



St John History

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA
VOLUME 11, 2011–2012





‘Preserving and promoting
the St John heritage’

St John History is the annual journal of the Historical Society, and is provided gratis to all financial members of the Society.

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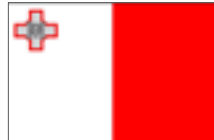


'Preserving and promoting the St John heritage'

Front cover

The pictures on the front cover reflect the theme of the leading article in this edition of *St John History*, 'Knights on Malta: A Discovery Tour'.

The images are:



the flag of the Republic of Malta with the George Cross in its upper left corner,



the Fort of St Angelo at the tip of the Birgu peninsula, seen across the Grand Harbour from Valletta,



Valletta seen from the Marsamxett Harbour, and



the Maltese Cross flag used by the Knights of St John during their occupation of Malta 1530–1798, still often flown in Malta together with the national flag.

St John History

Proceedings of the St John Ambulance
Historical Society of Australia
Volume 11, 2011–2012

Editor: Ian Howie-Willis (Priory Librarian, St John Ambulance Australia)

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Introduction

***St John History*: about Volume 11, 2011–2012**

Volume 11 of *St John History*, otherwise known as the *Proceedings* or *Journal* of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia, covers the year 2011–2012. The Journal aims to report on the Society's efforts to preserve and promote the St John heritage—as our motto implies. The Journal is the Society's principal publication and distributed to all financial members, as is *Pro Utilitate*, the Society's quarterly newsletter.

Included in each edition of the Journal are the papers delivered to the Society's most recent history seminar. In this case, those from the thirteenth annual seminar which took place in the Wrest Point Conference Centre, Hobart, on Saturday 28 May, 2011. Also included are the annual reports from the Society's State and Territory branches tabled at the tenth Annual General Meeting of the Society. The AGM was held in the same venue as the history seminar but on the following day, Sunday 29 May.

Volume 11 takes the Historical Society into its second decade. The journal has appeared annually since 2000–2001 and has survived the changes of the previous decade. The first edition was little more than a simple unbound 20 page newsletter, run off and stapled together from the photocopier in the Australian Office of St John Ambulance Australia, in Canberra. Since then it has grown progressively more ambitious and can now lay claim to being the most prestigious journal of its kind produced anywhere under the aegis of the Most Venerable Order of St John. Lest that assertion might seem to be the boast of an Editor who has been with the journal from the beginning, readers may judge for themselves. After reading the articles that follow, they might agree with the Editor that both the journal and the Historical Society that produces it are fulfilling important functions within St John Ambulance Australia, if not in the worldwide family of the Most Venerable Order.

Knights on Malta: A discovery tour

Kieran J Brown, KStJ

Kieran Brown is the Deputy Chief Commissioner of the St John Ambulance First Aid Services Branch. Previously he was a highly innovative Chief Cadet Officer. Tasmanian born and bred, he lives in Devonport on the north coast and is married to Val, the unfailingly sturdy supporter of his St John work. Apart from Army service in Vietnam, Mr Brown spent most of his professional career as a government school teacher, rising to become deputy principal in primary and high schools. A highly professional senior educator with a special interest in curriculum design, one of his achievements as Chief Cadet Officer was the thorough revision and revitalisation of the syllabus for each of the Cadet Proficiency Badges, and the addition of a range of new badges. The following article results from a pilgrimage to Malta that he undertook in 2010. Mr Brown, who received the inaugural national gold achievement award of St John Ambulance Australia in 2011, is a Knight of the Order.

Members of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia, I extend to you a very warm welcome to Tasmania, my home state, and to Hobart, the place of my birth.

I must first state that I am no historian. I am however a proud member of the Historical Society and very much enjoy these meetings and reading the Society's quarterly newsletter, *Pro Utilitate*, and of course its annual journal, *St John History*. Congratulations to the Society, a most vibrant arm of our beloved St John Ambulance Australia organisation.

In 2003 a number of Cadet Proficiency courses were updated, including 'Knowledge of The Order' (KOTO). The KOTO course, which focuses on the history and traditions of both the ancient and modern Orders of St John, is the sole compulsory proficiency badge for Cadets wishing to receive the coveted Grand Prior's Badge award. The update brought a number of improvements including a useful Trainer Guide for our hard working Cadet Officers.

Dr Ian Howie-Willis heard about our rewrite and very kindly provided us with *A Very Short History of St John*. This 43 page document brings us through the Order's fractured history from Jerusalem through to modern day Cadets in Australia. Thank you Ian, for this wonderful resource which has given the rewritten course a strong basis of credibility and authority. And thank you for your abiding interest in, and continued support of, the Cadet movement—not to mention your personal support, which has meant so much to me. I must also thank Mr Mark Compton for providing us with the annual KOTO Prize for each state and territory which is awarded to the Cadet producing the best KOTO Project.

Feedback on the revised course has been encouraging but it seems there is room for improvement in two major areas. We want to ensure that Cadets find learning about St John's rich history is fun. I



St John's Cathedral, Valletta, from St John's Square.

Brown



The former Grand Master's palace, Valletta, which now houses the Parliament of Malta and the President's residence.

expect this issue will receive due consideration in coming months when it is proposed to produce a hard copy version—an attractive booklet for the KOTO proficiency badge. That process will include a general review of all aspects of the course. Secondly, we want to provide learning alternatives for those Cadets who shy away from bookish learning and find the research work daunting.

Research learning can be very satisfying and empowering and I for one would want to preserve it in our course. However I do recognise that some students are not ready to engage in this form of learning. As a teacher I am increasingly aware of the need to cater for the full range of learning preferences which reflect the 'Learning Intelligences' famously identified by Gardner (Gardner H, 1993. *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice*, Basic Books, New York). We cannot afford to exclude Cadets albeit inadvertently on the basis of their preferred modes of learning. Therefore, to be all embracing and all welcoming, we need to accommodate the less academic Cadets and provide alternative approaches. I am proposing that we offer these Cadets 'interactive discoveries' for such topics as Malta, Clerkenwell and Australian Cadet history.

I would accordingly like to share with you a provisional attempt at discovering Malta through an interactive PowerPoint presentation which can be used in teaching the KOTO course. It is interactive in the sense that it requires progressive responses from the learner. The PowerPoint slides making up the presentation endeavour to give Cadets a sense of familiarity with Malta, its people, geography and history. The slides in effect comprise a 'virtual' tour of Malta

In my opinion, a Cadet who has produced evidence of learning in this particular mode has satisfied the implied objectives behind the research electives in the KOTO course. Such a Cadet has acquired knowledge and historical perspective and is in a good position to share or discuss the findings. One would also hope that some *affective* learning might have taken place, such as an appreciation of the good works of committed members of the Old Order. 'A Sense of Service' is one of our targeted youth development outcome attributes.

Let me now present the Discovery Tour as it would be presented to a class of Cadets working towards their KOTO proficiency badge. [At this point, Mr Brown presented a 13 minute sequence of PowerPoint slides titled 'Malta Discovery'. The slides comprised photographs he had taken during a tour of Malta in 2010. The slides aimed to give the audience an appreciation of the geography and history of Malta, with the focus being the 268 year period, 1530–1798, when the Maltese islands were ruled by the Knights of the ancient Order of St John.]

You will have noted that during my PowerPoint presentation 'Discovery Tour of Malta' I developed the following themes:

The Knights' former Lazaret (infectious diseases hospital), on Marsamxett Harbour.



- militarily strategic location of Malta in the mid-Mediterranean Sea
- Great Siege of 1565 and the defences subsequently developed on Malta
- Knights' accommodation, the auberges.
- Grand Masters who ruled Malta on behalf of the Order
- Hospitals, the *Pro utilitate hominum* or humanitarian aspect of the Order's role
- The Churches, the *Pro fide* or religious function of the Order.

Each of these themes combines to give the Discovery Tour's Cadet audience an appreciation of Malta's geography and history and why these were important in the development of the ancient Order of St John between 1534 and 1798.

In developing the 'Tour', I endeavoured to achieve interactivity through requiring some work and reflection along the way and also through trying to develop a keen anticipation for some of the more important slides.

Hopefully the Cadet will have learned key details and understandings as a result of discovering Malta in this particular mode. If any of you think the presentation lacks accuracy or balance, I would be grateful to hear from you. I expect that the 'Discovery Tour' will become available on the national website under 'Cadet Proficiency Resources'.

In very recent times and with great assistance from St John in the Northern Territory, I have been working to develop learning materials which are more suited to young indigenous learners. Again the aim has been to meet the young learner with their preferred or optimal learning preference. Early reactions indicate a positive response to materials which are highly illustrative and language friendly. Here is a little preview of that work.

Tailoring our learning programs to 'best fit' the learner's readiness will maximise the attainment of two major objectives of St John's First Aid and Youth Development Services. These are first, 'community resilience' and second, 'youth development'.

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'Not Cross, Just Quills': The Priory Secretaries of the Order of St John in Australia

James Cheshire, MStJ, JP

Mr Cheshire is the Secretary of the Historical Society. He organised the Society's thirteenth annual history seminar, which generated the articles appearing in this edition of St John History. He was a member of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch in Victoria for many years. Away from St John, he is a member of the Australian Federal Police, in which he is a Federal Agent in Crime Operations in Melbourne. He is also studying law part-time. His paper on the Priory Secretaries of the Order of St John in Australia was his fourth presentation to one of the Society's seminars. The opening phrase in the title of his paper is a reference to the emblem worn by Priory Secretaries on the left breast of their ceremonial mantles—crossed quills with the Badge of the Order.

Background

The Office of Priory Secretary was established with the creation of the Priory of Australia in 1947. The then Commandery Secretary for Australia, Commander Rowland Griffiths Bowen was appointed to the role. By all accounts Commander Bowen gave outstanding service and was instrumental in establishing the organisation's national identity and positioned it in the fabric of the community.

This paper has come from a discussion between the author and the Priory Librarian, Dr Ian Howie-Willis, on what is known of these office holders. While there is a plethora of information in relation to some of those who held office, some others are less well recorded within contemporary accounts or researchers comments.

I have been assisted by Mrs Betty Stirton, Professor John Pearn and Dr Ian Howie-Willis. We have compiled this paper of the office holders and where possible made some notes on them as individuals, their lives, and their contribution to the Order in Australia.

The Office Holders

The first viable federal organisation for St John Ambulance in Australia was established in 1941. Encompassing the five eastern States but not Western Australia, it had the long title: Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia of the Order of St John (Exclusive of Western Australia). Since the formation of the Commandery in 1941, 13 people have served as the chief executive officer of the federal body. When the Commandery was upgraded to Priory status in 1946 as the Priory in Australia of the Order of St John, the position has had the formal title of Priory Secretary. The position has had the dual title Priory Secretary and Chief Executive Officer since 1997, because as well as serving as Priory Secretary the incumbent has been responsible for the Australian Office of St John Ambulance Australia as well.

Of the thirteen people who have served as Priory Secretaries, ten have held the position permanently, two in an acting capacity and one in a *de facto* role without having the title. The time they have spent in the position has varied from several months to the 22 years of the late Charles Campbell (1937–2011). Some earlier incumbents held the position part-time but from the early 1970s being Priory Secretary has been a full-time job. In order of their service, the thirteen incumbents have been as follows:

1. Commander Rowland Griffiths Bowen, Commandery Secretary, 1941–1947, Priory Secretary, 1947–1957
2. Noel Hayton, Acting Priory Secretary, September 1957 to 30 June 1958
3. Major John Frederick Martin, Priory Secretary, 1958–1966
4. Reverend Dr Peter F Rudge, Priory Secretary, 1967–1968
5. The Venerable Eric Arthur Pitt, Priory Secretary, 1968–1969
6. Marjorie Alexandra Higgins, Honorary Assistant Priory Secretary, 1968–1971
7. Eileen Florence Butterfield, SSStJ, performed the duties of Priory Secretary, 1969–1971

8. Lieutenant-Colonel Stanley Thomas Bendall, Priory Secretary, 1971–1975
9. Charles Arthur Collis Campbell, Priory Secretary, 1975–1997
10. Christopher N. Thorpe, Priory Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, 1997–2001
11. Len Fiori, Priory Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, 2001–2008
12. Margaret Morton, Priory Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, November 2008 to April 2009
13. Peter LeCornu, Priory Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, since 2009.

Commander Rowland Griffiths Bowen, OBE, KStJ, ADC, RAN

Rowland Griffiths Bowen was born in Victoria on 14 January 1879 to Welsh born parents David Bowen and Margaret Hughes. He was the seventh child of this farming family. There is a discrepancy in the authorities as to his exact place of birth, with his naval records indicating Acheron and a biography indicating nearby Taggerty. His father David died when the Commander was only seven years of age, which was the catalyst for the family move to Petrie in Queensland. Commander Bowen attended the local state school until he gained employment with the Queensland Railways as a clerk, a position he held from 1895 until 1911.

Concurrently Commander Bowen joined the Queensland Naval Brigade in 1900 and took a commission as a sub-lieutenant. The brigade came under the authority of the Commonwealth Naval Force in March 1901. At that time it was commanded by the Director Commonwealth Naval Forces Captain, William Rooke Creswell, a native South Australian who was at the time resident in Queensland and formerly the commander of Queensland Naval Brigade. With the creation of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) on 10 July 1911, Commander Bowen transferred to the new force as a full time officer at the substantive rank of lieutenant, with an annual salary of £325 and was posted as the District Naval Officer (DNO) at Thursday Island. In February 1914, he was appointed the Assistant District Naval Officer Melbourne, a position he held until the outbreak of the First World War.

Perhaps due to the circumstances of the time or perhaps just serendipitous timing Commander Bowen married Agnes Grace Mary Bell on 14 August 1914 at All Saints Anglican Church, East St Kilda. On 19 August 1914 he was appointed Lieutenant in the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force and sailed off to war on HMAS *Berrima*. The vessel was formerly the P&O passenger liner SS *Berrima* prior to the outbreak of hostilities and pressed into service by the Australian Government.

Under terms agreed upon at the establishment of the RAN between the imperial government at Westminster and the Australian government, at the outbreak of war, the RAN was immediately put under the direct command and control of the Royal Navy as the Australian Squadron Royal Navy. The Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force was raised to engage the enemy in the Pacific and specifically tasked to destroy German wireless stations. The force first went into action in what was then known as German New Guinea. The then Lieutenant Bowen lead a raiding party of 25 reservists in an attack on an enemy wireless station at Bitapaka.

Reports of the action state that on 11 September 1914 members of the party put ashore at Kabakaul. While advancing on the enemy position the RAN element were engaged by an enemy patrol of native soldiers under the command of three German officers. During the course of the skirmish one of the German officers was injured and surrendered to the RAN raiding party. Bowen directed him at gun point to go forward and call on his comrades to surrender as there were 800 Australians advancing on their position. A short time later, Bowen was shot in the head by a sniper and received a serious wound which required him to be evacuated.

These actions by the raiding party commanded by Bowen were of particular consequence to the operation on German New Guinea as a whole. The incident lead to the false report of the strength of



Commander Rowland Griffiths Bowen, Commandery Secretary 1941–1947, Priory Secretary 1947–1957.

the Australian contingent reaching the acting Governor of German New Guinea, who ordered his small force to abandon the defence of the coastal belt with the military occupation of the colony following, without further opposition. Bowen was mentioned in dispatches for his actions in this engagement by Admiral Sir George Patey. This was a significant engagement for a number of reasons not least, of which was its importance in the Australian advance on the command elements of the Imperial German Army on New Guinea. The action received is described at some length in CEW Bean's seminal 20 volume work, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*.

However, a review of the actions of Bowen, have draw some comment that on its face he breaches the rules of war by using an enemy combatant in this deceptive fashion. All commentary expressing opinions on this issue also make it clear that Bowen would not have known this at the time. Bean states:

In the employment of a prisoner in this manner, under a threat, a breach of the rules of war appears to have been unwittingly committed. This was more liable to happen through ignorance in the early days of the war than later, when the Australian military authorities had supplied all officers with pamphlets defining the rules with regard to prisoners, and when lectures had been given and orders issued on these subjects. The consideration that loss of life to both sides was thus almost certainly avoided does not alter the legal position.

On 13 November 1914, Bowen was appointed acting lieutenant commander in the Naval Expeditionary Force, later being returned to Melbourne as the Assistance District Naval Officer in April 1915 then to duties in the Navy Office later that year. In October 1915, his wife Agnes passed away leaving behind an infant daughter. Keenly interested in the welfare of returned men, in 1916 he was appointed the first State President of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia (commonly known as the RSL).

On 1 May 1917 Bowen received his first posting to Perth, Western Australia, as Assistant District Naval Officer. On 22 November 1917, he married Corinne Elizabeth Bruce-Nicol in St George's Anglican Cathedral Perth. In August 1919, he briefly returned to duties in Melbourne until 1 October 1919 when he was posted as District Naval Officer Tasmania. Bowen held this position until he was appointed District Naval Officer, Western Australia on 1 January 1923. Bowen held this position with distinction until his retirement from active duties on 1 January 1936 at the age of 57 years. During his time in Western Australia he was significantly involved in the life of the community generally. He was the first President of the Fremantle Legacy Club. He developed a keen interest in aviation and was known to fly a 32 foot (11.7 metre) experimental guider biplane. In 1923 Bowen was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and was also closely connected to other scientific study and research groups. He lectured on international relations and economics for over ten years and had worked on the State War Council for Victoria.

Commander Bowen was prominently involved in the Fremantle centenary celebrations in 1929 and was an organiser of elements of two royal visits to Western Australia. At the completion of the visit of His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester (a later Grand Prior of our Order), in October 1934, it is recorded that Bowen received 'an autographed photograph of His Royal Highness as a token to mark his appreciation'. He was awarded the King's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1935.

Commander Bowen had been appointed as a naval aide de campe to the Governor General on 5 April 1922, which was an appointment he held with successive Governors General until his transfer to the Emergency List in January 1936. It is also noted in the reports of his retirement that Commander Bowen had served for 'some years' as a member of the council of the St John Ambulance Association in Western Australia.

Upon his retirement, Commander Bowen took twelve months furlough from the navy and travelled to the United Kingdom prior to retiring to the Sydney suburb of Vaucluse. Commander Bowen stood as a United Australia Party candidate in the March 1938 New South Wales State elections for the seat of King. The Australian Labor Party incumbent, Mr Daniel Clyne, retained the seat with 51.11% of the vote. Bowen received 36.38% of the vote and came second. Notwithstanding Commander Bowen's results in the poll, the United Australia Party won the Election and Sir Bertram Stevens was invited to form a government and take the commission as Premier by the Governor of New South Wales, Lord

Wakehurst (a later Lord Prior of our Order). I thought it interesting that in one of the newspaper articles leading up to the election, it stated in support of Commander Bowen that he ‘takes a keen interest in politics’. No doubt an attribute one looks for in a local member.

On 14 January 1939 at the age of 60 years Bowen was transferred to the RAN Retired List. Upon his retirement from the navy, Commander Bowen took on the role of Secretary of the New South Wales Centre of the St John Ambulance Association. This was an important time not only in the life of St John but also of the country moving into the Second World War. This is a role he maintained until 1944 and between 1941 and 1944 he held it concurrently with his duties as the Commandery Secretary.

In January 1940 Commander Bowen was appointed Deputy Secretary of the Australian Chamber of Aviation. This group was established to deal with such matters as additional civil aerodromes, civilian pilot training, safety requirements, subsidies to airlines, co-ordination with the Royal Australian Air Force and similar matters concerning aviation in general. In 1957 Commander Bowen moved to Canberra and was appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the Civil Division in the 1959 New Years Honours List. The citation noted that he was ‘Secretary of the Order of St John of Jerusalem’. He died on 21 October 1965, survived by a son and a daughter. His biographical profile is included in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, which describes him as:

Tall and distinguished in appearance, brisk in manner and speech, conscientious and inflexibly high-principled. Bowen probably commanded respect more readily than he inspired affection. At ease with his friends, he was a man of considerable charm and had a fund of amusing stories.

Mr Noel Hayton, OBE, KStJ

Upon the retirement of the first Priory Secretary there was a short interlude before the substantive appointment of the second. In this intervening period the duties of Priory Secretary were conducted by Mr Noel Hayton, OBE, KStJ, between September 1957 and 30 June 1958. Mr Hayton worked from the Priory Office, which at the time was located within the Diocesan House in George Street Sydney. At the time of taking the role of Acting Priory Secretary, Mr Hayton was the District Superintendent (Ambulance) in New South Wales and had recently been promoted to Knight of Grace in 1956 after only three years as a Commander.

Mrs Betty Stirton remembers Mr Hayton well. She observed that he was involved in every aspect of the work of St John Ambulance in New South Wales. He was instrumental in gaining the support of men from the Western Suburbs Ambulance Division in providing and installing the fences at the original St John Ambulance Training Centre at Blaxland, a project that he would work on from 1955 until his retirement from the organisation in 1969.

Mr Hayton completed his First Aid Certificate on 9 August 1920 and his Home Nursing Certificate on 17 October 1924. He joined Eastern Suburbs Ambulance Division in 1923, was appointed their acting Divisional Superintendent in 1932 taking on the role substantively in 1933. Between 1935 and 1951, Mr Hayton was a District Officer and served as the Honorary Treasurer. His work was recognised with a Vellum Vote of Thanks in 1937.

In 1938 he was appointed as the St John Ambulance representative to the Ambulance Transport Service Board. Mr Hayton was admitted to membership of the Order as a Serving Brother in 1940. In 1944 he took on the role as Staff Officer-in-Charge of the St John Ambulance Brigade School of Training. He was awarded the VAD Kings Bar Broach in recognition of war service in 1945 and promoted in the Order to Officer Brother in 1946. Mr Hayton was then in 1952 appointed as District Superintendent (Ambulance) which he held until he was appointed Deputy Commissioner in 1958. Mr Hayton was Deputy Commissioner until 1969 when he retired from the Brigade. During his time in the Brigade Mr Hayton was awarded the Service Medal of the Order in 1937 (number 1942) and subsequently awarded six bars, the final bar being awarded in 1967.

In the Queen’s Birthday Honours List of June 1959, Mr Hayton was appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the Civil Division in recognition of his work with St John Ambulance. The summary simply reads ‘Assistant Commissioner—St John Ambulance in New South Wales’.

Mr Hayton would spend many weekends at the Blaxland Training Centre for competitions, camps, working parties and training. He is remembered as an excellent pianist who delighted in providing the music after the evening meal. When Mr Hayton finished playing, he considered that it was time for bed which was punctiliously observed by all present. He was very involved in the National first aid competitions, not only in the training of the competitors from New South Wales but also acting as the teams’ mentor and manager when they travelled interstate. He gave endless hours each year in support of the Ambulance Divisions in New South Wales and encouraged the men to enter the first aid competitions. Mr Hayton died on 19 April 1970.

Major John Frederick Martin, MVO, MBE, OStJ, ED, ADC

At the time of being appointed Priory Secretary in June 1958, Major John Frederick Martin was Official Secretary to the 31st Governor of New South Wales, Lieutenant-General Sir Eric Woodward.

Major Martin was born in Ashfield, New South Wales on 31 August 1902. During the 1930s he worked for International Business Machines (IBM) and was the firm’s manager in Newcastle. He was an active member of the Citizens’ Military Force. Several months after the outbreak of the Second World War he enlisted at Sydney on 1 June 1940 while living in Hamilton, South New South Wales. He was posted to the 8th Division of the Second Australian Imperial Force.

The history of the 8th Division in the war is well known. The division was raised from regular army units in July 1940, split into four separate forces and deployed across the Asia-Pacific region. By February 1942 the Division was formally disbanded as a fighting unit as most of its members had been killed or captured by the Japanese. Many of those captured died while in Japanese captivity.

While it is not completely clear, from the research I have conducted, where Major Martin fell into enemy hands, it is clear is that he spent the rest of the war in their captivity. What his war service records do reveal is that he was kept in camps in Malaya and Thailand and worked on the infamous Burma–Thailand railway. The then Captain Martin was mentioned in despatches for ‘Highly Meritorious Service as POW in Thailand’. In the post-war honours list on 6 March 1947 he was appointed a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in the Military Division for ‘Distinguished service in the SW Pacific’. The citation reads:

Capt J F Martin NX12592 was a member of a POW party employed in construction of Burma Thailand railway and his efforts were responsible for ameliorating the lot and saving the lives of fellow POWs.

Upon his return to Australia he took up the post as Official Secretary to the Governor of New South Wales. He was appointed Member of the Royal Victorian Order (5th Class) on 27 April 1954 for services in that office.

Major Martin was admitted to the Order as a Serving Brother on 13 January 1959 and promoted to Officer Brother on 26 June 1964. He was also a recipient of the Efficiency Decoration. With the impending move of National Headquarters to the new building in Canberra, he decided, somewhat reluctantly, to take retirement rather than relocate to a city he was unfamiliar with and start afresh as administrative head of an institution. He died in 1971.

Reverend Dr Peter F Rudge, OStJ

The Reverend Dr Peter Frederick Rudge is one of two clergymen who held the appointment of Priory Secretary for a single year, the second being his successor, the Venerable Eric Arthur Pitt. Rev. Dr Rudge took up the position when the Priory Office moved from Sydney to Canberra in 1967. He was the Priory Secretary when the purpose-built Priory headquarters building on Canberra Avenue, Forrest, was officially opened on 29 May 1968. He had taken up duty in Canberra in 1967 before the official opening but remained in the job for only one year. He departed soon after the official opening.

