

# St John History



PROCEEDINGS OF THE ST JOHN AMBULANCE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA VOLUME 8 2008–09



*"Preserving and promoting  
the St John heritage"*

### **Historical Society Contacts:**

Further information about the Society may  
be obtained from the executive officers:

**The President:** Dr Harry Oxe  
Email: [hoxer@westnet.com.au](mailto:hoxer@westnet.com.au)  
Phone: 08-9457 0499

**The Secretary:** Dr Ian Howie-Willis  
Email: [iwillis@ozemail.com.au](mailto:iwillis@ozemail.com.au)  
Phone: 02-6231 4071

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Correspondence about articles in the journal  
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details are listed above.

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# St John History

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

Design & production: Shirley Dyson (National Publications Manager, St John Ambulance Australia)

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# INTRODUCTION

## ***St John History: about Volume 8, 2008–09***

**VOLUME 8** of *St John History*, otherwise known as the *Proceedings* or *Journal* of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia, covers the year 2008–2009. The Journal appears annually and aims to cover the Society's important developments and events. The Society's principal publication, it is distributed to all financial members.

Included in each edition of the Journal are the papers delivered to the Society's most recent annual history seminar, in this case those from the tenth annual seminar, which took place in Adelaide, South Australia, on 19 June 2008. Also included are the reports from the Society's State/Territory branches that were submitted to the seventh Annual General Meeting of the Society, held at the St John Ambulance Museum, Unley, Adelaide, on 20 June 2008.

In addition, this volume of the Journal contains a general report on the Society's activities published in the *Annual Report 2008* of St John Ambulance Australia (also known as the 'Priory Annual Report'). As well as that, the current volume contains two 'Occasional Papers', that is articles that are worthy of publication but were not papers or reports presented in the Society's other forums. The first of the latter is an article on the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of continuous St John Ambulance activity in Australia; the second is a short history the Bendigo Combined Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch.

## ARTICLES

Included in this section of the Journal are the papers delivered to the Society's most recent annual history seminar, which, as mentioned, was the tenth and took place in Adelaide on 19 June 2008. The first of the following articles, by Dr Brian Fotheringham, was the keynote paper at the history seminar. In addition to Dr Fotheringham's article, this section contains articles by the eight other authors who made presentations at the seminar. They are: Mr James Cheshire, Mr Mark Compton, Dr David Fahey, Dr Heather Fogerty, Dr Ian Howie-Willis, Mr Vincent Little, Dr Allan Mawdsley and Professor John Pearn.



# EARLY LINKS BETWEEN ST JOHN AMBULANCE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND THE ADELAIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

by Brian Fotheringham

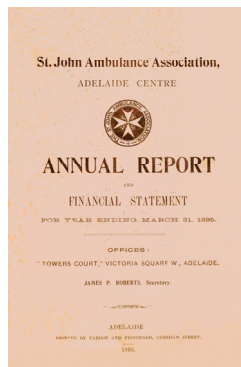
**THE AUTHOR:** The name Brian Fotheringham and the expression 'St John Ambulance Historical Society' are almost synonymous terms because not only is Dr Fotheringham the founder of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia, he is the founder of its State branch in South Australia, which actually preceded the national society by several years. Dr Fotheringham was the inaugural president of both historical societies and is the third Life Member of the national society. Although he retired as president of the national society in 2005, he continues as a committee member in the specially created position of 'Immediate Past President'. In addition he was the 14<sup>th</sup> State St John Ambulance Commissioner in South Australia and then served a record period of 13 years as the Priory Librarian. He came to St John almost 50 years ago as one of the young group of medical students who in the very early 1960s were recruited to be 'Probationary Surgeons' within the South Australian St John organisation. He is from a St John family for his father, the late Dr Jim Fotheringham, had also been the Commissioner in South Australia. In his professional life, Dr Fotheringham spent most of career as a senior medical administrator at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, the latter fraction of which is the subject of the following paper. Dr Fotheringham originally presented the paper as the keynote address at the Historical Society's tenth annual history seminar in Adelaide on 19 June 2008.

## INTRODUCTION

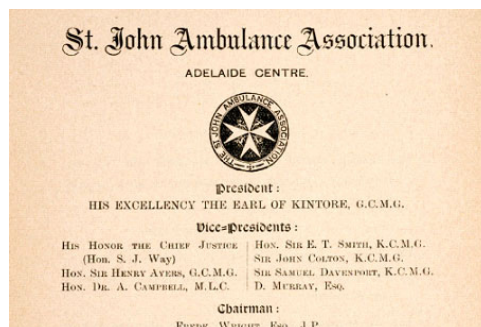
The purpose of this presentation is to parade briefly before you the names of some of the early workers for St John Ambulance in this State. You may recognize some of the names or even remember the persons mentioned, although some of them were born as far back as 1836! There are of course many people to choose from, and clearly I can't mention them all. I have been intrigued by the number who worked both for St John Ambulance and for the Adelaide Children's Hospital and have selected for mention only some of those who demonstrate this link. At the outset I confess my bias in choosing this path, as I too have been involved in the Adelaide Children's Hospital.

