



Pro Utilitate

PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE ST JOHN HERITAGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ST JOHN AMBULANCE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
AUSTRALIA

Issue 2026/1

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FROM THE EDITOR

2026 is another very historical year—the 25th anniversary of our St John Historical Society of Australia. Congratulations to all those who have contributed so much to the flourishing of this great Society and all that it has achieved. There have been too many volunteers to list to do justice to all who have given papers, contributed to *Pro Utilitate*, donated items for the library and heritage displays, and shown leadership and support. Behind the scenes are all the staff who support the Historical Society nationally and within each State and Territory, with time, expertise and cooperation. It is a good time to take stock, celebrate with, and thank them all. Preserving our history and heritage matters to us all and the wider community.

Dr Elizabeth Ellis, Editor

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With our new member database working well, it's time now to make 2026 a year of recruitment to the Society. The Australian Office comms team are helping us in this regard, but it's also up to each of us to let our friends and colleagues know about the Society and encourage them to join. Tragically, many members of St John don't know about us! We need to get our message out to Divisional level. I know that our State/Territory history groups are vital in achieving this goal.

We have added an 'Associate Member' category, so that we can keep non-financial members 'in the fold'. People in this category will still receive the *PU* by email, but not other member benefits like the printed journal. We are not promoting this as a preferred membership category.

Please save the date for our 2026 Seminar on 10 October. Note that it is a month earlier than in previous years because too many other events clashed in November. This year we will be meeting at the Realm Hotel in Canberra, and the seminar will also be live-streamed. The Church Service and Chapter Meeting will follow on Sunday 11 October.

Our website history.stjohn.org.au has had a number of improvements. The Library section has been overhauled, and a significant number of scanned books have been added, especially in the first aid/clinical category. Please visit the website and share with others.

We are very fortunate to have vastly improved display areas in the foyer in the new Australian Office, which has enabled us to display heritage items more effectively, and house the library securely. Thanks to Brendan Maher (CEO) for valuing St John heritage, and allocating the funds for our new displays.

Dr David Fahey, President

COMING EVENTS

Our first two Webinars in 2026 are designed to help members with their historical research and preparations of papers.

WEBINAR—USING AI IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Tuesday 21 April, 7.30–9.30 pm

Special guest speaker Dr Keith Joiner
CSC, PhD, MSc, MMgmt, BEng(Aero), CPPD, CPEng, MAIPM, MIEAust is with the University of New South Wales. He joined the Air Force in 1985 and became an aeronautical engineer, project manager, and teacher over a 30-year career before joining the University of New South Wales in 2015 as Senior Lecturer Test, Evaluation and Aircraft Design. He is additionally well-versed in contemporary technology areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Cyber. As a keen researcher, academic and current Editor of *The ITEA Journal* (International Test and Evaluation Association), Keith is well-versed on the use, impacts, pitfalls and considerations of using Artificial Intelligence to support the researching and production of suitable artefacts and texts for international publishing.

AWARDS and RECOGNITION

ADMISSIONS AND PROMOTIONS 2025

Congratulations to all members admitted or promoted to the Order of St John in 2025.

- * The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem: Priory in Australia — www.gg.gov.au
- * The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem: International listing [The London Gazette](#)

This webinar will provide advice for our members on the pitfalls and rewards of using AI in historical research. If you have a specific question you would like Dr Joiner to answer, please email the [History Secretary](#) before the webinar, and Keith will endeavour to have an answer for you during session.

SAVE THE DATE AND LOG-IN DETAILS TO YOUR CALENDAR.

ZOOM Login details <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83177461552?pwd=8WQtBUp7jDde59L355BUEOWbuc91GP.1>

Meeting ID: 831 7746 1552 Passcode: 056132
One tap mobile +12532050468,,83177461552#,,,,*056132# US +12532158782,,83177461552#,,,,*056132# US (Tacoma)

Join instructions <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/83177461552?pwd=8WQtBUp7jDde59L355BUEOWbuc91GP.1>

WEBINAR—USING ENDNOTES FOR PUBLISHING

August - details to come

We hope these two sessions will encourage people to submit papers to the October seminar, which this year will be celebrating the diversity and richness that has come through the 25 years of the Historical Society of Australia.

