



The St John Ambulance
Australia Historical Society



*"Preserving and promoting
the St John heritage"*

THE ST JOHN AMBULANCE AUSTRALIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sixth Annual General Meeting,
in the 'Elsa Albert' Hall, Priory Headquarters Building,
Canberra Avenue, Canberra, Friday 22 June 2007

Draft Minutes

1. **Opening:** The President, Dr Harry Oxer, declared the meeting open at 9.00 a.m. He said it was especially pleasing for the meeting to be taking place in the "Elsa Albert Hall" or meeting hall of the Priory Headquarters Building as it would be the first and last time that the Society could conduct its AGM in that particular venue. He also drew attention to the historical significance of his being able to preside over the meeting from the "Olga Cohen" ceremonial chair and table.
2. **Welcome:** The President welcomed those present. He gave a special welcome to Ms Lynne Panayiotis and her parents, Julie and Max Penaluna, who had made a special effort to travel from Melbourne to attend.
3. **Attendance and apologies:** A total of 31 people signed the Attendance Register, although an informal head-count indicated that over 40 people attended the meeting. A total of 19 names were entered in the Apologies Register.

The President thanked those present for turning out early on a very cold, frosty Canberra winter morning, with the surrounding landscape resembling a snowfield, at a time when the AGM was competing with several major and popular seminars being conducted at the main Priory Conference venue. He said it was gratifying to note how strongly the Historical Society had grown in its six years of formal existence, and that many people now came to the conferences primarily to attend the Society's events.

4. **Minutes of the last meeting:** The President called on the Secretary to introduce the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, held in the Duxton Hotel, Perth, WA on 21 June 2006. The Secretary advised that printed copies of the Minutes had been distributed shortly before the meeting had begun, and further copies were available at the rear of the room. The President then called for a motion that the Minutes be received and taken as read. Moved Mr Merv Goodall, seconded by Mr Vince Little, that the Minutes be approved. Agreed unanimously.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes:** The President asked if there were any matters arising from the Minutes. The Secretary advised that there were several matters to be discussed but that these were included later on the agenda under general business.
6. **Annual Report:** The President advised that his annual report had been printed and distributed before the meeting together with the agenda and the last meeting's minutes. He then formally tabled and read the sixth annual report of the Historical Society. During the course of his report Dr Oxer thanked the Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and management committee members for their efforts over the past year and especially for the organisational work the Secretary had done to ensure that the Annual General Meeting and History Seminar would be a success. Dr Oxer concluded by moving that his report be adopted. The motion was seconded by Dr Allan Mawdsley. Agreed unanimously.
7. **Financial Report:** The President called on the Secretary to introduce the report. Dr Howie-Willis explained that because of an unusual set of circumstances there was no signed report by the Treasurer, Mr Jim Byrne. What had happened was that in fortnight before the AGM the auditor (Ms Kareen Brandt, formerly National Manager Finance for St John Ambulance Australia), had resigned from her position on the National Office staff and had moved to Brisbane at short notice when her partner had transferred there with his army job. The Membership Secretary (Ms Cheryl Langdon-Orr) had then forwarded the requisite financial data to her there and she had then carried out her audit. The audit statement approving the statement of income and expenditure provided by Ms Langdon-Orr had only just been received by express post, allowing no time for it to be forwarded to Mr Byrne to prepare his usual report. Ms Langdon-Orr then displayed a PowerPoint version of the balance sheet showing a credit balance of \$4,555.41. From this amount, payments totalling \$2,568.20 were due for journal production and the awarding of the Cadets' "Knowledge of the Order" prizes for 2006 and 2007. Meanwhile a donation of \$1,000 had just been

received. After payment of accounts and the depositing of the donation, the credit balance in the account would amount to \$2,997.21, though the balance could be higher depending on membership subscriptions due to be received. Dr Howie-Willis advised the meeting that Ms Amanda Power, Ms Brandt's replacement as National Manager Finance, had agreed to succeed Ms Brandt as auditor. He then moved that the financial statement and audit report be adopted; seconded Mr Jack Blackstock. The President called for discussion of the report, observing that the Society's finances were in a healthy state. No comment being forthcoming, Dr Oxeer put the motion, which was adopted by affirmation.

8. **Membership Secretary & Publicity Officer's Report:** Ms Langdon-Orr reported briefly on membership renewals and new memberships. Membership of the Society currently numbers about 150 financial members. Turning to the journal, *St John History*, Ms Langdon-Orr explained that there had been difficulties in securing a supply of the bindings previously used for the journal and she accordingly wished to know if the meeting would approve the adoption of the next best available form of binding, which could be more expensive. The meeting indicated that that it was in favour of the latter. Ms Langdon-Orr thanked the meeting for this and said she hoped to be able to distribute the journal in the next fortnight or so, after she had returned from an overseas business trip.