## DR ALLAN CAMPBELL

The Annual Report of the St John Ambulance Association, Adelaide Centre, for the year ending 31 March 1895 shows that the Association had a President, the State Governor at the time, and seven Vice-Presidents.



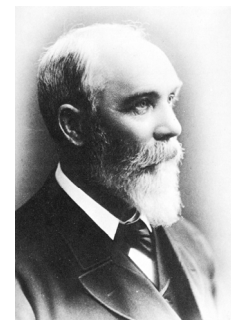
Adelaide Centre of St John Ambulance Association Annual Report 1895.



The seven Vice-Presidents.

One of these seven was Dr Allan Campbell, MLC. He was born in Glasgow in 1836, the year the Colony of South Australia was founded.

Dr Campbell graduated in Medicine from the University of Edinburgh and came to South Australia for health reasons; not the health of others, but his own health! Not that South Australia was particularly healthy environment then, especially for children. At about the time that Dr Campbell arrived nearly 18% of children born here died before the age of five years.



Dr Allan Campbell.

Aware of that awful statistic, Dr Campbell played a major role in founding the Children's Hospital, as well as the St John Ambulance Association here. Dr Campbell's contribution to the Children's Hospital is remembered through the Allan Campbell Building and through a commemorative stained glass window in the Hospital's chapel.



*The Allan Campbell Building.*



*Stained glass window at the Adelaide Children's Hospital.*



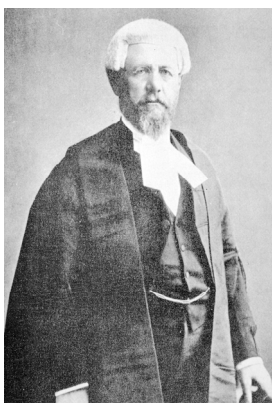
*Dr Allan Campbell's Pharmacy.*

Dr Campbell conducted a homeopathic pharmacy in King William Street in Adelaide. Homeopathy is a system of medicine developed in 1810 by Samuel Hahnemann, a German doctor, on the belief that diseases should be treated with agents that had a similar effect to the disease itself, and that the smaller the dose the greater the effect. "Homeopathy" means "like disease". I said that Hahnemann developed homeopathy. Many writers say he founded it, but much earlier Hippocrates and Paracelsus had used the criteria of homeopathy in some of their treatments.

Other doctors, known as alleopaths, prescribed large doses of at times quite dangerous drugs. The patients of homeopaths were said to die of the disease, while the patients of alleopaths died of the cure. Both groups should have known that "the art of medicine consists of amusing the patient while nature cures the disease". That quote is from Voltaire, who lived from 1694 to 1778, that is sufficiently long ago that he is now considered historic.

## **SIR SAMUEL WAY**

Dr Campbell married Florence Way, thereby becoming the brother in law of Samuel Way, another of the seven Vice-Presidents of the St John Ambulance Association.



*The Hon. Samuel Way.*

Samuel Way's career demonstrates how to get on in life! Born in Portsmouth, UK, also in 1836, he came to South Australia at the age of 16 years. He was articled to a legal firm headed by Mr Alfred Atkinson and became a lawyer. Soon after, Atkinson was declared insane and died. Way became joint head of that legal firm with another lawyer, James Brook. Brook died. Way was then the lone head. He entered South Australian politics as Member for Sturt. Four months later, as he was a lawyer, he was made Attorney General. Nine months later the Chief Justice, Sir Richard Hanson died. It was the task of the Attorney General to recommend who should be the next Chief Justice. Attorney General Samuel Way recommended Samuel Way. He got the job and kept it for very nearly the next 40 years. The Law Courts Building is named the Samuel Way Building in his honour. Samuel Way was also Lieutenant Governor of the State, and had the possibly unique experience of opening, and later dissolving, a Parliament of which he was a member. In 1887 Samuel Way became the only Australian member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council representing Australasia. His statue stands outside the University of Adelaide, of which he was the Chancellor. Curiously he wasn't himself a graduate of any university!

Samuel Way, later Sir Samuel Way, was also the first President and Chairman of the Board of the Adelaide Children's Hospital, a position he maintained for 39 years. Samuel Way's contribution to the Hospital was recognised by naming the Hospital's first building as "The Samuel Way Building". This building was demolished in 1965, but its less lovely replacement keeps the name.



*The first Samuel Way Building.*



*The present Samuel Way Building.*

## **DR EDWARD WAY & DR THOMAS CORBIN**



Dr Edward Willis Way, brother of Samuel Way and brother-in-law to Dr Allan Campbell, was listed as a committee member of the St John Ambulance Association in its very first Annual Report presented on 29 September 1887. He was also a surgeon at the Adelaide Children's Hospital, and one of the six doctors, including Allan Campbell, who gave lectures to the first few First Aid courses conducted by St John Ambulance in South Australia.

*Dr Edward Way.*

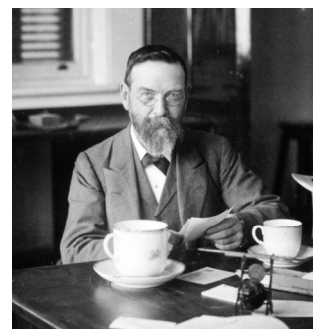


Similarly Dr T. W. Corbin was the only St John Association Examiner listed on that first Annual Report, and one of just three examiners listed on the Annual Report of 1895. He was greatly influential in helping to establish the Children's Hospital by pointing out the deplorable state of health of many of South Australia's children at that time.

