dawkins, subsequently ordered female Brigade members to dye their coats navy blue – which roused their ire further still. Then there were the differences between Brigade and Red Cross methods of treatment. The Brigade, for instance, taught that fractures should be handled one way, while the Red Cross recommended another. Brigade members taking part in VAD examinations or competitions therefore had to remember two sets of sometimes conflicting instructions. Despite problems like these, the Brigade-VAD link was profitable from the Brigade's point of view, for not only did it extend the range of Nursing Division activities, it led to a rise in membership and helped in the formation of new Divisions. A number of women who had started off in VAD units later joined up with Brigade Divisions when the Red Cross allowed the VAD movement to run down after the war.[16]

The pressure of work on Brigade women mounted in 1940 when Mrs Dawkins, the wife of the District Commissioner, moved up to the position of 'Lady' District Superintendent, that is officer in charge of Nursing Divisions. She threw herself into the task of organizing public first aid and



Mrs S.L. Dawkins, the Brigade's Lady District Superintendent 1940-46.

home nursing classes, of recruiting new Brigade members from among the graduates, and then drafting these into newly formed Divisions. In doing so she made heavy demands on the time of present Nursing Division members, expecting them to act as demonstrators for the classes as well as inducting new recruits into the Divisions. She also expected Divisional Officers to attend numerous meetings to map out plans for a host of new schemes she was ambitious for Nursing Division members to adopt. At the same time she restructured the metropolitan Nursing Divisions along suburban lines, much as her husband had reorganized the men's Divisions seven years before. She broke up the two city Nursing Divisions (the No. 2 Division having been revived in 1936), assigning their members to newly created regional Divisions at Unley, Goodwood, Norwood, Prospect, St Peters, and Thebarton.[17]

Mrs Dawkins' restless energy, her ambitions for the Nursing Divisions, her rearranging of Divisions and her emphasis on planning were probably what the female fraction of the Brigade needed. All this nevertheless created considerable resentment among the women. They could gladly accept the extra work as their contribution to the war effort, but they disliked being split up and posted to new Divisions away from friends of long standing. Many of them also disliked the long night time journeys by train and tram, and often by foot, back and forth across a city under blackout to attend meetings and the weekly parades of their new Divisions. Beryl Fegan, who helped set up the Port Adelaide Nursing Division, was only one who had to make such trips, though perhaps her journey from Eden Hills to Port Adelaide was longer than most. The long suffering District Officer, Vi Watson, was the go-between, endeavouring to act as a buffer between the demanding 'Lady' District Superintendent and her disgruntled 'troops'. This led to a great falling out between her and the two Dawkins, which threatened for a time to tear the Brigade asunder.[18]

The dispute between Watson and the Commissioner and his wife arose innocently enough in early 1943, when Dr Dawkins appointed Watson to chair a board he set up to superintend the beach casualty stations. Several months later Mrs Dawkins instructed her to stop using the word 'board' when referring to the body as 'the Commissioner did not approve of the term'. When she later rang Dawkins for clarification he accused her of 'doing everything she could to undermine his influence in the Brigade'. She challenged him about this allegation at a subsequent Brigade staff meeting. He agree he had made the remark but declined to withdraw it. She then contemplated resigning from the Brigade. However, Bulman, the District Superintendent of Ambulance Divisions, and other senior Brigade officers persuaded her against this, fearing that if she went most Nursing Division members would follow her. Dawkins seemed unlikely to offer the apology she was seeking to clear her name, and so her only means of redress was the unprecedented step of requesting the recently established Commandery of the Order to set up a 'Court of Honour' to hear her complaint. Her application for this had to go through the Association and its president, Sir Mellis Napier, the Chief Justice, as well as through the Deputy Knight Commander of the Order in South Australia, the Governor, Sir Malcolm Barclay-Harvey. Napier and the Governor took the view that the South Australian branch of the Order should not thus be washing its dirty linen before a national forum, and so Napier offered to mediate between Dawkins and Watson in an effort to keep the issue within the State. He got Dawkins to admit he had been 'in an irritable mood' when he made the offending remark; this admission was relayed to Watson, who agreed that a letter of apology would suffice for honour to be served. Later, in May 1944, she received a letter from Dawkins saying 'I am pleased to be able to inform you that you are now permitted to resume the full activities of your office'. It was hardly an apology, and it left a residue of recriminations, but it did paper over the breach. One witness to the whole affair later wrote that 'there was no doubt in anyone's mind ... the whole trouble' arose from Mrs Dawkins' dissatisfaction in the knowledge that 'Miss Watson commanded more respect from members of the Brigade than she did'. The next year Mrs Dawkins dropped out of Brigade affairs, and later resigned from it because of illness. Like various other contretemps within the St John bodies down the years, the whole episode had shown up one of the perennial problems of voluntary associations: personal pride is a sensitive plant, particularly in charitable organizations like St John, where it feeds on a rich mixture of altruism, emotion and self esteem. Once again St John had provided an object lesson in the ease with which it bruised.[19]

The dispute between Vi Watson and the two Dawkins was significant for another reason relating to an issue we canvassed in the previous chapter – the difference in social class between members of the St John organizations. The Brigade, as we saw then, arose as a 'plebeian' movement,

its roots firmly among the ordinary working citizens of Adelaide – in contrast to the Association, which, with its strong 'Establishment' connections, was suffused with a patrician sentiment that revealed itself most notably in the Dawkins' sponsorship of the socially exclusive Hospitallers' Club. The previous chapter endeavoured to explain the disagreements between Hussey of the Brigade and A.A. Simpson of the Association partly in terms of their differing social class origins. It suggested that, although their personalities were an important ingredient, there seemed to be an underlying antagonism arising from Hussey's background as a printer and toiler for workers' self improvement, in contrast to Simpson's privileged position as the current head of a family that had founded one of the State's principal manufacturing firms.

Social class differences within St John became more complicated when Dawkins succeeded Hussey as Brigade Commissioner. The Dawkins, as their efforts to make a success of the Hospitallers' Club showed, had pronounced social ambitions which strongly influenced their views on leadership within the St John organization. Dawkins' belief in the virtues of his own social class could also be seen in one of his earliest actions as Commissioner – the co-opting of a team of titled professional men to form a select company of senior Brigade officers. The result was that the Brigade became class divided, its feet remaining firmly planted in the clay of the common people, its head now thrust into the rarified atmosphere of the upper social strata. This, as we saw, worked to the Brigade's benefit, giving it access to high places and thus gaining it various advantages. Sharp class divisions, however, expanded the scope for internal conflict; and it is fairly easy to see that the difficulties between Mrs Dawkins and her Nursing Divisions were as much a result of social class as they were of personalities. Mrs Dawkins had become a District Officer in 1937, brought into the senior Brigade ranks by her husband without having to go through an apprenticeship of service in the Divisions. This was a year after Dawkins had promoted to District Officer the two women whom members had long regarded as the leaders of the women's fraction of the Brigade. These were Vi Watson and Miss G.J. Jude, another stalwart of the Nursing Divisions who, like Watson, had come up through the ranks. Then, after she had been only three years in the Brigade, Dawkins raised his wife over the heads of Watson and Jude to be the first 'Lady' District Superintendent, the most senior position then possible for a woman in an Australian Brigade District. He did not explain his reasons for doing so, though presumably these had something to do with his being able to work more effectively with the Nursing Divisions if his wife commanded them. Possibly, too, he thought his wife's access to Government House could benefit the Brigade: Mrs Dawkins had become a close personal friend of the Governor's wife, Lady Muriel Barclay-Harvey, and Dawkins might have seen advantages for the Brigade in this connection if his wife were its chief female officer. Nursing Division members were too well inured

in habits of obedience and loyalty to seniors to question their Commissioner's motives, or to grumble about his wife's gaining preferment for apparently social and familial reasons. That, however, could not stop them from feeling as resentful about the way in which their 'Lady' District Superintendent's appointment had occurred as they were over her imperious manner in organizing them. Their pleasure at seeing Vi Watson eventually win out in her dispute with the Commissioner, and at subsequently seeing his wife depart from the scene, did not perhaps arise solely from satisfaction that justice had at last been done: in it was a hint of enjoyment at having witnessed a cracking of the Brigade's upper crust.

In the rapid rise of Mrs Dawkins some historians would undoubtedly see evidence of a phenomenon remarked upon by those who have traced women's organizations in the immediate prewar and wartime years. This was the movement of upper class women into the leadership of a host of patriotic bodies during the late 1930s and early 40s. Voluntary associations of women dedicated to the war effort proliferated in every State. Literally hundreds of bodies sprang up for women to join, most of them set up and run by women from the upper social strata who, unlike those further down the social scale, were not obliged through economic necessity to hold down a paid job. With time on their hands they could throw themselves into voluntary patriotic work, serving as an example to other women and to the nation at large, while also affirming their social status and individual sense of self-esteem. The result was a great burgeoning of organizations for female volunteers, all with their own chosen functions, which ranged from knitting mountains of socks and balaclavas (some of the latter, it has been said, destined for soldiers serving in New Guinea), to sorting waste materials for recycling, to caring for domestic pets in the event of air raids. Among the more prominent were the Women's Voluntary National Register, the Women's Australian National Service and the VAD-VSD movement, but there were many others – the Women's Auxiliary Training Corps, the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps, the Red Cross Motor Transport Service, the Women's Reserve Emergency Naval Service, the Business Girls' War Service Bureau, the Women's Emergency Transport Corps, the Australian Women's Legion, the Women's Auxiliary Service Patriots and numerous others, not all of which spread into South Australia.[20]

The Women's Australian National Service (WANS) was one of the wartime women's auxiliaries which did operate in South Australia, and which for a time had St John connections. A former WANS explained the latter thus:

> Seven women who had trained with the Red Cross Transport Service met in March 1941 and decided to form a similar service to the WANS in New South Wales and to adopt their uniform. A press article outlining their aims brought so many volunteers that the ranks had to be closed but they still had 250 at their first meeting. Members had to undertake compulsory training in squad

drill, physical training, first aid, and ARP work, with specialised courses in Morse code, transport work, mechanics, map reading, large-scale cooking, clerical training, home nursing, and hygiene.

There were five companies in the WANS, "A" Morse, "B" Camps and Commissariat, "C" Clerical, "D" Transport, "E" First Aid. ... Recognising that ambulance work could be one of the most important fields of war work, they first became an auxiliary of St John; then in March 1943 they formed a Nursing Division [of the Brigade], meeting in Implement House, North Terrace, registration date being 17 July 1943. ... This Division wore WANS uniform with St John badges. Starting with twenty-four members, by the end of 1944 nine had resigned, some were on sick leave, others fruit picking, and by the end of 1946 the Division was closed and the five members remaining transferred to the Adelaide Central Division.[21]

The women's wartime voluntary organizations, including both the WANS and the VADs, came under criticism in various parts of the nation, and for various reasons. Some critics claimed many female volunteers were more interested in wearing smart uniforms than in doing real work, that the money for uniforms would be better spent on other wartime uses. Others accused the women's organizations of snobbery – of admitting 'Society' women but not those of lowlier station, or, where they did admit women of all classes, of favouring the former over the latter. A charge against the VAD movement in Sydney, for example, was that, when an opportunity arose for service overseas in a medical unit of the armed services, the VAD leaders usually preferred the untrained socialite from Vaucluse over the trained nurse from Balmain. Some within the trade union movement reckoned the voluntary work upper and middle class women were depriving needy working class people of paid jobs; some unionists feared that female volunteers might be used as strike breakers, and that employers would use the availability of unpaid female labour to chip away at workers' conditions. Finally, there was even progressive opinion that female voluntaryism was cheapening the value of women's contribution, undermining the campaign for equal pay for women and men.[22]

Critics making the last of these accusations possibly did not realize it at the time, but they were foreshadowing a feminist argument of a later era. This was to be to the effect that female wartime voluntaryism allowed governments and employers to exploit women's patriotic sentiments, getting high returns from women's work for little outlay through appeals to the 'national cause'. Voluntaryism, according to this view, helped keep women subservient, making them dependent on men by delaying the day when they would gain equal rights with men. As one feminist historian has concluded, it 'bolster[ed] the traditional sexual division of labour' by 'reaffirming women's role within the family while simultaneously branding women's work outside the home as both cheap and expendable'.[23]

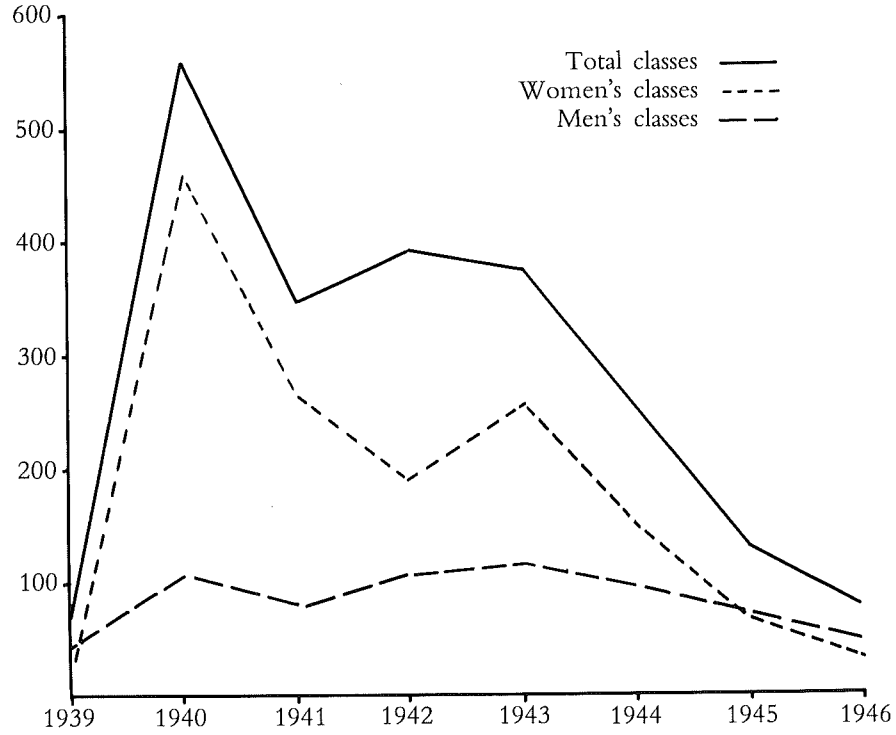
These criticisms of women's voluntary work may well have been justified, in the St John bodies no less than in the more ephemeral wartime

organizations. It is fairly certain, however, that few within St John would have joined the debate, even if they had been aware of it. For them, voluntary service for humanitarian ends was an article of faith transcending all debate. Getting on with the next task, and performing well in doing so, was what mattered most to them. Their views were best summed up in the slogan of the Brigade's Unley Division which was proudly trumpeted in their column in a 1940 issue of *"The Bayonet"* – *'Hats off to the past! Coats off to the future!'* Rolling up one's shirtsleeves and pitching in to help without expectation of reward was no doubt a commendable response to the needs of others; but the 'Good Samaritan' ethic did not silence the critics. The debate over voluntaryism would continue during the decades ahead, and was therefore one the St John organization would eventually have to join. After St John had taken over control of Ambulance transport in Adelaide during the early 1950s, and later as it extended its responsibility throughout the whole State, the subject would keep recurring, causing much soul-searching as it did.[24]

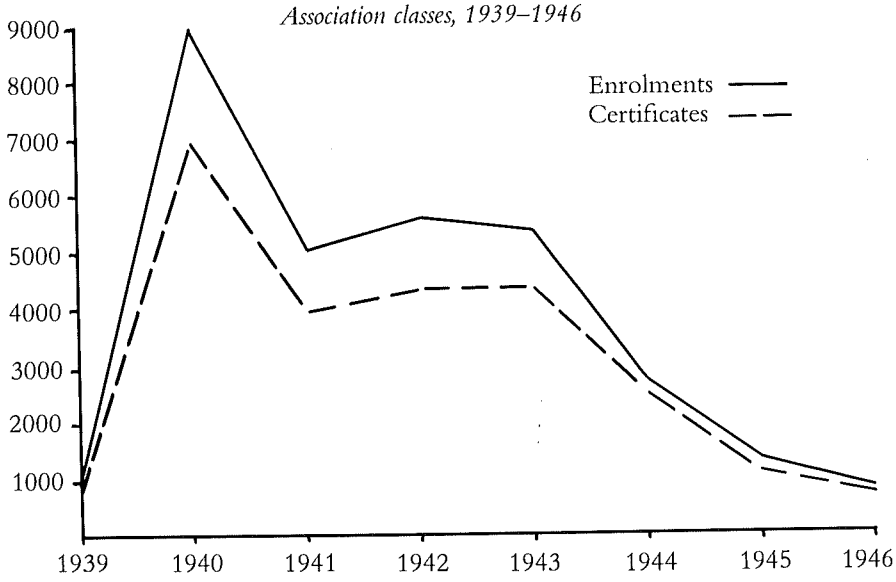
Once the war began there were numerous tasks for which St John folk could shed their coats. The most urgent of these was probably to satisfy the demand for training as the public, in a state of war panic, rushed to join St John classes. Association enrolment statistics indicate the magnitude of the task, and its accomplishment. The graphs on the following page illustrate the trend. During the late 1930s the Association had never run more than seventy-three classes a year, but in 1939-40 it ran 562, and over the six wartime years it averaged about 340 annually. The figures for enrolments were even more dramatic. Thus, in 1939-40 the Association had 8900 enrolments – no less than nine times the number it had taught the year before, which meant that in one year alone it had trained one in every sixty-six of the State population. The number who trained that year was some 2500 more than had done so during the entire four years of the First World War; or, put another way, that year's tally comprised twenty-three *per cent* of all those trained since the opening of the Centre in 1884-5. After that first wartime year enrolments dropped back to 5000 in 1940-41; they then rose to 5600 in 1941-42, the year in which Japan entered the war and bombed Darwin; and after that they declined to the 1938-39 level by the end of the war. During the six years of the Second World War the Association in South Australia enrolled almost 30,000 people, or fifty-one *per cent* of the 58,000 the Adelaide Centre had trained since its formation. This meant that, out of a State population of about 630,000 at the war's end, one in twenty-one had entered a St John course.[25]

The huge volume of enrolments placed enormous pressure on the medical practitioners who worked as Association lecturers and examiners. In the opinion of Dr H.H.E. Russell 'there [was] probably no other section of the community rendering such devoted and loyal service to mankind as these medical men'. Even though this was a compliment from someone inside the profession, their achievement was undeniable. With settlements

Number of Association classes held, 1939–1946



Enrolments in, and certificates awarded from, Association classes, 1939–1946



as far apart as Cook (on the Trans-Australian Railway near the Western Australian border), Marree (up towards Lake Eyre), Streaky Bay (upper west coast of the Eyre Peninsula) and Kybybolite (on the Victorian border) all running classes that needed teaching and examining, South Australia's medical profession were clearly making up for the decades during which they had helped keep the Centre poor by taking their fees. As they atoned for those decades with thousands of hours of voluntary work they finally established the principle that doctors working for the Association should do so voluntarily.[26]

It was these almost impossible demands on doctors' time in out of the way places that finally produced a breakthrough St John workers had been seeking for years. This was the appointment of lay persons to lecture and examine St John classes. The issue had first arisen in 1915-16, when the Association had trouble finding enough doctors to lecture and examine the many classes forming during the rush for training in the First World War. In a State of vast distances, unevenly spread settlements and widely separated communities, finding lecturers and examiners had always been a problem. The difficulty, moreover, had not been eased by the inflexible attitude London took: St John's Gate at first insisted that classes should number thirty, and that men and women be trained separately. Isolated communities had complained about this in the past, pointing out that they were too small to muster the requisite thirty, particularly if the classes had to be segregated. On occasions these requirements had meant that potential classes and recruits had been lost to St John, a situation which over the years had led to numerous complaints from Australian States to London, and which had been one of the factors behind the moves for an Australian federal St John body enjoying independence from St John's Gate. And, as the Hewett and Sleeman delegations discovered, the lack of understanding London evinced for the difficulties Australian geography interposed was an issue arousing concern in every State.

St John's Gate began relaxing its requirements in 1925, no doubt as a result of repeated representations from the Canadian, South African and New Zealand St John organizations as well as from those in Australia. That year London grudgingly advised the St John branches around the world that they were authorized 'in very special and exceptional circumstances, when separate classes are impossible, to grant permission for mixed classes in first aid to be held, provided that... the sexes occupy separate or divided rooms for the practical work'. To emphasize the point that it thought this a generous concession, 'the Ambulance Committee [of St John's Gate] desired it to be realized that they were opposed to mixed classes, and that the regulations on the subject were not altered by the resolution'. The permission might have been reluctantly granted but it allowed Association Centres in large sparsely populated territorial units to run classes that would otherwise have lapsed. The Adelaide Centre enshrined the new ruling in its own regulations forthwith. It did, however, honour the requirement

that mixed classes should only be formed in rare instances: unsegregated classes only became general in a later postwar era. Wherever possible, men and women continued receiving their instruction separately right through the Second World War, and even where mixed classes did run the men's and women's results were reported separately, maintaining at least an impression that the sexes had been duly kept apart. As Storie Dixson had once said when challenged on the issue, 'modesty forbade otherwise'. [28]

It was in the mid-1920s, too, that London gave way on the issue of lay teachers and examiners. In 1924 St John's Gate ruled that suitably qualified lay persons could, as 'honorary instructors', assist medical practitioners in teaching classes by helping demonstrate the practical work. This was a breakthrough the New South Wales and Victorian Centres quickly exploited. With increasing numbers of lay instructors taking part in the training programs of those Centres, honorary instructors' associations soon came into being. These bodies helped safeguard their members' interests and ensured they maintained high standards of efficiency. The Adelaide Centre seems not to have taken up the idea as quickly, though by 1928 it had for some time been using at least two Brigade officers as honorary instructors, R. McLachlan (Superintendent of the Prospect Division) and G. Burns (Superintendent of Unley Division), who assisted as demonstrators in classes for railways employees. From lay demonstrators to lay lecturers and lay examiners was but a short step, and in the case of the latter the Adelaide Centre seems to have appointed its first pair, McLachlan and Burns again, in 1928, after they had sat for a prescribed examination. No further lay examiners seem to have been appointed for another ten years, – the reason why is not clear – until March 1938, when F.C. Nalty, a Brigade Corps officer, was appointed as an examiner for railways classes.[29]

Only a year after this St John's Gate called the whole issue of lay training staff into question, much to the consternation of the Adelaide Centre. The Centre Committee received advice to the effect that London disapproved of lay examiners. In some indignation the Committee wrote back to protest, pointing to the fact that approval had been received to use lay examiners as long as eleven years ago. London remained firm, however, and called for compliance with its ruling. The folly of this attempt to ordain from London what would happen 19,000 kilometres away was underlined by the Committee's response to the second instruction that it should fall into line: it simply decided to write back. 'intimating that all examinations would be conducted by a medical man, but that for private record . . . examinations would be carried out as heretofore'. Subterfuge of this sort was definitely not in the best traditions of an Order which vaunted the code of honour of an ancient chivalric heritage, but London's insensitivity to local needs had invited it. At the same time, some unintended good probably came from the episode: it would have been yet another instance to persuade the Adelaide Centre that it would be better off independent, free from the power of 'Head Centre' to interfere in local

affairs by laying down such apparently arbitrary and contradictory rulings. The incident would therefore have served to strengthen the Centre's will to join the Australian Commandery, moves to set up which, as we will soon see, were already under way.[30]

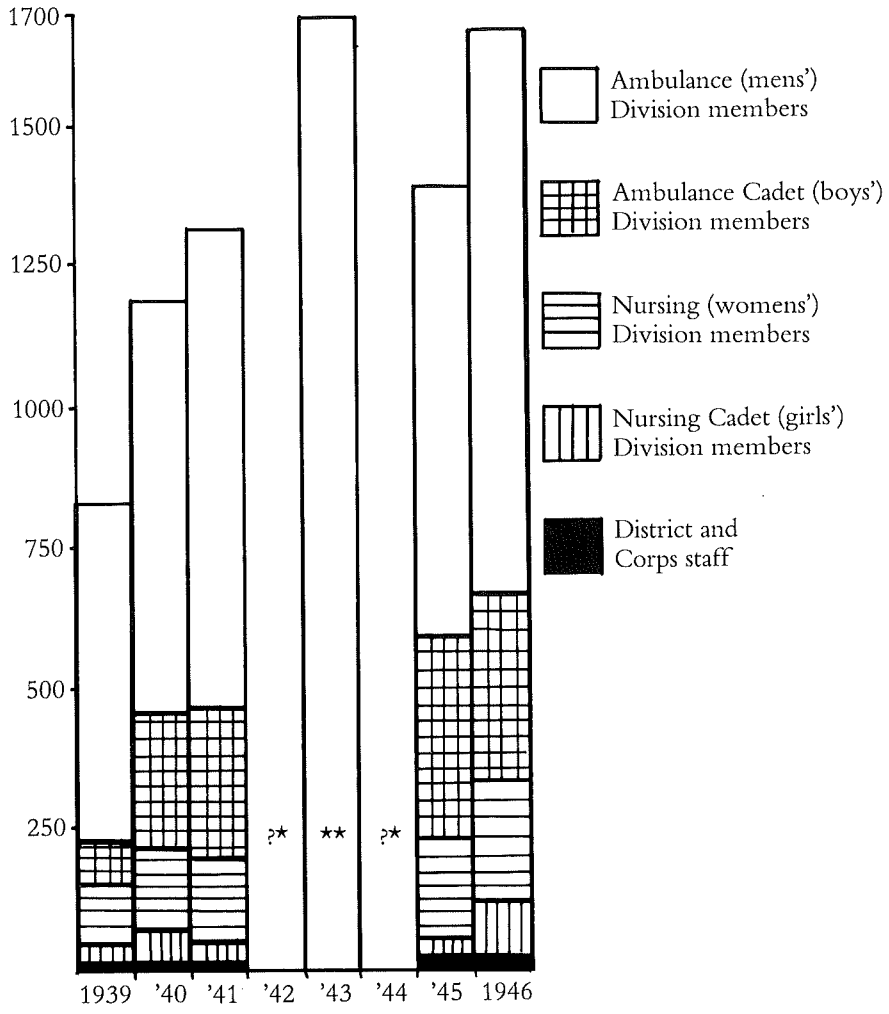
In defiance of London, the Adelaide Centre no doubt continued using its lay examiners, albeit circumspectly. Within a short space of time, however, subterfuge would be unnecessary, for the huge volume of wartime enrolments would soon oblige the newly established Australian Commandery to admit lay staff to all phases of the training routine to relieve the strain on the doctors who were carrying the burden of wartime training. With many of St John's doctors now drawn into the armed services, the organization was forced to admit not only lay examiners but lecturers (as against instructors or demonstrators) as well. South Australia's first lay lecturers were appointed in 1943. In May that year the Centre Committee responded to a recent Commandery decision to 'licence a number of persons in each State, with good experience, to act as lecturers to relieve the medical practitioners'. It gave approval for twenty lay lecturers to join its teaching staff for the duration of the war. Sixteen were men, and the four women included Jeanie MacMillan, the Brigade secretary, and a school teacher, one Beryl Fegan, both of them by now Brigade veterans, having joined the sole Nursing Division back in the late 1920s. With a vanguard of lay staff of that size entering the field, there could be no return to the days when medical practitioners had carried the burden of Association training alone. As the gate opened, more and more lay teachers-examiners entered to give their services, with the result that eventually it became almost *de rigueur* for people wishing to call themselves St John veterans to have taught and examined for either Association or Brigade. The principle of lay involvement thus established, the way was also clear for the later appointment of the fulltime salaried lay teaching staff on whose efforts the increasing volume of postwar training would one day depend.[31]

If the Association had enjoyed some signal successes in coping with an enormous training program, and in establishing the principle of lay participation in this, then the Brigade, too, had its own wartime achievements to be proud of. Not the least of these were the fact that Brigade members managed to follow their own regular routines and activities in addition to sharing in the extra wartime tasks and duties that fell to the voluntary agencies. Brigade members continued going on duty at the trotting and race courses; they kept up their Saturday afternoon commitments at city and suburban sports venues; they continued staffing the beach casualty stations during the summer; they attended their annual church parades and reviews; they took part in competitions to keep their patient care skills sharp; they went along to the weekly drills and training sessions of their own Divisions; they helped set up new Divisions; they gave encouragement to the burgeoning Cadet movement; and whenever

crowds gathered, as happened more frequently and in larger numbers in wartime than in peace, they were there, standing by to offer help and comfort wherever that was needed. In addition, they were always available as a reserve force to help police and fire brigades in any disaster. On at least two occasions, at bushfires in the Adelaide Hills in 1939 and at Port Elliot in 1945, they gave valuable service in treating the injured, of which there were 150 in the latter fires.[32]

The success of the Brigade in its numerous activities could, like that of the Association, be measured statistically. The following graph of its

Brigade strength, 1939–1946



★ Figures for 1942 & 1944 unknown ★★Breakdown for 1943 unknown

growth is one of steady expansion: from less than 830 members shortly before the start of war it grew to nearly 1680 in 1943, its peak wartime year; and after dropping back somewhat after that it recovered to more than 1660 in the first postwar year – a doubling of strength in less than seven years. At the war's end it had twenty-eight Ambulance and ten Cadet Ambulance Divisions, and fifteen Nursing and seven Cadet Nursing Divisions. By this time the Divisions were attending about two thousand functions a year, at which they were treating well over 4000 recorded cases and probably many more that went unrecorded.[33]

From the Brigade's point of view, the most satisfying aspects of this development had been the growth of the Cadet movement and the establishment of country Divisions, of which there were nineteen by the war's end. In the decade since Sleeman had urged Dawkins to establish more Cadet Divisions, Cadet membership had grown to the point where it now comprised about a fifth of total strength. Both Brigade and Association devoted considerable effort to encouraging the Cadet movement. The Brigade continued running its annual camp for Cadets near the beach at Kingston Park in the early war years. It organized a keenly contested annual first aid competitions for Cadets, in which the super-keen team from the Colonel Light Gardens Division most often took off the prize – a trophy presented by the Association Centre Committee. (If it had not been for one year when they drew with Thebarton, they would have won the trophy for thirteen successive years.) But above all the Brigade was able to give the Cadets interesting, challenging work to do, and of course there was no shortage of that during the war. With some 200 Brigade members away on active service, the Cadets were an important means for filling that large gap. Perhaps the best measure of the wartime success of the Cadet movement was that many of the Cadets who joined then were still with the St John organization forty years later, many of them in senior positions in either the Brigade or the St John State ambulance transport service. Given that persuading Cadets to graduate into the adult Divisions is a perennial Brigade problem, the later presence among senior St John officers of many who began as wartime Cadets would later be a salutary reminder of the importance of cultivating a strong Brigade youth branch by giving it purposeful work to do.[34]

The successful wartime spreading of the Brigade into country districts was another gratifying feature of the wartime work. Before the war the Brigade's country development had been fitful, but by its end there were Divisions at Gawler, Gladstone, Glossop, Lobethal, Mt Gambier, Penola, Peterborough, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie, Riverton, Salisbury, Tailem Bend, Whyalla, Moonta, Kadina and Clare. The Whyalla Division was perhaps untypical, being located in a town of heavy industry, which usually makes for stronger local interest in first aid work than is general in non-industrial country towns. The Whyalla Division, however, demonstrated the good sense in decentralizing the Brigade, lessening the

dominance of the capital city over all its affairs. Beryl Fegan describes its early years like this:

> The Whyalla Ambulance Division was registered on 27 July 1939, and started with fifteen men who already held first aid certificates. These men had met together earlier in the year and had elected Mr C. Baldwinson to be their Superintendent. Dr Arment Wallace was appoint ed Divisional Surgeon. One of the men, Mr Gothard Lee, had been a member of the Prospect Division and that Division allowed him to keep his uniform as their donation to the new Division. Other members started with dustcoats until uniforms could be obtained. A priority was the running of social events to raise money for uniforms. BHP donated £20 and several sporting clubs [gave] 10/6 towards their fund.
>
> With the outbreak of World War 2 training was stepped up to include realistic exercises, [such] as rescuing people from buildings, as it was realised that if ever Australia was attacked, Whyalla with its ship building, blast furnace and munitions would be a likely target.[35]

Whether fifteen part timers could be greatly useful in a bombing assault intended to obliterate some of the country's more important industrial installations is doubtful. Such a view, however, greatly underrates the keenness, ability and determination of dedicated volunteers. It certainly undervalues the contribution a Goth Lee could make to his adopted community through service with the Brigade over many years. Lee, who started off in the Whyalla Division as a corporal, later rose to be Divisional Superintendent and a Commander of the Order. Whyalla and the Brigade unit he helped establish there later became the hub for widespread St John activity, the centrepiece of which was the State centre of the St John-sponsored Air Ambulance. Lee later had the unusual distinction of dying 'on active service' with his Division, dropping dead while on public duty at a Whyalla trotting meeting in 1983, almost forty-four years after he had helped bring the Brigade into the town. In one of those sentimental gestures that are more typical of Australia's country towns than its capital cities, the race officials and his fellow Brigade members remembered him in a special way at the very next race meeting: the meeting started with members of the Whyalla Ambulance and Nursing Divisions forming a guard of honour on the track, while the clerk of the course placed a wreath on the winning post. To do him further honour his Division placed a bet for him on every horse running at the meeting, marking the betting slips 'For Goth'.[36]

In contrast to the unobtrusive work beginning in places like Whyalla, some Brigade wartime achievements attracted Statewide attention. A number of these were the large scale patriotic gatherings and celebrations that marked Australian communal life during the war. As befitted the State whose capital is known elsewhere around the nation as 'the City of Churches', one of the earlier of such occasions was a huge interdenominational religious festival cum military parade on the Adelaide Oval on

Sunday afternoon, 8 September 1940. It was billed as a 'State Service of Intercession' but was in fact a Protestant-Jewish affair, the Catholics remaining aloof, preferring to meet separately in the doctrinally safer precints of their own cathedral. Some 33,000 citizens attended, many brought in by special trains and trams laid on for the occasion. The service opened with prayers, hymn singing and scripture readings, the content and order of which had been drawn up through the ecumenical effort of representatives of the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational Churches, the Churches of Christ, the Salvation Army and the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation. The scriptural texts were from Psalm 46 ('God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed ...') and Ephesians 6:10-18 ('... Be strong in the Lord.... Put on the whole armour of God ..., for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world. ...'). The address was given by the Rev. J.A. Lewis, who, without explaining the connection, averred that 'the fresh outbreak of war had not invalidated Christian faith but confirmed it'. The (Anglican) Bishop of Adelaide, the Right Reverend A. Nutter Thomas, recited a Thanksgiving and Benediction, and then the religious part of the service made way for the military.[37]

The military aspect of the service consisted of five brass bands leading 8000 armed services personnel and members of para-military and reservist bodies in a march past the Governor, Sir Malcolm Barclay-Harvey, and a coterie of dignitaries including the Minister for the Army (William McBride), the State Premier (Tom Playford), the local commanders of the three armed services, and Col. P.G. Bice, the Commissioner of the State Defence Council, who was of course a Brigade District Officer as well. The parade took three quarters of an hour to pass the saluting base. After the five bands came the RAN Reserve, the 10th and 48th Battallions of the AIF and the RAAF, followed by assorted paramilitary and reservist bodies and uniformed youth groups. The St John Ambulance Brigade marched, too, as well as providing the afternoon's first aid amenities. As a reservist body it marched near the rear, behind the RSL Voluntary Defence Corps, the VADs and VSDs, but before the South Australian Ambulance Transport, the Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts, who brought up the rear. *The Advertiser* was highly impressed by it all: the next day's paper carried a superb photograph spread across a full broadsheet page showing the packed Adelaide Oval and accompanied by a report extending down a full column of print. 'The solemnity of the occasion, the beautiful setting, and the fine parade were most impressive', the latter read, and 'the singing of the hymns and the National Anthem by the vast congregation was inspiring'.[38]

The State Service of Intercession might have drawn Protestant and Jewish Adelaideans together in a mutual firming of wartime resolve, but

it did not visibly shorten the war. That was to run its relentless course for another five years, during which time, of course, it unfolded horrors unimagined by those who had gathered at the Adelaide Oval in September 1940 in the hope that, by marching, praying and singing lustily, they could persuade their God to intervene, preferably on their side in the conflict ahead. The trials, suffering, tragedies and grief of what had turned out to be a protracted war explain why the celebrations that came at its eventual other end were the jubilant inverse to the solemnity of the Service of Intercession near its beginning. When peace was finally announced, at 6.30 a.m. Central Standard Time on Wednesday 15 August 1945, it lifted a burden of dread that had weighed heavily upon communities all round Australia, releasing years of pent-up emotions compounded of the frustrations arising from disrupted lives, from sorrow, deprivation, self-denial, fear and unremitting toil. The outpouring of elation and relief was nothing short of abandoned. The celebrations continued for days on end, giving the Brigade in Adelaide and in other large cities around the nation one of its most prolonged public duties to date.

The official celebrations in Adelaide spread over two days, Thursday and Friday, 16 and 17 August. They included the inevitable street procession of the armed services, paramilitary and reservist bodies on the Thursday and a spectacular fireworks display at Montefiore Hill in the North Adelaide parklands on the Friday. Each of these produced its own toll of injuries for the Brigade to treat. Various people at the fireworks display, for example, were hurt as spent rocket cases dropped among the crowd from on high. Others were burnt as canisters still alight fell among them. The unofficial revelries went on uninterrupted for much longer, until the revellers dropped out, either from sheer exhaustion or to return to their jobs. Something of the nature of the festivities was evident in the tons of 'streamers, mud, feathers, torn up paper, broken bottles and other debris' they left behind in the city streets where they had been celebrating. In all the Brigade treated 230 recorded cases, and probably many hundreds more that went unrecorded.[39]

Again it was *The Advertiser* which caught the mood of the moment for later generations to savour. Its description of the day of the street procession is worth repeating here. This not only evokes something of the flavour of the day's events but shows the Brigade going about its routine work, albeit on a scale rather larger than usual but still one it was well organized to handle. Under the heading 'Many Casualties In Yesterday's Throng' the report ran as follows:

> From early morning yesterday people flocked to the city. By 9 a.m. streets were crowded. Trams spilled their packed loads at points outside, and King William street was kept clear of trams.
>
> The crowd which watched the procession was orderly and good-humoured. The route of the procession was lined 20 or more deep with excited flag-waving people, and from vantage points on balconies, roofs and window ledges thousands more waved and cheered.

The great crowd was in a carefree mood as it closed in behind the last of the procession. 'It's not a matter of where you want to go', said a robust woman who was being swept by the human tide to North Terrace. 'Anything might happen – and I hope it will', said a fair, beflagged girl to no one in particular.

Slowly the crowd pressed forward towards Parliament House for the ceremony there. The thousands already gathered in front of the dais were packed more and more tightly as the irresistable tide of humanity banked up behind it in King William street, King William road and North Terrace.

Several children, a girl and an old woman fell and got underneath the feet of the jammed crowd, but somehow they were dragged up and were treated by the St John Ambulance Brigade, whose work during the day was beyond praise. Sections of the people panicked when women became hysterical and struggled to get clear of the overwhelming press. Children cried with fear, and two got under the hooves of police horses and had their feet bruised. They were among the 60 or 70 cases treated by the St John Ambulance men at casualty stations in the area. During the minute's silence observed as part of the ceremony two WAAAF's became hysterical and collapsed, and a number of other women fainted.

The lawn of Parliament House was strewn with the figures of prostrate women. The management of the Gresham Hotel gave the St John men the use of its downstairs lounge, and at one time 42 patients were being treated there. The hotel provided brandy, hot tea, hot water and other comforts for the patients.

When the speeches were over the crowd dispersed without trouble, pouring back into the city streets down to Elder Park and to the cathedrals for special church services. Thousands formed queues and waited for picture theatres to open. A great part of the crowd resumed its purposeless wandering around the streets again.

Many of Wednesday's scenes were repeated. Irresponsible youths left a trail of damage and physical hurt behind them as they roamed the streets. St John Ambulance men and women were busy tending the injuries of people, mostly girls, burned by crackers or phosphorous. One girl was badly burned on the back by crackers dropped down the back of her dress, and many others were treated for minor to serious burns on the legs, hands and face. Many girls had their hair burned by other teenage revellers in a playful mood. A number of people had their hands burned when they tried to extinguish flags deliberately set on fire.

The women police had only two lost children to look after. They were kept in the guard house at Government House until their parents claimed them.[40]

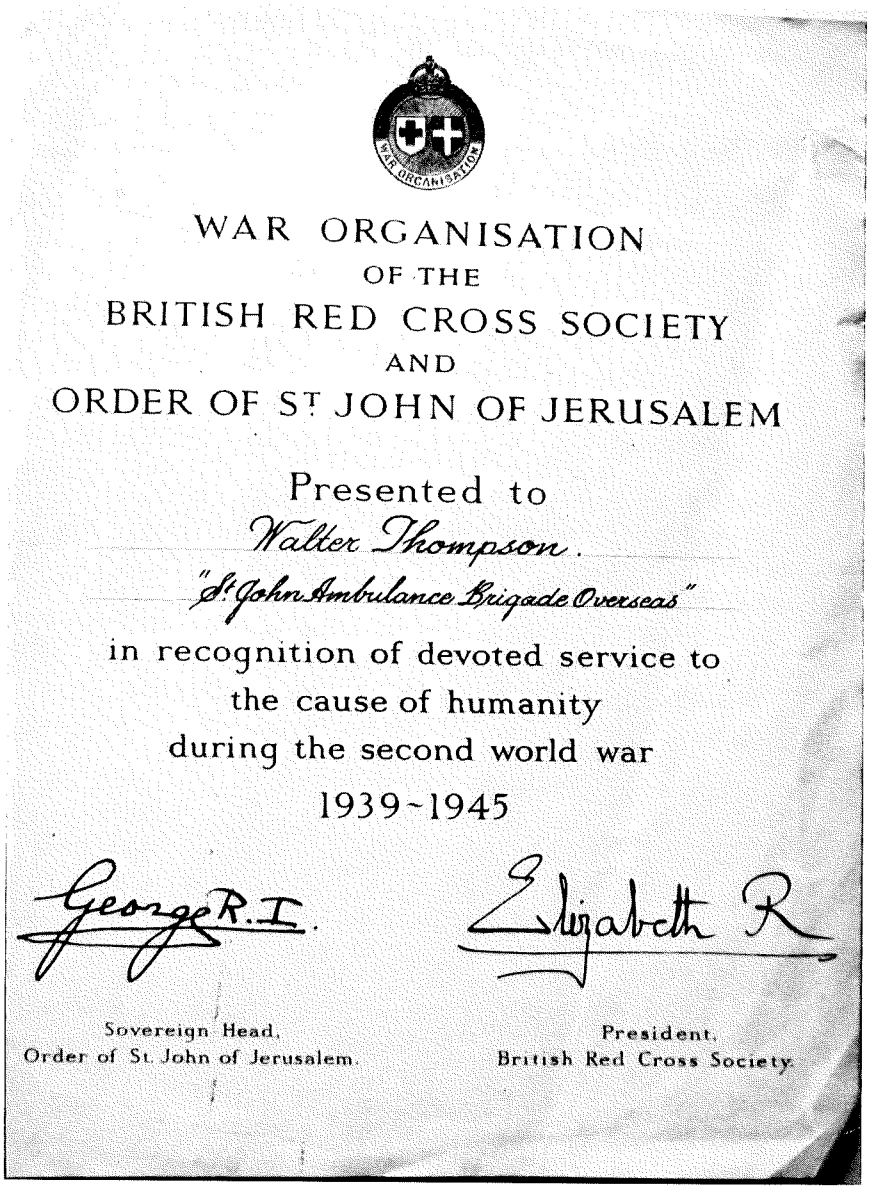
The men, and women, of the Brigade had been voluntarily giving this sort of service year in and year out for three decades now. One therefore need hardly labour the point that by the end of the war the Brigade had firmly established its credentials for dedicated service to South Australians. One might nevertheless observe that the war had provided the Brigade with every opportunity for winning itself into the affections of the people. The hard wartime work, then, had not been without its rewards; nor had the war, which had occasioned it all.

Before concluding this discussion of St John wartime activities we must turn briefly to the next of the 'crusaders' to be sent out from London to

inspect the operations of the Australian St John organization. No account of St John in the wartime years could be complete without reference to the arrival in Adelaide of Edwina, Lady Louis Mountbatten, whose tour of antipodean branches of the Order in early 1946 was in the same tradition as those between the wars by Sir John Hewett and Sir James Sleeman. Though she did not arrive until April that year, eight months after the peace, her visit had much to do with the wartime contributions the St John bodies had so recently been making to the health and welfare of the Empire's citizens. As much as a tour of inspection it was indeed a gesture by St John's Gate to thank Australian St John workers for their years of toil in aid of the war effort.

Lady Mountbatten was the Brigade's Superintendent-in-Chief, that is its chief Nursing officer for the Empire, and thus one of the Order's seniormost officials. She came as the representative of both St John's Gate and the Joint War Organization of Red Cross and St John, the agency the two institutions established in Britain to co-ordinate their wartime endeavours. Unlike some of her Royal in-laws, who mechanically if dutifully performed their figurehead roles in charity as an unavoidable chore, Lady Mountbatten had thrown herself into her St John-Red Cross duties with a zeal the Order possibly had not seen in one of its high-born members since the days of Lady Brassey sixty years before. Wartime work, it is said, had transformed her from aristocratic flibbertigibbet to crusading social activist. Her reputation for driving herself through a relentless program of work on behalf of the Order had spread before her, and, as far as Australian St John workers were concerned, no name amongst the St John's Gate hierarchy shone as brightly as hers.

Lady Mountbatten's reputation was well known beyond St John and the Red Cross. Her charitable works in South East Asia, and particularly her efforts to rehabilitate the former inmates of the Japanese prisoners of war camps, had already won her many fervent admirers among Australian ex-service personnel. She paid only a fleeting visit to Adelaide, from Saturday afternoon 27 April until Monday morning the 29th, but the full page coverage the newspapers gave left the impression that her arrival in the State was one of the major events in its 110 years of history. Perhaps that was indeed the way they all saw it, for the excitement it aroused was rather like that of the next Royal Visit another eight years later. *The Advertiser*, again, is our reference point. It marvelled at 'the amazing vitality which is one of her chief characteristics' and which was much in evidence during her 'crowded, strenuous two days in Adelaide'. It noted that 'all along the route from Parafield [aerodrome were] small groups of people gathered by the roadside ... waiting to wave their greetings, to which she responded with smiles and waves through the windows of [her] car'. It informed readers that when she had arrived at Government House, where she was to stay as the guest of the Governor, Sir Willoughby Norrie, 'she found awaiting her a beautiful basket of flowers, an anonymous gift to



WAR ORGANISATION
OF THE
BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY
AND
ORDER OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM

Presented to
Walter Thompson.
"St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas"
in recognition of devoted service to
the cause of humanity
during the second world war
1939~1945

George R.I.
Sovereign Head,
Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

Elizabeth R
President,
British Red Cross Society.

Wartime co-operation of rival ambulancing bodies: one of certificates awarded by the British Joint War Organisation of the Red Cross and the Order of St John to Australian members of the two bodies for wartime service. The recipient of this particular certificate, Walter Thompson, later served as the Brigade's District secretary 1964-74.

"One who is a symbol of England's courage"'. It mentioned how that later, 'as she drove along Anzac Highway, a group of nurses and patients from Keswick Repatriation Hospital waited by the roadside to see her, and her car slowed down to acknowledge their salutes'. It said that as she drove in an open car to visit the Army's Northfield hospital 'many groups waited for her to pass, women threw flowers into the car, and a small girl [not only] presented her with a bouquet [but asked] for an autograph, which Lady Louis provided'. It reported the comments of one Corporal Anderson, a former inmate of the Changi POW camp in Singapore who had met her on his release and met her again at the Northfield hospital. He had produced some Japanese paper money and asked for her autograph on it; she signed and added 'Changi and Adelaide'. 'That bit of paper isn't worth the millionth of a farthing, but I wouldn't sell it for £50', he said. And, positively smitten by her charm, it rhapsodized over her personal magnetism: it thought she possessed 'to a high degree many of those qualities which have made her husband a great leader'; it delighted in 'her simplicity of manner, which puts at ease immediately everyone to whom she speaks'; it warmly approved 'the obvious sincerity of her interest, and her directness of approach to the matter at hand'; it thought 'this slim, vital woman the last word in elegance in the black uniform of the highest ranking officer in the St John Ambulance Brigade'; and it was deeply impressed by her habit of talking individually to every person present at the many places she visited, bringing to bear 'that rare gift of concentrating completely on the person to whom she is speaking'.[41]

Lady Mountbatten spent nearly all of her two days in Adelaide among her St John and Red Cross admirers, and in discussions over the future work of the two institutions in Australia and in the State. The climax to the visit came on Sunday afternoon, 28 April, which, fortuitously, was the day set aside for the annual inspection of the Brigade by the Governor at the Adelaide Oval, scene of so many great St John occasions in the past. Over 1100 Brigade members and VADs took part in what *The Advertiser* described as a 'spectacular parade' watched by 'many thousands'. The crowd broke into applause as Lady Mountbatten arrived with Sir Willoughby and Lady Norrie, to be greeted by the president of the St John Ambulance Association, Sir Mellis Napier. In welcoming her, the Governor remarked that all present felt 'very real admiration [for] her outstanding services in aid of the sick and suffering, and for the cheerful encouragement she had given to untold numbers of troops in many different theatres of war and various hospitals'. She replied by saying she was 'deeply touched by the wonderful welcome given to her in Adelaide'. She also mentioned how pleased she was to meet again 'many of the fine prisoners of war whom she had met after they had been recovered from Japanese camps, and whose spirit and courage were never daunted by three and a half years of terrible suffering'. The next event on the program was the inspection. The Governor and the Assistant Commissioner, Dr E.A.H. Russell (standing in



Edwina Lady Mountbatten at the time of her second visit to Australia as the Brigade's Superintendent-in-Chief, in 1956, shown here visiting the Brigade in Western Australia.

for the Commissioner, Maj.-Gen. S.R. Burston, who had succeeded Dawkins in early 1945) inspected the Brigade divisions while Lady Mountbatten, Lady Norrie and the Controller of VADs, Dr H.H.E. Russell, looked over the VADs and other Red Cross personnel on parade. That done, and it took over an hour to complete, the Governor invested the most recent candidates for admission into the Order and presented long-service medals to the latest recipients. Then, as befitted all such grand Brigade ceremonies, the afternoon's activities concluded with the march past so beloved of those within the organization who relished its pomp and circumstance.[42]

That evening Lady Mountbatten held a farewell press conference in Government House. She used it to great effect to confirm the near adoration in which she was held by all Brigade members who had met her. Referring especially to the Brigade, she said that,

> because it had functioned so regularly and so efficiently over a long period of years, the service given by the members, most of them hard working people, had been taken too much for granted by the general public. The members gave up their leisure at night time and at weekends to attend all sorts of gatherings ... year in and year out. 'At the parade this afternoon', she said, 'I met many men and women who have been in the service for 30 years, and a point to remember is that they have to requalify every year to maintain maximum efficiency. I have nursed in hospital myself and know a good deal about it'.[43]

Such public acknowledgement by someone of such authority was much more than Brigade members might have wished for. In an era when the presence of almost any member of the English nobility, let alone one so closely connected with Royalty, could cause many Australians to genuflect, an endorsement like that was, arguably, worth as much public good will as all the years of wartime work. Not surprisingly, then, St John Ambulance emerged from six years of war with a much enhanced reputation. If not before, then certainly now it could lay claim to being one of South Australia's principal voluntary welfare agencies, if not indeed *the* chief amongst them all.

2. *Federation: the Commandery and the Priory*

This and previous chapters have referred to the Priory which various members of the St John organizations in Australia hoped might be set up within Australia to unite them and make them less reliant on St John's Gate. Storie Dixson's Brigade conference in Melbourne in 1920 was where the idea of an Australian Priory was first mooted, but as the previous chapter showed, London guessed, and probably correctly, that the Australian St John bodies were not yet ready for either federation or independence. Instead the Australians were talked into setting up their misbegotten St John Central Council for Australia. The accomplishments of the Central Council were minimal at best, but there was some benefit even in its failure: in its demise it showed a rising generation of St John leaders how not to go about setting up a national St John body.

While the men of Storie Dixson's and Hussey's generation were dithering with their powerless Central Council during the late 1920s, those of the next generation down were watching critically. Men like S.L. Dawkins and C.E.C. Wilson in South Australia, Dr Hugh Poate, the Brigade Commissioner in New South Wales, Dr John Newman-Morris, a later Association president in Victoria, and Dr Tom Goddard, a later Brigade Commissioner and Association chairman in Tasmania, witnessed

the failure of the Central Council. As they took over the leadership of their State St John branches during the 1930s, they realised there were benefits in an Australia-wide union of St John bodies, but knew these could only be gained in a structure more substantial and effective than the defunct organization the previous generation had laboured to erect.

Discussions with Sir John Hewett and Col. James Sleeman no doubt convinced the incoming leaders that St John's Gate was unlikely to grant the Priory Storie Dixson had once suggested: a Priory meant virtual independence from London, and so far none of the Order's Dominion branches had been accorded that privilege. Three of them, however, had been raised to Commandery status: because national St John sentiment had developed well in South Africa, New Zealand and Canada, the local branches had been permitted to set up Commanderies in 1921, 1931 and 1934 respectively. A Commandery was a stepping stone along the way to a Priory: it meant a large measure of autonomy, though not the full degree of independence from control by London which Priory status conferred. Australia alone of the 'white' Dominions had no Commandery at the time of Sleeman's visit, which, as the previous chapter showed, was a sore point in every State. When challenged about it Sleeman replied to the effect that the Australians had not merited Commandery status: their internal bickerings, for example between the Association and Brigade in some States, and in South Australia in particular, indicated to London that it could not trust the St John bodies in Australia, if freed from English control, to preserve the dignity and reputation the Order enjoyed. They must earn the right to a Commandery, and the means for doing so was to demonstrate their ability to work together harmoniously.[44]

At a more practical level, Sleeman had also suggested an interstate meeting between the St John bodies to reach agreement on their wish for a Commandery. No doubt stung by Sleeman's inferred slur against the Australian national character, and its supposition that, while South Africans, New Zealanders and Canadians were ready to run their own affairs, Australians were not, the leaders of the various State branches quickly adopted his suggestion for an interstate meeting. This took place within several months of his return to England in May 1936. At the instigation of the Victorians, most notably Newman-Morris, by now president of the Victorian Centre, representatives from the eastern States gathered in Sydney later that year to see what they might agree upon. Burston went over to represent the South Australians. The meeting readily agreed that not only could the State branches of the Association and Brigade co-operate with each other in a Commandery, but that within each State harmonious Association-Brigade relations could prevail. The Victorians were given the job of drafting a constitution for the Commandery, which they would then circulate around the other States for comment before submitting it to London for approval. The draft constitution was ready by January 1937 and received an airing at the next meeting of the Adelaide

Centre in February. Wilson and Goode reported to the meeting that they had been through it, had suggested one or two amendments, had discussed these with the Brigade, and had sent the amended draft back to Melbourne for later dispatch to London. The other members of the Centre Committee seemed to concur with their action, and probably they all felt pleased that the Commandery everyone now wanted would soon be set up to vindicate Australian character in the Order's Empire-wide forum.[45]

The Commandery did not come into being quite so easily, however. There was now a long delay as various States tried to make their minds up about the draft constitution, and whether or not they ought to participate. For a time it looked as if only New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia would join the Commandery; then there was further delay while London deliberated over the draft. Time slipped by; war broke out; new preoccupations arose; and in the end the establishment of the Commandery did not occur until more than two years into the war. It was not formally established until November 1941, and it did not hold its first meeting until 19 January 1942, six weeks after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour opened the Pacific War, and a month to the day before the bombing of Darwin. which was to set off war panic all around Australia. Once founded it lived up to expectations. Indeed, one of the great wartime accomplishments of the St John bodies in Australia was that they were able to make their new federal organization work effectively at a time when all were much preoccupied with other more pressing tasks, namely the record business all were doing as a result of the war panic. The success of the Commandery in giving direction to the Australia-wide St John war effort was such that after five years St John's Gate raised it to full Priory status – at the same time as the Commanderies of South Africa, New Zealand and Canada were also elevated to Priories in recognition of their wartime contributions.

The present writer has described the moves to set up the Australian Commandery and Priory in his history of St John Australia-wide, *A Century For Australia: St John Ambulance in Australia 1883-1983*. It is worth repeating here those portions of that work for they show facets of St John that this book has not yet fully explored. Firstly, they show something of the national consciousness at last coalescing within State St John branches. As this occurred, St John people around Australia, in South Australia no less than elsewhere, felt more confident about joining with colleagues of other States to work on common problems together, at the same time building their organization into a nationwide body from the parochial, inward-looking and State-bound bodies which had previously constituted the St John movement in Australia. Secondly, they show something of the prestige which the name of St John was enjoying by the time of the Second World War. So respectable was the St John reputation by now, so well had St John striven to establish its loyalist credentials, that the prime movers in the final setting up of the Commandery apparatus were no less than the

State Governors. Thirdly, they show something of the special South Australian contributions to the new federal body.

A Century For Australia outlines those moves as follows:

> [After the despatch of the draft constitution to London] nothing more was heard about a Commandery until July 1939, when the New South Wales Governor, Lord Wakehurst, discussed the matter with [Sir Winston] Dugan, the Victorian Governor, and the Lieutenant Governor and Administrator of South Australia, Sir George Murray [who was also president of the Adelaide Centre of the Association]. 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 [Dr Athol] Mobbs in New South Wales, Newman-Morris and [Maj.-Gen. Rupert] Downes [Brigade Commissioner in Victoria], and Dawkins and Wilson in South Australia. . . . But despite Wakehurst's prestige within the Order in Britain – he was a future Lord Prior of the Order [its chief executive officer] – 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 the delay: at the time the Secretary General [of the Order, in London] 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.
>
> The first definitive steps towards the Commandery came in March 1940, when Dugan received a letter 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'.
>
> 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'. ... 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 of the man he chose to fill the key position of Commandery Lieutenant [or chief executive officer], Poate.

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 at 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 Reverend Hugh 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, 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 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 and Dr A.E. Grounds of Launceston (Brigade in Southern and Northern Tasmania), Downes and [Dr J.A.H.] 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).

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 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. . . . 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 . . . said they would all find the Commandery 'most useful, and particularly so in that a central control had now been established'. . . .[46]

With that 'central control' now in permanent place, no State branch of the organization would ever be entirely the same again: from now one there would always be a federal authority to which State bodies, Association Centre and Brigade District alike, would be answerable.

Though the Sydney-Melbourne 'axis' had done most of the final work in setting up the Commandery, South Australian support had been important. If Wakehurst, Dugan, Poate, Newman-Morris and others in Sydney and Melbourne had been without this, there would probably have been no Commandery, at least not in 1941-42. The Western Australians had set themselves against it; the St John organization in Tasmania was small, new, weak and divided by the Hobart-Launceston rivalry; and in Queensland St John was under the control of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade, which regarded its hold on the local Association Centre as a way of keeping out of Queensland the St John Ambulance Brigade, in which it saw an unwanted rival. With St John only strong in four States, one of which had opted out of the Commandery, South Australian support was therefore necessary to convince London that an Australian Commandery would speak for at least half the States.