In thanking Ms Langdon-Orr for her report, Dr Oxeer observed that as the Society's membership grew and the journal became a larger publication, the pressures the society was placing on Ms Langdon-Orr as both Membership Secretary and Publicity Officer were increasing. Dr Howie-Willis endorsed Dr Oxeer's comments and asked Ms Langdon-Orr if there was anything the Society could do to reduce her work load. Ms Langdon-Orr suggested that one way bring this about would be to "decentralize" both the distribution of the journal and the system for processing membership applications.

In the discussion that followed, Ms Langdon-Orr made the following proposal for decentralization:

- In each State/Territory there should be a "Membership and Journal Liaison Officer" (MJLO) who would accept responsibility for processing membership applications and for distributing the journal in his/her State/Territory.
- In relationship to memberships, the MJLOs' duties would be to receive completed membership application & renewal forms and membership subscriptions, bank the subscriptions in the Society's Bendigo Bank account, mail out receipts, maintain a record of the members in their States/Territories, and then forward the completed application & renewal forms to the Membership Secretary.
- In relation to journal distribution, the MJLOs' duties would be to receive from the Publications Officer the completed journals and then distribute these to the Society's membership via the State/Territory St John Ambulance network.

During the discussion of Ms Langdon-Orr's proposal it was pointed out that the advantages of the proposal included giving the members in each State/Territory greater input into the Society's business, thus providing for greater local initiative.

When the discussion concluded, Dr Allan Mawdsley, seconded by Mrs Gladys Blackstock, moved that Ms Langdon-Orr's proposal be adopted. Dr Oxeer put the motion, which the meeting carried by affirmation.

The Secretary then undertook to contact appropriate people in each State/Territory with a view to their accepting the position of MJLO.¹

9. **Reports from States & Territories:** The President called on representatives of the various States & Territories to provide the meeting with written and/or oral reports on the work being done on St John heritage matters in their respective jurisdictions. The following members then spoke on behalf of their States and Territories:

- Australian Capital Territory — Mr Ross McConnell
- Australian Office — Dr Ian Howie-Willis
- New South Wales — Ms Loredana Criniti

¹ *Postscript: Dr Howie Willis subsequently contacted the following members to request that they accept the position of Membership and Journal Liaison Officer in their States/Territories. Each agreed to be a MJLO and so the designated MJLOs are as follows:*

*New South Wales: Ms Loredana Criniti
Librarian and Archivist*

*Queensland: Ms Beth Dawson
Historian & Librarian*

*South Australia: Dr Brian Fotheringham
President, St John Historical Society of SA*

*Western Australia: Dr Edith Khangure
Librarian to St John Ambulance (WA)*

*Tasmania: Ms Roxy Cowie
CEO of St John in Tasmania*

*Victoria: Dr Allan Mawdsley
Order Affairs Officer*

*Northern Territory: Ms Gwyn Balch
Secretary, Operations Branch*

*ACT: Dr Ian Howie-Willis
Priory Librarian*

- Northern Territory — Mr Alan Bromwich
- Queensland — Ms Beth Dawson
- South Australia — Mr David Heard tabled and read the report prepared by Dr Brian Fotheringham
- Tasmania — *no report this year*
- Victoria — Mr John Blackstock
- Western Australia — Dr Edith Khangure.

At the conclusion of the reports Dr Oxer thanked the presenters and expressed his warm approval of the thoroughness of their reports. He observed that the reports indicated that much was being done across Australia to ensure that the St John heritage is being preserved, managed and promoted well.

10. **General business:**

10.1 Topics for 2008 History Seminar papers

The Secretary advised that the Society's annual history seminar continues to gather momentum, with an increasing number of papers being on offer following each successive seminar. Rather than his having to solicit papers, as formerly, potential presenters were now seeking inclusion on the seminar program. After yesterday's seminar, the following topics and presenters had been suggested for presentation at next year's seminar in Adelaide:

- Keynote address: 'Links between the Children's Hospital and St John Ambulance in South Australia (Brian Fotheringham)
- 'Sir William Johnston, 2nd Priory Commissioner' (Allan Mawdsley)
- 'Commander R. Griffiths Bowen, inaugural Priory Secretary' (Ian Howie-Willis)
- 'The music of St John: hymns, songs and brass bands' (Ian Howie-Willis)
- 'The relationship of Manley to the Order of St John (Heather Fogarty)
- 'Thomas and friends: the Thomas splint' (Vince Little)
- 'The Fetherston Touch' (Vince Little)
- 'Snakes alive! Snakebite management in St John Ambulance' (Vince Little)
- 'NATO and first aid' (Cheryl Langdon-Orr)
- 'Evolution and changes in first aid training' (Harry Oxer)
- 'First aid training in remote communities (Jan Schautzer)
- 'St John and Scouting: conjoint links in the Australian centenary year of Scouting (John Pearn)
- 'The St John Life Saving Medal in Australia' (James Cheshire)

The Secretary undertook to liaise with the named potential paper presenters over their availability for the 2008 History Seminar and also the production of papers on the named topics.