*St John examiner Dr Corbin.*

## **DR JOSEPH VERCO**

Dr Joseph Verco, was born in Adelaide in 1851. He joined the medical staff of the Adelaide Children's Hospital, and in 1888 famously removed a hydatid from the brain of a child patient. This has been claimed as the first such operation to be performed in Australia. Unfortunately the operation was not successful. Dr Verco was on the St John Association's first panel of lecturers back in 1885 and some years later became the Divisional Surgeon for the Adelaide's Nursing Division No. 2 (YMCA). Dr Verco was a devout member of the Churches of Christ and would begin any lecture he gave to the St John Division with a period of Bible study. He died in 1933 and bequeathed money to the St John Ambulance Association. The Association used those funds to purchase its first human skeleton, to be used in teaching anatomy in first aid classes. That skeleton, which has quite a story of its own, is now in the St John Museum here in Adelaide.



*Dr (later Sir) Joseph Verco.*



## DR S. ROY BURSTON



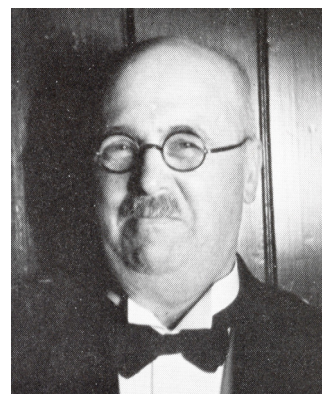
*Dr (later Major-General Sir) Samuel Roy Burstun.*

In September 1914, the Hospital decided for the first time to employ Medical and Surgical Registrars. The one and only Medical Registrar appointed in October 1914 was Dr Samuel Roy Burstun. In April 1915 he sought leave to join the Field Ambulance Section of the Royal Australian Medical Corps. Dr Burstun resumed his place as a Medical Registrar at the Children's Hospital in 1919. In 1936, the now Colonel Burstun met the Chief Commissioner for the Brigade Overseas when Col. (later Sir) James Sleeman visited South Australia. By 1942, Dr Burstun, later Sir Samuel Burstun, was Head of the Army's Medical Services in South Australia and a District Officer with the St John Ambulance Brigade. He later became the Director-General for the Australian Army Medical Services and the Australian Commissioner for St John Ambulance. Isn't it marvellous what an influence working at the Children's Hospital can have! Better still, isn't it marvelous what an influence working for St John Ambulance can have!

## DRS H.H.E. & E.A.H. RUSSELL

Two brothers involved with St John Ambulance in South Australia were Dr H.H.E. Russell and Dr E.A.H. Russell. The main recollection people now have of these brothers is that one was called "Fatty" Russell and the other was "Skinny" Russell. The H.H.E. ("Fatty") version was appointed as an Honorary Anaesthetist at the Adelaide Children's Hospital in 1901. At the time of James Sleeman's visit to South Australia in 1936, Dr Russell was the District Surgeon for the St John Ambulance Brigade in South Australia, a position he maintained until his death in 1951, 15 years or five triennia later!

Dr Russell was heavily involved in the VAD movement that saw Red Cross and St John volunteers working together. St John women, serving with the VADs, helped out at the Children's Hospital in 1918, filling in for the nurses. I can't believe this, but apparently the nurses were all suffering food poisoning!



*Dr H.H.E. Russell.*

## FRANCES WRIGHT, THE 'AMBULANCE COT' AND THE AMBULANCE LITTER

One of the graduates from the second First Aid course in South Australia, and the first First Aid course for women, was Frances Wright. That class was conducted at the Adelaide Children's Hospital. Frances was one of the first people in South Australia to receive a St John medallion. Also, in 1892, she was the first woman to be admitted to membership of the Order of St John in South Australia, as an "Honorary Associate" i.e., an Officer Sister.



*The Ambulance Cot at the Adelaide Children's Hospital.*

In 1888 Frances Wright was largely responsible for the success of a group variously named "The Ladies' Ambulance Association", "The Ladies' St John Ambulance Mission N. A." (the "N.A." standing for "North Adelaide", the suburb in which the Children's Hospital stands) or simply the "Ladies' Subcommittee". The Ladies' Mission was originally a group of First Aid certificated women who met regularly to practice the First Aid they had learned. Their meetings were held, without charge, at the Adelaide Children's Hospital. In return the women raised money for the Hospital's Annual Fête by selling produce at the fête's stalls. The money raised enabled them to endow a cot at the Hospital, at a cost of 30 guineas (\$63) a year. Hospital records show that the cot was maintained from 1896 to 1934, i.e., for 38 years.



*Museum litter.*

Frances Wright worked hard for St John Ambulance and also for the Adelaide Children's Hospital, where she is acknowledged as one of its founders. The Hospital named one of its wards, now no longer in existence, "The Frances Wright Ward" in recognition of her efforts.

In our local St John Museum are litters similar to the one the Ladies' Subcommittee of the St John Ambulance Centre in Adelaide purchased in 1887. It was stationed ... at the Children's Hospital!