Dr Rudge was born in Tasmania in 1927. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Tasmania in Hobart. Between 1949 and 1953 he was a student at St Michael’s House, Crafers, South Australia, the Australian Theological College of the Society of the Sacred Mission. The Rev. Dr Rudge

was appointed as curate to the Anglican parish church of St John the Baptist in the Canberra suburb of Reid in January 1954. This would appear to have been his first curacy. He became a long-term Canberra resident and spent the next ten years serving in parishes of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn. He then spent time in the United Kingdom undertaking doctoral studies at Leeds University. His PhD thesis topic was 'Ministry and Management'. The author of nine books on a range of subjects, he was a regular reviewer of books for the *Canberra Times* newspaper. He also lectured in Administration at the Canberra College of Advance Education (later called the University of Canberra.) After his brief time as Priory Secretary, he left Canberra for Queensland, where he set up a branch of the Christian Organisations Research and Advisory Trust (CORAT), a management consultancy group providing advice to churches. He currently lives in retirement at Tweed Heads.



*Reverend Dr Peter F Rudge,
Priory Secretary 1966–1967.*

The Venerable Eric Arthur Pitt, MA, OSTJ

Like Rev. Dr Rudge, whom he followed as Priory Secretary in 1968, the Venerable Eric Arthur Pitt remained only one year in the job. The Ven. Eric Pitt, also known as Archdeacon Pitt, was born in Port Melbourne, Victoria, on 28 December 1912. His father was an Anglican chaplain at the Mission to Seamen. When Eric Pitt was about two his family took him to England, where he was to spend the next forty years. He was a student at Ridley College, Cambridge, and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1935. He was ordained as a deacon in the Anglican Communion at Manchester in 1937 and was then commissioned as a priest in 1938. He occupied a number of curacies and was a chaplain to the Royal Air Force.

In May 1953 Archdeacon Pitt was appointed Dean of Sydney, a position he retained until 1962. At the time he had been serving as the vicar of St Matthew's Church at Rugby in the English midlands. He was married and had three sons. He travelled from England to Australia on the liner *Orcades*, which passed through Fremantle on 7 May 1953. He was interviewed by a reporter who recorded him as being a former rugby player with his sports now being golf and cricket.

Contemporary reports of Archdeacon Pitt's period as Dean of Sydney seem to suggest that he had an 'interesting' time with the local politics of the Anglican Church. His pastoral work was described as being outgoing, clubbable ministry, reaching a wide ambit of Sydney society. It was also suggested that he seemed to be rather naive and was not easily rebuffed. Another quote says that

he was impulsive, volatile, outspoken, with a breezy optimism which made him more or less impervious to the feelings of others in certain circumstances.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* printed a regular column titled 'The Pulpit' in which various clergy were interviewed. On 15 November 1954, Archdeacon Pitt was the clergyman interviewed for the column. Among other points he made when quoted in the column, which was headed 'Pioneer of Life', were these:

Australia needs pioneers in science, industry, and agriculture people who will go ahead making a way for others to follow, the Dean of Sydney, the Very Reverend EA Pitt, said at St Andrew's Cathedral last night. The title of 'pioneer' had been given to Jesus, he said. Jesus is spoken of as the 'Pioneer of Life', Dean Pitt said, 'in the sense that all time life comes from Him—I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly?' He made new life available to His disciples by the power of His risen life. Evidence of this was seen in their lives; it needs to be seen in ours.

Archdeacon Pitt was a very strong supporter of the Right Reverend Hugh Rowlands Gough, CMG, OBE, TD who became Anglican Archbishop of Sydney in 1959 and served a controversial term in

Archdeacon Eric A Pitt (right) and Bishop Thomas McCabe, the Catholic Bishop of Wollongong, in 1963 (photograph courtesy of the Wollongong City Library). Archdeacon Pitt is wearing the long gaiters worn by bishops and archdeacons of the Anglican clergy until the middle years of the twentieth century.



the position. Archdeacon Pitt saw himself as being Gough's lieutenant and right hand man. Pitt was appointed Archdeacon of Cumberland while still Dean, and then in 1962 was appointed Archdeacon of Wollongong. Archdeacon Pitt seems to have been able to juggle his ecclesiastical duties with those required of him as Priory Secretary.

When a bishopric was created for the See of Wollongong in 1969, Archdeacon Pitt considered himself as the most appropriate appointment and was greatly disappointed when he was not invited to take the position. This prompted his return to England and parish work at Cheriton in Hampshire. He remained in England for the rest of his life. He was killed in a motor vehicle collision on 19 July 1978 at Dorking, Kent.

Miss Marjorie Alexandra Higgins, MBE, DStJ, JP

After Archdeacon Pitt's departure as Priory Secretary, there was a two-year hiatus where no person was formally appointed to the position. Instead, two women concurrently performed the duties of Priory Secretary between 1969 and 1971, sharing the functions of the position. They were Miss Marjorie Higgins, the general secretary of the St John Ambulance Association in Sydney and Mrs Eileen Butterfield, the acting headquarters secretary in Canberra.

In 1940 Miss Higgins was appointed as assistant general secretary at the New South Wales Centre of the St John Ambulance Association (now called Training Branch) in Sydney. In 1944 she was appointed general secretary. Various interesting and insightful references are made to her work in the surviving records. It is recorded that a car was made available to her, after approval was given by the Director of Emergency Road Transport, to assist her to carry out her work as general secretary. In December 1946 a permit was issued making it possible for her to make valuable personal contacts in both the city and country areas of New South Wales. In 1947 she wrote:

Since the acquisition of the car I have travelled approx. 5000 miles through Central, Southern, South-Western and Western District of New South Wales. It has been a pleasure to meet personally a great number of Ambulance Transport Superintendents, Medical Officers, Lecturers, Instructors and Organisers who have carried on the work of the Association over a great many years.

The activities undertaken by Miss Higgins in her time as General Secretary were many and various. They included:

- visiting city and country St John Association instructors and examiners
- accompanying the Chairman of the Association when paying courtesy calls to Governors of New South Wales
- attending St John Investitures at Government House
- representing the Association at the Annual Church Parade of the Brigade at St Andrew's Cathedral and at several suburban Divisional Church Parades held during the years
- representing the St John Ambulance Association as a member of the Road Safety Council and ultimately appointed to the Executive Committee
- representing the executive at functions conducted by the Brigade and other organisations
- driving disabled soldiers from the Narrabeen War Veterans' Home to the Anzac Day March
- organising and attending all functions held in the Athol Mobbs Hall at St John House for the Association, including dinners and receptions
- teaching First Aid in New Guinea and creating a St John Centre there which occupied years of Miss Higgins time in consultation and organisation between the St John Priory in Australia and New Guinea. She made a visit to survey the area but due to ill health had to return to Australia without completing her recommendations
- attending Priory meetings as an observer
- attending St John Secretaries' conferences.

In 1965, when the St John Council for New South Wales was formed, Miss Higgins was appointed Secretary, a position she was to hold until her retirement in 1972. In 1969 she was appointed the Honorary Assistant Priory Secretary, based in Sydney. She would retain this position until 1979, when she finally retired from St John. Miss Higgins received the Priory Vote of Thanks in 1948, was admitted to the Order as a Serving Sister in 1952 promoted to Officer Sister in 1959, then to Commander in 1964 and Dame of Grace in 1969. In 1973 she was made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) Civil Division for her service to the community.

Betty Stirton recalls that Miss Higgins was a highly talented singer and frequently performed at St John events such as the annual St John Sunday afternoon concerts. Mrs Stirton describes her as a tall distinguished lady with a great sense of humour and a ready smile. Marjorie Higgins died in 1997.

Mrs Eileen Florence Butterfield, SSStJ

While Marjorie Higgins was serving as Honorary Assistant Priory Secretary in Sydney (1968–1971), Mrs Eileen Florence Butterfield held the fort at the new Priory headquarters building on Canberra Avenue, Forrest (1969 to 1971). Unfortunately, I have been unable to find out very much about Mrs Butterfield at all. I am able to state that she held the position of Acting Headquarters Secretary from 1969–1973. For the first two years of this period she performed in Canberra those functions of the Priory Secretary's position that Miss Higgins could not fulfil by virtue of being located in Sydney. For her services as a *de facto* Priory Secretary, on 18 November 1970 she was admitted to the Order as a Serving Sister. She departed her position in the Priory headquarters building after the next Priory Secretary, Stanley Thomas Bendall, had been in the job for two years.

Lieutenant Colonel Stanley Thomas Bendall, MBE, OStJ, JP

Lieutenant-Colonel ST (Stan) Bendall was appointed as Priory Secretary after a vacancy in the position of two years. He was a recently retired career army officer who had served in the World War II. He was born in Tenterfield, New South Wales on 13 May 1915. He enlisted in the army on 1 January 1940 at Paddington, Sydney, while living at North Head. He took a commission and was posted to the 1st Anti-Aircraft Regiment and later was appointed quartermaster with the rank of Captain to the 2nd/219th Australian Instructional Corps. After the war he served as a quartermaster with the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and later became the adjutant of this regiment. In 1953 he was appointed a Member of

the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in the Military Division for his work with the Instructional Corps. In the year following his appointment as Priory Secretary he was admitted into membership of the Order as an Officer Brother in February 1972 and was promoted to Commander (Brother) four years later, five months after his retirement in September 1975.

After his retirement Stan Bendall continued taking an interest in the work of the Priory. He was a frequent visitor at the Priory headquarters building, dropping by for a cup of tea and a chat with his successor, Charles Campbell. A chap of soldierly bearing who always came immaculately dressed in tweed jacket and regimental tie, Stan was a kindly fellow with lively sense of humour despite his apparently gruff, military manner. He died in 1986.

Charles Arthur Collis Campbell, AM, GCStJ

Charles Arthur Collis Campbell was a larger than life figure who is still fondly remembered by many in the wider St John community in Australia. He spent 22 years as Priory Secretary. A great deal has been written about him and his contributions to the organisation and to Australian life since his death in January 2011. Only a summary is therefore necessary here.

Charles was born on 28 March 1937 in Canberra. He was the youngest child of Arthur Campbell and his wife, Elizabeth Higgins. His family have a long and distinguished connection to the Canberra region with family connections as the original owners of the 'Duntroon' and 'Yarralumla' pastoral properties before the Commonwealth resumed them in 1913, after deciding to establish Canberra as the seat of the federal government. Charles first attended Canberra Grammar School and then Geelong Grammar in Victoria. After a period of travel overseas in 1955, he studied Classical Greek at the Canberra University College. Although he did not take out a degree, he read widely and was greatly learned. After leaving school, he worked for his father on 'Woden', another of the family's pastoral properties, on the southern outskirts of Canberra. After his father's death he ran the property himself. In 1970 he married Martha Rutledge, a distant relative who was the daughter of another pioneering family of the Canberra district. An historian by training, she became an editor with the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. They had two sons.

Before his appointment as Priory Secretary, Charles had been running a Canberra antique dealer's shop in which he had an interest. To help the Priory out after Stan Bendall's retirement, he accepted a temporary appointment as its secretary. The temporary job became a record 22 year tenure in the position. When appointed he had the assistance of a part-time secretarial assistant. When he departed all those years later, he had a staff of eleven full-time professional administrators advancing the good works of St John. The growth in his staff was a measure of how under his direction the Priory Office had steadily risen to pre-eminence in the affairs of St John Ambulance Australia.

Charles Campbell's community work extended beyond St John Ambulance. Always interested in history and heritage, he was one of the founders of the National Trust in Canberra, of which he was a long-term secretary. He also worked for the Australiana Fund, which places appropriate historic paintings and art works in publicly owned buildings, such as the Governor-General's and Prime Minister's residences.

Charles's productive efforts as Priory Secretary and in the field of Australian heritage were recognised through the awards of the Order of Australia and the Order of St John. He received the Order of Australia Medal in January 2000 and then in June 2005 was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia. He was admitted into membership of the Order of St John as a Serving Brother in 1974, promoted to Commander in 1980 and Knight of Grace in 1994. In 2005 he was promoted to Bailiff Grand Cross of the Order (GCStJ), becoming only the sixth Australian in 122 years to have been granted this the Order's highest honour. So far he has been the only salaried officer of St John Ambulance Australia ever appointed GCStJ.



Charles AC Campbell, Priory Secretary 1975–1997.

Mr Christopher N Thorpe, OStJ

Christopher (Chris) Thorpe was born and educated in Adelaide, South Australia. He gained an undergraduate degree in Economics from the University of Adelaide and joined the Commonwealth Public Service. At the time of his recruitment into the Priory Secretary's position, he held a senior position as a policy analyst within the Commonwealth Department of Transport.

Chris Thorpe came to St John Ambulance Australia during a period of extensive change. A series of structural reforms had been identified during the course of a review carried out by KPMG, the management consultancy firm. These recommendations included a move to a corporate model of governance with the previously separate 'Priory Council' and 'Chancellor's Executive Committee' being streamlined and amalgamated as the Board of Directors. Chris Thorpe presided over the implementation this major process of change.

It was concurrent with these changes that changes were also being made to the governance arrangements for the Order internationally. The establishment of the Grand Council, which replaced the former British dominated Grand Priory of the Order, recognised the increasingly international scope of the Order.

After spending four years as Priory Secretary, Chris Thorpe departed St John in December 2001. He subsequently became the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Diabetes Foundation and currently holds a position with the National Health & Medical Research Council in Canberra. He is married with two adult daughters.



Christopher N Thorpe, Priory Secretary 1997–2001.

Mr Len Fiori, CStJ

Len Fiori who succeeded Chris Thorpe, was the first Priory Secretary to have previously been a member of the Priory or Australian Office staff. He had held the position of National Manager Volunteer Services for six months before stepping up to become Priory Secretary and CEO. He was born in Footscray, Melbourne, in November 1956 to immigrant parents. (His father was Italian and his mother Scottish.) The family moved to Bendigo in central Victoria where he attended primary school. When Mr Fiori was 16 he returned to Melbourne and he continued his education at the St Albans Technical School and then the Footscray Institute of Technology. He first joined St John Ambulance in 1972 as a Cadet in the St Albans Cadet Division. He was promoted to Cadet Leader in the same Division before transferring to the Footscray Ambulance Division as a Cadet Leader and then as Divisional Nursing Officer. After moving to Canberra in 1997, he joined the Woden Division as a Divisional Nursing Officer.

Len Fiori's St John Ambulance membership led him into a nursing career. He completed training in general nursing at the Williamstown Hospital (1976–1979). He then worked as a registered nurse in the emergency department of Prince Henry's Hospital in South Melbourne. While at the hospital, he completed certificate level courses in coronary intensive care, and accident and emergency care. He also successfully undertook studies in business at the Footscray Institute of Technology. A succession of positions in health care followed. He worked as the community health Educator for the National Heart Foundation (1981–1983), then as manager of the Red Cross mobile blood collection units from 1984. After crossing to the private sector, he worked in marketing with drug and medical equipment companies ICI Pharmaceuticals, Drager Australia and from 1990 with Laerdal. At Laerdal, he spent



Len Fiori, Priory Secretary and Chief Executive Officer 2001–2008.

1992–1994 in Norway as the international product and marketing manager before returning to Australia as the national business manager. He spent a year as CEO for Parasol EMT Pty Ltd (2000–2001) before his appointment to the Australian Office of St John Ambulance in June 2001.

In 2009 Mr Fiori retired as Priory Secretary after eight years in the job. Shortly afterwards he moved to Perth to a position as Ambulance Service Director with St John Ambulance Western Australia. He currently lives in the Perth suburb of Quinns Beach with his wife Wendy. Their two adult children have remained in Canberra and work for the Australian Federal Police. Uniquely among Priory Secretaries anywhere, Mr Fiori speaks fluent Italian and Norwegian and is perhaps the only one ever to have been a St John Ambulance Cadet.

Ms Margaret Morton, OStJ

Margaret Morton was Priory Secretary for the six months November 2008 to April 2009. She took up her position only four days after the Priory headquarters had moved into its current premises in The Hotel Realm after vacating the iconic building on Canberra Avenue it had occupied for 40 years.

Ms Morton was born in Australia to Scottish immigrant parents. She joined the New South Wales State Emergency Service at the age of 14 and was on duty on 18 January 1977 at the Granville train disaster in Sydney, where some 83 people died, when a suburban commuter train derailed and crashed into the supporting pylons of the bridge overhead. After completing her schooling, Ms Morton trained as a secondary teacher. She completed a Bachelor in Education degree at the University of New England and a Diploma in Teaching at the University of Western Sydney. She then taught in government schools in central and western New South Wales before taking time away from teaching to raise her family of four children.

After returning to paid employment, Ms Morton worked mainly in the not-for-profit sector for community based groups. She also completed a Master's degree in Business Administration. Ms Morton worked successively as the education, marketing and promotions manager for the Cancer Council, as CEO of Carers ACT, general manager of Lifeline Australia and then national CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Moving to the commercial sector, she briefly worked as an executive with the telecommunications provider, Optus before her appointment as Priory Secretary and CEO in the St John Australian Office. She is currently the CEO of Williams Love and Nicol, a Canberra law firm.



Margaret Morton, Priory Secretary and Chief Executive Officer 2008–2009.

Mr Peter LeCornu, OStJ

Peter LeCornu joined St John Ambulance Australia as National Training Manager in June 2004. He was born in Adelaide, South Australia, in December 1952 and grew up there. After secondary schooling at Norwood High School, he completed a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Adelaide, majoring in applied mathematics and geophysics. After graduating he moved to Canberra to enter the Commonwealth Public Service. He worked for various government agencies and also completed a Bachelor in Administration degree and a Graduate Diploma in Computing Studies at the University of Canberra and a Masters in Education degree at the University of Southern Queensland. In 1982 he joined the computing services department at the Woden College of Technical and Further Education in southern Canberra. He took over as departmental head in 1984 and then in 1989 was appointed head of computing studies at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT). He then spent six years as the Dean of CIT's largest faculty, Business and Information Technology.

After moving across to the Australian Office, he became responsible for maintaining St John's official status as a Registered Training Organisation, producing course and learning materials for use in Training Branch programs across Australia. He also led the implementation of flexible learning and

e-learning across the organisation. During an office reorganisation in 2007 he was appointed Deputy CEO; and when Margaret Morton departed in 2009 he succeeded her as Priory Secretary and CEO.

In a corner of the St John Ambulance Australia website there is a Who's Who section. Contained therein are a series of questions which each person has completed to let readers know more about them as individuals. Given the context and nature of this paper I wish to share Peter LeCornu's answers to those questions:

What I like most about St John: The commitment to a single vision of helping humanity and the incredible volunteers.

My most memorable St John moment: Seeing the release of the Senior First Aid CD-ROM.

My vision for St John Ambulance Australia: To have the majority of the Australian population trained in first aid (and be willing to perform it).

Peter's personal mantra: Blessed are the peacemakers.

Peter LeCornu is married to Pam Cunningham, a professional librarian who in 2011 became the voluntary Priory Bibliographer with the task of cataloguing the books in the Chancellor's Priory Heritage Collection. They have four children and two grandchildren.



Peter LeCornu, Priory Secretary 2009- .

The Bushman's Companion: The Reverend John Flynn's first contributions to pre-hospital care in the Australian outback

John Pearn, AM, KStJ

Professor John Pearn is the Senior Paediatrician at the Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane, where he has been based as a senior clinician since 1970. As Major General John Pearn, he served as the Surgeon General of the Australian Defence Force from 1998 until 2001. As a boy, like so many others who had read Idriess' Flynn of the Inland in their formative teenage years, his life was influenced by that of the Reverend John Flynn (1880–1951).

John Pearn attended the Presbyterian Church in Auchenflower, Brisbane, for two decades from 1945 and played the organ for their services regularly for 12 years. He later (1997) wrote a history of the churches of Brisbane's inner western suburbs. In 2010, he published a detailed history of hospital chaplaincy in Brisbane. He first met Flynn's close friend and successor, the Very Reverend Fred McKay in 1957, and remained good friends with him until the latter's death. In 1988, the Reverend Fred McKay gave permission for Professor Pearn to republish *The Bushman's Companion* as part of the non-profit outreach of Amphion Press.

In 1969, John Pearn worked as a doctor in Katherine and at several remote clinics at Roper Bar and Francis Creek in the Northern Territory, and in 1970 was the sole paediatrician for four months in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. In 1987 he was appointed as Permanent Member of the Editorial Review Board of the newly established *Journal of Wilderness Medicine*. In 1988 he edited and published the diaries and memoirs of one of the most respected of the Royal Flying Doctors, Dr Tim O'Leary (1925–1987). In 1991, he suggested the name 'The John Flynn Hospital' to the Hospital authorities, for the proposed large private hospital to be opened on Queensland's Gold Coast. This was subsequently named *The John Flynn Private Hospital* and opened on 23 November 1993.

The author has enjoyed a major professional life in the discipline of pre-hospital care. He served (1990–1998) as the National Director of Training for St John Ambulance Australia and edited its core books of doctrine including *Australian First Aid* (Australia's bestselling book for two decades) and *The Science of First Aid*. He commissioned and edited the first edition of the St John Ambulance textbook, *Survival! Remote Area First Aid*. Currently, he serves on the world committee of the International Life Saving Federation and is the National Medical Adviser (Medical) for the Royal Life Saving Society Australia. A bibliophile, writer and biographer, he has published several hundred papers and books documenting Australia's medical history and heritage. In May 2012, John will become the Priory Librarian, the tenth to hold the position since its creation in 1941.

Abstract

Reverend John Flynn, 'Flynn of the Inland', holds a special place in the history and heritage of Australia. Three decades before he founded what was to become the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, he published in 1910 a small booklet titled *The Bushman's Companion*. Comprising a miscellany of practical drills and skills of first aid, and exhortatory and inspirational themes, it covered in Flynn's own words 'Material, Medical, Social and Religious' subjects.

One third of the 122 pages of *The Bushman's Companion* comprised a section titled 'First Aid to the Injured'. Pre-hospital care and first aid had interested Flynn in the decade following Federation in 1901. In this period he had worked as a school teacher (1898–1902) and later as a theological student and home missionary (1903–1910). In this latter context he worked in timber camps in the Otway Ranges, Beech Forest and Buchan, and at Shearers' Missions in rural Victoria. The *Companion* was written for 'solitary bushman'—those who, both as victims and responders, had no expectation of receiving any definitive medical or nursing care. When Flynn wrote *The Bushman's Companion* in 1910, people living in almost two-thirds of the continent of Australia were without any recourse to a doctor, a nurse or minister of religion.

Much of the text of 'First Aid to the Injured' was modified, using Australian vernacular, from the 1901 United Kingdom edition of the St John Ambulance Association's book of doctrine, *First Aid to the Injured*. Flynn's book was the first text for remote pre-hospital care written by an Australian and written specifically for those without expectation of any professional clinical help. The medical content of *The Bushman's Companion* was the first example of what was to be Flynn's lifelong commitment to the provision of nursing and medical services to all Australians. This paper is a perspective and critique of Flynn's first writing and advocacy. It

places this earliest work as an important datum in the history of pre-hospital care in the international context, and especially in the history of medicine and surgery in Australia.

With the Heat and the Drought, and The Dust Storm smiting¹

In November 1910, the Home Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Victoria published a small blue cloth-bound booklet, *The Bushman's Companion*. To be distributed gratis, it was written by a thirty year old bachelor, former school teacher, theological student and lay preacher, John Flynn.

There were several earlier first aid texts for Australian colonists and farmers. However, Flynn's *Companion* was the first textbook of instruction in first aid which spoke specifically to those without hope or expectation of recourse to medical or even nursing help. Perhaps more than many later accounts of pioneering conditions in the Australian outback, Flynn's text and its messages encapsulated the lives of isolation and danger and of those whose work took them to remote places. Besides its practical section on first aid, *The Bushman's Companion* contained devotional messages, 'Directions for Making a Will'² and a simple 'Service for the Burial of the Dead'.³ Flynn was writing for those who became mortally sick or injured in places where a mother alone buried her child, or in remote places where a mate performed a simple funeral ritual beside a grave he had dug alone.

John Flynn wrote *The Bushman's Companion* in the style of a supporting friend, speaking personally to the reader. He wrote in the Introduction, titled an 'Open Letter to Bushman':

We have a mutual love of the bush, and along with that, perhaps, a certain dread of it. If we have not shared discomforts and joys shoulder to shoulder, we have shared some of them, nevertheless, though widely separated.⁴

The *Companion* primarily imparted technical advice and wise counsel. It became a treasured accompaniment of those isolated from the centres of civilisation. Both it and its later (1916) edition⁵ were carried in hundreds of camels' panniers, in thousands of saddle-bags and in the swags of both 'Bushmen' and 'Out-backers', as Flynn himself affectionately referred to those with whom he was to identify for the remaining 41 years of his remarkable life.⁶ Flynn's writing was one of optimism. Although distressed when he encountered isolated and often unnamed graves in his outback ministry, his writings promoted a spirit of resilience, self-help and independence for a 'brighter bush'.⁷

After his ordination as a Presbyterian Minister in January 1911, the Reverend John Flynn's life became truly the stuff of legend. His role as foundation Superintendent of the Australian Inland Mission in 1911; his co-establishment of bush hospitals (the first at Oodnadatta in 1911); and ultimately his foundation of the Aerial Medical Service (AIM) on 17 May 1928 (in 1942 renamed the Flying Doctor Service of Australia, and from 1954 the Royal Flying Doctor Service)—all form part of the history and heritage of Australia.⁸

This paper explores Flynn's earliest interests in pre-hospital care, and places *The Bushman's Companion* in the perspective of his later towering contributions to humankind.