COMING EVENTS

24 JUNE 2026

The AGM for the St John Historical Society of Australia will be held online at 7.30 pm EST and all members should know that the executive positions (President, Secretary, Treasurer) are up for renewal as well as general membership of the committee. Expressions of interest are very welcome and should be directed to Dr David Fahey history.president@stjohn.org.au.

A full notice of the meeting with the agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting will be forwarded to all members prior to the meeting. Any items for the agenda could be forwarded to history.secretary@stjohn.org.au.

7–11 SEPTEMBER 2026

The next Grand Council meeting of the Venerable Order is to be held in Nairobi, Kenya.

10 OCTOBER 2026

The 28th Historical Society Seminar.

We're delighted to confirm the date at the Realm Hotel in Canberra. Call for papers and registration details for the seminar to come later in the year!

10–11 OCTOBER 2026

Message from the Australian Office of St John:

We are pleased to advise that our annual meetings and events have moved to October (instead of November) to help relieve the pressure traditionally experienced in

November and allow more members and volunteers the opportunity to attend.

Program overview

Saturday 10 October 2026:

- Women's Networking Breakfast
- Historical Society Seminar
- Evening: Annual Chancellor's Dinner

Sunday 11 October 2026

- Priory Chapter Meeting
- Church Service

Venue

All events will be held at Hotel Realm.

Accommodation

Special rates have been organised at the Realm and Burbury hotels. Use the relevant booking code below.

For both sites:

- (Close any advertising window first.)
- Select the 'Book' button in the top right corner of the homepage.
- Toggle the 'Special Codes' option, then input the code to 'Group Code'.

<https://hotelrealm.com.au>

Code: STJO091026_001

<https://burburyhotel.com.au/>

Code: STJO091026

Registrations and tickets

More information on how to register and purchase tickets for events will be circulated soon. For any questions, please contact priory@stjohn.org.au or call Kylie Seidel or Gab Lhuede on (02) 6295 3777.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE NATIONAL COLLECTION

THE 'NEW' PRIORY MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

In early January this year, members of your Historical Society's executive committee travelled to the new Priory headquarters in Canberra. They gathered to unpack archival boxes, and sort and display the Priory's museum collection and many books. We're very pleased to share with you a pictorial story of the collection's new home.



As you step out of the lift on the 2nd floor, immediately to your right is the Australian Office of St John Ambulance Australia, the Priory and the Historical Society. This is what greets you at the front door: excellent signage and the first glimpse of the collection.



The main display. Customise-made glass cases with internal lighting include subjects on: cadets, Malta, the ancient Order; the Eye Hospital, early first aid manuals, early Brigade, insignia, first aid competition trophies, international priory items, a whole case on first aid equipment, ephemera and much more.



The hallway to the Boardroom featuring Pel Fesq's leadlight windows.

The screen shows rolling images of individual collection items, with a story caption explaining that item's history.

The stain-glass window (left of the screen) is Sir Hugh Poate's family coat of arms. He was the first Chancellor of the Priory in Australia and Australia's first Bailiff Grand Cross (see [St John History](#) vols 16 & 17 for more about Poate).



BEHIND THE SCENES CONTINUED

The Priory Library. Books on topics ranging from the Crusades and Order Knights, to Priory and Brigade histories, biographies and various first aid publications over the years. Annual reports, *St John History* volumes, and more. Featured at the moment are two precious issues of the *Phantom* comic (issue 937 'Duel in Venice', and issue 938 'The Battle of Malta' [1989]). Did you know that the first Phantom was a Johanniter Knight? This is his story!

WANTED!

Our President would very much like to see a wooden bandage winding machine donated to the Priory collection for display at the Australian Office—such as this one.



THE SOCIETY'S WEBSITE

HISTORY.STJOHN.ORG.AU

The St John Ambulance Australia Historical Society's website is dedicated to preserving and sharing the rich history of our organisation. This site is already shaping up to be a valuable collection of stories, photos, and insights, contributed by a diverse group of passionate individuals who deeply know the legacy of St John.