South Australians in St John might have held back from Storie Dixson's Central Council, but two decades on they all realized the benefits of a federal St John structure, and as a result had warmly endorsed the idea of a Commandery. This time they had done all they could to hasten it. Sir George Murray, as we have just seen, had been a party to the discussions between Wakehurst and Dugan which had finally set in motion the chain of events leading up to its establishment. Dawkins had taken a keen interest in the matter, and had obviously been in frequent touch with his fellow Commissioner, Poate, and no doubt as a result of both this and his proud record as the South Australian Commissioner, Gowrie chose him as foundation Commandery Commissioner. To consider the proposed Commandery regulations, and no doubt to gain support for the body about to be formed, Dawkins had called a meeting of the thirty-six South Australian members of the Order in July 1941. At this meetings Murray, Eric Millhouse (the solicitor for both Association and Brigade in South Australia, as well as a Brigade District Officer), and Goode made various suggestions for improvements that the meeting passed on to Gowrie through the Governor, Barclay-Harvey. A second meeting two months later, in September, attended by Poate and Vickers from Sydney, finalized the matter of South Australian participation by nominating Wilson and



Goode as the Association's and H.H.E. Russell and Bulman as the Brigade's representatives on the new federal body.[47]

Once the Commandery was established, South Australia's voice in it was influential. Firstly, Dawkins as Commandery Commissioner, or principal Brigade Officer in Australia, held one of the top four executive positions in the Commandery: only the prestige of Poate's, Vickers' and Newman-Morris's positions compared with his. He now spoke for all Brigade members as the overall head of a 'national' Brigade organization spread across five affiliated Districts. In this Brigade network, which now, on paper at least, transcended State boundaries, were his own South Australian District and the Districts of New South Wales, Victoria, and Southern and Northern Tasmania. Dawkins' final success in having risen so high was qualified, however. The word 'national' in relation to Dawkins' suddenly expanded Brigade domain is not strictly accurate: because the Western Australian District remained outside the Commandery, while the Brigade for the time being was being kept out of Queensland, he was hardly 'Chief Commissioner for Australia'. Moreover, given his wartime preoccupations at home in South Australia (where he remained on as District Commissioner, holding both his local and national Brigade positions concurrently), not to mention the problems wartime interstate travel posed, it is doubtful whether he could make spectacular strides with the Brigade nationally as he had done within South Australia. On top of these difficulties he was growing old and was now ailing. At the beginning of 1945 he passed over to Burston his position as South Australian Commissioner, probably because as time went on he had found he could not adequately fulfil his twin roles. He continued on as Commandery Commissioner for almost another two years, but resigned because of illness towards the end of 1946, shortly before the Commandery rose to Priory status. Burston succeeded him again, and thus had the honour of being the first formally styled Chief Commissioner for Australia. How successful Dawkins was as Commandery Commissioner is therefore uncertain, though one might argue that the very existence of his position, whatever its limitations, was salutary, for it made Brigade members everywhere conscious that they belonged to a *national* organization.

Bulman, who also emerged as one of the Commandery's notable Brigade figures, did much to add substance to the notion that the Brigade was now a national body. He did so by adopting as his special cause the introduction of regular interstate Brigade competitions, which, he argued, 'were needed to raise standards among Brigades in all States'. He spoke fervently on the subject at the November 1945 meeting of the Commandery Council, held in Government House, Melbourne; then, back in

◄ Sir Samuel ('Ginger') Burston, the Brigade's District Commissioner 1946-47, who became its first Chief Commissioner for Australia in 1947. In addition Burston was the Army's Director of Medical Services.

Adelaide, he drew up a draft set of general conditions and rules for running such contests. These received an airing at the next meeting of the Council, in Sydney in June 1946, and were adopted. The first in what became an annual round of competitions were planned for the next year, and duly took place on 22 November 1947 in the Melbourne Town Hall. The competitions quickly became a popular and integral part of the national St John calendar, and over the next four decades possibly did as much as any other St John endeavour to foster a national sentiment within the organization. Bulman, unfortunately, did not live to see his hopes realized. He died in July 1946 at the age of sixty-four, at least thirty-one of those years having gone in serving St John.[48]

If setting up the Commandery and making it run effectively were major milestones in the Order's Australian history, then the changeover from Commandery to Priory came almost as an anticlimax. The Commandery executive received advice of the impending elevation in status in September 1946. The news was announced to the Commandery Council at its next meeting, at Government House, Adelaide, on 22 November 1946 – the first and last time the Council had met in Adelaide, at least in its 'Commandery' as opposed to its 'Priory' guise. Sir Willoughby Norrie, who as Deputy Knight Commander was in the chair, opened the meeting by saying that St John's Gate had sanctioned the move, and that the St John organization in Western Australia would come under the umbrella of the new Priory as a Commandery in its own right. The transition did not require any major restructuring, and many of the changes were merely semantic: the Knight Commander (normally the Governor-General) became the Prior, for instance; Poate's position was called Sub-Prior and later Chancellor instead of Commandery Lieutenant; Newman-Morris was now called the Receiver-General rather than the Treasurer; Burston came in as 'Chief Commissioner for Australia' rather than as 'Commandery Commissioner', and so on. The only odd twist to the new structure was at its apex: the Prior for the time being could *not* be the Governor-General. The reason for this was simple: the present incumbent at Government House, Yarralumla, was none other than the Grand Prior of the Order, H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester; and while it might have been alright for Dawkins to be both the South Australian and the federal Brigade Commissioner, it was hardly proper for the Duke to hold two positions as Prior. Instead Sir Winston Dugan, present Victorian and former South Australian Governor, became foundation Prior instead. The next time the Council met, in Sydney in June 1947, it did so as the Priory Council.[49]

South Australian members of the St John bodies generally welcomed the independence Priory status gave the Australian branch of the Order. Sir Mellis Napier no doubt spoke for many within Association and Brigade in his presidential address at the sixty-second annual meeting of the Adelaide Centre, in the Claridge Theatre, Gawler Place, on 27 May 1947. He said that 'constant reference to England [had], at times, been irksome',

and Australian members of the Order should be grateful they now had their Priory, 'which will enable us to deal locally with matters of local concern'. At the same time independence was a little disconcerting for Centre members who took pride in the fact that the Association was the 'senior service', older than the Brigade in South Australia by thirty years. It was Napier again who voiced the misgivings of old-time Association leaders when he said that 'at present a state of uncertainty exists in regard to the future. ... From the point of view of the Association it is a matter of satisfaction, tinged with regret, that the Brigade now becomes an independent body of equal status, taking full charge of its own destiny'. The Brigade, of course, had been going its own way since Dawkins had taken over as Commissioner; and it had long since eclipsed the Association in the mind of the public, most of whom probably thought the Brigade was the entire St John organization. The equal status of the two foundations under the constitution of the Priory simply confirmed formally what had already happened informally. Despite that, traditionalists probably still needed time to get used to the idea that the Brigade was not a 'junior service'.[50]

Although the Priory might thus have forced older members into mental and emotional readjustments, it vindicated itself from the outset. It did so by giving members of the St John organization in every State a sense of pride in belonging to an important national institution. Parochial issues and concerns were inevitably their chief preoccupation, and, because of the immediacy of these, the Priory and its principal personalities no doubt remained remote for the vast majority of ordinary members. Yet precisely because the Priory was there to focus attention on the fact that ultimately most local issues had national ramifications, it gave local branches a renewed sense of direction and purpose. Consequently it steadily gained in stature and authority among the State branches. The attainment of final, federated national independence by the Australian St John bodies was therefore a significant gain, and perhaps the most important outcome, of the busy wartime years, for South Australian members of the organization no less than for those elsewhere. At the same time the Priory served to complicate local matters for each of the State branches. In all local St John affairs there would henceforth be an additional consideration to bear in mind – the view Priory might take of the issues at stake. As we shall soon see, in the matter of the vexed issues of public ambulance transport in Adelaide and the St John dogma of voluntaryism, Priory opinion from now on was a factor to exercise the minds of all sides in any local debate.

CHAPTER SIX

The First Decade-and-a-half Postwar

The early postwar decades were a time of growth and prosperity for South Australia and St John Ambulance alike. They were the years of the 'long boom' – of rapid population increase, of large scale immigration, of industrial development, and the steady outward march of the Adelaide metropolitan sprawl. As immigrants arrived from most of the countries of Europe to take up jobs in the new factories the city spread up into the hills to the east, south into the vine-growing ridges and dales beyond the Darlington scarp, and north through Salisbury and the 'new town', Elizabeth, towards Gawler. The main provincial cities and towns also grew: Whyalla, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Mt Gambier, the Barossa valley towns and lesser centres shared in the growth and prosperity, becoming familiar names not just to South Australians but to Australians everywhere.

As the State prospered so did St John. The numbers undertaking its training programs and joining up with Brigade Divisions kept in step with the rise in population; and as Association classes and Brigade Divisions formed in lesser towns which had previously seen little of the white Maltese cross, the influence of the Order spread. In the process St John became not just a household name but one of the State's best known and most prominent public institutions – widely recognised throughout the State to an extent seldom achieved by the St John organization in other States and nations. Two developments were chiefly responsible for this glad turn of events – the formation of a 'St John Council' to manage the South Australian affairs of the Order and to co-ordinate the efforts of the Association and Brigade; and the Council's assumption of control of Adelaide's ambulance transport facilities. These were such signal events that this chapter will consider them in detail.

1. *The St John Council for South Australia*

A century after the arrival in South Australia of the St John Ambulance Association, the Association Centre had long ago receded into the background as other St John enterprises had risen into public prominence, even though its task had expanded greatly as the State itself had grown. The Association, eclipsed by the Brigade during the 1930s and 40s, was not only extant but highly active, yet it had long since been subsumed within the St John Council for South Australia, a body set up as a result of Priory initiatives in the immediate postwar years. By 1984 the St John Council

reigned supreme in St John affairs within the State, and by then was a body whose name was more often before the public eye than the Adelaide Centre had ever been during the prewar era. A long running parliamentary select committee had just finished probing its affairs, teasing out the intricate web of ties connecting the Council to the statewide ambulance transport system it sponsored, and binding into it the Association, the Brigade, the team of volunteers who helped staff the ambulance transport service, and the various other enterprises in which it had interests. Few South Australians in 1985 would have been unfamiliar with the name 'St John Council': as the select committee meetings had ground relentlessly on it was a phrase heard often on television, over the radio and in the newspapers.

The St John Council was one of the first fruits of the newly formed Australian Priory of the Order. The Sub-Prior, Hugh Poate, campaigned for the setting up of State St John Councils from the moment the Priory formed in 1947. The idea of such Councils was to co-ordinate the separate activities of the Association and Brigade in each State, for, as previous chapters have shown, in years gone by the two foundations had sometimes dwelt in separate worlds, had sometimes spent their energies in destructive back-biting, and all too often had lost sight of their common purpose.

The notion of St John Councils originated in the United Kingdom, where such bodies had formed in the early postwar years to oversee the amalgamation of Association and Brigade undertaken by the British St John organization. Lady Mountbatten had canvassed the reorganization with the Australian St John bodies during her tour of 1946, but it does not seem that the Australian St John bodies regarded a British-style merging of the two foundations seriously. Having only learnt to live with each other in recent times under the umbrella of the Commandery, such a move was probably too extreme for all concerned at this stage. Instead, it seems, Poate aimed at ensuring co-ordination via St John Councils, the setting up of which was sufficiently radical a step for the time being; and, even so, some State St John bodies resisted – most notably the Association Centre in New South Wales, which held out against the formation of a State St John Council until 1965.[1]

The South Australian St John bodies supported Poate's plans for State St John Councils more keenly than some of their counterparts in other States. There were good reasons for doing so. Firstly, the public had often been confused over the differ ence between the Association and Brigade, not realising that 'St John Ambulance' encompassed two separate bodies with differing functions and traditions. Secondly, the confusion was exacerbated when both Association and Brigade sought funds from either the public or the government. Thirdly, if there were an over-arching Council there would be fewer chances for unseemly public scrapping between the two foundations – always a risk when each maintained its own separate administration and operated out of a separate building.

The Deputy Prior for the Order in South Australia, the Governor, Sir Willoughby Norrie, foreshadowed the setting up of the Council at the annual Brigade parade in October 1947, when he said, 'It is suggested that the whole of the [Brigade and Association] activities be combined under the Order of St John, having the one office from which all activities will be controlled'. Discussions between the Association's Centre Committee and the Brigade's senior staff continued, and as a result both parties agreed to merge their administrations. This occurred early the next year, 1948, when the opportunity for doing so arose fortuitously. The occasion was the retirement of the Centre secretary, R.P. Goode. Goode's successor was a member of his accountancy firm, K.G. Shapter, part of whose duties as Goode's associate had been to maintain the Association's account books. Shortly before this Shapter had been talked into becoming the Brigade's secretary, and so it seemed both sensible and practical to combine the two offices.[2]

That the South Australian St John bodies were actively going about the establishment of a St John Council became obvious with the release of the combined Association-Brigade *Annual Report* at the end of 1948. The *Report* noted that

> for some time discussions have [been taking] place ... on the advisability of forming a properly constituted Centre or Council in South Australia. ... It is felt that: (a) The control of the affairs of all phases of administration and work of the Order of St John in South Australia would be co-ordinated. (b) While retaining the individuality of the Association and Brigade, there would be closer cohesion between these two bodies. (c) The public would know that, when subscribing to the Order of St John, they would automatic ally be assisting both the Association and the Brigade. ...
>
> The finances of the Association and the Brigade [have been] amalgamated, the assets of both bodies being vested in the name of the Order of St John. A finance committee of three members of each organization [has been] formed pro tem, to control and advise on the financial aspects, until such time as draft rules and Regulations for Councils of the Order of St John are finalised by Priory. ...
>
> Ultimately with the formation of a Council, all appeals, acknowledgement of donations, and the like will be made under the aegis of the Order of St John, and with the economy of general administration ... the Order in South Australia should benefit and progress greatly.[3]

In November of that year Poate had presented to the Priory Council a set of draft regulations to govern the proposed State St John Councils. Vigorous debate ensued, as the representatives of the New South Wales Centre argued that, because the Centre valued its separate tradition, it opposed the formation of a St John Council in New South Wales. Delegates from other States had mixed feelings. While they could see the sense behind Poate's proposals, they were dubious about the wisdom of creating what one delegate described as a 'top-heavy' body above both

Association Centre and Brigade District in each State. Eventually the meeting voted in favour of Poate's motion that the regulations be adopted, with the only dissenting votes being those of the two delegates from the New South Wales Centre. A speech by a South Australian, A.R. Heath, a Brigade representative, seems to have been the turning point in the debate. Alluding to the moves in his home State towards the setting up of a St John Council, he had said,

> We do not have difficulties in South Australia. The Brigade and Association work in closest harmony. Both bodies are strongly in favour of the formation of State Councils.[4]

Heath, no doubt, was trying hard to portrait his home State in the best possible light, as well as endeavouring to convince those States with doubts about introducing Councils. He was, of course, glossing over some recent history in the South Australian St John branch, for relations between Brigade and Association had often been less than amicable. There were many instances of this. Dawkins as Commissioner and Goode as Association secretary, for example, were often in conflict, Goode's high rank in the Brigade notwithstanding. The problem was the basic dichotomy between two foundations sharing the same name, 'St John Ambulance', but having separate tasks, traditions and differing channels of recruitment. The problem manifested itself in various ways. Difficult personal relationships were the most obvious sign of the structural tension. While Shapter was understudying Goode, for instance, he found that Dawkins distrusted him, treating him with frosty disdain because he worked for Goode and the Association. Disagreements over finances were another sign. The Association had an assured and regular income from class fees, with few costs. The Brigade, on the other hand, had limited revenue but continual expenses for equipment and supplies. The Brigade thought its income should be supplemented with Association earnings, an idea unwelcome to the Association. Many members of the public, grateful no doubt for some act of kindliness by a Brigade member on duty, sent in donations addressed to 'St John Ambulance', and the feeling around the Brigade was that much of this money ended up in the Association bank account. The mutual suspicion lessened after Shapter became secretary to both foundations, but there was always a natural division between those who donned Brigade garb to go on public duty and those who simply wished to arrange classes or teach or examine first aid without the quasi-military rigmarole of uniforms, rank structures, drills and parades.[5]

Association-Brigade difficulties like these were the common experience of all State branches of St John. Most St John bodies in most States could therefore see the sense in creating a new structure to produce greater harmony and unity of effort between the two foundations. After Poate's draft regulations for St John Councils had been chewed over by the State branches they came back to Priory for further consideration at its meeting

in June 1949. The Priory Chapter, the Order's supreme governing body in Australia, endorsed the regulations, and authorized the establishment of Councils in those States that agreed to introduce them. Not surprisingly, South Australia was one of the first States to form its St John Council.[6]

Progress towards the setting up of the Councils was to be reported at the next Priory meeting, to be held at Government House, Adelaide, on Friday 25 November 1949. This turned out to be a time for celebration – an auspicious occasion for the local St John hierarchy, the first time they had played host to the Priory. To mark the event they held a dinner at the South Australia Hotel on the Friday evening, after the conclusion of the day's business. The interstate visitors were entertained in grand style, with Sir Mellis Napier presiding, and the Premier, Tom Playford, proposing the toast to the Order. The festivities continued all weekend: the next morning the visitors were taken down to McLaren Vale for a tour of the local vineyards and wine cellars; in the afternoon they went to the Victoria Park racecourse, where they saw a team from the Port Adelaide Division take off the prize in the Brigade's interstate first aid competitions; on the Sunday morning they had a morning tea at the Napier residence at Crafers; and that afternoon they were at the University Oval for the annual Brigade review, and an investiture the high point of which came when the Sir Willoughby Norrie, as Deputy Prior, dubbed Napier as a Knight of Grace within the Order.[7]

At the Government House meeting that preceded these celebrations, much time was spent in hearing reports from each State on the steps it was taking towards setting up its St John Council. New South Wales reported that it had set up an 'Advisory Council' with joint Association-Brigade membership; however, because of the continuing objection of the Association Centre, this was an informal body rather than a St John Council duly constituted under the new regulations. Queensland was unable to form a St John Council since there was no local Brigade District as yet. Western Australia, as a Commandery in its own right, remained outside the Priory organization for the time being. That left Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. The Victorians and Tasmanians reported that their St John Councils had been formed. The South Australians, too, had similar good news. As one of their Brigade delegates, J.E. McKee, observed, 'in South Australia the gap between Association and Brigade has been bridged and all work is under the Order of St John now'. In saying so he was perhaps jumping the gun, for although the Association and Brigade leadership had no doubt agreed to the ground rules, the St John Council had not yet come into formal existence. That was not to happen for another nine weeks.[8]

The action which brought the St John Council for South Australia into being was a meeting on 2 February 1950, at which the twenty-six most senior members of the Order in the State – those ranking as Officers, Commanders or Knights – elected the first St John Council for South



Sir Mellis Napier, Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor of South Australia; president of the South Australian Centre of the St John Ambulance Association 1942-76; president of the St John Council for South Australia 1950-76.

Australia. In the chair was Sir Mellis Napier, and as he had done much of the legal spadework on the constitution for the Council, not to mention his years of championing St John causes as Association president, it was no surprise that he was elected president of the new body. The Vice-Presidents were Dr S.L. Dawkins, now fairly inactive in local St John affairs, having retired from Brigade life because of ill health; Sir James Gosse; and F.N. Simpson, current head of the family business. Shapter was elected secretary, and F.W. Russack, the Association treasurer, became treasurer of the Council as well. Other Council members included fourteen Association and Brigade representatives, the president of the Hospitallers' Club, and two outsiders – Sir Arthur Barrett, the State chairman of the Red Cross, and the superintendent of the South Australian Ambulance Transport, Capt. T. Lonnen. But perhaps the most significant appointment was that of chairman, on whose shoulders would fall the burden of directing Council affairs. For this key position the meeting chose Lt.-Col. Edward Waterfield ('Bill') Hayward, head of the Adelaide retailing firm, John Martin Ltd., who had joined the Association Centre Committee in 1947. His election marked the beginning of a twenty-six year period of Hawyward domination of local St John affairs. His period of rule tapered off in 1976 when he gave up the chairmanship to take on the figurehead role of president when Napier died. He held the latter office for the next seven years, until his death in 1983. As we will shortly see, the whole St

John organization in South Australia was to follow a new course under his direction, for his achievement was to bring Adelaide's ambulance transport facilities under St John control, thus paving the way for the St John operations in South Australia to become the most successful in all Australia.[9]

The St John Council for South Australia met only quarterly in its first two years, but in that time it quickly established its authority. As Hayward noted in his first annual report, in December 1950, 'it was necessary to have a controlling body [above] the Association and Brigade', and the new body was bringing greater prestige and higher public status to each foundation. Hayward was not the sort of man to be interested in running a weak body with only token powers. Any organization he ran would have to be pre-eminent in its field. This became evident within three years of his assuming control, when he successfully bid for Adelaide's ambulance transport services, relieving a grateful government of the responsibility for doing something about a notable lack of ambulance facilities that had once again become a public disgrace. This development, the 'quantum leap' in the evolution of St John in South Australia, is the subject for examination in the following section.[10]

2. *The St John Council acquires an ambulance transport service*

A previous chapter described the way in which the Brigade moved into ambulance transport work in the late 1920s, becoming one of the four or five proprietors of the ambulance vans plying the streets of Adelaide. The rivalry that created with the Hindmarsh Voluntary Ambulance, later the South Australian Ambulance Transport Inc., led to an agreement whereby the Brigade restricted its service to the race tracks while the SAAT kept out of first aid teaching and Brigade-style voluntary public first aid duty. This division of labour remained in force throughout the 1930s and 40s, and worked well enough: each side honoured the agreement, providing a service to its own clients, while several other operators also offered various services. By the late 1940s, however, Adelaide's postwar expansion was well under way, and a haphazard arrangement of four or five uncoordinated ambulance services no longer sufficed in a State capital the population of which was approaching half a million. Once again, as during the First World War, Adelaide's primitive ambulance facilities became the target of journalists in search of a by-line.

The best articles appeared in *The News*, under the by-line of a reporter whose very name evoked the crusading tradition in investigative journalism – Blake Brownrigg. In 1950 Brownrigg wrote a pair of feature articles on the city's ambulances. The first, which appeared under the headline,

> *'We've been lucky so far but it's time to overhaul . . .*
> Adelaide's haphazard ambulance service,

showed that Brownrigg had carried out his investigations thoroughly. It was such a good piece of reporting it bears repeating here:

> The set-up of Adelaide's ambulance service is so haphazard that its efficient operation is impossible. A growing population of 400,000, spread over the 160 square miles of the metropolitan areas, is "served" by 11 ambulances, some of them obsolete . . ., provided by four separate authorities. [Brownrigg did not include the Brigade's racecourse service here.]
>
> Try to imagine a cricket eleven without a captain, its players split into four rival groups, each striving to win the game on its own, and you have the Adelaide ambulance picture! . . .
>
> So far Adelaide has been lucky. There has been no major disaster that would expose the weaknesses of the present out-of-date ambulance system. But our luck might not always hold. . . .
>
> Ambulance services in the metropolitan area are provided by –
>
> SA Ambulance Transport ..... 7 cars
> Police Department (Civil Ambulance) ..... 2 cars
> Northern Suburbs, Prospect ..... 1 car
> J. Myren, Parkside ..... 1 car
>
> Let us examine separately each organization. First, the SA Ambulance Transport Inc., with head-quarters on Port road, Hindmarsh.
>
> Five ambulances are housed in a galvanized-iron building at the rear end of a shop at Hindmarsh – not ideal quarters, but the best the service can afford. In addition there is another ambulance at Unley and another at Port Adelaide.
>
> The service also "sponsors" the ambulance at Port Pirie and at Renmark. When either of these cars is off the road for maintenance or repairs, it is replaced by one sent from Hindmarsh.
>
> Two of the seven cars are almost new, two have been reconditioned, and three others are due for replacement as soon as possible. That is another problem. Costs are rising, so that a new ambulance costs about £1,200, with the prospects of the price going up to £1,500. . . .
>
> Financially, the service is "just getting by". Expenditure last financial year totalled £12,000, and there was little to spare after payment of wages, maintenance charges, and other expenses. Revenue comes mainly from subscribers, many of whom live outside the areas in which the ambulances are stationed.
>
> The subscription rate is 6/- for a man, his wife, and children under 16. (In 1947 it was 2/6, but rising costs forced the increase, and the charge might go higher. Pensioners are carried free.)
>
> The staff consists of 12 permanent men, assisted by 80 volunteers, who are members of the St John Ambulance Brigade. The Chief Officer is Capt. T.H. Lonnen, a city printer, who has made ambulance work a "spare-time" activity since 1923.
>
> In addition to its financial problems, the service is up against staff difficulties. The well of volunteers is drying up. After finishing their day's work as paid members of the staff, permanent men become "volunteers" and do a further shift of duty! Such is the spirit of the men who make the service possible.
>
> The two Police Department ambulances are stationed at police headquarters, Angas street. One is reasonably modern, and is fitted with two-way radio

equipment – the only one in Adelaide. (Brisbane, population 404,000, reports: Thirty ambulance men here will be equipped with modern-two-way frequency modulation radio by the end of the year.)

The two police ambulances between them have done 365,000 miles. They might be sent to any part of the State. Both have first aid outfits, but the ambulance drivers do no refresher training in first aid. Their "uniform" is a white or grey dustcoat....

Charges are a 10/- minimum for the city square mile, and then on an "aerial mileage" basis as follows: Two miles 13/4, then 3/4 a mile, so that a 10-mile trip costs £2. After the first 10 miles on country trips the rate is 1/- a mile. Pensioners are carried free....

The Northern Suburbs Ambulance Association, which is subsidised by the Prospect and Enfield Councils, has its headquarters behind the Prospect Town Hall. There is a room which is used as a watchroom, store for equipment, office, recreation room, and general assembly room for the staff of two permanent drivers, who are assisted by about 40 volunteers.

Some months ago this organization had two ambulances, but it had to dispose of the older vehicle because it could not afford to maintain the two cars. This means that the people in the northern suburbs must call on some other ambulance service when the only Northern Suburbs car is undergoing maintenance or repairs.

Charges are 2/- a mile for residents of the Prospect-Enfield district (12/6 minimum) and 2/6 a mile for non-residents. The Northern Suburbs Ambulance organization has no subscription scheme.

Mr Joe Myren's private ambulance is garaged at his home, Glen Osmond road, Parkside. He has no set scale of charges.

The St John Ambulance Brigade has a modern ambulance which is used mainly for racecourse work, and on such occasions as processions or large public assemblies. It does not attend to accident cases, or transport sick people to hospital, as part of normal work.[11]

Having thus sketched this 'not very imposing list' of ambulances and services in Adelaide, Brownrigg filled in the gaps with a dash of journalistic colour:

The basic fault, from which all other weaknesses grow, is that the ambulance organizations are scattered, separately controlled, and without means of quick, direct intercommunication. This results in uneconomic operation, overlapping services.

It is on record that three ambulances have been called to the same accident by onlookers, and all three have attended! Once, an ambulance was called from Unley to attend an accident in King William street within a short distance of police headquarters.

Subscribers to an ambulance service naturally depend on their own organization for transport in case of sickness. This inevitably involves some avoidable mileage for ambulances which might be called out, irrespective of distance or zone.

There is no uniformity about the color of ambulances, the scale of charges, their make or equipment, or of uniforms worn by the men who operate them.

Ambulance cars travelling to attend an accident victim must observe traffic lights and other restrictions on their movement, no matter how urgent the case might be.

One experienced ambulance man summed up his impressions of the existing set-up as "a sort of Darktown fire brigade". He laughed at the simile.

But somehow it didn't seem funny. Because the joke is on me – and you.[12]

Brownrigg's second article, under the headline

To take the guesswork out of the present set-up
Ambulances must be
under one control,

proposed two basic changes to improve the situation. First, was the 'establishment of an Ambulance Transport Service Board to reorganise and control the work of giving first aid to, and transporting, sick and injured people within South Australia'; and second was the 'provision in Adelaide of a central ambulance headquarters from which requirements of the metropolitan area could be met'. As well as this he outlined other 'basic needs' for an effective, co-ordinated service:

- Central city . . . garage and maintenance accommodation for ambulances.
- All cars should eventually be of the same make, design, and color, fitted with two-way telephone communication, a siren (for use in emergencies), interior seating space for an attendant, dark glass windows (to eliminate curtains), and with stretchers and other equipment standardised to be interchangeable throughout the service.
- All personnel should wear a prescribed style of uniform, cap, and badge. (No dustcoats and felt hats.) All should be qualified in first aid work, and have to pass an annual refresher examination.
- There should be one easily remembered telephone number.

Nor was that all, for he proposed a subscription scheme to cover the cost of the service – 10/- a year per family unit, and a charge of a guinea ($2.10) for non-subscribers for a call within a radius of three miles (5 km.) of an ambulance station. The service, he said, should be subsidised, with the government contributing four-ninths, the municipalities two-ninths, and the remaining three-ninths coming from subscriptions, charges and donations. The board running the service, he argued, should include representatives of government, the existing ambulance bodies, the St John Ambulance Brigade, the municipal councils, the trade union movement, and the business community. Finally, all ambulance services in the State, of which there were twenty-one in addition to metropolitan ones, should come under the control of the proposed board.[13]

What Brownrigg was suggesting was hardly exceptional: it was indeed the sort of service that for long had been standard in every other mainland capital. However, for Adelaide and the entrenched conservative government of Tom Playford (which had already been in office for twelve years,

and still had another fourteen to run) these were radical proposals. This possibly explains why, although the need was great, the government took another three years to bring into being, via the agency of the St John Council, something like the service Brownrigg and other critics were demanding.

Brownrigg's articles in *The News* did not allude to the fact, but at the time of their publication the St John Ambulance Brigade and Association were engaged in protracted negotiations with the SAAT, and the government's Advisory Council on Health and Medical Services in an attempt to reach an agreement that would give Adelaide, under the St John banner, the 'united, one-control' ambulance system he was calling for. These dealings, which had been going on for nearly four years, began early in 1947. The event that set them in motion seems to have been a conference run by the Royal Automobile Association of South Australia to consider 'highway first aid', a subject coming to prominence as motor traffic and accidents increased in lock step together. It was an issue in which both St John and the SAAT had an immediate interest, and shortly after the RAASA conference Goode, as Association secretary, and E.A.H. Russell, as Brigade Commissioner, attended a meeting with SAAT representatives. What came out of this was not a scheme for teaching first aid to motorists but a proposal for merging the SAAT with the Brigade. This was perhaps ironic, given the intense rivalry between the two bodies some fifteen years previously. Events had changed in the meantime, however: SAAT operations had never been on a large scale; there were financial difficulties; and, in common with most voluntary agencies in the immediate postwar years, SAAT was having trouble in recruiting the volunteers on whose efforts its service depended heavily. In short, as Shapter later remarked, 'SAAT had been battling for years', and were only too keen to pass over their burden.[14]

Goode reported on the outcome of his and Russell's meeting with the SAAT officials to a meeting of the Association Committee in May 1947. Since SAAT was so willing there seemed to be few obstacles to the merger. One was finance, because the Order would become responsible for what would be an expensive operation, with an extra burden of debt and run down equipment. Another was that six of the twelve SAAT drivers had no St John first aid certificates. A third problem, and what was to prove the chief impediment, was the entitlement of SAAT staff to long-service awards, and their wish to wear their SAAT long-service ribbons on their St John uniforms after the Brigade had taken charge of SAAT operations. After hearing Sir Mellis Napier's views on the subject the Committee decided to handle the first of these issues by forming a sub-committee to examine the financial aspects of the merger, and to this appointed Russell, McKee, Hayward, Goode and A.D. Young. On the other two issues the Committee decided to seek the views of Priory, and delegated to Goode the task of canvassing these with the Priory Executive.[15]

The sub-committee duly met with the SAAT, working out a twelve-point agreement with the latter which it reported to the next Association Committee meeting, in October 1947. The substance of the agreement was that the SAAT would become the Brigade's 'Transport Division', and would adopt the Brigade's badge. It would otherwise retain its discrete identity, however, including its own name, which would still appear on its ambulance vans and stationery, its own uniform, its Fire Brigade award ribbons, and its members' 'social rights'. A formula like this had been unsuccessfully tried out once before in Australia: in 1904 the Brigade in Sydney had taken under its wing a body called the Civil Ambulance Transport Corps, which became the Brigade's transport section while retaining its corporate identity. This marriage was never harmonious. If anything, it worsened the tensions the wedding had meant to heal, and so divorce followed almost inevitably eighteen years later. No doubt unaware of that particular lesson in history, the sub-committee went back into conference with the SAAT board the following month, and as a result the board agreed that Capt. Lonnen, the SAAT superintendent, and the SAAT solicitor, a Mr Bright, would amend the SAAT regulations to permit the merger to proceed. The only problem not resolved was St John recognition of long service with SAAT as a qualification for long service awards in the Brigade, and the right of SAAT personnel to wear their award ribbons on a uniform bearing Brigade badges and buttons. The sub-committee undertook to take this issue up with both Priory and London. This seemed such a minor matter that the Association *Annual Report* announced that SAAT was about to 'come in as the Ambulance Transport section of the Order of St John, displaying the St John badge and being responsible through their Chief Officer, who will be made a District Officer of the Brigade, to the Commissioner of the Brigade'.[16]

The proposed merger got no further. Discussions between Adelaide, the Priory and London over the issue of long service with SAAT and SAAT long service ribbons dragged on throughout 1948 and into 1949. Lonnen and his men stood firm: there would be no merger, SAAT insisted, unless St John made concessions to SAAT long service and to SAAT awards. That door seemed to close firmly in February 1949, when the Secretary General of the Grand Priory advised that 'past service with [SAAT] towards the Brigade service medal could not be accepted, it being "ultra vires" to regulations'. Despite this setback the St John leadership kept in touch with the SAAT leadership, ever hopeful that the latter might soften. Another year went by with the issue no nearer to resolution. Russell spoke about it at the Priory meeting in Sydney in June 1950:

> We have the highest hopes that the SAAT service will be incorporated into the Brigade soon.... We have had many talks with the Chief Officer, and they want to come in with us. We want them. ... There exists the best feeling between us.... I think we are going to get it, but give us time.[17]

By this stage some of his St John colleagues were doubting his sincerity, because to them he appeared to be the chief obstacle to the merger. In discussions with them he was saying that the Brigade could not afford to run a transport system, and that its proper role was to provide a public first aid service not ambulance transport. They also suspected that the matter of SAAT medals and long service could have been settled long ago if he had been less pedantic about getting a ruling on the matter from the Priory and from London. They concluded that, even though his public statements on the matter seemed unequivocally in favour of the Brigade's absorption of SAAT, he was privately against it.[18]

Despite Russell's various objections his St John colleagues, who wanted to take over the service, had perservered with him and with Lonnen. When the St John Council for South Australia formed in early 1950 it immediately began taking an interest in the St John-SAAT negotiations. It appointed the Association Centre Chairman, Col. W.S. Hanson, to chair a revitalized sub-committee on the ambulance service, and he co-opted Lonnen to work with the sub-committee. Lonnen was also a member of the St John Council, and was still saying 'there would be no trouble' in bringing about the merger if St John gave way on SAAT long service and ribbons. At the same time, Lonnen gave Hanson the impression that SAAT people felt they were being 'rebuffed' by St John, and that 'St John were shadow sparring, to get them on a limb, with the purpose on view of a vigorous use of the axe when appropriate opportunity offered'. Hanson guessed that Russell was the 'retarding influence'; and in order to shock him into a more compliant attitude towards the SAAT demands threatened to resign from the sub-committee. Hanson later said he told Russell he was 'not prepared to dither along unless real purpose was to be forthcoming to achieve what the Order had had in view'. That appeared to have the desired effect on Russell, who at least outwardly evinced a more positive attitude towards the merger. In March 1950 the sub-committee delegated to Hanson and Shapter the task of drafting a letter to the Chief Secretary, Sir Lyell McEwin, proposing, along the lines of the original 1947 agreement with SAAT, that St John should take over SAAT operations as the Brigade's transport section. The letter was long and detailed, backed up by a comparison of what St John was proposing with what prevailed interstate. It was even able to state that, as a special concession, Priory was prepared to give way on the issue of SAAT medals and long service. To add weight to these representations, Hanson met with McEwin to argue the St John case in person.[19]

The government, however, had decided in the meantime to establish a committee of inquiry to investigate the State's ambulance services. Stung, no doubt, by criticism in the press, and perhaps dubious about the outcome of the SAAT-St John dealings, it announced in March 1950 that it was setting up an 'Advisory Council on Health and Medical Services' to go into the matter thoroughly. The Advisory Council consisted of a panel of

well-known medical practitioners, its chairman being Dr A.R. Southwood and the other members being Drs Helen Mayo, J.W. Rollison, W. Christie, H.M. Birch and L.R. Mallen.[20]

Hanson's sub-committee delegated Russell to appear before the Advisory Council. He did so on 13 April 1950, arguing the sub-committee's case strongly. In answer to the Advisory Council's questions he made the following points: the State's ambulance facilities should be under one control; the Brigade, with its Divisions spread across the metropolitan area and in sixteen country towns should be the controlling authority; the Brigade could run the service more cheaply than anyone else by using teams of its volunteers to supplement salaried ambulance operators; the medical profession was wholeheartedly behind St John; the ideal arrangement would be for the SAAT to become the Brigade's transport section – a development each body desired; and the only problem was finance. In relation to this last point Russell explained that each ambulance would cost about £6600 a year in salaries alone, that a city the size of Adelaide should have about 20 ambulances, and that per-vehicle running costs and depreciation would amount to 2/6 a mile for the 16,000 miles (25,600 km.) each ambulance would run annually. That made an annual sum of £196,000 – a figure so large, he said, 'I will not commit my Order to that extent'. If St John was to take control of Adelaide's ambulance facilities, then, someone else, most probably the government and those making use of ambulances, would have to pay.[21]

The Advisory Council finished its inquiries in September 1950, and presented its report to the government at the beginning of November. The arguments the report set out would have been familiar to anyone who had read Blake Brownrigg's articles in *The News* earlier in the year:

> The time has come when something must be done to assure the orderly development of an efficient service, especially for the metropolitan area, commensurate with the growing population. Amalgamation of the existing services and the establishment of a central and single call depot for ambulances in the metropolitan area are essential now. . . . It is clear co-ordination should be the first aim. The fair and proper use of existing services and the eventual development of a unified plan are essential for that purpose. . . . The new scheme should provide a well-conducted comprehensive and efficient service, giving the public generally better facilities than those now available and a far greater degree of protection in the event of any major calamities.[22]

The report went on to make a series of twenty-five conclusions and recommendations. These boiled down to a proposal that the government should establish a statutory board to control and administer the existing services. The present services would thus be combined, but they, and St John, would all have representation on the board. Other interested bodies should also be represented – the Police and the Hospitals Departments, local government authorities, the British Medical Association, the Red

Cross, the Crippled Children's Association, the Bush Nursing Society, the Chamber of Manufacturers, and the Trades and Labour Council. The board should make full use of St John facilities, using the Association to train and certificate the 'bearers', and relying on the Brigade to provide voluntary 'bearers' to supplement the salaried ambulance staff at nights, weekends, on holidays, for race meetings and special functions. To fund all of this the report said that a variety of means should be used together – subscriptions, donations, fees for service, government grants, and allowances from local municipalities, in other words the sources that had always been used. In other ways, too, the Advisory Council was really proposing more of the same. Except for its recommendation for centralized control under a representative board, it was not suggesting any radical departure from existing practice. As far as St John was concerned the proposals simply formalized current practice: the Association certificate had generally been regarded as the yardstick for measuring ambulance skills, and Brigade personnel had customarily supplied many of the volunteers who supplemented the efforts of the paid staff of the existing services.[23]

The government now circulated copies of the report to the interested parties and called for their comments. SAAT, which would be most affected if the government adopted the Advisory Council's proposals, gave its reply on 27 November 1950. It was generally in agreement with what the report suggested. It pointed out that it thought the government should be primarily responsible for funding, then went on to recommend 'that the Board should be appointed at the earliest possible moment'. The St John reply was not forthcoming until late March 1951, only twelve days after Hanson had died, much preoccupied with his work on a St John response to the report. Hanson's death was 'in action': he collapsed and died while getting ready to go to a meeting at Government House, where the possibility of a St John-SAAT union was to be canvassed again. Although he had not finalized the St John response to the Advisory Council's report, a number of his ideas filtered through into subsequent St John thinking about the proposed ambulance service.[24]

With Hanson gone the task of preparing the St John reply fell upon Hayward, who was not only the chairman of the St John Council but a member of the Hanson sub-committee. The St John Council now abandoned the sub-committee, and delegated to Hayward the power 'to act as he deemed advisable' in further dealings over the ambulance transport issue. Hayward's reply to the Advisory Council's report took the form of a letter to the Under Secretary of McEwin's department, dated 21 March 1951. It rather typified his style: it was brief and to the point, and, if the reader were acute enough to perceive this, it contained a subtle threat. Just twenty-five lines long, it contained only four comments on the Advisory Council's recommendations – there would be 'psychological problems' in having salaried and voluntary staff working side by side; it was 'absolutely necessary' for an estimate to be made of the cost of running

the proposed service, a chore the Advisory Council had overlooked; the Order, with its own Royal Charter and Brigade regulations, might have difficulties being 'under the control of a Board set up by the government'; nevertheless both Brigade and Association would be 'only too happy to do all they can to help in every way'. It then concluded with the comment that St John would be happy to enter 'further consultations'. What McEwin and his department made of the letter is unknown, but perhaps the hint that St John might not prove co-operative with the proposed Ambulance Board was what persuaded the Chief Secretary to negotiate further with Hayward and, through him, St John.[25]

By July 1951 the government had still not made up its mind to accept the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Health and Medical Services, and it was at this stage that McEwin made overtures to St John. The government was obviously in a fix: it was uncertain about the Advisory Council's proposals; both vehicles of the Civil [Police] Ambulance were out of service with mechanical faults; new vehicles ordered from England had not arrived yet; as a result the SAAT service was stretched beyond capacity; and the press were starting up their clamour again. Thirty years later Hayward was fond of repeating his version of what then happened. McEwin, he said, was worried about what the government should be doing, and called on him for advice. No record of their discussion remains, for their meeting was one of those informal chats between 'Old Boys', quite likely conducted over Scotch and cigars in the seclusion of McEwin's office, or perhaps in the Adelaide Club, that convivial venue for deciding on the affairs of the State. Minutes are not kept on such occasions, and the decisions made are 'gentlemen's agreements'. Hayward later said McEwin outlined the government's problems then asked if St John was really capable of taking over the city's ambulance facilities. 'Of course we can!' Hayward replied. McEwin then asked him to write down on one sheet of paper 'how St John would do the job'. Hayward sat down at home that night and wrote out an eleven-point plan according to which St John could progressively take control. His secretary typed this up the next morning, and he gave it to McEwin the same day. McEwin, he said, glanced at it and exclaimed, 'Hmph! It's yours! You've got the bloody ambulances!'[26]

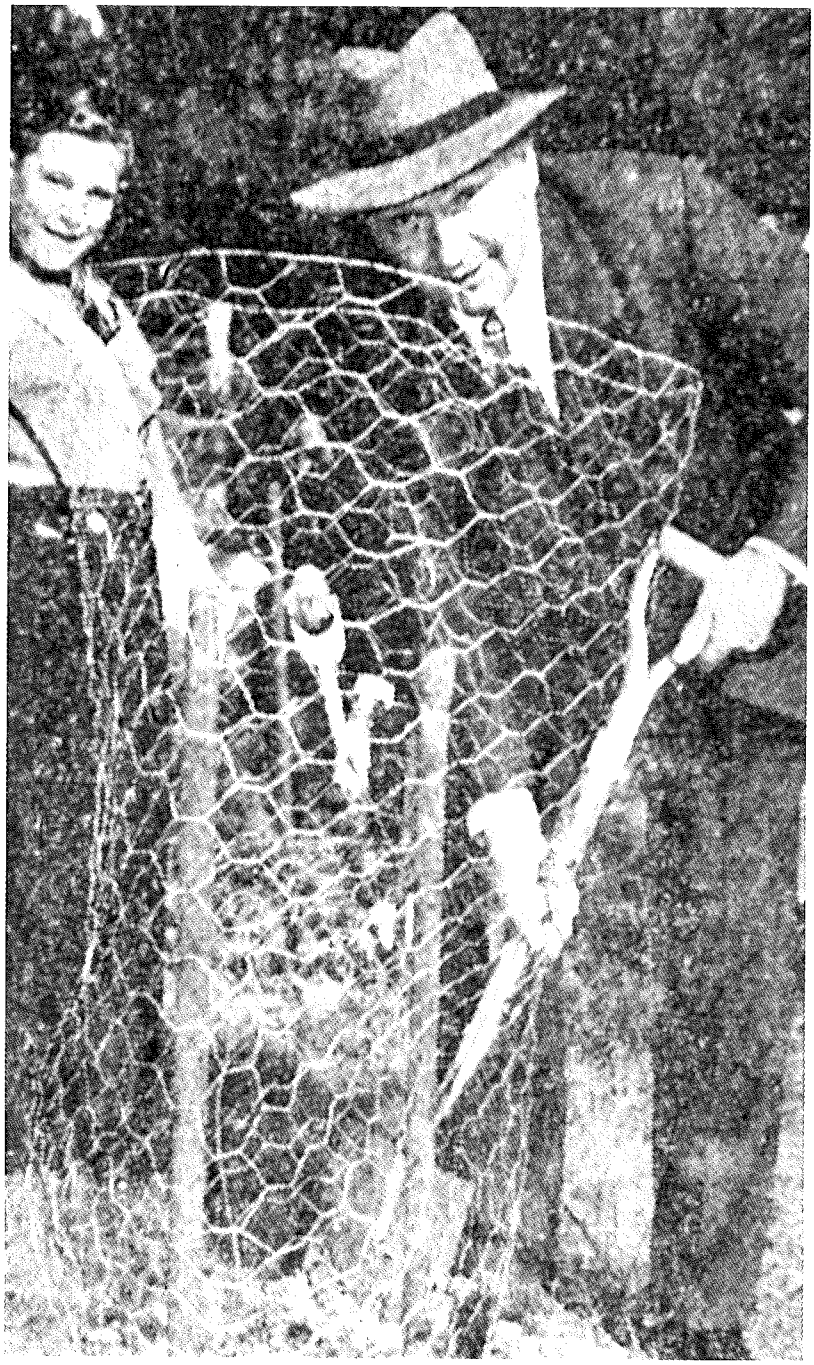
That, at long last, was that! St John was to become the proprietor of Adelaide's ambulance transport facilities some sixty years after the organization's founders first dreamed of doing so.

The Hayward plan remained a 'gentlemen's agreement' between the government and the St John Council, and it was to continue being so, without the blessing of legislation, for at least the next thirty-three years. Because it was to remain the basis of the service the St John Council now began building up, and because it later led both St John and the government into difficulties Hayward and McEwin might not have envisaged in July 1951, it is worth repeating here:

(1) The Council of St John will undertake to organize an efficient Ambulance Service for South Australia, starting in the City and gradually expanding to Suburban and Country centres.
(2) The South Australian Government will recognize the Council of St John as the authority to maintain and control the Ambulance Service in South Australia, and the St John Council will be responsible to the Government to carry out this work faithfully.
(3) The Service will, wherever possible, be worked by voluntary labour and only paid personnel will be used where absolutely necessary to maintain an adequate service.
(4) Finance will be by public subscription to St John, with the help of grants from the Government.
(5) The Government will make available a central depot to be used by St John for the operation of the Ambulance Service.
(6) The Police Department and St John will work together in the operation, control and maintenance of the Service.
(7) The St John [Ambulance] Association will undertake to train in first-aid all the personnel that will be employed in connection with the operation of the Service.
(8) The Police will have the right to charge for the Service in circumstances where there will be no hardship. This money would go towards the maintenance of the Service.
(9) St John Council to organize an auxiliary Ambulance Service for special circumstances . . . this to consist of private commercial vans fitted so that they can be immediately converted into use as Ambulances.
(10) Private Ambulance Services should be allowed to carry on the good work that has been done in the past, but should work in with the Police Department and St John's for the general benefit of the community.
(11) St John would be prepared and willing to absorb any Ambulance or Ambulance Services operating in the State of South Australia, and they would then become part of the St John Ambulances.[27]

It was a masterpiece in corporate dealing. It fully justified the belief of those who had elected Hayward St John Council chairman that the organization needed a businessman rather than a lawyer or doctor in command. It made all parties – the government, the St John bodies, the proprietors of the various ambulance services – the sort of offer they could not refuse. At one blow it solved their several problems, saved their faces, allowed them all to feel proud that they were doing something of value for the community, and held out the promise of the Statewide ambulance service for which even the most optimistic among them had hardly dared pray.

The next step was for the Premier, Tom Playford, to call a meeting of the principal interested parties – St John, SAAT, and the Police Commissioner, Ivor Green, who was nominally in charge of the Civil Ambulance. Playford, supremely assured in the office he held in semi-perpetuity, handled such meetings well. With him, the stern, avuncular figure, in the chair there could be no dissent. All parties readily agreed to the Hayward



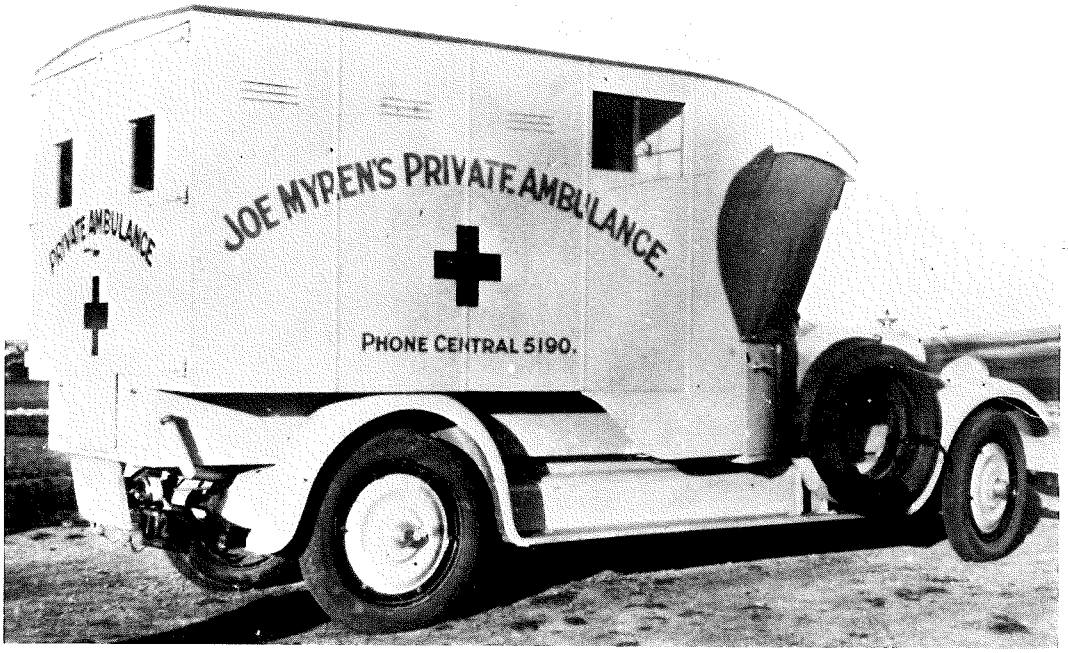
The Premier, Sir Thomas Playford, plants the first tree at the Brigade's Carripook campsite near Bridgewater, about 1955.

plan, and they agreed that other ambulance services should come into the scheme as well. To start off with, however, only the SAAT service would come under St John Council control, as the 'Transport Corps of the Brigade'. This would provide the nucleus for an adequate metropolitan service, which would later be extended into the country until a complete network was operating throughout the State. Green offered to accommodate all the ambulances, a work shop and control office at the Thebarton Police Barracks, but until that was ready the service would operate out of the SAAT headquarters in Hindmarsh, with suburban depots at Unley, Glenelg, Norwood and Thebarton Playford promised 'a fairly substantial grant towards the service', which turned out to be £10,000 to cover the purchase of three new ambulances and the renovation of the old vehicles. The service would other wise be self-funding: the 40,000 subscribers on the SAAT roll would be taken over and carried free, as would be those in need, but non-subscribers able to pay would be billed. The meeting agreed that the whole service would be under St John Council control, with the Brigade Commissioner, Dr F.K. Mugford, who had recently replaced E.A.H. Russell, having overall command. Lonnen, who had since become a member of the Council, would become the District Officer (Transport), and his deputy, Neville Wood, would become Corps Superintendent (Transport).[28]

With these details settled, Hayward announced the merger in October 1951. The St John Council, he said, hoped that a co-ordinated ambulance service with a fleet of eighteen vehicles would be operating by the end of the year. This was perhaps being over-optimistic, for the legal documents to allow the transfer of SAAT facilities to St John were not ready until December. They were signed during January 1952, and the handover to

The ambulance van of the Northern Suburbs Ambulance Association Inc., which amalgamated with the St John service in 1952.





The first of the ambulances Joe Myren ran privately from his garage on the Glen Osmond Rd., Parkside.

the St John Council took place on 1 February. By this time the Northern Suburbs Ambulance Service, based on the Prospect-Enfield area, had decided to come into the scheme. That gave the new St John Ambulance Brigade Transport Corps its fourth transport division, the others being Hindmarsh, Unley and West Torrens. The official handover ceremony was planned for March, and was to have taken place in conjunction with the Brigade's annual review; however, the death of the King, George VI, the Sovereign Head of the Order, who probably had no idea of what was being accomplished in his name in far off South Australia, caused a postponement. In the end it did not occur until Sunday 22 September 1952, when, amidst due pomp and ceremony on the military parade ground, a member of the St John Council, Maj. Hurtle C. Morphett, M.C., the chairman of the Council's Appeals Committee, officially took charge of the service in the name of the Order. He was standing in for Sir Mellis Napier, who was ill, and for Hayward, who was on a business trip to England.[29]

The service still did not control all Adelaide's ambulances: the Police held on to their two Civil Ambulance vehicles until 1954, and Joe Myren did not pass over his private ambulance until 1955, when he agreed to sell if for £500 – a very generous price probably several times the value of the vehicle and the 'goodwill' combined. However, by the time of the official handover the St John service was operating fairly effectively. By the end of 1952 it had carried 8501 cases and had travelled 8835 miles (14,136 km.). The voluntary component of this workload was significant as 5738 individual voluntary duties were performed, totalling 36,264 hours. Even more significant was the fact that the fulltime ambulance

officers carried by far the largest part of that burden. Their share was 98.3 *per cent* of the duties and 98.6 *per cent* of the hours! The St John Council could hardly have complained that it was not getting value for money from its salaried officers.[30]

The main need of the new service at this early stage was funds. It had twelve vehicles at its disposal, but a number of these were dilapidated and required extensive repair or replacement. The St John Council accordingly decided to run an appeal to provide much needed working capital. It set up an Appeals Committee to launch a public appeal for money, and appointed Morphett to organize this. The result was hardly encouraging, for the appeal had a target of £25,000 but fell short of this by some £8500, and the amount raised included a government donation of £5000. Perhaps it was this disappointing outcome that persuaded the government to grant the service an additional £5000 for vehicle maintenance. For at least the first two or three years government grants were the largest source of revenue for the service. Their proportion of total receipts varied between thirty-three and forty-four *per cent*, compared with transport fees, from thirty-three to thirty-seven *per cent*, and subscriptions, from fifteen to twenty-two *per cent*. Injections of government funds like this both for general purposes and earmarked projects would continue to be necessary. The granting of such subsidies so willingly was perhaps the government's way of saying it was grateful to have found another body eager to relieve it of a wearisome burden. After all the criticism and scorn the press had been raining down upon the government of late, an annual £15,000 or so was a small price to pay for peace.[31]

The transition to centralized control by the St John Council of Adelaide's ambulance facilities seemed smooth to South Australians outside of St John and probably to most St John people as well. Appearances were deceptive, however, for behind the orderly and businesslike St John takeover Hayward and E.A.H. Russell were waging an acrimonious struggle for power over and pre-eminence within the South Australian St John organization. Their rivalry dated back to 1947, when Hayward had first joined the Association Committee. Three decades later Hayward enjoyed relating his side of the story to those who would listen. Accord ing to that version he had been brought into St John to offset the influence of Russell. Russell had inherited the mantle of S.L. Dawkins, having become Assistant Brigade Commissioner, and thus its effective head, when Dawkins had risen to become Commandery Commissioner; he had retained that position when Samuel Burston had succeeded Dawkins, again being the *de facto* leader because Burston was at best a nominal head, his duties as the chief of the Army's medical services keeping him out of active Brigade life; and when Burston became Chief Commissioner for Australia, Russell succeeded him in South Australia. Russell's influence was pervasive, for he was not only the head of the Brigade but a member of nearly every other St John forum as well. He was on the St John Council, the

Dr E.A.H. Russell, Brigade Commissioner 1947-51. ►



Association Committee, the Hospitallers' Club, the Investigation Committee (which selected candidates for admission into and promotion within the Order), the sub-committee working on the takeover of SAAT operations, the Priory Executive, Priory Council and Priory Chapter, and as Priory Librarian was recognized within the Priory as the 'Executive Officer for South Australia' – that is the portfolio officer representing South Australian interests. Hayward later claimed that two of Russell's own senior Brigade officers had been so displeased with their Commissioner they had come to him, an outsider, to vent their grievances. This pair were R.P. Goode and J.E. McKee. Each of them knew Hayward through Adelaide business circles. Goode, as we have seen, ran an accountancy firm as well as being Association secretary, a Brigade District Officer and briefly the Brigade secretary as well; McKee was the advertising manager of *The Advertiser*, a Brigade District Officer and a member of both the St John Council and the Association Committee; both were members of the Priory Council; and they were therefore influential themselves within St John affairs in both South Australia and the Priory. Goode and McKee, Hayward said, protested that St John was 'in a mess', with poorly kept records, no building of its own, and Russell trying to run everything. He said they also complained about Russell's grandiose notions of his role within the organization, saying that he had obtained an ornate uniform for himself in England, and had once worn it to a ball in Adelaide at which the Duke of Gloucester had been present. So grand it was that the Commissioner had upstaged his own Grand Prior. With such a man in charge, they argued, St John would lose the ground it had gained in South Australia; and so what was needed to set things aright was for an experienced, hard-headed, shrewd and practical businessman like Hayward to come into the organization.[32]

Hayward's first close St John dealings with Russell were probably in 1947 as a member of the Association sub-committee on the merger of SAAT and the Brigade, which Russell had chaired. The opinion he formed of the Commissioner was not a high one, for while the latter was negotiating towards taking over the SAAT ambulance service he seemed against the idea, saying, 'We don't do that sort of thing'. When the sub-committee re-formed under Hanson in early 1950, after the establishment of the St John Council, Russell remained a member of it, and his thinking plainly influenced Hanson. Hanson used a high-flown rhetoric when referring to the Brigade, speaking of 'venerat[ing] the uniform which our men wear and the decorations they wear on their breasts, a veneration engendered by the contemplation of those ideals enshrined in the history . . . of the Order' – his way of saying that SAAT ribbons should not sully the St John uniform. Hayward was contemptuous of such pretension and impatient with the obstruction it was causing. As a businessman, practical results for him came before venerable tradition couched in grandiloquent phrases.[33]

Given Russell's and Hayward's contrasting views on St John tradition, and that the one was an old man who had served long in St John while labouring to the top whereas the other was a young man lifted to the pinnacle within four years, their conflict was not surprising. Hayward had no real wish to clash with Russell, to engage in polemics with him, and so he did what was perhaps the most aggravating for his older rival – he simply ignored him. By the time he had picked up from where Hanson had left off he was sure St John ought to be running Adelaide's ambulances, and had lost all patience with those of his predecessors in St John who had been talking for four years of taking over the SAAT operations without bringing off the merger. When the opportunity to take control came during the meeting with Sir Lyle McEwin he seized it, and in several months accomplished what others had vainly struggled for years to achieve. Russell was irrelevant to Hayward in all of this, and, perhaps because he thought Russell might be obstructive if consulted, he went ahead making commitments for the Brigade without bothering to consider the views of the Commissioner. Russell was deeply offended on two counts: firstly, as Commissioner it was his right to be consulted; and secondly, as the Priory Executive Officer for South Australia, he strongly believed he should be party to the negotiations so as to keep the Priory informed.