10.2 Guidelines and protocols for conducting St John museums, libraries and archives

The 2006 AGM appointed a subcommittee consisting of Ms Beth Dawson, Dr Edith Khangure and Mrs Betty Stirton to report on the production of a suitable set of guidelines or protocols for conducting St John museums, libraries and similar repositories of materials reflecting on the Order's history and heritage. Ms Dawson reported that the subcommittee had been meeting electronically but was not yet ready to deliver its final report. In lieu of that she gave the meeting an oral progress report on the subcommittee's work.

10.3 The Lynne Panayiotis Fund

The Secretary advised the meeting that, as instructed by the last AGM in Perth, he had made arrangements for the amount of \$500 to be transferred from the Society's bank account into the Lynne Panayiotis fund. Max & Julie Penaluna, Lynne's parents, who were present, thanked the meeting. They advised that Lynne, who had flown up from Melbourne for the conference would be arriving at the meeting shortly and wished to speak personally about her rehabilitation from the very serious injuries she suffered in a bus crash in Egypt last year. Lynne arrived at the meeting at this point. Dr Oxer invited her to address the meeting. Aided by a DVD, Lynne then made a presentation charting her recovery. She then answered questions from the audience. In thanking her, Dr Oxer foreshadowed the possibility of the Society's making a further contribution to the LP Fund.

10.4 Commonwealth grants

Mr Ross McConnell advised the meeting that the Historical Society could be eligible to receive various government grants for particular projects. In this context he mentioned the 'Volunteer Small Group Equipment' grants made available by the Department of Family and Community Services. He pointed out that it would be in the Society's interests to explore such grants.

10.5 The Historical Society's 'Mark Compton' prizes for Cadets' 'Knowledge of the Order' projects

The Secretary advised that, thanks to the generosity of the Receiver General (Mark Compton), it had again been possible for the Society to award prizes for Cadets' 'Knowledge of the Order' (KOTO) projects. The prizes (framed certificate plus \$50 Dymocks book voucher) for the latest competition round had been presented by Mr Compton and Dr Oxer during a special ceremony at yesterday evening's Chief Minister's Reception for conference delegates. This ceremony had been a popular success, with the recipient of the NSW prize being present to receive his award personally. In concluding this report, Dr Howie-Willis pointed out that the winning projects from the various States/Territories were currently on display in the foyer of the Priory headquarters building as part of the Historical Society's own display.

10.6 Display of historical items

Dr Oxer drew attention to the interstate display of historical objects, photographs and documents in the foyer of the Priory headquarters building. This had been attracting great interest among visitors to the building and would be sure to be of interest to those attending the Priory Chapter meeting the next day. Dr Oxer encouraged those attending the AGM to view the display at the end of the meeting if they had not already done so. He thanked those who had brought along items from their own States/Territories to include in the display.

10.7 Future of the Priory Headquarters Building

With further reference to the display of historic items and to Dr Oxer's earlier observations about meeting in the "Elsa Albert Hall", Dr Howie-Willis said that various members had been asking why the stained glass windows — one of the Priory's principal heritage items — had been removed from the foyer of the Priory Headquarters Building. He explained that the future of the building was currently being reviewed because the building was expensive to maintain, did not lend itself readily to modern office needs and had not been planned for the large staff that it must now accommodate. As it seemed likely that the National Office might be moved to another location, the stained glass windows had been removed to storage pending a decision on the building's future. Dr Howie-Willis said that as Priory Librarian he would make strong representations to the Board of Directors for the heritage items held in the collections within the present building to be adequately provided for in the new location, be that temporary or permanent.²