We encourage all readers to visit regularly and keep an eye out for new updates and additions. Together, with your contributions, we can build a comprehensive and ever-evolving resource that celebrates the past, present, and future of St John Ambulance.

Please email history.secretary@stjohn.org.au to share your knowledge, offer suggestions, or ask how you can get involved.

MUSEUM OF THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

TWO RECENT GRANTS—FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Museum of the Order of St John has been awarded £48,307 (AUD\$92,831) from Art Fund, the national charity for museums and galleries, to transform access to our uniform collection. The funding is part of a total of £1.3m awarded through the latest round of Art Fund's Reimagine programme, supporting innovative collections projects in museums and galleries across the UK.

The Museum's uniform collection of over 2100 garments dates from the late 1800s to the present. Through new research we will explore how St John Ambulance's uniform has changed over time and what this can tell us about changes in society, the development of first aid and the lived experiences of volunteers. Through close visual and technical analysis, we will learn more about how

MUSEUM OF THE ORDER OF ST JOHN CONTINUED

garments were constructed, worn and used—from mass-produced to tailor-made items. Working closely with a textile conservator, we will improve the physical care of the collection and make it more accessible through new online resources and oral histories. The project will run from January 2026 until December 2027.

In addition, The Museum of the Order of St John has been awarded £18,621 (AUD\$ 35,744) from AIM Museum Fundamentals funded by Pilgrim Trust and The Julia Rausing Trust **to preserve and provide access to its collection of photographic prints**. The funding is awarded through the latest round of AIM's Museum Fundamentals programme which enables museums to improve knowledge, care and access to the nation's heritage.

The Museum's photographic collection includes approximately 25,000 unbound photographic prints which visually document the work, activities, presence, and people of the Order of St John and St John Ambulance, nationally and internationally, from c. 1870s to the present day. It is the only photographic collection in existence that comprises a near 150-year detailed visual record of these



organisations and their efforts to care for and support humanity. This project will result in the repacking of the entire collection of photographic prints into conservation-grade enclosures and boxes with accompanying box lists to promote their long-term preservation and access. In addition, full catalogue records with accompanying digitised images for a collection of 3,500 photographs which represent the work and activities of St John Ambulance from its inception to the present day will be made publicly accessible on [Collections Online](https://collections.stjohn.org.uk/), the Museum's online catalogue. The project will run from November 2025–October 2026 ready for the charity's 150th anniversary in 2027.

<https://museumstjohn.org.uk/>

CLINICAL HISTORY

INFLATABLE AND VACUUM SPLINTS

Inflatable splints

The first description of an inflatable splint was in 1942 for a fractured tibia, by Dr George Curry, a trauma surgeon in Michigan USA. This consisted of a bespoke double-walled rubberised fabric 'boot' which was placed around the limb, secured at the front by laces, and then inflated with air.¹ This device was not produced commercially. Further work by Dr W James Gardner occurred in 1960 using transparent vinyl inflatable splints to control

haemorrhage in experimental animal models. Gardner then reported the clinical use of such a splint in 1961 for a fractured lower leg.² Patented commercial production of inflatable splints intended for first aid use was reported in 1962,³ with another more comprehensive review in 1964.⁴ The device was reported to be a valuable first aid adjunct for ski patrols in 1965.⁵ Concerns were raised about the potential for air splints to compromise limb circulation, and some crude experiments were devised which showed a possible effect.^{6,7}

CLINICAL HISTORY CONTINUED

However, I found no case reports in the literature of limb ischaemia due to air splints.

Air splints gained popularity in first aid and ambulance work in the 1970s and 80s. Their use was described in *First Aid*, second edition (1980); and *Australian First Aid*, first edition (1984) and second edition (1989), but not thereafter. The recent demise of air splints seems unfortunate given that they are so light and portable, and simple to use with uncomplicated fractures.