Early life

Although he left no autobiography, the details of the Reverend John Flynn's life are well-recorded.⁸ He was born on 25 November 1880 in the goldmining township of Moliagul, Victoria, where his father, Thomas Eugene Flynn was the school teacher and a Methodist lay-preacher. Moliagul is 220 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. On 5 February 1869, the Cornish miner, John Deason and his partner Richard Oates had discovered the 66 kilogram 'Welcome Stranger' on a rough bush track. It proved to be the largest gold nugget ever found,⁹ worth four million dollars in 21st century currency.¹⁰ Flynn's birth at Moliagul, eleven years after that event, was in a community composed of resilient, enduring, yet hopeful miners from all nations and of farmers and Chinese market gardeners.

John Flynn's mother, Rosetta Forsyth Flynn, died whilst giving birth to her third child when John, the youngest surviving son, was three years of age. For the next two years, John Flynn was cared for in Sydney by his mother's 18 year old sister. The latter part of his early childhood was spent intermittently in the care of relatives. His first schooling was at the splendidly named Snake Valley School. In a childhood of moving homes, he was subsequently a pupil at Sunshine and Braybrook Primary Schools and then at the University High School in Carlton, an inner Melbourne suburb.¹¹

When he was 18 years of age and unable to afford a university course, John Flynn became a pupil-teacher, employed by the Victorian Education Department from 1898. Over the ensuing five years



The Reverend Dr John Flynn (1880–1951) the man on the current \$20 Australian banknote.



The young John Flynn, about the time he quit teaching to enter theological training in 1903.

(1898–1902), he developed a special interest in volunteer first aid work.¹² It is conjectured, that this experience was to be the background for the extensive inclusion of the 'First Aid to the Injured' section¹³ in his *Bushman's Companion*, published a decade later. He worked for 18 months in the Otways, the high (700 metres) coastal ranges southwest of Melbourne, ministering to the axemen, timbermen and their families in transient logging camps, moving from settlement to settlement. It is recorded that his first aid skills were 'often the only doctoring available to the injured'.¹⁴

In 1902 John Flynn enrolled at the Presbyterian Theological Hall at Ormond College in Melbourne as an extra-mural student. As a Student Lay Pastor he served in the pioneering districts of Beech Forest (1903–1904) and at Buchan (1905–1906), the latter in his day, a region with beautiful limestone caves. He also worked for two periods at Shearers' Missions posts in Western Victoria, at Montague (1907) and at Pakenham (1908–1909) before his graduation from Theological College in 1910 and his ordination as the Reverend John Flynn in January 1911.

The Bushman's Companion

Flynn's booklet was initially published by the Home Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, under its Bush Publishing Scheme. It was printed with a blue, open weave, stiffened calico cover by Brown, Prior and Company, the Presbyterian Church printers of Queen Street, Melbourne. Extant (and rare) copies list on its frontispiece that it was a second edition, but no record of any first edition exists. It is probable that Flynn used a roneoed or carbon copied, hand stapled text as the first edition. This printed second edition, carried the note:

There has not been time yet for suggestions to come in, and the text is practically unaltered. We hope, however, that if further editions are called for in future, they will be enriched by a multitude of counsellors interested in the Bush.¹⁵

The urgency in this note probably referred to Flynn's planned departure in February 1911 for the remote Smith of Dunesk Mission at Beltana in South Australia, where he was to be based during 1911–1912. Flynn published *The Bushman's Companion* to fill what he perceived were: 'So many gaps in out-back life—Material, Medical, Social, Religious'.⁴

Front cover and title page of The Bushman's Companion sponsored by the Presbyterian Church in Victoria, which employed the author as a home missionary (pastor in remote rural settlements), 1903–1910.



Flynn was a humble man, and nowhere did he claim authorship of any of the contents of the *Companion*. The flyleaf records that the book was prepared by J Flynn, not written by. In the Introduction 'Open Letter to Bushmen' he describes himself as Editor.⁴ Flynn wrote explicitly that, although about to be ordained as a Presbyterian minister:

'We seek no denominational glory: we welcome any rivals in the field—God knows they are needed!—But, meantime, while we appeal especially to Presbyterians to help us, or let us help them, we extend the same invitation to all unprovided for, and the less religion you've got the gladder will we be to hear from you'.¹⁶

In an uncanny parallelism, the format and broad content of *The Bushman's Companion* had many similarities to Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys*, which had been published two years earlier in 1908.¹⁷ This latter has been described as:

Very much a hodgepodge, almost literally a collage, comprising seemingly unrelated materials, including quotations from his own previously published books ... [which] embraced within its encyclopaedic scope 'true crime' anecdotes, stock adventure tales, campfire hints,first aid tips and recycled advice ...¹⁸

Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys*, also involved interspersing uplifting materials with curious facts:

... To appeal to the semi-literate public ... [as] an apparent rag-bag of unrelated topics was in reality a cunning blend of entertainment, moral exhortation and practical advice...¹⁹

Similarly, *The Bushman's Companion* is a pastiche of first aid skills, counsel and exhortation for greater personal fulfilment, inspirational references, 'A Ramble among Ideals',²⁰ pragmatic advice about situations where individuals have to act responsibly and alone,^{2,3} and selections from scripture.

Both *Scouting for Boys* and *The Bushman's Companion* contain a core of first aid advice, social and spiritual exhortation, uplifting poetry and pragmatic counsel for self-reliance and resilience. Both were explicitly 'modelled on the hardy colonial frontiersman ...',²¹ and both were written as a *vade mecum* for males. The flyleaf of the *Companion* bore the full dedication:

To the stalwart men who are stoutly fighting with the heat and the drought,
and the dust storm smiting.
Yet whose life, somehow, has a strange inviting
When once to the work they have put their hand.²²

Although directed exclusively at bushmen who more often than not have to fight alone, there are multiple references in the *Companion* to the resilience, courage and fortitude of the women of the outback. Although stereotypical of the writing and outlook of the pre-World War I era, in both *Scouting for Boys* and *The Bushman's Companion* there was an identical and explicit Edwardian chivalric throughout. In the case of *The Bushman's Companion*, Flynn wrote explicitly of the advocacy for gender equality and of the:

Struggle up to equal voting power. We have almost struggled up to equal pay for equal work. And just so surely will be some day demand equal purity.²³

In the section entitled 'The Twin Soul'²⁴, Flynn spoke of the devotion of the brave [outback] women.²⁵ He described the reality where:

Home is for many of you no more than a dim hope, perhaps not even that. For others, it is a place hundreds of miles beyond the horizon, where works a lonely woman for her little ones, and where those little ones toil and play, live—and sometimes die—without their father near.²⁵

First aid and *The Bushman's Companion*

The First Aid sections in the *Companion* comprise one-third of the book. They were taken almost verbatim from the St John Ambulance Association's *First Aid to the Injured*, the first edition of which was published in London in 1879.²⁶

There exists a synergy between the author of the first first aid manual (the St John Ambulance first edition of *Aids to the Injured*, 1879), Surgeon Major Peter Shepherd in the United Kingdom; and the author of the first Australian remote area first aid manual, John Flynn. Both were Presbyterians and both conceived of the specialised needs and value of a simple text of first aid drills and skills. Both had the education, writing skills and initiative to produce a text which captured the enthusiasm of their intended audiences.

In 1878, Surgeon Major Peter Shepherd (1841–1878), a Scottish military surgeon based in London, had introduced the first civilian first aid training for adults. He conducted his gender segregated classes at the Presbyterian Church Hall near the Woolwich Arsenal on the Southbank of the Thames in London. Shepherd's pioneering St John advocacy was to bring the hitherto exclusively military drills and skills of First Aid to the civilian population.²⁷ The St John Ambulance Association's outreach, both in Britain and Australia, was essentially for city or town-based individuals who could attend formal courses of instruction. Thirty-two years later, across the world in *The Bushman's Companion*, Flynn extended this outreach to those living and working in remote areas.

It is believed that in the period from 1908 to 1910 John Flynn had lectured to country folk using a collection of lantern slides, and that some of his lecture themes comprised the first aid selections which he subsequently incorporated in *The Bushman's Companion*.²⁸ He also manifested an early enthusiasm for publishing, as several months after the *Companion* he also began publishing a quarterly newsletter, *The Outback Battler*, at Beltana. It was at Beltana where as a young ordained minister from 24 January 1911, he had arrived as a home missionary in February 1911. The Smith of Dunesk Mission at Beltana was 365 kilometres north of Adelaide and encompassed a parish the size of the United Kingdom.

Flynn's first aid section in *The Bushman's Companion* of 1910 is modelled exactly on the 1901 sixth edition of the St John Ambulance Association's *First Aid to the Injured* ²⁹. This latter was the edition edited by James Cantlie, Honorary Life Member, Lecturer and Examiner of the St John Ambulance Association in the United Kingdom. Cantlie (from 1918 Sir James Cantlie)³⁰, a Scottish surgeon from Banffshire and Aberdeen, had been the editor (with Dr J Mitchell Bruce)³¹ of Major Peter Shepherd's manual, *Aids to the Injured* in 1878. Cantlie continued this editorial role into the twentieth century.³² Cantlie's Obituary in *Nature*, in 1926, referred to the pioneering teaching of first aid to the public as an unexplored field of medical education.³³

In Melbourne, in the period 1908–1910, Flynn extracted the St John Ambulance text and used the illustrations, without acknowledgment. Flynn's Figure 2 in the *Companion*, the 'Large Armsling', is the

St John Ambulance Figure 16 'Large arm-sling'. The St John Figure 20, 'Fracture of the Lower Jaw', is Flynn's Figure 3 'For injuries to scalp, temple and jaw'.

Flynn promoted the teaching of First Aid and expressly mentioned the desirability of having books for reference, including the St John Ambulance *First Aid to the Injured*, the St Andrew's Association *First Aid*, Allman and Sons' *First Aid* and Pye's *Elementary Bandaging*. To this list Flynn added the desirability of referring to the St John Ambulance Association's *Home Nursing and Hygiene*.³⁴

Flynn particularly championed the importance of every man and every woman attending a St John Ambulance Association 'regularly constituted class...even at some expense and inconvenience.'³⁵

Flynn's 'patients'

John Flynn's first aid outreach was to men and women in isolated and remote regions of Australia. In 1910, almost two-thirds of the continent of Australia was without a doctor, a nurse or any minister of religion. The men, women and children who lived in the sparse outback were Aboriginal families, pastoralists, boundary riders, stockmen, governesses, well-sinkers, miners, drovers, railway workers, hawkers, 'townsfolk' of tiny settlements, swagmen, prospectors, police troopers, mailmen and government officers such as surveyors, water conservation officers and cartographers. They suffered from all the diseases of humankind and in addition, many types of trauma not experienced by townsfolk. Ion Idriess writing in his otherwise romanticised biography, *Flynn of the Inland*, recorded in 1932:

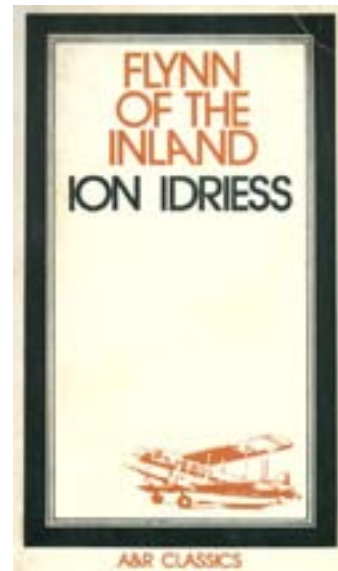
[Flynn] brooded on the distances necessary to bring medical help when in pain ... that 20 days' rough travel [was] necessary to transport a sick person from Alice Springs to Oodnadatta railhead ... [and after that to] a hospital farther south. The lonely tracks of the Kimberleys with two doctors in an area of 137,294 square miles! ... the Northern Territory with one doctor and one school in an area of 523,600 square miles!³⁶

In 1910, the Australian infant mortality rate was 71.1 per thousand. Even in cities, this meant that with an average family size of five children, one in every three families had lost an infant in the first year of life. These were the 'patients' whom Flynn foresaw would benefit from a basic knowledge of first aid. The only doctors for remote patients were often the victims of illness and injury themselves, or their partners or parents, usually a mother. In the majority of instances, menfolk were away from the family tent, hut or home for prolonged periods. In those post-Federation times and places, medical care was usually administered by the mother even if she herself was a victim of illness or trauma.

Flynn's medical authorities—first aid

Flynn mentioned the professional authority of two doctors in *The Bushman's Companion*—Dr FS Home of Adelaide³⁷ and Dr F Tidswell of Sydney³⁸. Dr Frank Sandland Home, BA, MBBS (1871–1951) was an Honorary Consultant Physician at the Adelaide Hospital and a pioneer radiotherapist. The son of a Baptist clergyman, Frank Home had been prominent in the Student Christian Movement at Adelaide University and in the period when Flynn was writing the *Companion*, was active in 'medico-political and muscular Christian interests'.³⁹ Flynn identified with Home's public and manifesting Christian stance and accorded him authority in *The Bushman's Companion* in 1910, the year before Home was elected the President of the British Medical Association (South Australian Branch) in 1911.

Dr Frank Tidswell was the Director of Pathology at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in Sydney and the pioneer scientific toxinologist in Australia.⁴⁰ Tidswell had been the first in 1898 to immunise horses with the venom of the Australian Tiger Snake (*Notechis*). In the decade before the



Flynn of the Inland, *John Flynn's 1932 biography by Ion Idriess, a popular writer in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, did much to establish its subject's reputation as a legendary figure.*

1910 publication of *The Bushman's Companion*, Tidswell was the Australian authority on snakebite and its first aid management.

Flynn also referred, in passing, in the first aid section of the *Companion*, to 'the doctor who assisted in the preparation of these [First Aid] notes'.⁴¹ Research has failed to identify the specific identity of that doctor, but knowing Flynn's reference to other manifesting Christian medical colleagues, it is certain, that that St John doctor was a senior medical authority also living in Melbourne. Flynn referred to Melbourne authorities several times in the *Companion*⁴² and Melbourne was his base in the period 1903–1910 when he received his own first aid training. The Melbourne St John Ambulance doctors of that period were all passionate volunteers. They were Surgeon-Major George Horne of the Army Medical Corps, Dr Charles Bage, Chairman of the St John Ambulance Association in 1909 and Dr JW Springthorpe, the Chairman of the St John Council 1906 and the first Knight of the Order of St John in Victoria.⁴³

Dr George Horne (1860–1927) was an obstetrician and gynaecologist in Melbourne and the founder of the St John Ambulance Brigade and first Commissioner in Victoria in the period of Flynn's training and lecturing in St John first aid.⁴⁴ He had a passionate interest in the outback. In 1923 Horne was to lead an expedition to Central Australia, east of Lake Eyre, the ethnographic and anthropologic details of which featured in his book, *Savage Life in Central Australia*.⁴⁵ Dr Charles Bage (1859–1930) was a prominent general medical practitioner in South Yarra from 1884 until 1925⁴⁶ and a leading personality in St John Ambulance in Victoria in the first decade of the twentieth century. He was the St John Chairman in 1909,^{43–46} when Flynn was writing the *Companion*. Bage was a devout member of the Church of England, was a vestryman at Christ Church in South Yarra and later was to be a member of the Victorian Diocesan Synod. John William Springthorpe (1855–1933) was a prominent Melbourne physician, paediatrician, writer and leader in collegiate medicine in the St John Ambulance Association in the year of Flynn's first aid interests. In 1881, Springthorpe was the first Australian medical graduate to be admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.⁴⁷ Dr Springthorpe was a devout Methodist and the Chairman and President of the St John Ambulance Association Council of Victoria from 1906 until 1916.⁴⁸ Springthorpe's famous tomb and sculpture, as a dramatic and beautiful memorial to his first wife in the Booroondara Cemetery at Kew, bears the inscription: 'Behind all shadows standeth God'.

These three devout Christian doctors and leading St John personalities in the first aid movement in Melbourne were all contemporaneous of John Flynn when he was writing the first aid section in *The Bushman's Companion*.

The Bushman's Companion—1916 Edition

The success of the 1910 booklet encouraged Flynn to produce an expanded third (1916) edition, formally printed as the 'Second Edition'. Prior to 1916, 6000 copies of the *Companion* had been printed by both the Victorian and New South Wales Home Missions Committees of the Presbyterian Church. As Flynn put it in his Preface to the AIM Edition of 1916, 'A good deal of water has flowed under the bridge'.¹⁶

By 1916, Flynn had established the Australian Inland Mission and had co-founded outback hospitals and nursing posts in many remote areas. He had also travelled extensively by camel, horse and buggy throughout South Australia and the Northern Territory. He had also attended conferences in Melbourne and Sydney, travelled by ship to Darwin and had visited the outposts of Katherine, Bathurst Island and Adelaide River. In addition, he had written reports for the Church Home Mission Directors and in 1913 had established the magazine, *The Inlander*.

The 1916 edition of *The Bushman's Companion* was essentially unchanged. Flynn made only trivial changes to the text, and these applied exclusively to the removal of suggestions about seeking funds to support its publication. For example, the suggestion that recipients of the booklet might contribute a voluntary 'trifle towards financing, so much the better, but that is not a condition',⁴⁸ was removed. Removed also was the earlier reference to the charitable support of first aid kits as Flynn felt that by 1916 'we cannot afford to give them away'.⁴⁹ The AIM had not been established when the 1910 edition was written, and the 1916 edition replaced the contact authorities of the former 'Mailbag League' with that of the AIM.⁵⁰

Flynn made no change to his first aid doctrine in the 1916 edition. The doctrine remained that of the 1901 St John Ambulance (UK) textbook. Although the field of first aid was intensely conservative in that era, minor changes had occurred in the dogmatic texts of the St John Ambulance manuals over this period. For example, the twelfth edition of the St John *First Aid to the Injured*, in its management on snakebite had removed the necessity for the first aider to suck out the venom from the bite site.⁵¹ That edition (1909) also no longer recommended 'spirits, whiskey or brandy, to be freely administered', to victims of snakebite, both of which interventions had been part of the 1901 Edition of the St John First Aid Manual.⁵²

A publication to be emulated

The teaching of first aid, specifically aimed at those working, travelling or adventuring 'beyond the beaten track' saw no further development over the ensuing decades. The advent of Alfred Traeger's pedal radio (1926) and Flynn's foundation of the Flying Doctor Service in 1928, initiated the era of practical medical communication, if not the reality of hands-on professional emergency treatment to many in the outback. Nevertheless, several (including the present author) saw the need for the development of modern doctrine specifically aimed at pre-hospital care in remote areas.

In 1989, an enthusiastic St John Ambulance member, Alan Caust, was one who also saw this need. He began the draft of a text which contained modern First Aid doctrine written from his experience as a professional nurse working in the outback.⁵³ On 24 June 1990 (St John Day), the present author was appointed as the National Director of Training for St John Ambulance Australia, with the responsibility of developing modern First Aid doctrine, and promoting the profession of pre-hospital care, and commissioning and publishing St John Ambulance textbooks. I commissioned, as a first endeavour, Alan Caust's text, and with the aid of Alison Verhoeven and Lynne MacDonald, partly re-wrote and edited Mr Caust's text. The new book, the successor to Flynn's *Companion*, was published as *Survival! Remote Area First Aid* in 1991.⁵⁴ In the Foreword, I wrote, in the spirit of Flynn's former outreach to fill an unmet need:

When injuries occur in remote places, they assume a significance quite different from those managed in populated areas. In no more dramatic sense can someone with basic first aid skills literally save lives ... Modern concepts of first aid combine two philosophies—the skilled self-management of injuries and sudden illness on the one hand, and prevention on the other. In no circumstances are these two themes more important than in the remote areas of Australia and its offshore islands.⁵⁵

Many thousands of copies of this book, and a subsequent edition, have now been published.⁵⁶



The Bushman's Companion was a precursor to the later remote area first aid manuals published by St John Ambulance Australia.

Conclusion

Flynn's memorials are extensive. His functional memorials are not only the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, but also aeromedical evacuation in all its 21st century sophistication, both nationally and internationally. Flynn is portrayed on postage stamps⁵⁷ and his work on coins.⁵⁸ Small and moving memorials are to be found throughout South Australia and the Northern Territory and one also at his birthplace at Moliagul in Victoria.⁸ He is featured on the Australian twenty dollar note. The Federal Electorate of Flynn in Queensland, the John Flynn Private Hospital at Tugun on Queensland's Gold Coast⁵⁹ and the Canberra suburb Flynn are also enduring witnesses to his service. Numerous biographies record his life and work.⁶ In 2010, Qantas announced that one of its new Airbus 380's, the 'John Flynn', was to be named as an ongoing witness of his influence in the development of aviation.⁶⁰

In this perspective, *The Bushman's Companion*, Flynn's first published writing, is a small and unpretentious booklet. Its contents nevertheless heralded Flynn's interests: service to those who lived and worked in the pioneering outback, first aid and pre-hospital care, medicine, the importance of self-reliance and empowerment especially in isolation, and the underlying ethos of the goodness of all humankind.

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The original St John ambulance: A two-wheeled cart that gave a world-wide organisation its name

Ian Howie-Willis, OAM, KStJ

Dr Howie-Willis is a professional historian. He joined St John 32 years ago, recruited by the Priory Secretary, the late Charles Campbell, AM, GCStJ to produce the centenary history A Century for Australia: St John Ambulance in Australia 1883–1983. Since then he has produced five other commemorative St John histories. He is the retiring Priory Librarian, relinquishing the position after three triennia. He was the foundation secretary of this Historical Society, but now serves the Society by editing this journal as well as the Society's quarterly newsletter. He was the coeditor of Celebrating women in St John: Our past, present and future, a history of women in St John Ambulance Australia, which is being launched by the Prior, Her Excellency the Governor-General, Quentin Bryce, in Sydney in May 2012. His latest publication is A Medical Emergency: Major-General 'Ginger' Burston and the Army Medical Service in World War II, a biography of the inaugural Chief Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Australia, Major-General Sir Samuel Roy Burston (1888–1960). His next writing project is a history of the Australian Army's continuing campaign against malaria.

The Ashford Litter, a patented invention dating from the late 1870s, is essentially a removable stretcher mounted on a frame having retractable legs and light cartwheels. A 'litter' is any kind of portable bed on which a patient can be moved. The term comes from an old French word, *litière* (= 'bed' or 'couch'), which is derived from the mediaeval Latin *lectaria*, meaning 'bed'.

Because the Ashford Litter was also a wheeled stretcher that stretcher-bearers walked from one place to another, it was also known as an 'ambulance'. 'Ambulance' is an English noun derived from the French adjective 'ambulant', that is, 'capable of walking'. According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, the original idea of an ambulance being 'a vehicle equipped for taking sick or injured people to hospital' was borrowed from the nineteenth century French term *hôpital ambulant*, meaning 'mobile hospital'. 'Mobile hospital' in this case did not imply the kind of 'highly technical' life support systems that present-day ambulances have evolved into but something much more rudimentary—either a horsedrawn vehicle for transporting the sick and injured or a wheeled conveyance propelled by human muscle power.



The iconic Ashford Litter. Marketed by the Ambulance Department of the Order of St John from 1879, it continued being sold by the St John Ambulance Association until at least 1939. Over time, various improvements were made, the first being the addition of the fold-up hood fitted to the litter in this photograph.

Why call it an ‘Ashford’ litter

Ashford is the town in Kent, England, where the Order of St John had a series of such litters manufactured from about 1879. The instigator of the litter manufacturing project was Sir John Furley (1836–1919), one of the bright young men brought into the Order by the 7th Duke of Manchester, the Order’s Grand Prior 1863–1888. Furley lived in Ashford, where he engaged a local wheelwright, Paul Headley of Headley’s Wheel Works, to manufacture them at his factory.

Furley patented the litter on behalf of the Order. He had seen similar litters used by the Prussian army medical units during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1877, in which he had served as a volunteer with the neutral Anglo-American Ambulance Unit, providing medical aid to both combatants. The Prussian litters, known as ‘Neuss’ litters because they were produced by the Berlin firm Messrs. Neuss, carriage makers to the Prussian government, had first been used in the Prussian-Danish war of 1864. Neuss’s was not the only such litter available. An Austrian army surgeon, the Baron Jaromir von Mundy (1822–1894), had also developed a lightweight wheeled stretcher. The British Army also used litters of various kinds. Among those it had used in the past was a device called the ‘Chinese’ litter or ‘ambulance barrow’, a hand propelled two-wheeled cart something like a street vendor’s barrow with a stretcher fitted above. By about the 1870s the Army had adopted a standardised litter known simply as the ‘standard military two-wheeled stretcher’. Furley believed that the various litters on offer were too cumbersome and unstable for battlefield use, so on returning to England from the war in France he began thinking about what the features of an improved model might be.

The ‘Neuss’ two-wheeled litter produced in Berlin, from 1864 by Messrs Neuss, carriage builders to the Prussian Government. It was this litter that Surgeon-Major Manley VC and John Furley saw in use during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871.