10.8 Amending the Constitution to make the Historical Society a federal organisation

Mr Ross McConnell, who had spoken during his ACT report about the proposal to form a St John Historical Society for the ACT, raised the possibility of amending the Society's constitution to accommodate State/Territory-level historical societies. He pointed out that it would be advantageous for the new State/Territory level societies to be structurally a part of the national historical society, with the latter serving as an umbrella-type organisation accommodating local State/Territory-based organisations. Mr Alan Bromwich supported this idea, pointing out that it would assist the Northern Territory, which also has plans to form a NT St John Historical Society. Dr Allan Mawdsley supported the idea as well, pointing out that in Victoria the previous Library and Museum Committee had reconstituted itself as the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Victoria. He said that a federal structure would strengthen the national organisation and encourage historical research and conservational work at the local State/Territory level. The Secretary said that he agreed the proposal had merit but would require changes to the Constitution. He suggested that the best way forward with the proposal would be for a small subcommittee to examine the constitutional changes that would be

² *Postscript: during the Priory Chapter Meeting on 23 June 2007 the Chancellor, Professor Marshall, announced that the Board of Directors had decided that the National Office should vacate the present headquarters building, which would then be sold. In response to this announcement, the Priory Librarian, Dr Howie-Willis, asked whether adequate provision would be made for storing and displaying the Priory's heritage collections. He pointed out that over the four decades in which the Priory had been in possession of the building, many St John members had contributed towards making the building the "St John's Gate of Australia". Professor Marshall assured the meeting that the Board of Directors was conscious of its obligations as the trustee for the Order's heritage in this country.*

necessary and then report to the membership with a set of recommendations. He undertook to convene such a subcommittee.

11. **Closure:** There being no other business, Dr Oxer thanked all those in attendance for their presence and especially thanked those who had participated by presenting reports and/or contributing to discussion. He declared the Society's sixth Annual General Meeting closed at 12.05 p.m...

Ian Howie-Willis (Secretary)

15 August 2007

Secretary's record of the Historical Society's 9th annual History Seminar
held in the "Geneva-Nyanza" Room 2, Rydges Canberra Lakeside Hotel, London
Circuit, Canberra City, Thursday 21 June 2007

1. **Opening:** The President, Dr Harry Oxer, welcomed the audience to the History Seminar and then declared the seminar open at 8.30 a.m.
2. **Attendance:** The attendance register was signed by 35 people and 17 apologies were recorded. However, a total of at least 60 people actually attended some or all of the various seminar sessions, and at times all 60 seats were occupied.
3. **Introduction of session chairpersons:** After welcoming the audience and guest speakers, Dr Oxer announced that nine papers were on the seminar program — the same as last year's record number. He then introduced the three session chairpersons, Dr Edith Khangure (first morning session), Ms Loredana Criniti (second morning session) and Mrs Betty Stirton (afternoon session).
4. **The speakers and topics:** Dr Khangure then took charge of the first morning session and introduced each speaker. As Ms Criniti and Mrs Stirton took charge of their sessions they introduced the speakers for their sessions. In order of appearance, the nine presenters across the three sessions were as follows:
 - 1 **Ross McConnell:** *'Key commemorative dates for St John Ambulance Australia'* (NB: joint keynote paper.)
 - 2 **Richard Caesar-Thwaytes:** *'The History of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch in the Australian Capital Territory'* (NB: joint keynote paper.)
 - 3 **James Cheshire:** *'Origins and continuity: how the Most Venerable Order developed in the period before the 1888 Royal Charter'*
 - 4 **Alan Caust:** *"Too young to die: The sad story of a young doctor and his wife who perished on an errand of mercy in Central Australia in 1942"* (NB: Mr Caust was unable to be present because of difficulties with plane bookings; however, he had prepared a comprehensive DVD presentation which the President, Dr Oxer, played to the audience.)
 - 5 **Allan Mawdsley:** *'Colonel John Arthur Sherwin: Commandant of Heidelberg Military Hospital and third Victorian St John Ambulance Commissioner'*
 - 6 **Vince Little:** *'The Australian first aid organisations 1940–45—precursors of the national emergency services'*
 - 7 **John Pearn:** *'Crosses — Symbolism and heritage: Emblematic cruciform metonymy'*
 - 8 **David Fahey:** *'Liston's splint: a forgotten first aid technique'*
 - 9 **Ian Howie-Willis:** *"Almost a Royal Tour": Lady Mountbatten's inspection of Australian St John establishments in 1946'*
5. **Seminar closure:** Dr Oxer concluded the seminar by thanking the session chairpersons for managing their sessions effectively, the presenters of the papers for the time and effort that had gone into preparing and delivering their papers, and the members of the audience for having attended and taken an active interest in the proceedings throughout the day. He also observed that the papers which had been presented were evidence of the diversity and high quality of the ongoing research into St John history in Australia taking place in consequence of the leadership that the Historical Society provided. He formally closed the seminar at 3.00 p.m.

Ian Howie-Willis (Secretary)
15 August 2007