## **ANNIE DUNCAN**

Incidentally, in that first First Aid class for women, besides Frances Wright there was another St John person of importance, Annie Duncan. Both Frances and Annie went on, in 1888, to be in the first class in South Australia in Home Nursing. Annie Duncan as any Tasmanians here will know, was a major force in establishing St John in that State.

## **CONCLUSION**

Leaving aside Annie Duncan, I've mentioned just eight people who have played significant roles in South Australia in the development of both St John Ambulance and the Adelaide Children's Hospital. I hope that serves as a gentle introduction to St John Ambulance history, particularly as it applies in this State.

It was Sir Isaac Newton who wrote to Robert Hooke in a letter dated 5 February 1676: *"If I have seen farther than others, it is because I was standing on the shoulders of giants"*.

I hope this seminar reminds us of many of those on whose shoulders we now stand, and to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude.



*Annie Duncan.*

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# THE AUSTRALIAN YOUTH COUNCIL TURNS 10

by Michael Compton (Chair, Australian Youth Council)

**THE AUTHOR:** Mr Michael Compton of Sydney is the Chair of the Australian Youth Council, that is the peak body for young people in St John Ambulance. He joined St John in 1997 as a Cadet in the Operations Branch in New South Wales. For the past 11 years he has served St John NSW as an active member of the First Aid Services Branch and as a Cadet Leader. His heavy involvement in Cadet Divisions and experience in leadership positions outside St John have helped him to develop an interest in and passion for youth development, which led to his current position as Chair of the Australian Youth Council. Mr Compton, who has chaired the council for a year, comes from a St John family. Not only is he a fourth-generation St John member, but he is the son of the present Priory Receiver General, Mark Compton. When Mr Compton Jnr. joined the national Board of Directors in 2007, he and his father set something of a record because for the first time in the Priory's 62-year history there has been a father-son duo sitting on the Board together. Mr Compton Jnr., however, believes that the significance of this is not that father and son sit on the same board but that his board membership demonstrates the dramatic shift in the organisation's philosophy on youth participation at the highest level of decision-making in St John Ambulance in recent times.

**Editor's note:** Mr Compton's paper was accompanied by a superb series of photographs in a 'PowerPoint' presentation that continually scrolled across the screen as he delivered his speech. Unfortunately, the slides in this presentation were unavailable for inclusion with this article. We accordingly apologise to Mr Compton and our readers for the omission.

**“**You're only 10 years old; you guys aren't the real deal. We've been here at least 35!” Clearly this person, who conveyed their birthday well wishes to the National Youth Manager, hadn't had the opportunity to speak to the Historical Society about what a significant anniversary the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the life of the Australian Youth Council (AYC) of St John Ambulance Australia is!

The AYC is indeed 10 years old this year, and we were delighted by the Historical Society's enthusiasm in allowing us the opportunity to share with you the story of the council throughout its young life so far.

Perhaps the earliest record of formalised youth participation in St John Ambulance Australia can be found in 1987, when in January 52 members attended a National Youth Conference in Canberra to 'consider and discuss the problems facing St John Ambulance and how they might be resolved'.

This conference was sponsored by the Kelloggs Company and was formally open by the then Prior, His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Ninian Stephen, Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia. The following main conclusions were recorded;

- a) The youth of St John Ambulance Australia is a most valuable asset and needs to be nurtured and given increased responsibility
- b) There should be more interesting and relevant training courses conducted for Cadets who should be given appropriate recognition for completing such courses.
- c) There should be more Cadet involvement in the activities of St John and more encouragement and appreciation for such involvement given to Cadets by adults in all parts of the St John Ambulance organisation but particularly at divisional level
- d) There should be better communication, both vertically and laterally, within St John Ambulance especially between adults and Cadets. More information should be disseminated and delays in distributing information should be reduced.

The Chief Commissioner at the time, Major-General Peter Falkland, noted: 'We should all accept the spirit of the conclusions enumerated and take action, where necessary and appropriate, to give the youth of today the support and guidance which will enable them to keep St John robust and vital as adults of the future.' It is interesting to note the validity of Chief Commissioner Falkland's comments, given that a number of the attendees (some present today) at that 1987 conference now occupy senior leadership position within the Priory of Australia.

In 1994, the Chief Officer Cadets, Lyn Dansie, visited England and returned with information about the St John National Youth Council in that place. This material was discussed with the Commissioners in November 1994, and then the District Officers (Cadets) in January 1995 at the North Brisbane Cadet Camp. Lyn also talked to Cadets who were attending this camp about the concept.

The Chief Commissioner at the time, Villis Marshall, strongly supported Lyn in promoting the idea of youth councils in St John. Villis had been influential in having the formal meeting of District Officers (Cadets) moved to Priory Conference in 1992 so that their proposals could more readily feed into the Priory Conference policy-making procedures. From the beginning of his term, Villis had sought representation from the Cadet movement on District Executive committees and Villis and Lyn Dansie saw Youth Councils as a means of directly involving Cadets in policy-making.

The District Officers (Cadets) meeting in Hobart in June 1995 discussed the idea of having two representatives from each district meet to develop a proposal for a national youth council and decided criteria for the selection of these representatives. In August 1995, a grant of \$4275 from The Queen's Trust was obtained to fund the meeting.