In the meantime the Order of St John had begun sponsoring the production of a device known as the ‘St John’ litter. Modelled on the Neuss, it had a pair of ‘V’ shaped front legs to give it greater stability when standing. It also carried a detachable stretcher, which enabled patients to be more easily moved into hospitals and field operating theatres. By 1874 the Order was marketing the ‘St John’ with a £16 price tag. Who designed the ‘St John’ is uncertain, but it could have been Surgeon-Major William GN Manley, VC of the Royal Artillery. Manley, who had won his VC in 1864 during the Maori Wars, helped establish the Ambulance Department of the Order of St John during the mid-1870s. With Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd (of ‘Little Black Book’ fame), he had been instrumental in setting up ambulance services at Burslem and Wolverhampton in Staffordshire in 1872, using ‘Neuss’ two-wheeled litters, which, like Furley, he had seen being used by the Prussians in the 1870–1871 Franco-Prussian War. In 1875 Manley was granted ‘Letters Patent’ by Queen Victoria giving him the sole rights for 14 years to an ‘improved wheeled ambulance litter’. What Manley’s litter looked like is a mystery because the Letters Patent contain only a vague description and no plans or drawings, and no pictures of it survive in the contemporary literature. If the ‘Manley’ was indeed one and the same device as the ‘St John’, by the end of the 1870s it was eclipsed by Sir John Furley’s much more famous and iconic ‘Ashford Litter’, which the Order marketed for at least 60 years, from about 1879 to 1939.

Apparently not content with the ‘St John’ litter, Furley set about developing an improved model. The result was his Ashford—a lightweight, manoeuvrable two-wheeled trolley or gurney with four fold-up legs, which the Neuss and ‘St John’ litters had lacked. Furley’s litter carried an easily detachable, folding canvas ‘Furley’ stretcher, which he had also designed. The stretcher could be securely clipped into position on the frame when being wheeled, and the clips were fast-release, enabling the stretcher to be swiftly detached from the frame. One special feature was a low slung U-shaped axle which allowed the stretcher-bearer at the rear to step over the axle and through the unit after the stretcher had been detached for movement indoors. This was easier and more convenient than lifting the stretcher up and over the 3 foot 6 inch diameter wheels. Why Furley used such large wheels is an interesting point. One suggestion is that he simply used the standard wheels of the common horsedrawn Hackney cab. Perhaps such wheels were a staple product at Headley’s Wheel Works—if so, using them would have been more economical than tooling up to produce a smaller, odd size.

The St John Ambulance Litter about 1874. It was modelled on the ‘Neuss’. Who designed it is uncertain, but possibly it was the litter for which Surgeon-Major William GN Manley, VC received ‘Letters Patent’ in 1875.



The ambulance department of the Order of St John

To superintend the manufacturing and marketing of its ‘St John’ litter, the Order established an Ambulance Committee in 1874, a name soon changed to Ambulance Department. To provide instruction for the operators of its Ashford Litters and for the general public, in 1877 the Order’s Ambulance Department established the St John Ambulance Association to teach first aid. Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd’s 1878 first aid manual was adopted as the course handbook. Published as *First Aid to the Injured* from 1885, it survived through some 40 editions until 1958 and became affectionately known as ‘the Little Black Book’. Then in 1887, the Ambulance Department established the St John Ambulance Brigade, to provide a disciplined and uniformed public first aid field service. Many of the Brigade divisions that soon proliferated acquired their own litters, mostly ‘Ashfords’, for transporting the casualties they handled.

By the time the Brigade formed in 1887, the official term for the Order’s litter was ‘the St John Ambulance’. The reason for this was that in April 1875 the Ambulance Department decided that henceforth its litters should be called ‘St John Ambulances’ rather than simply ‘St John litters’. Why I’m not yet sure, however, my guess is that it was to do with marketing. I suspect that the Order wished its litter to be ‘branded’ with the name of the organisation under whose auspices it was being produced—‘St John’ because of the Order that sponsored the litters’ production and ‘Ambulance’ because that’s what such litters were deemed to be. Very soon ‘St John Ambulance’ came to mean both the litters or ‘ambulances’ and the organisation that produced them. The formation of the St John Ambulance Association and the St John Ambulance Brigade confirmed such usage.

And so the new name of a stretcher on cartwheels became that of a great worldwide organisation. The name is an eponym. Eponyms are those words signifying inventions named after their inventors, for example the Biro ball-point pen (named for Laszlo Biro), the Braille alphabet (named after Louis

Braille) and the ‘Thomas Splint’ (named after the Welsh surgeon, Hugh Owen Thomas, who first developed it). ‘St John Ambulance’, however, is a reverse eponym because in this case the invention has given its name to the organisation manufacturing it rather than vice-versa. If you’ve ever wondered why we’re called ‘St John Ambulance’ when our organisation is only sometimes involved in ambulance transport, the reason is that we’re named after the contraption our organisation once marketed—the detachable stretcher on cart wheels.

Development from earlier litters and ambulances

The ambulance litter had a long history. Stretchers and carts for removing injured soldiers from the battlefield had been in use for centuries. The earliest record of an ambulance vehicle was a cart equipped with a hammock constructed about 900 AD by the Anglo-Saxons. The Normans later used a litter suspended between two horses. Elsewhere and later, litters were carried by donkeys, camels and elephants. This led to the development of the ‘cacolet’, a French dialectal word from the Pyrenees meaning a horse-mounted litter. The cacolet could be a pair of chairs or litters slung on either side of the beast of burden. Notorious in this mode of patient transport was the camel cacolet, where a pair of litters straddled a camel’s hump. Colonel Rupert Downes, chief Australian Army Medical Corps officer in the Sinai and Palestine desert campaigns of World War I (and a later Victorian St John Ambulance Commissioner) described it as ‘the most uncomfortable form of wounded transport ever devised’. Despite that, camel cacolets were widely used in the desert campaigns of World War I because they could be used in sandy or rough terrain where wheeled ambulances couldn’t go.

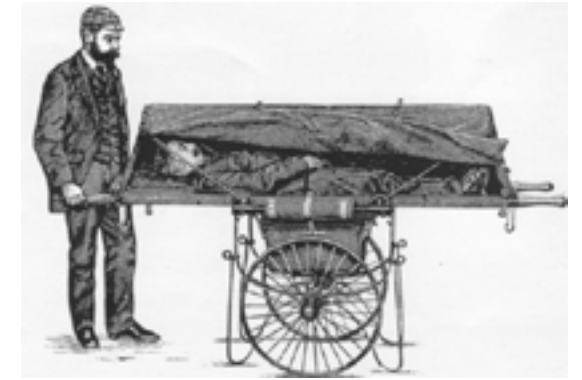
In 1797 Napoleon’s chief military surgeon, Baron Dominique-Jean Larrey (1766–1842), designed and built a lightweight two-wheeled, horsedrawn ambulance cart for rapidly evacuating the injured from the battlefield during the Italian campaigns. It soon became known as the *ambulance volante* or ‘flying ambulance’. Other armies later developed their own versions of Larrey’s two-wheeled ambulance. During the American Civil War for instance, two Union military physicians, Joseph Barnes and Jonathan Letterman, developed Larrey’s ‘flying ambulance’ further, producing a lightweight, two-wheeled ambulance wagon that could accommodate up to three patients. Every regiment had at least one of these.

The American Civil War also gave rise to the use of various other ambulance vans by the combatants, both Unionists and Confederates. Usually named after those who developed them, there were both two and four-wheeled varieties. Among others were the Coolidge and Finley two-wheelers and the Howard and Moses four-wheelers. By the end of the Civil War horsedrawn ambulance vans like these were being used to provide civilian ambulance services in some cities. The Cincinnati General Hospital in Ohio was the first to offer such a service, in 1865. The Bellevue Hospital in New York began a service in 1869. This aimed to bring patients to hospital faster and more comfortably. It boasted that its ambulance vans were ready to go within 30 seconds of receiving a call. The service proved popular and grew rapidly. If not in the UK and Europe, then in the US by the 1870s the era of public ambulance transport had arrived, at least in the larger cities.

Similar litters elsewhere

The ‘Neuss’, ‘St John’ and ‘Ashford’ litters were only three among a bewilderingly wide range of similar litters being produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. All were essentially ‘look-alikes’—detachable stretchers mounted on two large wheels. But local ingenuity, the advancement of wheel making technology (especially the invention of the pneumatic tyre) and an urge to make the patient’s ride more comfortable resulted in wide variation. There are, accordingly, so many similar ambulance litters that my friend Vince Little of Toowoomba, an authority on early ambulance transport, tells me that the title of this article should be ‘Will The Real Ashford Litter Please Stand Up’.

As if to make things difficult for later St John historians, the original ‘St John’ litter and Furley’s later Ashford were not the only litters in which the Order had an interest. By the early 1890s, various other models were being marketed.

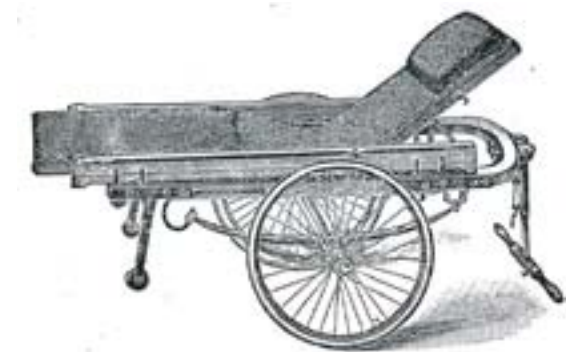


The extraordinary ‘Furley-Headley’ litter. It could carry two patients sitting (left) or one lying (right), and the legs could be raised and lowered. How stable it was when carrying two patients is a matter that invites speculation.

Furley and his business partner, Paul Headley of Headley’s Wheel Works in Ashford, were advertising another litter—the ‘Furley-Headley’, an extraordinary device manufactured by the Military Equipment Stores & ‘Tortoise’ Tent Company of 61 Pall Mall, London. It had fold up backrests to enable two patients to be seated back-to-back; the backrests could be lowered to allow one patient to be carried lying down. It had four legs or supports that could be lowered when the litter was stationary and raised for travel. The wheels could be either bicycle type or wooden with steel rims. A canvas cover was an optional extra for the carriage of recumbent patients. The Order’s Ambulance Department does not seem to have promoted the ‘Furley-Headley’, but eventually it marketed three other wheeled litters.

In addition to the ‘Ashford’, the Ambulance Department advertised the ‘Rea-Edwards’, the ‘Clemetson’ and, confusingly, the (new) ‘St John’. The ‘Rea-Edwards’ differed from the ‘Ashford’ by having a straight axle, legs at only the front end of the frame, rounded framework at the rear end and a ‘push-bar’ that could be raised to form a handle or lowered and locked into position as a third or rear leg. The ‘Rea-Edwards’ could be bought with either light cart wheels or 28 inch bicycle wheels. The ‘Clemetson’ was really a padded stretcher with adjustable head section that could be fitted to a modified ‘Rea-Edwards’ frame having trolley wheeled front legs and extra springs. The new ‘St John’, according to the Ambulance Department, represented an advance over previous litters because it was designed to carry the ‘regulation’ military stretcher of the Royal Army Medical Corps as well as the ‘Furley’ and ‘Clemetson’ stretchers. It had a straight axle and, instead of the four legs of the ‘Ashford’, a pair of central ‘Y’ shaped retractable legs fore and aft, which, according to the sales blurb, rendered it more manoeuvrable while not sacrificing stability when stationary. Further, once the stretcher had been detached, the wheels could be readily removed and the frame dismantled into three sections to allow

The ‘Clemetson’ stretcher on a ‘Rea-Edwards’ frame (bicycle wheeled model). The straight axle, trolley type wheels on the front legs and the ‘push-bar’ lowered to form a third, rear leg.



The original St John ambulance



The 'new St John' litter fitted with 'Regulation Military Stretcher'. It has central 'Y-shaped' retractable legs fore and aft.

for ease of storage. The blurb claimed that one person could reassemble the new 'St John' within three minutes. The Ambulance Department continued marketing its 'Furley' and 'Clemetson' stretchers and its 'Ashford', 'Rea-Edwards' and new 'St John' litters until the outbreak of World War II. Thus, according to the St John Ambulance 1939 *Price List*, if you had £16 you could still buy the basic 'Ashford', though if you wanted all the accessories such as hemi-cylindrical cover and detachable first aid kit you would have to pay more. The 'Ashford', if not the other litters, therefore continued in production for at least 60 years.

Despite the longevity of 'Ashford', its inventor, John Furley, could have taken little pleasure from that because the marketing of the litter had prompted his exit from St John Ambulance. About 1908 there were grumbings in some quarters of the organisation that he was profiting personally from the sale of the litters. Deeply aggrieved, he withdrew from St John and henceforth devoted his energies to British Red Cross, of which he was a co-founder.

Meanwhile, and elsewhere, other manufacturers had produced a range of wheeled litters more or less resembling those that St John marketed. In England, for example, there was the cumbersome 'Diogenes', a two-wheeled ambulance van with cabin. Produced by Headland & Co. of Brighton, it could carry two patients sitting opposite each other or lying bunk style one above the other. There was also a litter called the 'Devon VAD cart', the manufacturers of which claimed it had been produced specifically for use by the Voluntary Aid Detachments, i.e. ancillary military-medical units. It was a litter that came with a range of useful accessories—extension ladder, spade, cross-cut saw, sledge hammer, axe and crowbar—enabling it to be set up as a mobile first aid post in forward field positions.

In Dundee, Scotland, a litter with four wheels was used. As well as the two large outer wire spoke wheels with mudguards, there were two small central wheels fore and aft to prevent the litter from tipping forwards or backwards while in motion. In Germany the elaborately sprung *Raederbahre* (wheeled litter) of 1900 had an anti-tipping frame, pneumatic tyres with wire spokes, a folding hood and an end-board to prevent the patient from sliding off feet first. Britain's Royal Army Medical Corps used a similar, simpler litter on the Western Front in World War I.

In the USA by the late nineteenth century, the Army was using something similar but of tubular steel construction and heavier, motorcycle type wheels. This type had hand grips for moving the litter into place while the stretcher was detached from it. Tubular steel also formed the framework for an elaborate litter produced in the Netherlands. This was a three-wheeled variety propelled by two ponies, which were saddled within the framework behind the front swivel wheel. The patient lay on a hammock suspended from the frame above the ponies and sheltered by a canopy, while the driver stood at the back, alongside a seated attendant, who watched over the patient.

After motor cycles had been invented during the mid 1890s, litters were quickly adapted for use as sidecars, giving rise to the motorcycle ambulance. These were widely used by the various combatants during both World Wars I and II. In recent times they have made a comeback in some African nations where the roads are too rough for conventional ambulances. Motorcycle ambulances were also being used by Australian civil ambulance authorities by the later years of the First World War. In Melbourne

Howie-Willis

the St John sponsored Victorian Civil Ambulance Service bought its first motorcycle ambulance during 1917–1918. The sidecar didn't look much like an Ashford Litter, but the sidecar litters of other types of motorcycle ambulances did show their ancestry in design and appearance.

The Ashford litter in Australia

The first Ashford Litters to arrive in Australia seem to have been a group of six imported to Melbourne in 1889–1890 by the local St John Ambulance Association Centre. Their purchase was made possible by a St John fundraising campaign in 1887 augmented by the gift of £120 from Lady Janet Clarke, the wife of the patron of the Centre, Sir William Clarke. The Centre did not establish an ambulance service with its litters but instead placed one of them at the Melbourne Town Hall, one at the Eastern Hill Fire Station and four at police stations around the central business district—at Russell Street, Bourke Street, King Street and West Melbourne. Because each of these places was already connected to the telephone service, litters could be quickly summoned to street accidents. The policemen and firemen, who ideally all possessed the St John Ambulance first aid certificate, operated the service, which proved so popular that the St John Ambulance Association Centre began making plans to raise the money to buy a horsedrawn ambulance. Financial difficulties because of the depression of the 1890s delayed these plans, which eventually came to fruition in 1899, when the Centre placed a horsedrawn ambulance van at the Eastern Hill Fire Station.

Meanwhile, Ashford type litters continued in frequent use and other, later models were developed. In Victoria, various regional centres—Ballarat, Bendigo, Colac, Geelong and Warrnambool—also acquired litters. These were not always genuine 'Ashfords'. Vince Little has informed me that some local communities constructed their own litters, modelling them more or less faithfully on the commercial varieties. The model acquired by Colac in 1896 might have been one improvised in this way, because there is nothing quite like it among the many dozens of photos of other litters. It had a full length canvas hood but no step-over-and-through 'U'-shaped axle. The model obtained by Warrnambool in 1900 might have been another cobbled together locally. It had bicycle type wire spoke wheels with pneumatic tyres however, it, too, had a straight rather than 'U'-shaped axle. It also had elaborate curved springs, a headrest that could be raised or lowered. It was possibly a 'Rea-Edwards', but it also sported a handbrake!

When the Victorian Centre of the St John Ambulance Association took over control of the Melbourne ambulance service from the Fire Brigade in 1903, it used both Ashford Litters and horsedrawn vans. The introduction of motor ambulances in 1910, and the immediate popularity of this mode of ambulance transport, resulted in the litters being progressively withdrawn from the service; however, two were still in use at the outbreak of World War I in 1914. These were models equipped with full length hoods.

Many of the Ashford Litters imported into Victoria have survived. As well as two of the original six now in St John museums, one in Williamstown and the other on loan to the Chancellor's Priory Heritage Collection in Canberra, other models have survived in regional museums and in the heritage collection of Ambulance Victoria. The litter now on display in the Priory Room of St John's National Office in Canberra is a later model than the prototype patented by Sir John Furley. Unlike Furley's original, it has a fold down hood, rather like that of a baby's pram. Was this the 'Mark II' or 'Mark III' model?

The other Australian capital cities and regional centres also acquired their own Ashford Litters. For example, in 1889 Lord Brassey, widower of the St John Ambulance 'evangelist', Annie Brassey, who together had toured Australia in 1887, sent a litter to Dr John Thomson of Brisbane. Thomson, one of the co-founders of St John Ambulance in Queensland, had attended a meeting Lady Brassey had called in Brisbane with the aim of establishing a local St John centre. Warwick, on the Darling Downs south-west of Brisbane, obtained a model with an all encompassing cover to protect the patient from the elements. The other cities also acquired litters of either the 'orthodox' St John kind or models produced by rival manufacturers. Sydney had various Ashford type litters, including one that provided a service in Manly. This was opened in 1903 by two members of the Paddington–Woollahra Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade, Messrs AW Wilkinson and J Ellison. In Adelaide, both city and

port, various wheeled litters were in use by the turn of the century, while in Perth the Roe Street Police Station had an Ashford Litter which was the nucleus around which the later metropolitan ambulance service developed.

As with the litters in Victoria, many of the litters imported into Australia during the 1890s and early 1900s survive. Various models are on display in our St John museums and the museums of the state ambulance services. I would nevertheless love to know what became of the Ashford litters (called 'ambulance carts' in the Army Medical Corps) used by Major 'Ginger' Burston's 7th Field Ambulance at Gallipoli in 1915. Burston, of whose biography I'm the author, became our inaugural Chief Commissioner in 1946. A picture of his camp in the Chailak Dere valley behind Anzac Cove survives in the Australian War Memorial and there in the foreground, are not just one but two Ashford Litters!

Latter-day wheeled litters

The 'Ashford' and other similar litters did not, like the horsedrawn ambulance wagons, disappear from the ambulance services of the world following the rise of the motor ambulance van during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Instead they evolved into something else—the modern ambulance stretcher or gurney. With small retractable trolley type wheels which are easily folded away, enabling the stretcher to be loaded quickly aboard a motor ambulance, such gurneys are now standard equipment on all modern ambulances. Their special features vary enormously, but they all essentially perform the same function that the 'Ashford' and the look-alike litters did from the 1860s and 1870s. That is, they enable the sick and injured to be moved as quickly and comfortably as possible between an accident scene and the casualty ward of a hospital. Commercial competition between their manufacturers plus the imperatives of patient comfort and speed of delivery to hospital are the motors driving their continual evolution.

In the meantime, wheeled litters very similar to the 'Ashford' in both appearance and function have reappeared on the market. Go to the websites of major ambulance equipment manufacturers like Ferno and you will discover not just a bewildering array of gurneys but also a range of large wheeled litters for use in difficult terrain where gurneys could never be wheeled. My friend Roxy Cowie, the CEO of St John Ambulance (Tasmania), tells me that in Tasmania, St John First Aid Service volunteers now use a Ferno litter with wide diameter wheels and broad tyres for moving casualties over sandy, muddy or soft ground. Other manufacturers have similar products. Consider, for example the Ready Group's 'model SR301RT' patient transporter, which looks like nothing quite so much as the basic early model Ashford Litter without trimmings. Here's how Ready Group's publicity blurb describes the 'SR301RT':

The low profile and ground-hugging centre of gravity of the SR301RT provides a unique platform to complete tasks which, up until now, required two to four personnel. In critical disaster situations where manpower is limited, one man can gather casualties and deliver them to aid stations.... Because of the unique design of the SR301RT it can function as a bulk hauler deploying [both patients and] equipment which usually requires several personnel. Available accessories include Dual Wheels, a Handle Medical Bag, which provide additional cargo space for medical supplies, and a Back Rest. Unit weighs 25 lbs. with a weight capacity of 500 lbs.



The Ready Group's model 'SR301RT', two-wheeled stretcher. It performs exactly the same function as the 'Ashford' but is only a sixth the weight.

It looks like an Ashford Litter and it functions like one. The critical difference, of course, is weight because at 25 pounds (11.36 kilograms) it is only a sixth as heavy as an 'Ashford', which weighed 149 pounds.

The importance of the Ashford litter in St John ambulance iconology

Iconology is the study of symbols and their meaning. The Order of St John and its St John Ambulance off-shoots are institutions rich in visual and verbal symbols, of which, there are a plethora. Reflect, for instance, on the great standard of the Order and its Priory and Commandery derivatives, each of which displays the gold Royal Lion surmounting a Tudor Crown in the top left quarter of the plain white 'Greek' cross upon scarlet field of St John the Baptist. I lack the space here to explain the significance of all this, suffice to say these emblems are pregnant with symbolism. (I must confess that my great favourite here is the Shield of our own Priory.) Similarly, the Badge of the Order, whether or not the St John ('Maltese') Cross is silver or white and the Queen's Beasts white or gold, is a potently symbolic heraldic device. Then there are our various logos, for example the new international St John logo, the St John Ambulance Australia 'red bar' logo and our own Historical Society logo. We use all these often: in our ceremonial regalia, our publications, our neckwear, our uniforms, our letterheads and on our first aid kits, mobile first aid units and ambulances.

And that brings me back to the eponymous Ashford Litter—the best known of the early 'St John Ambulances' that gave us our organisational name. It, too, is an icon, and one of which we can be as proud as we are of the Maltese Cross, the Queen's Beasts, the John the Baptist Standard of our Order, the Priory shield and the various logos which identify us to the public. It was the 'St John', the forerunner of the Ashford Litter that prompted the Ambulance Department of the Order to publish Peter Shepherd's original 'Little Black Book', to institute the St John Ambulance Association to instruct the public in First Aid and then to establish the St John Ambulance Brigade to provide the community with a disciplined field force of trained first aiders. To the modern eye it might seem like a cumbersome contraption, but it was the two-wheeled 'ambulance cart' which spawned the proud, honourable name of St John Ambulance. A worthy icon indeed for St Johnnies of all ages and eras!

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St John Ambulance uniforms: A brief history

Trevor Mayhew, OAM, KStJ

Trevor Mayhew joined St John as a Cadet in 1953 and was awarded his Grand Prior's Badge in 1958. He has held various appointments, including Divisional and Corps Superintendent and State Staff Officer. Trevor is a former State Operations Officer and currently is State Ceremonial Officer. He served in the Army Reserve Forces 1959–1973, in both the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps and the Royal Australian Corps of Signals, holding appointments such as Acting Wardmaster, Foreman of Signals and Squadron Sergeant Major. In civilian life, Trevor retired in 2007 from WorkCover New South Wales as a Technical Specialist (Occupational Hygienist) Working Environment. His qualifications include a Master of Applied Science (OH&S) and a Graduate Diploma (Safety Science). Within the Order of St John he was promoted Knight in 2000. His wife Jean served for 36 years in St John and their eldest daughter Michele is the present New South Wales State Nursing Officer. Both are Officers of the Order. Mr Mayhew is a Justice of the Peace and in 2011 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his St John Ambulance work.

St John uniforms have customarily been prescriptive, their specifications set out in the *Dress Regulations* of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch, now known in Australia as First Aid Services. Compliance with these rules over the years has often been at the discretion of the presiding officer of a division but some individual members have tended to observe the regulations more in the breach than in strict compliance.

What is a uniform?

A useful starting point is the definition of a uniform provided by *Wiktionary*, the online dictionary, which says that a uniform is 'a distinctive outfit [worn] as a means of identifying members of a group'. The standard dictionary definition is a little more expansive, stating that 'a uniform is a set of standard clothing worn by members of an organisation while participating in that organisation's activity'. A full definition would go on to indicate that there are many types of uniform, including:

- ethnic dress, for example the Scottish kilt in clan tartan.
- religious dress, for instance the ceremonial garb worn by members of the College of Cardinals.
- sporting wear, such as the 'stripe' worn by the teams of famous football clubs and the 'walking out' uniform of the Australian Olympic Team.
- corporate uniforms, like those worn by many 'front office' staff in banks, insurance companies, post offices, transport services and various other public utilities, often consisting of a shirt/blouse in the corporate colours, a jacket with the corporate logo and perhaps headwear.
- military uniforms, which identify members of the armed services and usually come in two main distinct varieties: 'fatigues', the garb worn in everyday working situations; and 'dress', that worn on formal and ceremonial occasions.
- the uniforms worn by members of the emergency services and other 'line of command' agencies. This group includes the uniforms worn by the police, prison officers, fire brigades, ambulance services, rescue agencies and of course the First Aid Services members of St John Ambulance Australia.