When Russell realized Hayward was bypassing him he tried to remonstrate with the latter. He wrote Hayward a long, impassioned letter, arguing that he, Russell, had been instrumental in establishing the St John Council, which had now become the vehicle for Hayward's ambitions. Hayward replied politely, suggesting that rather than engage in an extended correspondence they should meet to discuss their differences. What they said to each other at their meeting, indeed whether or not they actually met, is unknown; but not long after this Hayward succeeded in having Russell removed from any further effective influence in St John. He did this by going first to Sir Mellis Napier to complain that the 'hopeless' Russell was proving difficult. Napier passed this on to the Governor, Sir Willoughby Norrie, possibly hinting that the latter might intervene in his capacity as Deputy Prior. Shortly afterwards Hayward received a 'phone call from the Governor's secretary saying that Russell would be seeing Norrie at 11.30 that morning, and that Hayward should come to Government House before this to give the Governor his side of the story. Hayward kept the appointment; and later in the day had the satisfaction of being called from his lunch at the Adelaide Club to answer a 'phone call from the Governor himself. 'Dr Russell's resignation has been accepted', Norrie said.[34]

Russell was not inclined to accept either humiliation or defeat, or the means by which Hayward was taking control of St John. Wheeling-and-dealing to him was still wheeling-and-dealing, and therefore inappropriate for an august body like St John, even if it had been carried out in the

respectable seclusion of Government House, by the most respected members of the Adelaide 'Establishment', and in the name of the Order. He now took his grievances to what he regarded as a higher court – the Priory Council. At the Priory Council meeting in Sydney in November 1952 he laid a number of charges against Hayward and the St John Council. First, there was the matter of the public appeal to raise funds for the ambulance service; and second was the way Hayward had acted behind Russell's back. Hayward had been in England when the appeal had been launched, and had arranged through the Secretary General of the Order at St John's Gate for the Duke of Gloucester to send a message of support to the appeal organisers in Adelaide. Protocol demanded that such requests should come through the Priory in Australia; but Hayward, who could plead ignorance of Priory conventions, had done what seemed sensible – he had simply taken advantage of being in England to make his request personally. He later wrote to Poate, the Australian Sub-Prior, to apologise for not having referred the matter to Priory, which would, of course, have meant passing the request through Russell. Poate was not amused, either at Hayward's going direct to St John's Gate or at his bypassing of Russell. Poate was in a quandary. On the one hand he was greatly displeased that Hayward, in flouting convention, was seen to be thumbing his nose at the Priory; but on the other hand he was pleased Hayward had brought off the ambulance deal, and he guessed it could not have happened if the latter had handled the matter any other way. He therefore censured Hayward publicly but congratulated him in private. To the Priory Council he said,

> We object very much to the method adopted in developing this project. ... 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.[35]

However, he later told Hayward in private he was pleased with his enterprizing promotion of the Order's interests, saying, 'It's what all the other States should be doing'. A number of other Priory members shared this private view, and said so at the Priory Council meeting. As one Victorian delegate remarked, 'Whilst we feel that a certain amount of censure is warranted on the St John Council for neglecting to advise us, can we not also at the same time congratulate them on having done something positive?'[36]

Russell must almost have choked with anger to hear one of his fellow Priory officers condoning Hayward's action. After the Victorian delegate had spoken he broke into the discussion to say he was shocked

> at the ill advised [suggestion] that South Australia be complimented on their action. ... 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 Excellency 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.[37]

The Priory Council argued around the issue for some time before eventually agreeing to send Poate and Burston off to Adelaide to 'thoroughly investigate the matter and ensure that [it] is carried through to success'.[38]

The Sub-Prior and his Chief Commissioner subsequently came to Adelaide to see for themselves what Hayward had been up to. They departed well pleased. At the next year's Priory meeting, in Sydney in June 1953, Poate gave the St John Council and its ambulance service a strong endorsement. 'I think the St John Council are to be congratulated upon the way this changeover has got into good working order', he told the Priory Chapter, 'and there is every prospect of increasing the usefulness and the amount of service that can be done by this Ambulance Transport Section in South Australia'.[39]

Russell's reactions to this vote of confidence by Poate in Hayward and the St John Council are unknown to this writer, but there is little doubt that he felt his Sub-Prior had betrayed him. His response was to drop right out of all St John affairs. He doggedly held on to his position as the Priory Executive Officer for South Australia for another six years, but he stopped attending Priory meetings. That, perhaps, was his way of telling his fellow Priory officers he had lost faith in them. His most tangible connection with St John thereafter until his death in 1968 was the appearance of his name in the list of South Australian Knights of the Order which formed the frontispiece of each *Annual Report*. It was a sad end to a St John career extending back more than forty years, and to a family connection with St John going back to the earliest days of the Adelaide Centre. As Beryl Fegan has observed, 'Dr E.A.H. Russell was very proud of his family's involvement with St John almost from its inception in South Australia in that his mother attended the first classes for women held outside Adelaide and only the second in the State of Ladies' First Aid and Home Nursing', while Russell's three sisters had obtained certificates, and two of them medallions, at the turn of the century. In addition his brother, Dr H.H.E. Russell, had served as the Brigade's District Surgeon from about 1933 until his death in 1951, and as an Association Centre Committee member 1926-51. It was a little ironic, too, that the few 'old hands' who in the 1980s could still remember the Russell brothers recalled them chiefly for their nicknames, 'Fatty' (H.H.E. – a man of substantial girth, which his tight-fitting Brigade uniform emphasized) and 'Skinny' (E.A.H., who was as lean as his brother was portly).[40]

Three decades and more after these events several aspects of the St John takeover strike the student of South Australian history. First there is the casual approach the Playford government took to an issue so sensitive for the public. The leisurely manner in which the government came to a decision perhaps was a measure of how assured Playford and his Liberal Country League were in their hold on the reins of office. A government

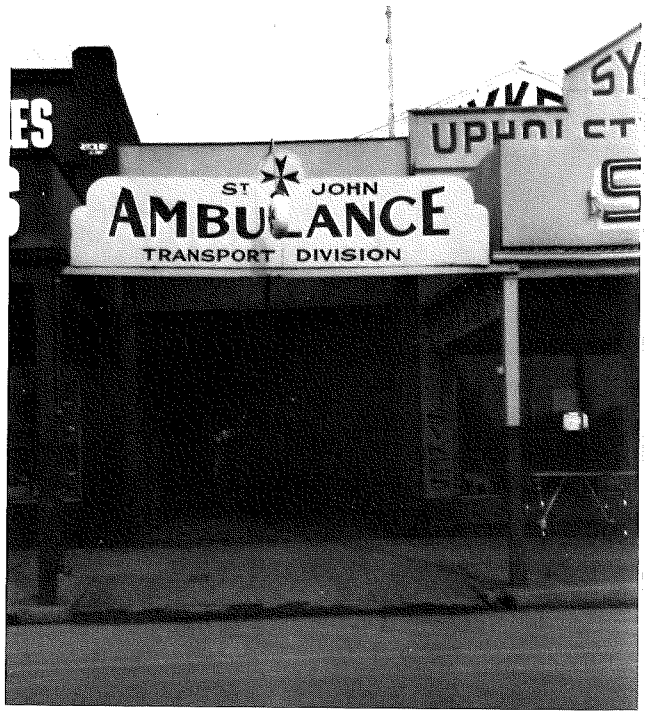
more nervous about its standing with electors would most likely have done something positive about the State's haphazard ambulance services years before. Second is the extraordinary means by which the St John Council carried off the prize. As much as a tribute to Hayward's entrepreneurial talents, this was a testament to the strength of the Adelaide 'Establishment', that closely woven network linking the city's leading financial and commercial houses, the senior members of its legal and medical fraternities, the Adelaide Club, St Peter's College Old Boys, the Playford Cabinet and Government House. A deal like the one Hayward pulled off on behalf of the St John Council could probably have happened only in a community with a ruling elite as closely knit as Adelaide's was midway through the Playford years. Third, the circumstances of Russell's departure were further evidence of the power and influence of that elite, for a nod in the right direction meant the end of his St John career. There was a further lesson for St John, too, in the demise of Russell. He, like Hussey, and to a lesser extent Dawkins, showed yet again the danger for a voluntary organization in allowing one person too much power in too many directions over too long a period. In bodies like St John there seems to be a critical point at which a leader's emotional investment takes over from his or her ability to see the organization objectively. Beyond that point there is an increasing danger that he or she will, with the best of intentions, do more harm than good.

Finally, and perhaps most significant of all, the observer of the mid-1980s might wonder whether or not Hayward and the St John Council had really served themselves well through their 'Establishment' connections. They had used these to advantage in 1951, when the Liberal Country League reigned supreme in South Australia. However, by the mid-80s the political complexion of the State had changed. Labor was in power everywhere in Australia except in the country's most northerly and southerly extremities. Labor memories were long, and Labor Ministers who remembered the decades their party had spent languishing in the wilderness were suspicious about, if not downright hostile to, organizations they regarded as being too partisan, too close to those sitting on the opposite side of parliament. As we will see in a later chapter, few St John leaders in the mid-80s could deny that the organization's earlier easy access to Liberal Ministers was an important factor in the troubles the St John Council was having with the Bannon Labor government.

3. *Growth of the ambulance service during the 1950s*

The ambulance service which the St John Council took over was a ramshackle outfit. By 1951 SAAT was using Sykes' Furniture Factory on Port Road, Hindmarsh, as its depot. This was an unpretentious wooden building, the top floor of which was still in use for making furniture. Space was cramped, there was little room for the vehicles to manoeuvre, and,

St John's first ambulance base, at Sykes' furniture factory, Port Road, Hindmarsh.



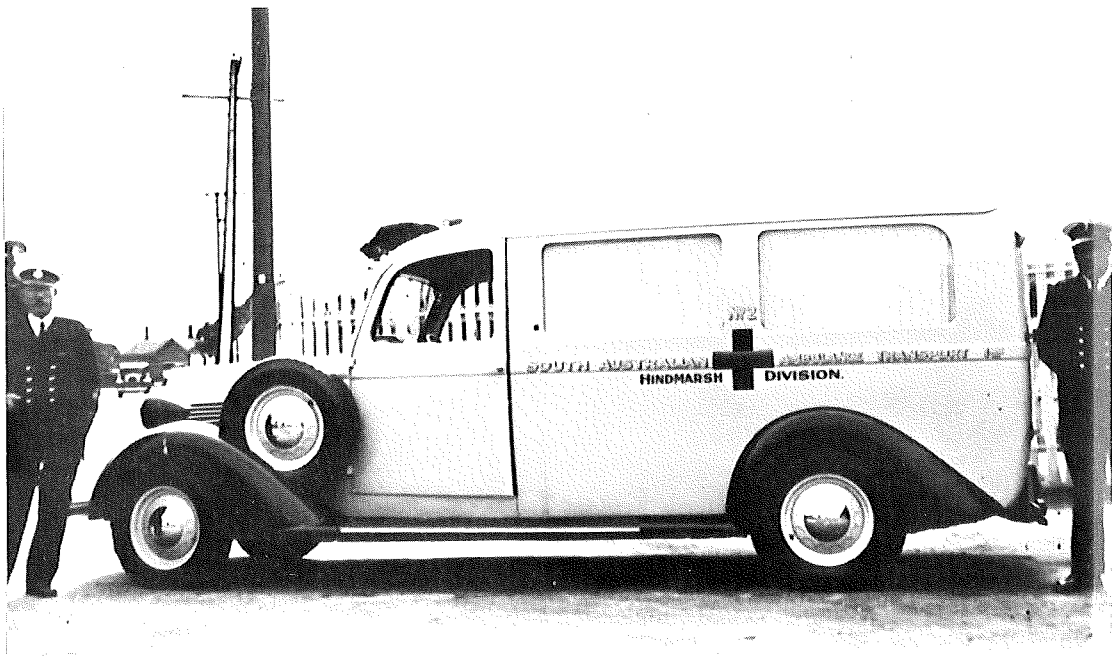
Part of St John's newly acquired fleet of ambulances at the rear of Sykes' furniture factory, 1951.



with a 500-gallon (2273-litre) tank of paint thinner installed on the top floor, the building was a fire trap. Some of the vehicles, for example a 1926 Packard, should have been in a museum rather than a metropolitan ambulance service. The subscription scheme was delightfully whimsical. There were four salaried collectors who rode round the suburbs on bicycles, with kitbags fixed to the handlebars, visiting the homes of subscribers to collect their annual fee of 6/-. They were an oddly assorted group: one was a retired parson, another a part-time trainer of trotting horses, and one of them soon had to be dismissed when he appeared back at the depot without his kitbag. He claimed the wind had blown it away with all his day's takings. The court which subsequently heard his case probably got a laugh from his story, and let him off with a bond.[41]

Problems were also caused by a senior ex-SAAT officer with responsibilities for ambulance traffic. He was slovenly, difficult to get along with, and resisted attempts by the St John management to exercise surveillance over the service. When it was discovered that he was running a profitable business on the side – trading in tyres and batteries stolen from the service – he resigned. One of his close relatives went with him. She had been employed to keep the accounts, but her insolence and laziness had made more of an impression on the St John management than her accounting skills. After the departure of this pair, in 1954, Shapter took on the job of general manager of the transport service in addition to his other secretarial duties. At the same time a recent appointee, Philip L. Ferrier, became depot manager. Ferrier, who succeeded Shapter as general manager in 1964, had a background in public relations. He had been brought in to promote the service and to help handle its increasing volume of business. As Shapter and Ferrier took over the running of the service they found its records in a

One of the South Australian Ambulance Transport vans taken over by the St John ambulance service in 1951.



mess. There was no record, for example, of which subscribers had or had not paid their dues. They accordingly prepared a letter asking subscribers to pay up their arrears, and sent this out to the 10,000 or so known subscribers. They were amazed at the response: so much money came in within the next few weeks there was enough to purchase two new ambulances.[42]

Another early priority was to equip all the ambulances with two-way radio, an expensive task to which Ferrier applied himself with a will. During 1954 he staged a series of fund-raising activities – a veteran car rally run with the aid of the Sporting Car Club, a Repertory Theatre 'benefit', a 'Stairway to Stardom' collection, and various other gimmicks from the fund-raiser's armory. The result was an extra £1105/5/8. These functions probably had greater value than the sum they returned. They not only persuaded the public to pay up but also kept the St John name before their eyes, and – more importantly – built up good will with the government by demonstrating that the St John service aimed to be as self-sufficient as possible. This became clear the next year when the government made a special grant of £2500 to enable the service to have two-way radios installed in all vehicles by the end of 1955.[43]

Other pressing priorities were the construction of an adequate depot with ample space for the growing fleet, which had increased from the eight vehicles taken over from SAAT in 1951 to fifteen in 1955, and further fund-raising to pay for it. The site Shapter and Ferrier decided on was a block of land in John St. (now South Rd.), Hindmarsh, formerly a bend in the Torrens River, later a rubbish dump, and since filled in. To cover the costs of purchase and construction they ran an appeal, which *The Advertiser* sponsored. The target was £30,000, but, disappointingly, only about half that came in. Again the government stepped in, making up most of the shortfall with a grant of £14000. The St John Council's honorary architect, Mr L. Dawkins (a son of the former Commissioner) drew up the plans in late 1954; construction began early in 1955; Playford laid the foundation stone on 22 April; and at the end of the year the service moved into the new building, which contained the operational headquarters, staff recreation facilities, the vehicle depot and the workshop. A grand celebration took place in February 1956, when 200 official guests and numerous St John workers came along to see the Governor, Sir Robert George, perform the opening ceremony. The St John Council was highly pleased with it all, for, as Hayward said in his chairman's report for 1955, 'the change to the new administration building and garage has enabled comfortable working conditions, ... resulting in increased efficiency and results'.[44]

Another early task was to start on the long job of bringing the country centres under the St John umbrella. Many of the country services needed little prompting: Shapter later recalled that as soon as St John had taken responsibility for the metropolitan service they 'besieged' him with



The latest in ambulance technology and St John promotion: one of the new Ford Mainline vans, and an advertisement for the ambulance subscription scheme, Hindmarsh ambulance centre, 1956.

various requests – for financial support, for new vehicles, for the overhauling of existing vehicles, for the loan of cars, for the supply of oxygen equipment, for assimilation into the St John organization. Renmark, Angaston and Kapunda were the first to affiliate with St John, in 1953. Port Augusta, Murray Bridge, Onkaparinga and Tailem Bend were all clamouring for advice and assistance; and Barmera, Kadina, Loxton, Bordertown, Jamestown, Peterborough, Eudunda, Penola, Keith, Victor Harbour and Balaklava were not far behind.[45]

To systematize such requests Shapter and Ferrier surveyed country districts to establish what ambulance facilities existed outside Adelaide. Ferrier prepared a letter asking the country districts to send in details of their services. Most co-operated. What emerged was a pattern of haphazard, generally indifferent, or totally absent services. Only about a dozen country services existed, and a number of these had either non-operational or unsuitable vehicles. Shapter and Ferrier began visiting country centres systematically, bearing the St John banner wherever they went. What they found on some of their earlier visits was at least comical. At Kadina, for instance, the local ambulance was a 1933 Vauxhall without shock absorbers. At Millicent the town ambulance was parked in a paddock behind a garage, whose proprietor had been the driver in the days when the ambulance was in working order. It had remained unused for so long a crop of oats was growing up through it, and the tyres had rotted away. Peterborough had an International ex-Army truck, its tray fitted with roll-down canvas sides like a fruiterer's cart. As the tyres of its double rear wheels were kept filled to a pressure of seventy pounds per square inch, the matron at the local hospital said she would use it only in cases of overdue pregnancy.[46]

Eventually the country services became standardized under St John influence, even in those districts which chose to retain their own services rather than affiliate with St John. By 1958 thirty-six country services had either affiliated or had formed strong ties with the St John service. Most of them were fairly marginal operations, run part-time and voluntarily by community-minded local residents. St John could not always give them the level of assistance they demanded, which usually prompted them to complain to the government. In 1958 Playford, no doubt tiring of such petitions, called Shapter in to discuss the matter. Shapter later remembered the Premier 'berating' him for 'not doing anything for the country'. Shapter answered that St John was 'going flat out just to cater to the needs of the metropolitan area', and suggested that if the government were displeased with what St John was doing it might like to run the service itself. Playford, he recalled, paused for a second; replied, 'Let me think for a moment'; scratched his head, then asked, 'If we give you another £10,000 can you do something about the country services?' Shapter said he could, with the result that, whereas the government had been giving the service an annual grant of from £10,000 to £12,500, from 1958 the government subsidy almost doubled.[47]

The St John Council took an important step towards standardizing the country services in 1960, after it had run a Statewide convention of ambulance services at the Hindmarsh depot, which Hayward chaired. The convention passed several significant resolutions. One was to implement a plan for zoning the country ambulance services, and a second was to form a branch of the Council in each zone for those services wishing to affiliate with St John. The Council's legal adviser, R.M. Napier (the son of Sir Mellis), subsequently drew up an affiliation agreement which allowed for

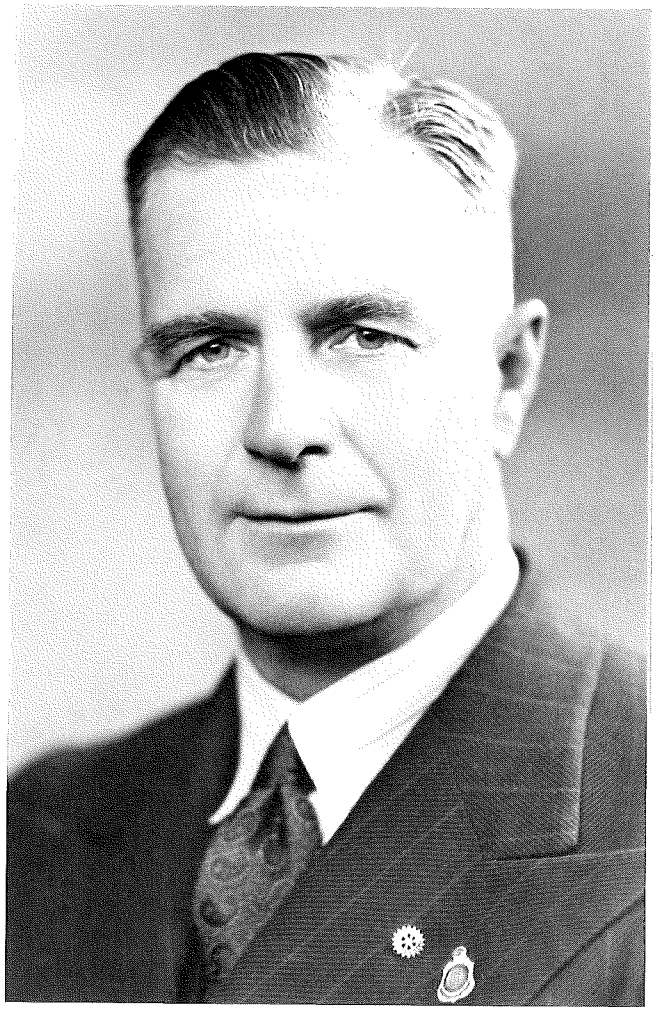
The Kadina ambulance, 1947, a caravan towed behind a twenty year old Buick, owned and operated by the local Brigade division.



both 'general' and 'local' administration of the country services. The general aspect covered the St John Council responsibility and the role of the Hindmarsh headquarters, which should set the standard for new equipment and vehicles, permit the name 'St John Ambulance' to be used by affiliates, provide standardized training for country operators, serve as their supply base, conduct a radio communication network on a standard frequency and according to uniform procedures, subsidize their mileage at a rate of ninepence a mile, and, as the country services took on salaried staff, run their superannuation schemes. The local aspect involved the country services' looking after their own finance and banking, and the replacement of their vehicles, in which they would be subsidized by St John. The effects of these new arrangements soon became apparent, for whereas the country services carried 4500 patients and travelled 211,000 miles in 1960, in 1961 the figures were 4994 and 250,160 – an increase of eleven *per cent* in patients, and of eighteen *per cent* in distances.[48]

By 1960 the metropolitan service was clocking up even more impressive tallies. That year it carried 25,497 patients and travelled 291,304 miles (466,086 km.), compared with the 15,569 and 211,298 (338,077 km.) of two years before. The voluntary component of the service was significant. Brigade members put in 73,376 hours in doing 12,970 duties with the Transport Section in 1958; and two years later the figures were up to 88,716 hours and 16,461 duties. Little wonder Playford was so ready to subsidize the expansion the St John Council had embarked upon! Those tens of thousands of voluntary hours enabled the service to run round the clock, with all vehicles on the road all the time if necessary. They enabled the St John Council to give South Australia what were no doubt the cheapest ambulance services in the country. So pleased was the government, indeed, that it never saw fit to give the service a legislative base. The Premier made his views known publicly on at least one occasion. That was in December 1956 at a ceremony in Adelaide at which he handed over new vehicles to Eudunda, Balaklava, Keith, Penola and Victor Harbor, these districts having raised sufficient money for the purchases. The government, he said in his platitudinous way, 'had every confidence' in the St John administration, and 'would continue with its support, as in the past'. The St John Council had been showing it could be relied on to run an efficient service that reflected well on the government. The St John ambulance staff and the volunteers were yearly demonstrating an almost fanatical dedication. And so, as Ferrier later remarked, 'there was no need for formal legislation'.[49]

Perhaps the most pleasing feature of the St John service in its first decade was the high morale and sense of cameraderie among its workers. This in large part was probably due to the combination of the principal personalities. Sir Mellis Napier, as Chief Justice, Lieutenant Governor and St John Council president, was a worthy figurehead whose presence helped even the lowliest Brigade ambulance volunteer feel that he [not 'or



Dr Frank Mugford, Brigade Commissioner 1951-60.

she' in those days] was playing a part in the affairs of a great South Australian institution. Napier, as we have seen, took a close interest in all aspects of St John work, and this extended to the ambulance service. Indeed on one occasion, late at night and perhaps after a St John reception, he even asked one of the drivers, Alan Lockwood, to give him a ride in an ambulance 'to see what it's like'. Lockwood later reported to Ferrier, 'He's not a bad old geezer, in his claw-hammer coat, so I took him for a burn down the Grange Road, flat on his back on a stretcher, with the siren on'. Hayward, as Council chairman, was suitably avuncular, and was affectionately known as 'Uncle Bill' around St John. When occasion demanded he brought his gruff manner and corner-cutting entrepreneurial skills to bear, but otherwise he stayed in the background. He delegated much of his power to Shapter and Ferrier, telling them, 'Don't come to me unless you have real problems!' Shapter, a gentle, undemonstrative person who combined the accountant's tidy ways with shrewd observation of human foibles, had learnt his managerial craft during his long St John apprenticeship. He had learnt well what would later be called 'communication skills',



The Prior and Governor General Sir William Slim, visits the Hindmarsh ambulance centre, 1959. Left to right are Phil Ferrier (Brigade and Association secretary), Dr Frank Mugford (Brigade Commissioner), Sir William Slim, Ken Shapter (St John Ambulance manager).

through watching in action the strengths and weaknesses of such St John giants as Dawkins, Goode, Burston, E.A.H. Russell and Hayward.[50]

The fourth character was Frank Mugford, the Brigade Commissioner. Mugford, who had come into the Brigade in 1935 and had risen to be Assistant Commissioner by 1951, had taken over the Commissionership on E.A.H. Russell's departure from the scene. He remained Commissioner throughout the 1950s, retiring in 1960, when Dr Harvey H. Hurst succeeded him. He then served as South Australia's Priory Executive Officer until his death in August 1963. Mugford was quiet and unassuming but an effective leader and capable administrator. As Shapter later remarked, 'he made the Brigade function well' – by which he meant that Mugford kept morale high within the Brigade, that the integration of the Brigade's part-time volunteers into the ambulance service was smooth, and that his collaboration with the full-time managers of the service – Shapter and Ferrier – was close and harmonious. Mugford, moreover, was well placed to help St John through his salaried position: as the State's Director of Health he could daily promote St John interests to the government, if that should have been necessary.[51]

Finally, there was Ferrier. It was he who had most contact with the ambulance staff. He brought to his job qualities to complement those of the other four principal characters. He had been an Army officer during the war; and, whether consciously or unconsciously, he adopted the role

of company commander to his 'troops'. Thus, he knew them all personally, called them all by their first names (while they called him 'Chief'), chatted with them, treated them all with jovial *bonhomie*, fostered among them the feeling that theirs was a special freemasonry, and retained their respect while joining in with their fun. There was plenty of fun at Hindmarsh in those days. Some of it was Ferrier's doing, as on the occasion he obtained from Myers a naked red-headed female window dummy, which he draped in realistic pose along the top of front seat of an ambulance just as the driver was getting ready to dash off on an emergency call. Another time, Alan Lockwood, a well-known prankster, got hold of one of the skeletons the Association used in first aid training, and quietly placed it in bed alongside a slumbering night duty driver. He later placed on the staff noticeboard a note to the effect that the driver had enjoyed 'a rattling good time'.[52]

By the beginning of the 1960s, then, the St John management and staff had built their ambulance service into a strong, effective organization. It was fast becoming among the best in the nation. In less than a decade it had indeed become the sort of service the press had campaigned for a decade previously. In the process 'St John' had become a household word, not only in the capital but throughout much of South Australia.

4. *The Association and Brigade, 1945-1960*

In all the time in which the St John Council had been concentrating its attention on the task of building up the ambulance services, the regular work of both Association and Brigade had been expanding steadily if not spectacularly. The statistics of growth demonstrated this. Association

New Ford ambulances in the Hindmarsh garage, 1957. The ambulance officers are, left to right, Neil Ensor, Murray Whimpress, Ray Schilling and Vic Kollosche.



training, after the enormous wartime effort, trailed off towards the end of the war, reaching a low point in 1946, when only 686 people gained certificates. Enrolments recovered during the late 1940s, though not to wartime levels. The number of certificates awarded thereafter varied from year to year, fluctuating between about 1400 and 2000 during the 1950s. The steady upward march of the graph began in 1960, when certificates awarded totalled nearly 3000. After that the trend continued, until by the early 1980s some 12,000 people were qualifying annually. The increase was both absolute *and* relative to the State population, as this table indicates:

Association certificates awarded, as a ratio to State population in years of Commonwealth Census, and 1983

1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1975	1979	1983
1:369	1:427	1:269	1:228	1:191	1:175	1:148	1:112

By 1983 these figures were the best of any Association Centre in Australia, except for those of the Northern Territory, where, with a much smaller population (only about 120,000 compared to South Australia's 1.34 million), the ratio was one certificate holder for every seventy-eight people.[53]

Brigade strength was increasing, too. From 1439 members in 1945 it had dropped away to 1043 in 1951. the year in which the ambulance service became the Brigade's Transport Section. Thereafter the opportunity of doing voluntary duties on the ambulances began having a powerful effect on Brigade recruitment. After hitting the postwar low point in 1951, Brigade strength rose to 1868 members in 1960. The rate of increase was to rise markedly later in the 1960s and early 70s, with the result that by 1973 South Australia, with 3696 members, took from Victoria (3532 members in 1973) the title of 'strongest Brigade State'. A decade further on, in 1983, South Australia still retained the title with 4712 members,

The Brigade's Hindmarsh Transport Division, 1958. Phil Ferrier, Brigade and Association secretary, is seventh from the left in the front row. Next to him on the right is the Divisional Superintendent, A. Lewis.





The Adelaide Nursing Division team, winners of the Sir James Sleeman Shield for the Brigade's Australian home nursing and first aid championship held in Sydney in 1950, the first year of interstate competition for women. Left to right, back row, are Rhonda Perryman, Pauline Russ, Linda Harrison, and front row, Margaret Richardson and Jean Roberts.

compared with 2996 members in the next State, Victoria. Brigade strength in South Australia was also increasing relative to State population, as the following table shows:

Brigade strength as a ratio to State population in years of Commonwealth Census (1947-79) and 1983

1947	1954	1961	1966	1971	1975	1979	1983
1:417	1:617	1:491	1:470	1:349	1:340	1:393	1:284

As with overall strength, South Australia was 'best State'. Its proportion of Brigade members to State population was higher than the next State, Tasmania, which had one Brigade member for every 660 citizens in 1983, though the Northern Territory had one for every 170.[54]

The effects of the ambulance service on Association and Brigade were both direct and indirect. The most direct effect was on Brigade strength. The benefit to the Brigade of being able to offer potential recruits the opportunity of doing voluntary duty in ambulances was clear: South Australia, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Tasmania had the best ratios of Brigade members to population, and they were the States where Brigade members could serve on ambulances as volunteers. In the first three of those, and to a lesser extent in the fourth, Brigade membership was the usual route into a full time career as an ambulance

The Colonel Light Gardens team, South Australian representatives in the Brigade's interstate first aid competition, Hobart, 1952. From left are Laurie Caston, Gordon Ortmann, Ray Schilling, David Heard, Lance Heard.



officer. In time the Brigade in South Australia came to rely on its ties with the ambulance service to be the principal threads of its recruiting net. The effects on the Association were more indirect. Later, as we will see, the need for high quality training for ambulance officers had beneficial effects on Association training procedures. In the meantime the presence on South Australian streets and roads of ambulances bearing the eight-pointed white cross and the title 'St John Ambulance' was salutary. It made South Australians more aware of the organization, so that the notions 'first aid' and 'St John' became almost synonymous for them.

The public identification of St John with the ideas of 'ambulance', 'first aid', 'nursing' and 'safety first' was something Ferrier sedulously promoted. He had been recruited as a public relations officer, and he never lost his flair for publicity when he was promoted to depot manager and, on Shapter's retirement in 1964, to general manager. He accepted all invitations to speak at service club dinners, to church groups, on radio and later television. He fed the newspapers a steady diet of press releases, with interesting 'angles' and graphic photographs calculated to capture public interest. He travelled the State, promoting St John and its various services in every community he visited, generally creating the impression among local citizens that, as far as St John was concerned, they were the centre of the universe. Whenever St John was setting up a new ambulance centre in a country town, he made sure it was located prominently in the main street so that, with its large Maltese Cross and 'St John Ambulance', it was as conspicuous as the local bank or Elder Smith agency. He persuaded the Royal Automobile Association to put a small St John emblem on its road maps wherever there was a St John ambulance centre; and he issued to each motorist gaining a first aid certificate a windscreen sticker with the emblem to indicate that the driver of the car concerned was a trained first aider.[55]

One radio talk Ferrier gave in early 1961 still retains its flavour, even when reduced to paper. It started off with a survey of the major scientific developments from Galileo to the unravelling of the DNA molecule, then it made the following 'sales pitch':

> In spite of these wonders, man himself, alas, hasn't altered much. Certainly he manages to either do away with himself, or someone else, with a little more ease than his forebears, for example, it's much easier to kill or permanently maim half a dozen people at a time in a car than with a horse and cart.
>
> The underwater snag is equally as dangerous now to the adventurous diver as it was a thousand years ago – and our heads are no harder, our limbs no stronger than were those of our ancestors.
>
> Those who have managed to steer their families accident free through the holiday period just past are to be congratulated either on their judgement or their luck – but keep your fingers crossed – Easter is on the way – see if you can manage to get through that hazardous period unscathed. It does seem ironical that the two periods of such deep religious significance are those which

seem to give the green light to some to behave in anything but a Christian manner towards their fellows, be they motorists, cyclists or pedestrians.

Record sheets of one of our St John beach casualty rooms tell a grim tale, for apart from dozens of minor ailments treated, ominous entries such as the following occur:

- John Smith, 16 years old – kicked in head, dentures broken, lacerated mouth, attacked by four youths.
- Kurt Newmann, 19 years old – unconscious, severe facial lacerations and head injuries, attacked by a gang. Taken to hospital by ambulance.

Apart from the names there is nothing fictitious about these entries. What is even more disturbing, the attacks occurred in crowded, well lit areas. It would appear to be high time that authority took stern action and handed out some appropriate medicine to these young thugs – but this is outside my province anyway.

The point I was making of course is, that in spite of our wonderful progress in numerous realms, some of us won't be taking an interest in these things much longer if not through our own fault then because of the callous thoughtlessness of someone else.

May I ask again – demand, call it what you will, – that your resolution for 1961 be 'I will take more care when driving'.

If you don't, the chances are that you'll finish your tour per medium of a St John Ambulance, and whilst we're very proud of our service, we don't exactly seek increased business!![56]

It was paternal and it was homely; yet it contained just enough subtle menace to make the listeners stop, think, and perhaps act a little more carefully. It also encouraged them to associate 'St John', 'safety', 'care', 'responsibility' and 'ambulance' together in their minds. It was vintage Ferrier, and it brought more and more South Australians into Association classes and Brigade Divisions.

By the end of the 1950s the St John assault on the South Australian publicity media was as resolute as any attack on a Saracen fortress by the ancient Knights Hospitaller. In 1959 the *Annual Report* gave an account of the profit to the Brigade of that year's campaign:

> Our close co-operation with newspaper representatives has again proved that friendly exchanges of news value can be of mutual benefit. During 1959 twenty-five photographs and 400 single column inches of news relative to St John activity in Adelaide was printed in leading newspapers. In addition, known but unrecorded articles dealing with Brigade activity have been published in staff journals and magazines, as well as in country newspapers. A full page article in the *Women's Weekly* brought comment from as far afield as Wellington, N.Z. The figures quoted relate to articles of specific St John activity, for example, the Annual Review, and do not include the innumerable road accident reports which mention 'St John Ambulance'.
>
> Three TV sessions comprising demonstrations of elementary first aid to young viewers were well presented and well accepted, while fortnightly broadcasts over the commercial network have helped keep the Brigade before the public. In addition the Australian Broadcasting Commission has been most helpful in reporting items of news value which relate to the Brigade.

> Apart from the numerous letters of thanks and donations received during the year, one more unusual aspect of public relations activity involved the introduction by Professor R.P. Jepson, of the Chair of Medicine at the Adelaide University, of five nights of lectures and practical first aid to a group of thirty third and fourth year medical students. The class was conducted in the lecture room of the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and there was no obligation on the part of students to attend. The enthusiastic reception and continuity of attendance of the students was most heartening to the members of the West Torrens Division who participated, and the Brigade feels that it has gained many supporters in the future doctors of this State.
>
> The Church Parade, the Annual Review, Cadet Day and a grand parade at the Royal Show allowed the Brigade to muster in very good strength before the general public.[57]

That the public relations effort was not all flimflam, but had positive, tangible benefits for the organization was obvious in the alliance formed with R.P. Jepson, the Professor of Surgery at the University. Jepson later – 1963 – joined the Association Centre Committee, and subsequently served as its chairman from 1965 until 1970. His Association-sponsored lectures on first aid to medical students later bore bountiful fruit for St John. At the end of 1959 five of his first aid students, Glyn Davies, Ian Buttfield, Peter Gartrell, and two brothers, Robert and Andrew Black, were taken on by the Brigade in a new scheme to be 'Probationary Surgeons' – Brigade 'apprentices', who, it was intended, would become Divisional Surgeons on graduation. This scheme began in early 1960. The five probationers went out on the ambulances for further experience during the 1959-60 summer vacation, and as a result of this they together wrote the Brigade's first 'red book', its *Manual of Ambulance Transport Nursing*, the progenitor of a series of subsequent textbooks for ambulance officers produced by the South Australian District. All five went on to notable medical careers as specialists; all later served as Divisional Surgeons; and one of them, Davies, rose to be District Surgeon 1978-83 and then Commissioner in 1983. Two later probationers, Des Owens and Brian Fotheringham, also rose high in the Brigade, the former serving as a District Superintendent 1980-84, and the latter as Deputy Commissioner 1978-84. Jepson also brought former students into the Association. Two of his notable recruits were Robert Britten-Jones, a surgeon whom he persuaded to succeed him as Association chairman and who served in that position for the fourteen years until 1984, and Professor Villas Marshall, who had a long association with the Cadet movement before serving briefly, 1983-84, as District Surgeon. In 1984 the Priory picked out Marshall to be the new Director of the Association, that is Association head for Australia, to succeed the veteran Dr Howard Toyne of Victoria – a signal honour for Marshall personally and for the St John organization in South Australia generally.[58]

There were numerous other Brigade and Association developments during the 1950s. One that probably happened almost unnoticed even by



Dr Glyn Davies, Brigade Commissioner from 1983.

members of the St John organization itself was a change in the name of the Association Centre. The change came as a result of a conference of Centre secretaries conducted in Sydney in December 1957 by the Priory's Director of the Association, Dr George Stening (a former Commissioner of the Brigade in New South Wales and, in 1961, Poate's successor as Chancellor of the Order in Australia). Stening called the conference to compile a uniform set of Association regulations for Australia. Shapter attended on behalf of his Centre, and, as he later reported, one outcome was that 'South Australia will now fall in line with other States and become known as "South Australia Centre" in lieu of "Adelaide Centre"'. Even traditionalists would have shed few tears over the dropping of the old name, even though it had been in use for almost three-quarters of a century, since the Centre's inauguration in December 1884. It had become obsolete as soon as the first country sub-centre had come into existence in the 1880s; but now, with the organization spreading fast into all corners of the State, it was more outmoded than ever. That no one seems to have objected to the loss of the old name was, no doubt, a measure of the Centre's declining influence in St John affairs. The Centre was now but the training branch of the St John Council, an adjunct to the Brigade District and the ambulance service.[59]

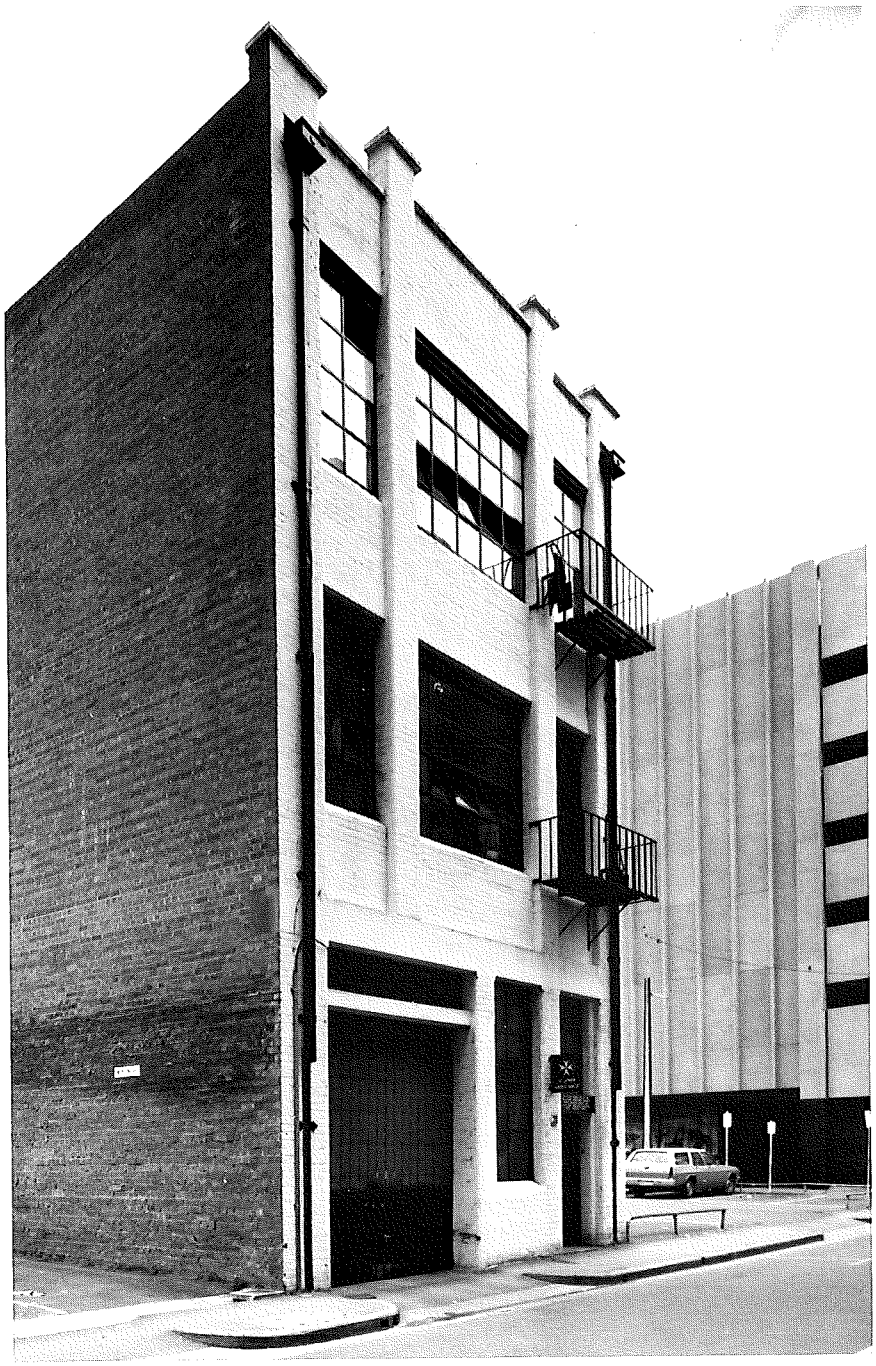
Another change during the 1950s was one of address. In 1948 the Brigade had taken a room in Claridge House, 52 Gawler Place. When Shapter became secretary to both Association and Brigade, he moved the Association in too – a convenient arrangement as both bodies were able to use the theatre in the basement of the build ing as a training room. Claridge House sufficed for the time being, while the office staff consisted of Shapter and a typist to serve St John Council, Association and Brigade

jointly; but as more staff were brought in to help handle the increased volume of work resulting from the takeover of the ambulance services, it quickly became inadequate. A relocation to roomier premises, preferably into a building St John could have to itself, became a priority. It did not seem a priority for Hayward, however. He deflected hints that the Council might think of buying its own building. By 1957 Shapter and his staff had had enough. They took advantage of Hayward's being away overseas on a business trip to snap up a suitable property in Austin St. when they heard it was coming on the market. In Hayward's absence the Council's deputy chairman, Brigadier (later Sir) Kenneth Wills, was exercising control, and he was talked into agreeing to its acquisition. He and two Council members, Hurtle Morphett and K.J.D. Benger (owner of the Rundle Hotel) arranged the purchase, at a cost of £30,487. That year's *Annual Report* explained what had happened:

> The Deputy Chairman was deputed to exercise control of the Council during the absence of the Chairman. . . . During this period the opportunity arose to buy a three-floor property for Headquarters of the Council, Association and Brigade in South Australia, a much-needed requirement to cope with business and staff expansion. Ample space on the ground floor enables it to be used as a City Ambulance Sub-station; the offices, meeting room and storeroom are situated on the first floor; and the second floor is available for large meetings, functions and recreational activities. All concerned are greatly appreciative of the action taken so promptly and effectively to acquire a property at a reasonable figure, close to the main business portion of Adelaide.[60]

Ownership of the State's first 'St John House' was no doubt an accomplishment worth celebrating, but Hayward was less than happy to discover on his return that while the cat had been away the mice had been playing. Nor was he very pleased when, twenty years later, after the St bodies had outgrown the Austin St. premises, the management and staff of the much expanded St John bodies began urging the St John Council to move house again. By the mid-1970s Austin St. was totally inadequate for the organization's needs, but Hayward seemed not to wish to see this. Some people further down the St John hierarchy suspected that he was making the Council 'pay' for its rashness in 1957.

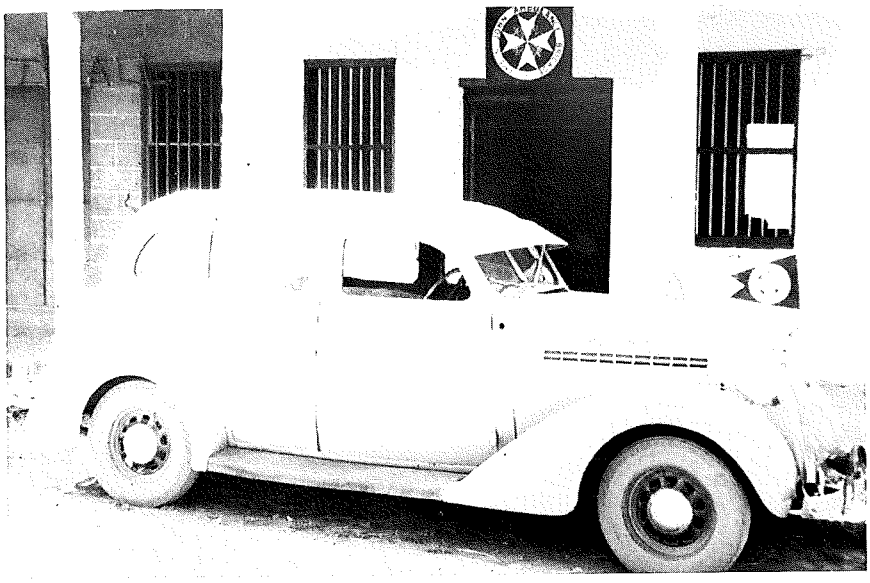
The acquisition of a 'St John House' was but one sign of the growing strength and influence of the St John movement in South Australia during the 1950s. Another was its sponsorship of the first St John activities in the Northern Territory. In Sydney Poate had tried to interest the Northern Territory Administration in sponsoring St John work in Darwin at the end of the war, without much luck. By 1952 there was both interest and a need: Department of Civil Aviation employees arranged with Priory for an Association first aid class to be formed among their number. The moving figure was one G.N. Bradbury, who found a medical practitioner willing to give the lectures, while he himself gave the class of twenty-one extra training. From the eighteen who subsequently passed the examination



South Australia's first St John House, Austin St., State St John headquarters 1957–78.

Bradbury proposed forming a Brigade Division. While Poate and the Priory secretary, Commander R. Griffiths Bowen, were happy at last to get their toe in the Darwin door, Bradbury's initiative raised certain problems. Certificates for Association classes had to be issued by an Association Centre, which the Northern Territory did not have yet; and Brigade Divisions could not operate in isolation but had to belong to a District. The solution was to attach Darwin to one of the State St John branches, of which Darwin would become an Association sub-centre and a Brigade sub-district. South Australia, with its stronger historical ties and better communications with the Northern Territory, was the logical choice. The choice probably also had much to do with the rising strength of the South Australian St John organization, for Poate, who knew the strengths and weaknesses of each State branch, was unlikely to have entrusted the Northern Territory to South Australia unless he was sure the former would benefit from the tutelage of the latter.[61]

The Darwin-Adelaide St John connection was formalized during 1953. A 'governing council' was formed to supervise the affairs of the Darwin branch; the Administrator of the Northern Territory, F.J.S. Wise, became its patron; premises were obtained in the Cavenagh Street recreation hall; the sub-centre began running regular classes, and by the end of the year 122 people had qualified for certificates; the Brigade Division, with Bradbury as Superintendent, began going on regular public duties, and was even talking of launching into ambulance transport work. The South Australian contribution to these developments was fairly token: the role of the South Australian St John organization seems to have been mainly to provide the trunk on which the Darwin branch was nailed. All the initiative, in true independent Territorian style, seems to have come from the Territorians themselves. Ferrier visited Darwin in 1959 to inspect the branch on behalf of the St John Council. He made further visits later on, as did other senior Brigade staff from Adelaide, but the Territorians remained sceptical of the value of their Adelaide St John links. Decades later, after their branch had formally separated from South Australia, St John old timers in Darwin and Alice Springs referred wryly to the 'gunners' who had occasionally visited them from Adelaide. Intermittently, they claimed, St John dignitaries would journey up from South Australia, look them over, then depart saying they were 'gunna do this, and gunna do that' to help the Territorians. They did not think much had come from the promises, with the result that if they wanted something done they had to do it themselves, rather than wait on Adelaide's pleasure. This was a Territorian exaggeration, for, as a subsequent chapter will show, the St John Council in South Australia was later able to divert resources to the Northern Territory branch, helping it reach the point in 1979 where it could become independent under a vigorous St John Council of its own. There was nevertheless some truth in it, for Darwin, Alice Springs and Adelaide were still very remote from each other in the 1950s, and even in



The Cavenagh St., Darwin, St John base, mid-1950s.

the Territory itself the St John workers in Darwin had little knowledge of what their colleagues in Alice Spring were up to. The St John Council in Adelaide, concerned principally with extending its services throughout its own State, probably had little time to give the Northern Territory more than an occasional thought.[62]

The greatest 1950s event for St John workers in South Australia, indeed in every State, was the Royal Tour of 1954 – the first visit to Australia of the reigning Monarch. With a sense of great awe, the St John Council's *Annual Report* that year began with the words 'the year brought to The Order of St John in South Australia an outstanding event in our history, the visit of our Sovereign Head, Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II'. The Brigade *Report* added further emphasis to the fact that the Order not only viewed the visit as a singular point in history but regarded it as an occasion at which the organization could shine brilliantly. This *Report* began with these words:

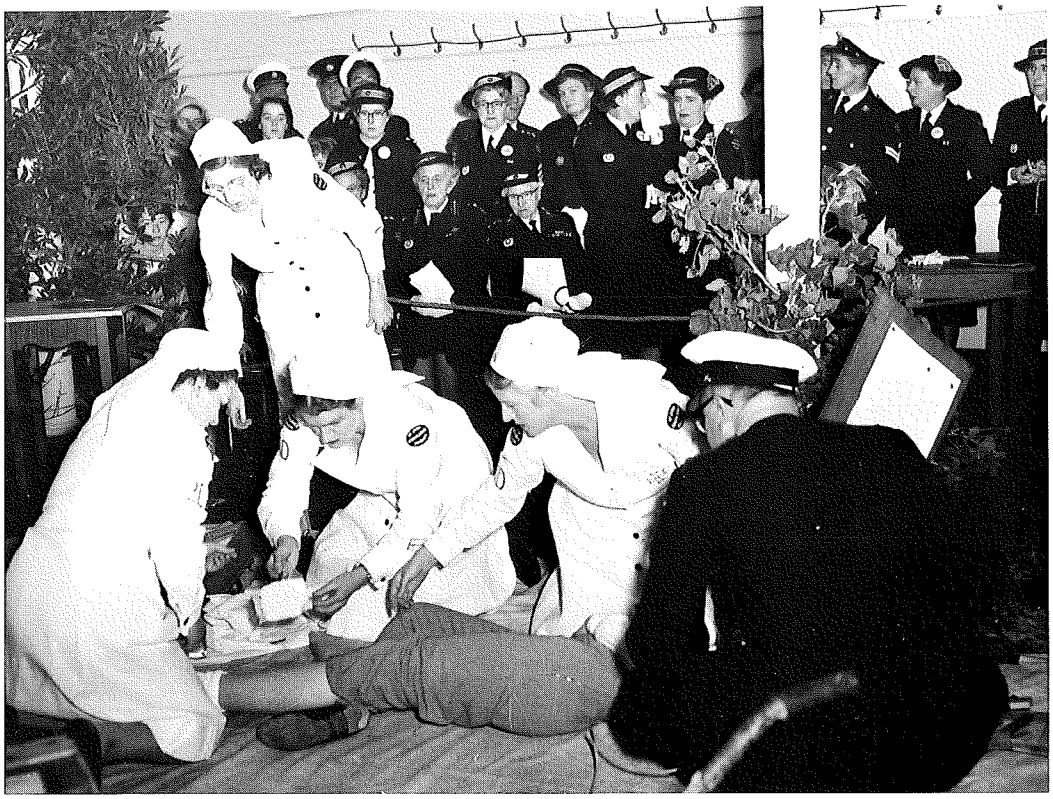
> Preparations made prior to the Royal Visit showed that members were eagerly awaiting the important event, in order to pay homage to our Sovereign Head, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh, and to carry out the objects of the Brigade by giving voluntary service in the interests of the public, wherever they would gather to view the various functions.[63]

It then went on to mention that, among the various events in which it participated, was a 'Combined Services Parade on the University Oval which was attended by 600 members'. More importantly, Brigade

members had 'responded in a most satisfactory manner to calls for duty', which had been excessive because 'the Royal Visit naturally increased the attendances and casualties treated'. The extra work resulting from the tour could be seen in that year's statistics. The totals for 1954 were 10,384 attendances (i.e., individual duties), during which 9597 cases were treated. The tour alone had occasioned 2210 attendances and 2798 cases, or a fifth of all the duties and a third of all the cases for the year. The 1954 figures showed a huge increase over those of the year before: attendances were fifty *per cent* higher while the casualties were an impressive 130 *per cent* above the 1953 tally. The Brigade gave itself a well-earned pat on the back for all of this, its *Annual Report* noting that 'many letters of appreciation were received as a result of the good work carried out by members during the Royal Visit, and it can be said with confidence that St John gained prestige in the minds of the public, thus giving an impetus to the organization in South Australia'.[64]

Some idea of what all that work had meant for St John workers wherever the Royal couple had travelled is evident in the experience of Whyalla, which the Queen and Duke visited for three hours, 10.00 a.m. till 1.00 p.m., on the day they toured the Eyre Peninsula. The local Brigade Division went on duty at 4.00 a.m. that day. It was only a small unit, consisting of six men, supported by five women formally attached to the Nursing Division in Port Augusta. The Port Augusta and Port Pirie Divisions came down to help out. They arrived between 5.30 and 6.00, and ate the breakfast the Whyalla Division had prepared for them. By 7.00 they had their three casualty clearing stations set up at key points and had individual first aiders spread all along the route for the Royal procession. The Queen and Duke duly arrived, beheld the steel town's wonders, listened to the inevitable speeches, lunched, dropped in at the sports carnival arranged in their honour, then flew off to Port Lincoln. In Whyalla the festivities continued, and the Brigade stayed on duty. The last event at the sports carnival was a cycle race, during which the front rider crashed, bringing down the rest of the field and giving Brigade members their most serious casualties for the day. The Port Pirie and Port Augusta Divisions stayed on into the evening to help the local Division handle the cases arising from the continuing revelries. After they had departed the local Brigade team stayed on duty, then cleaned up after the rest of the town had gone home to bed. They were eventually able to go off duty – at 2.00 a.m. the next day. Similar tales could have been told by the members of any of the seventy Divisions which in 1954 comprised the South Australian Brigade District.[65]

Not surprisingly, the South Australian government was among those who subsequently expressed appreciation of the Brigade's efforts. It did so in a most tangible way, by making a special grant of £5000, which enabled the Brigade to set up a fund to help equip new members with uniforms. The Royal Visit Committee, which had arranged the South Australian



The interstate first aid competitions, Victoria Park racecourse, 1960: the winning team from New South Wales.

stage of the tour, also showed its gratitude by giving the Brigade £611/19/8 to help cover its expenses. As a result of these gifts, Brigade revenue that year was almost £6000 higher than that of the year before, which had been £1774.[66]

In the first decade-and-a-half postwar there were other milestones deserving our attention. For example, on 13 December 1950, at the annual investiture and presentation of awards at Government House, Sir Willoughby Norrie presented a Brigade Cadet with the Order's Life Saving Medal – the St John equivalent of the Victoria Cross. The recipient was William McLoughlin, a member of the Glenelg Cadet Division, who in February 1949 had rescued another lad from drowning at the Glenelg beach and had subsequently resuscitated him. Poate mentioned the award at the Priory meeting in Sydney in November 1950, saying it was only the second time he had heard of the award going to an Australian. It was actually the seventh time, but the last had been in 1919. The medal is awarded in three grades, gold, silver and bronze, according to the degree of bravery involved. McLoughlin's was in silver. By 1984 the medal had been awarded on only eleven occasions in Australia, only once in gold, and only four times in silver, McLoughlin's having been the last time the medal was awarded in silver. His was the only presentation to a Cadet, and the first in South Australia. Only two other medals, each in bronze and each for acts of bravery in 1979, were subsequently awarded in South Australia.