In January 1996, sixteen youth representatives met for four days in Hobart with the Chief Officer for Cadets, Lyn Dansie. The Chief Commissioner, Villis Marshall, opened the meeting.

Following this, two Youth Council representatives made a presentation to the Commissioners' meeting at the Priory Conference in Sydney in June 1996. The Operations Branch Standing Committee agreed that the Youth Council concept be accepted in principle. Progress in developing Youth Councils at State/Territory level was reported to the November 1996 meeting of National Headquarters (NHQ) Staff, Commissioners and District Superintendents.

Fifteen youth representatives, met in Perth in association with the National Cadet Camp in January 1997 and Mr Ivan Ward from South Australia was elected as the inaugural Chairperson.

At the October 1997 meeting of NHQ Staff, Commissioners and District Superintendents it was resolved unanimously: *'that States/Territories establish evolving Youth Councils, with the Australian Youth Council [AYC] as the forum for the State/Territory Councils.'*

The Sydney National Cadet Camp meeting in January 1998 was regarded as the first formal meeting of the Australian Youth Council. The Constitution of the Australian Youth Council was formally approved later that year by the Operations Branch Standing Committee at its meeting in Melbourne in June.

The Australian Youth Council met again at National Cadet Camp in Alice Springs in January 1999. Issues discussed at this meeting included retention of 18–25 year olds in St John and the introduction of youth members from other branches to youth councils. In association with that meeting, the Chief Commissioner also invited the AYC to meet on more regular occasions with the NHQ Staff.

This invitation was also issued when the AYC and NHQ Staff met at the Bacchus Marsh National Cadet Camp in Victoria in January 2000. It was at this meeting that the AYC, chaired by Michelle Davis from Tasmania, decided that it should move to a Priory Conference schedule and this was implemented at the Adelaide Priory Conference in June 2000.

The 2000 Adelaide meeting saw Dirk Sunley elected as chair. Issues discussed included investigation of a maternity uniform for St John, development of a national Cadet non-commissioned officer (NCO) training syllabus, and an induction program to help Cadets move into adult divisions. 2000 also saw an AYC proposed amendment to the dress regulations, concerning jewellery and body art, debated in the Priory Conference meetings and adopted later that year.

At the June 2001 meeting in Brisbane, the AYC nominated representatives to the Commonwealth Youth Forum, a body established to represent young people at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Then Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, the Hon Dr Rod Kemp MP, said that he was "delighted that young Australians will have a voice in ensuring that the Commonwealth has a relevant and effective role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." The AYC was also commissioned to conduct a First Aid competitions review, and resolved to place a number of discussion issues on the Cadet discussion board on the National website, including a uniform review (one of many!), strategies of youth retention, review of the AYC's constitution, and encouragement to express views on multiculturalism in the organisation.

2002 saw a change of the chair, as Jamie Ranse took the reins and steered the AYC towards discussions on issues including Child Protection, State and Territory guidelines and policies for having Cadets on duty at public first aid events. In 2002, the AYC sent representatives to the Australian Forum of Youth Organisations, the Australian Defence Force Cadets Inaugural Conference, and developed a document entitled the 'Youth Council Manual', which was designed to assist struggling youth councils to find an easily manageable function and structure - similar to the recently updated Youth Participation Support Pack.

In 2003, the AYC (under the chairmanship of Jamie Ranse) considered and passed a proposal for ongoing recognition of Peter Falkland awardees, developed a policy on international assistance at interstate events in Australia, contributed to a discussion paper on the review of the Operations Branch uniform (commissioned by former Chief Superintendent Jeffrey Williams) and proposed a national criminal record check for all newly recruited volunteers. Mid-year Darren Daff was elected Chair, the Treasury portfolio was replaced by Communications Co-ordinator, Sally Hasler, and the AYC agreed to meet on more regular occasions. The National website was redeveloped, a proposal to increase the age limit of the Grand Prior's Award from 21–25 years of age (to reflect the Duke of Edinburgh's award) and Sally Hasler put forward a paper entitled 'The Cadet Voice—One Year On—Our Youth, Our Future', which reflected national recommendations on youth policy.

With the election of Sally Hasler as the AYC's chairperson in 2004, the AYC presented an ambitious plan for the future at the Alice Springs National Conference. Sally presented a paper entitled 'Future Direction for the AYC', which outlined her vision for the council under her leadership. Deirdre Mason, Chairman of the Board of the St John Foundation, presented a policy to lobby the top 200 ASX companies for sponsorship for youth leadership and consultation meetings (which, unfortunately, was ultimately unsuccessful).

2005 was a significant milestone not only for the AYC, but indeed for youth development in St John Ambulance Australia. Following a visit by Chair Sally Hasler and Chief Cadet Officer Kieran Brown to a youth development conference in New Zealand, the AYC presented a paper to the board proposing that the organisation employ a National Youth Manager within the National Office, to provide guidance and support to both the AYC and the National Cadet Officers Group, and to resource the participation of young people in decision making processes in the organisation.