The inspiration for St John uniforms

The traditions of our modern Most Venerable Order of St John date back to the hospice to support pilgrims established by the Blessed Gerard in the 11th century in Jerusalem.

The adoption of John the Baptist as the patron saint and the Cross of Amalfi as the symbol of the Benedictine monks or 'hospitallers' who assisted Gerard in time became a distinctive uniform. Gerard's hospitallers wore the white Amalfitan Cross on their black vestments. Several decades later, after the hospitallers had taken on a military function as well, the white cross on red background of St John the Baptist and the white eight point Amalfitan Cross on black background became the distinguishing emblems of the Knights Hospitaller.

Mayhew



Early Hospitaller uniforms of a chaplain, a knight and nuns.

Neither Gerard nor his monks could have known that, centuries hence, the latterday 'hospitallers' of St John Ambulance would be wearing a black and white uniform ultimately derived from their monks' habits and the battle dress of the Knights Hospitaller.

The uniforms of the St John Ambulance Brigade

The early uniforms worn by Brigade members were variants of the military uniforms of the era. From the beginning of the Brigade in 1887, members were gradually organised into local units or 'divisions'. As the Brigade grew, it extended its services across the British Empire, including Australia, where Brigade divisions began forming soon after the turn of the century. The outbreak of the Boer War saw many members of British divisions recruited as ancillaries to support the Royal Army Medical Corps. Their contribution was such that a St John Medal for South Africa was struck. Approximately 1800 medals were issued. These medals were in addition to the Service Medal and the life saving medals already instituted by the Order.

Some idea of the uniforms worn by early Brigade members can be gained from contemporary photographs. In the United Kingdom, one of the first divisions established was Accrington. One of the Accrington Division's early photographs shows the members being inspected in 1904 by the founder of the Scouting movement, Lord Baden Powell. Examining the uniforms of those on parade enables us to determine fairly accurately the nature of their uniforms and accompanying insignia. Similarly, in Australia the first Ambulance (men's) Division was at Glebe in 1903 with a Nursing (women's) division formed in 1904. A division was established in Perth in Western Australia in 1904 and over the next decade divisions were established in other States: in Victoria from 1910 and in South Australia from 1912. Again, the types of uniforms worn by Brigade members in the early Australian divisions can be readily determined by an examination of surviving photographs. In Victoria, as in other states, St John took over existing ambulance transport services, initially using Ashford Litters and horsedrawn vans. In Melbourne in 1910, the St John service obtained its first motorised ambulance, a two cylinder Renault. The uniforms worn by the ambulance operatives were not Brigade uniforms and easily demonstrated by reference to contemporary photographs.

Cadets

The institution of St John Ambulance Brigade Cadet Divisions for young people gave rise to various new Brigade uniforms. The first Australian Cadet division for boys (and therefore an Ambulance Cadet division) formed in Glebe in 1925. At first the Glebe Cadets had no uniform just their Sunday best suits (short pants and long socks) with a St John armband worn around the upper left sleeve of their suit coat. The uniform later adopted was white shirt, black short pants, knee-length black stockings with

Officers and Cadets of a New South Wales Nursing Cadet (girls') Division in 1931.



white top band, a black Air Force style forage cap, a white lanyard and a Scout style rolled triangular scarf with the front two ends kept together with a woggle.

When Cadet Ambulance divisions formed in Victoria and South Australia forming later during the 1930s, they opted for something else—black shorts, stockings and shoes but a gray flannel 'lancer' (double-breasted) jacket with black piping and black felt berets.

The establishment of Cadet Nursing divisions for girls in the 1930s resulted in uniforms modelled on those worn by members of the nursing profession. Female Cadets in New South Wales wore a white tailored long sleeved, knee length dress with a wide collar and belt, buttoned from the bodice to the hemline. This was set off by dark stockings and shoes and a white nurses' style veil with the Brigade badge on the forehead. Nursing Cadets in the other States wore similar uniforms when divisions for girls were established during the 1930s.

Changes in St John uniforms

From the beginning, Brigade members wore military style uniforms. However, like military uniforms, the Brigade uniform changed over time and also regionally, reflecting prevailing fashion and local preference. As Brigade Districts formed for each of the States, the District Commissioners were authorised to vary the uniforms according to need. Considerable variation in the uniforms consequently developed from one District to another.

Men in the early Brigade Divisions in Australia (those established in the years before World War I) wore a black tunic similar to those in khaki worn by the Anzacs but with a 'patrol' collar. Their headwear consisted of a black peaked hat with white hatband and the Brigade badge. In Western Australia Ambulance Division members looked much more like the Anzacs than elsewhere because there they wore a khaki uniform until 1987, when they adopted the black and white uniform familiar to the public in the eastern States. In New South Wales the Brigade men wore a broad black leather belt attached to which was a first aid equipment pouch worn on the left hip. Officers also sported a diagonal 'Sam Brown' style belt across their left shoulders.

The Brigade was organised along quasi-military lines, with a rank structure of privates, non-commissioned and commissioned officers. The insignia of rank reflected those of the army. Chevrons, stars and crowns worn on the sleeve or shoulder indicated the various levels of responsibility.

Until the 1920s, rank and file female members wore a white long sleeved, ankle length dress and a white nurse's veil with Brigade badge. When working on duty they wore a long white pinafore over the dress. On formal occasions they also wore a long black cape similar to the red capes worn by nurses of the Australian Army Nursing Service, with a black 'pill-box' bonnet with long black ribbons replacing the veil. During the 1920s and 1930s the hemlines were raised, the capes were shortened to waist length, felt hats replaced the bonnets and senior staff went into grey tailored double breasted tunics. Grey skirts were worn with the hemline below the knee, white blouses with narrow black ties and grey felt hats with the left brim raised and embellished with a cockade.

Women of the Glebe Nursing Division show off their formal uniforms. 1904 ankle-length, long-sleeved white dresses, long black capes and bonnets fastened with long black ribbons.



By the end of the 1930s and at the outbreak of World War II, the situation with uniforms was that nursing personnel were wearing white long sleeved dresses with epaulettes. The ladies still wore black capes, but these were soon cast off. Except in Western Australia, the Brigade men wore black tunics and trousers with a white stripe up the outside of the trouser leg. Officers wore tunics with lapels and members wore patrol collars. Later, during the 1950s and 1960s, a standard male tunic was adopted. Like the previous officers' tunics, it was of military service dress pattern with normal lapels.

During World War II, a whole new suite of uniforms was adopted when St John Ambulance and Red Cross cooperated in running the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) organisation, which fulfilled an ancillary role at the military hospitals. The VAD members wore a military style uniform which combined elements of both St John and Red Cross. Members wore a prominent Red Cross badge on the left breast but a cap badge bearing the Maltese Cross and the letters 'VAD'. Many Brigade Divisions registered as VAD units. In such cases, the members had to maintain two uniforms—the St John uniform for Brigade public first aid duties and the VAD uniform when on duty at the military hospitals.

Headwear varied from district to district and between the sexes. Ladies continued wearing soft felt hats and their officers commonly wore theirs with a cockade. The men's military style peaked caps were not yet of standard type. In Victoria, officers wore a black cap but rank and file members wore their caps with white tops. Senior officer brims were embellished with white stripes or stylised St John Wort flowers around the rim. Except in Western Australia, where khaki caps were retained, this became standard dress for many years.

The standardisation reflected the establishment of the federal Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia of the Order in 1941, followed by the formation of the Priory in 1946. A federal structure for St John Ambulance, including the formation of a national standing committee for the Brigade, greatly facilitated the process of standardisation. The adoption of the uniforms prevailing in Victoria probably resulted from the composition of the Brigade's national headquarters staff, which until the late 1970s was dominated by Victorian appointees.



Connie Turner in her standard Nursing Division uniform, 1940s. The style of the women's uniform was closely modelled on the garb of nurses in hospitals. However, by this stage the short black cape had been discontinued from the Brigade uniform.



The 1943 District Inspection of the New South Wales District of St John Ambulance Brigade at Government House, Sydney. The officer at left wears the standard black tunic with lapels, white shirt and black tie and peaked cap with white top. The officer immediately right of him wears the senior officers' uniform of grey skirt and tunic, grey felt hat and hatband, with a cockade on the upturned left brim. The men being inspected by the State Governor, Lord Wakehurst (a later Lord Prior of the Order, seen here wearing his army uniform), are wearing two types of uniforms. The 'other ranks' wear tunics with 'patrol' collars, a stripe of white braid down their outer trouser legs, a white hat band, and they carry large white first aid kitbags hung from white shoulder straps secured to their hips by broad black belts with silver 'Brigade' buckles. Their officers wear peaked caps with white tops. Their trousers lack the white braid stripe—they do not wear belts or carry first aid kitbags.

Continued evolution and diversification in St John uniforms

Standardisation of the Brigade uniforms remained an ideal in the decades following World War II. By the late 1980s, after the Operations Branch (the new name for the Brigade) in Western Australia had opted for the standard black and white uniform of the eastern States, the ideal seemed to have been achieved. The uniforms continued evolving, however, and as they did they began diversifying.

When the Brigade finally gained a foothold in Queensland during the 1950s and 1960s, and then in the Northern Territory during the 1960s and 1970s, the need arose for a lightweight or 'summer' uniform that could be comfortably worn in the tropics. The heavy woollen tunics appropriate in colder, southern climes were unsuitable in places like Cairns and Darwin. There was also a trend towards 'unisex' uniforms that could be worn by both men and women. This could be seen in the adoption of slacks for women instead of skirts plus the 'bomber' jacket and the Akubra style broad brimmed hat increasingly worn by both sexes during the 1990s.

In recent times, Commissioners have had discretion in making variations to the uniform to meet local circumstances and the exigencies of public duties at particular locations. This has taken the St John uniforms further down the path towards diversity and away from the former ideal of two single standard uniforms, one for men and another for women. The obvious example here is the green overall with light reflective silver strip, indicating that the First Aid Services member in the St John overalls is a medical emergency worker. Similarly, fluorescent yellow and green vests and shirts of various types for particular tasks are an eye catching departure from the sombre standard blacks, whites and greys of yore, but they give the St John first aider on public duty high visibility.

The insignia of rank displayed on St John uniforms has been the subject of debate in recent years. Some favour the present Army style practice of down-playing insignia on combat fatigues, replacing elaborate chevrons, stars and crowns permanently stitched on sleeves and epaulettes with unostentatious insignia embroidered on small detachable Velcro backed cloth patches.



The 'unisex' St John Operations Branch/First Aid Services work uniform in 2008. Black slacks, open necked shirts with St John insignia. Green and fluorescent yellow vests with reflecting silver vertical and horizontal band, and black baseball type caps with the St John badge.

My view here is tempered by experience. I have observed that most emergency service personnel continue to wear rank insignia to identify who is in charge and at what level. Crowns, stars and chevrons are the most frequently used. Whilst there has been general acceptance of the use of various vests which identify tasks, other emergency services still wear rank as well, even on overalls and vests.

There are some among us who would like to see the removal of the word 'Ambulance' from our organisational title. With the exception of the Northern Territory and Western Australia, where St John has responsibility for the State and Territory ambulance services—most St John members are not involved in ambulance work. Dropping 'Ambulance' from the wording on the shoulder patches of our uniforms, leaving just the three word name 'St John Australia', would at least eliminate the confusion of members of the public, some of whom think we must be operating an ambulance service.

Ceremonial

Ceremony and the associated ritual preserve not only our historic military past but make a significant contribution to team work and discipline required for our tasks as members of St John. Our ability to follow instructions and contribute to team ethics, are essential to the professionalism with which we treat our clients and also to how we are perceived by others. The demise of squad drill and in particular stretcher drill in my view has been regrettable.

The attitude of some disturbs me greatly. The practice of wearing a pullover as an outer garment at an investiture when the wearer is the recipient of an award is technically correct. However, it lowers the image of the organisation. The formal Service Dress should be an option on such occasions. Here I point out that St John in the United Kingdom has had a similar optional ceremonial uniform since 2006.

Another gripe—members promoted to Commander in the Order, are often seen still wearing their Officers insignia on their medal bars. Not supposed to happen! Lowers our standard!

Mess Dress

Mess Dress, or formal evening attire, has in recent times has been discouraged in St John Ambulance even if not under direct threat of abolition. Here we should learn from the Australian Defence Force. Mess Dress in the ADF is a standard uniform, and in certain ranks is compulsory, for example, at formal receptions, dinners and other evening functions. Other emergency services—the State Emergency



Mess Dress or formal evening attire of four emergency service organisations. Trevor Mayhew (centre) wears his St John Ambulance mess dress, insignia of rank, medals and KStJ neck pendant and breast star. On either side of him are officers of the Rural Fire Service in their Mess Dress. The man at far left wears the State Emergency Service and far right the New South Wales Ambulance Service formal wear.

Services, the State Fire Services and the State Ambulance Services have Mess Dress and I welcome the occasions where St John can collaborate or meet with our colleagues. The appropriate insignia of rank and status as well as service awards are customarily worn on the epaulettes and lapels of Mess Dress, adding to the sense of formality and enhancing the dignity of the wearer and of the organisation he/she represents.

Conclusion

My final observation is that despite the diversification of our uniforms, there is still a case for our traditional black and white. This became evident during the planning process for the 2000 Olympics in Sydney. Someone from the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) suggested to our liaison officer that the St John first aiders should wear the SOCOG Olympic polo shirts with red sleeves to indicate that we were 'Medical Team'. Our response: 'We've been wearing the black and white since the Crusades!' The universal symbol of help manifest in the white on black Amalfitan Cross prevailed, and we wore St John Uniform.

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The history of inhalational analgesia

David Fahey, OStJ

Dr Fahey is a specialist anaesthetist working at Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney. He is also the State Medical Officer for St John in New South Wales. He joined St John in 1983 as a 13 year old Cadet in Goulburn Division, and during his 29 years of membership has held Divisional, Regional and State positions in both New South Wales and Queensland. He originally trained as a nurse and after completing his degree, worked as a nurse in hospital appointments before deciding to retrain as a medical practitioner. He moved to Queensland in 1999 to study medicine. After graduating with the double Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (Hons.) degree, he undertook postgraduate specialist training in anaesthesia. In 2009, the year Dr Fahey was awarded a Fellowship in the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists, he spent six months working with the CareFlight rescue helicopter in Brisbane. He is currently completing an additional qualification in aeromedical retrieval. Dr Fahey has been a frequent contributor to the Historical Society's seminars.

Attempting to relieve pain and suffering has always been a priority for practitioners of health care. According to the World Health Organisation, access to pain relief is a basic human right. This point is further reinforced by the motto of the Royal College of Anaesthetists '*Divinum Sedare Dolorem*'—'it is divine to relieve pain'. The delivery of pain killing drugs by inhalation has the benefit of simplicity (since no injections are necessary), speed of onset, and safety (when self-administered by the patient). The development of effective inhalational analgesia was largely driven by the need for pain relief during labour. Subsequently, the drugs and devices used for labour analgesia have found their way into ambulance practice for the benefit of injured patients. This paper will review several methods of inhalational analgesia which have been used over the centuries: the medieval soporific sponge, ether, chloroform, nitrous oxide, trichloroethylene and methoxyflurane.

Soporific sponge

The use of a *spongium somniferum* (soporific sponge) to attempt to provide inhalational anaesthesia and analgesia was known for many centuries. The earliest references to its use are from the 9th century AD¹ and it was still described in medical texts throughout the 16th century.²

One well known recipe was devised by Theodoric, in the 13th century. Opium, mandrake, nightshade, mulberry and hemlock were mixed together and then poured onto a sea sponge. This was then cooked until the liquid evaporated. When required for use, the sponge was soaked in hot water, and then applied to the nostrils of the patient until they 'fell asleep'.² Many similar recipes are described, almost always including opium and mandrake as key ingredients.

It is extremely unlikely that this mixture produced any effect when administered by inhalation, as described. However, it is possible that liquids dripping from the sponge were absorbed via the nasal or oral mucosa. Experiments have been conducted on rats² to test the efficacy of various medieval soporific recipes. None of these were seen to have a clinical effect when breathed from a sponge.

Mandrake

Mandrake is the common name for the *Mandragorum officinarum* plant, which contains atropine, hyoscine, hyoscamine, and other alkaloids with sedative properties.³ It has thick, fleshy roots which often have a humanoid appearance. According to medieval legend, the plant would shriek when pulled out of the ground, causing the death of the person responsible. Many elaborate methods were devised to overcome this risk, including blowing a trumpet while digging, or using a dog to do the work instead! Certainly, when taken orally mandrake has a sedating effect, and this has been known for centuries. Dioscorides (40–90 AD) was a Greek physician, who wrote of the effects of mandrake in his *Materia Medica*, a text which remained in use until c. 1600. Mandrake is well described by the German physician Leonhart Fuchs, in his landmark herbal text published in 1542. However, the ingredients of mandrake are not volatile, hence the lack of any effect when inhaled via the soporific sponge.

Opium

The mood altering and analgesic properties of the *Papaver somniferum* poppy have been known for millennia—it was cultivated in Mesopotamia as early as 3400 BC. Opium was a key ingredient in the soporific sponge, although it is unclear whether any therapeutic effect is derived purely by inhalation in this manner. However, opium can be delivered by inhalation when it is smoked. Opium dens were prevalent in many parts of the world in the 19th century, and provided an environment where opium could be smoked recreationally. The subsequent medicinal use of opium has utilised oral and injection preparations.

Ether

This compound was first synthesised in 1540 by Valerius Cordus, who named it *oleum dulce vitrioli* (sweet oil of vitriol). Dr William Morton gave the first public demonstration of ether to produce surgical anaesthesia on 16 October 1846 in Boston, Massachusetts. However, Dr Crawford Long is now known to have used ether as a general anaesthetic in Georgia as early as 1842.⁴ News of ether as an anaesthetic reached the United Kingdom in December 1846 by way of the steamship *Acadia*.

Ether was used for labour analgesia in 1846 by Dr James Young Simpson, a Scottish obstetrician. Although he was overjoyed at the prospect of childbirth without pain, he was not entirely satisfied with ether as it frequently caused nausea and vomiting.⁵ Simpson's search for an alternative finally led him to chloroform, which is explained below. However, ether continued to be used as an inhalational analgesic during childbirth, especially in the United States where it remained more popular than chloroform.

Chloroform

Chloroform was discovered in 1831, and was subsequently named and chemically characterised by Jean-Baptiste Dumas, a French chemist, in 1834. Its potential for use as an anaesthetic was identified by Dr James Young Simpson in 1847. Having already used ether for obstetric analgesia, he began searching for an alternative which might be less unpleasant for the patient. Simpson and his assistants tried inhaling a sample of chloroform. They rapidly became unconscious, convincing Simpson of the effectiveness of chloroform as an anaesthetic. He then proceeded to try chloroform on his own niece during her labour. The child was born safely, and was christened Anaesthesia.⁶ Despite Simpson's passionate support of chloroform, its use during labour and delivery met with significant opposition. The opinion of the church was based on the Biblical reference 'in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children' (Genesis 3:16). Many physicians were also opposed to relieving labour pain, citing reasons such as '...the very suffering that a woman undergoes in labour is one of the strongest elements in the love she bears her offspring'.⁷

Objections to obstetric analgesia on religious or moral grounds were largely overturned following the historic use of chloroform by Queen Victoria during her last two deliveries (Prince Leopold in 1853, and Princess Beatrice in 1857).⁸ On these occasions, chloroform was administered to the Queen by Dr John Snow (1813–1858), a pioneer in the fields of anaesthesia and public health. Understandably, the use of chloroform during childbirth became commonplace within a short time of its use by Her Majesty.⁸



Dr James Young Simpson, the Scottish obstetrician who successfully began using chloroform as an obstetric analgesia in 1847.

Nitrous oxide

Nitrous oxide was first synthesised in 1772 by Joseph Priestly, who called it phlogistigated nitrous air. From 1798–1800, Humphry Davy conducted experiments with nitrous oxide which led him to conclude that it might be useful during surgical operations.⁹ Unfortunately, it would be 44 more years before nitrous oxide was actually used to relieve pain.

In the early 1800s, the use of nitrous oxide as a recreational drug became popular at 'laughing gas parties', primarily among the upper classes. On 10th December 1844, Gardner Quincy Colton (an American showman, entrepreneur and former medical student) conducted one of his popular demonstrations of the pleasures of nitrous oxide in Hartford, Connecticut:

I invited a dozen or fifteen gentlemen to come upon the stage who would like to inhale it. Among those who came forward was Dr Horace Wells, a dentist, and a young man by the name of Cooley. Cooley inhaled the gas and, while under the influence, ran into some wooden settees and badly bruised his leg. Taking his seat next to Dr Wells, the doctor said to him 'You must have hurt yourself', 'No, not at all,' [he replied]. Then, he began to feel some pain, and was astonished to note that his leg was covered in blood.

At the close of the exhibition Dr Wells came to me and said 'Why cannot a man have a tooth extracted under the gas and not feel it?' I replied that I did not know. Dr Wells then said that it could be done and would try it on himself....The next day I went to his office carrying a bag of the gas.¹⁰

On 11 December 1844, Dr Horace Wells did in fact extract a tooth without inflicting pain, by using nitrous oxide gas. Unfortunately, the Boston medical community remained doubtful about the efficacy of this strange gas, following a public demonstration of its use by Wells in 1845, in which the patient did actually feel pain.

Wells never recovered from this public disgrace, and he eventually committed suicide in 1848. However, nitrous oxide did become widely used from 1863, when Gardner Quincy Colton founded a chain of dental clinics which provided the gas to patients.¹⁰

Robert James Minnitt (1889–1974) was born in Lancashire, and graduated from Liverpool Medical School in 1915.¹¹ He practised as an anaesthetist at Liverpool Maternity Hospital, and became dedicated to improving the relief of pain during labour. He wanted to develop a system which could be used by midwives without medical supervision, since the majority of babies were delivered in the home by a midwife, rather than in hospital.¹¹ In 1933, Minnitt adapted a McKesson oxygen therapy apparatus to deliver nitrous oxide and air 'on demand'. Self-administration provided the essential safety feature—if the patient became too drowsy, she would drop the mask and stop inhaling nitrous oxide. In 1936, the Central Midwives Board approved the use of nitrous oxide by unsupervised midwives. A subsequent improvement to the Minnitt Gas and Air Apparatus in 1943 was housed inside a wooden case, and became part of the standard midwife's equipment for home deliveries.^{11, 12} It remained in use for a further 21 years. A major drawback of Minnitt's machine was that it provided a hypoxic gas mixture of only 11% oxygen (with 45% nitrous oxide), because the nitrous oxide supplied from the cylinder was mixed with room air entrained through the inspiratory valve.^{12, 13} For this reason, Minnitt's apparatus was eventually superseded by Entonox.

Entonox is a mixture of 50% nitrous oxide and 50% oxygen, contained together in the same cylinder. This gas became available in 1963¹³ and rendered the Minnitt apparatus obsolete. This gas mixture is made possible because of the Poynting effect. The early work on premixed nitrous oxide and oxygen was undertaken from 1961, by Dr Michael Tunstall (1929–2011), an anaesthetist at the Aberdeen Maternity



Dr Horace Wells, the American dentist who successfully used nitrous oxide in tooth extraction in 1844.



Dr Michael Tunstall (1929–2011), the Aberdeen obstetrician who in the 1960s developed 'Entonox' in obstetric analgesia, and an 'Entonox' cylinder with demand valve.



Hospital.¹⁴ He originally experimented with 75% N₂O in 25% oxygen, but later settled on the 50/50 mixture, which was then manufactured for him by the British Oxygen Company. Tunstall also described the effects of cooling, which would cause the N₂O to separate into a liquid inside the cylinder.^{15,16}

The simplicity and effectiveness of Entonox led to its widespread use within ambulance services, especially within the United Kingdom and Australia from the early 1970s.¹⁷

Trichlorethylene

Trichloroethylene (Trilene) was used as a general anaesthetic agent from the 1940s to the 1960s. It is still used as an industrial solvent!¹³ It produces good analgesia in concentrations of 0.35–0.5%, and for this reason it was used for several decades by midwives and ambulance officers.

In 1955, the Central Midwives Board in the United Kingdom approved the Emotril inhaler for independent use by midwives. This draw-over inhaler was designed by Epstein and Macintosh in 1949, and enabled the patient to self-administer trichloroethylene in air.¹³

The Cyprane inhaler was developed in England in 1947 by Bill Edmonstone, also to provide labour analgesia using trichloroethylene.¹⁸ It consisted of a hand held canister containing trichloroethylene, attached to a facemask. The strength of trichloroethylene vapour could be adjusted by a dial on the neck of the device. This inhaler was used by midwives and some ambulance services.¹⁸

The Trilite inhaler is a further example of a trichloroethylene inhaler designed for pre-hospital use. It was developed during World War II by Dr John Hayward-Butt (1911–1973) a British anaesthetist who served in the Royal Navy.¹⁹ It is said that the original idea for the design came from the successful use of a Trilene soaked woollen plug inside a Benzadrine inhaler. The Trilite inhaler was a small brass cylinder containing an absorbent wick. A 6 ml Trilene ampoule was placed inside the device and held in place by a spring. When required for use, the ampoule was broken by striking the plunger in the base of the inhaler. The patient then inhaled through a nozzle which was intended to be placed in a nostril. The Trilite inhaler proved to be robust under combat conditions, and simple to use by non-medical personnel. It provided effective analgesia, delivering trichloroethylene concentrations in



In use from 1955, the 'Emotril' inhaler enabled a patient to self-administer 'Trilene' (trichloromethylene).

the range of 0.3 to 0.5%.¹⁹ Trilite was subsequently used in ambulance services, including within Australia. Instruction on the use of this inhaler is given in the 1963 manual used by St John Ambulance in South Australia.²⁰

Methoxyflurane

Methoxyflurane was first developed in 1960 in New York.²¹ It was subsequently used widely as a general anaesthetic in the 1960s and 1970s, but eventually fell out of favour due to concerns over dose-dependent nephrotoxicity.²² Methoxyflurane is highly soluble, which resulted in a slow induction and emergence, however its analgesic properties provided good pain relief well into the post-operative period. Because methoxyflurane provides good analgesia, even at sub-anaesthetic doses²³ it began to be used as an inhalational analgesic in a range of situations outside the operating theatre.