One of these went to Jim Toshach, Superintendent of the West Torrens Cadet Division, who pacified and disarmed a gunman threatening to shoot police. The other went to Colin Bourne, a volunteer attendant on a Murray Bridge ambulance involved in a head-on crash. With his driver trapped in the cabin and a patient in the back, Bourne had kicked out a window and struggled from the vehicle although he was severely lacerated, concussed and suffering from heavy loss of blood. Petrol had been spilt and a fire had started, which Bourne put out. He then disconnected the battery and collapsed. Unknown to him the occupants of the other vehicle had been killed and his own patient was dying, but he had not known this at the time and had acted in the belief that he might save all three and his own driver.[67]

Other Brigade milestones followed, marking out successive years of achievement during the 50s. In 1953, for example, the Brigade took control of the Port Adelaide Waterfront First Aid Service on behalf of the State Committee of Overseas and Interstate Shipping Companies. That year the service handled almost 7000 cases, and its records showed the range of occupational casualties commonly befalling seamen and waterside workers. Included in that number were 'wounds, 3192; fractures, 74; concussion, 12; sprains, 148; foreign body in eyes, 929; strains, 94; burns, 49'. In 1954 the service handled 8138 cases, 7428 in 1955, 9130 in 1956, by which time it had three first aiders in full time work. Then there was the visit of the Brigade's Commissioner-in-Chief, Sir Otto Lund, the latest

Bandmaster Graham Maloney leads the Cadet drum band in a parade, about 1961.



emissary from St John's Gate, out from London to inspect his Australian Districts. The St John Council ran a cocktail party in his honour, and the Brigade paraded for him in the Government House grounds. In 1955, too, the Hospitallers' Club helped run the annual Badge Day appeal.[68]

Yet another accomplishment of the 1950 was the formation of the first St John Ambulance Brigade band. This was the Cadet Drum Corps, formed in 1957 from lads belonging to various suburban Cadet Divisions, trained by Drum Major Graham Maloney of the Colonel Light Gardens Division, a former drummer in the Air Force band, and organized by the Superintendent of the Cadet Motor Cycle Division, Max Moyle. The band formed for a specific reason: in annual Brigade parades, which were generally led by the brass band of the South Australian Railways, the Cadets customarily brought up the rear. They marched so far from the front they had difficulty in hearing the beat of the music. To help them march in step it was decided to have a drummer lead them in the parades. The president of the South Australian Bands Association was approached for help; he donated a drum; other drums were scrounged from elsewhere; several Cadets had their own; and so the band was born. It was a conspicuous success. In 1960 its busy year included 'many engagements', with a performance on the stage of the Adelaide Town Hall at the request of the South Australian Brass Bands Association, the provision of 'entertainment at numerous suburban and near country functions', and an appearance in the 'Spectacular Christmas Pageant arranged by John Martin & Co. Ltd.' By 1963 it had twenty-eight players, including some

The St John Ambulance band march past the Hilton Hotel (under construction), at the corner of Victoria Square and Grote St., during a street parade, about 1981.





The St John Ambulance Brigade Band at the Priory Centenary celebrations, Melbourne, 1983. The Musical Director, Peter Hutchins is in the centre of the back row; Drum Major Don Evans is fifth from the right in the middle row; Divisional Superintendent Glen Webb is second from the right in the middle row; Ralph Anderson, Brigade secretary and Band president, is seated behind the bass drum; and Ken Harris, Band secretary, is seated third from the right.

trumpeters and a cymbals player. That year it went to Perth, and over the succeeding three years made four country tours.[69]

By this time the Brigade had an adult St John band as well. It had acquired this in 1960, when the new Commissioner, Harvey Hurst, saved the Henley and Grange Municipal Band from [– no pun intended –] disbandment. Local support for the band had dwindled away, and the municipal council had lost interest in it. Hurst and one of his District Officers, R. MacLachlan, arranged for the band to come into the St John fold. It was formally registered as a Brigade Division in January 1961, and remained a proud Brigade ornament thereafter. In June 1983 it distinguished itself in Melbourne by giving free concerts in the City Square and by providing the music at the celebrations the Priory conducted to mark the centenary of St John activities in Australia.[70]

The first decade-and-a-half postwar was thus a seminal period for the St John organization in South Australia. St John was pushing itself confidently into all corners of the State. The range of services it was delivering to the South Australian population was publicly acclaimed. It stood high in the esteem of the government. The news media were singing its praises, albeit with prompting from its own publicity mill. The morale of its members was high. It had achieved a financial security it had never known before, and it was living in its own St John House. It was, in short, well on its way to being the largest and – in its own view at least – the best of the State branches of the Order.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The 1960s and Growth

The South Australian St John bodies had entered the 1950s as a group of loosely connected institutions serving charitable and health care ends. They entered the 60s more tightly knit as an increasingly cohesive organization, still serving those ends but now bonded to the St John Council and, through it, responsible for a rapidly expanding circle of metropolitan and provincial ambulance facilities. As the 1960s became the 70s both organization and task were undergoing further evolution. Success bred success, and in so doing wrought permanent changes. The voluntary foundations of earlier years now looked more like business enterprises staffed by professionals than charities run by well-meaning amateurs. The St John Council presided over these developments; and, like the prosperous business corporation it increasingly resembled, by 1970 it was running not so much a charity as an industry. This chapter traces the steps St John followed during the 60s as it moved into the world of corporate affairs.

1. *Measures of growth*

A hint of these changes was obvious in the graphs of growth the St John Council began publishing in its *Annual Reports* during the 1960s. There were graphs to illustrate many aspects of the St John task – not only of certificates gained in Association classes and cases handled by the Brigade on public duty, but of other measurable facets of St John work. The mileages the ambulances covered, the cases they carried, the numbers of St John vehicles on the road, St John Council financial turnover and capital assets, and building projects begun and completed all showed an almost invariable upward trend. Both Association and Brigade had always showed off their statistics of achievement as annual evidence of their effort, but when the Council published graphs of the year's accomplishment for the first time in 1967 – a useful practice maintained ever since – pride in corporate attainment became more visible.

The 1967 graphs displayed more dramatically than statistics could have done the increasing bulk of that corporate body, the St John Council for South Australia Inc. In his section of the *Annual Report* Hayward, with obvious pleasure in accomplishment, had said, 'I can report that for the first time we have passed the $1m mark – balance sheet figures indicate the total assets to be $1,043,410'. The graph for assets justified his pride: it

showed that from a base of $13,532 in 1952, the first full year of responsibility for the ambulance service, the assets had steadily expanded up to and past the million dollar point – an astounding increase of 7725 *per cent.* Many of those capital assets were in solid real estate, for – as the graph for building and construction demonstrated – St John Council properties had grown from one in 1955 to thirty-two in 1967, and, as the *Report* made clear, these did not include 'the number of land holdings acquired as potential sites for St John Centres'.[1]

The graphs for the late 1960s, samples of which appear on the following page, recorded other milestones the organization reached. In 1964 the ambulance service for the first time had travelled a million miles (1.6 million km.) on duty; and by 1970 it was only a few miles short of the 1.5 million mile mark, which it passed the next year. The total of ambulance cases transported exceeded 100,000 for the first time in 1967, and in 1970 went over the 120,000 mark. Association certificates awarded were over 3000 for the first time in the postwar period in 1965, and passed 4000 two years later. The number of casualties treated by Brigade members on public duty reached the 10,000 level for the first time in 1963, then went well beyond 15,000 in 1969. Brigade membership passed 2000 in 1962, then 3000 in 1969. South Australia had been the strongest Brigade District in proportion to State population for the whole of the postwar period, but it would soon be the largest numerically as well: the District won that distinction from the Victorians in 1973, when membership reached 3696. Yet another milestone was the number of hours' flying time logged by the St John air ambulance service that began operating out of Whyalla in 1965. It reached the 600 hour level in 1969, the 900 hour level in 1970, and the 1000 hour level the following year. And finally, a further sign that the decade just past had been one of growth, the number of salaried staff reached 100 in 1970. With so many full time workers the organization could no longer honestly describe itself as a charity. It had indeed become a thriving business 'marketing' a range of popular 'products'.[2]

2. *Charity, the Hospitallers' Club and the business of charity*

Whatever the reality, at least one St John body kept alive the notion that the organization was a worthy charity. This was the Hospitallers' Club. As a previous chapter pointed out, Dr and Mrs Dawkins had founded the club in the early 1930s as a means of winning to the St John cause the 'best' people in Adelaide 'Society'. In the early years, when the club's exclusiveness had perhaps been more important to its members than the work it purported to support, its practical value was uncertain. It held several balls at the Palais, its members helped out on Brigade 'badge days', and it entertained occasional distinguished visitors such as Sir James Sleeman, but otherwise it does not seem to have done much. During the 50s, however, it took on a more active and purposeful role. It began raising such large

sums of money for various St John purposes that it became not only an indispensable part of the St John organization but its charitable fundraising efforts grew into a well organized and efficiently run – not to mention slickly promoted – business enterprise.

The turning point in this development seems to have been 1950. In that year three of the club's leading figures died. These were Mrs Dawkins, Mrs Simpson, widow of A.A. Simpson, the former president of the Adelaide Association Centre, and Andrew Young, one of the club's former presidents and, like Mesdames Dawkins and Simpson, one of its foundation members. That year, too, the club secretary, Miss Alys Trueman, entered the Order as a Serving Sister – the first time, it seems, anyone in South Australia had been admitted into membership solely for services to the club. About this time, too, Hayward, recently risen to prominence as St John Council chairman, began taking a closer interest in the club. He was, no doubt, irritable with the members' social pretensions for he later claimed he had to whip the club into line because its members were more interested socializing with each other than in raising money. His means for making them shape up in approved style was to have his own nominee appointed as club president. The man he chose was a respected medical man, Dr Rex (later Sir Francis) Matters, who had been a member of the Association Centre Committee since 1945 as well as having been a Brigade surgeon. Hayward later said he instructed Matters either to make the club function productively or close it down altogether by the simple expedient of never convening meetings.[3]

If that indeed was how Hayward handled the Hospitallers, his indirect influence had the desired effect. In 1950 the club organized the badge day appeal, which netted a huge £1024/9/11. From this amount the club was able to contribute towards expenses incurred the previous year when the Priory had met in Adelaide for the first time, help send the State team to Sydney for the Brigade's nursing competitions, and make a donation to the Priory's fund in support of the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem. The club organized all subsequent annual badge days during the 50s, all of which returned similar handsome sums. By 1958 the club had justified its own continuance. Matters was able to step down as president, and was succeeded by Mrs Edna Ayers, a daughter of Sir Sidney Kidman. That year the *Annual Report* described the club's activities during the year:

> The Annual Badge Day organized by the Hospitallers' Club was the most successful since the War, the sale of badges exceeding £1000. In addition, the ... Hospitallers actively supported "Cavalcade of Sport", and a monster barbecue held in the beautiful grounds of Mr Erwin Hoffman's winery in the Barossa Valley. A Spinsters' Ball, arranged by Miss Ann Kidman in the grounds of Mr W. Kidman's home, also raised £500 for the Hospitallers' funds. This money will ultimately bolster Brigade finance.[4]

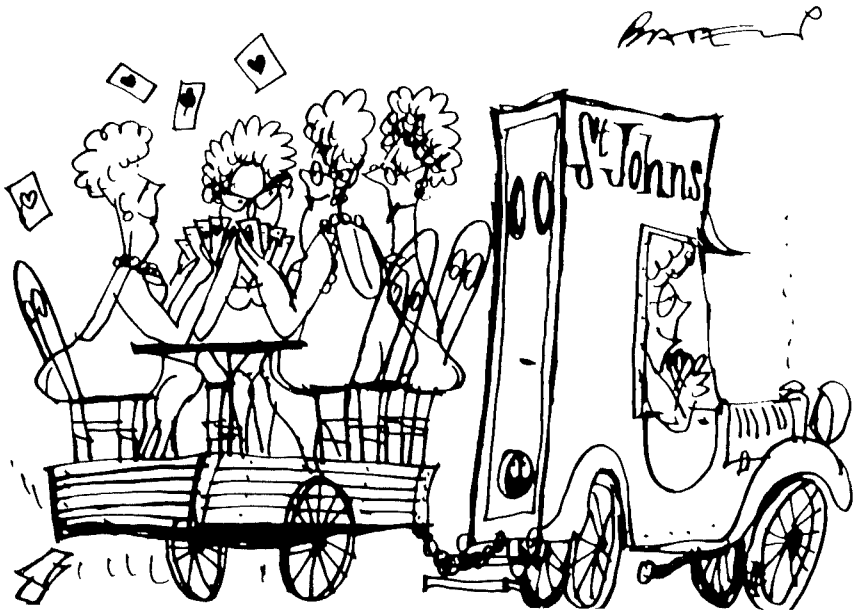
Hayward, no doubt, was pleased. Exclusiveness, *haute bourgeois* gaiety and hard work for St John had been joined in productive union.



Being appealing for an appeal: a Brigade fundraising effort in Rundle Mall, mid-1970s. Sally, a dog belonging to Bob Hall, an invalid who used to collect money for St John, earns donations.

The impression that St John was a worthy charity had been reconfirmed by other fundraising activities during 1958. To start with, in May, there was the first of a series of large quadrennial public appeals for funds. The target was £25,000, and the aim was to pay off the overdraft incurred in the purchase of the Austin St. headquarters two years before, and to pay for a new ambulance station at Prospect. The public responded generously, and the target was reached in several months. Hayward subsequently reported that the £277 raised above the target was 'indicative of the high esteem with which the general public regard St John in this State'. Then there were two veteran car rallies run in association with the Sporting Car Club of South Australia, *The Advertiser* and the H.C. Sleigh Ltd. (Golden Fleece) petroleum company, which raised £670. A further useful sum came from the proceeds of the Jack Davey-Shirley Abicair Show, sponsored by Ampol Petroleum Ltd. This popular but short-lived television variety program, featuring an oddly matched couple – one of the nation's favourite comedians and a zither-playing troubadour, returned another £445 to St John funds. Finally, the St John Council received £823 as a third share of the proceeds from the premiere of the film 'Around the World in Eighty Days'. By the end of the 50s, then, St John had firmly established itself in the public mind as a cause worth giving to; and for the improved cash flow which followed on from that it could thank both the Hospitallers and Ferrier's public relations campaigning.[5]

Under Mrs Ayers' presidency the Hospitallers' Club attacked the task of fundraising with renewed vigour. During the eleven years in which she guided the Hospitallers there was an annual series of fund raising activities as novel as they were diverse. There were art exhibitions held in the gallery of John Martins Ltd., a Continental Evening and bikini parade at the Kidman home, a Christmas festival sale at the Penfold Grange Winery, luncheons at the yearling sales, a vintage car auction, a display of orchids, and 'Operation Name Slate'. The last of these was an idea borrowed from Graumann's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, where film stars' handprints are set in the concrete pavement. For Operation Name Slate, South Australians, both past and present, could have their names set permanently into paving blocks in the courtyard of the Co-operative Building Society at two guineas ($4.20) a time. Redevelopment of the site during the 1970s later prevented the subscribers' names from living forever in this particular form: despite their promise that the tiles would be preserved, the developers managed to break many. As compensation a roll of names was later hung in the foyer of the new building. Later, and more durable, projects were participation in The Charity Card Shop run by the South Australian Council of Social Services and 'Bridge on Wheels'. The former involved members' staffing the shop two days a week in the Christmas card sales season, beginning in August. The latter was a progressive luncheon-cum-bridge-party, with members moving by car to selected homes to play the next rubber and eat the next course. It occasionally



The News cartoonist Bateup's view of the 'bridge on wheels' fundraising efforts of the St John Auxiliary, 1977.

attracted amused comment in the press: journalists found the notion of 'bridge on wheels' delightfully incongruous, and titillated their readers with visions of grand Society dames playing bridge while trundling along Adelaide's streets. Mrs Ayers' ladies were, perhaps, fair game for the cynical but their contributions to St John were hardly trivial. The favourable publicity and the large sums of money they brought the organization were indispensable to its continuing successful growth.[6]

Evidence for this was the volume of funds they provided, and the facilities this made possible. Thus, their contribution to St John revenues in 1959 amounted to £1798 ($3596), whereas by 1982 they raised $24,125. In real value the latter amount may not have been much greater than the former, but it was still substantial. The revenue they brought into St John enabled them to provide the other St John bodies with essential equipment that might not otherwise have been possible. In 1969, for example, Mrs Ayers, in her final presidential duty before her retirement, handed over to the St John Council a new ambulance provided out of money her members had raised. In subsequent years they were able to present the Brigade with two fully equipped mobile first aid units, a telemetry unit, and a substantial donation towards the purchase of a campsite at Lobethal. The total they raised in the 1960s was the equivalent of $45,600 or roughly $4500 a year. During the following decade they raised even more money – $166,854, or close to $17,000 a year.[7]

The social activities lubricating the fundraising mechanism in order to produce cash of that magnitude won widespread publicity for St John. They also generated comradeship and jollity of varying kinds within the several bodies of the organization. This advantageous melding of fun with fanfare was evident in a notable Hospitaller occasion early in 1960 – a farewell dance the Hospitallers ran for the departing Vice-Regal couple, Sir Robert and Lady George. The dance took place at Government House, a sanctuary so few Adelaideans had then been privileged to enter that, as one of the organizers later recalled, citizens fairly 'jumped over themselves for tickets'. The result was a nett profit of £3357 for the evening. It was a highly successful financial enterprise by any measure, which we might appreciate the better by comparing it with Operation Name Slate, launched that year, and the 1960 badge day. It raised nearly three times the amount of the former and well over three times the sum of the latter. As notable as the scramble for tickets were the floor show entertainments and the conduct of the guests. Part of the floor show was a troupe of can-can dancers, whose presence His Excellency had especially requested and whom he watched with a connoisseur's eye from the seat in the front row he had also requested. Another act was a whip cracker, who, at the climax of his performance, flicked the lash of his stockwhip a little too high, detaching several crystal drops from the large chandelier overhead. Guests promptly pocketed these, plus a few more as the evening wore on. Another bauble spirited away was a diamond brooch belonging to an admiral's wife. She had left it pinned to her coat, which she had hung over a chair. While all these festivities were unfolding, the Brigade men who had obligingly come on duty for the evening were enjoying their own entertainment. They had found the bar unsupervised, and held their own party. One organizer later recollected that before the evening was out half of them were 'sloshed'. Few St John functions attended by the departing Deputy Prior could have been quite as lively.[8]

In 1965 the Hospitallers underwent a change of name. They recognized they were no longer performing the functions of a club, as originally conceived, but had become a fundraising task force instead. Though they possibly did not know it, the latter role was what Hayward had in mind for them when he had installed Matters as their president fifteen years previously. That objective having been accomplished, it was time for the name to reflect the reality. Mrs Ayers canvassed the idea of a name change; Mrs Elspeth Doman, who later succeeded her as president, proposed the name 'St John Auxiliary in South Australia'; members agreed to this; and the St John Council public relations officer, Neil Quarmby, who was responsible for liaison between the Hospitallers and the Council, was given the task of drawing up a constitution for the reformed body. The new constitution established the Auxiliary as a formal St John body – an integral part of the organization rather than the appendage it had previously been. Perhaps as a reward for the Auxiliary's fortitude, and as a token of his



From left, Dr John Crompton (Australian St John fellow at the St John Ophthalmic Hospital, Jerusalem), Beryl Fegan (St John historian), Sir Edward Hayward (St John Council president), and Elspeth Doman (president of the St John Auxiliary) at a St John social function, early 1980s.

pleasure that it had obligingly if unwittingly fallen into line with his views of its proper function, Hayward from 1965 allowed it to use his 'holy of holies' – the boardroom of John Martin Ltd. – as its regular meeting place. Auxiliary members continued using that venue until 1982, when they were allowed the use of another and more appropriate boardroom, this time in the new St John House in Greenhill Rd., Eastwood.[9]

By this time a sense of independence had developed among Auxiliary members. By the 1980s they no longer saw themselves as compliant handmaidens whose assigned task was dutifully to run fundraising errands for the St John Council, their chief reward being to see their names reported in the social pages of the daily newspapers. They were beginning to insist on saying how they thought the Council should allocate the large sums they contributed to St John revenues. Their enhanced status within the organization under their 1965 constitution was partly responsible for this assertiveness, as was their knowledge that their financial contribution was significant. Changed community views on women's rights was also adding to the timbre of the Auxiliary voice. Significantly, when the St John Council belatedly got round to appointing the first two females among its twenty-seven members in 1981, Elspeth Doman was one of them. (The other was Beryl Fegan, who was appointed a Council vice-president.) Mrs Doman was by then a St John veteran. She was one of only two Auxiliary members to hold the Auxiliary's gold star badge for twenty years' service, and she was an Officer in the Order. She, and some of her sister Auxiliary members, strongly felt that, in an organization depending heavily on

women's efforts, women were conspicuously under-represented in the organization's upper echelons. They had come to resent the fact that the St John Council executive, the senior full-time management, the Brigade and the Association were all controlled by men, and that it was only in their own Auxiliary that women were in charge. Further resentment arose from a suspicion that the two women on the Council were intended to be there in only token capacity, and only because the government had brought informal pressure to bear for female membership.[10]

Despite its great successes, the Auxiliary was experiencing difficulties other than the institutional sexism practised unconsciously by a male-dominated bureaucracy. Firstly, its continuance depended on its ability to recruit a particular sort of member. Members were almost invariably female. married, most often to prosperous and influential businessmen or professionals, their names were often well known to the public, and they had ample free time for the demanding routines of fund raising. To put it another way, they were 'Social', with a capital 'S'. By the late 1970s social – small 's' – change was having an effect on membership. The rise of higher education for women, changing community views on marriage and new attitudes about women's employment were drying off the flow of younger recruits, and those left to bear the burden were middle aged. Fewer women were available for voluntary work on behalf of charity auxiliaries. The daughters of present Auxiliary members were in jobs and, unlike their mothers, expected to keep them after marriage, or at least to return to them after child rearing. Very few saw unpaid charity fundraising as a fulfilling part-time career.[11]

A second problem for the Auxiliary also related to its 'Social' composition. Like the Hospitallers' Club before it, it was unabashedly exclusive. It drew its members from the upper social strata, and anyone without that background would have been ill at ease and out of place within it. In private conversation members were frank about its informal and unstated but nevertheless rigid rules of membership. These effectively debarred prospective recruits who did not measure up according to 'Social' criteria, limiting membership to about thirty. The trouble with exclusivism was that it created resentment. People lower down the social scale suspected that, because they did not measure up, they had been judged and found wanting. That in turn aroused hostility, for in all this some rank and file members of St John bodies sensed an air of condescension on the part of Auxiliary members. By the 1980s this was beginning to reveal itself in various directions. Brigade men, for example, had begun proving difficult in fundraising activities in which the Auxiliary expected their co-operation. Thus, they were reluctant to sell badges in Rundle Mall on badge day, even though their Divisions would be keeping the money they collected. Or, if they did agree to help, they would not wear their uniforms. Nor would they work at the direction of particular Auxiliary office bearers. Social class divisions and sex role differentiations thus

intersected, generating tensions which made unity of purpose in St John work more an ideal than the reality.[12]

Yet another problem for the Auxiliary, and for the wider St John organization, was the fundamental question of whether or not the services St John supplied to the public should depend on charity. The partial reliance on charity of the ambulance service in particular raised issues relating to the responsibility for providing, funding and controlling social welfare and health services. As a later chapter points out, the Bannon Labor government, and in particular its Minister for Health, J.R. Cornwall, was expressing concern that a public utility as vital as an ambulance service should have to depend on donations cajoled from the public by bodies like the Auxiliary. With particular reference to the Adelaide Children's Hospital, but with clear implications for the St John ambulance service as well, Cornwall raised the ire of the loyal legion of charity fundraisers when he said that such health agencies should not have to depend on 'chook raffles and chocolate wheels' for their funds. The Minister's frank manner and reputation for abrasiveness angered charity workers, who had made an emotional investment in their voluntary fundraising activities. Few would have denied that his epithet aptly summed up a whole social philosophy, even if they disagreed with the socialist thrust of his argument. Auxiliary members might even have been able to enjoy Cornwall's caustic wit, but they still found his message ominous. It threatened to knock out the voluntaristic, self-denying and charitable underpinnings of the work to which many of them had devoted a large part of their lives. If that happened they would have to find other causes to bring meaning and purpose to life.

Particular governments, ministers and social theorists might have believed in ideologies in which bodies like the St John Auxiliary had no place. There was, however, another point of view. It was one argued forcefully in 1981 in the book *'Don't mourn for me – organise . . .': The social & political uses of voluntary organizations.* The author, David Scott, a welfare administrator and writer on welfare issues, estimated the number of voluntary organizations providing health and welfare services in Australia at anywhere between 15,000 and 60,000. The range of services they provided was so wide that, after education, health, housing, employment and income transfer, they amounted to a 'sixth social service system'. Unavoidably their efforts were a matter of political controversy because conservative governments and individuals generally favoured their development while those with egalitarian or radical views did not. The former saw them as saving public funds: it was cheaper for governments to subsidise eager voluntary agencies than to supply comprehensive State-funded welfare services. The latter criticised them on various grounds – for taking a 'bandaid' approach to welfare problems, for obscuring the nature and extent of need, for patronising those in need by casting them in the role of recipients of 'charity'.[13]

A person of the latter, egalitarian-radical, persuasion might criticise the St John Auxiliary, or indeed any of the St John bodies, on these grounds. Defenders of the St John ethic of voluntaryism, on the other hand, were quick to point to St John's 'gap-filling' function. Some services, they argued, were too expensive or labour-intensive for governments to supply. If the resultant gaps were to be filled, it would have to be through the endeavours of voluntary bodies, that is 'charities'. Both Association and Brigade were notable gap-fillers, for governments had neither the resources nor the inclination to run large scale public first aid training programs or to provide a first aid service at functions like junior suburban netball matches or local fun runs. While there were still gaps like these, there would always need to be a St John Ambulance Association and Brigade to fill them. In turn this meant that there had to be a St John Auxiliary providing the necessary financial support. And so it would continue until governments were prepared to remove the need for charity by instituting the complete Welfare State.[14]

The degree of dependence on charity fundraising of the St John bodies, and the extent to which charity in the St John case was becoming a highly organised business, are obvious in the major quadrennial appeals the St John Council had instituted in 1958. As we saw above, the first appeal, in 1958, easily reached its target of £25,000. The next appeal, in 1962, was even more ambitious. It aimed to raise £100,000 to provide 'urgently needed buildings for training and meeting purposes, and ambulance housing throughout South Australia'. The previous appeal had relied on a circular letter to business houses and individuals, but this time the appeal committee, chaired by Sir Kenneth Wills, decided on personal contact. They did so on the advice of one of Hayward's executives at John Martin Ltd., Donald P. Williams, who had established a reputation as a highly proficient raiser of funds for charity, and whom Hayward had asked to work with Wills' committee. 'D.P.', as he became known to a later generation of St John workers, after he had succeeded Hayward as St John Council chairman in 1976, had been a key organizer of the National Heart Foundation appeal, which raised £330,000 during 1960-61 – a sum roughly equivalent to $3 million in the values of the mid-1980s. This appeal, and the appeals he organized for St John over subsequent years earned him the unofficial title of 'the greatest non-professional fundraiser South Australia has ever seen' among his peers in the charity business.[15]

The appeal committee set up numerous suburban and country sub-committees, each with a group of prominent local citizens in charge. Some 1400 people were involved in the metropolitan area alone, each making the direct personal approaches on which the appeal strategy depended. The task of approaching the State's principal business houses, and the individuals who led them, fell to Williams. His method was at once simple, aggressive, and very effective. The first donation was a conspicuous £500 from Hayward. He might not have given so much but Williams had persuaded

him that a generous personal donation would have salutary demonstration effects. Hayward's peers in the business community would not wish to appear cheap by comparison, Williams argued, and would come up with similarly generous amounts. Nor could the companies they directed be seen to be cheap; and if an individual businessman was prepared to contribute several hundred pounds his firm might be relied on to put in even more. This tactic worked as well for St John as it had for the National Heart Foundation. The appeal opened in October 1962, and within two months it had raised nearly eighty-five *per cent* of the target sum. By the time it closed it had surpassed its goal by a margin of twenty-five *per cent*, or £25,000. Further and richer 'icing on the cake' was the pound-for-pound government subsidy the total then attracted. Some idea of the magnitude of the appeal committee's attainment is that whereas the appeal, with government subsidy included, had returned £250,000, the total revenue for the metropolitan and country ambulance services that year – government grant, subscribers' dues, transport fees, donations and bank interest – had amounted to considerably less than half that figure.[16]

During the 1960s St John was thus undergoing an important shift. It entered the 60s as a big charity and it would leave them as big business. The charity became an industry. The growth in the scale of its operations gave ample evidence of this, and in that growth the increasing professionalism of the organization's fundraising processes was a key factor. D.P. Williams and his allies in the St John Auxiliary may not have realised it at the time, but their task had been as midwives in a rebirth.

3. *The country ambulance services*

The country ambulance services were among the more successful of St John growth areas in the 1960s. As the previous chapter showed, the country services, in clamouring to link up with the new St John metropolitan service in the early 50s, had helped boost St John strength and influence: with country as well as metropolitan responsibilities, the St John Council always had at its disposal a useful argument in favour of more generous government subsidies. At the beginning of the 60s the Council took an important step towards standardizing ambulance facilities throughout South Australia. As we have seen, that came about following a Statewide ambulance convention attended by over 40 representatives from the country districts, who came down to the Hindmarsh depot to discuss the ramifications of standardization, and to work out an agreement on the division of responsibility between the St John Council in Adelaide and the local ambulance committees in country districts. The network of uniform, statewide services that spread as a result was one of the more spectacular and visible of St John achievements during the 60s. This particular St John accomplishment, like the others, is most readily seen in the statistics revealing the scale of the growth. Whereas the country

services carried 4500 patients and travelled 211,000 miles (337,600 km.) in 1960, they were moving 16,740 patients over 692,000 miles (1,107,000 km.) a decade later, in 1970. By that stage there were ninety-seven ambulances operating out of sixty-eight country ambulance stations grouped into ten zones covering the entire State.[17]

The Statewide ambulance convention of 1960, as well as agreeing on standardization, took another step that proved important in developing the country services. This was the division of the country districts into an original seven zones. The separate services in each zone agreed to create links with each other through zone committees, and each zone sent representatives to a country zones' committee, which became known as the St John Country Ambulance Committee from the mid-60s. This body acted as the go-between in dealings between the country services and the St John Council, a function formalised in 1963 when the committee's chairman and deputy chairman, L. Fitzgerald of Port Pirie and A. Brown of Waikerie, took seats on the Council as country delegates.[18]

The zones'/Country Ambulance Committee began regular twice-yearly meetings in 1962. They soon revealed the vital interest country communities were taking in any matter touching on health services in their own areas. As Hayward observed in the 1963 *Annual Report*, the Committee's meetings became 'a melting pot of submissions for agenda contributed by all services'. One such idea was for better training for country ambulance crews. Standards of training and service varied from zone to zone. They were higher in the larger towns, where full-time Adelaide-trained ambulance officers were in charge, and they were at least adequate in those smaller towns where a Brigade Division operated the local service on a call-out, part-time basis. In very small or remote settlements the service was run by whoever was willing, and hopefully he, and occasionally she, had at least a St John first aid certificate. The country services' requests for better training resulted in several schemes. The first was a mock disaster training exercise in the Lower North Zone – roughly the triangle between Gawler, Eudunda and Balaklava – in 1961. Forty simulated casualties, all painted up realistically to depict a variety of serious injuries, travelled north from Adelaide and were deposited at the side of a road. The six local ambulances were summoned, and their crews duly showed themselves capable of handling a major disaster. Another idea was for annual weekend training camps for instructors of country crews. These began in 1962, and were held at the Brigade's Caripook campsite near Aldgate in the Adelaide Hills. A further scheme, which also began in 1962, was for a team of ten instructors from the Metropolitan Transport Corps to visit the country zones in turn to help in training the country crews. Later on in the decade, in 1969, the Committee instituted a country ambulance competition, in which crews from the various zones came down to Adelaide to compete for the P.L. Ferrier trophy.[19]

Perhaps the most important factor in raising standards in ambulance services was the establishment of ambulance centres in the country towns. Previously the country ambulance 'station' had most often consisted of garage space loaned by the local hospital, medical practitioner, service station proprieter or other volunteer. The new, separate, centres were usually built as a result of local action, after the local ambulance committee had raised sufficient funds and had enlisted the support of the St John Council. In many instances they were sponsored by the Council, which obtained the site and put up the building. When that happened they became St John centres, fully integrated with St John operations; but often the local ambulance committee wished to retain its autonomy. In the latter case a looser link was maintained with the Council, the local committee accepting St John standards, financial contributions, equipment, training, and often full-time staff, but retaining control of the facilities. The establishment of new country services, and the building of ambulance centres to accommodate them, accelerated during the 60s. New services started up at Mallala (1962), Berri, Mannum and Mannahill (1963), then, after a four-year gap, at Lameroo, Crystal Brook, Booleroo Centre and Cummins (1967). The acquisition of land and the construction of centres also proceeded apace, with new buildings going up at Mount Barker

The Brigade's Clare Ambulance Division, 1947. The Divisional Surgeon, Dr G. Wien-Smith, is seated second from left; president of the division, the mayor, J.R. Michael is seated third from left; the District Superintendent of Northern Sub-District, Capt. G. Dey, is seated third from right; seated at extreme right is Divisional Superintendent A. Millard; while Sgt. W.J. Ness is standing at extreme left.



(1961), Whyalla, Port Pirie, Lucindale, Minlaton, Millicent and Peterborough (1964), Port Pirie and Strathalbyn (1965), Port Augusta, Waikerie, Victor Harbour, Loxton, Renmark, Tailem Bend, Mount Gambier and Port Lincoln (1966), Mannahill, and Gladstone (1967), and Berri, Kingston (South East), Pinnaroo, Bordertown, Clare, Wudina and Lobethal by the end of the decade.[20]

Where a local service started up, and especially where a new centre was built, it became a focus for local St John activity. The Association expended considerable effort in running its courses in such places. In 1963 it appointed its first full-time training officer, Jack Revitt, a Brigade officer who, in the words of the Association chairman, Dr H.G. Prest, spent much of his time 'barn storming' through the country centres. Revitt took with him the recent training film 'Pulse of Life', and was able to give instruction in the innovatory resuscitation techniques, expired air resuscitation ('mouth to mouth') and external cardiac compression. The Brigade, too, ensured that the opening of new Divisions kept pace with the establishment of new country ambulance services and centres. In consequence of this Association and Brigade activity there was usually a supply of trained country people who were available for service on their local ambulance, and who were prepared to wear the Brigade uniform, live up to its standards of efficiency, and help in the training of new recruits from the community. As a result the 1963 *Annual Report* was able to say with pride that, 'in many towns where divisions have been formed, the bulk of operational responsibility [for the ambulances] falls on their shoulders, whilst full-time country ambulance officers in larger towns have a fine service of voluntary reinforcements at hand within the ranks of the Brigade'.[21]

The successful grafting of St John work on to the country centres benefited all concerned. It assured country residents that those operating their ambulances held at least basic ambulance skills. It helped bring the trainees into Association classes which helped push up the curve on the graph for certificates awarded. It brought recruits into the Brigade, thus boosting District strength by so many new Divisions that by 1969 the corps structure had to be rearranged to allow for the creation of three new country corps. And, as the Ferrier promotional machine and the rural press fed each other, it brought the St John Council publicity and goodwill the organization had never before enjoyed.

The satisfaction of St John's country clients with the development of the country ambulance system was obvious in various ways. The acres of column space St John affairs had begun receiving in several dozen weekly provincial newspapers was tanglible proof. So too was the $83,000 which country districts contributed towards the $250,000 target of the 1970 St John building appeal. Gratitude also shone through the report which the chairman of the Country Ambulance Committee wrote for the St John *Annual Report* in 1968, the first year in which the chairman was given a

section of his own. That year the chairman was Mr P. Conrick of the South East zone, and in writing about the latest crop of new country ambulance stations he said,

> They are indeed St John Centres in every sense, being used for a variety of activities related to the promotion of communal health benefits, e.g., polio injection campaigns, glaucoma screenings, Red Cross blood taking, Crippled Children's Association Almoners' meetings as well as being readily available for any other emergency health requirement....
>
> Stable growth of the Country Ambulance Services [is continuing] under the guidance of the St John Council for S.A. and its Executive Staff. However, more important than this is the fact that today we have a State-wide Ambulance Service which is renowned for its efficiency of operation and economy of service, and which takes pride in being an integral part of St John.[22]

In making some of these claims he was not strictly correct. South Australia did not yet have a single Statewide service, but rather a system of associated independent services led and co-ordinated by St John. Nor, however much the St John Council might have liked it, were they an integral part of St John. That Conrick seemed to think South Australia's ambulance facilities were all within the St John organization was nevertheless a tribute to the effective way the Council had standardized ambulance operations throughout the State, raising service standards everywhere.

By the end of the 1960s the process of standardization was almost complete. As early as 1963 uniformity of vehicle make and design had been achieved. As the older non-standard ambulances were withdrawn from service in country areas they had been replaced with the standard type used in the metropolitan area. The result was more efficient country services, because the vehicles were now interchangeable throughout the State. Thus, if a country ambulance needed repair it could be exchanged for one of the same type from Hindmarsh, and the stretchers and life-support equipment kept in the country centres would still fit the exchange vehicles. Radio communications had also been standardized early. In 1961 bases able to use the metropolitan frequency had been set up at Mount Gambier, Mount Barker, Victor Harbour and Minlaton. Further bases were added until by 1968 there was a Statewide network with twenty-four radio bases, into which were linked 119 mobile units in ambulances, all using dual frequency and therefore able to operate on either the metropolitan or the country frequencies. By 1969 transport fees, salaries of full-time staff, signwriting style and ambulance colours were standardized as well. The last two of these meant that every ambulance vehicle was white, bore the Order's Maltese Cross on a large black disc, and prominently carried the words 'St John Ambulance', even if it belonged to one of the autonomous services, in which case it also wore the name of the local service. Similarly, the ambulance centres also featured the 'St John Ambulance' and Maltese Cross devices – which, of course,



The Governor and Deputy Prior, Sir Mark Oliphant, opens the new St John Ambulance centre, Murray Bridge, 1973.

gave, and was intended to give, the St John name wider currency and greater popular appeal.[23]

The success of the St John organization in turning itself into one of the principal institutions in each country town and district was not won easily. It was also, sad to say, an achievement made despite the efforts of some within St John's senior management. This could be seen in the experience of one country service, Bordertown, and in the St John career of its chairman, Eric Ridgway, who rose through the St John hierarchy via his country zone committee, the Statewide Country Ambulance Committee, and the St John Council to the position of Council chairman. He climbed to that final pinnacle in 1983, on the retirement of D.P. Williams, who had reigned for seven years after Hayward's departure 'upstairs' to the nominal and honorific post of Council president. Thus becoming only the third St John Council chairman in thirty-three years was not only a personal triumph for Ridgway, who on his way to the top had had to overcome the biases of an institution and a management centred firmly in Adelaide. It was also a tribute to the determination of the country people who stood behind him. Comprising nearly three-quarters of the South Australian population, the people of the metropolitan area had often mistaken Adelaide for the entire State; and so Ridgway's appointment was one of the rare occasions when they are reminded that those other inhabitants, in that vast hinterland constituted by the rest of the State, have a point of view and wish to be heard.

Ridgway ran a family sheep and wheat farm, and an unlikely but successful business growing cut flowers and bulbs for Australia's metropolitan markets, in the Wimmera country beyond Bordertown, near the Victorian border. Farmer, horticulturalist, inventor of farm machinery, and agricultural entrepreneur, he was a man of many talents. As a farm boy with only an Intermediate Certificate (Grade 10) education, he had joined the Royal Australian Air Force at the outbreak of the Second World War. He had applied for pilot training, and had found himself pitted against university graduates in the competitive selection tests. Amiable, practical, self-assured, entirely without pretension, and with an ability to talk unselfconsciously, authoritatively and as an equal to people from all social backgrounds, he had overcome that and all subsequent hurdles. Posted to England he found himself serving in a Royal Air Force squadron of Beaufighters, No. 245, under a Wing Commander who had been on his pilot training course in Australia and who appreciated his multiple talents. As a result he was assigned various duties in addition to the flying missions over Europe which later earned him a DFC. Thus, he used to be asked to give pep talks to the RAF ground staff, as he was the only one around who seemed able to persuade them to keep the squadron's 'planes airworthy without antagonizing them; and he gained such a reputation as a talker and conciliator that the BBC began inviting him to make morale-boosting broadcasts.[24]

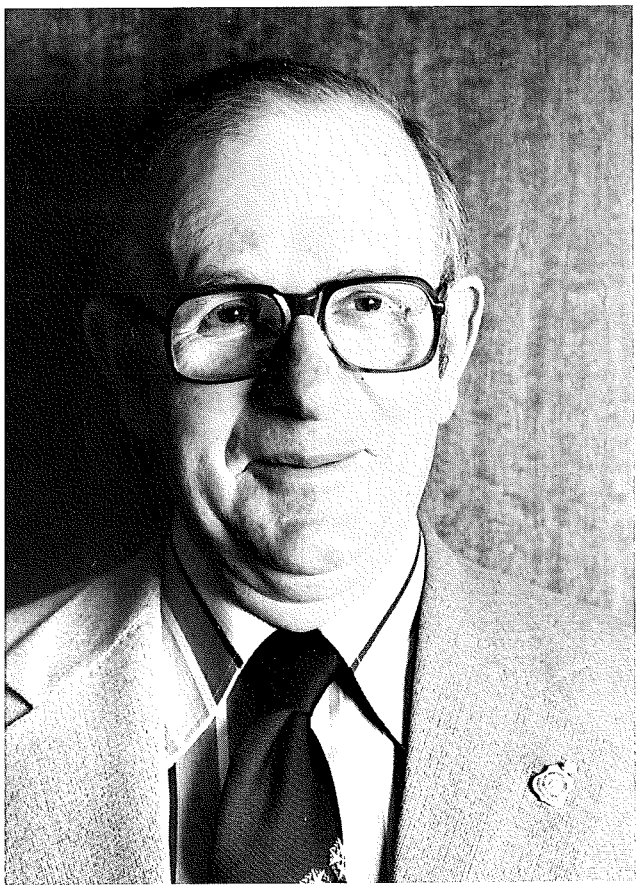
Back home in Bordertown at the end of the war, Ridgway inherited his father's community commitments as well as the family property. One such responsibility was to be the Returned Services League representative on the local ambulance committee, which ran the Tatiara Memorial Ambulance, a joint RSL-Red Cross venture founded in the early 1920s. The Tatiara service in the mid-40s was fairly typical of South Australian country services then. Its sole vehicle was a 1920s-vintage Chevrolet buckboard, driven by the local garage owner, and the principal equipment was a blanket and a long length of rope for tethering down the patients. As the Tatiara region had raised enough money during the war to provide the Army with three ambulances at £450 each, the RSL-Red Cross committee decided at the war's end to obtain from Army Disposals one of the ambulances the district had donated. The new vehicle, a Chevrolet 'Blitz wagon', was handed over in a ceremony in May 1946. This was replaced in February 1950 with a Fargo one-ton utility truck. One of the part-time drivers of this vehicle was a local undertaker, and the ambulance committee was always a little puzzled as to why, when he was on duty, the patients being carried always seemed to require treatment in Adelaide rather than at the local hospital. They discovered the reason some time later when, returning from an Adelaide trip late one night, he overturned the ambulance, strewing its illicit backloading of empty coffins along a wide expanse of the Dukes-Western Highway.[25]

Ridgway, who joined the ambulance committee in 1951, became its chairman in 1955, a position he still retained thirty years later, in addition to his chairmanship of the St John Council. Among his first objectives was to regularise and raise the standard of the local service. To that end the committee took on as ambulance officer the proprietor of the local hardware store, Ron Williams, who, for an honorarium of £100 a year, agreed to keep the ambulance fuelled, cleaned and ready for service., a service he performed for the next twenty-one years, until 1976. Part of the agreement was that Williams would run the ambulance with the assistance of an approved list of volunteers, and on the understanding that, if the vehicle were called out, the local doctor would go with it, together with a sister from the hospital if first aid treatment was likely to be necessary. The next year, 1956, the Tatiara service affiliated with St John. Shapter and Ferrier came down from Adelaide to convince the committee of the advantages of affiliation, and when they mentioned a £500 vehicle subsidy as one of the benefits, Tatiara 'couldn't join quickly enough'. The links with St John proved advantageous, for within three years the service had obtained its first brand new, custom-built ambulance – a 1959 Chrysler Royal. Its running costs were financed largely by a subscription scheme Ridgway organized. For an annual fee of a guinea ($2.10) members could be carried for a shilling a mile, as against 1/6 a mile for non-members. Only two residents refused to join. One of these was a truck driver who later fell off his truck, broke his pelvis, and had to be carried

to Adelaide at a cost to himself of some £27 – £9 more than he would have paid if he had been in the scheme, or the equivalent of eight years' subscriptions. The committee was well pleased with its St John connections, and accordingly opted for closer bonds. In 1965 it decided to reconstitute itself as the Bordertown and District Ambulance, under a constitution similar to those of other affiliated services.[26]

All this time Ridgway's own St John connections had been developing. When the country districts came under the St John zoning system after 1960, he became secretary of the Upper South East zone, which took in the territory east of the Murray in the triangle between Coonalpyn, Bordertown and Pinnaroo. In 1968 he became its chairman, and as such he also became a member of the St John Country Ambulance Committee, the chairmanship of which he took over in 1972. His heavier involvement with St John began in 1962, when the St John Council was running its second quadrennial building appeal. The country appeal organiser, Jim Dunne, travelled down to Keith and Bordertown to tell the local communities that, if they met their appeal quota of £750 this time round, they would receive 'Priority 2' status, which meant they would be next in line to receive a new St John Ambulance centre after the next appeal, in 1966. At Ridgway's direction, the Bordertown committee set to with a will, and soon met its part of the quota. Keith, on the other hand, lagged, raising only £26. Ridgway then organized a doorknock of every household in the district, and that raised a further £242, the total now near enough to earn the district its Priority 2 ranking. By the time of the 1966 appeal Ridgway knew that the combined cost of land and building for an ambulance centre would be $28,000. He therefore set a target of $10,000 to make sure the district got its new station. With the promise of one of the burgeoning new St John Ambulance centres before it, the district exceeded all expectations by contributing $15,000. The building was duly erected, and was ready for use before the end of 1969. It had its official opening on a hot day in February 1970. Sir Mellis Napier came down from Adelaide, resplendent in his black coat with 'tails', to perform the handover ceremony in 110° Fahrenheit heat.[27]

Not all Ridgway's earlier dealings with St John officials were either easy or happy. He had a difficult relationship with the local Bordertown Brigade Division, for example. The Division had opened in 1955, the year he took over as local ambulance committee chairman. At first it was based on the local Church of Christ, with which its early members had affiliations, though later, in the 60s, it was taken over by people with more 'Social' and secular connections – a group centred on the local pony club. Ridgway was not very impressed with it, and would not join it himself. To start with, he found that many of its members seemed preoccupied with their uniforms, their rank and their regulations, and, in his experience, this kept many potentially good recruits away. A local business proprietor, for example, might be attracted by the opportunity for community service



Eric Ridgway of Bordertown, chairman of the St John Council from 1984.

the Brigade offered; however, if it happened that the Divisional Superintendent was one of his (less frequently her) employees, he would stay away: the prospect of being called to task by an employee was decidedly unwelcome. In Ridgway's opinion, moreover, the local Division was a 'rag-tag-and-bobtail outfit' that did little to raise the prestige of the wider St John organization. It restricted its activities to public duty at local football matches, for instance, and was little interested in accepting wider challenges. Ron Williams, who supervised the ambulance service, gave up trying to persuade its members to come on to his duty roster: they were either unwilling or too unreliable to bother with. Then, too, one of its Divisional Superintendents had to be dismissed when he refused to take hints from his superiors that he did its reputation little good by boozing in the local pub after public duties, in uniform but without shoes. Later, after a new Divisional Superintendent had been appointed and had members working regularly on the ambulance, the Brigade began insisting that only Brigade members should be allowed to work on the ambulance as volunteers. At this stage Ridgway and the ambulance committee had to reassert their control and draw the whole St John operation together. It was agreed that the committee would furnish the Division with funds for its uniforms and equipment, but that in exchange Brigade members would staff the ambulance according to the roster drawn up by the committee.

This experience left Ridgway convinced that where an ambulance centre was to be founded it was better for the ambulance facility to be operating in advance of the formation of an associated Brigade Division. The alternative was for disputes over control of the service, and an undue preoccupation with Brigade regulations and its chain of command.[28]

Ridgway possibly did not recognise it at the time, but what he was experiencing was one of the perennial St John conundrums: the Brigade, like the Association, is an autonomous foundation that takes its orders from neither local ambulance committee nor St John Council but from its Commissioner and Chief Commissioner. It has its separate traditions of which it is intensely proud, and it jealously guards its independence within the wider St John organization. Administrators, like Ridgway, who saw the St John movement globally, and consequently thought the Brigade should compliantly subsume itself within the wider organization, found difficulty in coming to terms with the Brigade position. It was not a problem Ridgway could hope to solve as the chairman of an ambulance committee remote from Adelaide, though later, after he had risen to the chairmanship of the St John Council, it was one that exercised his mind greatly.[29]

Ridgway had other early difficulties with St John, personally and as a spokesman for the country services. In 1972, newly installed as chairman of the St John Country Ambulance Committee, he took a seat on the St John Council. At first, he later recalled, he was there 'under sufferance': no one bothered speaking to him or asking his opinion at Council meetings. Other members, he thought, regarded him as just a farmer down from the back blocks, present in only a token capacity, and too simple to comprehend the complexities of St John policy and practice. At first he was treated with either rudeness or condescension, particularly when he spoke out for the rights of country residents. In the mid-70s, for instance, at a time when the senior management was putting forward a scheme for dividing the State into several semi-independent ambulance regions, he spoke out against the lack of consultation with the country services, declaring that country people valued centralized control and wanted a Statewide system because it meant uniformity of service. Regionalization, he said, meant an inferior service for remote districts like his own. He was summoned to Adelaide by the manager of the day, who no doubt hoped to beat him into submission. He arrived on time, was kept waiting for an hour and a half, and was then upbraided for his outspokenness. His commitment to the rights and needs of country people persuaded him to persevere, however, and eventually he won grudging recognition as 'that persistent country bastard'. His co-operation with D.P. Williams in the fundraising appeals of the 1970s and his strong promotion of the need for a new, spacious St John House to replace the antiquated Austin St. headquarters, and his growing reputation as someone who delivered on promises, in the end won him allies among the St John hierarchy.

Consequently it was no surprise to either the metropolitan or country fractions of the organization that he was promoted to the deputy chairmanship of the Council when Williams succeeded Hayward in 1976.[30]

The rise of Ridgway through St John ranks was a notable accomplishment. Without political pull, and without a power base in either Association or Brigade, or the medical or legal fraternities, or the Adelaide business community, and indeed despite the powerful interests these all represented, he had got to the top. The truly Statewide St John ambulance service that was set up in the early 1980s, and which we will examine in a subsequent chapter, owed much to his personal influence, to his persistence in demanding parity of service for metropolitan and rural residents alike, and to his diligent toil in bringing that about. Its establishment was a signal attainment by the St John Council – the last link in a long chain of development the Council had begun thirty years before. If Ridgway had been an historian as well as an activist he would have been able to take special pride, as a man of the country, in having forged the final links.

4. *Whyalla and the St John Air Ambulance for South Australia*

Over the years St John workers in Whyalla and the St John management in Adelaide developed an uneasy wariness about each other. It was a similar relationship to that existing between the city as a whole and the capital city two gulfs and 230 or 395 kilometres away, depending on whether one travels by air or road. Adelaide's citizens would speak of the troublesome inhabitants of the State's second city, all of whom seemed to have a chip on their shoulders. People in Whyalla spoke deprecatingly of Adelaideans' 'end of the earth syndrome': Adelaideans who reached Port Wakefield, a bare ninety-five kilometres north of the capital, thought they were in the outback, so the Whyalla adage went, and by the time they were on the far side of Spencer Gulf they went in fear of falling off the planet! Whyalla's residents felt they were constantly overlooked by the decision-makers in the capital. If a decision about Whyalla were made, to close down a school, for example, or to shut a post office, or to cancel an aeroplane route, then the decision would be made without reference to the wishes or needs of Whyalla citizens, who had usually struggled to build up the amenity concerned. Whyalla's people were therefore reluctant to concede power over any of their facilities to centralized – that is, Adelaide – control.

Whyalla in many respects typified all country towns. Its sense of isolation from Adelaide, its resentment of the dominance of the capital city, and its conviction that Adelaide's centralizers had perfected the art of ignoring the wishes of country people – all this was common to many country districts, but was perhaps felt more strongly in Whyalla. In other respects Whyalla was untypical. It was, firstly, a 'steel' town, and it was on

the edge of one of the world's great deserts – for motorists driving west across Australia it was the last big town before the Nullarbor Plain. Its smelters, steel mills and shipbuilding yards rising up above a dreary landscape of sun-scorched red earth, salt pans and blue-grey saltbush could hardly be compared to the wheatfields rolling away from the grain silos of rural settlements like, say, Bordertown. Then, too, Whyalla was above all a 'company' town. Nearly all its 34,000 residents either worked for, or in activities indirectly related to, the 'Big Australian' – Broken Hill Proprietary. Steel making, a sense of remoteness and working for 'the Company' together made for a different regional personality – one that was more defensive, more inward looking, more intensely proud of being independent, and much less willing to accept direction by Adelaide. And so it was in St John operations no less than in other things; and nowhere was that more obvious than in the development of the St John Air Ambulance, which was another of St John's spectacular achievements during the 1960s.

The last chapter briefly looked at the growth of the Brigade's Ambulance and Nursing Divisions in Whyalla from 1939, when the Ambulance Division formed. In those early days the town ambulance was owned and run by BHP. The company generally welcomed the Brigade initiative, donating £20 towards the new Division. In 1944 it gave the Division permission to use its ambulance should there be need, and any Brigade member with a driver's licence could drive it. This offer was most often taken up for the Division's public duties at the races and football. Some time after the war the Division made arrangements for its own ambulance, when it began hiring a Volkswagen Kombivan for its racetrack engagements. In the early 50s, too, the Whyalla Town Commission began taking an interest in ambulance work. It set up an ambulance committee, obtained a vehicle for use as an ambulance, and made an arrangement for the local taxi drivers to staff it. The usual practice was that medical practitioners would call the vehicle out whenever it was needed for a case of accident or illness, with bystanders co-opted as stretcher bearers. In 1958 the Town Commission obtained a replacement vehicle through the St John ambulance transport service in Adelaide, but continued the arrangement with the taxi drivers. In 1961 the ambulance committee decided to employ a full-time manager and assistant for its service, and perhaps because the chairman of the Town Commission, C.L. Ryan, supported the Brigade strongly – he was president of the Ambulance Division and his wife was president of the Nursing Division – it decided to enlist Brigade support in running the service.[31]

The two men the ambulance committee appointed to operate its service were Don Jacquier and Bruce Battersby. Jacquier had been a car salesman in Adelaide, but had come to Whyalla as a sales representative for a medical firm. The entrepreneurial style he brought to his new job with St John owed something to that background. As a medical salesman he was one of

those whom the committee had consulted when it had made up its mind to establish a full time service. Such were his salesman's skills that it chose him as its first full-time manager, a position he still held under St John patronage nearly a quarter of a century later. He took over in November 1961. At his disposal was a Holden 'EH' van and a Volkswagen Kombivan which he ran from a tin shed the Brigade Divisions used as their training hall. (The shed had its own special history. Local Brigade members had expended so much of their hard-earned funds acquiring it in 1957 that they had inusfficient cash left over to pay for the coat of paint it needed. They therefore brought along whatever paint they could scrounge – white, yellow, blue, green, red lead – and mixed these together in a drum. To their surprise the resulting colour was what one member described as 'lovely iron ore dust pink', the colour it remained for more than twenty years.) The tin shed had its limitations, and so Jacquier soon began running the service from his own house. The service was known as 'the Whyalla Ambulance' but it was affiliated with St John. The team of volunteers who operated it after hours and at weekends were all Brigade members, and occupied the living room of Jacquier's home while waiting for calls. This meant that he had four and sometimes more semi-permanent guests.[32]

The Whyalla Ambulance was busy from the outset. Its main work was the same daily routine of all ambulance services, and in handling its caseload it carried everything from the usual injuries, accidents and heart attacks to cot deaths, drownings, and hospital transport and clinic cases. In addition to these, and because Whyalla had no veterinary surgeon at the time, it took care of various dogs and goats with broken bones, for instance – the victims of speeding cars and their own nomadic habits on the city fringes. On one occasion Jacquier was called out to a magpie with a broken leg. He splinted the leg with cotton buds, took the bird home, set its leg with plaster, and took tender care of the patient until the break was mended. The magpie showed little gratitude: no sooner had Jacquier removed the plaster and pronounced his patient cured than it viciously pecked the hand that had healed it. After late 1962, when a radio base using the State ambulance frequency had been installed for the service, the workload increased appreciably. Ambulance staff were called on more frequently to drive cases to Adelaide, with which they could be in constant radio contact during the long trip south. The round trip to Adelaide meant that for ten hours or more Whyalla was without one of its two ambulances – a serious situation for an industrial city, where a multi-casualty accident has a better chance of happening than in places more tranquil.[33]

Jacquier's mind was typically full of ideas, schemes and plans for improving the service, in which he took proprietorial pride. Out of his discussions with C.L. Ryan came a proposal for solving the problem of the long round trip to Adelaide – why not obtain an aeroplane, which could be stationed in Whyalla and used for transporting to the capital not only local cases but also those of other Eyre Peninsula towns as well? They put

separate requests to the St John Council for an 'air ambulance', but by this time Hayward and his Council had already committed St John to the construction of a large new ambulance centre to house the Whyalla Ambulance, and were in no mood for grandiose schemes like that. A promoter with Jacquier's enterprise does not accept refusal easily, and so Jacquier fell to devising other means for obtaining the aircraft he was convinced the Whyalla Ambulance needed. He guessed that Whyalla's population, then about 8000, would justify the cost of about £8000 to buy a secondhand light aircraft: that many residents, he reckoned, would provide sufficient income for the service in carriage fees to meet both running and maintenance costs plus loan repayments. In 1965 he hired a Piper 235 Cherokee four-seater for several weeks to test his theory, then, because he thought the scheme economically feasible, he undertook to buy the 'plane.[34]

Hayward and the St John Council remained unaware that Jacquier's aeronautical dreams were taking physical form like this. They could not be kept ignorant indefinitely. Their illumination occurred on an auspicious occasion for the Whyalla St John branch – the weekend of the opening of the new St John Ambulance centre. A group of Council members flew up from Adelaide for the opening. Flight bookings that weekend were heavy, and some Council members had to take whatever seats were available on light 'planes. Jacquier arranged for his Piper Cherokee to be available. Not knowing who owned it, some of them were grateful to accept seats on it. The opening of the building took place on the Saturday afternoon; the visitors stayed overnight; and most of them flew back home on the Sunday. A group of them, including Hayward, were standing waiting for their flight at the Whyalla airport when a call came over the public address system, 'Would the pilot of the St John air ambulance please report to his 'plane?' Too taken aback to demand explanations, Hayward and his companions then had the unique opportunity of seeing the latest St John enterprise go into action on its very first case. Jacquier, however, suspected that there would be angry 'phone calls from Adelaide on the morrow, and to preempt that he gave Hayward just enough time to reach his home then rang him there. 'We have called our first 'plane the "Sir Edward Hayward"', he explained, 'and we wonder if you could come here again next weekend to perform the naming ceremony'. Hayward's opposition ended there and then. He duly returned and, with due ceremony and the assistance of C.L. Ryan, withdrew the flag of the Order from the nose section of the 'plane, revealing the magical words bold-scripted from the door to the propeller. A photo of the beaming Hayward performing this little ceremony appeared as the frontispiece in that year's *Annual Report* of the Council.[35]

The air ambulance was a great success from its first day of operations. It was kept so busy ferrying patients between the Eyre Peninsula towns and Adelaide that before long the Whyalla ambulance committee had to



The 'Sir Edward Hayward VIII', a Piper Seneca II air ambulance, at Whyalla airport.

charter a second 'plane. By 1969 the service was employing two pilots full-time, both of them Brigade members. That year they logged 600 hours' flying time on casework; the following year they did 900 hours, and in 1971 1000 hours, saving some 150,000 miles (240,000 km.) of ground travel. In 1971, too, the service bought its second 'plane, another Piper Cherokee which took the name 'C.L.Ryan'. By this time the Whyalla ambulance centre boasted not only its two air ambulances but fifteen ground ambulances as well. The air ambulance service continued to grow under Jacquier's guidance. By 1984 it had six full-time pilots and three aircraft, two of which were now based in Adelaide. It was logging over 2500 hours' flying time a year, and was annually carrying 1400 patients. In the two decades since Jacquier had bought his first Piper Cherokee the service had owned no fewer than twenty-five aircraft. It no longer used the single-engine Cherokees, having long since switched to roomier twin-engined 'planes, which were more suitable for ambulance work. In the intervening years it had used a succession of Piper Senecas, Chieftains and, more recently, the eight-passenger Navajos. These 'planes were flying far and wide, all over South Australia and into every other State as well. By that time, too, Whyalla had become one of the strongest St John centres in South Australia, if not in all Australia or indeed the entire St John world. Members of the local Whyalla Brigade Divisions by then were spending a vast amount of time on voluntary duty either with their Divisions or on the ambulance service – some 20,000 hours annually, or about three *per cent* of the 620,000 hours South Australian Brigade members put in that year, or roughly 1.7 *per cent* of the all-Australian figure of 1,182,000 hours.