Following this presentation, St John employed Emma Robertson as the National Youth Manager, who began immediately to work collaboratively with the AYC and National Cadet Officers Group on developing an ambitious youth development strategic plan, including the development of the AYC's Youth Participation Support Pack. The organisation's decision to employ a youth resource specialist within the National Office was emblematic of the Board's commitment to strengthening and empowering the AYC to participate in national decision making.

The Board also agreed to establish the Youth Advisory Panel as a body of experts to provide strategic advice to the Board and AYC as to how the organisation could implement best practice youth policy.

A number of significant developments occurred in 2006 for the council, with reports provided to the National Board on the AYC's progress in March, important consultations with the Youth Advisory Panel occurring in May in Canberra, and a wide-ranging youth consultation session conducted at the National Conference in Perth. 2006 also saw the introduction of a further four National Portfolio Positions to the AYC, resulting in an increase in the council's capacity to support the state/territories and further progress the work they engage in.

Following recommendations from both the Youth Advisory Panel and the AYC (in consultation with the National Youth Manager), a submission was put to the Board that the AYC Chairperson be represented as a Director on the National Board of Directors. After robust discussion around the board table, this proposal was agreed to, and AYC Chair Sally Hasler first sat as a Director on the Board at the December 2006 Board meeting. In 2006 the AYC began its custom of presenting Key Themes and Messages—key areas of focus for the organisation and the AYC for the year. The 2006 Themes and Messages were framed in the context of getting achievable 'runs on the board' and a number of the goals set were achieved by the end of 2006.

Most significant of these was the Youth Participation Audit, presented to the Board in March 2007. The Audit was designed to assess the level of youth participation in decision making, leadership positions at all levels of the organisation and produced some significant data which has subsequently been used to formulate youth policy in the organisation. At the National Conference in Canberra in 2007, members of the AYC presented to the Chief Executive Officers Management Committee, the National Headquarters Staff, the Community Care, Training and Ophthalmic Branches, NCOG, Professional Officers, and the National Board on the 2007 Key Themes and Messages and the importance of engaging young people in their respective areas of responsibility.

December 2007 saw the National Board formally adopt a set of Youth Participation Principles for St John. These principles were developed by the Youth Advisory Panel in partnership with the AYC.

2007 also marked the end of Sally's successful years as Chair of the Youth Council, and it is incredibly important to reflect on the significant progress that was made under her leadership. The AYC went from being a body openly struggling to find a place within the national organisational structure to being a well established, mature and professional



representative committee reporting directly to the National Board, providing advice to many of the various management bodies at a State and National level, and able to effect real and lasting change in the organisation.

The invaluable support of the National Board in further strengthening youth participation and development in our organisation cannot go without mention, and, amongst his many other distinguished accolades, former Chancellor Professor Willis Marshall should be lauded in the tomes of our shared and proud history as the Youth Council's greatest champion.

So what's next? In 2007 I was fortunate enough to take over the leadership of the AYC from Sally at the Conference in Canberra. I have found reflecting on the history of this great body a very informative experience. It is clear that over time, young people have faced the same challenges and barriers to their participation in decision making processes. Indeed, the same issues that were brought up at the 1987 Kelloggs Conference continue to challenge the AYC today to strive for new heights.

Ten is a composite number, its proper divisors being 1, 2 and 5. Ten is the smallest noncototient, a number that cannot be expressed as the difference between any integer and the total number of coprimes below it. Ten is the sum of the first three prime numbers. Ten is the eighth Perrin number, preceded in the sequence by 5, 5, 7.

Most importantly, however, 10 is the number of years that the Australian Youth Council has officially operated in St John, and I thank the Historical Society for the opportunity to present our history on this important occasion.

## **SCOUTING & ST JOHN AMBULANCE—BADEN-POWELL'S ADVOCACY FOR FIRST AID & LIFE-SAVING: A PERSPECTIVE IN THE CENTENARY YEAR OF SCOUTING**

by John Pearn

**THE AUTHOR:** Major General John Pearn is the Vice-President of Scouts Australia (Queensland) and has been a Councillor of Scouts Australia (Queensland) since 1992. He was an active Scout and in 1955 was awarded the Scout Cord. He has served as a National Councillor of the Scout Association of Australia since 1997. As a paediatrician also, General Pearn was appointed (1995) as Adviser to the Chief Commissioner of the Scout's Child Protection Code of Conduct. He served also as an Adviser on the 18<sup>th</sup> Australian Jamboree (in First Aid provision and pre-hospital care) (1996-1998), and has been the author and editorial consultant for several books published by Scouts Australia. These have included Youth Suicide Prevention – Parents Guide, published in 1997. He wrote A Parents Guide on Adolescent Health for Scouts Australia, a text published in 1999. He has also been the author of a number of articles on the history of Scouting. Major General Pearn has served in senior positions in St John Ambulance Australia for more than four decades. After successive Divisional and Corps appointments, he was promoted to District Surgeon for Queensland (1983-1988) and since 1984 has served as a Councillor for the St John Council in Queensland. He served as the national Director of Training for St John Ambulance Australia for 10 years (1990-1999), and during this period edited the Australian best-seller, Australian First Aid, with over 2 million copies sold during this period. He has been the author or editorial consultant for a number of other St John publications including Occupational First Aid, Staying Alive, Survival – Remote Area First Aid, The Science of First Aid, Emergency First Aid – a Quick Guide, First Aid for Children Fast, Preventive First Aid and The Carer's Handbook. In 1997 he was appointed as the Chairperson of the foundation Ethics Committee of St John Ambulance Australia; and since 1996 has served on the national Medical Standards Committee.