Midwives in the United Kingdom began using methoxyflurane for labour analgesia from 1971, when the Cardiff Penthrane vaporiser was developed by the Cyprane Company. Subsequently, Abbott Inc. developed the 'Analgizer', a disposable plastic inhaler, intended to permit self-administration of methoxyflurane.²⁴ This device was used successfully for labour and for trauma, but was found to be cost prohibitive, because single-use plastic devices could not be manufactured cheaply in the 1970s. Also, many patients had trouble inhaling through the device due to high inspiratory resistance. For these reasons a new device, the 'Penhalor' was designed.²⁵ It was a cylindrical lightweight metal tube with a non-rebreathing valve at the top of the handle. A side arm allowed the attachment of a mouthpiece or facemask. A rolled polyethylene felt wick was placed inside the handle, and was saturated with 15 ml methoxyflurane.²⁵ After its use, the wick could be removed and the entire unit could be sterilised.



The 'Penhalor' used for the inhalation of methoxyflurane.

From the 1980s, the plastic inhaler was reintroduced by Medical Developments International (MDI), a Melbourne based company. The use of methoxyflurane in pre-hospital care was championed by Dr David Komesaroff (1932–2007), an anaesthetist and founder of MDI.²⁶ In Australia, methoxyflurane has been the most widely used pre-hospital analgesic for over 30 years²⁷ including in all ambulance services, the military and St John.

Ambulance use of inhalational analgesia

The use of inhalational analgesics by ambulance officers began sporadically in the 1960s. Midwives had already been using these agents safely for some decades, and this paved the way for their use by ambulance officers, with obvious benefits.

A survey of Australian ambulance services conducted in 1973–1974 revealed that the use of inhalational analgesia was widespread (percentages refer to the number of vehicles surveyed):²⁸

- 67% carried trichloroethylene
- 13% carried Entonox
- 9% carried both
- 6% carried no form of analgesia (including 7% of Queensland vehicles and 43% of WA)
- 5% data unavailable unfortunately, a more specific state by state analysis is not available.



The 'Penthrox' methoxyflurane inhaler in use.

The use of inhalational analgesics by volunteer groups such as St John Ambulance has also increased since that time. Currently, all St John First Responders receive training in the use of methoxyflurane and/or Entonox. Some variation exists between Australian states with regard to the agent which is approved for use.

Conclusion

Pain itself long pre-dates humans. Nociception as a means of withdrawing from danger is wired into the nervous systems of even the most primitive organisms. Controlling pain, by either overcoming it or embracing it, is deeply embedded in most civilisations and cultures. From a Western perspective, it is interesting to consider, how people's perceptions of pain and their expectations for pain relief have changed dramatically within the short period of the past 200 years. Enduring pre-anaesthetic surgery, or malignant disease without palliative care, are inconceivable by standards today—yet these were harsh realities for people living at a time when suffering was faced as part of daily life, and doctors could do little about it. Of course, for billions of people in poor countries this situation continues today. The first use of ether in the 1840s ushered in a new era, where patients could *expect* pain-free surgery and childbirth. As drugs and equipment for inhalational analgesia were developed, these were embraced by midwives and ambulance officers for use outside hospitals. The simplicity of inhalational techniques has firmly entrenched this method of analgesia into modern pre-hospital care.

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Heroes of our forgotten past

Allan Mawdsley, KStJ

Dr J Allan Mawdsley is the President of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia and also the Secretary of its Victorian Branch. A retired psychiatrist who lives in Melbourne, he has spent most of his life—63 years continuously—in St John. He joined St John as an 11 year old Cadet in the Malvern Division. In the intervening years he has held most positions available to a St John volunteer in Victoria. He is a former Victorian Commissioner and is a long-serving member of his State St John Council. He is also a past Chair of the Victorian branch of the Historical Society, which runs the acclaimed St John Ambulance museum at Williamstown. An accomplished medical historian, Dr Mawdsley has been a frequent contributor to the Historical Society's annual history seminars. He is the author of the book In Ages Past, the centenary history of the St John Ambulance uniformed branch launched during the 2010 National St John Conference. His most recent book, Such Big Work, is a biography of Alice Creswick, DStJ, a national leader of Australian Red Cross during World War II, which was launched in February.

The earliest tasks of the St John Museum in Victoria were the cataloguing and displaying of accumulated memorabilia. This required the establishment of information systems about the collection and gradual elaboration of the historical context of the items. Concisely summarising the recorded history of our organisation has been a major challenge and our achievements to date have been rather modest.

However, a greater challenge lies ahead. This is the task of recording the unreported history so that it will be available to future generations. We have made a start on this by documenting some of the history of past Commissioners in Victoria. We are now moving on to looking at the stories of all the past Knights and Dames of the Order in Victoria. This, of course, assumes that we knew the names of all the past Knights and Dames, which was not the case and necessitated researching all the admissions and promotions in the Order from the commencement of the Centre in 1883.

An electronic search

One of the earliest names was that of Eirene May Appleton, DStJ. Miss Appleton is the longest serving member of St John Council for Victoria for a record 53 years from 1915 to 1967. She was Honorary Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer of Council from 1929 to 1950. Apart from her name appearing in Annual Reports, there were no specific records about her and nobody in the organisation could recall who she was. In presenting this paper about my research into her life story I am hoping this will inspire all the members of all the branches of the Historical Society to start researching the forgotten heroes of their State Branches. As a mere beginner in the historical research field, I think I have uncovered an amazing story and I have no doubt that you too, could find others which turn out to be just as rewarding.

The first step was to 'Google' her name. This produced hundreds of hits about 'Appletons' but none specifically about her. Some of these later turned out to be about relatives but as I did not know who was in her family I had to return to those items later. The next step was to find out who was in her family. I found a small amount of information in the deaths index and, being somewhat lazy, I asked for some help from the Genealogy Interest Group of the Melbourne PC Users Club, of which I am a member. My enquiry said:

I looked in the computer records at St Kilda Library which indicated that Probate was granted on 26/4/76 Ref 8038862 28P TypeN 67/000773. There was also another number for her file N25842 Her father was William Thomas Appleton and her mother was Elizabeth Traill. This is all that I know about her and my query is—how do I go about finding more?

As well as answering my question about how to go about searching, they actually did it for me and a lot more besides. An avalanche of information descended upon me about the family, and they also sent off enquiries to the Stonnington Library and History Centre (the municipality where she lived and died), the State Library of Victoria, the Springvale Necropolis Trust (about family burials) and indexed newspaper articles. These items of information each led on to other clarifications and extensions,

Mawdsley

including a return to the Google search results which now made a lot more sense. The most rewarding further lead came from the Lauriston School archivist who gave me the contact details for Miss Appleton's niece and grand niece, who had totally different names but held wonderful photographs and stories of Aunty Rene. Here is her story.

Eirene May Appleton and her family

Miss Appleton served on St John Council for Victoria for a record 53 years from 1915 to 1967. She was Honorary Treasurer of Council from 1929 to 1950. She came from a family which was highly distinguished in the shipping and business world, a kind of natural aristocracy of late Victorian 'marvellous Melbourne'. Her grandfather, Thomas Appleton, was a bookbinder in Leeds, Yorkshire, who had migrated with his family in 1869, settling at Geelong.

The older son of the family, Colonel George Burnley Appleton (1850–1945), developed a Geelong wool broking and stock and station agency. The younger son, William Thomas Appleton (1859–1930), who had begun his education at Wharfedale College in Yorkshire and completed it at Melbourne Grammar school in 1873, joined his brother's company for his first few years in business.¹

On 27 April 1882 William Appleton married Elizabeth Jane, daughter of John Traill, a founder and then chairman of Huddart Parker & Co, a coastal shipping company. William Appleton joined the Huddart Parker Geelong office in about 1884, became manager there a couple of years later, then transferred to the Melbourne office, becoming a member of the board and then managing director from 1898. He was founding chairman of the Australasian Steamship Owners Federation, president of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce and president of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Australia (1915–1916). He was a trustee who became Chairman of Trustees of the Melbourne Harbour Trust and was a staunch advocate for the development of the port. Appleton Dock was named after him.¹

William Thomas and Elizabeth Jane Appleton had seven children: William Thomas Traill Appleton (1883–1916)^{2,3}, Eirene May Appleton (1884–1975)^{4,5}, Norman Burnley Appleton (1886–1964)^{6,7}, Arthur Wellesley Appleton (1888–1947)^{8,9}, Edward Cecil Appleton (1889–1956)¹⁰, Lily Ethel Appleton (1892–1988)^{11,12,15} and Harold Douglas Appleton (1894–1895)^{13,14}.

The oldest of the seven, William Thomas Traill Appleton, was born in Geelong on 20 April 1883.² He attended Melbourne Grammar School, where he matriculated in 1900. He was a Sergeant in the school cadet corps. He became Melbourne manager of Huddart Parker & Co. shipping line, following in his father's footsteps. In 1915 he enlisted in the AIF and was sent to Egypt as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 7th Infantry Battalion. He sailed from Australia on 23 November 1915 on the *Ceramic* to Serapeum, a training base on the Suez Canal, from where he was sent to join British Expeditionary Forces in France. He was killed in action at Pozières on 24 July 1916, aged 31.³

The Battle of Pozières was a two week struggle for the French village and the ridge on which it stands, during the middle stages of the Battle of the Somme. Though British divisions were involved in most phases of the fighting, Pozières is primarily remembered as an Australian battle. The fighting ended with the British forces in possession of the plateau north and east of the village, and in a position to menace the German bastion of Thiepval from the rear. However, the cost had been enormous. Australian Official Historian, Charles Bean wrote: '*The Pozières ridge is more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth*'.¹⁶ William was initially buried in the field at Pozières. Later, with three unknown Australian soldiers and one unknown British soldier, he was reburied in Plot 3, Row E, Graves 1–5 at Cerisy Gailly military cemetery a short distance south-west of Bray-sur-Somme in northern France.³



William Thomas Appleton (1859–1930), father of Eirene, after whom Melbourne's Appleton Dock is named.

Eirene May Appleton (1884–1975), the principal subject of this paper, and Lily Ethel Appleton (1892–1988), her younger sister, both remained unmarried and lived in the parental home throughout their lifetimes. Eirene, known within the family as ‘Rene’ devoted her lifetime to social causes, whereas her younger sister, ‘Lil’, was more interested in social occasions.¹⁷

Norman Burnley Appleton (1886–1964) married Beatrice Marie (née Ockerby) (1896–1966); they had three children: Thomas, John, and Judith.¹⁷ Arthur Wellesley Appleton (1888–1947) married Ida Evelyn (née Robson) (1887–1973); they had four children: Elizabeth, William, Margaret and Joan.¹⁷ Edward Cecil Appleton (1889–1956) married Dorothy (née Gladstone) (1907–1978); they had three children: Peter, Richard and Jill, but moved to New South Wales and broke contact with the family in Melbourne.¹⁷ The seventh child, Harold Douglas Appleton (1894–1895) died in infancy.

William and Elizabeth Appleton’s family home from 1899 was ‘Montrose’, a large Victorian mansion in Melbourne’s inner south-eastern suburbs at 35 Mercer Road, Armadale. The house stood alone on its site for three-quarters of a century before it was eventually subsumed into Lauriston Girl’s School, which had gradually acquired property all around it. The double storey Italianate villa, originally called ‘Lynton’, was built in 1890 and is on the Heritage list of Stonnington Council.¹⁸ After William Appleton’s death in 1930 the house was subdivided into four apartments, including one each for the two daughters who continued to live there until their deaths at ages 91 and 96 years.¹⁷

Eirene was educated privately at home by a governess. In later years she confided that she was sorry not to have gone to school because she had missed the social influence of other young people. Likewise, because her family was relatively wealthy, she did not have the experience of employment. She was encouraged to engage in appropriate sporting activities. She became an accomplished horse rider and relatives recall her riding long distances.¹⁷ Eirene also played tennis. Eirene, however, was also brought up with a strong sense of social obligation to help those less fortunate than herself. She spent a lifetime committed to social welfare activities pursued with the same frugality and management skills that were seen in her personal life. She followed her mother as a volunteer at Berry Street Children’s Home and was also a supporter of the Children’s Hospital, the Australian Red Cross Society and the St John Ambulance Association. Eirene was on the committee of Berry Street for 45 years.¹⁹ Berry Street had been a successor of the Victorian Infant Asylum. Under the auspices of Lady Bowen, wife of the then Governor of Victoria, a meeting was held in June 1877 to raise money to give shelter to the ‘unfortunates’, the dying babies and ‘fallen women’. As a result, a house was rented in



Eirene May Appleton in her mid-teens, about 1899.



‘Montrose’, the Appleton family home at 35 Mercer Road, Armadale, Melbourne.



William and Eirene Appleton, winners of the 1904 mixed doubles championship at the Royal South Yarra Tennis Club.

Hanover Street, Fitzroy, and the first inmates admitted. The project was named ‘The Victorian Infant Asylum’. Later name changes reflected the sensitivities of public attitude. ‘The Victorian Infant Asylum’ became ‘The Victorian Infant Asylum and Foundling Home’, then ‘The Foundling Hospital and Infants Home’, then ‘Berry Street Babies’ Home and Hospital’ and finally ‘Berry Street Child and Family Care’.

The Berry Street Babies’ Home

The first of the Infant Asylum’s annual reports lists Mrs WJ Clarke as a committee member and indicates the important financial support of the Clarke and Chirnside families by several of their members being appointed as Life Governors.³⁰ Lady Clarke became president in 1888 and continued in that role for five years before reverting to committee membership in 1893. Another leading Melbourne philanthropist, Ephraim Zox, MLA chaired several of the annual meetings. Ephraim Zox was also treasurer of the recently formed Victorian Centre of the St John Ambulance Association. Most of the office-bearers were women and they were active in promoting the leadership roles of women. In 1904 an important paper on the work of the Infant Asylum and Foundling Hospital was read by Mrs Henry Cave (honorary secretary to the committee) to the Congress of the National Council of Women.³¹

Extreme poverty and the social stigma of illegitimacy resulted in abandonment of many babies each year. The committee members had to work very hard to maintain their commitment that no baby should be turned away. In its early days there was no government support at all for its work and throughout its 130 years there has been a constant struggle to raise enough money to carry out its work. After a successful public appeal for charitable donations in 1881 the committee was granted a site on the corner of Berry Street and Vale Street at the edge of Yarra Park. This was an area that had once been the police paddock, where a building stood that had once housed the Police Hospital. It was then located amidst the double-storied, wrought iron balconied Victorian houses in Berry Street, Jolimont.

Rene’s mother, Elizabeth, joined the committee in 1913, when the president was Mrs HM O’Hara. There had been a significant turnover of membership from the previous year, when Lady Madden had been president, and the committee included Mrs David Syme and Mrs James Burston (the mother of Major-General Sir Samuel Roy Burston, inaugural Chief Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Australia). A year later, Mrs Appleton was joint honorary secretary. The annual report notes that the Foundling Hospital had become an incorporated institution that year. Four years later, in 1920, Mrs Appleton became vice-president, a post she held for the next eight years until her retirement in 1928 just before the Great Depression. From 1925 she was joined on the committee by her daughter, Eirene.

The President was Mrs Montague Cohen and Honorary Medical Officers included Dr AE Rowden White, a great philanthropist of Melbourne University, and Dr Douglas Stephens, an honoured senior paediatrician of the Children’s Hospital. In the 1930s the depression brought greater demands and responsibilities to Berry Street. For many years the Foundling Home had been training probationers in infant care. From 1931 this training was recognised by the title Mothercraft Nurse. The first graduates were employed at Berry Street.

Eirene Appleton was also a member of the house committee as well as being on the management committee. Friends remember her visiting the families of children in care although her role in such visits is not reported.¹⁷ From 1939 until 1944 she served as vice-president. After a further couple of years as a committee member she was appointed president from 1946 to 1949. After relinquishing the presidency she resumed her committee membership and was also on the advisory financial committee. She did a further stint from 1951 to 1953 as honorary secretary following the death of Miss Byron Moore, and two



The Victorian Infant Asylum, Hanover Street, Fitzroy, Melbourne—forerunner to the Berry Street Children’s Home.

further stints as honorary treasurer in 1958–1959 and 1961–1962, before resuming ordinary committee membership. Clearly, she was one of those invaluable people who step forward in times of need.

A successful rebuilding appeal was launched in 1963. The first building completed under the new building scheme was the toddlers' wing, named the Appleton Wing. In 1966 Miss Appleton had been awarded the MBE for her service to Berry Street and other charitable organisations. The Appleton Wing was officially opened on 3 June 1969 by Lady Delacombe (the wife of the State Governor).²⁰ Beryl Penwill's book comments:

There was accommodation for sixteen toddlers to live in, plus sick room accommodation, dining room, modern kitchen, bathrooms, storerooms, laundry and a large airy playroom with folding doors that can divide it into two areas. Wide verandas gave playing space for wet days while the outdoor playground was well equipped. A large sand pit had also been added.¹⁹

The building was converted to a child care centre when the Berry Street agency moved to another location in Richmond.

Eirene Appleton's other charitable involvements

Eirene was for many years the honorary secretary of the Malvern Auxiliary of the Children's Hospital. This was noted in correspondence to Malvern Council between 1931 and 1937.²¹ In those days the Children's Hospital was in Pelham Street, Carlton. Unfortunately, the archives of Royal Children's Hospital itself do not include material about the various suburban auxiliaries that fundraised on behalf of the old hospital.²² The full extent of her contribution is not therefore documented.

Eirene was also active in Red Cross, which only began in Australia in 1914, nine days after the commencement of World War I. She was honorary secretary of No. 1 Branch, based in the Malvern area, from the time of the outbreak of the war.²³ The Branch was primarily engaged in fundraising for Red Cross through such activities as knitting and selling craftwork.

Red Cross and St John jointly administered the Voluntary Aid Detachments in Australia from 1914. The members, mostly women volunteers who wore a uniform common to both organisations, undertook a variety of hospital support tasks that maintained patient care whilst releasing qualified staff for the war effort. There was no indication that Eirene was a member of a Detachment.²⁴ However, being a member of both organisations, she would have been well aware of the importance of Detachments to the War effort.

The No. 1 Branch continued its work between the two world wars and throughout World War II but the ageing and loss of members led to its closure in the early 1950s. Eirene briefly transferred to No. 2 Branch, which was focused both on fundraising and in the provision of helping services such as driving disabled people to their medical appointments.²³ The Voluntary Aid Detachments also continued, with St John senior officers as administrators.

Eirene's St John commitments

Eirene became a member of Council of St John Ambulance Association in 1915. The chairman was Dr John Springthorpe and other members of council at the time included Mrs Janet McKinley, Dr Charles Bage and Howard Hansford (superintendent of the St John sponsored Victorian Civil Ambulance Service, the corporation recently formed to take responsibility from the financially troubled St John charitable ambulance service).²⁶

The two organisations shared the same building in Lonsdale Street opposite the old Melbourne Hospital, from 1914 until 1950. By this time Victorian Civil Ambulance Service had come largely under Government control and moved to purpose-built premises in Latrobe Street whilst St John renovated a warehouse in Little Lonsdale Street, now the poor relation of the once fragile offspring.²⁵

As a volunteer, Eirene made a considerable contribution to the council, taking on the role of honorary treasurer in 1929. She remained treasurer for 22 years, continuing on council for a further 17 years after relinquishing the treasurer-ship. Altogether she served for 53 years, by far the longest serving member of Council.²⁶

Members of the council for the Victorian Centre, of the St John Ambulance Association, 1949. Eirene Appleton is possibly the person standing fourth from the right.



Eirene was also a foundation member of the Ladies' Linen Guild (Victorian Branch) for the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem in 1959, and was immediately elected treasurer. She remained a member until her death. The Minutes show she regularly attended committee meetings to present her financial reports until 1970, when her apologies were tendered because of illness. She was actively involved in fundraising activities for the Ophthalmic Hospital. She hosted at least one of the meetings of the committee at her home in Mercer Road when it appears to have been customary for them to be held at the home of the chairperson.²⁷

Victorian branch of the Ladies' Linen Guild of the St John Ophthalmic Hospital, 1947. Eirene Appleton is possibly the woman sitting in the front row second from the right.



Miss Appleton was admitted into membership of the Order of St John as a Serving Sister in 1926, was promoted Officer in 1933 and Commander in 1937. She was invested as a Dame of Grace of the Order in 1965.²⁸ In the New Year Honours list for 1967 she was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire 'for social welfare services for many years'.²⁹

Congratulations were noted in the Minutes in 1965 when she was promoted to Dame of Grace in the Order of St John, and in 1967 when she was awarded the MBE. She retired as treasurer of the Linen Guild in 1971 and does not appear to have been able to attend any meetings after that although her apologies were regularly recorded until her death. After her death, a Minute was recorded in March 1976 as follows:

Miss Appleton was a foundation member of the Linen Guild Committee and has been an active and generous member until her death. She will be greatly missed by us all and we wish to place on record our gratitude for all she did as Treasurer until 1971 and then as a member until her death in November 1975.²⁷



Eirene Appleton in later life.

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The Chancellors: The seven distinguished Australians who have led the Australian Priory of the Order of St John since 1946

Ian Howie-Willis, OAM, KStJ

Refer to the previous article (pp. 27–35) by Dr Howie-Willis, 'The original St John Ambulance', for an outline of his career in St John Ambulance Australia.

A statistical introduction

The Australian Priory of the Order of St John has had only seven Chancellors since its establishment 65 years ago in 1946. All have been distinguished native born citizens of Australia who had achieved great distinction in public life before their appointment to the position; and five of the seven had also had distinguished St John careers. In chronological order, they have been as follows:

1. Sir Hugh Poate: 1946–1961
2. Sir George Stening: 1961–1982
3. Sir John Young: 1982–1991
4. Sir Guy Green: 1991–1995
5. Mr Peter Henderson: 1996–1999
6. Professor Villis Marshall: 1999–2007
7. Dr Neil Conn: 2007– .

Three of the seven (Poate, Stening and Marshall) were Senior Surgeons. Two (Young and Green) were Senior Judges, Chief Justices in their home states. Two were very senior public servants: Henderson, a diplomat, was the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs; Conn, an economist, was head of Treasury then the Administrator of the Northern Territory. All seven had a strong St John Ambulance background before their appointment as Chancellor. However, three of them (Poate, Stening and Marshall) were true St John 'insiders', having effectively grown up within St John and having served the organisation in numerous positions before their elevation to the Chancellor's position. The other four (Young, Green, Henderson and Conn) had come into St John at the highest levels of management, and although all four were also 'insiders' they had not been involved at the grassroots level.

For the statistically inclined, the Chancellors' average length of service in the position has been 9.3 years—a little more than three triennia. The longest serving was Stening, with 21 years as Chancellor; the shortest period in office was Green's four years, but his service was curtailed by his appointment as Governor of Tasmania (and therefore a Deputy Prior of the Order) during his second triennium. Their average age on being appointed was 62; but there was considerable variation around this mean because the youngest, Green, was 54 while the oldest, Conn, was 71.

Schooling might have been a factor in their rise. Only two of the seven received their secondary education at government schools—Stening (Sydney High School) and Conn (Armidale High School). The other five all attended elite private schools—Poate at Sydney Grammar, Young and Henderson at Geelong Grammar, Green at Launceston Grammar and Marshall at St Peter's in Adelaide. All have been university educated. Poate, Stening and Conn were at Sydney University, Marshall at Adelaide University, Green at the University of Tasmania and Young and Henderson at Oxford.

Putting all this together in a statistical 'profile', we might conclude that if you wish to be the Chancellor, it would be better for you to have attended a top 'GPS' grammar school before university, then to have become a leading surgeon, judge or government department head, to be a St John 'insider' and to be 62 years of age at the time of your appointment. Do any of you fit that profile? If so, you could be our next Chancellor.

What are the Chancellors' duties and responsibilities?

With the adoption of a series of structural reforms of the Priory management in 1997–1998, the Chancellor became the chairman of a national Board of Directors. Previously he (no females so far) had chaired an 'Executive Committee' of a 'Priory Council'. The nomenclature and corporate structure changed, but essentially the Chancellor remained what he had been previously—the most senior national officer within St John Ambulance Australia and the head of its executive.

The Chancellor's responsibilities are set out in Section 12 of the Priory's constitution, that is, *St John Ambulance Australia Inc: Rules of the Association incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act of the Australian Capital Territory* (1999). This short section actually says very little other than that:

the Chancellor is the deputy of the Prior, [who] may delegate to the Chancellor such of his powers, duties and obligations as he thinks fit from time to time.