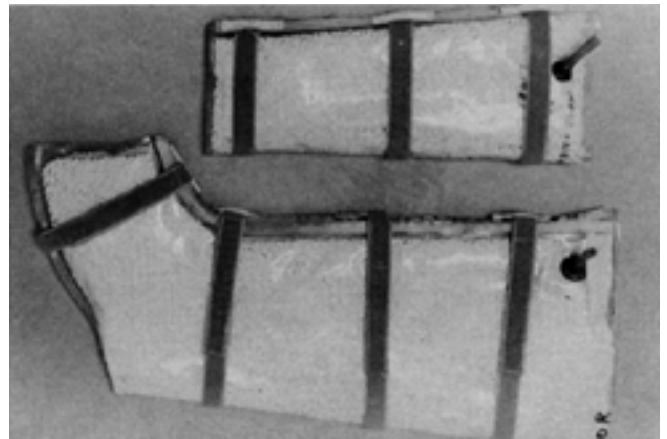
Rubberised fabric inflatable leg splint secured by laces, 1942.¹



Transparent air splint secured by zipper, 1982.⁸

Vacuum splints

These were first devised in 1973 by Dr Robert Mervyn Letts (orthopaedic surgeon) and Douglas Hobson (engineer), both of the Winnipeg Children's Hospital in Canada.⁹ Letts wanted to design a splint which could accommodate a fractured limb regardless of angulation or deformity—thereby overcoming a deficiency encountered with rigid wooden splints and air splints. The idea for vacuum splints emerged from a description in 1970 by Dr R Povey of similar devices used as limb supports during orthopaedic operations.¹⁰



Vacuum splints for the arm and leg, 1973.⁹



Vacuum mattress (showing how it 'moulds' around the patient upon deflation), 1977.¹¹

Letts' splint was constructed of a double-walled vinyl envelope in various sizes, each containing polystyrene bean-bag balls. After application around the limb, air was sucked out of the splint through a valve using a hand-pump. This caused the splint to become rigid, taking on the shape determined before withdrawing air. Velcro straps secured the splint in place. An extension of this concept was seen with the 'vacuum mattress' which attempts to immobilise the whole patient and was promoted as an alternative to the rigid spine board.¹¹ Vacuum limb splints are in current use by many ambulance services. The design has changed very little since Letts' original description. Unfortunately, vacuum splints have never been included in *Australian First Aid*.

Dr David Fahey

Notes

Unfortunately, no eponym is associated with either the inflatable or the vacuum splint.

1. Curry GJ. A pneumatic leg splint—a preliminary report. *JAMA*, 1944; 125: 966–68.
2. Gardner WJ. An inflatable emergency splint. *Cleveland Clinic Quarterly*, 1962; 29: 54–56.
3. Vere-Nicoll ED. Air splint for first-aid treatment of fractures. *Brit Med J*, 1962; 2(5297): 114.
4. Vere-Nicoll ED. Air splints for the emergency treatment of fractures. *J Bone & Joint Surg*, 1964; 46A: 1761–64.
5. Earle AS, et al. Inflatable splint for ski injuries. *JAMA*, 1965; 192: 152–54.
6. Ginsberg M, et al. The use of plastic inflatable splints. *JAMA*, 1967; 200: 190–91.
7. Christensen KS, et al. Inflatable splints—do they cause tissue ischaemia. *Injury*, 1986; 17: 167–70.
8. *Emergency Care and Transport Manual*, St John Ambulance Service for South Australia, 1982, p. 83.
9. Letts RM, Hobson DA. The vacuum splint: an aid in emergency splinting of fractures. *Can Med Assn Journal*, 1973; 109: 599–600.
10. Povey RW. A vacuum splint for use in orthopedic operations. *J Bone & Joint Surg*, 1970; 52B: 535–39.
11. Proctor H, London PS. *Principles for First Aid for the Injured*, third edition, 1977, Butterworths: London, p. 99.