In the meantime Jacquier had acquired a reputation as one of the great characters of South Australian aviation. His aerial ambulance service resembled nothing quite so much as a busy small airline that had achieved respectability in the industry through the valiant pioneering and fast talking of its venturesome proprietor. He had travelled widely in his quest to become an expert in all aspects of the airline industry, including a round-the-world trip in 1975, when he visited the Piper aircraft factory in the USA, the Paris Air Show, and the Biggin Hill Air Display in the UK. He was a vice-president of the General Aviation Association of Australia; his name and photograph appeared often in at least the *Whyalla News*; he received invitations to write papers for learned journals and to address seminars on aviation medicine; other States were developing air ambulance services that looked remarkably like what had evolved in South Australia; and he was known widely throughout St John circles as 'Biggles'.[36]

These achievements had not been without their costs to Jacquier, for his 'airline' had had to pass through some pockets of severe turbulence. Firstly, as the aerial ambulance service expanded it became clear that the State needed such a facility; and the question then arose as to whether or not such a vital utility should be located in Adelaide rather than Whyalla. Further, should such a Statewide ambulance service continue to be controlled by an autonomous regional body, the Whyalla ambulance committee, or should it come under direct St John Council control? To investigate questions like these the St John Council in 1974 engaged a

The pilot, Barry Clifford, assists ambulance officers Graham Morrison (left) and Morrie Denham to transfer a patient from a Navajo air ambulance to an ambulance van, early 1980s.



retired RAF Wing-Commander, Frank Davison, then working as an executive for Hayward's firm, John Martin Ltd. Davison flew over to Whyalla, reviewed Jacquier's operations and wrote a report recommending that the Whyalla set-up should become the nucelus of a wider State air ambulance system, with stronger links to the St John Council but with its regional autonomy retained. That was, perhaps, having a bet each way, but at least it would have helped allay Whyalla fears that Adelaide was bidding for a takeover. On the other hand, it might not entirely have satisfied Jacquier that his personal performance was not under continuous scrutiny by the St John Council executive, some members of which conveyed the impression that they disapproved of his wheeler-dealer style.[37]

The next problem Jacquier had to face was a 'rebellion' by his pilots. From about 1976 they had been grumbling about aspects of his management. Things came to a head in January 1978 when the pilots submitted a long report to Jacquier on the operation of the aerial ambulance service. They marked it 'private and strictly confidential' but sent copies to the chairman of the Whyalla ambulance committee (now formally titled the St John Ambulance Service Upper Eyre Peninsula Committee), Murray Norton, a local real estate agent, to the St John Council general manager, Ferrier, and to the St John Council secretary, Glen A. Woods. This report alleged various charges against Jacquier. It accused him of an 'unbending attitude' and a 'flat refusal to do anything about problems' with the service as identified by the pilots. It said that, to make economies, he was forcing them into breaches of air navigation regulations, for example requiring them to fly aircraft that had not undergone mandatory maintenance servicing, to fly longer hours than permissable, to carry patients without adequate restraining braces, to call into sub-standard airstrips, and to fly aircraft that were left in an unhygienic state from previous trips. It concluded by claiming that

> illegal operations void all insurances, crew licences, [and] operator licences, [and] risk lives. ... The patients and medical personnel have every right to expect they are being carried legally, but frequently go with total and often misplaced trust in the legality of the operation. Because we are a community service, the standards of our operation should be impeccable. Our nil accident record since our inception is not because of management policy, but in spite of it![38]

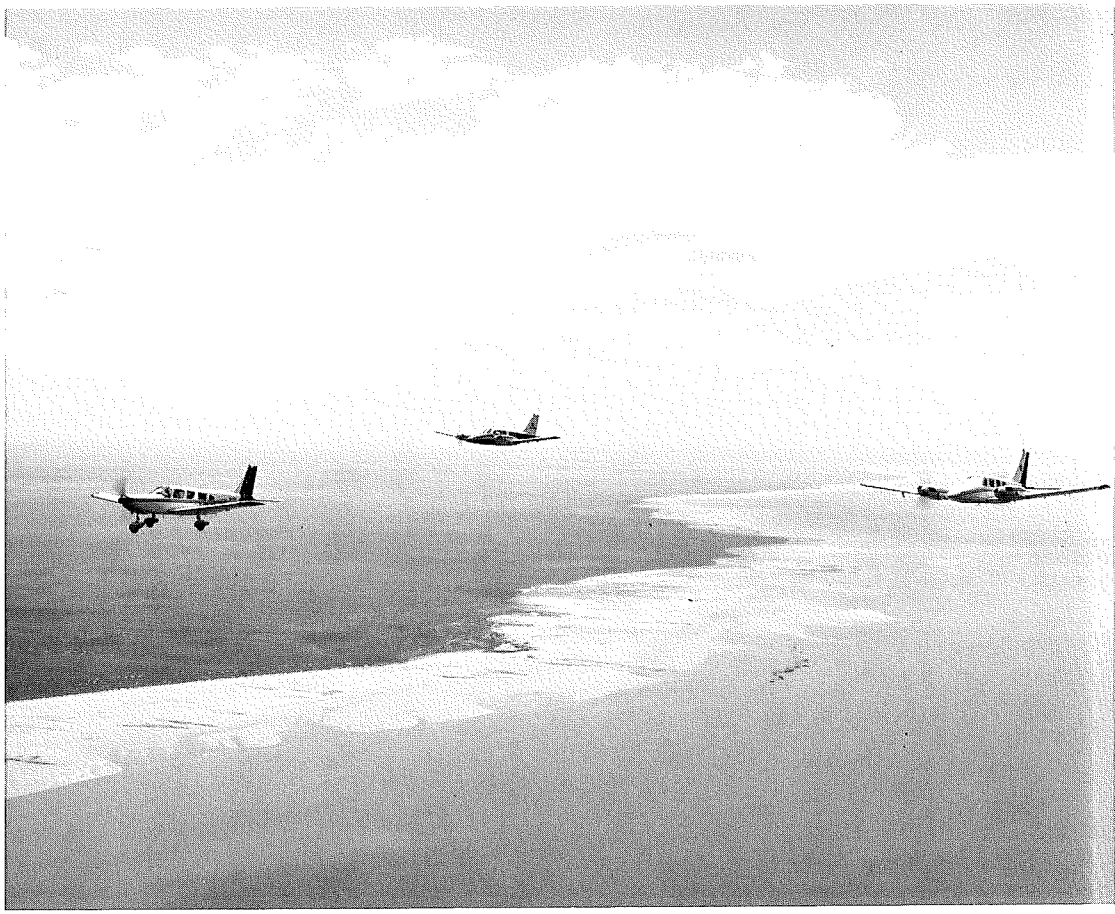
The day after the pilots had submitted their report Norton convened a meeting of his committee to consider it. Ferrier and Woods came over from Adelaide, and Mrs Eckblom, the Mayor of Whyalla, was also present. Norton said he had 'complete confidence' in Jacquier, who had 'never pressurized pilots' into flying unairworthy 'planes. He also said he 'considered [the] pilots [were] lazy and [were] not doing their job'. This point of view was in accord with that of Jacquier, who would later claim

the problem arose from the influence of one or two 'stirrers' within the pilots' ranks. To state the pilots' case, B.J. Clifford, the chief pilot and operations manager, was present. He said Jacquier 'had not supported him' and had not given him 'proper opportunity to run the operations'. Speaking for the St John Council, Ferrier said 'the Operation must not be jeopardised because of costs', and that 'there should be a greater contribution to flying subsidies by H.Q.'[39]

To gain a clearer view of the rights and wrongs of each side to the dispute, the St John Council subsequently sent Davison back to Whyalla to make another report. This was not very favourable to the Jacquier side, for it recommended that he should not be directly responsible for air ambulance operations. This placed Ferrier and the Council in a quandary. On the one hand they had Davison's adverse report, but on the other they knew the ambulance committee in Whyalla was behind Jacquier and would interpret any move to shift him sideways as an unacceptable attempt by Adelaide to play 'Big Brother'.[40]

Ferrier's way out of his problem was to call for a further review. This time he engaged the firm of management consultants, P.A. Consulting Services Pty. Ltd. One of the P.A. consultants, R.E. Morris, duly carried out an investigation then submitted his report in March 1978. He found that Jacquier's leadership style had been a contributing factor to his difficulties with the pilots. Thus, Morris wrote, Jacquier 'made most of the key decisions' and kept 'tight control' over the 'top down' decision making process, as a result of which 'the key problem' was 'the lack of top management delegation'. At the same time, Morris went on, Jacquier had 'become bogged down by an expanding volume of routine decision making'. His 'first love [was] the air ambulance service', and he 'found it quicker to move in and make decisions in this area than [to] develop an executive who can do the job effectively'. Morris drew other conclusions. He thought that Jacquier needed to work on his communication skills, that the air operations procedures could be tightened, that financial controls could be improved, and that, in relation to the pilots, who, he found, were 'working in an intolerable situation', industrial relations problems could have been handled better. On the other hand, he concluded, 'on the road operations side of the service, morale and team spirit [were] excellent'; and, all in all, the Upper Eyre Peninsula undertaking, in both its road and aerial operations, was 'giving excellent service to patients and member branches'.[41]

Morris's report went on to say that the way out of the various problems he had isolated was for the UEP ambulance committee to play a more active role in supervising the service Jacquier was running in its name. At the same time the St John Council should exercise more direct influence over the service by appointing three representatives to sit on the committee. These recommendations were duly implemented. A former RAAF Squadron Leader, Max Goodsell, was recruited as air operations



The St John air ambulances, 1984.

manager, while the new St John Council general manager, D.W. Jellis (the successor to Ferrier, who had retired in July 1978), joined the committee, along with John Rawes, the Council's finance and administration manager, and Ray Schilling, the ambulance transport service's superintendent of country operations.[42]

The service settled down after that, evolving into the St John Air Ambulance for South Australia. Its administration remained centred on Whyalla, but, with two of its three 'planes based in Adelaide, the centre of gravity of its operations had rather shifted. This could be seen in the fact that, of the 1056 separate flights its aircraft made in 1983, no less than 977 were either from, to or through Adelaide, whereas only 117 were from, to or through Whyalla. It had frequent interstate calls to retrieve South Australians in need – eighty of these in 1983, or 7.5 *per cent* of its total. These made it a truly nationwide service, but also meant that Adelaide was its natural focus. Whether or not the balance of its operations tilted in favour of Whyalla or Adelaide, the fact remained that, like the country services generally, it had been another development where the provincial hinterland had led the capital. Jacquier could take pride in the justification of his vision, for what he had started continued on, yearly setting new

records of hours and kilometres flown, patients carried, and hours of duty performed by the Brigade's team of voluntary attendants. In doing so it had become not only one of the key elements in St John's Statewide network of ambulance facilities but a vital part of the State's system of health services. Government acknowledgement of the latter point was perhaps apparent during 1981, in the official recognition that year of Jacquier's contribution to aerial ambulance work. He received the Medal of the Order of Australia – a decoration he could wear alongside his St John awards, his Brigade long service medal and the cross of an Officer in the Order he had received six years previously.[43]

5. *The Northern Territory branch of St John in South Australia*

The previous chapter showed how St John operations spread to Darwin and Alice Springs in the 1950s, and how, after the formation of a St John 'Branch Council' in Darwin in 1953 they came under the formal superintendence of the St John Council for South Australia. Like most other South Australian St John ventures in the 60s, the Northern Territory operation was one that prospered, though that was due less to South Australian tutelage than to Territorian initiative.

St John operations in the Northern Territory entered a phase of self-generated rapid expansion in the mid-60s. This coincided with the appointment as both Branch Council chairman and Brigade Deputy Commissioner of W.A. ('Spike') Langsford, the Commonwealth Director of Health for the Northern Territory from 1963 until 1973. Langsford was a New Zealander who had first come to Darwin as a young resident medical officer at the Darwin Hospital in 1952. Since then he had served in various government postings in the Territory and overseas, including periods as the medical superintendent of the Alice Springs Hospital and assistant Director of the Northern Territory Health Service. Langsford was thus well placed to give St John the prominence it had previously lacked in the Territory. Unlike his predecessors in charge of St John's Territorian affairs, he began regularly reporting to the St John Council for South Australia on the progress the Branch was making, with the result that it began figuring rather more prominently in the life of the South Australian St John organization. Perhaps for the first time members of South Australian St John bodies were able to appreciate what a lusty infant their Council was responsible for. Those of them who bothered reading the Northern Territory section of the Council's *Annual Report* might have realised that, under Langsford's leadership, their Northern Territory Branch was really an outgrowth of their own organization in name only: for all practical purposes it led a separate existence, Furthermore, it was growing so vigorously with little reference to or help from Adelaide that obviously it would soon be independent in name as well as deed.

If Langsford's leadership was one reason for the rapid development, another was the strong links the Branch had forged with people who mattered in Territorian affairs. It was, perhaps, as well-connected with the Territory's influential figures as the parent organization was with those who counted in South Australian public life. Until self-government came to the Territory in 1978, the Administrators, or Commonwealth-appointed principal government officers, were generally keen St John supporters both in practice as well as in their formal capacity as Branch patrons. R.L. Dean, who held the position from 1964 until his appointment as Australian consul in San Francisco in 1970, and his successor, F.C. Chaney, who then held it to 1973, took special interest. Darwin's Mayors also played an active role in St John affairs. Alderman Harry Chan, who was both Mayor of Darwin and President of the Northern Territory Legislative Council at the time of his death in 1970, had been the long-serving treasurer to the St John Branch Council. His successor as both Mayor and Branch Council member, Alderman Bill Richards, served briefly as the Branch Council secretary, until he died in 1971, while a later Mayor, Dr Ella Stack served a long spell as a Branch Council member from 1974.[44]

The indispensable factor in the success of the Northern Territory Branch, however, was probably the sheer enthusiasm of its own members. By the mid-1960s the Branch consisted of four elements. First there was the Branch Council, analogous to South Australia's St John Council. Then there was the Brigade Sub-District, consisting of Divisions in Darwin, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. The Darwin Division in particular was flourishing. By 1966 it included both men and women and was therefore a 'Combined' Division, as against an Ambulance or Nursing Division. In a couple of years it grew from twenty to seventy-five members. Further Combined Divisions soon followed – a Darwin Combined Cadet Division, and further Darwin adult and Cadet Divisions at Casuarina, one of the newer suburbs. The third element was a small ambulance transport service that used two vehicles and was entirely staffed by Brigade volunteers. Finally, the other three parts of the organization received generous financial assistance from a vigorous Auxiliary. In the absence of well developed government ambulance facilities the challenge to the Brigade was large, and, in keeping with the Territorian penchant for thinking big, Darwin's Brigade members rose to meet it.

To fuel Territorians' awakening enthusiasm for St John work there was, of course, the ambulance transport work the Darwin Division had begun in the early 60s. A community in which the rhetoric of sturdy independence and self-help runs strongly is one that takes readily to self-improvement through large-scale schemes that demonstrate its flair for innovative initiative. In such communities practical and useful voluntary bodies like the St John Ambulance Brigade might expect to do well, particularly when they sponsor exciting projects like the operation of an

ambulance service. Brigade activity in Darwin illustrated this point perhaps better than anywhere else. By 1967 the Darwin Division had two ambulance vehicles, bought with money raised from donations. To house these the Branch Council had purchased a property in Fannie Bay and had built a two-storey St John centre there. The new building included a large lecture hall, a radio communications centre, garage space for both vehicles, and storage space and meeting facilities for both the Brigade Division and the local St John Auxiliary. A Branch Council member, Angelo Maddalozzo, had donated the final sum that allowed the building to be finished, debt-free, in 1967, while that same year the local St John Auxiliary had been 'as usual ... tireless' in raising funds to purchase a two-way radio system for installation in the new centre and in the two ambulances. The radio system, Langsford reported, 'has been a great blessing and has enabled the Brigade to eliminate much unnecessary vehicle running'. It also allowed the St John service to co-operate more closely with the Police, 'and quite frankly we do not know how we managed without it', Langsford wrote.[45]

The Brigade ambulance transport service, which complemented a small operation run by the Department of Health out of the Darwin Hospital, grew fast. In 1967 its two vehicles travelled over 10,000 miles (16,000 km.), attended 321 accidents and 264 other cases and carried 720 patients, all of which was in addition to the 220 public duties division members attended. Four years later the Division was operating four vehicles, which travelled over 36,000 miles (57,600 km.), attended 2626 cases, and transported 3287 patients. In the same period Brigade strength in the Territory had grown to 255, while the number of person-hours of voluntary service was increasing apace, and was up to nearly 30,000 hours in 1971. By the end of 1974, when Cyclone Tracy flattened Darwin in several hours, the St John ambulance service in Darwin was highly professional, though still run by the Brigade's part time volunteers. As the present writer has shown in his Priory history, *A Century For Australia*, it was so effective during the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, that the government had few qualms in passing over to the St John Branch Council full responsibility for, first, Darwin's ambulance facilities, and later those of the rest of the Territory.[46]

Those who joined a Brigade Division in the Northern Territory entered a world in which St John work was a way of life. Indeed, Territorian Brigade Divisions more closely resembled commanderies of the ancient Knights Hospitaller than did any other Divisions in Australia. The 30,000 hours' voluntary duty performed by the 255 Territorian Brigade members in 1971 meant that, on average, each was doing 2.26 hours a week, compared with the weekly average of 1.39 hours done by South Australian Brigade members that same year. Those hours demanded that Brigade members spend much time in each other's company, that their life away from their jobs should revolve around the Brigade. Why, we could ask,

were Territorian Brigade members so ready to immerse themselves in St John work when the Brigade elsewhere in Australia often had to struggle to hold its members? The answer lay partly in the Territorian self-help ethic, but there were other aspects to life in the Territory which also contributed. The Territory towns were places where many residents were transients, cut off from families and friends in other States or overseas St John for many people was a substitute for those other close ties. In their year or two in Darwin or Tennant Creek or Alice Springs, people from 'South' could consequently give the Brigade the loyalty and devotion that would have been channelled elsewhere 'back home'. Brigade members thus had need of each other, and of the St John work they shared. Their dedication to that work was consequently the stronger. So too was their commitment to each other, and as a result bonds between Brigade members were close.

The Brigade's social life, much of which revolved around fundraising, helped reinforce the ties between its members. The social event of the year for all within St John was the annual Brigade ball, usually run by the Auxiliary at Government House at the invitation of and presided over by the Administrator. There was usually a special guest at such grand occasions. In 1968, for example, it was the Foreign Minister of Thailand and his wife, Dr and Madame Thanet Koman. What those particular guests made of the celebrations is unknown, but if they received the hospitality accorded to southern visitors looking over St John's northern outpost they would have been overwhelmed with the generosity of the reception. The Auxiliary was highly active in running the fundraisers that supported Brigade activities. Most of Langsford's annual reports to Adelaide were able to include statements like the following, from his 1968 report:

> The Auxiliary ... worked tirelessly throughout the year, taking part in numerous functions and activities, and was responsible for raising over six and a half thousand dollars, a magnificent effort in such a small community. As a result of this, many improvements were made to the Ambulance Station, including the re-furnishing of the "live-in" crews' quarters, the provision of two refrigerators, washing machine, table tennis equipment, and numerous other items.[47]

The following year the Auxiliary raised even more money for the Brigade including $10,000 in less than forty-eight hours pledged during a 'Pole Sit' appeal run in conjunction with the Darwin Jaycees Club and Radio 8DN. Similar busy fundraising was also going on down the track in Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. The Divisions there were smaller than that in Darwin, but the Tennant Creek Combined Division raised enough money in 1968 to purchase its own centre, and its own ambulance two years later, while the Alice Springs Combined Division, with the help of the local Apex Club, also purchased its own ambulance in 1970.[48]

Lives dedicated to the Order, as were those of many Territorian St John workers, incurred certain personal costs – perhaps as much for St John

workers in the 1960s, 70s and 80s as for those ancient Hospitallers in whose footsteps they imagined they were treading. A normal social and family life for the committed Brigade enthusiast was difficult, wherever he or she happened to be – Darwin or Adelaide, Alice Springs or Whyalla. Training sessions, Divisional parades, meetings to plan forthcoming public duties, service at public engagements and on the ambulances, fundraising activities, maintenance work on the ambulance centre or equipment, and care of uniforms took up much of a member's spare time, leaving little for family and the hobbies, cultural pursuits, further education, sports and leisure activities pursued by those citizens who have not been called to a St John vocation. A question invariably asked of the spouses of St John workers at social engagements was, 'Are you a St John widow too?' The pained smiles that often accompanied the answers indicated something of the personal dimension of the sacrifice made by the errant latterday hospitallers individually, and also by their families. St John 'fanaticism' was difficult to live with, especially when the spouse was less enthusiastic. Not surprisingly, marital problems often went in train with dedication to the Order. As one loyal St John worker remarked to the present writer, 'many marriages break up: people become obsessive about doing St John work and their spouses get sick of it'.[49]

Enthusiasm for St John work was the chief characteristic of the Territorian Brigade Divisions as the 70s unfolded. It might not have been fanaticism, but it was certainly intense zeal that Territorians brought to the Order's enterprises. The event that best illustrates the depth of their dedication was, of course, Cyclone Tracy, which obliterated Darwin, leaving an official figure of sixty-five dead behind, on Christmas Eve and early Christmas morning 1974. The present writer has described in *A Century For Australia* how a team of Brigade members spent that terror-stricken night in their Fannie Bay centre, struggling to hold it together against the onslaught of screaming winds, uprooted air-borne trees, flying sheets of metal and glass, and tidal waves of horizontally 'falling' rain. It is not therefore necessary to repeat here the incidents recounted there. Suffice to say that, when morning dawned and Darwin's dazed citizens began stumbling towards the St John centre, the Brigade members had already set up a casualty clearing station and were ready to suture lacerations caused by flying debris, immobilize fractured limbs, administer tetanus, typhoid and cholera injections, distribute medical supplies, and provide the homeless with food and temporary shelter. They lost count of how many cases they treated over succeeding days, but their Fannie Bay centre stayed open and working at high pressure for thirty-six hours non-stop, treating the worst of the casualties. One estimate of the number treated was 2000 on Christmas Day alone; and over the three days following the cyclone fifty-five Brigade people notched up a tally of almost 3000 hours' duty – about fifty-four hours each; and when that was done they helped in the evacuation of the thousands of citizens airlifted to southern cities.[50]

St John people all round Australia rallied to the help of their Darwin colleagues in the wake of the cyclone. South Australia's help was especially significant. The Brigade Commissioner, Dr Bill Gove, kept a team of his members at the Adelaide Airport to greet and care for the Darwin evacuees, who began arriving on Christmas day. Five days later the St John Council sent a team of twelve ambulance officers led by Peter Gebert, the Transport Superintendent of the ambulance service, to take over the running of Darwin's ambulance facilities for a month. This move was criticised by Brigade members in Darwin and Adelaide alike. Those in Darwin had just taken control of all ambulance work in the devastated city. Convinced they could put the government's ambulances to better use than the hospital's drivers, they had approached the Health Department on Christmas afternoon and had talked its dubious officials into allowing them to take over responsibility for all the ambulances in town. Having just won that right, which they had coveted for some time, they were reluctant to hand the ambulances over to a team of officers from 'South'. It took considerable firmness on Gebert's part to convince them that the service they had just captured required full-time professional guidance at this stage. In Adelaide Brigade officers were perturbed to think that only salaried officers had accompanied Gebert to Darwin. They thought that voluntary crews of Brigade members should have been included as well. Some of Gebert's squad stayed on in Darwin on loan to the new St John ambulance service until August 1975. Warren Burgess, formerly the officer in charge of the South Coast (Victor Harbour) ambulance centre, then took the job of foundation manager of the service. Another South Australian officer, Terry Stal, took over as the training officer for the new service. Officers from the South Australian ambulance service were thus responsible for ferrying through its first year the Darwin ambulance service which the local Division had captured. Later on, too, as the service began appointing full-time ambulance staff, the South Australian service provided a rich source of recruits.[51]

Without doubt Cyclone Tracy and the opportunity it afforded Darwin's Brigade members to demonstrate their capabilities and dedication were a watershed in the development of the Northern Territory St John Branch. The Branch had grown rapidly in size and influence under Langsford's supervision during the preceding decade, but after Tracy the organization really took off in a manner that few would have expected even months before. The reason was undoubtedly the great fillip given to the Order in the Northern Territory by responsibility for first Darwin's and subsequently the rest of the Territory's ambulance facilities. Given Territorian zeal in St John work and the new responsibility for the ambulance service, any other outcome than outstanding success would have been surprising. The effects could be seen in Brigade strength, which went from about 270 in 1974 to nearly a thousand ten years later. By that time there was roughly one Brigade member for every 140 Territory residents whereas in 1974 there had only been one for each 403.[52]

With the Branch Council overseeing expansion of that magnitude as the 1970s wore on, it was obvious that St John in the Northern Territory had little need of its South Australian connections. The Commonwealth Government, moreover, was in the process of handing over control of the Territory to a State-type legislature and elected executive. If self-government was appropriate for the Territorian body politic, then even more so was it fitting in the St John organization, for the Territorian organization had enjoyed *de facto* autonomy, despite its *de jure* dependence on its South Australian parent, since Langsford's arrival on the scene in the early 60s. Plans for establishing it as a State branch in its own right were set in train in 1975. The formal handover from South Australia to a newly constituted St John Council for the Northern Territory took place at a ceremony in Darwin on 16 July 1977. The Chancellor of the Order in Australia, Sir George Stening, was there to present the new constitution to the incoming Council members. The South Australian representatives were J.G. McKinna, one of the four vice-presidents of the St John Council for South Australia (and, in 1983, Hayward's successor as president), and Glen Woods, its secretary.[53]

An account of the handover appeared in that year's *Annual Report.* It noted that 'for eighteen years [sic.: it was actually twenty-four] St John in the Northern Territory was a Branch of South Australia and due to the major role St John accepted as the Ambulance Authority in Darwin following Cyclone Tracy autonomy [has been] granted'. It observed that 'Darwin is over 3000 kilometres from Adelaide', and concluded by saying that 'in the short time that St John has been responsible for full time Ambulance transport in Darwin, the Council and Staff have ably demonstrated their ability to provide a splendid service to the citizens of Darwin'. This was all true, and it probably made the South Australian St John workers who read it proud their organization had provided an umbrella for their northern colleagues. Territorians reading it would also have been proud, but theirs would have been pride of a different sort – a satisfaction in knowing that, while they were now formally severed from South Australia, they had really been independent all along.[54]

6. *Other advances of the 1960s and early 70s*

Preceding sections of this chapter have detailed some of the significant advances the St John organization made in South Australia during the 1960s. There were many other gains, large and small, in single centres and in the organization as a whole, as the St John bodies grew and their influence spread. There were too many to mention them all here, but the following, in the opinion of the present writer at least, are worthy of mention. Among the more important was the introduction of new first aid techniques and technology, particularly in relation to methods of resuscitation.

Until the early 1960s the standard methods of resuscitation taught in Association and Brigade classes had been the Holger-Nielsen and the Sylvester-Brosch techniques. The purpose of resuscitation is to move air in and out of the lungs, the former method through applying intermittent pressure to the patient's back, the latter through lifting and moving his or her arms. Neither is greatly efficient, managing to move only 200 to 300 cubic centimetres of air into the lungs at each induced breath, and then only when performed by an expert operator. (An unskilled operator would probably move less than 200 cubic centimetres of air into the larynx, with little air reaching the lungs.) By the late 50s the new method of direct insufflation, that is mouth-to-mouth, or, more correctly, expired air resuscitation (EAR), was gaining acceptance overseas. EAR shifts between 500 and 700 cubic centimetres of air into the lungs at each induced breath. It is thus more than twice as effective as the two other methods, and can, moreover, be performed efficiently by a novice with a modicum of training. The St John Ambulance Association, which has the duty of developing the relevant training programs, may only teach new techniques after Priory has approved them. In this case Priory witheld approval until November 1961, even though the Association had wished to teach EAR since 1959. The reason for not immediately introducing EAR was caution rather than conservatism. In advocating first aid methods that will be used in real life thousands of times every year, the organization is acutely conscious of its great legal and moral responsibilities to the public. Before it will adopt a new practice a lengthy process of discussion, trial, and evaluation must occur.

Before approving EAR Priory called for a report on it from London, where the English branch of the Association had produced a film on the subject. It did this in 1959, then, apparently satisfied by what it learnt from English experience, it agreed in 1960 that the Association in Australia should teach the new method, though not to the exclusion of the Holger-Nielsen and Sylvester-Brosch methods. The Association Standing Committee of Priory then set to work to draft instructions for teaching EAR. These were ready by the next Priory meeting, in November 1961. Delegates voted that, 'in order of merit the mouth-to-mouth, the Sylvester-Brosch and the Holger-Nielsen methods for the teaching of artificial respiration' should be the St John priorities. After that few classes would have learnt resuscitation either the Sylvester-Brosch or the Holger-Nielsen way. The debate over resuscitation methods did not end there, for Sylvester-Brosch and Holger-Nielsen still had their advocates, who pointed to some of the limitations of EAR. EAR, they argued, is dangerous in the case of someone with a 'dish face' injury – the driver who has smashed mouth and nose against a steering column or windscreen, and the construction worker with facial injuries after falling from scaffolding. Despite these problems with the new method, St John instructors took it up avidly. Using the 'Resusci-Anne' training mannikin, they quickly made

EAR the standard technique throughout Australian St John classes. In South Australia public demand for knowledge of the new lifesaving method lay behind the rapid increase in Association training we noted at the beginning of this chapter. As Dr H.G. Prest, the Association chairman, gratefully remarked in 1964, 'the demand for lectures and demonstrations on mouth-to-mouth resuscitation from all over the State has provided us with many opportunities to promote the name of St John'.[55]

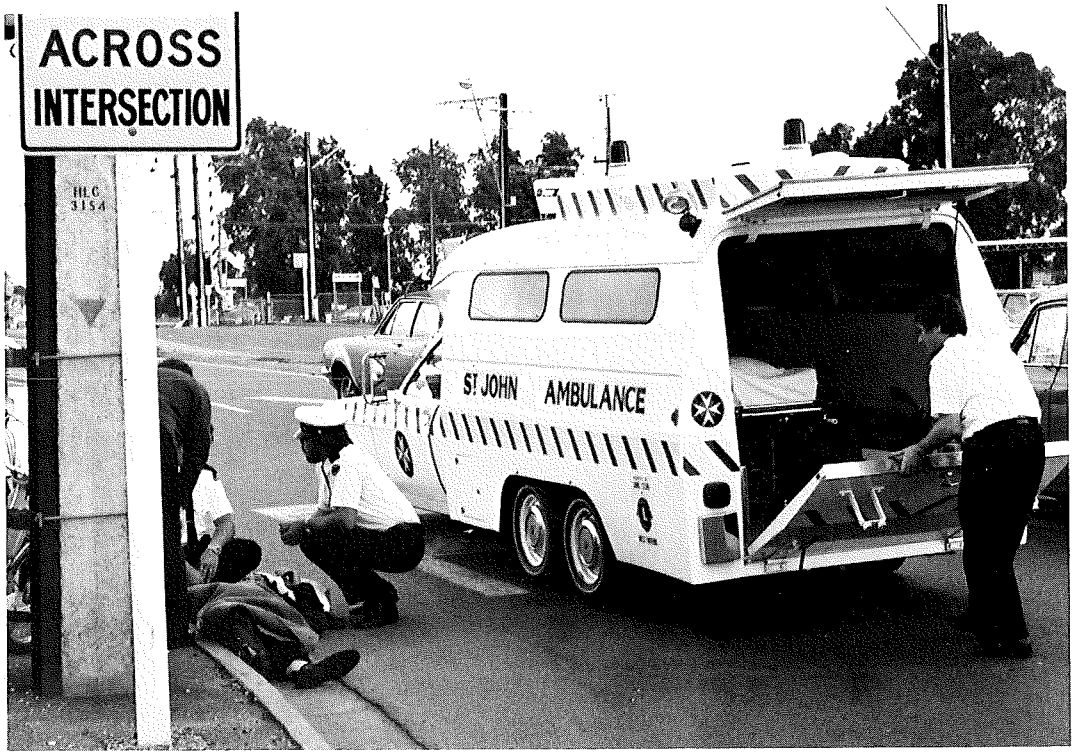
Rather more intense debate preceded the introduction of the second lifesaving innovation of the early 1960s – ECC (external cardiac compression), or external heart massage. This is a technique for applying rhythmic pressure to the chest of a victim of cardiac arrest, that is someone whose heart has stopped beating. Again, this was a technique that had come into usage overseas during the 50s, but it was considered so radical a method that the Association leadership wondered whether it was suitable for inclusion on the Association's syllabus of public instruction. When the matter was first raised in Priory, in October 1962, the Director of the Association, E.A. Daley, persuaded the Priory Council to adopt a resolution to restrict the teaching of ECC to 'those people in possession of no less than a medallion', that is to pupils who had passed an initial first aid examination and two subsequent re-examinations. This resolution was subsequently rescinded the following year, after State Association Centres had protested that there was a need to train the public as widely in ECC as in EAR. After that both methods became a standard part of the Association syllabus, and were taught as complementary lifesaving skills from 1964. A further innovation that year followed the successful trial over several months of the recently invented plastic inflatable splints. Ambulance crews in South Australia assisted in testing the new device, which soon became standard equipment on every ambulance and in every Brigade member's first aid kit.[56]

Further innovations were in the training of ambulance officers and in the construction of ambulance vehicles, and in each of these the St John service in South Australia led the rest of the country. As the previous chapter noted, the Probationary Surgeon scheme the Brigade promoted in the early 60s resulted in the production of a training manual, the *Manual of Ambulance Transport Nursing* (1963), which, in subsequent rewritten and further developed editions, became the standard work of reference not only for the South Australian ambulace services but among those interstate as well. A much updated version, *Casualty Care and Transport* (1975), quickly gained acceptance throughout Australia, as did its successor, the *Emergency Care and Transport Manual* (1982). Significantly, the editorial committees which produced these two later versions included not only V.W. Kollosche, the State Ambulance Training Officer, but medical practitioners who had come into the Brigade as Probationary Surgeons. Thus, Glyn Davies, Brian Fotheringham and Des Owens, all by then Brigade Corps Surgeons, were members of the 1975 committee, while Ian

Buttfield, who had helped produce the original 1963 manual, was on the committee of 1982, by which time he, too, was a Corps Surgeon. Yet another signal training manual was the Association's textbook, *Care of the Sick in the Home*, published in 1976 and produced by a panel headed by Sister Honor Morris, a District Officer of the Brigade in South Australia.[57]

In vehicle design and development the South Australian St John organization made a further contribution to Australian ambulance practice. During the 1950s the ambulance service experimented with a number of vehicle types, and had settled on a station sedan modified for use as an ambulance. In 1962, however, fashion in vehicle body design changed, the result being lower vehicles unsuitable for adaptation as ambulances because they allowed crews insufficient head room. The service then switched to panel vans, which the manufacturer modified to St John specifications. These sold well to ambulance services in Tasmania, the Northern Territory, New South Wales and Victoria, and were also bought by the Commonwealth Government and the Army. In 1973 the service designed its own ambulance vehicle, which the manufacturer agreed to make. This was a six-wheeled vehicle known as the Emergency Care Ambulance, or 'Em-Care', built around a Holden V8 308-horsepower one ton chassis. Its designers were the Transport Superintendent, Peter Gebert, and the St John ambulance body builder, Franz Moeller. Its set of tandem rear wheels, mounted one pair behind the other, gave it greater stability, and therefore better patient comfort, particularly on long country trips over rough roads.

Three volunteer ambulance officers collect an injured motor cyclist in an Em-Care ambulance at the corner of Anzac Highway and Morphett Rd., Morphettville, 1978.





A St John Em-Care ambulance collects a dangerously ill patient flown into Adelaide by RAAF helicopter from a country town, 1975.

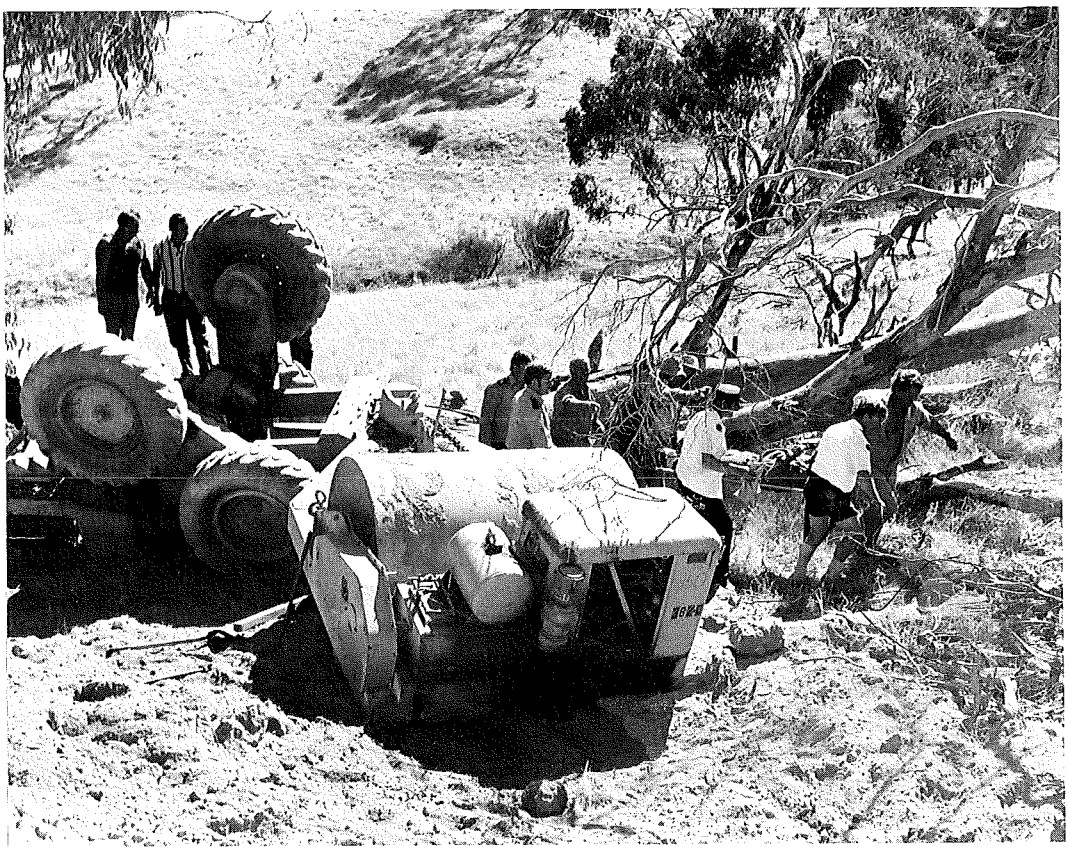
The prototype 'Em-Care' was donated by the Lions and Rotary Clubs of Woodville, and production models went on sale at $10,800 each in 1975. The 'Em-Cares' attracted considerable interest within South Australia and without, but when the manufacturer changed the basic chassis in a further adjustment to the dictates of fashion they had to be discontinued.[58]

The production of its own training manuals and of vehicles of its own design were an indication that the St John ambulance service had become self-confident in its professionalism during the 1960s and early 1970s. A further sign of its professional competence was its ability to handle disasters – the real test of an ambulance service's efficiency. In 1968 and 1970 the organization had two such tests, in which it earned high marks. The first was the so-called cherry pickers' crash in the Adelaide Hills. A truck carrying a group of migrant cherry pickers smashed through a guard rail of the road, spilling the occupants down a steep slope. Three were killed and thirty-two injured, twenty-two of whom were stretcher cases. Ambulances called to the scene travelled 425 miles (680 km.) in ferrying the injured to hospital. The whole operation from the first call to the clearance of the last vehicle lasted only two and a quarter hours - swift action, given that the stretchers with the injured had to be lifted back up to road level with the aid of ropes. That year's *Annual Report* informed the

St John community with pride that the 'smooth operations resulted from close adherence to the disaster plan outlined in our *Manual of Ambulance Transport Nursing*'. The second disaster was a road-rail crash at Wasleys, 36 miles (58 kilometres) north of Adelaide, one Sunday evening in April 1970. A double decker bus and a train collided on a crossing, killing seventeen people and injuring another thirty-four. Little was left of the bus, and the ambulance crews and police had to sift through the tangled wreckage to find and extract the victims. 'An excellent acquittal of duties in the Communications Centre added to the efficient on-the-spot handling of operations', the *Annual Report* again informed its readers, while St John staff at the scene made 'a magnificent effort'. The dramatic photographs the *Report* included to illustrate its claims on each occasion left little doubt that these were no idle boasts.[59]

South Australia's worst disaster was still in the future. This was 'Ash Wednesday', 16 February 1983, when bushfires swept across vast areas in many locations around the State and over the border in Victoria. It was Australia's worst natural disaster since Cyclone Tracy eight years before, though the Granville train disaster in Sydney in 1977 exacted a higher death toll than either Tracy or Ash Wednesday. Rather than one disaster Ash Wednesday was a series of dispersed disasters all on the one day - five

Jean Price and Kingsley Dollard (third and second from right) of the Brigade's Gawler Division retrieve the injured driver of a road roller which overturned at One Tree Hill, 1977.





St John Ambulance, police and fire brigade officers and a medical retrieval team from the Royal Adelaide Hospital work to free a man trapped in a car after a fatal traffic accident, 1978. The two St John men are John Skinner (right of centre) and David Mathlin (left of centre).

fire fronts in the Adelaide Hills, six separate fires in the South East region around Lucindale, and one at Clare to the north, as well as at six widely separated places in Victoria. The South Australian fires destroyed 196 houses and left twenty-six dead, plus an unknown but huge number of injured. In Victoria the toll was higher – forty-six dead and several towns burnt to the ground. In South Australia the St John ambulances were directly involved in rescue work at each of the fires. The ambulance crews, backed up by both Brigade and Association, treated 1526 casualties and transported seventy-five cases from the Wednesday through to Friday. All this was done without serious disruption to the normal activities of the metropolitan ambulance service, which on the Wednesday was having its busiest day for 1982-83, handling some 625 patients above the normal caseload for that time of the year. If anyone doubted that South Australia was a place of stark contrasts, a further disaster only a fortnight after Ash Wednesday reminded people of that fact. This was the so-called Barossa floods, which were not only in the Barossa Valley but in the recently burnt out Clare Valley as well. Thirty metropolitan ambulances and six local vehicles took part in rescue operations, transporting ninety-seven patients in the flood areas. Again, there was heavy pressure on the normal metropolitan service that day, and it had to answer fifty-five emergency



Glen Bone, officer in charge of the Marion St John Ambulance station, assists one of the victims of a bushfire in the Adelaide Hills, 1980.

calls, including twenty-eight 'Priority One' cases, above usual demands. Then, after the floods had subsided, the Brigade District Superintendent, Des Owens, led a team of 100 Brigade members into the Barossa towns to help in the clean-up operation.[60]

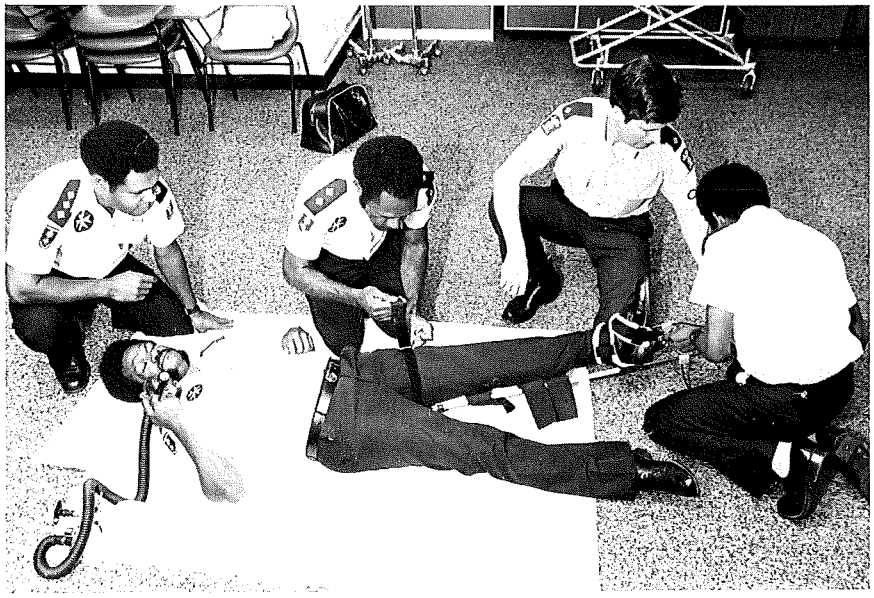
Through the efficiency of its daily operations, as much as through its ability to take in its stride the exceptional circumstances of a disaster, the St John organization in South Australia during the 1960s was establishing an envied reputation for itself within the community of Australian ambulance operators, all of whom were aware of what their neighbours were doing. The country's ambulance agencies had long maintained links with each other, but these became more formal in 1969 with the staging of the first national convention of Australian ambulance authorities. The first convention was so successful that further conventions were held, becoming an annual event, and from them developed a professional association for ambulance officers, the Institute of Ambulance Officers of Australia. The second convention took place in Adelaide in 1970. Delegates came from all States and Territories, and thus had the opportunity of seeing how well the St John service in South Australia compared with their own. Ferrier chaired the meetings, which discussed a range of issues of common concern – Australia-wide standardization of ambulance facilities, participation in a road accident survey conducted by the Australian Medical

Association, and tax deductibility for ambulance fees and subscriptions. Both the conventions and the Institute of Ambulance Officers that grew from them indicated that, by the end of the 60s, a sense of professionalism was emerging within the fraternity of ambulance operators. Rather than seeing themselves as full-time first aiders, ambulance officers were beginning to regard themselves as professional paramedical specialists. As the next chapter will show, this development was one with mixed blessings for the St John service in South Australia. It certainly led to a more consciously professional service, but it also heralded the onset of industrial militancy among the State's salaried ambulance staff and, with that, much trouble for the St John Council.[61]

A further sign of the growing professionalism of the South Australian ambulance service was, perhaps, an agreement between the St John Council and the Commonwealth Government in 1968 whereby an ambulance officer from Papua New Guinea received training in Adelaide. The Commonwealth Minister for Health, Dr A.J. Forbes, had requested the Council's assistance in providing the officer, Mr Noga Noga of Port Moresby, with six months' practical experience. Australia was still administering Papua New Guinea as an external territory at the time, and a 'colonial' branch of the New South Wales St John Council had been active in Papua New Guinea since the 50s. In Port Moresby, the capital city, where the branch was most active, a new St John centre had been opened in 1965. This housed the local Public Health Department ambulance service, which ran with the help of the local Brigade Division. In view of this Papua New Guinea-New South Wales connection, the St John Council for South Australia felt honoured to receive their Melanesian visitor. 'We like to think', its *Annual Report* remarked, 'that the selection of Adelaide ... as the City in which Mr Noga Noga could receive broad training in all aspects of ambulance work was a compliment to us'.[62]

An increasingly standardised service: part of the St John Ambulance metropolitan fleet, with a mix of Ford and Holden vans, 1961.





Brigade instructor Paul Whittenbury helps in the training of Papua New Guinean ambulance officers, 1983.

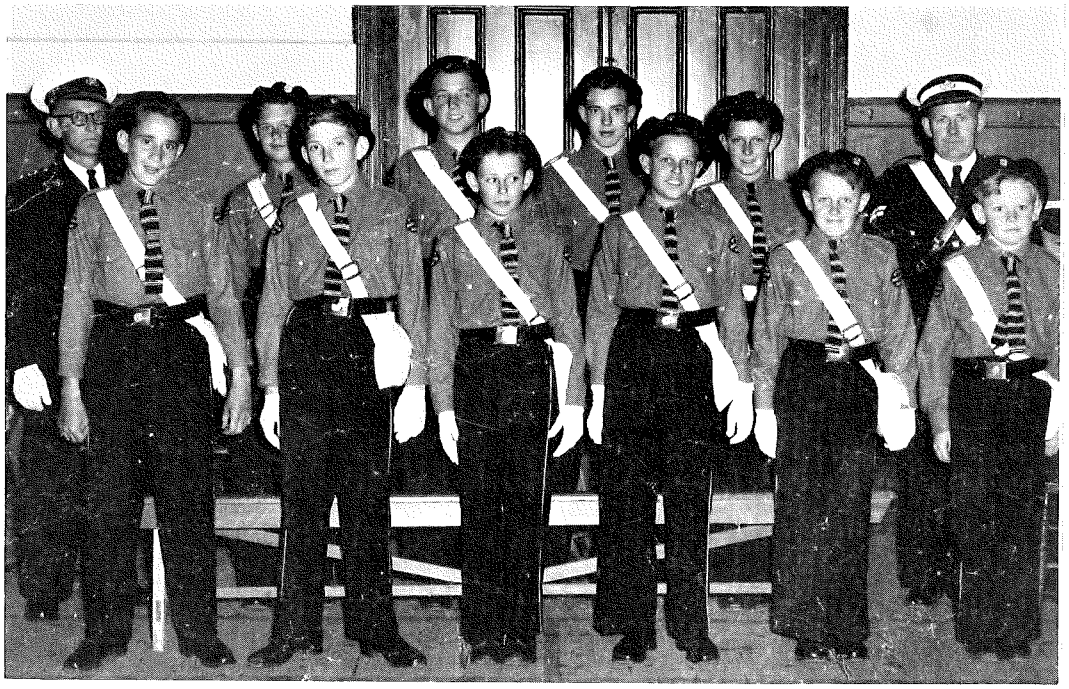
Noga Noga, as things turned out, was to be only the first Papua New Guinean to gain experience on South Australian ambulances. His country became an independent nation in 1975, after which its national government took control of ambulance services. In 1983 a reorganization of government functions led to health services being passed over to the nation's eighteen provincial governments. As part of this devolution of powers, the now independent national St John Council for Papua New Guinea took over responsibility for motor ambulance transport services. To train the officers required for the new services the Council set up a 'core training team' of seven Papua New Guinean Brigade members, and to give the team practical experience and further training in a modern ambulance system the seven were sent to Adelaide in early 1983. Each of the seven was attached to a metropolitan Brigade Division, worked closely with both salaried and volunteer ambulance staff on the metropolitan vehicles, and were put through an intensive course on the new manual *Emergency Care and Transport*, which was to become the textbook for their reorganized services at home. 'The St John Council for South Australia is delighted that South Australia has the unique opportunity to assist a sister service at its inception', observed *Spotlight*, the St John quarterly journal.[63]

There were numerous other St John achievements and milestones during the 1960s. In 1962, for instance, the St John Council co-operated with the organizers of the Commonwealth (still formally titled 'Empire') Games in Perth. Many people from eastern States were expected to drive

across for this rare chance to see a series of international sporting contests. Because the Eyre Highway was still undeveloped over long stretches, the organizers were fearful lest road accidents should diminish the flood of spectators they hoped might drive west. The Council helped out by positioning three ambulances with crews of Brigade volunteers, two of these led by Probationary Surgeons, at points along the lonely 500 miles (800 km.) between Kimba and the Western Australian border for three weeks. The crews tended about forty cases in that period, which in the opinion of the Council, justified the expense of keeping them there.[64]

Continued expansion of the Brigade's Cadet Divisions was also one of the achievements of the 1960s and 70s. From eighteen Divisions with 240 members in 1950, Cadet strength had increased to thirty-two Divisions with 730 members in 1960. Growth during the 60s was perhaps a little slower than in the preceding decade, for by 1970 there were forty-six Divisions with 1159 members. By 1983 further increases had pushed Cadet membership to 1744 in 60 Divisions, which meant that the rate of growth of the 60s and 70s had been maintained into the 80s. This achievement was notable, for after the mid-60s it was harder to persuade young people to join and remain in voluntary community service organizations like the St John Ambulance Brigade Cadets. The 'Me' generation had too many distractions in a rapidly changing world for old fashioned notions like service, and a vigorous scepticism was suffusing the nation's youth. The Vietnam years of youth rebellion, the brave new world of sexual liberation and its attendant epidemics of marital breakdown and sexually transmitted diseases, the capitalist cornucopia spilling out electronic music, surfboards, panel vans, discos, video recorders, home computers and overseas working holidays for youthful consumers, not to mention the

The Brigade's Unley Cadet Ambulance Division, 1959.





Howard ('Dutchy') Hollands, the Brigade's District Officer of Ambulance Cadets, with some of his Cadets after being named Father of the Year 1965.

lengthening queues of young unemployed, distrust of national leaders because of the mendacity that now passed for political debate, or the fear of a nuclear armageddon – all these were were leaving a legacy of disillusionment for young Australians.[65]

The Cadets continued bravely on despite it all, and perhaps they owed their continued success to the stability and continuity they represented in a changing world. As the 60s became the 70s and then the 80s they kept up certain time honoured traditions. They were still going up to Angaston for their annual camp over the Labour Day weekend in October. The Angaston camp was an institution in the South Australian Cadet movement. It had been started in 1951 at the insistence of Mrs Beatrice Williams, the Brigade's District Officer in charge of Nursing Cadets. Mrs Williams had been instrumental in founding the Nursing Cadet movement in South Australia fifteen years before, and her views about young people were in advance of the times. She saw the Cadets as an educational as well a community service movement – a means by which her girls could learn to accept adult responsibilities. A camp of Nursing and Ambulance Cadets combined – girls *and* boys – to her seemed to present a valuable lesson in the Brigade's youth training program. It was not a lesson her fellow District Officers wished to try out, however: a boys' camp might be alright, they

argued, and even a girls' camp, but only trouble could be expected from a mixed camp! She fought so strenuously for her views that her colleagues had to concede at last to a trial. It was an immediate success. Her opponents forgot their objections, and were soon clamouring for the camp to be an annual event.[66]

One Brigade personality who enthusiastically took up the idea of an annual Cadet camp was the District Officer in charge of Ambulance Cadets, H.H. ('Dutchy') Hollands, a man so highly regarded by his young 'troops' that he was named South Australian 'Father of the Year' in 1965 for his services to the Cadet movement. It was in 1965, too, at the Angaston camp that Holland received another 'honour', when, during the high jinks that punctuated the serious business of training and competition, he was crowned 'King of Angaston'. Among the festivities put on in his honour on that occasion was a 'bullfight': cadets dressed as bulls and torreadors stamped and snorted around the improvised bullring, breaking into dancing to the sounds of the 'Waltz of the Torreadors' each time the music struck up. During the 1980s the Cadets were also still staging their annual 'Cadet Day' – another institution, first run in the late 1940s. Cadet Day began as day of parading, marching and drilling, at the request of St John's Gate, which wanted each Brigade District to set one day aside each

Members of the Marion team display the Johnstone cup at the Adelaide railway station after returning from Melbourne, where they had just won the interstate Cadet nursing competitions, 1969. Left to right are Christine White (leader), Dianne Narler, Robyn Phillips, Beverley Dale.



year to focus attention on Cadet activities. Over the years the nature of the occasion changed, until by the mid-80s it was a simple 'fun' day for Cadets from all over the State.[67]

Regardless of the frivolity of Cadet Days and Cadet camps, much cadet activity remained serious. The present writer paid tribute to the Tea Tree Gully Cadet Nursing Division in *A Century For Australia.* The record of this Division, one of the largest and most vigorous, adult or Cadet, in all Australia showed how purposeful Cadet work could be. In the early 80s its ninety members were going on regular duty in the casualty ward of the Modbury Hospital, as well as at a local hospital for elderly citizens, and in addition to regular duties at local sporting matches. The strength of this Division represented an interesting development that occurred during the late 1970s. This was the increasing strength of girls' Divisions compared with the boys' Divisions. Until 1978 boys had always outnumbered girls in the Brigade's Cadet Divisions. That year the balance tipped in favour of female membership, and by 1983 girls outnumbered boys in the Cadet movement by 1010 to 734. Why this development should have occurred is not clear, but it was possible that, in a shrinking youth job market, teenage girls who saw nursing as a career were endeavouring to maximise their chances of entry to a career in nursing by joining the Brigade, thus hoping to cite membership in a Cadet Nursing Division as a qualification for selection into nursing training. Whatever the reason, the dedication and determination of the girls who queued to join active Divisions like Tea Tree Gully were promising to keep the Cadet movement as lively in the uncertain 80s as it had been in the more secure world of the late 50s and early 60s.[68]

The Brigade as a whole had other achievements during the 60s. It staged a number of large scale training exercises, for instance. After one of these, a mock air disaster with ninety 'casualties' at an inaccessible site in the Adelaide Hills in 1964, the Commissioner, Dr J.M. Pedler, said that the exercise had 'proved to outside authorities just what value the Brigade can be in an emergency'. The Brigade staged some spectacular annual reviews as well, reminiscent of those run during the stirring days of the Second World War. After that of 1962, held on the University Oval one balmy day in October, the Commissioner, Harvey Hurst, voted it 'the most successful Brigade Annual Review yet held'. Over 800 Brigade members attended, and Hurst later wrote that 'apart from the solemnity and dignity of the occasion, other features . . . were the excellent attendance, including Brigade members from distant country areas, and the prominent part played by the Brigade band'. The Band, which, as the previous chapter showed, had become a permanent Division within the Brigade in 1960, was going from success to success. Both the senior Band and the Cadet Drum and Bugle Band, Hurst also wrote in 1963, 'continue to give sterling service to the Brigade . . . [and] are in constant demand from city and country areas'. He went on to say that the St John organization generally



Dr Harvey Hurst, Brigade Commissioner 1960-63.

benefited from the publicity the Bands thus brought it, particularly in country districts. The next year, 1964, was a special year for the Brigade – its fiftieth anniversary of operations in South Australia. The highlight of the anniversary year, as far as Pedler, the new Commissioner, was concerned, was the appearance at the Annual Review of Lady Bastyan, wife of the Governor and Deputy Prior, Sir Edric Montague Bastyan, KCMG, KBE, CB, KStJ. Since her arrival in South Australia in 1961 she had been following the activities of the Nursing Divisions with interest, an interest she brought with her from the UK, where she was a Vice-President of Nursing Divisions. She came to the 1964 Review in her Brigade Uniform, which, with its white gorgets, Vice-Presidential insignia of rank and bonnet with gleaming white cockade, no doubt cut more of a dash than all of the District Staff Officers combined.[69]

Lady Bastyan was but one St John's Gate dignitary to be in South Australia during the 60s. The 1920s, 30s and 40s had seen the arrival of Sir John Prescott Hewett, Sir James Sleeman and Edwina, Lady Mountbatten. By the 1960s members of the Order's upper echelon were arriving in Australia almost annually – a tribute to both the strength of Australian St John organizations and to advances in international aviation. The first to come in the 1960s was H.R. Taylor-Young, the Brigade's Surgeon-in-Chief, who arrived with his wife in November 1962. Hayward hosted an official St John reception in his honour, and he later addressed a meeting of senior Brigade and ambulance service officers on the new lifesaving techniques of EAR and ECC. The next to arrive was the former Deputy Prior of New South Wales, Lord Wakehurst, now the Lord Prior of the



Dr John M. Pedler, Brigade Commissioner 1963-69.