The only other information about the position in Section 12 is that: 'the Chancellor is appointed by the Grand Prior on the recommendation of the Prior' and that 'the Chancellor is a Knight of the Order'.

These scant details could hardly be shorter or less specific. The brevity, however, is deceptive, for what the formulaic words of Section 12 really mean is that the Chancellor manages the Priory on behalf of the Prior, who in turn is responsible to the Grand Prior. The formal powers of the Chancellor are therefore far-reaching; but though they might appear to allow Prior and Chancellor to be supreme, in actual fact they must govern the Priory in accordance with a complex set of unwritten conventions that form an effective set of checks and balances upon their powers. Rather than dictating, the Chancellors are obliged to negotiate their way towards their goals, and instead of managing St John Ambulance Australia affairs personally, they do so by delegating their responsibilities through a series of national, State and Territory, regional and local chains of command.

Sir Hugh Raymond Guy Poate, KVO, GCStJ, Chancellor 1946–1961

Hugh Poate (1884–1961) was an eminent Sydney surgeon with a distinguished war record in World Wars I (Army) and II (Air Force). He joined the relatively new Australian Army Medical Corps as a captain in 1909. In 1914 at the outbreak of World War I he was one of the first AAMC officers to enlist in the 1st AIF. He went to Gallipoli as a major in the 1st Field Ambulance, but was then given charge of the transports ferrying the injured back to the army hospitals in Egypt. He sailed aboard these transports, spending much of his time during the voyages operating. Having learnt to fly in the inter-war years, he became Consulting Surgeon to the RAAF during World War II, with the rank of group captain.

Poate had a lifetime association with St John, having come into the organisation as a Divisional Surgeon with Glebe Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade in 1913. His 15 years as St John Ambulance Brigade Commissioner in New South Wales 1926–1941 is still the record for that State.

When the forerunner of the Priory, the Commandery of the Commonwealth of Australia (Exclusive of Western Australia), formed in 1941, Poate was a logical choice as Commandery Lieutenant, that is, administrative head of the new federal St John Ambulance organisation. He had been in the Brigade for 28 years, was at the peak of his professional and military careers and had proved himself to be an outstanding Commissioner—among the four or five best of the 115 plus, that Australia has now had.

Poate had become a leading candidate for the Commandery Lieutenant's job by the mid 1930s. In 1936 he caught the favourable attention of Sir James Sleeman, Commissioner-in-Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas, whom the Grand Prior of the Order at St John's Gate had sent



Sir Hugh RG Poate, KVO, GCStJ, 1955, on becoming Australia's first Bailiff Grand Cross of the Most Venerable Order of St John.

out on a long tour of inspection of Australia and New Zealand in 1935–1936. The hidden agenda for Sleeman's tour was probably to report on whether or not the St John organisations in 'the dominions' could be entrusted with self-government in the form of first Commanderies and later Priorities. Poate was subsequently identified as the most appropriate leader for the national organisation in the period 1939–1941, when the Commandery was being brought into being. The Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, hand-picked him for the job. Gowrie became the Knight Commander or ceremonial head of the Commandery at its inception in 1941, and it was Gowrie who appointed Poate as his Commandery Lieutenant or administrative head. Gowrie had possibly been advised by St John's Gate that Poate was the chap for the job.

Poate made a success of establishing the Commandery, and so when the Commandery was upgraded to fully autonomous Priory status in 1946 he was the obvious choice for appointment as inaugural Chancellor or 'Sub-Prior' as the position was called until 1953. Subsequently Hugh Poate's great achievements as Chancellor were to:

- bring the Association (Training Branch) and Brigade (Operations Branch) into profitable dialogue with each other (previously they'd had a long history of mutual antagonism in some States)
- establish the system of State and Territory St John Councils that we still have today
- weld the fractious, inherently centrifugal State St John branches into a cohesive national whole
- preside over a long period of growth in all St John endeavours
- extract St John in Queensland from the clutches of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade (QATB, now called the Queensland Ambulance Service)
- oversee the creation of the state wide St John Ambulance service in South Australia
- bring Western Australia into the Priory, albeit as a self-governing Commandery (the price Poate had to pay to persuade the Western Australians to come aboard)
- generally turn the Priory into an effective, unifying national forum.

In recognition of his outstanding success in establishing first, the Commandery and second, the Priory, Poate was made Australia's first Bailiff Grand Cross of the Order (GCStJ) in 1955. In the 56 years since then, only six other Australians have been made GCStJ. Poate died of lung cancer in January 1961 and was immediately succeeded by his protégé, George Stening. His portrait by Joshua Smith hangs in Priory HQ in Canberra.

Sir George Grafton Lees Stening, Kt, GCStJ, Chancellor 1961–1982

George Stening (1904–1996) was an eminent Sydney gynaecological surgeon with a distinguished war record in World War II (Army). As a lieutenant-colonel, he served with the 2/5th Australian General Hospital in the Cyrenaica campaign in 1940–1941 and then commanded the 2/11th Australian General Hospital at Alexandria. After returning to Australia with the 2nd AIF in 1942, he commanded the 113th Australian General Hospital at Concord, one of the six major Army base hospitals established in the capital cities in 1941.

Like Poate, who brought him into St John as a Divisional Surgeon, Stening had a lifetime association with St John. He had been one of Poate's students and he eventually succeeded Poate as Commissioner in New South Wales (1946–1951). He then joined the Priory Executive Council (fore-runner of the present day Board of Directors). His mentor, Poate, spent the next decade grooming him for eventual succession as Chancellor. In effect, he was hand-picked and anointed by Poate, and so when Poate died there was a seamless succession into the Stening era. Stening, who had earlier served as the Director of Training, would go on to be Chancellor for 21 years, an Australian record unlikely ever to be broken. His reward was to be appointed Knight Bachelor in 1968 and then in 1970 to become the second Australian GCStJ.



Sir George GL Stening, Kt, GCStJ, Chancellor 1961–1982. Official Priory portrait by Graeme Inson, c. 1981.

George Stening's achievements as Chancellor were many and varied. Among others, he worked to:

- consolidate Poate's work in establishing the Priory
- preside over the Priory during the period when (arguably) St John reached the peak of its influence and the Brigade its maximum strength (which almost reached 15,000 in 1969)
- clean up the mess in Queensland Poate had left behind by forcing the expulsion of the QATB from St John
- oversee the disengagement of St John from its responsibility for the Tasmanian ambulance service
- steer the Priory on a steady course through a time of far-reaching social change as the 'Baby Boomer' generation grew up and came of age
- bring greater autonomy to St John in Australia, for example, by publishing the first editions of *Australian First Aid* and the Brigade's *Regulations*
- build up a national structure for St John Ambulance in Papua New Guinea, then transfer it to Papua New Guinean control at independence in 1975
- maintain the integrity of the Order during a period when political events such as protests against the Vietnam War, the sacking of the Whitlam government by the Prior (wearing his Governor-General's hat) could have damaged the Order politically
- preside over the granting of full autonomy as State and Territory branches to the St John organisations in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, and the transfer to St John control of ambulance services in the Northern Territory
- deal decisively, honourably and effectively with the \$14 million tax avoidance scam in which the Victorian St John branch became involved in 1979–1980, a scandal that threatened the Order's good name
- commission *A Century for Australia* (1983, the centenary history by one IJ Howie-Willis), which served as a prelude to the structural reforms that took place later in the 1980s.

Sir John McIntosh Young, KCMG, GCStJ, Chancellor 1982–1991

John Young (1919–2008) concluded a distinguished legal career in Melbourne by serving as Chief Justice and Lieutenant Governor of Victoria for the decade from 1974. He was from a very 'Establishment' background—after Geelong Grammar School, he had done his law degree at Oxford before being commissioned in the Scots Guards, in which he spent the six years of World War II.

Young was not a complete St John 'outsider' because he had spent seven years chairing the St John Council for Victoria 1975–1982 before becoming Chancellor. However, unlike Poate, Stening and later Marshall, he did not grow up in St John or work for St John in a wide range of other positions.

I am uncertain how Young first came into St John, but it was possibly through his Melbourne Establishment connections. At that time various members of the St John Council in Victoria (as well as of the Priory executive council) were from that background and were his fellow members at the Melbourne Club. Little would have been recorded to indicate how Young was appointed Chancellor—the 'Old Boy' network doesn't operate that way—but my guess is that the Priory Secretary, Charles Campbell, played a pivotal role. I do know that Charles worked hard for a couple of years to persuade Young to become the Chancellor. I suspect that Charles, another Geelong Grammar Old Boy, personally identified him as a suitable appointee, and then persuaded Stening and the other members of the Priory Executive Council to appoint him.

John Young's achievements as Chancellor were to:

- initiate and preside over the structural reforms of the late 1980s, including the name changes (Training Branch instead of Association, Operations Branch instead of Brigade, St John Ambulance



Sir John McIntosh Young, KCMG, GCStJ, Chancellor 1982–1991. Official Priory portrait by L Scott Pendlebury, c. 1990.

Australia as the public name of the Priory in Australia of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jeruslaem) and the creation of Community Care Branch

- deal decisively with the running sore of industrial unrest in the St John conducted South Australian Ambulance Service that was bringing the Order into disrepute. Aided by Charles Campbell, he did so by first, removing the State St John Council from the formula; second, removing the Operations Branch volunteers from the metropolitan service, whose presence was the root cause of the decade long season of industrial disputes afflicting the service, and third, making an arrangement with the State government under which there was a transitional period when St John control (exercised by the Priory rather than State St John Council) would be passed over to a newly created South Australian Ambulance Service. (We St John historians continue to debate whether or not the withdrawal from the ambulance service was an 'achievement'. Some of us believe that other action might have saved the service for St John.)
- continue what Poate and Stening had already done to give the Priory pre-eminence in St John affairs by strengthening its moral authority.

Sir John had become a KCMG in 1975, the year he became President of the Victorian St John Council. He accumulated many other honours and awards. He spent seven years (1989–1996) as the Chief Scout in Australia and was the Honorary Colonel of no fewer than three army regiments. Within St John he became the fourth GCStJ in 1991. (The third was the former Receiver-General, Sir Neville Pixley, in 1984.)

Sir Guy Stephen Montague Green, AC, KBE, KStJ, Chancellor 1991–1995

Guy Green (1937–) followed a career path in St John and the wider community remarkably similar to Sir John Young's. He was Chief Justice of Tasmania from 1973 until his appointment as State Governor in 1995. Before becoming Chancellor he had chaired the State St John Council in Tasmania for seven years, his only previous St John position. His term as Chancellor ended midway through his second triennium because of his appointment as Governor, after which he became Deputy Prior of the Order in Tasmania.

I have never met Sir Guy and rarely discussed him with Charles Campbell, who until his death was my source of information about much St John lore, including the Chancellors. During Sir Guy's time as Chancellor I was doing little active St John historical research and visited Priory Headquarters only infrequently. At least one of my close St John friends, John Pearn, however, remembers Sir Guy's period of office as a 'golden age' in more recent St John history. John was the St John Director of Training throughout Sir Guy's years as Chancellor. John accordingly knew him well and worked closely with him.

Guy Green's one notable achievement as Chancellor that I'm aware of was his critical intervention to ensure that Sir William Deane accepted the position of Prior. Deane, a devout Catholic of the old school, is said to have thought that the Order was really part of a grand Protestant plot initiated by Henry VIII to split the English speaking peoples of the world from Mother Church. Deane wrongly thought that if he became Prior he would be joining an Anglican organisation and thereby furthering the Protestant Reformation. I'm told that it was Green who persuaded him to become Prior after talking with him, judge to judge, pointing out that the Order is effectively a secular, multicultural organisation, only quasi-religious (and then ecumenically Christian rather than Anglican or even Protestant) and with as many Catholics among its members as adherents of other persuasions. Green's intervention preserved the traditional link between the Governor-General's and Prior's positions, which is important to the status and prestige of the Order. We must therefore be most grateful for that.



Sir Guy SM Green, KBE, KStJ, Chancellor 1991–1995. Official Priory portrait by Paul Fitzgerald, c. 1995.

Mr Peter Graham Faithfull Henderson, AC, KStJ, Chancellor 1996–1999

Peter Henderson (1928–) was a career diplomat with ‘Establishment’ credentials almost as impressive as Young’s—Geelong Grammar then Oxford, prestigious diplomatic postings, six years as Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs (1979–1985) and marriage to Heather, the only daughter of Sir Robert and Dame Pattie Menzies.

Peter Henderson served a seven year ‘apprenticeship’ as Vice-Chancellor of the Priory (1988–1995). The qualities he brought to the chancellorship included the self-assurance, *savoir faire*, diplomatic and leadership skills that come from being someone of his background and experience. Such qualities would have been advantageous to the Priory in the international negotiations to establish the Order’s Grand Council in 1997–1998.

Peter Henderson’s achievements as Chancellor included leading the Priory through a period of transition and change, signal events of which were:

- the departure of Charles Campbell as Priory Secretary after 22 years in the job
- a major review of Priory governance and the subsequent streamlining and ‘corporatisation’ of management structures
- the establishment of the Order’s international Grand Council in which all Pories enjoy parity of esteem (instead of being subservient to the Priory of England).



Mr Peter GF Henderson, AC, KStJ, Chancellor 1996–1999. Official Priory portrait by Paul Fitzgerald, c. 1999.

Professor Villis Raymond Marshall, AC, GCStJ, Chancellor 1999–2007

Like his great predecessors, Hugh Poate and George Stening, Villis Marshall had grown up in St John. He entered the organisation as a 20 year old ‘Probationary Surgeon’ while still a medical student and subsequently worked his way up through the ranks from Divisional Surgeon to District Surgeon in South Australia.

In 1984 Professor Marshall was ‘headhunted’ as Director of Training by Charles Campbell and Sir John Young, who had become aware of his mounting reputation as Professor of Surgery at Flinders University. Villis Marshall remained Director of Training for six years until appointed Chief Commissioner in 1990. He held the latter position through the next three triennia until becoming Chancellor in 1999. Until Professor Paul Arbon in 2011, he was the only person to have been both Director of Training and Chief Commissioner, and after George Stening he is the Chancellor to have served the next longest period on the Executive Council/Board of Directors (8 years compared to Stening’s 21).

How did Villis Marshall become Chancellor? As with his three immediate predecessors, I suspect that he was possibly ‘tapped on the shoulder’ by Charles Campbell, who would probably have convinced Guy Green and/or Peter Henderson to have him appointed Vice-Chancellor in 1995 (while he was still Chief Commissioner), to allow him time for being groomed for the job. In any case, his record of achievement in his nine years as Chief Commissioner was such that, like Hugh Poate in 1941, he was so outstanding a candidate that no one else was probably considered. I wrote a profile of Villis Marshall and his attainments in my 2002 Brigade/Operations Branch/First Aid Services centenary history, *The Zambuks* (pp. 121–24); and this shows why he was the outstanding candidate.



Professor Villis R Marshall, AC, GCStJ, Chancellor 1999–2007. Official Priory portrait by Evert Ploeg, 2007.

And what were Villis Marshall’s main achievements in his two triennia as Chancellor? They included:

- keeping the Order and its Branches together and focussing in a time of accelerating changes, which have included: first, the rise of commercial competitors who have made inroads on St John’s traditional ‘markets’; second, the decline of the voluntary ethic in Australian society; and third, a consequent trend towards ‘revolving door’ St John membership
- instituting and seeing completion of a review of the National Office functions and staffing, which led to reorganisation, staff reductions and economies
- hosting the first meeting in Australia of the Order’s international Grand Council and providing high-quality representation for Australia on the council
- reassessing the accommodation needs of the National Office and taking the decision to sell the former ‘Priory Headquarters Building’ on Canberra Avenue and move into interim premises nearby in The Realm Hotel
- working effectively with the then Priory Secretary (Len Fiori) and Board of Directors to establish transparent, systematic, rational and fair processes for making senior appointments, which are in contrast to the previous means of making appointments via the ‘Old Boy’ network
- maintaining excellent relations with Government House at Yarralumla (something previous Chancellors also did), an important duty if the Order is to maintain its status and prestige
- being an excellent judge of which person is the right one for a particular job, and using that judgement to good effect in making senior appointments.

As with some of his illustrious predecessors, honours and awards tended to accumulate around Villis Marshall. He became Australia’s fifth GCStJ in 1997. In 2006 this was followed by an AC, Companion of the Order of Australia, the highest grade of the Order. On his retirement as Chancellor, he became the first Australian to be appointed as one of the Great Officers of the Order of St John, taking the position of Sub-Prior; that is, the member of the international Grand Council with responsibility for developing St John Ambulance in the 40 plus countries which have St John National Councils, but are not yet Pories or Commanderies.

Dr Neil Raymond Conn, AO, KStJ, Chancellor 2007–

Neil Conn was the first Chancellor to be appointed according to the newly instituted procedures under which the general St John membership was enabled to participate in identifying potential candidates for the job. Instead of being ‘tapped on the shoulder’ via the ‘Old Boy’ network, he was selected by a panel given the job by the Board of Directors.

Dr Conn’s qualifications for the position were impressive. An economist with a PhD from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, he had lectured in Economics at Sydney University for 15 years, worked for the Commonwealth and Reserve Banks and spent two years in Paris as the principal administrator of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Back in Australia by 1977, Dr Conn was then successively Deputy Secretary of the New South Wales Treasury, Head of the Treasury Department in the Northern Territory and Director of Corporate Finance for the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Returning to the Northern Territory, he chaired the Northern Territory Treasury Corporation from 1994 and then in early 1997 he became the Northern Territory’s fifth Administrator since the granting of self-government in 1976. As such, Dr Conn also became the Deputy Prior of the Order of St John for the Northern Territory. He served almost four years in the position until his retirement at the end of 2000.

In retirement in Sydney, Dr Conn maintained his links with St John by joining the New South Wales State St John Council. He then served as its President (2004–2007). In that capacity he also served on



Dr Neil Conn, AO, KStJ, Chancellor since 2007.

the national Board of Directors. Dr Conn was therefore an outstanding candidate for the Chancellor's position when it became vacant after Villis Marshall became the Sub-Prior of the Order in 2007.

Dr Conn has a series of important innovations to his credit:

- He enthusiastically took up and developed the 'One St John' notion, which during his four years in office has become a reality rather than an ideal.
- He superintended the transfer of the Priory Headquarters/National Office from the former Canberra Avenue building to The Hotel Realm.
- He revitalised the management of the Priory's ceremonial function by instituting the Office of the Priory.
- A great friend of the Historical Society and an enthusiastic promoter of the Priory's heritage function, he oversaw the development of the Chancellor's Priory Heritage Collection at The Realm, which he officially opened in November 2010.
- His support of the present 'Women in St John History' project has been decisive.
- He is currently keenly promoting the inaugural International History Seminar of the Pories to be held in conjunction with the Grand Council meeting in Sydney in May 2012.

Conclusion

The above outline of the Priory's Chancellors suggests that the seven men who have so far filled the position were all eminent achievers and leaders in their chosen professional fields. They were also men of their times who rose to the challenge of leading the Priory as was appropriate in their day and age.

The first six of them were appointed following the proverbial 'tap on the shoulder' from someone who thought they could do the job and would enhance the status and dignity of the Order. The last two of these, Peter Henderson and Villis Marshall, then served 'apprenticeships' as Vice-Chancellors before stepping up to the top job. Most recently the seventh, Neil Conn, was identified by a committee after an exhaustive process involving the calling for nominations and expressions of interest, the short-listing of candidates and finally interviews. Whether or not the latter process, which in this era of modern management practice seems likely to prevail, will deliver us better leadership remains to be seen.

What is certain is that a close, mutually respecting working relationship between the Chancellor and Priory Secretary (and the latter's staff) is critical. Each of the Chancellors to date has worked in close collaboration with their Priory Secretaries. We see this with Hugh Poate and his relationship with R Griffiths Bowen. We see it with George Stening and John F Martin, Stanley T Bendall and Charles AC Campbell. It is obvious in the dealings John Young, Guy Green and Peter Henderson had with Charles Campbell. It was evident in the link between Villis Marshall and Len Fiori and more recently between Neil Conn and Peter LeCornu.

Finally, *the* critical requirement for a Chancellor is to be capable of inspiring admiration, respect and loyalty while maintaining throughout the Priory, the Order's integrity, values, high ethical standards and hard won prestige. So far the Priory in Australia has been fortunate in having Chancellors who measured up to these exacting criteria. May it continue to be so fortunate!

Reports from the State And Territory branches of the Historical Society

The following are the reports from State and Territory branches of the Historical Society, tabled at the Society's tenth Annual General Meeting on Sunday 29 May 2011 at the Wrest Point Conference Centre, Hobart.

St John Ambulance Historical Society, Victorian Branch

Shirley Moon, OStJ, Chair

Members. The Victorian branch of the Society continues to grow and thrive. It currently has 49 financial members of the National Society plus several members who attend but do not yet wish to join the National Society. We are working on those and think that they will eventually come round. At the recent Branch elections the number of nominations was the same as the number of vacancies so there was no need for a ballot. Office-bearers appointed were Shirley Moon (Chair), Allan Mawdsley (Secretary), Gary Harris (Treasurer) and six Committee members: Mervyn Goodall, George Jackson, Dorothy Bache, Nicholas Clarke, William Foley and Gladys Blackstock. Two longstanding members who did not stand for re-election because of health problems were Jack Blackstock and Ian Cheesewright. Both have given many years of wonderful service and are greatly missed.

The Branch holds quarterly meetings during school holiday times at our Museum at Williamstown Beach. This maintains our linkage between the archival collections and the members of the Society who do the research and particularly those who volunteer to run the Museum. Historical papers delivered at the quarterly meetings give real meaning to Historical Society membership and motivation for more archival research. The output also serves to improve the Museum displays.

Archives and donations. Interest in the archives has strengthened, with a significantly improved rate of donation of records and memorabilia to the Museum. Two examples highlight this trend. Certificates, photographs and memorabilia of the late Charles Morphett, former Superintendent of St Kilda Division, were donated by his nephew, Mr Harry Leggert. A dedicated photo album with this new material and related material already in our archives has been added to our display collection. Books, documents, photographs, clothing and memorabilia have been donated by Lynne Panayiotis covering the whole span of her career in St John from a Nursing Cadet competing in competitions to her time as Chief Officer (Cadets) at National Headquarters.

The additional Ashford Litter which had been in our storeroom, not on display, has been given on long term loan to Priory Headquarters in Canberra for inclusion in their historical display. Dr Ian Howie-Willis, the Priory Librarian, sent a letter of acknowledgment and a copy of the notice on the exhibit, explaining its significance as the first ambulance from which St John Ambulance gained its name.

The St John Museum and St John Historical Society Victorian Branch is now affiliated with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. This now results in our having access to all their collections as part of our improving research capacity.

Papers and presentations. The quarterly meetings provide a forum where discussion of topics of interest can lead to presentation of papers or Museum items such as obituaries on the display board. One of the aims is to develop Obituary Notes for all of the past Knights and Dames of the Order in Victoria. Michael Sellar offered a paper on the Saints associated with the Order of St John. Gary Harris has offered to do a paper on the evolution which has taken place in the Grades of the Order. Gary Edwards is working on a paper on the links between St John and the Judiciary. Joan Batson is working on her paper on the ten counter-disaster exercises held at Williamstown, known as Exercise Seagull.

St John sponsored the publication of Dr Mawdsley's book 'In Ages Past' an account of one hundred years of volunteer First Aid in Victoria. Copies were given to all registrants at the last Priory Conference in Melbourne and are available to any members of the Historical Society who would like to have a copy.

Information technology. A major improvement in the functioning of the Museum occurred with the installation of a new computer and software with high speed internet connection enabling a great deal of Museum work that previously had to be done off site, to now be done at the Museum. We have our own email address which can be checked every time the Museum is open. The address is museum@stioh.nvic.com.au

The computer has a linked scanner and a large hard drive which will enable progressive scanning and saving of digital images of large numbers of our precious photographs. The computer is synchronised over the internet with data storage at St John Headquarters, which will now enable remote backup.

State Constitution. The recently adopted new Constitution of St John Ambulance Australia (Victoria) has a seven person Board of Management selected by an independent search committee to provide special expertise in areas necessary for optimal corporate governance of contemporary not-for-profit charitable organisations. The Deputy Director of Ceremonies is no longer an ex-officio member of the Board but is recognised in the Constitution as Chair of an Order Matters Advisory Committee and as a member of the State Investigations Committee for recommendations for admissions and promotions within the Order. The Order Affairs Advisory Committee is responsible to the Chief Executive Officer for overseeing the Museum and archives, and the Victorian Branch of the Historical Society. The changes emphasise the increasing importance of the Museum to ensure that a historical perspective is made available to Board members who will no longer necessarily have any previous knowledge of St John.

Finally, Dr John Talbot (Hospitaller of the Order of St John and Chairman of the Board of the Jerusalem Eye Hospital) visited the Museum with Mrs Talbot during their stay in Melbourne for the Priory Conference in 2010.

St John Historical Society of South Australia

Brian Fotheringham, AM, KStJ, Chairman

It has been a really great year for our Society in South Australia. Perhaps even the most productive in our history!

National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grant. As you may recall from the 2010 report, a student librarian used our museum as a subject for one of her assignments. Among her recommendations, was one that we should apply for a Community Heritage Grant from the National Library. We did and were successful. This gave us the funds to employ an experienced assessor to evaluate our collection and to gauge its significance. This 'Significance Assessment' is a first step to be climbed before an application can be made for additional funds for projects of our choosing. We asked Yvonne Routledge to be our assessor and she is part way through this quite intensive task.