AUSTRALIAN HERALDRY

JOHN WARD KSTJ JP

Arms Gules between four keys with double-bitted outwards in saltire a Maltese cross all on a chief of the Last between open hands Proper that on the dexter in bend and that on the sinister in bend sinister a Waratah flower (*Telopea Speciosissima*) slipped and leaved Proper.

Crest A demi Adelie penguin (*Pygoscelis Adeliae*) Proper holding in its beak a key Or with double wards fesswise.

Motto ‘Service and action’.*

The Maltese cross at the center of the shield represents St John Ambulance. Arms associated with people surnamed ‘Ward’ often feature keys because the end of the key that fits into the lock is called a ‘ward’, and the derivation of the name ‘Ward’ being from guard or warden, who typically would carry keys. The Waratah is the state floral emblem for New South Wales. The two open hands allude to generosity and care-giving. The Adelie penguin above the helmet holding a key in its mouth shows John’s fondness for the animal and this particular species is intelligent, curious, and brave. These qualities are echoed in the motto ‘Service and Action’.

*Source: Grant of Arms (Public Register of All Armorial Bearings in Scotland, Vol. 96, fol. 69), 10 December 2025.



NUMISMATIC ICONOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALIAN PRE-HOSPITAL CARE

Electronic banking has become an indispensable part of everyday life—many of us no longer carry cash at all! As a result, we are becoming less and less familiar with the rich symbolism portrayed on our coins and banknotes, which is a shame. This short article focuses attention on the two most recent designs of the Australian twenty dollar note (lobster). The hero portrayed on the reverse of the second (1994-2018) and third (2019-present) designs of the \$20 note is Rev. John Flynn OBE, the man responsible for creating what is now known as the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Flynn's concern for the medical needs of the 'outbackers' was first sparked during a St John first aid course in 1902. Through the Australian Inland Mission, he set up nursing outposts in 1912. But defeating the 'tyranny of distance' ultimately required major innovations in aviation and radio, the scale of which is hard for us to comprehend today because we take these technologies for granted. In 1928, the first plane with a doctor on board flew out of Cloncurry to attend a patient in Julia Creek. In 1929, 'pedal wireless' sets enabled people to call for help using Morse code. The incredible history of the RFDS is covered in detail in *St John History 2020* vol. 20 p. 12–17.

The \$20 note (top right) was first issued on 31 October 1994. It features a portrait of John Flynn, and an image of the first aeroplane used by the fledgling service – a DeHavilland biplane named *Victory*. Above the tail of the plane is Flynn's signature. There



are depictions of the pedal wireless (invented by Alfred Traegar) and a body chart for describing symptoms (designed by Sister Lucy Garlick). The man on the camel is Coledge Harland, an early inland missionary. There is a compass inside the clear window, to represent navigation.



The latest version of the \$20 (above) was issued from 9 October 2019. The aeroplane is a 1930's DeHavilland Dragon Rapide, shown taking off from a remote property near Broken Hill. A woman is shown operating a pedal radio, using voice transmission (made possible from 1933). The plane and radio represent the advances made in less than 10 years since the inception of the service. A compass is again featured in the clear window.

David Fahey

CHALLENGES

CHALLENGE NO. 1

This challenge has been offered by Dr Fin MacNeill.

Your hint—it is housed in the throne room of the City Palace of Jaipur and was awarded in 1912.

Whose could it be? And does anyone have any further information on the awardee?



PREVIOUS CHALLENGES

Our Priory Librarian, Matthew Glozier, asked 'What might this medallion have been awarded for?'



The answer—the Natal Challenge Trophy 1938.

CHALLENGE NO. 2

Can anyone tell us what these badges were awarded for?



And we're still wanting to know who this royal prince in Austrian uniform is, and what St John badge he is wearing.

Still wide open



CLINICAL HISTORY QUIZ

This photograph is from *A Century for Australia* by Dr Ian Howie-Willis (1983). It shows a critically ill man who had been bitten by a taipan in Western Queensland in 1967. He was flown by RFDS to Adelaide via Broken Hill. The picture shows St John ambulance officers about to transport him from Adelaide airport to hospital.