Order, that is its chief executive officer and the next in rank after the Grand Prior, the Duke of Gloucester. Wakehurst came in late 1965 during a tour of Australia, the chief purpose of which was to lay the foundation stone of the new Priory Headquarters building in Canberra. He was the most senior of all St John's Gate officials yet to visit Australia, save for the Duke of Gloucester who had been a wartime Governor General. In South Australia he received the usual reception, opened the new St John ambulance centre at Marion, and visited several country centres as well. He later complimented the South Australian branch of the Order freely in a letter to Hayward. He was, he said,

> so glad to have had the opportunity of seeing the wonderful organization that you and the St John Council for South Australia have built up. It is a model of its kind and I hope that the spirit of dedication and goodwill which now prevails will continue for a long time to come to inspire what is a wonderful service to the community.[70]

The next visitor was the Commissioner-in-Chief, Rear Admiral Sir Royer Dick, who had just been promoted to the highest rank possible in the Order – Bailiff Grand Cross. He made an extensive tour of inspection of metropolitan and country Brigade Divisions in January 1967, and performed the opening ceremony at one of the new country ambulance centres. He was also due to be guest of honour at a District Parade, but heavy rain caused its cancellation, and, as Pedler later wrote, he was thus deprived of 'meeting many of our Officers and Members who had prepared a rousing reception for him'.[71]



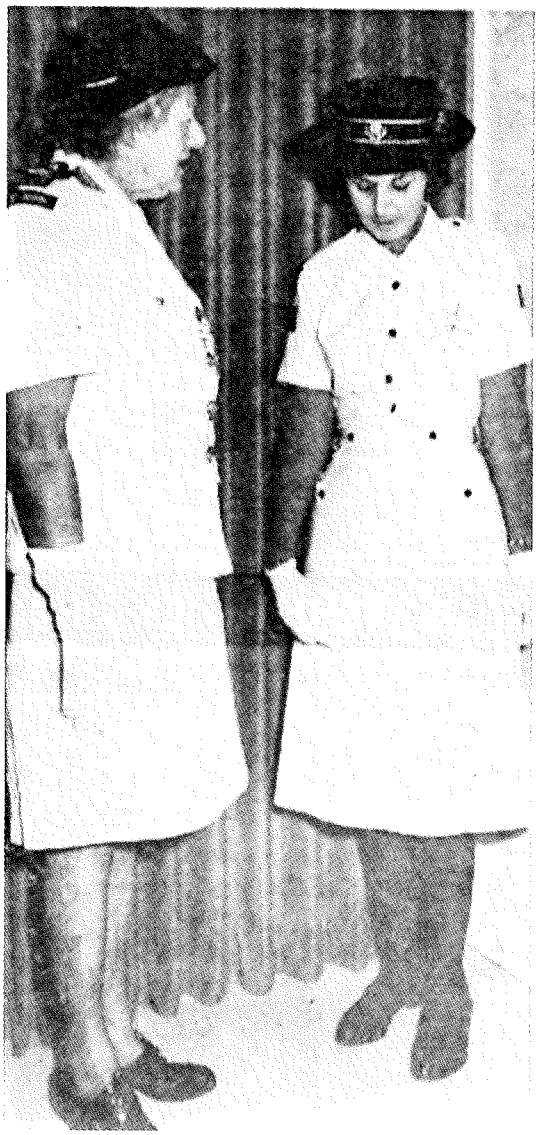
Dr Jim Fotheringham, Birgade Commissioner 1969-73.



The Brigade's uniform for women, mid-1960s. Beryl Fegan, soon to be District Superintendent (Nursing) shows it off.

The final St John's Gate tourist of the 60s was the Brigade's Superintendent-in-Chief, Marjorie, the Countess of Brecknock, who arrived in February 1969. She duly received the usual reception, toured metropolitan and country Divisions, opened a new St John centre (Elizabeth), and made the usual speeches about how 'tremendously impressive' the local St John organization was, and how 'very encouraging [it was] to see the enthusiasm of members'. By this time approving comments from St John's Gate dignitaries, who always managed to come south during the Australian rather than the English summer, were beginning to sound like clichés. Marjorie of Brecknock, however, said other and different things that made South Australian Brigade members sit up and pay attention. She said the future of the Brigade depended on its ability to attract young people into its ranks, but then hinted that it was in danger of failing in that important task because it was conveying to the younger generation an impression of stodgy conservatism. The end of the 'swinging 60s' was nigh, she seemed to be saying, but the Brigade in South Australia had yet to enter them. Her criticisms were veiled in comments upon the length of Nursing Division

members' skirts, which then, in the era of the mini-skirt, had to be a regulation sixteen inches (41 cm.) from the ground. 'I just don't think we can honestly ask our young girls to go around in skirts falling around their ankles as their grandmothers did', she said. It was a story the local press took up with relish, running reports on it under captions like 'Mini-skirts "In" for St John girls', 'St John's Mini Girls', 'Hemlines up', and even 'Show a leg – but how much?'. The senior Brigade management at first saw the Countess's statement as a simple complaint about the style of the women's



The Countess of Brecknock, the Brigade's Superintendent-in-Chief, discusses skirt lengths with Sgt. J. Grove, 1967.

uniform. The retiring Commissioner, Pedler, had to explain to the numerous reporters who sought him out that the sixteen-inch rule was intended to make all uniforms level on parade, irrespective of the height of the wearers. He also pointed out that the Brigade was 'thinking of raising the hems to mid-knee length, but they cannot be any shorter than this as the girls do a great deal of bending when they are on field duty and too much leg would be shown'. Younger rank and file Brigade members, on the other hand, recognised the Countess's criticisms for what they were, and felt relieved. Fifteen years later one former Brigade officer recalled that her words 'came as a breath of fresh air for the younger people'. He pointed out that by the end of the 60s many Divisions were stagnating under the control of aging officers who had entered the Brigade during or before the War. Such people had difficulty understanding the youth of the postwar 'baby boom', and ran their Divisions along the same lines as yesteryear. Uncomprehendingly and powerless to stop the drift, they had to watch formerly eager Cadets grow dissatisfied and drop out of the Brigade rather than graduate to the adult Divisions.[72]

The 1960s, the decade of the St John organization's greatest growth and achievement in South Australia to date, thus ended with Marjorie of Brecknock pointing the way ahead to the principal Brigade tasks of the 70s and 80s. Attracting younger recruits; keeping them satisfied by giving them fulfilling work amidst the tensions and distractions of the new age; continually updating methods; delivering higher standards of public service; keeping in tune with changing public attitudes while still acknowledging the traditions of service of an ancient heritage – all these would become preoccupations for all St John bodies in the decades ahead. As we will see in our final chapter, carrying out such tasks would not be easy. The 70s and 80s were not to be a time of unhindered progress as the 60s had been. St John might have been moving into an era of further expansion, but the troubles attendant upon that would be the most serious the Order had faced in its century of South Australian history.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1975-1985: Change, Challenge and Achievement

The decade and a half from 1960 to the mid-70s had been a time of expansion on many fronts for the St John organization in South Australia. All its endeavours had grown, relatively as well as absolutely. It had adopted new enterprises, all of which had succeeded, generating further growth. The government of the day, be that Liberal or – more frequently now – Labor, supported it strongly because of the excellent service it gave and the public expense it spared. Hardly a day went by without some item of favourable publicity coming its way through the metropolitan and provincial newspapers, radio and television. Its name and emblem were on daily display on the streets and roads of virtually every town in the State, and both were now probably better known throughout the length and breadth of the State than the South Australian coat of arms itself. It had, in the language of the day, taken on a 'high profile'.

During the final decade, up to the St John centenary in 1985, the growth was to continue. Association training, Brigade strength and voluntary public service, the annual mileage and casework of the ambulance service, and the capital assets of the St John Council would all keep on multiplying. Despite all this, change was under way, and in many respects that would make the period 1975-85 the most difficult of the entire hundred years in which St John Ambulance had been a part of South Australia. The ideology and rhetoric that had sustained the organization for the preceding ninety years came under challenge for the first time both within and without the St John movement. Its internal tensions and the external pressures upon it were greater than at any time in its history in South Australia. The way it handled these were likely to determine whether or not it would prosper in the first decades of its second century as it had done during the last decades of its first.

1. *Change: leadership*

The most obvious change during the final decade was in the leadership of the organization. The changes at the top began with the death in March 1976 of Sir Mellis Napier. Although Napier was ninety-three when he died, the St John organization felt his loss keenly. He had been among the Order's longest serving and most loyal workers in South Australia, if not

in all Australia, and he was certainly its most influential. He had belonged to the coterie of 'Society' personages Dr and Mrs Dawkins had drawn into St John circles during the late 1930s via the Hospitallers' Club, and he had gone on to succeed Sir George Murray as both Chief Justice and Association president in 1942. He still formally held the latter position at his death, in addition to the St John Council presidency, which he had occupied since its inception twenty-six years before. Scots-born and schooled in London before graduating in law from the University of Adelaide in 1902, he had been one of South Australia's most eminent adopted sons. He had become a judge of the State Supreme Court in 1924 at forty-two; he had chaired the Federal Royal Commission on Banking in 1936-37; he served as the Chief Justice for twenty-five years, and as Lieutenant Governor for thirty-four, during which time he was twice Administrator of the State in interregnums between Governors; and he had been Chancellor of the University of Adelaide 1946-61. On more than one occasion, as previous chapters have shown, he had spared the St John organization embarrassment by acting decisively to prevent internal squabbles from spilling into the public domain; he had written the constitution for the St John Council; and he had been a wise advocate in the formation of the Priory. Although Napier's advancing age in recent years might have restricted him to a figurehead role, the loss of such a devoted – not to mention well-connected – disciple left a gap in the Order's ranks.[1]

Sir Edward Hayward stepped up to fill the presidential gap, and was the obvious person to do so. His formal connections with the organization went back almost as far as had Napier's, as he had first joined the Association Centre committee in 1946. He had been St John Council chairman for the past twenty-six years, and now at the age of seventy-two he was ready for the less active role of Council president. Like Napier, he was to retain the position until his death, in August 1983. As the figurehead of an organization that valued its connections as one of its strongest assets, he had impressive credentials. He was one of the sturdiest of pillars of Adelaide 'Society'. Indeed he was probably even better-connected than Napier had been. In his youth he had won a triple sporting blue at St Peter's College and had later captained the State polo team. His first wife, the former Ursula Barr Smith, who died in 1970, had come from a family as prominent as, and perhaps even better known, than his own. During the war he had served with the 2/43 Battallion AIF in the Middle East, at Tobruk, and in Papua New Guinea and Borneo, rising from lieutenant to lieutenant-colonel; he had twice been mentioned in despatches, and had been awarded the American Bronze Star. As well as his chairmanship of directors of John Martin & Co. Ltd. and Coca Cola (Adelaide) Bottlers Ltd., his business interests included the grazing property, 'Silverton Park', near the tip of the Fleurieu Peninsula at Delamere, where he raised Border



The Grand Prior, the Duke of Gloucester (left), with Sir Edward Hayward, president of the St John Council for South Australia 1976-83 and its chairman 1950-76, at the opening of the new St John House, 1979.

Leicester sheep and Hereford cattle. 'Silverton Park' became one of Australia's leading Hereford studs, its products winning grand champion prizes at the Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Shows. He also bred and raced horses that took their names from his retail store – Johnnie's Lad, and Johnnie's Smile being among the better known. His Adelaide residence was 'Carrick Hill', off the end of Fullarton Rd., Springfield, at the head of a long winding driveway lined with lofty exotic trees. It rested assuredly on its undulating broad acres in the lower Adelaide Hills, looking more an English manor house than an Australian suburban home. It was here that Hayward kept what was probably one of the finest collections of paintings in private hands in South Australia. On top of these attainments were other distinctions. In 1961 he had been knighted (Knight Batchelor) for his efforts on behalf of the ambulance services, and he was named South Australian Father Of The Year in 1973. Though childless he earned the latter honour for the annual Christmas pageant staged by John Martins. He had instituted this street parade of bands, floats and fairy tale characters forty years before as a means of 'introducing Father Christmas to South Australia'. By the 70s it was so large a part of the festive season fantasies of the State's children that the award's sponsors saw fit to grant him honorary paternity of them all.[2]

'Paternal' was the word that probably summed up the impressions Hayward left on most St John workers who dealt closely with him. One St John employee, who used the St John Council as a case study in a Sociology course he undertook, dwelt upon variations of that word in an essay he wrote in 1978. This was Ian Anson, who had emerged as the leader of a group of ambulance officers who had begun openly resisting the St John management. Rule by the Hayward-Ferrier regime, Anson observed, was typified by 'paternalism and P.R. management': within the St John organization the regime encouraged strong and uncritical loyalty to the leadership, while among the South Australian community outside St John it strove to build up the corporate image through persistent public relations campaigning. The sedulous courting of the media was highly effective. Thus, the daily newspapers periodically quoted Hayward and Ferrier, and occasionally flattered them and the organization with feature articles that obligingly referred to Hayward as 'Mr Bill' (the nickname used by John Martins staff) and to Ferrier as 'Mr St John'. The public relations continued within St John as well, for example in the *Annual Reports* and later in the in-house journal *Spotlight*. The readers of either publication were left in no doubt that 'paternalism' in Hayward's case meant 'fatherly' rather than the pejorative connotation Anson might have intended. As one whose reputation owed much to the St John publicity officers, Hayward would no doubt have appreciated his St John obituary in the 1982-83 *Annual Report*, which lauded his efforts on behalf of the Order. Being accorded any sort of obituary in the Order's South Australian publications was a mark of posthumous distinction that had eluded previous South Australian

St John giants such as G.F. Hussey, S.L. Dawkins and E.A.H. Russell. That Hayward, whose commissioned portrait was already hanging in the foyer of the new St John House, had a whole black bordered page to himself was a measure of the manner in which he had dominated the organization. So, too, was the epitaph with which the obituary concluded – 'He was a man that looked up, not down; out, not in; forward, not back'.[3]

Such eulogies notwithstanding, there were some within St John who questioned the long term effects of Hayward's paternalism. He had been a formidable figure. Few within the South Australian St John organization had been resolute enough to criticise him openly while he had been alive. His impatience with those who disagreed with him and his brusque manner of dismissing their views both in public and in private were so feared, it was later said, that few would stand up to him. After he was gone it was a different matter. The more vocal of his critics began suggesting that twenty-seven years under the control of someone as domineering as Hayward was too long for any organization. His relationship with the senior management of the ambulance service deteriorated badly during the final decade of his chairmanship, the critics averred. He had so forcefully imposed his will, they said, he had stifled senior managers' initiative, grinding them down into such meek acquiescence that they lost the respect of those beneath them. As a result, critics maintained, the St John organization was 'falling apart' and in an 'appalling mess' by the mid-1970s.[4]

At the same time even critics thought it 'amazing' how, through his influence, the organization had remained conservative when all around there was rapid change. In recent decades, and especially during the Ministries of the Labor Premier Don Dunstan (1967-68, 1970-79), South Australia had acquired a reputation for being the nation's most progressive State. During those years the St John organization might not have been reactionary, but neither was it among the more progressive of institutions in the Festival State. Certain values had endured during the Hayward decades. Thus, the idea that a St Peter's College education was best, that membership of the Adelaide Club was worth aspiring to, that 'Old' families and 'Old' money were, *ipso facto*, worthy, that imperial honours awarded by Liberal governments were true measures of worth, and that some people deserved precedence over others through birth and family connections were taken for granted by many influential figures within St John. The conservative orientation such values gave the organization under Hayward's chairmanship was to be a factor in fomenting the troubles that struck it during the years of his presidency of the St John Council, 1976-1983.

Hayward might have been a giant within the St John organization in South Australia, but in the national affairs of the Order he did not enjoy the same stature. At Priory meetings he failed to strike awe into his fellow workers for the Order, for there he was but one State leader among many,

and each State St John leader imagined his own particular State had the most significant St John organization in the land. Hayward was officially South Australia's representative on the Priory executive for fourteen years after F.K. Mugford's death in 1963, but in later years if not in earlier he attended few Priory executive meetings. There was a suspicion within the executive that he began absenting himself when he found that his fellow executive officers would not bend as readily to his will as did those beneath him in the South Australian St John bodies. His absenteeism offended other executive officers, as did his penchant for taking unilateral action without concern for the niceties of Priory protocol. His difficulties with the Priory executive by 1966 led him to sound out Lord Wakehurst, Lord Prior of the Order, then touring Australia, on the possibility of the South Australian organization's becoming a separate Commandery of the Order – along the lines of the Western Australian Commandery, which enjoys a measure of independence from the Australian Priory. He had already prepared a long written argument on the subject. This pointed out that St John in South Australia then had responsibility for the central third of the Australian continent, from Darwin to Mt Gambier, and thus superintended an area greater than the British Isles, France, the Iberian Peninsula, the Low Countries and Italy combined. To Hayward it probably seemed sensible to make a direct approach to Wakehurst to plead that St John in South Australia merited its own Commandery. Bypassing the Priory was heresy, however, even if South Australia was emerging as the strongest St John State. Those few senior Priory officials who knew of Hayward's approach to the Lord Prior were incensed. Their annoyance cost Hayward any chance for further advancement in the Order. Shortly before his sudden death he had let it be known he would like to be given the highest honour the Order could bestow on a non-Royal – promotion to the rank of Bailiff Grand Cross. Only two Australians had ever risen that high in the Order – Sir Hugh Poate and Sir George Stening, the first two Chancellors of the Order in Australia. It was folly for him to think he might ever be allowed to add the letters 'G.C.St.J.' to his postnominals, for there was little chance that such an honour would come his way. The rank of Bailiff Grand Cross could only come for exceptionally outstanding service to the Order at the national level. Hayward had certainly not distinguished himself thus. Indeed in 1977 the Priory had declined to reappoint him as its Director of Ceremonies (one of its principal portfolio positions). It did so not only because of his absenteeism but also because of his parochialism – his general disinclination to be bothered with Priory affairs except when South Australia was directly concerned.[5]

Hayward's successor as president of the St John Council was Brig. John Gilbert McKinna, who had been Police Commissioner for South Australia from 1957 until his retirement in 1972. A son of a minister of religion, a Prince Alfred College old boy and graduate of the University of Adelaide, the new president had a distinguished record of military and community



Brig. J.G. McKinna, president of the St John Council for South Australia from 1984.

service. He had finished the Second World War as an infantry battallion commanding officer, and his postnominals included a D.S.O., a C.B.E. and a M.V.O. He had been an honorary colonel in the Australian Army Cadet Corps 1960-65, a member of the State committee of the CSIRO since 1962, chairman of the South Australian Road Traffic Board 1960-69, and, since 1966, a member of the St John Council whose presence fellow members welcomed because of his constructive approach to the issues coming before the Council. Although he had held office as president for little more than a year as this page was being written, Council members and senior St John managers were pleased with his manner of handling the position. He was, they said, an active yet unobtrusive president – one seen often at St John House, one often seen listening to the views of his juniors, one who lent his wisdom when he guessed it was needed. This, they also said, was in contrast to the presidential style of his predecessor, who had played only a figurehead role during what (as we shall soon see) was the most difficult period the organization had ever passed through – a time of trouble when more active leadership seemed called for.[6]

When Hayward stepped up to the presidency of the Council, D.P. Williams, his loyal lieutenant in both John Martins and the Council, took his place as chairman. Like other businessmen who had linked up with the St John organization over the years, Williams had become a St John convert. This meant that, like other volunteers, he gave the organization hundreds of hours of voluntary service each year, deriving a special sense of satisfaction and fulfilment from furthering its humanitarian aims. He was fond of aphorisms, and used them frequently to explain his interest in community work. Just one of them, borrowed from Etienne de Grellet



Don ('D.P.') Williams, chairman of the St John Council for South Australia 1976-83.

(1773-1855), pointed to the attitudes that prompted him and his fellow volunteers in St John:

> I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good therefore that I can do or any kindness that I can show my fellow man, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

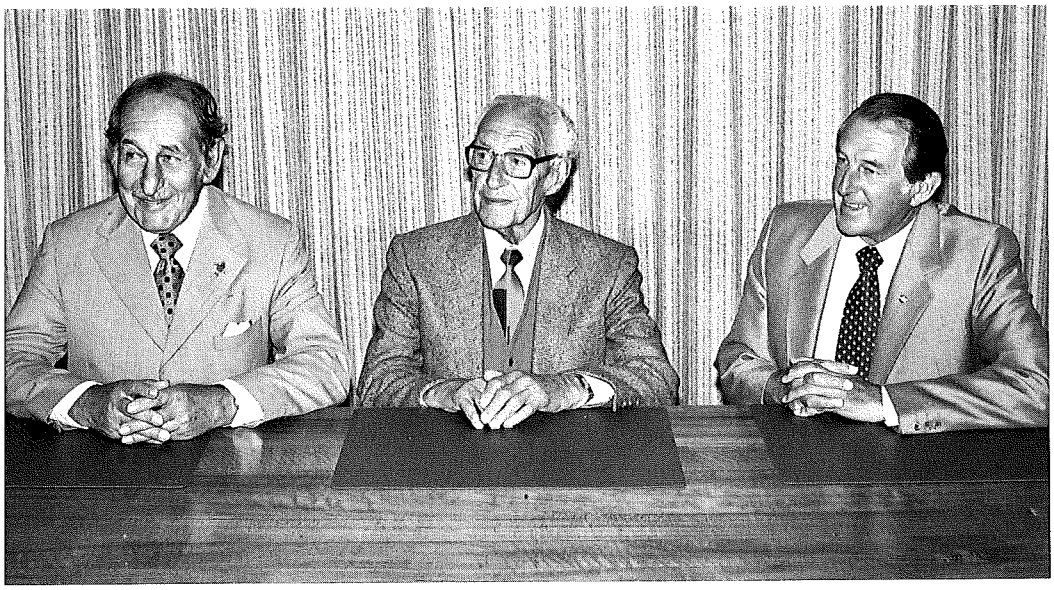
It also reflected something of Williams' background in service clubs, for he had founded Apex Clubs at Port Adelaide and Gawler in the 1940s, had gone on to be president of the Adelaide Apex Club, and had been District Governor for Apex in 1949 and 1950. Unlike Napier and Hayward, he was not of the Adelaide Establishment but had battled his way upwards. His father, the son of an immigrant Cornish Methodist parson, had died when he was young, and he had had to leave Adelaide Boys High School early to help support the family. During the Great Depression he endured a couple of spells of unemployment, but continued working away at his accountancy qualifications throughout the 30s, and eventually rose to the top of the profession, serving terms as both State and Federal President of the Australian Society of Accountants. During his federal presidency the society was host to the Tenth World Congress of Accountants in Sydney.[7]

Williams' rise in John Martins was similarly resolute: he joined the firm as company secretary in 1950, was appointed to its board in 1959, became its joint managing director in 1971, and, always the loyal company man, he even took part in its Christmas Pageant – variously playing the role of a Cobb & Co. coach driver and as King Neptune. Another of his maxims related to his work ethic:

He who does not advance falls back.
He who stops is overwhelmed, distanced, crushed.
He who ceases to grow greater becomes smaller.
The stationary position is the beginning of the end.

It was the philosophy of the achiever, and it was obvious in every venture he entered. It had, for example, been evident in his fundraising efforts, which returned some $3,500,000 to various causes, most notably the Anzac Memorial Appeal, the National Heart Foundation, the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and St John Ambulance; and, as the previous chapter pointed out, Hayward had brought him into St John for his special talents here. Once linked to the organization he became totally committed, and advanced steadily within it. He spent thirteen years as Hayward's deputy on the St John Council, rising all the time through the ranks of the Order to become a Knight of St John in 1971. After this long apprenticeship he was the logical choice to succeed Hayward both as chairman of the Council and as Priory Executive Officer for South Australia. He served in the former position for almost eight years, until his retirement at the end of 1983; and he continued on in the latter until his death in January 1985. The complete convert, he was ever ready to proselytise for the 'faith', and missed few chances for doing so. This book, for instance, was just one of his ideas, and, using something akin to a fundraising ploy, he talked the present writer, who was initially reluctant, into taking on the job of producing it. (Unfortunately he did not live to see it. He died the very day the author completed the manuscript – a sad, ironic twist.)[8]

As well as a change of presidents and chairmen, the rearrangement of senior officers' positions included the appointment of a new general manager. After twenty-four years with St John, the last fourteen as general manager, P.L. Ferrier retired in July 1978. John Rawes, the superintendent of finance and administration, then acted in the position for two months until the appointment of the next general manager, D.W. (Don) Jellis, who took up duty in September. Jellis, formerly the general manager for South Australia of Australian National Industries-Austral Steel, was the first senior servant of the Order in South Australia in recent decades not to be a native of the State. He was a Victorian, and after training in accountancy and metallurgy with the Commonwealth Steel Co., a BHP subsidiary, he had joined Australian National Industries, rising through the executive ranks of the company in his home State before coming to South Australia to manage ANI-Austral Steel in 1972. Like Williams, who had recruited him for St John, he was a 'company man' – a professional manager who had spent his working life in the world of big business. He was a life member of the Steel Industries Institute, of which he had been national chairman, a fellow of the Australian Institute of Management, and a member of the Institute of Directors. His sporting attainments bespoke a similar professional approach to all endeavours: in his home State he had played top grade cricket for the prestigious Hawthorn-East Melbourne



The three managers of St John's South Australian ambulance service: left to right, P.L. Ferrier (1964-78), K.G. Shapter (1958-64), and D.W. Jellis (1978-).

club, and had played off a handicap of seven as captain of the Yarra Yarra Golf Club.[9]

The appointment of Williams as chairman, of Jellis as general manager, and the move away from the old Austin St. premises to a new St John House in Greenhill Rd., Eastwood, were signs of significant changes in emphasis within the St John organization in the late 1970s. These shifts could be partly explained by the professional experience of both chairman and general manager. Firstly, their managerial backgrounds were in contrast to those of their predecessors. Whereas Hayward and Ferrier had more or less found their way into their St John positions through happenstance, Williams and Jellis had been consciously recruited for specific administrative skills acquired in the world of corporate affairs. Thus, whereas the organization under the Hayward-Ferrier regime reflected much of the chairman's and general manager's personal idiosyncrasies, the Williams-Jellis regime was to be noted more for its rational and systematic approach to management issues. Under the latter St John finally made the transition from a charity that had grown haphazardly to a service industry conducted by a team of trained professional managers who took pride in running St John as they would any other corporation requiring their well-honed administrative skills.

The difference in style between the two regimes was a function partly of the contrasting backgrounds of the two sets of leaders, and partly of the size of the organization each had to manage. Previous sections of the book have dwelt on the personal qualities of the central characters, and the point has already been made that, while Hayward was a bluff patrician – 'born to rule' in the idiom of the late 70s –, Ferrier carried over into St John the lessons he had learnt as company commander and publicist. Their

avuncular mode of leadership had done much to shape St John during the 50s and 60s. Even their critics could agree that both Hayward and Ferrier in combination had a forceful presence which, in the early years at least, had succeeded in securing for the organization the loyalty of St John workers. Ian Anson, for instance, could write about the early Hayward-Ferrier years in these terms:

> Many employees entered their careers with the Council willing to sacrifice status and trade qualifications, and in most cases high incomes, for the satisfaction of providing an essential community service. The early goals were urgent and relevant. Paternalism coupled to a small organisation built strong personal loyalties, and this loyalty was often used to 'bale out' of impositions employees in similar industries would not tolerate.[10]

These were the words of a trade unionist, written during a period of industrial unrest, yet it was clear that charismatic leadership had certainly been a key factor in the earlier successes of St John ambulance operations. The compactness of the team had also helped greatly: when the organization had still been small enough, all staff, full-timers and volunteers alike, could feel a strong sense of familial identity not possible in larger entities.

There were of course other reasons why St John had prospered in the quarter century to 1975. Napier's and Hayward's Establishment connections had been significant. So, too, had been the support of governments which were only too pleased to save costs by leaving St John to run the ambulances. Then there had been the continuous barrage of publicity Ferrier had mounted, the determination of the country services to have parity with the metropolitan ambulance service, and the enterprise of particular individuals like those responsible for the success of St John's Whyalla operations. By the time the Williams-Jellis leadership was taking over from that of Hayward and Ferrier, however, conditions had changed. The new regime would have to seek its fortunes in other sets of circumstances.

The scale of St John Council undertakings superintended by Williams and Jellis was the most obvious difference between the responsibilities of their regime and that of their predecessors' earlier years. The previous chapter traced the growth of St John endeavours during the Hayward-Ferrier decades, and, as we saw there, all indicators of achievement showed that what Williams and Jellis took over was a vast, expanding enterprise that needed the executive skills for which they had been appointed. Thus, assets growth had been from $13,532 in 1952 to $13.9 million in 1983. In the same time the number of paid staff had risen from fewer than twenty to 347, the ambulance fleet from twelve vehicles to 257 plus three aircraft, the number of ambulance cases from 8500 to 200,000, ambulance 'mileage' from 11,878 to 5.6 million kilometres, the number of certificates awarded to graduates from the Association's public classes from 1594 to nearly 12,000, Brigade strength from 1160 to 4712, the number of voluntary hours put in by Brigade members from 495 on field duties and

35,769 on transport work to 190,000 and 429,000 respectively, while the Brigade's caseload on field duty had mounted from 4304 to 17,000. As the last chapter argued, St John had become a Statewide public sector industry.[11]

There were costs to be paid for such success, for sheer size was as much a strain on the organizational heart as it was a sign of corporate health. As the St John bodies grew it was probably unavoidable that they would lose something of their earlier familial quality, and as that happened their members inevitably lost their sense of team identity. Ferrier's early informal manner of handling staff was possible in the 1950s, when there were only several dozen paid employees working out of only five or six ambulance stations. By the 1970s, however, it was impossible to call all employees by their first names, inquire after their children and share a joke. Several hundred staff spread around forty or fifty centres ruled out the intimacy of close daily contact on which camaraderie depended. Whereas St John employees might once have enjoyed the warmth and security of belonging to a small select community, in the 1980s they were much more like workers in other large service industries. Senior managers loyally sweated to uphold the voluntaristic principles of the Order that had employed them, dutifully promoting St John rhetoric about keeping the faith by serving humanity; but the truth was that full-time staff, be they managers or workers, were now salaried officers working contractually in a large quasi-public utility. As such they were little different from wage earners in any of the other complex bureaucracies of the late twentieth century. That in turn had important implications for the dealings between the executive and the staff. The rise of industrial unrest in the ambulance service during the mid-70s, which a later section of this chapter examines, was but one consequence.

A sign that the quality of management-staff relations was changing came in 1977, when the St John Council appointed its first manager of personnel and industrial relations. The duties and functions of this officer were like those of the personnel branches of other large organizations – staff recruitment and selection, training and career development, assessment for promotion, the keeping of personal records, the safety, health and welfare of employees, negotiation and administration of industrial awards and agreements, liaison with employees' unions, the handling of workers' compensation claims, the promotion of equal employment opportunities, and the general maintenance of harmonious management-staff dealings. His appointment signalled the fact that the chairman and general manager could no longer rely on bonhomie and back-slapping as the solution to personnel problems. In an expanding and increasingly complex organization a more systematic approach to staff issues had become necessary, and more specific professional expertise was called for.

A further cost arising from the growth of the organization was the increasing attention which the government paid to St John operations.

While St John had provided its services unobtrusively, politicians had taken little interest either in St John's management-staff relations or in the way the organization conducted its business, so long as the ambulances ran well enough to keep the electors happy. Both Liberal and Labor governments were contented to provide increasingly large subsidies to the St John Council without asking too many questions; but as soon as the organization became controversial, as during the industrial disputes between the Council and the ambulance officers in the late 70s and early 80s, the political parties showed sudden interest. As politicians of both sides soon discovered, the St John ambulance service was a convenient political football, kicking which was a sure way of keeping one's name before the public, and of gaining the electoral support of various disaffected fractions of the St John community. The news media, the stock trade of which had for long been controversy, obliged – frequently to the embarrassment of the Council, management, staff and volunteers. The result was a government-appointed commission of inquiry followed almost immediately by a parliamentary select committee into the ambulance service, which together ran for more than two years, from October 1982 until December 1984. In all that time, as we shall see in following sections, St John lived in doubt, unsure whether it would be able to retain its links with the ambulance service it had built up over the preceding quarter century.

This sad tale of disaffection and uncertainty did conclude with the offer of a happy ending, however. The parliamentary select committee eventually recommended legislation that would give the St John ambulance service the statutory foundation it had always lacked. If enacted and implemented, the proposed legislation would effect far reaching changes within the South Australian branch of St John. The organization would end its first hundred years with a constitutional guarantee unusual in its Australian career and in Australia's history of ambulance transport services. Having started as a charity that had developed into a Statewide industry, it would now begin a new phase of existence, one of its wings in effect becoming a *de facto* statutory authority. What the future held for St John and its thousands of workers under such an arrangement was an intriguing question. Change and challenge were therefore the operative themes as St John and South Australians began their second century together.

2. *Challenge: industrial disputes*

Almost from the day the St John Council took control, tensions between the full-time ambulance officers and the Brigade volunteers supplementing them were a fact of life for the St John organisation in South Australia. Conflict was unavoidable, however much St John loyalists might deplore the situation, for they arose from structural causes as well as from personal differences. It was not just that the full-time officers saw themselves as professionals in contrast to the 'amateurs' who came in to run the

ambulances at nights and at weekends, or that the full-timers thought the volunteers threatened their conditions and security. The problem in large part arose from the fact that salaried officers and volunteers worked according to different principles. First was the matter of allegiances. Volunteers owed primary loyalty to the Brigade and their Commissioner, whereas full-timers answered to their general manager and through him to the Council. Then there was the question of accountability. Full-time staff were held accountable for their actions for the simple reason that they received salaries: their job security depended on satisfactory performance. Volunteers, on the other hand, were not accountable: if they acquitted themselves poorly on the ambulances their reputations within the Brigade might suffer, but their livelihoods were not at stake. Because these basic principles for service on the ambulances differed for the two classes of officers, it was inevitable that strains between them would emerge from time to time.

The public, and probably many within St John, remained generally unaware of these tensions during the first Hayward-Ferrier decade. Loyalty to the leadership and to the Order was sufficient to prevent the lines of stress from becoming visible. An undercurrent of dissatisfaction nevertheless nagged at the salaried officers as they contemplated what the management expected of them. Ian Anson, an ambulance officer prominent in the industrial disputes of the mid-1970s, later wrote about his colleagues' grievances. He interviewed a number of the early ambulance officers and found that while they had generally been happy in the service, and had been dedicated to the work it entailed, they had resented their conditions and rates of pay, which they thought were lower than those of comparable services elsewhere. They had disliked having to drive what they regarded as inadequate ambulance vehicles. They had been disappointed in the training they had received, for this was simply what ordinary Brigade members underwent in their Divisions, and had to be done in evening sessions after work. They complained that hospital staff, particularly nurses, treated them condescendingly. A number of their grievances focused on the Brigade, of which they were at least nominally a part, but which many of them regarded as generally lethargic. Some officers had come to resent the minimum quota of voluntary duties they were expected to perform as Brigade members; some believed that certain favoured Brigade members were being recruited into the ambulance service and promoted above established employees; and some no longer liked having to wear the Brigade uniform.[12]

In 1961 the St John Council recognised that its full-time ambulance officers had been receiving less than their due. It agreed to raise wages to levels comparable with those of ambulance services interstate, and to introduce a range of pay margins to reward officers for length of service and for the performance of additional responsibilities like being in charge of a suburban out-station and being a radio-controller. Better salary

conditions did not, however, remove all the grievances. As the service grew and became more impersonal, dissatisfaction became more vocal. The paternalistic management style found critics; 'back stabbing' became a complaint of some as they saw others scramble for promotion; and by the late 1960s, one officer told Anson, 'there was an "Irish parliament" whenever crews got together'. One tangible outcome of the mounting discontent among ambulance officers was the formation in 1968 of an ambulance service staff association calling itself the St John Council for South Australia Inc. Employees Committee. This cumbersome title was later changed to the Ambulance Officers Association of South Australia. Later still, in July 1971, it changed its name to the St John Ambulance Officers Association and affiliated with the Australian Government Workers Association (AGWA).[13]

Their staff association now constituted as a trade union, full-time ambulance officers had a formal channel for expressing grievances. This came at a time when new causes for discontent were arising. One such issue was a ruling the St John Council made in 1972 that paid officers must remain members of the Brigade and must perform a minimum number of voluntary duties. AGWA took a vote on its ambulance officer members' views on these issues, though with inconclusive results. Another cause for concern was the clinic service the Council had opened. This picked up and returned walking outpatients to various non-emergency treatment centres. It grew rapidly, and by 1974 operated twenty-five

A St John Ambulance clinic car: a patient is assisted by Beverley Dale (left) and Libby Birchmore, mid-1970s.



vehicles requiring some forty ambulance officers who rotated between it and the ambulances. Full-time officers disliked having to spend time on the clinic vehicles, regarding this as mere 'taxi work', and therefore an improper use of their skills. Still further grist to the mill of their dissatisfaction were several studies of ambulance crew training facilities in Australia which inferred that training in South Australia lagged behind that in other States. The growth of a St John bureaucracy further exacerbated ambulance officers' sense of injustice. The appointment of further managerial and clerical staff during the mid-70s made them feel they no longer had ease of access to senior management, as a result of which their salary claims were not receiving the priority they believed was their due.[14]

In the mid-1970s, too, the full-time officers' resentment of the volunteers surfaced for the first time. During 1975 a secret ballot of AGWA members showed that by a majority of eighty-two to twenty-eight the paid officers wanted a service without volunteers, particularly in the metropolitan area. The full-timers had various complaints about the volunteers. Their basic objection arose from professional pride. Even if they could accept that volunteers were well trained, they thought them inexperienced: someone who came on duty for the minimum volunteer's quota of one night a week, they argued, would handle only a fraction of the cases in the full-time officer's weekly case load, and could therefore only ever have a fraction of his experience. When all other capital cities had fully paid ambulance services, they reasoned, it was unfair that Adelaide alone should have to suffer a service that was part amateur, and therefore in their view 'deficient'. Other complaints ranged from petty gripes to graver charges against the volunteers. For example, some paid staff thought that volunteers responded more slowly to calls than did full-timers. Some said the volunteers were keen to attend urgent cases but reluctant to perform mundane routines like folding linen, cleaning vehicles and replacing stores. They also said that volunteers frequently turned up late for their evening shift, which meant that full-timers had to stay on duty for an extra ten minutes or so until the volunteers had arrived to take over. On the other hand, it was said, volunteers often went off duty early to get to their daytime jobs on time, and this left the service under-staffed. A further criticism was that volunteers had already spent eight hours in their daytime jobs by the time they went on ambulance duty, and this, full-timers maintained, meant they could not give their ambulance duties the alertness these demanded. Consequently, it was further claimed, road accident rates were higher in volunteer-driven ambulances than in those driven by paid staff. Perhaps an even more serious accusation was that some volunteers joined the service because of personality defects rather than from a spirit of service. The ambulance service, according to paid officers, attracted an undue proportion of 'siren chasers' among the volunteers. These, full-timers said, included ghouls, who joined up because they liked the sight of blood; escapees from the

mundane world of everyday events, who thrilled at the excitement of speeding through city streets with siren blaring; and the inadequate, who felt important being in a uniform at the scene of an accident.[15]

These, of course, were not criticisms volunteers accepted. Not surprisingly, as time went on relations between paid officers and volunteers grew progressively worse. The public became aware of this at last in 1977 when AGWA mounted an ultimately unsuccessful campaign to remove the volunteers. AGWA pursued this aim through the news media and into the South Australian Industrial Commission in 1977-78. The rift deepened as newspapers editorialised against the union, and as a volunteers' action group emerged to defend volunteer interests. Relations deteriorated further under pressure of events during the early 1980s. First, a series of manoeuvres within the union in 1980 resulted in AGWA merging with the Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union (FMWU), and the splitting away of the more militant faction of ambulance officers to form their own union, the Ambulance Employees Association of South Australia (AEA). The AEA, considerably more vociferous than AGWA-FMWU, retained as one of its chief objectives the removal of the volunteers. It argued forcefully for its aims in significant venues such as the South Australian branch of the Labor Party, the 1982 Opit inquiry into the St John Ambulance Service, and the parliamentary select committee (chaired by the Minister for Health, John Cornwall) which followed Opit in 1983-84. The next section of this chapter examines those events more closely. Suffice to say here that the presence of the volunteers continued to aggravate a substantial body of paid officers, while the unionists' attitude continued to anger volunteers. The depth of the animosity became obvious in 'Underground Ambulance ', a vicious little anti-management and anti-volunteer newssheet which began surreptitiously circulating among ambulance staff in the early 80s. The virulence of its attacks on management and volunteers showed how bitter were the more militant of the paid staff; but while it probably raised laughs among its readers, it was, like other similar 'underground' newsletters, an insolent offensive rag that reflected rather more poorly on its anonymous authors than on its victims.[16]

As the issue of volunteers festered away, relations between paid officers and the Brigade also continued to deteriorate. Many full-time officers remained loyal to the Brigade, gladly carrying out their quota of voluntary Brigade duties and participating actively in the life of their home Divisions. The more militant of ambulance unionists, however, resented the requirement to belong to the Brigade and to perform voluntary duties. One of the unionists' early aims was to break the nexus between Brigade membership and paid employment in the service. It was this issue which led to the first instance of direct industrial action by the unionists. This occurred in 1975 when Anson, at that time an AGWA official, resigned from the Brigade both to protest the obligation to go on voluntary duty

and to test the management's attitude to the issue. He was promptly dismissed from the service for that and other purported offences. His colleagues had little doubt, however, that, since he had emerged as one of their leaders, management was keen to grasp at any pretext for getting rid of him. He spent seven weeks out of work while the union, coming to his rescue, worked to persuade management to reinstate him. (This was fortunate both for his subsequent St John career and for the organization generally: transferred out of duty as an ambulance officer, he went on to distinguish himself as a health educator, and later still as secretary-manager of the South Australian Centre of the St John Ambulance Association.) In this and other incidents the unionists were provocative and the management obtuse, but Brigade loyalists in particular could not readily comprehend the unionists' attitudes. They reasoned that, since virtually all paid officers had found their jobs via the Brigade, having come up through Brigade ranks and into the service first as volunteers, the full-timers owed the Brigade something. To attack the Brigade and its cherished principles of voluntary service, as the latter were seen to be doing, to many Brigade members was almost sacrilegious.[17]

The relationship between the paid officers and the Brigade was much complicated by the fact that, in addition to their salaried positions in the ambulance service, many paid officers held senior positions in the Brigade, in which capacity they served voluntarily – as would any other Brigade officer. This meant divided loyalties, especially if they were unionists, as a number were: on the one hand was their loyalty to the Brigade and its voluntaristic traditions, but on the other hand were their bonds of comradeship with fellow full-time ambulance officers and their sympathy for the union's aims. Yet another complication was the stance taken by the volunteers' action group. This body saw itself besieged: not only did it feel

Ian Anson instructs a public first aid class, about 1979.



that volunteers were under attack from the unionists, it also believed the management and St John Council were not wholeheartedly behind volunteers, and would most likely give way in the end to the unionists' campaign to remove them. It further thought the Brigade leadership, with a number of full-time ambulance officers in senior positions, would crumple in the face of pressure from the union; and it saw the presence in the Brigade of paid ambulance officers as a pernicious influence. As its voice grew louder, one of its complaints was that 'Brigade regulations and orders forbidding the expression of opinion are rigidly enforced'. This was another way of saying the Commissioner and his senior officers were stifling rank and file comment in the hope of appeasing the unionists.[18]

The volunteers' action group, a self-proclaimed coalition of perhaps a dozen or two like-minded Brigade members purporting to speak on behalf of the 550 volunteers in the metropolitan area and the 1000 or so throughout the rest of the State, were the wild card in the pack – a 'ginger' group beyond the effective control of either the St John Council or management, or indeed of the Brigade hierarchy itself. They formed during May 1977, contravening Brigade regulations which stated that only the Commissioner or his delegate could make public statements on the Brigade's behalf. Within a couple of months, however, the Commissioner, then Dr Bill Gove, seemed able to forgive or overlook their act of defiance in presuming to represent publicly a substantial body of his 'troops', for in late June he gave them formal approval to speak out on behalf of volunteers. The group's chief spokesman was David McGowan, a member of the Unley Division who later served a term as chairman of the State branch of the Institute of Ambulance Officers, a national body formed in 1973 to promote the professional status of ambulance officers. He and several close allies relentlessly lobbied for their group, seeking allies wherever they could find them – among St John Council members, in the news media, in the ranks of the parliamentary Liberal Party. The group proved to be adept exploiters of the media – much to the chagrin of the unionists, who were greatly peeved by (but surely envied) the highly favourable publicity the volunteers subsequently attracted to themselves. The letters group members wrote revealed the complexity of the issue. They lambasted the unionists, the ambulance service management, the St John Council and the Brigade leadership in equal proportions. At the same time they showed a paradoxical sympathy for the unionists' grievances. For instance, one letter D.P. Williams received from the group claimed that

> the Council does not appear to have adopted any personnel policy that would give dignity and satisfaction to paid ambulance officers. . . . There is no method available for a man to advance in a career as an ambulance officer;

but on the other hand the group's press statements accused unionists of trying to 'destroy the volunteer ambulance system' through whatever means seemed appropriate – the persistent encroachment on volunteers'

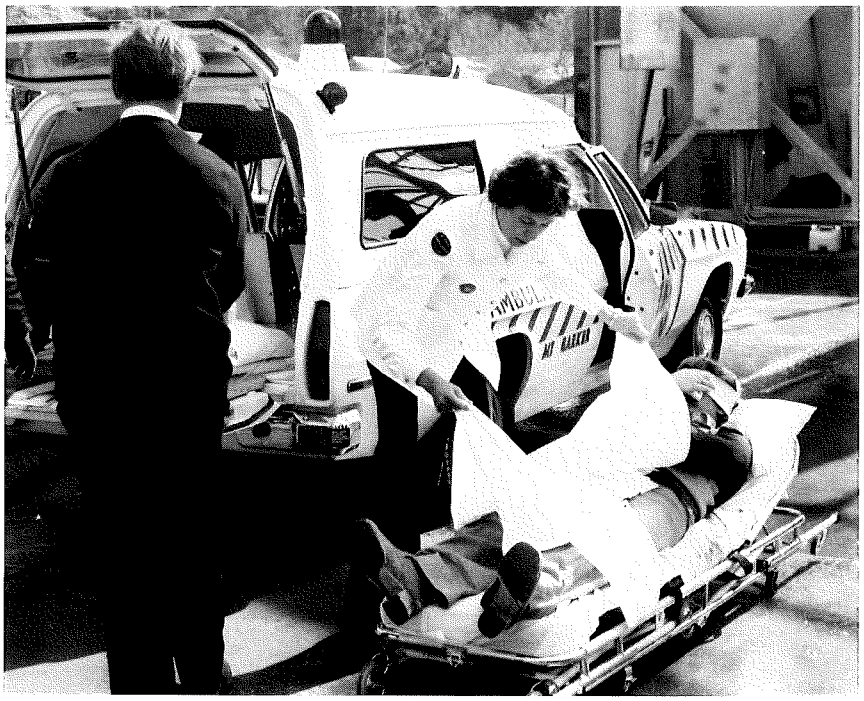


Dr Bill Gove, Brigade Commissioner 1973-78, and Eve Gove (his wife), District Superintendent (Nursing) 1980-84.

rights, the harrassment of volunteers, and the running of a program of intimidation to force them out of the service.[19]

McGowan himself resigned from the service in 1980 because he said he had received 'phone calls threatening the safety of his family, but he and several associates continued their campaign. Without formal Brigade connections, they were entirely beyond St John control and, as such, a great embarrassment. Having gained the ear of influential members of the parliamentary Liberal Party, they kept pushing their contention that the St John Council, the management of the service and the Brigade leadership had retreated before the unionists' demands – an argument with considerable appeal in Liberal circles at a time when elections were being fought on the theme of 'Who's running the country, the unions or the government?' The volunteers' action group justified their provocative actions through appeals to tradition. The South Australian ambulance service, they pointed out, was remarkable because, except for the Northern Territory's, it alone among Australian ambulance services relied

heavily on voluntary effort; the volunteers had helped build the service into the country's best; and voluntaryism in ambulance work had consequently become one of the proudest aspects of the State's heritage. Now, however, volunteers' rights were under grave threat through a combination of the unionists' determination to be rid of them and the weakness of the management and St John Council in failing to defend them. As in most great controversies, the truth in this case lay somewhere in the middle ground. There was no doubt that many unionists wanted the volunteers phased out, and that for the sake of industrial harmony the St John management eventually came round to making compromises. However, to suggest that Williams, Jellis *et al.* were 'selling out' on the volunteers was unfair, for the management stuck resolutely to the principle of voluntaryism throughout the disputes between their two classes of ambulance officers. Being fair to one's adversaries, however, was not the way to score political points in this debate, and this was one the McGowan group were as determined to win as were their union opponents. Having found allies in the Liberal Party, they agitated away, and in the end their activism was one of the principal factors behind the 1983-84 inquiry into the ambulance service by the Cornwall select committee.[20]



A volunteer crew from the Mt Barker St John Ambulance station collect a man who had been trapped in a cement silo at Verdun, 1978.



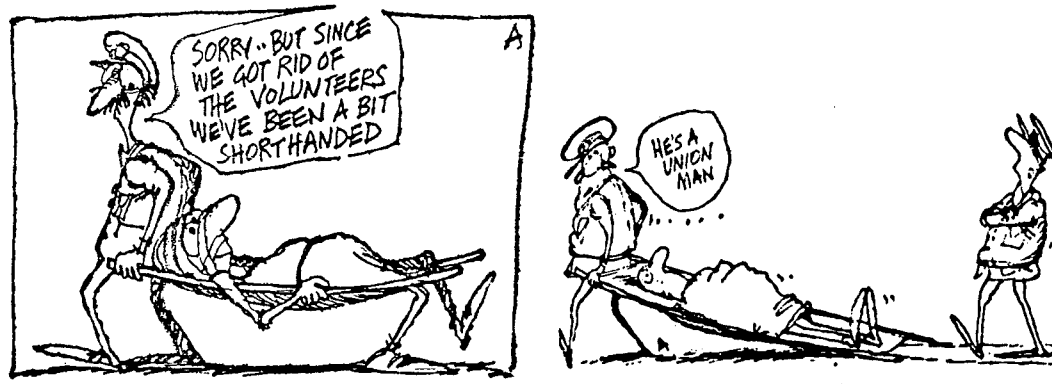
Brigade members of a volunteer ambulance crew and police retrieve a child injured in a fall at the Torrens Weir, late 1970s.

The volunteers' action group formed in 1977, following a series of events in which the paid officers had gained some concessions from management that appeared to the volunteers to be an erosion of their position in the service. During 1976 the management had given way on the issue of compulsory voluntaryism for full-time officers – a small victory for the unionists justifying the stand Anson had taken the previous year. Henceforth full-timers could choose *not* to give voluntary time to the service or the Brigade, rather than be obliged to fulfil a quota of voluntary duty. The management also agreed to set up an inservice training school for paid officers – something for which they had been agitating for several years. Then management and the unionists entered a series of discussions to explore the full-timers' various demands for the service and particularly their wish to extend their hours of operation into the 'after hours' periods handled by the volunteers.[21]

One outcome of these negotiations was the formation of a joint management-union working party to provide a new uniform for paid staff. Uniforms were not only a convenient and distinctive form of work clothing but a potent symbol to unionists and volunteers alike. To the volunteer they were a sign of Brigade membership, and of acceptance of

the traditions of voluntary service and discipline the Brigade vaunted. To the unionist, who wished to distance himself and the service from the Brigade, they meant something else: having to wear the standard Brigade uniform at work was a daily denial of his and his colleagues' professional aspirations. For the full-timers to shed their black and white uniforms in favour of some other colour therefore represented to unionist and volunteer alike a tacit weakening of the links between the Brigade and ambulance service that had survived for a quarter of a century, and of the voluntaristic principle from which the links were forged. As well as being a controversial symbol, the Brigade uniform emphasised certain anomalies in the ambulance service. Thus, the Brigade senior officer coming into the service as a volunteer wore the 'pips' of rank on his or her shoulder, but the full-time ambulance officer of 'inferior' rank in many cases would be the more expert ambulancer. Disparities like this eventually persuaded the management to structure the service as a unitary entity distinct from the Brigade, to which the Brigade simply supplied the voluntary component. The new uniform, which in the end was adopted in 1983, was intended to affirm these notions of unity and separateness. It was blue, and it was worn by all paid ambulance officers. Once the full-timers were wearing it, senior managers were agreeably surprised to see how it lifted morale all round. Until its introduction, however, its absence continued to fuel the animosity of the unionists and to arouse the concern of the volunteers.[22]

As 1977 wore on the unionists became restless, thinking their negotiations with management were making little headway, particularly in the key issue of extending full-timers' hours of operation. AGWA took their various claims to the Industrial Commission seeking a voluntary conference, but in the meantime the unionists continued discussions with the St John management via the joint management-union working party. The working party now included government representation, delegates from the Health Commission having joined its deliberations in the guise of mediators between union and management. The tripartite dealings for a time held the promise of an amicable settlement, but in mid-1977 the unionists pulled out of the negotiations when the Minister for Health, Don Banfield, brought the volunteers' action group into the working party as a separate respondent. He took that step because of pressure from the volunteer lobby, which, fearing the imminent removal of volunteers from the service, had stirred up a controversy in the press at the end of June, grabbing the headlines with front-page lead stories in both *The Advertiser* and *The News* about the union's plans for 'axing' the volunteers. The editorials backing up these stories demanded the retention of the service's voluntary component, and castigated the union for its selfishness in trying to get rid of the volunteers, whom *The Advertiser* styled as 'a community of chivalrous and compassionate citizens with origins in the 12th century'. *The News* spoke of St John as an 'organisation with [a] magnificent record of community service [which was] in danger of being ripped apart by yet



An *Advertiser* cartoonist's view of the ambulance unionists' attempts to remove volunteers from the ambulance service.

another union wrangle'. *The Advertiser* wondered how far unionists' tentacles might reach: 'the Emergency Fire Services, staffed largely by volunteers, could be the next target', it opined, 'then perhaps will come Meals on Wheels and a host of other voluntary services'.[23]

The newspapers were full of the issue over the next few days. Ferrier was quoted as saying that the replacement of volunteers by paid staff would cost South Australians an additional $3.6 million annually, while various medical experts attested to the 'excellent job' the volunteers were doing. All this pressure forced the government into publicly affirming the volunteers' role. The Acting Premier, Des Corcoran, went on record as saying the government opposed the union on its attitude towards the volunteers, whom it regarded as the 'soul' of the ambulance organisation. The volunteers' action group could not have hoped for better publicity for themselves, nor for heavier censure of their AGWA adversaries. The press outcry caught the union off guard. The AGWA general secretary, R.F. Morley, denied the charge that his members were trying to 'make volunteers redundant' and tried bravely to point to the legitimacy of their industrial goals. As the furore continued over talk-back radio and in the newspaper correspondence columns, he began doing positive harm to the unionists' cause. He 'blasted' the Labor government, hinting that it cared more for the interests of the Establishment than it did for the workers; he took a swipe at the volunteers, suggesting they were generally irresponsible (for instance, they often 'broke driving rules'); and he said the views the public were expressing in the news media were simply 'emotional crap'. At a time when 'union bashing' was a popular public pastime, it was a poor way to win support, and any justice the unionist cause might have had was soon overlooked. Little wonder, after the public caning they had suffered, the unionists were left with an antipathy towards the major news outlets, which, they felt, had misrepresented their aims. Little wonder, too, that their hostility towards volunteers intensified as they contemplated how readily the volunteers' action group had swung popular support behind itself and against them.[24]

AGWA had perhaps learnt that by publicly demanding the elimination of the volunteers it would probably always antagonise public opinion. This realisation seems to have been behind the union's next manoeuvre, which came early the following year, in February 1978, when it announced that it was laying before the government a set of proposals for ending the dispute between its members and the volunteers. The union formula would have left the country services intact, allowing them to continue their heavy reliance on volunteers, but it proposed turning the metropolitan after hours service over to the full-time officers Monday to Friday. Volunteers would still have been allowed to work in the 'after hours' shifts during that period, but only in a 'third man' capacity, as assistants to the two full-timers who would be in charge of each vehicle. At the weekends, on the other hand, the service would be in sole charge of the volunteers. Cabinet duly considered these proposals but decided to reserve its decision until the St John Council had formed an opinion on the matter. The Council agreed to discuss the formula with the union, but came up with a counter offer which AGWA deemed unacceptable. It then withdrew its offer. Negotiations now bogged down, with relations between the unionists and management reaching a new high water mark of mutual hostility.[25]

A petty – and in retrospect a comical – incident in this period helped swell the flood of full-timers' resentment. Ferrier had recently banned the wearing of beards by ambulance officers, and had insisted that paid staff comply. The issue was one that confirmed for unionists their belief in the arbitrary nature of the management; but it also gave them an opportunity to embarrass the general manager and win a round against the volunteers. Only several paid staff wore beards, and they submitted; but, freshly clean shaven, they demanded that the rule apply to volunteers as well. Ferrier attempted to make his new rule stick to the latter as well, but when two well respected, long serving and bearded volunteers stood firm and remained hirsute, he had no option but to withdraw his ruling.[26]

AGWA's formula for an accommodation between paid staff and volunteers having foundered, and unionists' resentment of management running high, the union re-launched in the Industrial Commission its case for after hours duties for full-time officers. The Commission resumed its hearings and handed down a recommendation that by July 1978 the St John Council should include paid staff on the two night shifts five days a week, and in the metropolitan area (though not in the country) should be running a fully paid service by 1979. The Commission also requested the parties to apply for a Commission award for ambulance staff. The Council rejected these recommendations, engaged a barrister and sought a full court hearing. The Commission agreed to these representations, and set aside time later in the year for a hearing by its full bench.[27]

The case got under way in July 1978. It moved slowly at first as counsel had witnesses explain to the bench the complexities of the St John organization. Their Honours at first appeared to have trouble understand-

Unabashed, the union chose not to take further part, and now withdrew from the hearings. An AGWA organiser, V.E. Smith, who had been assisting Harrison, tried to explain to the press that the action by his members was 'nothing dramatic': they simply 'wanted to be paid overtime for working after normal hours as was the case for comparable occupations, such as the police and nurses'. They had not previously imposed work bans because they had not wanted to endanger the service. However, the hearing before the Commissioners had showed that the St John Council did not appreciate the unionists' contribution to the service. Indeed it had abused their good will by avoiding the payment of overtime to them, attributing to their quota of 'voluntary' effort any after hours work they were called on to perform. The latter particular contribution by paid officers was a significant factor in the success of the service. The Council apparently believed it could manage quite well without it, using only volunteers after hours, Smith continued defiantly, 'so, OK, let's see if it works'.[31]

The work bans now began, and continued for a week, but without major disruption to the service. Even though their protest caused few people inconvenience, the unionists should not have been surprised that scarcely anyone but themselves would find anything to commend their actions. They should also have expected that, yet again, a clamour against irresponsible unionism would break out in the news media. 'St John staff stop work', the headlines roared, creating the false impression that the unionists' bans on overtime and against working with volunteers meant they had walked off the job as well as out of the hearings in the Industrial Commission. Once more newspaper editorial writers, columnists and correspondents inveighed against them. Even the Governor, the Rev. Keith Seaman, spoke out for the volunteers, and – by inference – against union action to limit voluntary effort. 'The volunteer worker not only makes a contribution of ... skill, but also gives practical demonstration of the impulse to labour and not to seek for [one's] own reward', he said. He was, of course, the Deputy Prior, and no doubt thought it his duty to promote the Order's ideology of voluntaryism; however, the fact that he was prepared to break convention by speaking out on a partisan issue was a measure of how provocative the public deemed the union's action to be.[32]

If the unionists had no cause to resent the unwelcome attention of the media, nor should they have been surprised that within their own ranks was a body of their colleagues who were askance at what had happened. The very day of the walk-out from the Commission 'several dozen' paid staff attended a meeting at the Hindmarsh centre to co-ordinate volunteer action against the work bans. 'We will show them [the union] [that] people are still free to make their own choices in this country', *The Advertiser* quoted one of them as saying. Many paid staff ignored the ban on overtime, staying on duty after hours as volunteers. There were complaints

from the latter group about the union faithful employing 'standover tactics' against those who would not stand firm for the union, and there were allegations that some staff were 'absolutely terrified by the strongarm tactics of the union'.[33]

That the union action had drawn blood could not be denied, and perhaps the most notable casualty was Ferrier. During the 1970s Hayward's imperious ways had exacted an increasingly heavy toll from his enthusiasm. His wife had died after a long illness, and he himself was not in good health. The organization was growing apace, and he had experienced difficulty in trying to keep up with it. His avuncular manner might still have worked with veteran staff, but it was insufficient for the newer breed of ambulance officers, whose resentment and recent militancy had shaken him badly. He had trouble understanding the motives of the rising generation of union activists, whom he seemed to regard as politically inspired subversives. Recent events had exhausted him, and so he chose this time to retire. John Rawes now carried out his functions for the two months it took to advertise for a replacement, interview applicants and appoint Jellis. Rawes had already proved his ability to do so: he had been carrying a major share of the management's industrial burden as well as being almost solely responsible for undertaking the development of the new St John House in Eastwood, a construction project then nearing completion.