Some people present in this room will have been asked to comment on part of Yvonne's draft report, and I thank you for your assistance in doing this. Others sent information to me in advance of the assessment, and again I thank you most sincerely.

Open Airways. The awarding of the National Grant helped raise the profile of the St John Museum in the eyes of our Chief Executive Officer, Sharyn Mitten. She suggested our Society provide an article in each edition of the South Australian St John newsletter, *Open Airways*. This was negotiated to be a full page presentation promoting St John history. Eventually a collection of these pages will make up a booklet of our history and the articles will be accessible online.

Part-time Archivist/Museum Specialist. Further the CEO asked what was most needed in our museum. The prompt answer was a part-time archivist or museum specialist especially chosen to assist with the cataloguing and general arrangement and management of our collection. This long held wish has been granted! We look forward to developing a much more professional archive and museum.

History Week, SA. 'History Week' in South Australia was expanded to a whole month this year and our museum was open on several occasions during that time as part of this more general celebration of history and its importance. The feedback from our visitors was most encouraging.

From this it can be seen that our Society has been very active during the last twelve months. This would not be possible without the enthusiastic support of all our members and the dedication of our office bearers, Cliff Wright (deputy chairman), David Heard (Treasurer) and Lyn Dansie (Secretary), all of whom have been re-elected for the current calendar year.

St John Ambulance Archives, New South Wales

Loredana Napoli, MStJ, Information Management Coordinator and Betty Stirton, OAM, DStJ, Honorary Archivist

'Women in St John History' project. Twenty four biographical profiles of key St John women in New South Wales have been written for the 'Women in St John' book, which will be launched during the 2012 St John Ambulance Australia Members' Convention in Sydney. Photographs have been obtained from our Archive collection to accompany the histories.

Research requests. We have received various research requests, including:

- biographical profiles of deceased St John members wanted by families and for eulogies
- information and photographs for Divisions celebrating anniversaries
- information about members service applying for a National Medal Award
- Broken Hill Division requested names of all Divisional members admitted into membership of the Order of St John. The first member was honoured in 1947 and since then there have been three Knights, four Commanders, three Officers and 33 Members.
- the Hon. Peter Collins, Chairman of the St John New South Wales Board of Directors, requested information about St John New South Wales involvement in Red Cross and the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) movement during World War I—this information was required for ANZAC Day 2011:

The VADs were inaugurated in 1915 and proved a very valuable adjunct to the Red Cross Society.

The members worked in hospitals, convalescent homes, met wounded and sick soldiers at train stations and wharves, raised funds for patriotic purposes including the upkeep of Marrickville Hospital and furnishing homes built for War Widows. Many St John Ambulance Brigade Divisions registered as VAD units.

Members of St John and the VADs collected articles, such as newspapers, sheepskin vests, chocolates, envelopes, writing paper, pencils, tobacco, cigarettes, balaclava caps, and were dispatched or presented to members about to leave for overseas

During the 1918–1919 worldwide pandemic of pneumonic influenza (commonly known as the 'Spanish Flu'), the members of St John divisions and VADs volunteered at hospitals, visited the sick in their homes, distributed food and medicine and rendering service during the months that the influenza emergency lasted. Some 13,000 people in Australia died from the 'Spanish Flu', including some St John volunteers.



St John Ambulance and Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) volunteers in Sydney, during the 1918–1919 pandemic of pneumonic influenza.

Donation for Ophthalmic Care. A generous donation to the Ophthalmic Committee from a deceased estate without any history of the donor (1916–2009) was received. As Betty has been a member of Ophthalmic Committee for many years she recognised the name and was able to research and provide information about the deceased. The deceased was one of the daughters of the first Superintendent of Glebe Nursing Division in 1903. She joined the Ophthalmic Committee in 1963 and attended her last meeting in 1988. The deceased was a regular donor but seldom attended meetings.

Sir Hugh Poate Training Centre. The Centre is located at Blaxland on land that was originally leased from the Blue Mountains Council. The first building at the Centre was opened by Sir Hugh Poate (who was Chancellor of the Priory in Australia), on 8 December 1956. The St John Ambulance Brigade members raised the funds for the building.

In 1971 the St John Ambulance Brigade again raised funds and purchased one and a quarter acres of the land from the Blue Mountains City Council. Plans were underway to rebuild the Centre to provide live-in accommodation and a hall for training. The new buildings were opened 19 March 1983 by the Governor of New South Wales, Sir James Rowland.

In March 2010 the Board of Directors of St John New South Wales, approved a proposed expansion of the Blaxland Training Centre. Funding through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Grant was received from the Federal Government and the Centre now provides a new conference wing. The facility includes a large training space which can be divided into two and is fully fitted out with modern equipment and furniture. A large underground storage area houses the regional disaster trailers in readiness for an emergency response.

The official opening of the Conference Wing by Dr Neil Conn, AO, Chancellor and Chairman of the National Board, was held on 12 March 2011.

The Ian Kaye-Eddie Heritage Centre, Western Australia

Edith Khangure, CStJ, Librarian and Archivist

The general status of the Heritage Centre is good, and the major changes in its scope which occurred last year have been satisfactorily consolidated. The St John Museum and Archives continue and details are given in this report. An organisational restructure has seen the Heritage Centre become the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Tony Ahern. We continue with our membership of Museums Australia. The Information Resource Centre continues as a reference service for archival and heritage issues.

Archives. A number of areas have been tackled this year with considerable effort in collating material for biography files on Western Australian members of the Order, historical material for all First Aid Services divisions and Sub Centres in Western Australia and sorting newspaper cuttings.

Donations to the Museum. Donations this year include photographs, books, ambulance equipment, home nursing equipment, first aid training equipment, shields, manuals and documents. A significant donation was an original 1960 Laerdal Resusci Anne.

Donations from the Museum. The museum donated a photograph of a 1934 Austin ambulance to the Albany Sub Centre. This completes their collection of ambulance vehicles used at their Sub Centre.

Acquisitions by purchase. A third montage of ambulance vehicles used in Western Australia has been ordered. Four new vehicles introduced to the Ambulance Service during 2010 and 2011 will be featured. Dr Oxer has purchased an additional ceremonial banner.

Loans. Material was loaned to Fremantle First Aid Services in preparation for a forthcoming anniversary.

Research work. Requests for information on Sub Centre history and St John Ambulance personnel have been met this year. The 'Women in St John' project is underway with myself and Faye Morgan assisting with contributions from Western Australia. We were privileged to have been invited to comment on the South Australian St John Collection's significance assessment and look forward to the final report.

Cataloguing. The MOSAIC cataloguing program is working well and we have updated our version to the latest 10.66 version. There is a substantial backlog of cataloguing but our major area of activity is currently with archival work.

Digitisation and binding. The St John Ambulance Australia Annual Council Reports for 2010 and 2011 have been sent for copying in a digital format for archival purposes. The hard copy has been bound and housed in our fire proof, secure room in Central Records.

Restoration. No restoration work has been undertaken this year.

Museum promotion. Material from the museum was provided for the annual Sub Centre Conference in August. It featured the 50th anniversary of Resusci Anne and involved material from the Museum and the First Aid Resource Department. The internet website was updated this year and appropriate changes were made for the Heritage Centre.

Museum volunteers. Our regular volunteers: Irene Simpson, John Ree, Barbara Franklin, Des Franklin, Frank DiScerni, George Ferguson, Kevin Young and Betty Dyke, are all working on material in the archives. Assistance is also received from Terry Walton in London. Our thanks go to these volunteers without whose help, we would not be able to achieve so much.

Finance and security. We have not had any losses this year and are grateful to the organisation for providing our security system, insurance and funding.

Visitors. The Centre has been delighted to receive visitors from the general public, several schools, community groups, country and metropolitan SJAA staff and volunteers. The self-guided tour brochure is working well.

Publications. A history of the 50th anniversary of Resusci Anne appeared in the Annual Report.

Projects 2011–2012. Cataloguing, restoration work as funding permits, meeting reference requests and sorting Archival documents are ongoing. The 'Women in St John' project will continue through 2011–2012. A display for the next Sub Centre conference will be provided if requested.

Summary. A busy year in the Archives and in other areas of our work.

The Priory and the Australian Capital Territory

Ian Howie-Willis, OAM, KStJ, Priory Librarian and Historical Society Editor

The Priory Heritage Collection

The display of the Chancellor's Priory Heritage Collection—Library, Regalia, Memorabilia—at the National Office premises at The Hotel Realm, National Circuit, Barton, Canberra, was formally declared open by the Chancellor, Dr Neil Conn, during a short ceremony on Saturday 27 November 2010. The centre piece of the display is the Ashford Litter on long term loan from St John Ambulance Australia (Victoria). This litter was one of six imported from the UK by the Melbourne Centre of St John Ambulance in 1887. These litters formed the nucleus around which Melbourne's ambulance transport system was subsequently developed. Ashford Litters are highly significant in the evolution of the St John Ambulance organisation because their alternative name, 'St John Ambulances' soon became the name of the organisation itself.

The Priory Librarian, who has overall responsibility for the Chancellor's Priory Heritage Collection, gratefully acknowledges the assistance of those chiefly responsible for the loan of the Ashford Litter and for transferring it to Canberra, notably Mr Stephen Horton (CEO of St John in Victoria), Mr Mervyn Goodall (librarian at St John Headquarters in Melbourne), Dr Allan Mawdsley (Order Affairs Officer in Victoria) and Ms Kylie Seidel (personal assistant to the Priory Secretary).

Another significant development during 2010–2011 was the appointment of two volunteers to help manage the Prior's Priory Heritage Collection. First was that of Ms Pam Cunningham, a recently retired professional librarian who as Priory Bibliographer has taken responsibility for the cataloguing and display of the library. Second was that of Ms Jeanette Regan, a professional museological consultant, as Priory Curator, taking responsibility for the cataloguing and display of the Priory's small museum. The appointment of Ms Cunningham and Ms Regan is an important step forward for the collection because, for the first time in 70 years of accumulating heritage items, we will have professional specialists responsible for its development.

A further appointment agreed on but still to be made is that of Priory Historical Consultant. This position, to be filled by a volunteer, has been created in anticipation of the change-over in Priory Librarians at the end of May 2012. When the period in office of the present Canberra based Priory Librarian ends, it seems most unlikely that he will be replaced by another resident of Canberra. His successor and the National Office management will have need of an historical adviser who lives in Canberra and will be available at short notice to provide advice on historical matters as these arise.

ACT St John History and Heritage Society

The Australian Capital Territory St John History and Heritage Society remains quiescent. However, if and when necessary, it can be readily reactivated. Meanwhile, the staff of the National Office of St John, are available to advise the Australian Capital Territory St John management on heritage matters whenever necessary.

The History and Heritage Committee, Queensland

Beth Dawson, AM, DStJ, Chairperson

The past year has been a year of achievement for the History and Heritage Committee largely due to the introduction of monthly two-day working bees to sort, accession and conserve St John memorabilia. **Additions and maintenance of the Archives.** During the year a biography entitled *Sir Kenneth Fraser: A Twentieth Century Crusader* was donated by Sir Kenneth's daughters Ann Knowlman and Leith Fussell. Sir Kenneth Fraser was the first District Commissioner of St John Ambulance Brigade, Queensland District from 1949. From 1954 until his death in 1969, Sir Kenneth was the Priory's Hospitaller and Almoner.

A bound pictorial record of the St John (Qld) 2010 Investiture at Government House, Brisbane was donated by committee member Gail Vann. An historical record of 100 years of St John Commissioners in Victoria *In Ages Past* by Allan Mawdsley was added to the library; also *All for Queensland: The Governors and The People* was purchased by the committee.

Donation of uniform items, photographs, St John textbooks/manuals were received during the year from St John members as well as members of the public.

Displays at St John House, maintained and provided by the committee continue to generate interest of training course participants and St John members who visit.

The committee received a significant donation from State Council member Dr Paul Luckin in the form of an early solid leather first aid case. The exquisite hand-made case includes a tooled template of the Maltese Cross on the exterior. The origin of the case is unknown, and true to the comment made during its handover presentation, 'if only the case could tell us where it has been, its history would be interesting'.

Several earlier St John Ambulance (Qld) publications have been collated, bound and added to the library this year.

Grants. A successful application to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for \$2403.43 ensured the purchase of more archival items to store the collection. Since the devastating floods, earlier this year, grant applications have been limited as funds are being directed to affected community groups.

Support for St John Cadets. The resources for the Proficiency Badge Course 'Knowledge of The Order' now include two DVDs: *Knights of St John, Malta* and *The St John Priory Church Service*, both donated by Deputy Chief Commissioner Kieran Brown. Two committee members continue as members of the selection panel for the annual Mark Compton Award.

Trophy register. Some progress has been made with this register as a number of trophies (together with details of donors, purpose of the trophy and recipients) have been provided by Divisions.

Research. Requests for historical information relating to St John and the community have been researched and provided to a number of groups and individuals. Topics included:

- QATB Cup for which the nursing divisions competed from 1950–1970's against Red Cross and Queensland Ambulance auxiliary members.
- first aid courses provided by the St John Ambulance Association (Queensland Centre) for Brisbane Girls Grammar School students during World War I and World War II.
- the contribution of Miss Mary Harriett Griffith, the first woman in Queensland to be admitted to the Order of St John as a Lady of Grace in 1911.

Events. The committee participated in the Heritage Festival organised by National Trust of Queensland during May this year. The festival theme was 'Heritage of Water', a significant theme in view of the devastating Queensland floods and cyclone Yasi. Displays at St John House, the Townsville St John Centre and three Brisbane City Council Libraries focused on the contribution of St John volunteers at the recent events as well as the 1974 Brisbane floods, the use of water for first aid treatment, maintenance of body fluids, importance in patient care and infection control. The display highlighted the visit and sea journey to this country by Lord and Lady Brassey in the 1880's, which influenced the establishment in this country of St John Ambulance Association.

Festivals enable the committee to network with like organisations and spread St John Ambulance Australia's contribution to the community.

Assistance was given to the Welcome Creek Cadet Division for the celebration of their Golden Jubilee in December; some committee members attended the festivities.

Committee membership. Committee membership remained much the same throughout the year. However, long-term member Tony Harrison resigned in October and Dr Fred Leditschke has joined the Committee. Committee meetings were held quarterly. Articles for the *One St John* newsletter have been contributed by Committee members and reports for State Council meetings and National Board meetings were also prepared.

History groups—donations. Some surplus items to the archives have been donated to other State and Territory collections.

Acknowledgment. History and Heritage Committee's achievements during the year would not have been possible without the support and assistance of the St John Board, State Council, Chief Executive Officer and St John House staff. Committee members gave unstintingly of their time, interest and ideas, without which, the achievements would be minimal.

One stone mason's recollections of building the St John Jerusalem Eye Hospital

Beth Dawson, AM, DStJ, Chair, History & Heritage Committee, St John Ambulance (Queensland)

The following item is a translation of notes made during an interview conducted with Said Faraj, a Palestinian-born stone mason from Jordan who had been employed on the construction of the Jerusalem Eye Hospital, also known as the St. John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem. *St John History* reproduces it here because it provides insight into the lives of those who have worked at the hospital at various stages of its 127 year history.

Said Faraj started the interview by saying that in 1948 and after the Palestinian 'Al Nakba' ('the catastrophe'), when Palestinians were evicted from their homeland and Israel was established on their homeland, they left their village in Jerusalem district called Rafat and headed for Bethlehem, where it was safer since the Israelis did not invade that part. A state of panic occurred in the Palestinian population, especially after a massacre of civilians in the village of Deir Yassin. In the panic that followed, men, women, children, the elderly all fled to find safer places where they knew Israelis did not exist. This was mainly villages in the West Bank, which was controlled by the Jordanian army at the time. They lived in a refugee camp administered by the United Nations Relief & Works Agency (UNRWA) in the outskirts of Bethlehem called Al-Deheisha. Said

Faraj started working as a milkman in Bethlehem; however, in 1955 he began learning the craft of stone masonry from his father-in-law—Said was married to Nimeh Odeh in 1954—and also the Maltese contingent of construction workers brought in by the British High Commission to build its headquarters in Jerusalem. He started work as a stone mason on buildings in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Among those buildings was the St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem. Work on the hospital started in 1958. The hospital was located near a hotel named Centre Hotel. The company contracted to build the hospital was a famous company well known in the area called Shaheen. That company is based in Amman, capital of the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan.

Said's job was to prepare the stone quarried from rock of various types and prepare it according to which area of the building the dressed stone was to be used. He worked helping to build the hospital for one and a half years. The main financier for the hospital was a British society named 'Ijohanna' (an Arabic word possibly meaning 'Saint John'. The supervisors and engineers were also British. The head of the engineers was known by the name of Simpson. Said also helped to carve the British crown and flag from stone and they were placed at a prominent position at the entrance of the building. He would make 70 piastres a day (less than 1 Jordanian dinar, which means less than \$1.37 Australian at 2012 exchange rates) for his stone masonry work. After the external part of the building and structure was finished, and before interior work began, he finished his work with the hospital and went to on work on the YWCA building, also in Jerusalem, for a period of two weeks. He left his job in the YWCA and went to Amman Jordan in 1960 due to the high demand for stone masons and also the higher remuneration available to stone masons there. One of the very first buildings he worked on the Philadelphia Hotel in downtown Amman (still in existence today.). He left Amman with his wife Nimeh, his two sons, Basim and Nabeel and his newborn daughter. In 1970 and just before the civil war broke out in Jordan between the Jordanian army and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) forces, he bought land 30 kilometres north of Amman in nearby Zarqa city, where they built their home.

Said Faraj continued working in stone masonry until 1986, when cataracts in his right eye caused him to stop working. Working in the sun and the dust for all those years contributed greatly to his developing cataracts. In 1986, he had an operation to remove the cataracts in his right eye and then had another operation in the left eye in 1993. In between each operation he was working in a supervisory role on the construction of stone buildings and as an estimator. After his second operation the doctors asked him to stop working in stone masonry because of the dust and exposure to the sun. He has not worked from 1993 until now. Because he was a freelance stone mason he has no pension from the government or his employers. They rely on their male children for financial support, especially the eldest. In 2004 the family felt honoured to be able to visit the Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem and to be given an extensive tour by the matron.

The 1931 Centenary of the Order, and the Australian contingent that travelled to London to participate

Vince Little, Betty Stirton and Ian Howie-Willis

The Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem celebrated the centenary of its formation in 1931. Members of the delegations from overseas branches of St John Ambulance who travelled to London for the celebration were issued with badges denoting the countries they represented. The badge of one of the ten members of the Australian contingent, possibly that of Sir Hugh Poynter Bt. CStJ, the inaugural Priory Librarian, eventually became a part of the Chancellor's Priory Heritage Collection in Canberra.

Until recently the provenance of the badge was unknown, but in 2011 it was identified by the UK representative on the management committee of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia, Terry Walton. Mr Walton, a guide at the Museum of the Order at St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London, recognised what the badge was after seeing similar badges in the Museum. In the meantime, the Honorary Archivist for St John Ambulance New South Wales, Betty Stirton, has identified the ten members of the Australian delegation. She has provided the following notes about them. We thank Mr Walton and Mrs Stirton for their detective work in identifying the badge and its recipients.

The unembellished Maltese Cross badge with the single word 'Australia' in a scroll in the Chancellor's Priory Heritage Collection. It possibly belonged to Sir Hugh Poynter, Priory Librarian in 1946, who was a member of the Australian contingent attending the centenary celebrations of the Order in 1931. Perhaps he donated his badge to the Priory to help establish its collection of memorabilia.



The Australian delegation to the 1931 centenary celebrations

The delegation comprised seven St John members from New South Wales: Thomas Henderson, Sir Hugh Poynter, Bart, Miss Isla Blomfield, Miss Flora Read, Miss Ella England, Miss Annie Rients and Miss A Hayes. A record in the Minute Book of the NSW Centre of the St John Ambulance Association noted that 'when visiting London they will represent NSW Centre at the Headquarters Conference'.

In addition to the seven from NSW were three from elsewhere in Australia: Dr AE Cullen, TA Hardwick and G Stone. Which state(s) they represented and what positions they held there are at present unknown. Can any reader of this article help identify them?

Archival records in NSW provide useful information about the NSW contingent. According to the St John Ambulance Brigade NSW District annual report for 1931, Thomas Henderson, District Officer NSW St John Ambulance Brigade, Miss Ella England and Miss Flora Read were 'granted leave to represent the NSW District at the Centenary'. The report went on to note that

the Brigade regretted, due to the economical depression [i.e the Great Depression of the early 1930s] that NSW was unable to send a representative [first aid competition] squad to participate in the celebrations of the Centenary in England.

On 23 June 1931 there was an Investiture at Buckingham Palace by His Majesty, the Sovereign Head of the Order, King George V. Flora Read and Thomas Henderson were invested as Officers of the Order of St John. (They both chose to wait until this Investiture to receive their awards even though these had been granted on 17 February 1928.) At the Banquet held at St James's Palace on 22 June 1931, it was a male only affair! Dr E Herrick Knowles sat at Table C. Table G was the Official Table headed by the Grand Prior HRH the Duke of Connaught. Thomas Henderson sat at this table.

The NSW Association and Brigade members of the contingent

Mrs Stirton has provided the following information about the NSW members of the contingent:

- **Miss Isla Blomfield** was a Lady Health Inspector with the NSW Department of Public Health. For 10 years (1922–1932) she was a member of the Executive Committee of the NSW Centre of the St John Ambulance Association. She was admitted into membership of the Order as a Serving Sister in 1930, but her St John career ended the year after the Centenary, 1932, when she resigned from St John.
- **Miss Ella England** joined St John in 1917 as a member of the Sydney Central Nursing Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade. She was awarded the Service Medal of the Order in 1929 and was subsequently awarded seven bars to the medal, the last of these in 1964. She resigned from St John in 1968. She was admitted into membership of the Order as a Serving Sister in 1939. Because of wartime service with the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) movement, she was awarded the VAD King's Bar Brooch in 1944 and in 1951 received a bar to the brooch.
- **Miss A Hayes** was a member of the NSW contingent to the Centenary celebrations but apart from that nothing about her is known.

- **Thomas Hodson Henderson** gained a St John first aid certificate in 1907. In 1909 he joined the Randwick Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade and was appointed divisional superintendent. In 1915 he became a VAD member and turned his home in Randwick into a convalescent home. In 1917 he joined the Executive Committee of the NSW Centre of the St John Ambulance Brigade, and in 1919 he became the Centre Chairman. That same year he became District Superintendent of the Brigade in NSW. He was also a member of the NSW Ambulance Service Transport Board, for which he served as the liaison officer with St John. In 1941 he was awarded membership in the Order of the British Empire (MBE) and that same year was appointed as a Brigade representative on the council of the newly established Australian Commandery of the Order. In 1944 he was appointed Assistant Commissioner of the NSW District of the Brigade. He was admitted into membership of the Order as a Serving Brother in 1919 and was then promoted through the grades, becoming a Knight in 1943. He held the Service Medal of the Order with four bars. He died in 1945.
- **Dr E Herrick Knowles** examined St John first aid classes. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the NSW Centre of the St John Ambulance Association from 1916. He became its Deputy Chairman in 1932. He chaired the Centre's Business Sub-Committee (1933–1941). He was admitted into membership of the Order as a Serving Brother in 1930 and promoted to Officer in 1936. He died in 1942.
- **Sir Hugh Poynter** (1882–1968), an English-born baronet and a cousin of the author Rudyard Kipling, arrived in Australia in 1927 as the chairman of Baldwin's Steel. He became a member of the Executive Committee of the NSW Centre of the St John Ambulance Association in 1931. He was appointed President of the Centre in 1945. At the formation of the Priory in 1946 he became a Priory Officer, holding two portfolio positions: Librarian and Director of Ceremonies. He held the former only in 1946 but served in the latter until 1950. He was admitted into membership of the Order as an Officer in 1943 and promoted to Commander in 1947. He and his wife returned to London to live in 1951. He subsequently served as the Priory's UK representative. He died in Sydney.
- **Miss Flora Read** was one the St John 'Founding Mothers' in NSW. She gained a first aid certificate in 1892 and a medallion in 1896. She was secretary for St John first aid and home nursing classes in four suburbs of Sydney. She formed Nursing Divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade at Balmain in 1904, Burwood in 1910, Leichhardt in 1914 and was then appointed divisional superintendent of the Burwood Nursing Division. During World War 1 she began lecturing in first aid. She had earlier helped organise the Brigade's first public duty in Australia—at the Federation Parade in Sydney on 1 January 1901, when 160 male and female graduates of the St John first aid classes were present to provide first aid facilities. As this event took place before there was a formal Brigade presence in Australia, they had no uniforms but wore a St John armband. During the World War I she and the members of the other Nursing Divisions became VAD workers in the convalescent homes established for returned wounded servicemen. After the war she served as the Brigade's nursing divisions Lady District Superintendent (1924–32). In 1915 she was admitted into membership of the Order as a Serving Sister, becoming the first in NSW granted that honour. She was promoted to Officer in 1928. She held the Service Medal with one bar. She died in 1941.
- **Miss Annie May Reints** lived at Mount Victoria in the Blue Mountains, where in 1925 she established a local branch of the St John Ambulance Association, of which she was secretary and a first aid instructor. In 1939 she was admitted into membership of the Order as a Serving Sister.