- What is the device shown by the arrow?
- Who invented it?
- What treatment would have been recommended (and available) in 1967 for taipan envenomation? Consider here the history of first aid as well as antivenom therapy.

There is a lot to unpack from this photo! Answers in the next issue of *Pro Utilitate*.

Dr David Fahey





**30th instalment from
Dr Ian Howie-Willis KStJ**

WHAT IS HISTORY?

A PROBLEM OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

'Historiography' is a word often used in instalments of this 'What is History?' series. That's hardly surprising because the series is really all about historiography. But what does 'historiography' mean? My dictionary says it is 'the study of the writing of history'. Historiography is not accordingly history itself but deals with what historians do and how they do it.

I was reminded of this when I came across a quotation about historiography by Henry Ergas, an academic and economist who in the August 2025 edition of *Quadrant* pointed out that:

Anyone who has attempted to reconstruct the past knows [that] historiography is a ship sailing on the dark seas of time and oblivion, and the further away the shores it seeks to make out, the dimmer and more flickering is its lamp.

Professor Ergas was eloquently telling his audience that the further historians are from the events they write about, the less likely they are to be able to write an accurate account of the scenarios they describe and interpret.

Plainly, the further back in time historians go, the fewer the documents there are for retrieving the past. For example, an historian investigating the Vietnam War of 1955–1975, will be able to draw on a wide variety of sources, including contemporary news media reports, interviews with participants, archival records, innumerable books and journal articles, and first-hand testimony by those who experienced the war and remember it. The resulting journal article or book will be a fairly accurate account of the war.

Leaping further back in time to, say, the two Roman invasions of Britain in 55 BC and 43 AD, historians have far fewer resources. Two contemporary historians, Julius Caesar and Tacitus, wrote about the conquest from a Roman perspective, but no one recorded what the leaders of the British resistance, e.g. Caractacus and Boudica, thought about the Romans invading their land. And in any case, the ancient Britons were pre-literate and couldn't write their own stories of the conquest.

Going back even further in time, to when Neanderthals occupied Britain, 50,000 years ago, the sources are even more scarce. They amount to a couple of skull fragments, a hand-axe and several occupation sites. Writing about 'The occupation of Britain by Neanderthals' could therefore be done in half a page.

Fortunately, our Priory Librarian, Matthew Glozier, is currently writing about something much closer in time—a book about the first 60 years of our Most Venerable Order of St John. His historiographical sources are relatively plentiful, even though almost 200 years have elapsed since the Order's progenitors began plotting to revive the long defunct Priory of England of the original Knights Hospitaller. Fortunately, he has correspondence files, annual reports, newspaper clippings and personal diaries to delve into.

Some gaps in the historical record do, however, exist. For instance, no one has yet found a portrait, much less a photograph, of the chap most responsible for 'reviving' the ancient Priory of England. This was a Frenchman, Monsieur Pierre Hippolyte LaPorterie (1776–1842), the self-styled 'Marquis de Sainte-Croix-Molay'. The daguerreotype process for capturing photographic images had been available since 1839, but no one seems to have pointed a camera at Monsieur LaPorterie. What a pity for those of us who believe that portraits reveal something of the character of the subject!

With or without LaPorterie's image, Dr Glozier's book will perform a critically important historiographical function for the Order. The period 1828–1888, the Order's first 60 years, is one still obscured by various 'creation myths' that have accumulated around the Order's origins.

Dr Glozier's book will clear these away. It will also definitively answer this key question: 'Was the Most Venerable Order a legitimate successor to the ancient Hospitallers' Priory of England; or was it an entirely new, essentially self-styled Johannine organisation?'

Having been privileged to read draft chapters of Dr Glozier's book. I can pronounce that in answering that question, he is well on the way to producing one of the most important statements on the history of the Orders (note the plural) of St John in the 80 years since World War II. When the book is eventually published, I'm sure those who read it will agree that its author successfully overcame the 'Problem of Historiography' outlined above.