The union called off its industrial action several days after Ferrier's departure, after Commissioner G.E. Pryke had adjudicated at a private consultation between representatives of AGWA and the St John Council. A meeting of seventy full-time staff on 28 July voted to lift the bans, and the service returned to normal as the issue of paid staff on the night shifts lay dormant for a spell. The union members had seen little immediate gain from their industrial action other than a bad press, which, if anything, had obscured the justice of their claims while strengthening the position of their opposition. That did not mean they had given up their cause: getting their foot in the door to the night shifts remained their primary objective. It was one they eventually achieved in mid-1980, after further skirmishing, typically involving either work bans or the threat thereof.[34]

In the end *rapprochement* was possible because of changes in the attitude of both management and the union. The vigorous new-style St John management, now under the control of Jellis, was a significant element. Jellis was determined to bring order to St John affairs. Appalled by the mess he had landed in through joining St John, he had set about reforming the management, working sixty-hour weeks to institute the sort of systematic administrative routines he believed were obligatory in a large semi-public utility like an ambulance service. With the arrival of Jellis came a more flexible attitude towards the unionists – a preparedness to negotiate with them as a group having legitimate industrial rights rather than to confront them as subversives. This more pragmatic approach on the part of management called forth a more co-operative approach on the part of the

unionists, many of whom had come to appreciate that all they seemed to gain from direct industrial action was chastisement in the news media. With a more conciliatory approach from either side, management and union agreed on a trial scheme whereby for the six months from 1 July 1980 the management would introduce two crews of paid staff to the 'sleep on' shift, midnight to 8.00 a.m., Monday to Friday. Despite vociferous protests by the volunteers' action group, which threatened mass resignations by volunteers if the service pushed ahead with 'integration' – a shorthand term meaning paid officers and volunteers sharing shifts –, the trial was generally successful. As a result integrated shifts subsequently became standard.[35]

In the meantime another great drama had been unfolding, this time one for unionists alone. It arose from a schism within unionists' ranks – the splitting away from the parent union of the group who set up AEA, the Ambulance Employees Association of South Australia. This occurred even as the unionists and management were reaching agreement over trying out the scheme for integrating paid and volunteer officers in the same shifts. The previous failures of AGWA, most notably in the 1978 case before the full bench of the Industrial Commission, and the ambulance officers' general disenchantment with the service AGWA was giving them, prompted the move to break away. A research officer for the AEA later wrote about it in these terms:

> Despite the attempt by AGWA to extend the professional service into volunteer hours, ambulance officers were beginning by the late 1970s to display dissatisfaction with the industrial service they were receiving from the AGWA. Their major complaint was that the St John Branch was simply a very minor element in the AGWA machine, consisting as [the latter] did at the time of some 10,000 members. Ambulance officer numbers were relatively insignificant and as a result, felt them selves under-represented in the concerns of the AGWA.
>
> Also, their increasing recognition of their professional status led them to view representation by AGWA as not reflective of their concerns.... Around that time, moves were also being initiated towards the amalgamation of the AGWA with the Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union (FMWU) – anathema to ambulance officers.
>
> Accordingly, moves were made by officers to secede from the AGWA. At a meeting in April 1980, a draft constitution of a new union was prepared. It was also proposed that the new union approach Mr Mick Doyle, secretary of the Fire Fighters Association of South Australia, and ask if he would agree to become secretary of the new body....[36]

The would-be secessionists still had to contend with their former union before they could claim to be a union in their own right. AGWA-FMWU was loth to see another union poach its members, and opposed the registration of the proposed AEA. This led to a lengthy hearing in the Industrial Commission, which passed into South Australian industrial

history, not to mention ambulance union mythology, as the 'AEA Registration Case 1980-81'. The Commission eventually found in favour of the new union, and the AEA was finally registered in August 1981. Most – four-fifths or more – of the paid officers chose to join the AEA, and they tended to be the lower level staff. Except for a handful who would belong to neither union, the remainder stayed with AGWA-FMWU, and they tended to be the supervisers and other officers of middle level management. Broadly speaking, then, the unionists divided horizontally, according to their position in the St John hierarchy, and those belonging to the lower stratum were at once the more radical and the more militant – as the next round of industrial action was already demonstrating.[37]

The AEA was but a fledgling when it flew into its first dispute with the St John management. In September 1980, almost within days of his taking up duty with the new union, Doyle called a short stopwork meeting of his members to discuss a range of issues – alleged staff shortages, the alleged appointment of casual employees to ambulance crews, the future of the clinic car service, and the assigning of night shift crews to hospitals rather than the St John base. It was, perhaps, his way of serving notice to AEA members, on the one hand, that he intended to be vigilant on their behalf, and to management, on the other hand, that the AEA meant serious business. Shortly after this he accused the St John Council of playing 'a deadly game of industrial roulette' in its attitude towards ambulance officers and their complaints about the service. A little later the AEA imposed a new form of work ban, AEA members refusing to fill out case cards, which meant that the service could collect neither the call out fee of $47 per patient nor the carriage fee of 77¢ a kilometre. As a result patients travelled free for several days.[38]

As this needling of Council and management continued, Doyle's name became familiar to observers of the news media. So, too, did that of Geoffrey Roberts, a full-time ambulance officer and AEA assistant secretary during the union's early days. A series of AEA statements in the press attributed to Roberts made extravagant criticism of the service. In November 1980 one such statement said the service was 'grossly undermanned and short of funds', and that 'lives would be lost unless money was made available by the State government immediately'. The government, it was claimed, had 'failed dismally' to meet its responsibilities because the South Australian service had 'the lowest level of government funding of any State'. It was high time the government relieved the service of its dependence on charity: now it was the 1980s the government should relieve St John of the need to keep 'spinning the chocolate wheel and raffling the chook to raise funds for an essential public service'. The Minister for Health, now a Liberal, Jennifer Adamson, responded angrily, saying these comments had been 'irresponsible' and 'just not true'. Jellis also joined the debate, supporting the Minister's statements. In May 1981 a

further AEA statement gained publicity. This time, it was alleged, the ambulance service was 'in a shambles', and that consequently 'the morale of paid officers [had] never been lower'. There was a severe staff shortage, the statement continued, because St John efforts to attract volunteers had failed. The solution was for the service 'to be filled with fully paid professional officers'. Because St John was unlikely to take such a step of its own volition, there was need for 'a full public inquiry into manning levels'. Then in August 1981, after three people had been badly burnt in a fire on a Sunday afternoon, another AEA statement attacked the voluntary component of the service, alleging that the time it took weekend volunteer crews to respond to calls was too slow. The volunteers, so the AEA statement said, 'often were forced to deal with situations for which they were totally inequipped', then went on to say the system was at fault because it 'allow[ed] people who are basically doing a job as a hobby to be placed in such a situation'. To round all this off the statement concluded by repeating the AEA demand for a public inquiry into the service'.[39]

By this time the AEA was a thorn dragging in the flesh of both government and the St John management. It was causing almost continual embarrassment, and the management in particular found itself spending unwanted time and effort defending itself from the barrage of union criticism. Alarmingly, for almost the first time since St John had taken control of the service thirty years before, letters in the correspondence columns of the daily newspapers began criticising the service. These might have been well orchestrated by the AEA – a number were from unionists' relatives - but they damaged the public image so carefully built up over previous decades, and that in turn boded ill for fund raising. St John, senior managers felt, was being subjected to a 'death from a thousand cuts'. The management no doubt wished it could be rid of the more militant unionists, without whose aggravation the service might run smoothly and harmoniously. Their chance came in early December 1981, when Roberts and the officer in command of his vehicle, Wayne Jones, refused to take a 'Priority One' call – one where a life was at risk – because it came after their shift had just formally ended and would have forced them to work overtime. The next day Roberts was sacked and Jones demoted. A St John spokesman informed the press that 'disciplinary action had been taken because it was the obligation of officers to attend such cases'. The AEA had another viewpoint. Doyle told journalists the union's opinion was that management had 'set Roberts up'. AEA members would accordingly 'accept nothing except the sacked officer being reinstated and returned to his former rank'. The union then placed a series of work bans on the service, and these continued for a fortnight as union and management fought over the issue.[40]

Eventually St John took Roberts back into its service, but only after ten months and at the order of the South Australian Industrial Court. Roberts had applied unsuccessfully to the St John Council for reinstatement, and

had then taken his case to the Industrial Court, where a magistrate, Mr F. DiFazio, eventually handed down a 111-page judgement ordering his reinstatement. DiFazio found that senior St John management had seized upon 'an excellent opportunity to be rid of an officer they considered disruptive and bloody-minded'. The judgement went on to point out that 'a more objective and slightly more rigorous examination' of the facts of the matter would have raised the possibility that in the strict terms of his employment contract Roberts had not acted illegally, even if not in sympathy with the spirit of the humanitarian ethic. 'Approach[ing] industrial questions with persistence, obstinacy and zeal', 'acquir[ing] a reputation for industrial intransigence', and being 'vigilant in . . . industrial rights to the point of exasperating management' were insufficient grounds for dismissal; and, according to testimonies tended on behalf of the sacked man, he had been 'an excellent ambulance officer, enthusiastic and energetic'. The magistrate concluded this summation of evidence by ordering reinstatement, and by directing that the wages Roberts had lost since the dismissal should be restored.[41]

The St John Council and management were less than enthusiastic about this verdict, and for a time planned to appeal it. In the end they chose not to, rather than hazard an industrial accord they were currently trying to reach with the unions. AEA members were, by contrast, elated. 'Underground Ambulance' conveyed the general mood among them in its next issue. 'Welcome back Geoff', the lead story trumpeted. Now the martyr brought back to industrial life, Roberts told an *Advertiser* reporter who sought his reactions he thought the DiFazio decision had 'again clearly establishe[d] the place of the trade unionist within the workplace'. He duly rejoined the service and, perhaps having found in the meantime that discretion might be the better part of valour, played a more subdued role in union affairs even though he might have remained as committed to AEA goals as ever.[42]

This case was the last major industrial dispute to afflict the South Australian St John organisation as it approached its centenary. Eventually both sides probably learnt something from their conflicts. The St John Council had found out it could no longer call on the ancient rhetoric of chivalry and sacrificial duty to justify its hold on the ambulance service. Nor could it afford to don that rhetoric as a cloak for shielding itself from its employees' industrial demands. It had to accept the reality that its paid ambulance staff belonged to an emerging paramedical profession, which, like all professions, was sensitive about issues such as training, status and working conditions. It had also learnt that the volunteers, of whose contributions it customarily boasted, could be inspired by mixed motives, not all of them necessarily altruistic. With hindsight, the Council could appreciate that it bore at least part of the responsibility for its problems with the unions. It had not acted effectively when difficulties with the unionists emerged in the mid-1970s. It had allowed its management to

flounder then; and it had paid too little attention to human relations, allowing itself to be seen as remote from its employees. It had forgetten that even lowly workers have a sense of self esteem, and that in Australia Jack often regards himself as being as good as his master. It had prevaricated on issues like uniforms and integration that were important to the unions, and its response to overtures from the unions at times had been provocative.

Hopefully, the Council had become less apprehensive about unionists through its experiences with them, having discovered that workers pursuing legitimate industrial objectives, in the form of better working conditions, are not, *ipso facto*, subversive. Workers' demands might appear unreasonable, their own particular form of rhetoric extravagant and irritating, their uncompromising stance aggravating, but that was simply a part of the process of collective bargaining, and had to be accommodated. Hopefully, too, the St John Council and executive in time would come to appreciate that union participation in management was an idea worth pursuing. This was a proposal the Cornwall parliamentary select committee would float to them in 1984; and, if it held out the promise of less industrial conflict of the sort that had embittered all parties during the late 70s and early 80s, it was something worth embracing enthusiastically.

The unionists, too, had learnt from recent experience. While their encounters with management no doubt confirmed for some of them their belief in the class struggle, others had learnt the values of conciliation, and had realised that confrontation was only one – and not necessarily the best – way of pursuing industrial goals. Despite union rhetoric to the contrary, many of them had learnt to respect the volunteers, who, they realised, were as determined to fight for their own particular stake in the service as were the most militant of unionists. Many of them also came, albeit grudgingly, to accept that volunteers seemed likely to continue on as a significant part of the service for the foreseeable future. This was something both the public and the politicians seemed to want, and so a totally professional service must remain a long-term goal. Many unionists also learnt from the volunteers that political connections were a valuable resource. As the next section shows, it was the pressure ambulance unionists applied within the Labor Party that was responsible for the 1982-83 Opit inquiry into the ambulance service, which in turn led directly into the Cornwall select committee. Doctrinaire unionists might subsequently have been disappointed with the reforms the select committee proposed, but the pragmatists could be reasonably pleased with the dividends the political process had yielded. Sharing in the management of their work was, after all, a goal few of them would have thought attainable four or five years previously.

The historian contemplating the struggles between the St John management and the St John unionists would interpret the events outlined above according to the complexion of his or her own personal historical

perspective. The labour historian might, like some AEA members, see those events as evidence of the workers' striving for justice and dignity in a society overwhelmingly dominated by capitalist institutions and values. The interests represented on the St John Council would explain much to such an historian: the presence on the Council of people with 'OAF' – 'Old Adelaide Family' – connections would suggest to him or her that at the head of St John there was a coalition of conservative interests which made conflict with ambulance officers likely sooner or later. A conservative historian, by contrast, might lament the erosion of traditional values the union-management conflict represented. The decline of mutual respect between employer and employee, and the weakening of the responsibility to the other that each felt because of that, to the conservative would seem symptomatic of a wider malaise afflicting the nation. Institutional historians would see the troubles as a product of organisational growth – a development arising from the increasing size and complexity of the St John bodies. The antiquarian, the admirer of things ancient, would regret the damage done to the honourable name of the Order of St John and to the proud traditions of humanitarian service it stood for. It is not for the present writer to favour any one of these perspectives above others, though he sees something useful in each. Suffice to say that St John represented various things to different South Australians as they entered their second century together. That this was so indicated something of the complexity that had developed in their association with each other over the preceding hundred years.

3. *Challenge: official inquiries*

During the last two years of its first century in South Australia the St John organisation was much preoccupied with the two official inquiries into its activities mentioned in previous sections – those by Louis Opit during late 1982 and early 1983 and for a year from late 1983 by a select committee of the Legislative Council under the chairmanship of John Cornwall, Minister of Health in the Bannon Labor government. Both of them arose from the turbulence of the three-way conflicts between unionists, volunteers and management in the five years preceding the return of a Labor government to office in October 1982.

One result of those conflicts, as the last section pointed out, was that two of the contestants, the volunteers and the unionists, began seeking political allies for support in their struggle against each other and against the St John management. While the former sought out parliamentarians on the right of State politics, in the Liberal Party, the latter found their natural allies to the left, in the Australian Labor Party. Ambulance unionists accordingly began canvassing their unions' objectives within the ALP via the party's branch meetings, its State conference and its trade union connections. The first public sign that unionists were turning towards political as well as



Dr Brian Ancell, Brigade Commissioner 1978-83, and from 1983 the Brigade's Chief Surgeon for Australia.

industrial solutions to their problems came in a motion from the Payneham sub-branch at the ALP State conference in June 1982. This called on the next ALP government to set up a State ambulance service employing only paid officers and funded from a 'national' health scheme. When the motion came up for debate, Cornwall, then Opposition spokesman on health, successfully moved an amendment to it, calling for a government inquiry into all aspects of the St John ambulance service. He later said he had two pragmatic but sound reasons for doing so. First, he knew no government could afford to replace the volunteers on the two night shifts; and second, to eliminate the volunteers was politically unwise: not only was there a long and valued tradition of voluntary service on the State's ambulances, but many of the volunteers were loyal Laborites, and might therefore be relied on to make a commotion within the party if it tried to remove them. Although he had thus toned down the unionists' demands on the party, he was nevertheless convinced that the St John service needed 'a very substantial overhaul', and he decided to make that task a priority if he became Minister for Health following the forthcoming elections.[43]

Other events had been happening in the meantime to tie Cornwall into a particular public posture on the St John question. *The Advertiser* had reported the debate at the ALP State conference, and that alarmed the St John management. Jellis and the Brigade Commissioner, now Brian Ancell, had written to Cornwall immediately to express their concern at the views on St John being canvassed within the ALP, and to deplore the prospect of a public inquiry in which St John might become the chopping block for any disaffected group with an axe to grind. In reply Cornwall

said he would have thought that, as 'a service which receives $5,000,000 annual funding from the Government', St John would have regarded the proposed inquiry as 'unexceptional'. To allay their fears, however, he pointed out that

> in the past the St John organization has been supported by ALP governments. I have not the slightest doubt that this support will continue in the future.... The ambulance service in South Australia will continue to be run by St John under a Labor government. I am sure St John will still be thriving long after I have been interred, either politically or physically.[44]

He invited them to meet him personally to discuss the matter further. They accepted the invitation, and he later described their conversation as 'friendly and wide ranging'. He also held discussions with Mick Doyle, and later said he had tried to impress on him, and through him the AEA members, 'that there is no intention of prejudicing the role of volunteers in the service'. In advising his fellow members of the parliamentary Labor Party of these developments he was emphatic:

> I repeat that there are overwhelming practical, political and financial reasons why [eliminating the volunteers] is unacceptable. What we must do is to resolve the ill-feeling within the service, enhance the legitimate career aspirations of the professionals and maintain the morale and dedication of the volunteers.[45]

The balancing act Cornwall was thus trying to perform was extremely difficult. It meant treading a tight rope strung between three points – the St John management, the ambulance unionists and the volunteers. As he did so, his parliamentary opponents were ready to shake the rope, then rejoice if he should fall. Liberal parliamentarians had good reason to see him come to grief. In parliament he had acquired a reputation as the *enfant terrible* of the Legislative Council. His debating style was self-confident, assertive and abrasive. His mind was nimble, his wit caustic, and his flair for the apt throw-away line renowned. (It was he, for instance, who had coined the phrase about charities having to rely on 'chocolate wheels and chook raffles'. Later on, in pondering the link between the Brigade and the ambulance service, he wondered aloud whether 'Dad's Army' should be helping operate one of the the State's key health utilities.) To some members of the Liberal government Cornwall seemed to personify the dreaded and despised socialist demon – the ranting hard-line ideologue intent on driving the country down the road to socialist perdition.

In parliament Cornwall received as good as he gave. Debates in which he took part were therefore often lively. One of the more spirited exchanged between him and members on the government side occurred on 28 July 1982. A Liberal member, Dr R.J. Ritson, attacked him over the amendment he had moved to the motion on the ambulance service at the recent ALP State conference. Ritson, a medical practitioner whose sympathies for the volunteers' action group were well known, said he

wished to protest 'about the political threat [hanging] over the St John Ambulance' by virtue of the Cornwall proposal for a public inquiry. He went on to make a sturdy defence of the volunteers, in the course of which he alleged that Cornwall really wished to replace the volunteers and introduce a free ambulance service. Doing the former, he said, would cost the State about $5,000,000, while the latter would cost at least $20,000,000. Cornwall now sought and was granted leave to make a 'personal explanation', claiming Ritson's remarks 'severely misrepresented' his position. During the explanation, which government members peppered with interjections, he and Ritson became entangled in a slanging match over whether or not Jellis had 'implored' Ritson not to drag St John's name into the political arena. Cornwall called Ritson a liar, and was promptly suspended from the Council on the motion of J.C. Burdett, another parliamentary supporter of the volunteers. The feud continued over the next year, and especially after Cornwall, as Minister of Health in November 1982. Ritson and Burdett leapt at every chance to belabour Cornwall with St John issues. On 17 August 1983 Burdett even moved, though unsuccessfully, to have Cornwall sacked as Minister, saying he had 'demonstrated disgraceful behaviour and derisory conduct toward citizens, totally unacceptable in a Minister of the Crown, and has also demonstrated a lack of administrative ability in performing his Ministerial duties'. Cornwall fought each assault with characteristic vigour, attempting all the time to maintain balance on his tight rope.[46]

When the Bannon Labor government replaced the Tonkin Liberal government following the State elections in November 1982, Cornwall, as Minister of Health, wasted little time in instituting his public inquiry, announcing on 23 November that he had chosen Louis Opit to conduct it. Opit, Professor of Social and Preventive Medicine at Monash University in Victoria, was a native South Australian – the son of a Yorke Peninsula general practitioner, an 'Old Boy' of St Peter's College, a graduate of the University of Adelaide, and a former senior surgeon at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Woodville. He was selected, Cornwall later said, as 'a distinguished person of great probity, a respected son of South Australia ... [who] knew just about every one of his peers' in his home State, and because he had conducted similar inquiries before.[47]

Cornwall assured the public the inquiry would be 'wide-ranging', and that Opit would accordingly report to him and make recommendations on matters like 'the long-standing difficulties which exist between career and volunteer officers', 'the establishment of satisfactory industrial relations', 'an appropriate career structure for professional officers', 'the maintenance of the morale and dedication of the volunteers', and the establishment of 'a workable framework within which career and volunteer officers can operate'. This news received a mixed reception. *The Advertiser* ran an editorial, under the heading 'Grasping the nettle', saying that, whatever Opit's eventual findings, the government should be careful.

'No changes [to the service] must be adopted simply to serve some political ideology', it cautioned. The Leader of the Opposition, John Olsen, said the inquiry 'seem[ed] to be the first instalment of the Government's payback to union officials'. The AEA advised its members that the inquiry was 'our one big chance to make the necessary changes to the State's ambulance service'. Then, after Opit had held preliminary discussions with the St John management and the unions, Jellis was reported in the press as saying he hoped the inquiry would not develop into 'a witch-hunt'. At the same time Doyle was quoted as saying he wanted it to result in a 'more appropriate type of management to run an efficient ambulance service'. He made clear that by 'more appropriate' he did not mean St John. And in the Legislative Council Burdett and Ritson attacked Cornwall for refusing to acknowledge the volunteers as one of the principal parties to be consulted by Opit. Amid interjections from Opposition that the inquiry was 'a pay-off' to the AEA, the Minister explained that the volunteers would be collectively represented before the inquiry by the Brigade but were free to make individual submissions.[48]

During December 1982 and January 1983 the St John Council, the AEA, AGWA-FMWU and other interested parties prepared submissions to Opit, putting forward their particular views of the way the service ought to run. Some restricted themselves to one or two points – like the South Australian Council of Social Services, which urged Opit to recommend the retention of the volunteers, a request the moderate AGWA-FMWU submission also made. On the other hand, the St John Council and the AEA provided Opit with a mountain of information. The Council's submission was a hefty 223-page bound volume, while the bulk of the AEA submission, though less than the Council's, was also impressive. The Council submission was a comprehensive document that took Opit through the complexities of the links between the Order, the Council, the Association, the Brigade and the ambulance service, as well as explaining in detail the structure of each. It concluded by making a series of twelve proposals. Foremost among these were suggestions that the government should formalise the Council's appointment as the operator of the State ambulance service, that a Minister's ambulance advisory committee should be set up as 'an independent source of review in respect of ambulance matters', that St John should set up an 'industrial relations consultative committee' with representation from the employer, the unions and the volunteers, and that the government should recognise the 'total role' St John played – that its ambulance operation was an integral and inseparable part of a larger organization, from which it could be inferred that government must also accept St John views on voluntary service. The AEA submission, by contrast, was poorly organised, and its arguments at times extravagant or confused. It nevertheless made quite clear what AEA members wanted. It argued at length for worker participation in management, calling for the establishment of mechanisms through which paid

ambulance officers could have greater 'control over both administrative and operational aspects of the service'. It argued that 'the St John organization [was] 'not the appropriate body to maintain and operate the service', though it conceded that St John should be allowed 'retain a minor representative role' on whatever agency replaced it in the ambulance service. It proposed the gradual phasing out of volunteers. It made suggestions for upgrading training, including the establishment of a 'South Australian State Ambulance Training School'. Finally, it called for more broadly based recruiting, to 'redress the existing situation where the entire career workforce of the St John Ambulance Service is almost exclusively Anglo-Australian with a sprinkling of third and fourth generation descendents of Southern European migrants'.[49]

Opit took until April 1983 to work through the mass of material submitted to him, and then make a preliminary report to the government. This endeavoured to lay down a set of broad principles, leaving a detailed consideration of issues to the final report. In the end he never submitted a final report, political events having in the meantime led to the setting up of Cornwall's parliamentary select committee, the investigations of which superseded Opit's investigation. The preliminary report was tabled in parliament on 11 May 1983. In speaking to it, Cornwall announced that he had asked the Acting Chairman of the Health Commission, Dr Brendon Kearney, to discuss Opit's recommendations with the St John Council and the two ambulance unions then report back to him by the end of June. Both the report and the Minister's immediate plans for it attracted widespread media attention the next day. *The Advertiser* reported it under the heading 'Sweeping changes to St John Ambulance urged', and in an editorial noted that Opit had 'paint[ed] an awkward state of affairs within the service, with deep-seated tensions among management, unionised career workers and non-unionised volunteers'. The editorial then urged caution, especially in relation to recommendations on the St John volunteers. In concluding what, like previous editorials on the subject, amounted to a eulogy on voluntaryism, the paper counselled Kearney to 'be mindful of the centuries-old traditions of the St John service and the needs of the State, especially for that volunteer service which so dignifies the giver, the recipient and the whole community'.[50]

The AEA, too, urged caution, though for different reasons than *The Advertiser*. Publicly Doyle was quoted as saying the recommendations would bring the South Australian service into line with those of other States. He saved his other views for the AEA *Bulletin*:

> Some of us would have preferred a more radical and drastic approach to the problem of the Service, but we must keep in mind the fact that the South Australian public, after more than 30 years of 'soft-sell' by the St John organization, aided and abetted by a conservative media, in general likes its ambulance service the way it is. As a result we must tread warily in getting the recommendations implemented.[51]

What were these recommendations, and why did they require such caution? Opit prefaced them by saying they applied mainly to the metropolitan service, as that was both the largest component and had been the major source of industrial friction; and he had further limited himself by concentrating on the terms of reference relating to industrial unrest. He also said that making recommendations of any sort placed him in a dilemma: there was the possibility of 'creating even more political, administrative or industrial friction, since almost any suggestions for change [were] likely to be regarded as too radical by one party or insufficiently radical by another'. The recommendations he then made were for the following:

1 The creation of a nine-member 'Ambulance Board of South Australia' composed of representatives of the St John Council (three members), the Association and Brigade (one each), employees of the ambulance service below the rank of superintendent (one), and the Minister of Health (three). The Board would be 'publicly accountable', through being responsible to the Health Commission. It would confine itself to policy issues. And it would 'incorporate and recognise' the role of the St John Council, Association and Brigade in providing ambulance services.
2 The formation of a 'State Ambulance Executive which would be responsible for day-to-day management of the Ambulance Services and would act to implement the policy of the Ambulance Board', to which it would be responsible. It would consist of three members, a general manager, an operations manager and a financial director, each of whom would be taking over those positions which they already held in the St John management.
3 The setting up of an eight-member 'Special Consultative Committee on Industrial Relations' to advise the Executive on industrial and related operational problems. It would be another means by which 'workers [could] represent their view-point and identify problems', for as well as having representation from the Board (two members), the Executive (two) and the Health Commission (one), there would be three members drawn from the unions – one each from the AEA, AGWA-FMWU and the Federated Clerks' Union.
4 Certain improvements in work-sharing between volunteer and career staff, and in operations. There was a continuing role for volunteers in the metropolitan service; but, because 'there can be no doubt that volunteers and paid staff sharing the same work make for an extremely provocative and frictional industrial climate, all volunteers should be required to give contractual agreement to certain conditions before employment as volunteer ambulance crews'. The conditions included the number of shifts to be worked by volunteers (a minimum of four a month), continuing assessment of performance (a condition to apply to volunteer and career officers alike), and mixed career-volunteer crews on the same vehicle (something the Brigade and volunteers opposed). Other parts of this fourth recommendation related to an extra shift for career officers, from 2.00 p.m. until 10.00 p.m., to be created at four centres; and public advertising for recruits to the career staff (instead of via Brigade channels alone), with the acceptability of female applicants stressed.[52]

news items stirred up by the volunteers' action group. They feared the volunteers' renewed media and political campaign, unsure of where it might lead. They were unable to curb dissident volunteers because the principal figures behind the present commotion had quit both service and the Brigade, though they kept up their agitation on behalf of former comrades. They worried about the effects on the service if the Minister should insist on incorporation and the Priory should insist on a St John withdrawal. The latest industrial unrest perturbed them. The delicate negotiations between them, the Health Commission and the unions over shifts and overtime were at a critical stage. The Roberts case before the Industrial Court simmered in the background. Cornwall's aggressive manner in their dealings with him was disquieting. Though he half excused his abrasive mode of address by saying 'tail-twisting' was just his way of negotiating contentious issues, St John people wondered whether he privately intended to twist their limbs right off. They felt drained of energy by the enormous effort they had put into the Opit inquiry, which for the past year had been a continual distraction from normal business. And now Burdett and Ritson were raising St John issues in parliament again, and were impervious to pleas from Williams and Jellis not to bring the organization back into the political arena.[56]

In the end it was the Burdett-Ritson campaign in the Legislative Council that provided the catalyst for transforming the Opit investigation into a parliamentary select committee on St John affairs. Burdett by now – August 1983 – was the Liberal's shadow Minister of Health. As such he felt he had a responsibility to criticise the government on health issues, and this was in addition to any private wish he might entertain to settle old scores with Cornwall. There was no doubt that Burdett felt a deep philosophical commitment to the cause of voluntaryism in the ambulance service, and he had come to the considered opinion that in the controversies of recent years the volunteers' well-established rights in the service were not being properly safeguarded in the three-way dealings between the St John management, the unions and the ALP. Burdett's gave parliament a full exposition of his views on voluntaryism and the ambulance service in a long, well-researched and eloquent speech in the Legislative Council on 16 August 1983. It took members through the history of St John, outlining the way in which the Order's charitable and voluntaristic ideals had developed, and relating the means through which St John had come to operate the South Australian ambulance service. All this had a purpose, however, for it served as the prelude to the motion Burdett moved in the Council next day to have Cornwall removed from office for alleged 'disgraceful behaviour' and 'lack of administrative ability in performing his Ministerial duties'. The debate over this motion, which ran through the afternoon and into the evening, was vintage rough-and-tumble Australian parliamentary politics. Cornwall survived this attempt on his political life by a margin of ten votes to eight.[57]

Burdett regarded the Minister's escape as but a minor setback, and sought other means for giving the volunteers and the service the protection he thought they needed. A week later he came back into the Council and moved for the appointment of a select committee 'to inquire into and report on all aspects of the St John Ambulance Service in South Australia'. What prompted this step was the fast-changing developments of the week gone by. Even as his motion for Cornwall's sacking was being debated the week before, the Minister (through the Health Commission) had been reaching a final agreement with the St John management and the unions over the afternoon-evening shift and overtime arrangements for paid staff. Cornwall announced the agreement to the media on 18 August, the day after he had survived Burdett's attempt to remove him. It was part of a package that included the implementation of a number of Opit recommendations – a contract of service for volunteers, which would see the Brigade seconding selected volunteers to the ambulance service, in which they would now have to agree to certain conditions as proposed by Opit; the appointment of two permanent officers, funded by the Health Commission, to provide inservice training; the introduction of the afternoon-evening shift for paid staff, at the Hindmarsh, Campbelltown and Noarlunga centres; full authority would be given to St John to allocate overtime to paid staff as required; and the agreement would be recognised in law by being taken to the Industrial Commission for confirmation. With evident relief, Cornwall was able to say that 'many of the points which have been at issue for many years have now been resolved'.[58]

Burdett and his volunteer informants were little pleased with the agreement. They saw it as yet a further driving in of the union wedge to separate the volunteers from the service, a further appeasing of the militant union elements by the Labor government, a further 'sell out' of the volunteers by the St John Council and management. A parliamentary select committee, they hoped, would once and for all establish volunteers' rights. Burdett's motion to set one up therefore called for special attention to be given to

(a) The part which volunteers play within [the] service and the community.
(b) The appropriate relationship within the service between volunteers and paid staff.
(c) The appropriateness or otherwise of volunteers being required to enter into contractual agreements.[59]

In speaking to his motion Burdett claimed that, in the first place, the Opit inquiry had been unnecessary because the State already had the best ambulance service in the nation, and the most cost-effective. Second, Opit had spent a comparatively brief time in Adelaide carrying out his investigations; he had spent most of that time talking with the St John management and the unions, principally the AEA; and his consultations with the volunteers had been 'minimal'. Third, the result was that the Opit report was 'misleading' and 'badly flawed'. In relation to the latter point,

Burdett said Opit had failed to consider the possibility of the loss to the service of the volunteers, had not critically analysed the activities of the AEA, had not identified any financial incompetence by St John or any deficiency in its service, and had not provided 'a basis for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the service'. Because the Opit report was so 'seriously defective', and its outcome so unsatisfactory, an 'impartial parliamentary inquiry' was now necessary so that the Legislative Council might learn what the 'true position' was.[60]

Burdett's moves for a parliamentary inquiry horrified the St John Council and management, and particularly Williams, who was now in his last months of office as chairman before handing over to E.B. Ridgway. Williams wrote Burdett an impassioned letter saying that the continuing political campaign was placing 'enormous pressure' on the St John leadership, distracting it from the task of providing a top-grade service. He pointed out that the Council was obliged to get on amicably with the government of the day, and did not therefore wish to be party to the Liberal Party attack on Labor's handling of health policy. St John was tired of being the 'meat in the sandwich' in essentially party political contests between the government and opposition, and did not enjoy its recent role as 'political football'. (In subsequent weeks Williams repeated this protest in letters to both the Premier, John Bannon, and the Leader of the Opposition, John Olsen.) Burdett wrote back to say he intended proceeding with his plans for a select committee because 'a parliamentary enquiry where all persons concerned, including the volunteers, may give evidence can do nothing but good'. In contrast to the St John Council, and ironically, in view of the opinion Burdett and the volunteers' action group held about them, the members of the AEA welcomed the prospect of a further public inquiry. As the AEA 'Bulletin' pointed out to its readers, at worst the select committee would result in the *status quo*, which included the newly-won concessions regarding shifts, overtime and controls on the volunteers; and by co-operating with the inquiry the union stood to gain further ground.[61]

Debate on Burdett's motion for a select committee resumed, after an adjournment, on 31 August 1983. As usual, both Minister and shadow Minister used the occasion for point-scoring against each other, and once again the debate was punctuated with numerous interjections and 'personal explanations' as the protagonists sought to establish that the other side was misrepresenting their views. As this *badinage* continued, the Opposition was perhaps surprised to discover that Cornwall was not strongly opposed to their move for a select committee, and certainly would not stake his career on defeating it. He took the view that, if the Liberals, helped by the Australian Democrats, insisted on pushing ahead to institute another inquiry, then the government would go along with it. The Liberals were further disconcerted to discover that, rather than embarrassing the Minister, they had given him a chance to play a role they preferred to retain for themselves – that of defender of the St John service. In

commenting to the press on the Liberals' manoeuvres, Cornwall said he was worried lest St John should choose to withdraw from the service rather than 'allow its name to be dragged into further public controversy'. Despite having the tables turned on them like this, the Liberals did insist on pressing ahead with their plans. The Burdett motion came up for decision on 14 September 1983, and passed by eleven votes to eight. Immediately after the counting of the vote Burdett moved that the committee should consist of Cornwall, B.A. Chatterton and J.A.W. Levy (Labor), K.L. Milne (Australian Democrats), Ritson and himself. This motion was put and passed unopposed, and an announcement about the setting up of the new inquiry was released to the press.[62]

The select committee got down to work promptly. It advertised its formation and called for submissions, then held its first sittings in late October 1983. At first it aimed to conclude its business by the end of the year, but as time went on it found it had to extend its sittings again and again. In the end it met on thirty occasions, holding the last of its hearings in November 1984. It heard evidence from forty-two separate witnesses representing a range of diverse interests. Williams, Jellis, Rawes, Ferrier, Ridgway, Dr R. Britten-Jones (chairman of the St John Ambulance Association), Dr G.A. Davies (Brigade Commissioner), John McGreevy (Operations Manager), W.P. Broderick (Executive Administrator of the Brigade), Brian Sullivan (Personnel and Industrial Relations Manager) and and Ian Anson appeared at different stages on behalf of the St John Council, the ambulance service management, the Association and Brigade. Mick Doyle and Gaye Walsh (recently appointed organizer of the FMWU) gave evidence on behalf of the ambulance unions. David McGowan and other personalities of the volunteers' action group spoke for their particular following. Health Commission delegates also gave evidence, as did representatives of the South Australian Council of Social Services and the Non-Amalgamating Ambulance Services Group (i.e., those few country services which had not amalgamated with St John). In addition to the oral evidence the committee received forty-seven written submissions from people and groups as diverse as the unions, the Ministries of Health of Tasmania, Western Australia, New South Wales and the Northern Territory, the South Australian Hospitals Association and a number of individual hospitals, the St John Council, management, Association and Brigade, and Professor Opit. Then, as well as going through the mountain of evidence thus accumulated, the committee undertook inspections of the ambulance centres at Hindmarsh, West Torrens, Murray Bridge, Strathalbyn and Whyalla, in addition to looking over the Air Ambulance facilities at West Beach and Whyalla and the St John headquarters in Eastwood.[63]

We will not dwell here on the evidence placed before the select committee, much of which was along the lines of that already supplied to the Opit inquiry. Nor will we concern ourselves with the tactical

manoeuvrings during committee hearings of the opposed interests represented in its membership, or with the interplay between individual committee members and witnesses – which some of the latter found discomfiting. Suffice to say that, during its thirteen months of meetings, the committee's members, through working together, discovered enough common purpose to produce one unanimous report rather than the separate main and dissenting reports that might earlier have seemed likely. In view of the bitter debates that had divided the Legislative Council during much of 1982 and 1983 whenever the question of St John arose, such unanimity was at least remarkable.

What were the major recommendations produced with such notable consensus? In all there were thirty-seven proposals. The first of them were for an Act of parliament to allow the Health Commission to grant to the St John Council a formal licence, subject to revocation following failure to comply with the licence's conditions, to provide ambulance services in South Australia. Under the terms of the licence the St John Council would set up an Ambulance Board to be responsible for running the ambulance service. The board's membership would comprise two appointees of the Council; one each of the Association, the Brigade, and the ambulance service employees below the grade of Superintendent; and three appointed by the Minister of Health. The board would appoint its own chairman, and would make recommendations to the St John Council as to whom the chief executive officer of the ambulance service should be. The Council would continue to be the employer, but on terms and conditions agreed to with the Health Commission. The board would run the ambulance service using a mix of paid and volunteer officers, and to ensure industrial harmony it would set up an Industrial Relations Consultative Committee with representation from the management, the unions and the Health Commission; and it would also establish an Advisory Committee of Volunteer Ambulance Officers. To ensure financial accountability, the St John Council would have its accounts audited through the Auditor-General, provide estimates and reports on expenditure to the Health Commission, which would have the right to inspect St John documents relating to the ambulance service. Most of the remaining recommendations related to the operation of the service. Thus, while it recommended against contracts for volunteer officers it called for all officers, volunteer as well as paid, to be subject to the rules of the Council's *Ambulance Service Policies, Procedures and Regulations Manual.* In relation to other previously contentious issues, it said the proposed Ambulance Board should make policy rulings on matters like the appropriate balance between career and volunteer officers, the monitoring of performance, and the integration of paid and volunteer crews. The board should also review the effectiveness and equity of the ambulance subscription scheme; it should recruit staff from sources other than the Brigade; it should set common standards of training, skill development and assessment for both career and volunteer

officers; and it should continue the recently-instituted practice of the Brigade seconding its volunteers to the ambulance service (and thus allowing them undivided loyalty, letting them serve one master rather than two). Finally, as a priority, the board should address itself to various operational issues the AEA and FMWU had raised in their evidence and submissions.[64]

What did all this mean? First, Opit's effort had not been entirely wasted, for a number of his principal recommendations resurfaced amongst those of the select committee, for example those proposing the establishment of an Ambulance Board and an Industrial Relations Consultative Committee. Second, if they should survive the legislative and industrial processes and were eventually implemented, the Cornwall committee proposals would give the St John service both the legislative basis it had always lacked and the obligation to be accountable to government – two points of previous major objection to the service under St John. In so doing they would confirm St John's links with the service, and restore the confidence of the St John council and management in their fitness and suitability to run the ambulance service. Third, they promised to establish what seemed like a workable mechanism for restoring industrial harmony. They offered concessions to paid officers, allowing them a voice in management, improved and standardised training, and a more flexible approach to rostering. At the same time they established the rights of the volunteers, giving the latter a defined place in the service, but reining them in rather more tightly than previously. Fourth, because they emanated from a unanimous inter-party parliamentary committee, and thus promised hope of a common approach to the ambulance service by all parties, the proposals held out the hope of removing the service from the cock-pit of party politics – thus allowing it to devote its energies to its primary task of giving South Australians excellent service. If there was a fault in all of this, it lay in the fact that the proposals left rather a heavy responsibility on the Ambulance Board, a body which of course did not yet exist. That weakness notwithstanding, the select committee had produced a wise, fair, balanced and practical report that offered a way out of the disputes, controversy, bitterness and turmoil of the past decade. The St John Council and management, the unions, and the volunteers, had every reason to be pleased, each having gained from it. And Cornwall, Burdett *et al.* had every right to be proud of their most recent handiwork!

One of the main benefits to flow from the parliamentary select committee was the new understanding and respect for St John evinced by politicians from both sides of parliament. Through their experiences in gathering evidence Cornwall and Burdett had come to see that their respective informants – be they government officials, unionists or members of the volunteers' action group – had been promoting a warped view of the organization. Cornwall seemed also to have discovered the paradox whereby a body with an Establishment head could also have

sturdy proletarian feet. Most of the volunteers were ordinary South Australian working people, many of them Laborites, who found their chief fulfilment in life came from serving fellow South Australians voluntarily through the Brigade. To punish St John for alleged conservative links, by removing the service from its grasp, and thus doing away with volunteers, would penalise many citizens whom the Labor Party claimed to represent. South Austalia *did* have something unique in the unusual blend of paid and voluntary staff in its ambulances, and, the logic of the Welfare State notwithstanding, this was worth preserving. The truth about St John was that humanitarian ideals inspired it; it took great pride in providing an excellent service; this remained its preoccupation; and taking sides in party politics was irrelevant to it. For his part Burdett had probably learnt that the 'ginger' group of volunteers who had fed him information were a tiny unrepresentative minority. The vast majority of volunteers were uninterested in political agitation and headline-grabbing. Their chief concern was indeed the community service of which he had spoken in parliament. Together both Minister and shadow Minister seemed to have realised that continued political manipulation might hazard the organization. Using it as a weapon for smiting each other could only harm it, diverting its attention from its proper tasks. Better, then, to allow it to settle down to supplying the high quality service it now ran so well. If the politicians had indeed taken these lessons to heart, and had come to appreciate South Australians' good fortune in having such an organization in their midst, then the public inquiries and even the controversy had been beneficial.

4. *Achievement*

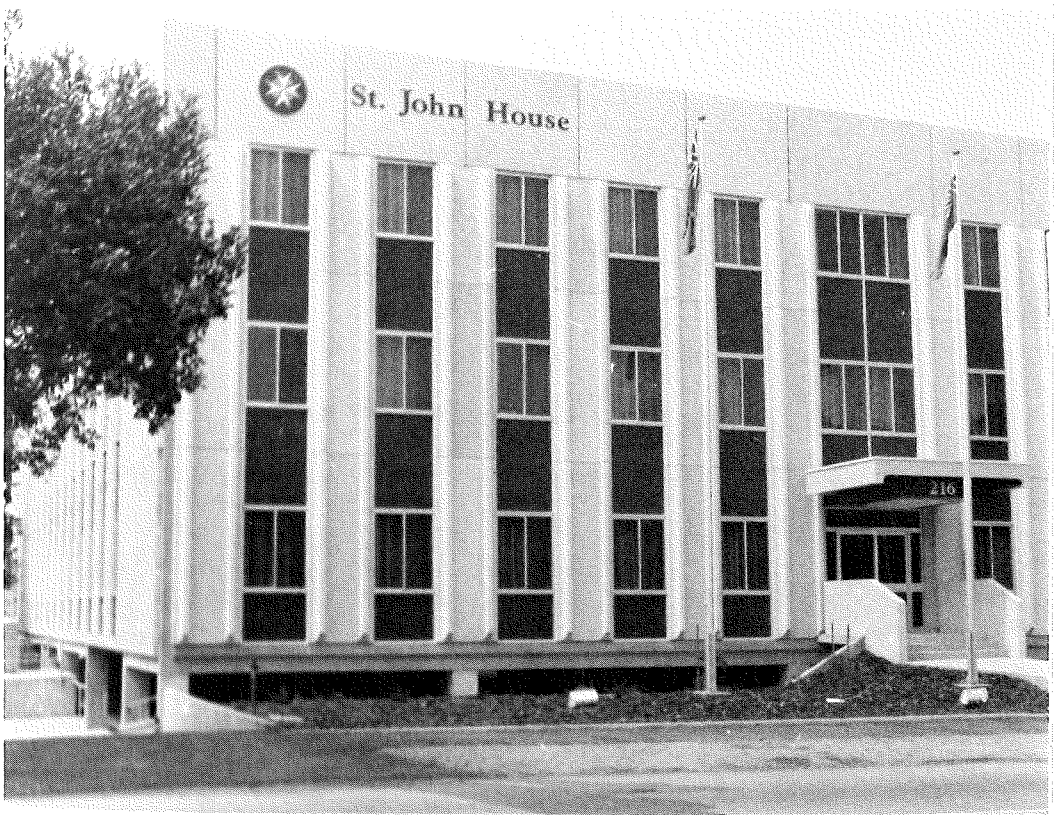
It is tempting to pass judgement on the maze of incidents and developments that make up the story described above, and on the individuals, institutions and interest groups involved. The present writer will refrain from succumbing to such temptation because the recency of the events described demand that they be viewed from a more distant standpoint. All that should, perhaps, be said is that, given the means by which the ambulance service had dropped into the lap of Edward Hayward in 1951, the troubles that began afflicting the St John organization a quarter of a century later were to be expected. Complacent governments had found it easier not to question their responsibilities too closely, readily allowing St John a free hand in all aspects of policy, development, staffing and operations. St John gave good service, and provided satisfaction, but in a time of rapid growth in its own responsibilities and rapid change in the world around it, its conservative leadership experienced difficulty in adjusting to new demands. The shocks the organization experienced after 1975 severely shook St John confidence, and the disputes and controversies in which it subsequently became embroiled brought it within a decade to

the point where parliamentarians thought that only their intervention could extricate it from the impasse they perceived.

Whether or not political intervention was required to save the St John ambulance service was debatable. The St John leadership were in no doubt that, if left alone, they would have managed capably. They took the view that under Williams and Jellis the organization had gained in strength and purpose and had found its way out of the problems the new regime had inherited. This view had much merit, for the reforms and new initiatives of the Williams-Jellis regime had lifted the organization into the world of modern corporate management from the increasingly chaotic muddle of the final years of the previous regime. The previous two sections have dwelt upon St John's industrial problems and its difficulties with the government, for these were issues of major magnitude. They were not, however, matters that should be allowed to obscure the solid achievement of the Williams-Jellis years.

There were many aspects to that achievement. The first was the move into the new St John House in Eastwood. This was a $1.72 million project, the burden of developing which Hayward and Ferrier had left largely to Rawes. The original demand for something better than the cramped, run down and inadequate Austin St. premises had come from the country ambulance services, and it had been Ridgway's Country Ambulance Services Association that had so pressed the St John Council that eventually the leadership gave way and adopted the project. It was completed in late

The newly built St John House, Greenhill Rd., Eastwood, 1978.



1978, as Jellis was taking up duty, and was officially opened in February 1979 by the Grand Prior, the new Duke of Gloucester.[65]

The opening of this modern 'prestige' building was symbolic of further changes that would ensue at Jellis's prompting: in bricks and mortar it represented the juncture between regimes and management styles. Other advances soon followed. Among the first was a restructuring of the St John Council. Under the previous regime the Council had not always met frequently, and had often been cowed by its forceful chairman. It now began meeting regularly, taking on the functions of a board of directors. Previously the Council had divided it responsibilities between three sub-committees – finance, land and buildings, and industrial relations. Jellis persuaded it to do away with these, and to centralize its functions in an inner executive committee. This, Council members felt, had the effect of creating greater unity of purpose, of giving a better overview of their responsibilities, and of enabling them to act more effectively. All this, they believed, enabled St John to survive the crises into which the organization was falling because of the industrial troubles and adverse publicity. Previously, they guessed, the organization had been coming apart, but it had now found the resolution to hang together and survive. Ensuring survival, indeed, came to be seen as one of the achievements of the new regime.

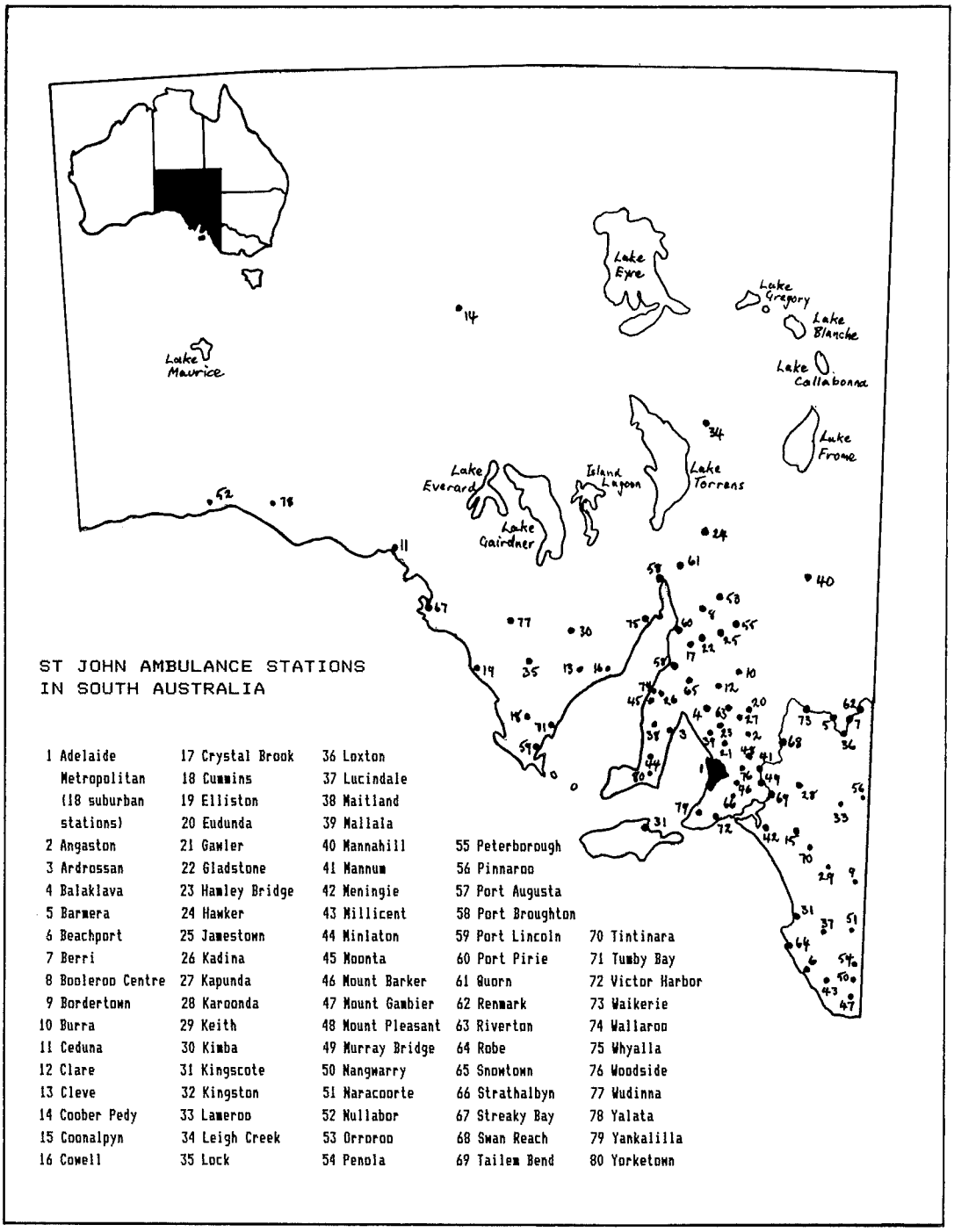
Recruitment of executive staff with skills well-honed in industry and administration was another Jellis priority. He found that some previous appointments lacked what he regarded as the requisite degree of skill, and, rather than promote internally, he brought in the key staff he wanted from outside. Among his new recruits were Brian Sullivan, John McGreevy and Gordon Best. Sullivan, who came from BHP at Whyalla, took the position of personnel and industrial relations manager, and was charged with the responsibility of bringing harmony to industrial relations, promoting staff training, and improving staff welfare and safety. McGreevy, who became the operations manager, came from the Army, where he had been a brigadier. His task was to run the ambulance service, and to raise its standards of training until it was indisputably better than any other service in Australia. Best, brought in as State communications officer, took over a communications system already brought to a high level of performance by his predecessor, Ted McGrath. Best's task was not only to maintain existing equipment but to engage in research and devlopment to ensure that what St John had was the very best available. After the Ash Wednesday fires in February 1983, and other disasters that followed, senior managers felt that Best had demonstrated the wisdom of his appointment: the St John communications system, they were confident, had been seen to be superior to those of all other emergency utilities in Australia.

Staff development was another achievement. The new management team drew up and put into practice schemes for both external and internal staff training. Key staff were sent to the Administrative Staff College at Mt

Eliza near Melbourne for executive training, and staff lower down the hierarchy were given inservice training. The sense of professionalism flowing from such programs was enhanced through the adoption of new pay codes which endeavoured to match St John salaries with those of the salary-earning community outside, thus removing from staff the professional stigma many felt attached to them as charity workers. Related improvements in conditions included a lowering of the St John retirement age from sixty-five to sixty, better superannuation benefits, and generally better personnel administration practices, which, for instance, included initiatives such as the creation of career paths for permanent staff – all of which came about through management initiative rather than as a result of industrial agitation by employees. A significant adjunct to this upgrading of staff skills and morale was the standardization of administrative routine that occurred with the introduction of the comprehensive manual, *St John Ambulance Service for South Australia Policies, Procedures and Regulations.* An ambitious computerization program further facilitated better personnel and financial administration.