### **ABSTRACT**

**I**n 1908, Lieutenant General Robert Baden-Powell published *Scouting for Boys* and established the Boy Scouts, which within a decade had grown to be the largest youth organisation in the world. So it remains today. *Scouting for Boys* contained 28 "Camp Fire Yarns", of which three were incorporated in a chapter entitled "Saving Life; Or, How to Deal with Accidents". Thirty years previously, Surgeon Major Peter Shepherd (1841–1878) and Colonel Francis Duncan (1836–1888) had introduced the first civilian First Aid training for adults, conducting segregated classes in the local Presbyterian Church Hall near the Woolwich Arsenal in London. Baden-Powell adopted these concepts and promoted both the chivalric heritage (inherent in the Order of St John) and its pragmatic teaching of the drills and skills of First Aid, incorporating these themes into the broader curriculum of Scouting. He promoted the teaching of First Aid as part of his broader ethos that one could be an optimal citizen, albeit as a child or youth, if one could "Be Prepared" both by prior training and knowledge; and by the maintenance of personal fitness, to help others. Shepherd and Duncan's pioneering St John advocacy was to bring the hitherto exclusively-military drills and skills of First Aid to the civilian adult population.

Baden-Powell further extended what had been a novel, if not radical concept, to include boys and male youths. This pioneering advocacy was one specific example of his broader promotion of training in the skills of rescue, resuscitation and pre-hospital care that would enable youths to “Be Prepared” to deal with emergencies encountered in the pre-hospital scene. Many of the First Aid techniques which Baden-Powell proposed have changed; and many accident risks, such as runaway horses in the streets of towns, and bites by rabid dogs (commonplace in his day) have disappeared. Nevertheless, his general principles of training for safety and rescue, accident site control, the seeking of counselling for depressed or suicidal victims and the acquisition of hands-on skills to treat common injuries remain true today. This paper is a perspective audit of an important milestone on the road to widespread community training of essential life-saving and resuscitation skills.

## INTRODUCTION



The year 2008 is the Australian Year of the Scout <sup>1</sup>. It is also the world centenary of the publication of one of the most popular and perhaps most influential books <sup>2</sup> published in English, Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* <sup>3</sup>. It is the centenary also of Lieutenant-General (later, Lord) Baden-Powell's first uniformed Scout Camp, held at Carr Edge, near the village of Fourstones, four kilometres south of Hadrian's Wall, in Northumberland <sup>4</sup>.

*The Scout movement logo.*

Exactly thirty-three years before, in 1878, two British military officers, Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd (1841-1878) and Colonel Francis Duncan (1836-1888) had established the concepts of First Aid <sup>5</sup>, as we know the drills and skills of pre-hospital care of the sick and injured, today.

In 1877, Surgeon-Major Peter Shepherd had written a comprehensive series of lecture notes entitled “Aids for Cases of Injuries and Sudden Illness”, as part of his radical proposal to teach the skills of military stretcher bearers to adult civilian members of the general public. In 1875, the Order of St John had established its own wheeled transfer litter, called the “St John Ambulance”. It was a short step, in 1877, to the establishment within factories of a volunteer St John Ambulance Association; but a further giant step to the teaching of First Aid to the civilian public. In a rented hall, the Presbyterian Church Sunday School Hall at Woolwich, south of the Thames in London, Surgeon-Major Shepherd and a Dr Coleman conducted the first public First Aid class <sup>5</sup>. Shepherd was killed on active service later that year, massacred along with almost 2,000 of his fellow soldiers at the Battle of Isandhlwana, in the Anglo-Zulu War.

After his premature and tragic death, Shepherd's lecture notes were codified and published as *First Aid to the Injured* over Shepherd's name, by Dr (later Sir and Lieutenant-General) James Cantlie <sup>6</sup>. By December 1878 St John First Aid Classes were being taught to tens of thousands of members of the general public, both in the United Kingdom <sup>7</sup> and in the colonies. Enthusiasm for St John First Aid Classes was boundless and members of the general public were taught in St John Classes at Malta (1882), Cannes, Melbourne (1883), Bermuda, the Bahamas, Bombay, Gibraltar, Hong Kong (1884), New Zealand (1885), Singapore, South Africa (Kimberley in 1885) and in Borneo (1887).

Twenty years later, in 1907, Lieutenant General Robert Baden-Powell, “B.P.”, conducted an experimental camp on Brownsea Island, off Poole. The enterprise was a great success and in January 1908 he started publishing, in fortnightly serial form, the first parts of *Scouting for Boys*. Later that year he conducted the first uniformed Scout Camp at Carr Edge near Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland. At that time he was based in North East England in the context of his appointment as Commandant of the newly-formed Northumbria Division of the Territorial Army.

By the time of Baden-Powell's establishment of the Boy Scouts Movement in 1908, more than a million civilians had completed a 16-hour, examined and certified course in St John Ambulance First Aid.