Dr Ian Howie-Willis

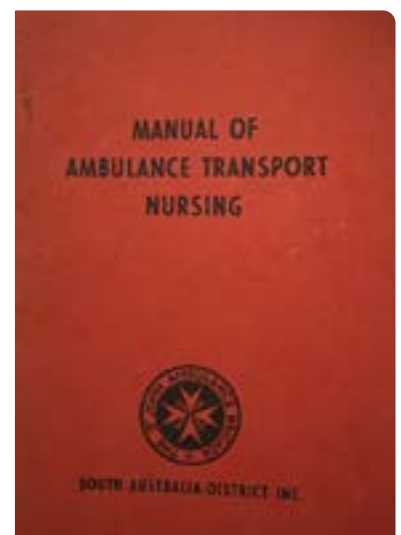
AN HISTORICAL BOOK REVIEW

MANUAL OF AMBULANCE TRANSPORT NURSING SECOND EDITION

The Manual of Ambulance Transport Nursing (ATN) was an amazing little book—it was a 'first' in many ways for St John Ambulance in South Australia who published it. I used this little book to complete my first ever Ambulance Officer training in SA, to enable me to 'work' as a volunteer 'Ambo' in my early teens. The first edition, which sadly I have never seen, was published back in 1963.

This book was written with respect and care, by a group of contributors, primarily medical doctors and other professionals from St John Ambulance SA headquarters in Adelaide. The Medical Officers were all attached to Volunteer Divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade. Hence, they were ranking Officers entitled as Divisional Surgeons with three pips on each of their epaulettes with red banding underneath each silver pip. You couldn't miss a Medical Officer in uniform! They gave their time voluntarily in weekly Divisional meetings and training sessions. They were always totally respected by all members of the St John Ambulance Brigade.

These wonderful Medical Officer's also helped with our training nights and gave lectures on many things related to both our own health and, of course, the contents of our ATN courses. To have such enthusiastic and knowledgeable people such as doctors, nurses or paramedics, in my opinion, added just so much more to our knowledge-base, that we both absorbed and eventually practised in our field work—and ambulance transports. Additionally, we could ask questions and engage totally in our training sessions, which engendered our further understanding of medical-related conditions and subsequent treatments—than could be gathered just from a first aid text or the ATN text. Recognising various signs and symptoms on our patients saw us doing preliminary diagnoses on our patients for the more evident illnesses and injuries.



Within this wonderful textbook were some great ways to recognise signs and symptoms of various medical conditions, that we were most likely to encounter, on our call-outs for assistance requiring an ambulance.

Chapter 9 heralded in a 'new' treatment for the treatment of patients in severe pain—the drug Triethyl-chlorine' or 'Trilene' for short, was used extensively in those times. It was a patient-administered narcotic that was administered through what was called a 'Haywood Butt Inhaler'—something we would probably name-change today! The treating officer busted an ampoule of blue-coloured liquid in a glass ampoule, soaked into gauze, and the patient placed the silver nozzle in one nostril, closed the other with a finger of the same hand, and breathed normally. Horrid stuff; you could smell it for miles! It could have the disadvantage, in enclosed spaces, such as an ambulance, where others could also become a bit sleepy; it was that pungent! But it worked, and that was the main thing. It had some drawbacks, however, in later treatments in hospital, such as going to the operating theatre and having adverse effects to anaesthesia. It was important that hospital staff were well-aware of the

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administration of Trilene and a red-printed tag was always placed on the casualty's left wrist to alert all staff.

Alan R Caust

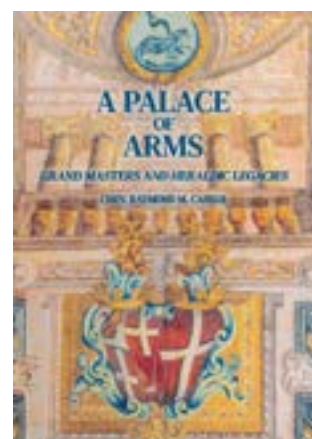
The Manual of Ambulance Transport: Nursing is available on the Society's website: <https://history.stjohn.org.au>

A RECENT PUBLICATION

Palace of Arms: Grand Masters and Heraldic Legacies by Chev. Raymond M Cassar has recently been published in 2025 by Heritage Malta Publishing.