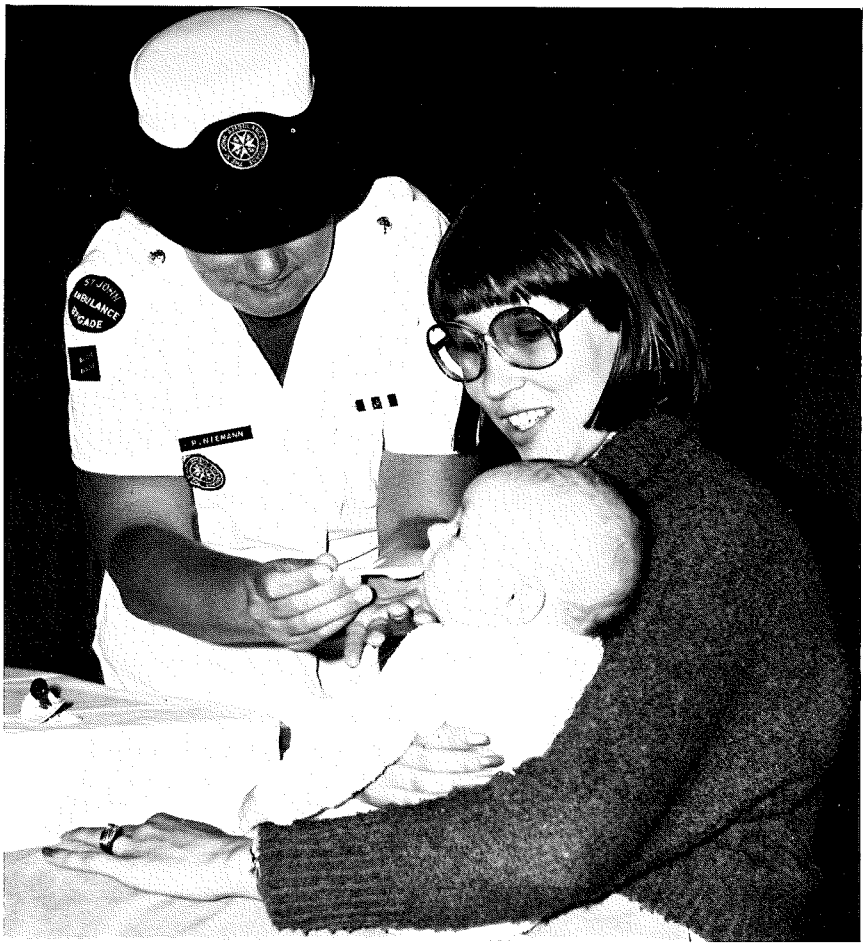
The effects of the increasing professionalism of the service under its new management could be seen in the career history of certain individuals. Peter Gebert, the designer of the Em-Care six-wheeled ambulance and McGreevy's predecessor as operations manager, had risen through the ranks from ambulance officer to operations manager, and at his retirement in 1984 was staff officer to the general manager. Ian Anson, the former union rebel, rose to be secretary-manager of the St John Ambulance Association, in which position he revamped Association training and presided over a resurgence in its programs, chief evidence for which were soaring enrolment statistics, and, for the first time, the issuing of over 11,000 certificates in one year (1983-84). John Rawes, already a senior executive under the previous regime, grew in confidence under the new, going on to serve a term as State president of the Australian Society of Accountants and, as an outside interest, as president of the South Australian Turf Cricket Association. Louise Badcock, a junior clerical officer under the previous regime, under the new rose to be the organization's chief publicity officer, and thus the first woman to make it into the executive ranks of the St John management. Under her determined hand, the St John public relations machine geared up for even wider media coverage and for even more ambitious and consumately professional ventures in attention-seeking. There were others, too, who were similarly able to find fulfilment in the new thrust towards corporatism that characterised the new regime.

Still further accomplishments lay in the achievement of a single Statewide St John ambulance service, the creation of a unified ambulance staff, and the institution of an annual State ambulance conference. The first of these had been a St John objective ever since 1951, but local vested interest and parochial pride had always ensured that it would be a distant goal. The breakthrough came in 1981 when forty-six previously autono-



A Statewide ambulance service: St John Ambulance stations in South Australia.

mous services finally agreed to full amalgamation with the St John service, in contrast to the simple affiliation they had maintained before. The newly expanded service, now known as the St John Ambulance Service for South Australia, proved so effective that the Cornwall select committee recommended that the seven country services still remaining outside St John control should also amalgamate with the St John service. The second, the setting up of a unitary ambulance staff, was a management victory in 1983. Previously Brigade members had worked in the service as volunteers, and, as we have seen, this contributed to the schizoid nature of the service and to the industrial unrest arising from that. The St John management devised a formula that achieved what had been previously out of reach – a scheme that won the agreement and preserved the honour and interests of Brigade,



Corporal Pru Niemann of the Brigade's Unley Nursing Division assists in a child care training program, early 1980s.

volunteers and paid staff alike. This allowed for the Brigade to second approved volunteers to the service, where they would now be subject to management rather than Brigade control, and obliged to accept the same regulations and discipline as paid staff. One outcome of this development was an immediate decline in unionists' industrial agitation. The third development, the annual State conference, began in 1981. It brought together all those with an interest in the service – senior and middle-level managers, Council members, administrative and professional workers, volunteers, Brigade and Association leaders, delegates from the country regions, representatives of allied government agencies and the emergency services, and outside professionals – to discuss new developments, future directions and issues of joint interest. To use an overworked – but in this case apt – expression of the time, the annual conference helped break down the barriers, helping participants to a renewed awareness of the common purpose they shared, and thus to more productive co-operative effort.

These were not achievements broadcast far and wide via newspaper headlines and the current affairs sessions of the radio and television stations. They were not controversial or sensational enough for that. Other more newsworthy topics – the threat of nuclear holocaust, election campaigns, scandal in high places, organized crime, assassinations, wars, revolutions, famines abroad, and other bread-and-butter journalistic preoccupations – hid their value from politicians and public alike. They were achievements for all that, and they indicated that the Williams-Jellis regime and its successor the McKinna-Ridgway-Jellis regime had led St John away from the problems of the past. The organization was now stronger and better prepared than ever before for survival in its second century among South Australians.

From time to time the South Australian media outlets *did* allow the community a window on St John achievement that neither smacked of controversy nor of 'PR' hype by the organization's own publicity machine. One such occasion occurred in late 1984, after the anti-uranium demonstrations at the Roxby Downs mine in the far north of the State, when Alec Mathieson, a journalist with *The Advertiser*, filed the following story:

> While protesters and police have received most of the publicity during the Roxby Downs protest, some of the hardest-working people this week quietly returned to their homes.
>
> I'm referring to the 13 officers of the St John Ambulance Brigade [he really meant the Ambulance Service] who spent 24 straight days operating three shifts, 24 hours a day. Under the command of the assistant superintendent of country operations, Lloyd Rogers, the team dealt with 710 cases during their stay at Roxby.
>
> Most of the patients, police and protesters, were treated for minor complaints such as dust in they eyes, sore throats, stomach upsets, cuts and splinters, but five people were evacuated to hospital – four to Woomera and

one, suffering from kidney stones, by the Royal Flying Doctor Service to Adelaide. Interestingly, only one of the injuries – a knee in the groin of a police officer – was deliberately inflicted.

Lloyd told me the dozen members of his team came from Whyalla, Port Augusta, Renmark, Gawler, Murray Bridge and Victor Harbor as well as metropolitan brigades. [Their] vehicles at Roxby included three ambulances, a four-wheel-drive vehicle, a clinic car, communication bus and mobile first-aid caravan.

As an indication of the regard in which they were held, on their last day at Roxby protesters baked the St John lads a special cake. It was decorated with red cherries in the shape of a cross.[66]

If the demonstrators' cake bore a cross in red it was probably that of the Red Cross Society – St John's main rival in the field of first aid – rather than the Maltese Cross of the Order. That misconception notwithstanding, the cake was evidence to those who read the Mathieson column that St John still cared, was still vigilant and enterprising in seeking new avenues for serving South Australians, and could still be relied on to live up to its voluntaristic ideals without fear or favour. Coming as it did while the Cornwall committee was still inquiring into the organization, it was a salutary reminder that St John had never stopped achieving, even in times of trouble.

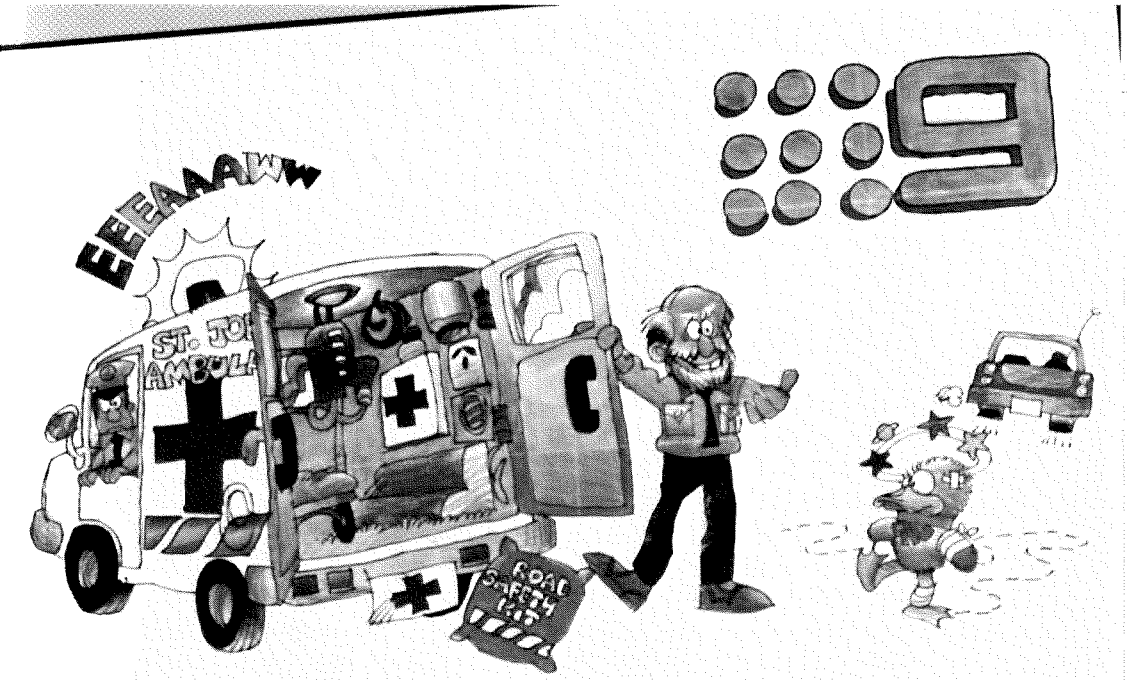
5. *Epilogue*

A history of an institution still extant has to end somewhere, and so we will leave this one here, with the recommendations of the Cornwall select committee. Inevitably histories of this nature are incomplete and selective, and there is much that this particular history has omitted. It could, and perhaps should, have included sections on the myriad matters that had special significance to various sections of the St John organization. Thus, the book has only briefly mentioned the inauguration of the single Statewide ambulance service in 1981, and it has made only passing reference to the continual updating of ambulance equipment and advances in ambulance technology. So, too, it has overlooked episodes like the development of advanced Brigade training courses during the late 1970s and the 80s, the Medic-Alert Foundation co-sponsored with Rotary, the production and national distribution of the St John motorists' first aid kit, the acquisition of the Brigade campsite at Lobethal, the Brigade's annual calendar of first aid and nursing competitions, and public health and safety awareness campaigns like the Association's 'Operation Four Minutes' in 1982 and 'Don't Let Them Die' in 1983. And no doubt ordinary Brigade members will be disappointed to have discovered that the book says very little about the history of any of the 160 or more Brigade Divisions to which they belong, and which provide the focus for a great deal of the effort they make in helping their fellow South Australians.

public institutions had already seen fit to create positions for 'EEO officers' to advise them on and to promote means by which the interests of women, members of cultural minorities and the disabled might be advanced within their organizations. This was a lead that St John had not yet chosen to follow, and its various fractions remained overwhelmingly under the leadership of Anglo-Celtic males. Only two members of the St John Council were women. Except for one female publicity officer all senior executives were men. There had never been a female Brigade officer who had risen above District Nursing Superintendent (who ranked fifth in the Brigade hierarchy). Nor had there ever been a female 'chairman' (sic.), deputy 'chairman' or secretary-manager of the Association. The ambulance service had certainly managed to recruit an Aborigine and several women as full-time drivers of clinic cars, but no woman had ever been an executive officer of the operations branch. Consequently the St John organisation increasingly resembled a male enclave as the principles behind EEO gained greater acceptance in the wider community. In so doing, it seemed, St John was denying itself of the talents of that substantial proportion of the population represented by women and the members of cultural minorities.

Another task before St John lay among the next generation of South Australians. The Brigade, of course, was much concerned with youth via its Cadet Divisions, and it had achieved considerable success with them. Indeed, with about 2000 young people in Cadet Divisions by 1985, the Cadets made up over two-fifths of District strength, and there were more of them in South Australia than in any other State. However, even 2000 Cadets were but a drop in the bucket – no more than about one in every 165, or roughly 0.6 *per cent* of South Australians under the age of twenty. More serious than their relatively small number was the high attrition rate amongst them. The Brigade published no figures here, but it was commonly said that only about five *per cent* of Cadets remained with St John in adult life. If the proportion were that low, then the organization had a serious problem. Certainly by the 1980s there were more attractions outside St John for young people than ever before, and more pressures

Organisational image: from the 1960s increasing St John effort went into public relations. The results of one 'PR' exercise, the St John Ambulance-Channel 9 poster competition for children in 1983, are seen here. The competition was run to promote a new St John first aid kit for motorists, and posters had to show Winky, a Channel 9 cartoon character, being treated by St John ambulance officers using the new kit. The winning entries were by Dan Glenn, age 13 (above), and Ingrid Peters, age 9 (below). (This exercise seems to have misfired slightly because Dan's very sophisticated entry displays the symbol of St John's principal rival, the Red Cross Society, rather than the Maltese Cross of St John Ambulance, though Ingrid's entry has the appropriate symbol.) ►





The "Winky Winners"

Top — by Dan Glenn, 13
winner over 11s. Above — by Ingrid Peters, 9
winner under 11s.

upon them. The rise of the youth sub-culture and of youth consumerism, higher school retention rates and more accessible tertiary education, mounting youth unemployment and increasing competition for the fewer and the less satisfying jobs available, and the decline of the patriarchal nuclear family were all, no doubt, factors underlying the reluctance of Cadets to graduate to adult Divisions. In view of these problems, which were beyond its control, the organization needed to do everything in its power to attract and hold onto the young. It needed to scrutinise the quality of its youth leadership, to spend time and effort devising training programs and ambulancing experience relevant to the interests and needs of youth, and to place the fostering of young talent and initiative centrally among its concerns. Beyond the Cadets there was a huge task St John could be doing among the young of the State. Unemployed and disaffected young people represented one of the country's most pressing social problems by the 80s, and were among the most formidable challenges facing Australian community organizations. If St John chose to, it might find that by channelling its enormous expertise into projects to restore their self-respect through constructive, purposeful activity, it would be performing a service both to them and the nation.

A further task related to the St John image, and to the national structure which projected this. John Cornwall's jibe about 'Dad's Army' running the State ambulance service might have indicated the Minister's failure to understand the complexities of the State ambulance system, which the St John Council now operated – in contradistinction to the Brigade, which supplied the volunteers. It nevertheless reflected something of the public perception of the organization. To some sections of the community, as the Opit report had pointed out, there was something quaintly anachronistic about an institution that seemed to be an adjunct of the Adelaide 'Establishment', and in which Britishry and Royal connections were prized. By 1985 something like forty *per cent* of the Australian population were of non-British descent, and few of them could aspire to membership of the Adelaide Establishment, or at least not in the medium term. The professions of loyalty to a distant Queen and Grand Priory required of members of the Order, and the entrée to Adelaide 'Society' some people sought through St John, were therefore at least extraneous to those comparitively rare members of non-Anglo-Celtic minorities who joined and remained in St John. If the organisation wished to attract and hold such people, its imperial heritage and 'Society' connections were matters to be played down. At the same time, its practical, life-saving usefulness to peoples of all backgrounds, and its broad-based foundations within the community were aspects it could emphasize.

In South Australia in particular – and also in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, where St John also ran the State ambulance services – the admixture of salaried and voluntary staff set tasks for the Order that were more pressing than elsewhere. The St John managers in the two

States and the Territory where the organization was responsible for ambulance transport were both professional and proud of their professionalism. This was something for which the Order could be grateful, for without their expertise, St John would be unable to retain control of its ambulance services. The Order, however, was a voluntary organization: its governing councils at State, Priory and Grand Priory levels were composed of people who gave their efforts voluntarily to its service and who cherished its ancient voluntaristic heritage; and the ideal of voluntary service was what allowed it to retain the army of ordinary citizens who made its work possible. An organisation so suffused with voluntaryism could not easily allow itself to be run by professionals, even if they were ideologically and emotionally committed to the principles that inspired its volunteers. This was a continuing source of tension, for the volunteers would always want the Order to retain its voluntaristic direction. They would resist the temptation to turn their organization entirely over to professionals, because they felt that if they did so the Order, while gaining in efficiency, might run the risk of becoming more and more a business corporation 'marketing' yet another 'product' – first aid and nursing training and practice. The task, then, was to retain the voluntaristic ethic while ensuring the loyalty of the professionals on whom so many of the Order's undertakings depended.

For the organization nationally, as much as for its South Australian branch, the vexed question of structures also needed resolution. As St John personnel had discovered in their appearances in forums such as the South Australian Industrial Commission, the Opit inquiry and the Cornwall parliamentary select committee, trying adequately to explain the links between the Grand Priory in distant St John's Gate, the Australian Priory in Canberra and its various State branches created confusion, even in the minds of an intelligent audience. As senior St John officials had discovered in recent years, to their considerable embarrassment, even judges and cabinet ministers looked mystified and perplexed as St John witnesses were forced to field questions about the St John constitution. Further difficulty was posed by the existence of the Order, consisting of those elect among St John workers who had been elevated to its membership, of its three separate and autonomous foundations – the Association, the Brigade and the Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem – , and of the St John Councils endeavouring to co-ordinate its interests in each State. In South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory was the additional complication of a publicly-funded St John ambulance service, with a variety of connections to all the other elements of the organization. Attempts to dispel the confusion by streamlining this structure of interlocking segments had been tried before, overseas and in Australia. The South Australian branch, through the influence of its modern management, was by now convinced of the need for planning, and for trimming corporate structures to fit expected future requirements. In the Priory its representa-

tives were strong advocates for reform. Whether or not the South Australians could persuade St John colleagues in the other States that structural reform was an urgent priority was an open question, however.

Whatever the outcome of such issues, one thing remained fairly certain: the usefulness of St John to Australians everywhere was increasing, despite the mediaeval connotations, British connections and archaic image that the organization's enemies now used as ammunition against it. Australian society was, arguably, less cohesive and less caring by the 1980s than it had been in decades gone by. Unemployment, youth alienation, drug dependence, family break-up, criminal violence, suicide, disasters and accidents that seemed to be ever more frequent, and the alarming rise in incidence of diseases related to life-styles – all were phenomena that increasingly impressed themselves upon the public consciousness. In such a society there was ample scope for action by an organization claiming to exist 'for the use of humanity' – the motto it proudly said it still served after nine centuries or more. The challenge was certainly there for St John to embrace new tasks while performing better on the old. The extent to which the organization rose to meet this challenge, and its commitment to tackling its urgent tasks, would probably govern its acceptance by and success among the coming generations of South Australians.

Appendix 1

DEPUTY PRIORS OF THE ORDER OF ST JOHN IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND PATRONS OF THE ST JOHN COUNCIL FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA

(Note: In Australia State Governors customarily occupy the position of Deputy Prior of the Order, that is the formal head, in their respective States. The Governors-General customarily occupy the position of Prior, that is overall head of the Priory, the federal structure of the Order in Australia. Until the establishment of the Priory, and during the existence of the Australian Commandery of the Order, which preceded the Priory, the Governor-General had the title of Knight Commander and the State Governors had the title Deputy Knight Commander. Since the setting up of the St John Council for South Australia in 1950, the State Governors have also been Patrons of the Council.)

Sir Charles Malcolm Barclay-Harvey, 1941-44, Deputy Knight Commander
Sir Charles Willoughby Moke Norrie, 1944-47, Deputy Knight Commander; 1947-52, Deputy Prior for South Australia; 1950-52, Patron of the St John Council for South Australia
Sir Robert Allingham George, 1953-60, Deputy Prior and Patron
Sir Edric Montague Bastyan, 1961-68, Deputy Prior and Patron
Sir James William Harrison, 1968-71, Deputy Prior and Patron
Sir Marcus Laurence Elwin Oliphant, 1971-76, Deputy Prior and Patron
Sir Douglas Ralph Nicholls, 1976-77, Deputy Prior and Patron
Sir Keith Seaman, 1977-82, Deputy Prior and Patron
Sir Donald Dunstan, 1982-, Deputy Prior and Patron

Appendix 2

KNIGHTS, DAMES AND COMMANDERS OF THE ORDER IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

(Note: Members of the Order with the rank of Commander and above, viz., Commander, Chaplain, Dame and Knight, constitute the Chapter of the Priory, that is the Order's supreme governing council in Australia. These ranks carry no titles, and the postnominals attaching to them – K.St.J. (Knight of the Order), D.St.J. (Dame), Ch.St.J. (Chaplain) and C.St.J. (Commander) – are used within the Order as occasion demands, but are not generally used outside. The dates in the following list, where given, indicate when the member concerned was either promoted to or admitted at the given rank.)

1. *Knight (K.St.J.)*

A.A. Simpson, 1929
Sir Winston Dugan
Dr S.L. Dawkins, 1937
Sir Malcolm Barclay-Harvey
Sir Willoughby Norrie
Sir Samuel Burston, 1944
Dr H.H.E. Russell, 1947
Sir Mellis Napier, 1948
Dr C.E.C. Wilson, 1948
Dr E.A.H. Russell, 1952
Sir Robert George, 1953
Dr N. Manson, 1956
Dr Frank K. Mugford, 1958
Sir Edward Hayward, 1959
R.P. Goode, 1960
Sir Edric Bastyan
Dr Harvey H. Hurst, 1961
F.W. Russack, 1963
Sir Kenneth Wills, 1963
S. Symons, 1963
Dr John M. Pedler, 1965
H.C. Grimshaw, 1967
Sir James Harrison, 1968
Dr James Fotheringham, 1968
The Hon. R.L. Dean, 1969
Sir Marcus Oliphant, 1971
Donald P. Williams, 1971
Brig. John G. McKinna, 1971
Walter Thompson, 1972
Dr William Gove, 1974
Sir Douglas Nicholls, 1976
Philip L. Ferrier, 1976
Sir Keith Seaman, 1977
Peter W. Gebert, 1981
Sir Donald Dunstan, 1982
Dr Brian E.J. Ancell, 1984

2. *Dame (D.St.J.)*

Beryl I. Fegan, 1970
Lady (Victoria) Bastyan, 1972
Eve A. Bush, 1972
Lady (Rosa) Oliphant, 1976
Sister H.L. Morris, 1977
Mrs R.A. Hankel, 1978
Gwennyth Metcalf, 1984

3. *Chaplain (Ch.St.J.)*

The Rt. Rev. Dr T.T. Reed, Chaplain, 1965
The Rt. Rev. L.E.W. Renfrey, Assistant Chaplain, 1971
The Most Rev. Dr Keith Rayner, Chaplain, 1984

4. *Commander (C.St.J.)*

Sir George Murray, 1934
Lady (R.L.) Dugan, 1937
Sir J. Langdon Bonython, 1937
Lady (Muriel) Barclay-Harvey
Lady Norrie, 1949
Lady George, 1953
Archdeacon A.L. Bulbeck, 1954
Lady (Dorothy) Napier, 1955
C. Grosset, 1959
Vi Watson, 1959
Kenneth G. Shapter, 1962
Sir Stanton Hicks, 1963
H.L. Hollands, 1965
Dr H.G. Prest, 1965
Joy B. Weston, 1965
A.W. Hardy, 1966
D.C. Myers, 1967
Lady Harrison, 1968
L.G. Riches, 1969
Dr W.A. Langsford, 1970
R.G. Markham, 1970
K.J.D. Benger, 1970
Mrs E.A. Greene, 1970
A.J. Shard, 1971
Dr J.R. Thompson, 1972
J.H. Berry, 1974
G.R. Lee, 1976
Lady (Joan) Seaman, 1977
Dr G. Viner Smith, 1977
Miss G.H. Surman, 1979
William J. Ness, 1980
Eric B. Ridgway, 1980
Ray G. Schilling, 1980
R.C. McCleave, 1980
Robert Britten Jones, 1981
Jack H. Revitt, 1981
Lady (Beryl) Dunstan, 1982
M. Eve Gove, 1982
H. Ralph F. Anderson, 1982
D.C. Heard, 1982
Dr F.F. Heddle, 1982
Margaret K. Corkhill, 1983
Dr Glyn A. Davies, 1983
J.B. Smith, 1983
John Bashford, 1984
Victor W. Kollosche, 1984
Dr Desmond H. Owens, 1984

Appendix 3

ST JOHN AMBULANCE ASSOCIATION ADELAIDE/SOUTH AUSTRALIA CENTRE, EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

1. *President or Patron*

(Note: Until 1928 the President was customarily the State Governor. When Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven succeeded to the Governorship he declined the position of President but accepted that of Patron. His successors also became Patrons, and the Lieutenant-Governors henceforth became the Presidents. With the establishment of the St John Council for South Australia in 1950, the Governors took the position of Deputy Prior, or head of the Order in South Australia, and the position of Association Patron lapsed after the departure of Sir Robert George in 1960. After the death of Sir Mellis Napier in 1976 the position of Association President lapsed as well.)

Governors who were Association Presidents:

Sir William C.F. Robinson, 1887-89
The Earl of Kintore (A.H.T. Keith-Falconer), 1889-95
Sir Thomas F. Buxton, 1895-99
Lord Hallam Tennyson, 1899-1902
Sir George R. Le Hunte, 1903-09
Sir Day H. Bosanquet, 1909-14
Sir Henry L. Galway, 1914-20
Sir W.E.G. Archibald Weigall, 1920-22
Sir George T.M. Bridges, 1922-27

Governors who were Association Patrons:

Sir Alexander G.A. Hore-Ruthven (later Lord Gowrie), 1928-34
Sir Winston J. Dugan, 1934-39
Sir C. Malcolm Barclay-Harvey, 1939-44
Sir C. Willoughby M. Norrie, 1944-52
Sir Robert A. George, 1953-60

Lieutenants-Governor who were Association Presidents:

Sir George Murray, 1928-42
Sir J. Mellis Napier, 1942-76

2. *Chairman*

Frederick Wright, 1887-1900
Sir W. Herbert Phillips, 1900-04
W.B. Wilkinson, 1904-07
R. Kyffin Thomas, 1907-08
Eric Willis Van Senden, 1908-11

Harry D. Gell, 1911-26
A.A. Simpson, 1926-32
C.R.J. Glover, 1932-34
Dr Charles E.C. Wilson, 1934-48
Col. W.S. Hanson, 1949
R.P. Goode, 1950-51
Dr H.G. Prest, 1952-64
Prof. R.P. Jepson, 1965-70
Robert Britten Jones, 1971-84
James F. Young, 1984-

3. *Secretary*

James P. Roberts, 1887-1900
Charles C. Drifflield, 1900-02
Bentley S. Connor, 1902-26
L.G. Cant, 1926-32
R.P. Goode, 1932-47
Kenneth G. Shapter, 1947-57
Philip L. Ferrier, 1958-63
Gordon H. Ortmann, 1964-68
R.W.E. Mitchell, 1969-70
Jack H. Revitt, 1971-83
Ian R. Anson, 1983-

4. *Treasurer*

Frederick Wright, 1887-1900
Sir W. Herbert Phillips, 1900-04
W.B. Wilkinson, 1904-08
Eric Willis Van Senden, 1908-11
Harry D. Gell, 1911-25
F.W. Russack (Snr.), 1925-31
F.W. Russack (Jnr.), 1931-73
John Bashford, 1974

Appendix 4

ST JOHN AMBULANCE BRIGADE SOUTH AUSTRALIA DISTRICT SENIOR OFFICERS

1. *Commissioner (before 1932 called Assistant Commissioner)*

A.S. Lindsay, 1914-15
R.V. Bulman (acting), 1915
George F. Hussey, 1915-31
Dr S.L. Dawkins, 1931-46
Sir Samuel Burston, 1946-47
Dr E.A.H. Russell, 1947-51
Dr Frank W. Mugford, 1951-60
Dr Harvey H. Hurst, 1960-63
Dr John M. Pedler, 1963-69
Dr James Fotheringham, 1969-73
Dr William Gove, 1973-78
Dr Brian E.J. Ancell, 1978-83
Dr Glyn A. Davies, 1983-

2. *Assistant Commissioner*

Sir Samuel Burston, 1938-39
Sir Stanton Hicks, 1939-49
Dr E.A.H. Russell, 1946-47
Dr Frank K. Mugford, 1949-51
Dr Harvey H. Hurst, 1953-60
Dr John M. Pedler, 1960-63
Dr James Fotheringham, 1963-69
Dr William Gove, 1969-73
Dr G. Viner Smith, 1973-77
Dr Brian E.J. Ancell, 1977-78
Dr Brian Fotheringham, 1978-

3. *District Surgeon*

Dr S.L. Dawkins, c.1928-31
Dr H.H.E. Russell, 1931-51
Dr Harvey H. Hurst, 1951-53
Dr G. Brown, 1953-54
Dr John M. Pedler, 1954-60
Dr James Fotheringham, 1960-63
Dr William Gove, 1963-69
Dr Brian E.J. Ancell, 1973-77
Dr Brian Fotheringham, 1977-78
Dr Glyn A. Davies, 1978-83
Prof. V.R. Marshall, 1983-84
Dr R.M. Edwards, 1984-

4. *District Superintendent*

R.V. Bulman, 1915-46
J.E. McKee, 1946-55
C. Grosset, 1955-60
H.C. Grimshaw, 1960-69
R.G. Markham, 1969-75
Peter W. Gebert, 1975-80
Dr Desmond H. Owens, 1980-84
S. Peter Sperou, 1984-

5. *District Superintendent (Nursing) (formerly 'Lady' District Superintendent)*

Mrs G.M. Dawkins, 1940-46
Vi Watson, 1946-56
Jean Hussey, 1956-60
Joy B. Weston, 1960-66
Beryl I. Fegan, 1966-72
Joy B. Weston, 1972-80
M. Eve Gove, 1980-84
Margaret K. Corkhill, 1984-

6. *District Secretary (from 1983 known as Executive Administrator)*

Jean McMillan, 1934-41
*Mr Buttrose } c.1941 to c.1945
*Miss Fischer }
Kenneth G. Shapter, 1948-57
Philip L. Ferrier, 1958-64
Walter Thompson, 1964-74
H. Ralph F. Anderson, 1974-83
Brig. W.P. Broderick, 1983-

*Initials unknown: Mr Buttrose and Miss Fischer each worked as part-time secretary for a while during World War II.

Appendix 5

ST JOHN COUNCIL FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

1. *President*

Sir John Mellis Napier, 1950-76
Sir Edward Waterfield Hayward, 1976-83
Brig. John Gilbert McKinna, 1984-

2. *Chairman*

Sir Edward Waterfield Hayward, 1950-76
Donald P. Williams, 1976-83
Eric B. Ridgway, 1984-

3. *Manager, and, from 1969, General Manager*

Kenneth G. Shapter, 1958-64
Philip L. Ferrier, 1964-78
Donald W. Jellis, 1978-

4. *Secretary*

Kenneth G. Shapter, 1950-57
Philip L. Ferrier, 1958-64
Gordon H. Ortmann, 1964-68
R.W.E. Mitchell, 1969-72
Glen A. Woods, 1973-

5. *Treasurer*

F.W. Russack (Jnr.), 1950-73
John Bashford, 1974-

Appendix 6

DIVISIONS OF ST JOHN AMBULANCE BRIGADE SOUTH AUSTRALIA DISTRICT

(Note: the name is given first; then the registration date; and then the previous or subsequent history as relevant.)

1. *Ambulance (men's) Divisions*

Adelaide Central No. 1, 1 Sept. 1915; disbanded, 1933, to form suburban Divisions.
Adelaide Motor Cycle; 29 May 1939.
Adelaide Railway, July 1919; changed to Unley City Ambulance Division, 1 Jan. 1930.
Air Ambulance, 1965.
Angaston, 1 Jan. 1959; changed to Barossa Combined Division, 21 August 1979.
Balaklava; 2 Oct. 1958.
Beachport and Millicent, 1933; disbanded, 1936;
Berri, 13 June 1940.
Booleroo Centre, 1939-40; changed to Booleroo Centre Combined Division, 23 Sept. 1968.
Bordertown; 1955.
Brighton, 1934; no longer active.
Brinkworth, 1918-19; disbanded.
Ceduna, 4 Dec. 1967; changed to Ceduna Combined Division, 4 Dec. 1967.
Clare, 1943.
Colonel Light Gardens, 1941; changed to Mitcham-Colonel Light Gardens Combined Division.
Elizabeth, 26 Aug. 1981; see Salisbury-Elizabeth, 1 Jan. 1959.
Fire Brigade 1, 1936; disbanded, Dec. 1950.
Fire Brigade 2, 1 Jan. 1945; disbanded, Dec. 1950.
Fire Brigade 3, 1 Jan. 1945; disbanded, Dec. 1950.
Gawler, 1 Dec. 1935; changed to Gawler Combined Division, 8 Nov. 1977.
Gilbert Valley, 8 April 1974; see Saddleworth-Manoora, 1954.
Gladstone, 1939-40.
Glenelg, 18 September 1915; disbanded 1917-18; re-formed as sub-division 25 January 1933; full Divisional status 1935.
Great Northern, 1918-19; disbanded 1925; re-formed as Great Northern (Quorn) 1933; disbanded 1936.
Glossop, 1939-40; later disbanded.
Hindmarsh, 15 August 1952.
Islington Railway, 18 September 1915; disbanded 1933 to form suburban divisions.
Kadina, 19 January 1943.
Keith, 25 July 1966.

St Peters, 1 January 1940; deregistered, 1 June 1979.
Stow, 1 December 1937; changed to Glenelg Nursing Division, 24 October 1939.
Tea Tree Gully, 22 April 1968; see Tea Tree Gully Combined Division, 6 November 1963.
Thebarton, 24 July 1940; changed to West Torrens, 12 May 1978.
Town Hall, 9 September 1942; amalgamated with Adelaide Central, 14 April 1946.
Unley, 24 July 1940.
West Torrens, 12 May 1978; see Thebarton Nursing Division, 24 July 1940.
Whyalla, 1956.
Woodville, 17 July 1943; lapsed 1947; re-registered, 9 April 1963.

3. *Combined (mixed) Divisions*

Aldgate-Stirling, 1 January 1959.
Aldinga, 16 July 1979.
Ardrossan, 2 March 1970; see Ardrossan Section, 19 December 1968.
Barmera, 30 July 1963.
Barossa, 21 August 1979; see Angaston Section, and Angaston Ambulance, 1 January 1959.
Blackwood, 11 September 1973.
Booleroo Centre, 23 September 1968; see Booleroo Centre Ambulance Divison, 1939-40.
Burra, 12 September 1979.
Campbelltown, 12 August 1968.
Colonel Light Gardens, 24 September 1973; changed to Mitcham-Colonel Light Gardens Combined Division.
Ceduna, 4 December 1967; see Ceduna Ambulance Division.
Coober Pedy, 16 January 1979; see Coober Pedy Section, 28 November 1972.
Crystal Brook, 11 November 1966; formerly Crystal Brook Combined Section, 1963.
Cummins, 26 February 1975; see Cummins Combined Section, 10 October 1968.
Eudunda, 19 January 1983.
Gawler, 8 November 1977; see Gawler Ambulance Division, 1 December 1935.
Goolwa, 7 March 1984; see Goolwa Combined Section, 12 September 1979.
Hawker, 29 April 1981; see Hawker Section, 10 March 1971.
Jamestown, 25 July 1966.
Kangaroo Island, 28 July 1967.
Karoonda, 6 March 1972; see Karoonda Section, 26 March 1969.
Kimba, 1966.
Kingston-Robe, 8 January 1975.
Lameroo, 23 September 1968.
Leigh Creek, 29 August 1975; see Leigh Creek Section, June 1966.
Loxton, 1963.
Maitland, 20 November 1973; see Maitland Section 30 September 1970.
Mallala, 21 April 1965.
Marion, 1 July 1981; see Marion Ambulance Division, 1 November 1965, and Marion Nursing Division, 1 March 1966.
Meningie, 11 August 1980; see Meningie Combined Section, 21 May 1973.

Millicent, 28 September 1964; see Millicent Ambulance Division, 1933.
Minlaton, 23 July 1963.
Mitcham-Colonel Light Gardens; see Colonel Light Gardens Ambulance Division, 1941, and Mitcham Nursing Division, 1 January 1943.
Mount Barker, 17 November 1976; see Mount Barker Combined Section, 20 October 1972.
Mount Pleasant, 28 July 1971.
Mount Gambier, 1952; see Mount Gambier Ambulance Division, 1934 and Mount Gambier Nursing Division, 1952.
Noarlunga, 28 November 1967.
Onkaparinga, 6 January 1972; see Lobethal Ambulance Division, 1936-37, and Woodside Section.
Orroroo, 24 November 1978; see Orroroo Combined Section, 9 October 1974.
Penola, 25 July 1967; see Penola Ambulance Division, 1937.
Pinnaroo, 1 May 1966; see Pinnaroo Ambulance Division, 1947.
Port Broughton, 11 September 1973; see Port Broughton Section, 12 August 1970.
Port Pirie, 21 March 1979; see Port Pirie Ambulance Division, 14 August 1933, and Port Pirie Nursing Division, 1938-39.
Prospect, 13 December 1979; see Prospect Ambulance Division, 1933, and Prospect Nursing Division, 1948.
Renmark, 11 March 1965; see Renmark Ambulance Division, 1965.
Salisbury, 18 February 1982.
Snowtown, 8 June 1971; see Snowtown Section, 1968.
Strathalbyn, 2 October 1961.
Tea Tree Gully, 6 November 1963; changed to Tea Tree Gully Ambulance and Tea Tree Gully Nursing Divisions, 22 April 1968.
Tintinara, 29 February 1984; see Tintinara Section, 10 February 1982.
Tumby Bay, 20 February 1970; see Tumby Bay Section, 1968.
Victor Harbour, 1 January 1963.
Waikerie-Morgan, 26 August 1960; changed to Waikerie, 1 July 1977.
Wallaroo, 18 March 1982.
Wudinna, 22 March 1971.
Yankalilla, 28 August 1975; see Yankalilla Combined Section, 1972.
Yorketown, 6 November 1969.

4. *Sections (i.e., sub-divisions)*

Ardrossan, 19 December 1968; changed to Ardrossan Combined Division, 2 March 1970.
Angaston, 30 March 1947; changed to Angaston Ambulance Division, 1 January 1959,
Cleve
Cowell, 24 March 1971.
Coober Pedy, 28 November 1972; changed to Coober Pedy Combined Division, 16 January 1979.
Cummins, 10 October 1968, changed to Cummins Combined Division, 26 February 1975.
Crystal Brook, 1963; changed to Crystal Brook Combined Division, 11 November 1966;

Elliston Combined Section, 28 July 1971.
Goolwa, 12 September 1979; changed to Goolwa Combined Division, 7 March 1984.
Hawker, 10 March 1971; changed to Hawker Combined Division, 29 April 1981.
Iron Baron, 30 April 1972; now defunct.
Karoonda, 26 March 1969; changed to Karoonda Combined Division, 6 March 1972.
Kimba
Leigh Creek, June 1966; changed to Leigh Creek Combined Division, 29 August 1975.
Lock, 1968.
Maitland, 30 September 1970; changed to Maitland Combined Division, 20 November 1973.
Mannahill, 27 October 1982; deregistered, 1 July 1977; reinstated, 27 October 1982.
Meningie, 21 May 1973; changed to Meningie Combined Division, 11 August 1980.
Mount Barker, 20 October 1972; changed to Mount Barker Combined Division, 17 November 1976.
Munno Para, 10 July 1984.
Orroroo, 9 October 1974; changed to Orroroo Combined Division, 24 November 1978.
Port Broughton, 12 August 1970; changed to Port Broughton Combined Division, 11 September 1973.
Port Kenny, 2 May 1979; deregistered 14 April 1980.
Port Wakefield, 31 July 1980.
Quorn, 11 July 1972.
Salisbury, 1955; changed to Salisbury-Elizabeth Ambulance Division, 1 January 1959.
Snowtown, 1968; changed to Snowtown Combined Division, 8 June 1971.
Streaky Bay, 1968.
Swan Reach, 5 August 1981.
Tintinara, 10 February 1982; changed to Tintinara Combined Division, 29 February 1984.
Tumby Bay, 1968; changed to Tumby Bay Combined Division, 20 February 1970.
Woodside; combined with Lobethal Ambulance Division and renamed Onkaparinga Combined Division, 6 January 1972.
Woomera, 7 August 1972; deregistered 1 July 1977.
Yankalilla, 30 April 1972; changed to Yankalilla Combined Division, 28 August 1975.

5. *Cadet Ambulance (boys') Divisions*

Adelaide Motor Cycle, 28 November 1967.
Angaston, 28 November 1967; changed to Barossa Combined Cadet Division, 21 August 1979.
Aldgate-Stirling, 9 July 1959; changed to Aldgate-Stirling Combined Cadet Division, 10 July 1974.

Campbelltown, 6 November 1969.
Clare, 24 June 1952.
Colonel Light Gardens, 1942; changed to Mitcham-Colonel Light Gardens Combined Cadet Division, 20 September 1976; subsequently changed to Mitcham-Colonel Light Gardens Combined Division, 1 January 1983.
Drum and Bugle Band, 10 February 1964; disbanded.
Edwardstown, 25 January 1957; changed to Edwardstown Combined Cadet Division, 8 June 1976.
Elizabeth, 26 August 1981; see Salisbury-Elizabeth Cadet Ambulance Division.
Gawler, 1943; changed to Gawler Combined, 8 November 1977.
Gilbert Valley, 16 July 1975; see Saddleworth-Manoora Cadet Ambulance Division.
Glenelg, 1939-40.
Hindmarsh, 4 July 1968.
Keith, 5 September 1967; subsequently disbanded.
Kilburn, 21 March 1955; combined with Prospect, 6 November 1974.
Lobethal, 1960; subsequently disbanded.
Marion, 5 January 1966.
Moonta, 24 January 1950; changed to Moonta Combined Cadet Division, 23 April 1974.
Mount Barker, 2 December 1976; changed to Mount Barker Combined Cadet Division, 21 March 1977.
Mount Gambier, 28 November 1952; changed to Mount Gambier Combined Cadet Division, 22 March 1977.
Murray Bridge, 23 September 1968.
Naracoorte, 1954; changed to Naracoorte Combined Cadet Division, 28 November 1972.
Norwood-St Peters, 16 April 1936; subsequently changed to Norwood Cadet Ambulance Division.
Port Adelaide, 8 March 1936.
Port Augusta, 23 February 1956.
Port Pirie, 1943; changed to Port Pirie Combined Cadet Division, 27 February 1981.
Prospect, 6 July 1976.
Riverton, 1939-40; subsequently combined with Gilbert Valley Cadet Ambulance Division.
Saddleworth-Manoora, 6 April 1962; changed to Gilbert Valley Cadet Ambulance Division, 16 July 1975.
Salisbury-Elizabeth, 26 August 1960; changed to Elizabeth Cadet Ambulance Division, 26 August 1981.
Tailem Bend, 5 May 1969; changed to Tailem Bend Combined Cadet Division, 27 September 1982.
Tea Tree Gully, 28 November 1967.
Thebarton, 7 June 1945; amalgamated with West Torrens Cadet Ambulance Division, 4 June 1968.
Unley, 13 October 1956.
Walkerville, 1948; amalgamated with Norwood Cadet Ambulance Division, 27 February 1981.
Westminster, 4 December 1967; deregistered 1970.

West Torrens, 26 August 1960; see also Thebarton Cadet Ambulance Division.
Whyalla, 20 February 1967.
Woodville, 22 June 1937.

6. *Cadet Nursing (girls') Divisions*

Adelaide Central, 1 June 1943; deregistered 10 October 1975.
Aldgate-Stirling, 28 September 1964; changed to Aldgate-Stirling Combined Cadet Division, 10 July 1974.
Brighton, 21 January 1974; changed to Brighton Combined Cadet Division, 3 January 1980; see also Edwardstown Cadet Nursing Division;
Campbelltown, 9 November 1971.
Draper, 1956; subsequently disbanded.
Edwardstown, 9 July 1959; changed to Brighton Cadet Nursing Division, 21 January 1974.
Elizabeth, 26 August 1981; previously Salisbury-Elizabeth Cadet Nursing Division.
Glenelg, 12 May 1975.
Goodwood Park, changed to Marion Cadet Nursing, 9 December 1965.
Marion, 9 December 1965; see also Goodwood Park Cadet Nursing Division.
Mitcham, 29 December 1975; changed to Mitchell-Colonel Light Gardens Combined Cadet Division, 1 January 1983.
Norwood, 1946.
Port Adelaide, 8 July 1947.
Port Augusta, 1953; subsequently disbanded.
Port Pirie, 1948; changed to Port Pirie Combined Cadet Division, 27 February 1981.
Prospect, 1948.
Salisbury-Elizabeth, 15 August 1968; changed to Elizabeth Cadet Nursing Division, 26 August 1981.
Tea Tree Gully No. 1, 22 April 1968.
Tea Tree Gully No. 2, 23 August 1982.
Thebarton, 1948; changed to West Torrens Cadet Nursing Division, 5 August 1980.
Unley
West Torrens, 5 August 1980; see also Thebarton Cadet Nursing Division.
Whyalla, 16 April 1969; subsequently disbanded.
Woodville, 21 November 1947.

7. *Combined (mixed) Cadet Divisions*

Aldgate-Stirling, 10 July 1974; see also Aldgate-Stirling Cadet Ambulance and Nursing Divisions.
Aldinga, 21 November 1981.
Barossa, 21 August 1979; see Angaston Cadet Ambulance, 1 January 1959.
Blackwood, 25 January 1979.
Booleroo Centre, 5 October 1983.
Bordertown, 11 September 1973.
Brighton, 3 January 1980; see also Brighton Cadet Nursing Division and Edwardstown Cadet Nursing Division.

Ceduna, 17 March 1980; subsequently disbanded.
Colonel Light Gardens, 20 September 1976; changed to Mitcham-Colonel Light Gardens Combined Cadet Division, 1 January 1975; see also Colonel Light Gardens Cadet Ambulance Division.
Edwardstown, 8 June 1976; see Edwardstown Cadet Ambulance Division.
Gawler, 8 November 1977; see Gawler Cadet Ambulance Division.
Kadina, 26 August 1981.
Leigh Creek, 8 August 1978; subsequently disbanded.
Loxton, 8 June 1973.
Mallala, 3 February 1975.
Mannum, 9 November 1976; disbanded 5 March 1981; re-established 17 September 1974.
Millicent, 5 May 1969.
Mitcham-Colonel Light Gardens; see Colonel Light Gardens Cadet Ambulance Division, Mitcham Cadet Nursing Division, and Colonel Light Gardens Combined Cadet Division.
Moonta, 23 April 1976; see also Moonta Cadet Ambulance Division.
Mount Barker, 20 March 1977; see also Mount Barker Cadet Ambulance Division.
Mount Gambier, 22 March 1977; see also Mount Gambier Cadet Ambulance Division.
Naracoorte, 28 November 1972; see also Naracoorte Cadet Ambulance Division.
Noarlunga No. 1, 28 June 1971.
Noarlunga No. 2, 9 June 1984.
Onkaparinga, 12 September 1978.
Penola, 7 February 1983.
Port Broughton, 3 August 1976.
Port Lincoln, 15 July 1969.
Port Pirie, 27 February 1981; see also Port Pirie Cadet Ambulance Division and Port Pirie Cadet Nursing Division.
Salisbury, 12 November 1981.
Strathalbyn, 14 July 1982.
Tailem Bend, 27 September 1982; see also Tailem Bend Cadet Ambulance Division.
Victor Harbour, 9 November 1971.
Waikerie, 22 September 1977.
Yankalilla, 1 September 1978.
Yorketown, 11 January 1973.

Appendix 7

AMBULANCE STATIONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

METROPOLITAN

Blackwood, 155 Main Rd.
Campbelltown,
Montacute Rd., Newton
Elizabeth, Elizabeth Way
Glenelg,§ Williams Ave.,
Glenelg East
Hindmarsh, 82 South Rd.
Marion, Sturt Rd.,
Mitchell Park
Modbury, Nurses' Home,
Modbury Hospital
Noarlunga, Flaxmill Rd.,
Morphett Vale
North Adelaide,§ Tynte St.
Norwood,§ Coke St.
Port Adelaide, Swan Tce.,
Semaphore
Prospect, 387 Regency Rd.
Salisbury, Nylex Ave.,
Salisbury Sth.
Stirling, Mt Barker Rd.,
Aldgate
Unley, 14 Arthur St.
West Torrens, Acorn Ave.,
Camden Park

COUNTRY

Angaston★
Ardrossan
Balaklava
Barmera★
Beachport[1]
Berri★
Booleroo Centre†
Bordertown
Burra★
Ceduna[11]
Clare
Cleve[11]
Coober Pedy[10]
Coonalpyn
Cowell[11]
Crystal Brook
Cummins[9]
Elliston[9]
Eudunda
Gawler★
Gladstone
Hamley Bridge
Hawker[10]
Jamestown†
Kadina
Kapunda
Karoonda†
Keith
Kimba[11]
Kingscote
Kingston
Lameroo
Leigh Creek[10]
Lock[11]
Loxton★
Lucindale
Maitland[2]
Mallala
Mannahill
Mannum
Meningie
Millicent★
Minlaton
Moonta
Mount Barker★
Mount Gambier★
Mount Pleasant
Murray Bridge★
Nangwarry[3]
Naracoorte★
Nullarbor[11]
Orroroo†
Penola
Peterborough†
Pinnaroo
Port Augusta★
Port Broughton[4]
Port Lincoln★
Port Pirie★
Quorn[10]
Renmark★
Riverton†
Robe[5]
Snowtown
Strathalbyn
Streaky Bay[11]
Swan Reach[6]
Tailem Bend
Tintinara[7]
Tumby Bay[11]
Victor Harbor★
Waikerie★
Wallaroo
Whyalla★†
Woodside★†
Wudinna[11]
Yalata[11]
Yankalilla[8]
Yorketown

[1] Sub-Branch of Millicent
[2] Sub-Branch of Central Yorke Peninsula
[3] Sub-Branch of Nangwarry
[4] Sub-Branch of Port Pirie
[5] Sub-Branch of Kingston
[6] Sub-Branch of Waikerie
7 Sub-Branch of Keith
8 Sub-Branch of South Coast
9 Sub-Branch of Port Lincoln
10 Sub-Branch of Port Augusta
11 Sub-Branch of Upper Eyre Peninsula

★employer branches †non-amalgamated services §no vehicle

Notes

Abbreviations used in notes
SJAA: St John Ambulance Association
SJAASA: St John Ambulance Association, Adelaide/South Australia Centre
SJABSA: St John Ambulance Association, South Australia District
SJASA: St John Ambulance organisation in South Australia

CHAPTER 1: *History and the Order of St John*

1 For two of the more recent accounts see Ernle Bradford, *The Shield and the Sword: The Knights of St John* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1972), pp. 13-50; and Ian Howie-Willis, *A Century For Australia: St John Ambulance in Australia 1883-1983* (Canberra, Priory of the Order of St John in Australia, 1983), pp. 1-40.

2 Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, Volume 2: The Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Harmondsworth, England, Penguin Books Ltd., 1971), pp. 416-7.

3 E.J. King, *The Knights Hospitallers in the Holy Land* (London, Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1931), p. 67; E.E. Hume, *Medical Work of the Knights Hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 15.

4 Hume, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-55, 93-175 *passim*, discusses the medical achievements at length. The quotation by Edward Brown is given p. 101.

5 *ibid.*, pp. 101-4.

6 See for example Bradford, *op. cit.*; Howie-Willis, *op. cit.*; E.J. King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire* (London, The Order of St John, 1934); John Taaffe, *The History of the Holy, Military, Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem* (London, Hope & Co., 1852), which are among the many written about the Order in the past century and a half.

7 For further details about the contributions of the four see, for example, E.J. King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire*; Howie-Willis, *op. cit.*; Joan Clifford, *For the Service of Mankind: Furley, Lechmere and Duncan, St John Ambulance Founders* (London, Robert Hale, 1971); and N. Corbet Fletcher, *The St John Ambulance Association: Its History and Its Part in the Ambulance Movement* (London, Order of St John, 1929).

8 Fletcher, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER 2: *The St John Ambulance Association Adelaide Centre, 1884-1900*

1 The material in this section is derived from various sources, but principally *The Australian Encyclopaedia* (1977), vol. 5, pp. 370-88.

2 Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

3 Howie-Willis, *op. cit.*, ch. 4, discusses these developments at length.

4 *The South Australian Register*, 16 December 1884, transcript of report in newsclipping scrapbook collection, St John Council for South Australia archives, St John House, Eastwood, Adelaide.

5 *ibid.*

6 *ibid.*, 22 January 1885.
7 *ibid.*
8 Margaret Barbalet, *The Adelaide Children's Hospital 1876-1976: A History* (Adelaide, 1975), ch. 1.
9 *ibid.*; and Beryl Fegan, two unpublished typescripts, 'St John Ambulance Association: its beginnings in South Australia', and 'Summary of extracts from Association Minutes', St John Archives, Adelaide.
10 Australian Medical Association South Australian Branch [AMA], *The South Australian Branch of the Australian Medical Association: A Centenary History 1979* (Adelaide, AMA, 1979), pp. 19, 24, 85; J. Estcourt Hughes, *A History of the Royal Adelaide Hospital* (Adelaide, The Board of Management of the Royal Adelaide Hospital, 1967), ch. 6.
11 AMA, *loc. cit.*; Fegan, *op. cit.*
12 AMA, *loc. cit.*; Fegan, *loc. cit.*
13 Howie-Willis, *op. cit.*, ch. 4.
14 Fegan, *op. cit.*
15 Fletcher, *op. cit.*
16 Fegan, *op. cit.*
17 Typescript of article in *The South Australian Register*, 23 September 1885, St John archives, Adelaide.
18 *ibid.*
19 Fegan, *op. cit.*
20 *ibid.*
21 SJAASA, *Annual Report*, 1897; Fegan, *op. cit.*
22 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
23 *The South Australian Register, loc. cit.*
24 *ibid.*
25 The material on the Brasseys is from *The Dictionary of National Biography* (U.K.); *Who's Who* (U.K.); *The St John Ambulance Gazette* (New South Wales) 1(3), 21 July 1902; a pamphlet compiled by Lady Brassey in 1887, *The St John Ambulance Association*, no listed date or place of publication, scrapbook of the Library of the Order of St John, St John's Gate, London; notes by Beryl Fegan on the Brassey tour of Australia, with clippings from *The South Australian Register*, and issues of *The Sydney Morning Herald* for July 1887.
26 Lady Brassey's pamphlet, *op. cit.*
27 *ibid.*
28 *ibid.*
29 *ibid.*
30 *ibid.*
31 SJAASA, *Annual Report*, 1892.
32 SJAASA, *Annual Reports*, 1894-1897.
33 Material on the women's practice classes and the Ladies' St John Ambulance Mission North Adelaide comes from SJAASA *Annual Reports*, 1887 and 1890-1895; and Fegan, *op. cit.*, which include a photocopy of the rules of the Mission.
34 SJAASA, *Annual Report*, 1897.
35 Fegan, *op. cit.*; SJAASA, *Annual Report*, 1903-04.
36 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
37 SJAASA, *Annual Report*, 1914-15.

CHAPTER 3: *From Federation to the end of World War I*

[1] Beryl Fegan, unpublished paper, 'Secretaries and Publicity' (1981), and 'Extracts from Association Minutes', *op. cit.*; SJAASA, *Annual Reports* 1900-01 to 1904-05.
[2] Fegan, 'Secretaries and Publicity', *op. cit.*'; SJAASA, *Annual Reports* 1900-01 and 1901-02.
[3] SJAASA, *Annual Reports* 1900-01 to 1909-10.
[4] SJAASA, *Annual Reports* 1908-09 to 1931-32.
[5] SJAASA, *Annual Reports* 1900-01 to 1913-14.
[6] Howie-Willis, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-3.
[7] *ibid.*, pp. 183-4.
[8] Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes', *op. cit.*
[9] *ibid.*
[10] *ibid.*
[11] *Annual Reports*, St John Ambulance Association Christchurch Centre and St John Ambulance Brigade Canterbury and West Coast District, 1907-1909, reprinted in the Order of St John, *Reports of Chapter General*, 1907-1909.
[12] Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes', *op. cit.*.
[13] SJAASA, *Annual Report* 1910-11, p. 9.
[14] Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes', *op. cit.*
[15] *ibid.*
[16] SJAASA, *Annual Report* 1913-14, p. 19.
[17] Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes', *op cit.*; and unpublished paper, 'The St John Ambulance Brigade: Its beginning in South Australia'.
[18] Fegan, *loc. cit.*
[19] Fegan. *loc. cit.*
[20] Fegan, *loc. cit.*
[21] SJAASA, *Annual Reports* 1911-12 and 1912-13.
[22] SJAASA, *Annual Reports* 1903-04 to 1914-15.
[23] Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Brigade . . .', *op. cit.*
[24] *ibid.*; and Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes', *op. cit.*.
[25] Fegan, *loc. cit.*
[26] Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Brigade . . .', *op. cit.*
[27] SJAASA, *Annual Report* 1915-16, pp. 11-12.
[28] *ibid.*
[29] SJAASA, *Annual Report* 1917-18, p. 10.
[30] Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War* (Penguin Books, Middlesex & Victoria, 1975), p. 4.
[31] Quoted in Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes', *op. cit.*.
[32] SJAASA, *Annual Report* 1914-15, pp. 10-11.
[33] Howie-Willis, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-9.
[34] Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Brigade . . .', *op. cit.*
[35] *ibid.*
[36] *ibid.*
[37] *ibid.*
[38] *ibid.*
[39] *ibid.*
[40] *ibid.*
[41] SJAASA, *Annual Report* 1918-19, p. 8.

42 Fegan, 'The St John Ambulance Brigade...', *op. cit.*
43 *ibid.*; and Howie-Willis, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-8, 257-64.
44 Beryl Fegan, unpublished paper, 'Ambulance Transport in South Australia'.
45 *ibid.*; and Fegan, 'Extracts from Association Minutes', *op. cit.*
46 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
47 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
48 Fegan, *loc. cit.*; Howie-Willis, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-7.
49 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
50 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
51 SJAASA, *Annual Reports* 1912-13, 1913-14, 1920-21 and 1925-26.
52 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
53 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
54 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
55 Newsclippings from *The Advertiser*, February 1916, St John Ambulance Adelaide headquarters scrapbooks.
56 *ibid.*
57 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
58 Fegan, *loc. cit.*
59 Newsclippings from *The Advertiser*, May 1917, *op. cit.*
60 Fegan, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER 4: *The 'Twenties and 'Thirties*

1 Figures derived from SJAASA, *Annual Reports.*
2 Figures derived from SJAASA, *Annual Reports.*
3 SJAASA *Annual Reports* 1921-22, p. 12; 1922-23, p. 10.
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63 *Report of the Select Committee . . . on St John Ambulance . . ., op. cit.*, pp. 2, 53-57.

64 *ibid.*, pp. 6-9.

65 Material for this and following paragraphs is from personal communications from D.W. Jellis, F.W. Davison, J.A. Rawes, G.A. Woods, I.R. Anson, E.B. Ridgway, J.A. McGreevy, B.R. Sullivan and P.W. Gebert during numerous conversations, 1983-85.

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