Ray Cassar is a generous guide and well-informed historian living in Malta and this book reflects that generosity of spirit in that it includes sections on the history of the Order and the Grand Master's Palace in Valetta; explanation of what Coat of Arms means and another on The Herald; Blazon or the language of Heraldry and then more detail on the heraldry of the Order down through the centuries. The information provided and the associated illustrations make this book very accessible for naïve readers of heraldry, such as me, and an excellent resource for cadets or new members. A more sophisticated reader of heraldry will find the later chapters an interesting reference point with an almost complete list of the heraldic arms of all the Grand Masters of the Order—all except Paul of Russia.

The Editor



ONE ST JOHN. SEEKING ARTICLES— WOMEN AND THE ORDER

Dr Matthew Glozier is still seeking articles for Vol. 10 (2025/2026) *One St John: Women and the Order* (medieval, modern, future). He is encouraging research papers on the following topics:

- earliest Serving Sisters
- first Royal women members in the 1870s and '80s
- the Nursing Cadet movement
- Matrons and Sisters of the Eye Hospital
- VOSJ: one of the earliest honours available to ladies
- the Linen Guild
- female saints of the Knights Hospitaller
- the significance of Edwina Mountbatten.

So many possibilities and lots of potential.

VISIT FROM QUEANBEYAN DIVISION—JUNIORS AND CADETS

The Australia Office was delighted to host St John Juniors and Cadets from the Queanbeyan Division in March, as part of their work toward their respective Knowledge of the Order Interest and Proficiency badges.

Our resident historian (and Past Librarian), Dr Ian Howie-Willis gave a talk about the history of the Order of St John, the Australian Priory and the St John Ambulance in Australia.

The group was shown around the new Priory Office, and then the history collection. There was a lot of interest in the Pel Fesq stain-glass windows as the group tried to identify the state and territory floral emblems! And the display of early first aid equipment received fascinated interest.



THE VOLUNTEER ROOM AT THE AO

The Australian Office has a room for you! If you're undertaking research in relation to the Order (for example, your Grand Prior badge, or your essay for *St John History*) and wish to use the Priory Library or view the collection, you're welcome to use the Volunteer Room (and the coffee machine in the kitchen).

Please contact gabrielle.lhuede@stjohn.org.au, to book a date and time.

THE PRIORY'S LEAD-LIGHT WINDOWS

Those of you who have visited the Priory/Australian Office will be familiar with our leadlight windows - here's an example:



St John's Wort and the Maltese cross.

I'm looking for photos taken of the original Priory building (built in the early 1990s in Canberra Avenue, Canberra)—specifically pics showing the columns of the windows in all their glory. External, internal, indeed any photos taken of that building would be of interest.

You can email your images to gabrielle.lhuede@stjohn.org.au, or send them to St John Ambulance Australia, 6/3 Sydney Avenue, Barton ACT 2600 (they will be scanned and returned to you).

Appreciate your help! Many thanks - Gab

MEMBERSHIP FOR 2025/26

We remind you to renew your Historical Society membership subscription for 2026 if you wish to continue your benefits as a member. Membership is now current for the *financial* year and *not* the calendar year. You will find our new online membership website where you can check your membership information and pay your membership fees: <https://sjaa25.tidyhq.com/>. If you need assistance on the site, please email gabrielle.lhuede@stjohn.org.au or call on (02) 6239 9228.

As a financial member, you receive three issues of *Pro Utilitate*, a copy of *St John History*, discounted attendance fee for the Seminar and access to a wealth of information on the ancient and modern history of our international organisation.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND FEEDBACK

You are invited to write to the Editor if you would like to contribute to or raise correspondence on any of the material in *Pro Utilitate*. Contact details below.

AND FINALLY ...

The next 2026 issue of *Pro Utilitate* (2026-2) has a **deadline for contributions by July 15**. Without your contributions of letters, articles, and historical ideas the PU would not be nearly as interesting as it is. Thank you so much.

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