**Caption:** Lieutenant-General Baden-Powell was influenced by both the pragmatic teaching of first aid and by the codes of chivalry<sup>9</sup> that had been adopted by the secular but Royal Order of St John, established by Queen Victoria in 1888. The governance of the new Order was invested in *The Grand Priory in the British Realm of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem*. From that date, dedication to the alleviation of pain and suffering, as a volunteer skill in the Good Samaritan ethic, became the chief terms of reference of the work of St John Ambulance, today in more than 60 countries throughout the world.

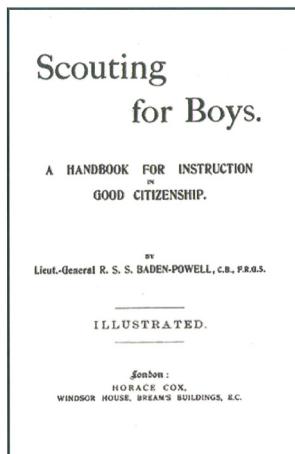
In *Scouting for Boys* (1908), Baden-Powell wrote specifically of the work of St John Ambulance and included first aid and its concepts of rescue as part of the curriculum of outdoor training and adventure which he devised for Scouts. Specifically, he promoted the altruistic proactive treatment of the sick and injured as part of the Scouting regimen.



'BP': Lieutenant-General (later Baron) Robert Baden-Powell.

## SCOUTING AND OTHER BODIES

Prior to 1908, Baden-Powell had seen the virtues of training, discipline and collegiate pride which were espoused by many other youth organisations which blossomed in the late Victorian era. Prior to his establishment of the Boy Scouts, and as the national and Empire hero of Mafeking (1900), "B.P." had been actively associated, either as a role model, counsellor or Patron, with many youth organisations. These included The Boys' Brigade<sup>10</sup>, the Junior YMCA, the Church Lads' Brigade, the American Temperance Cold Water Army, the Baden-Powell League of Health and Manliness, the Baden-Powell Brigade, the Baden-Powell Boys of Greenock and the Baden-Powell Anti-Cigarette League<sup>11</sup>. A number of these youth groups were Church based. One example was the Baden-Powell Brigade which was a branch of the Sunday School Union of the Primitive Methodists. Other bodies with which he was closely linked and whose work he promoted included the Royal Humane Society and the Boys' Life Brigade<sup>12</sup>.



Baden-Powell took fragments and ideas from many of these bodies to formulate the miscellany of doctrines which was to form the text of *Scouting for Boys*.

This book, destined to be the best-seller in English after the Bible, was described as an "apparent rag-bag of unrelated topics, was in reality a cunning blend of entertainment, moral exhortation, practical advice and escapism"<sup>13</sup>.

*The title page of the original edition of Scouting For Boys.*

The St John chivalry themes<sup>9</sup> and the advocacy for the boys to learn rescue and first aid techniques<sup>8,14</sup> were contained in three of his 28 Camp Fire Yarns which comprised the first bound edition of *Scouting for Boys*, published on 1 May, 1908. In the text, Baden-Powell also recommended several "Books to Read" which encompassed the themes of rescue, life saving and first aid. These eclectic references again came from a miscellany of sources:

- *Manual of Boys' Life Brigade: Life-Saving Drill.*
- *Manual of Fire Drill*, published by the London County Council.
- *Swimming*, by Professor Holbein.
- *Aids to the Injured or Sick*, by H.W. Gell.
- Booklets on *Sanitation and Hygiene* by the National Health Society.

## FIRST AID

Baden-Powell's all-encompassing ethos in *Scouting for Boys* was the absolute necessity of prior-training; and the maintenance of personal fitness in order to "Be Prepared" to help others. Baden-Powell had first used the motto, "Be Prepared", for the South African Constabulary which he had formed in 1901. Later, he adopted it also as the motto for the Boy Scouts in 1908. He noted in *Scouting for Boys* that the motto "Be Prepared", also stood for:

*B.P., my initials, which means that a Scout must always Be Prepared at any moment to do his duty, and to face danger in order to help his fellow-men* <sup>15</sup>.

This remains today also the ethos of all first aid training. As the national Honorary Medical Adviser of the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia, in the 1989 Foreword to *Preventive First Aid*, I had written:

*First aid is a skill required by all. It is one which knows no rank or status, no limitation by age, and no special constraints of time or place. The most important person in the world if acutely injured is the person standing beside the victim. Every parent, every family member, every workmate, every employer, every citizen – all will at some time be called upon either to restart a stopped heart, or to prevent loss of sight from eye injury, or to prevent a fitting person from choking* <sup>16</sup>.

Later, when I was national Director of Training for St John Ambulance Australia, I had written in the Foreword to the 1989 edition of *Australian First Aid*:

*First aid remains one of the most important of all life's skills. The simple yet essential skills to preserve life in an emergency, to protect a casualty and to hasten the healing of wounds, are skills which no parent, partner, motorist or workmate can do without. Acute illness and sudden injury have no respect for age or status, or place or time. It is one of the imperatives on modern living to 'do the right thing' by those around us. First aid training is one vehicle by which these important skills can be achieved*" <sup>17</sup>.

In *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell condensed his Camp Fire Yarn No. 23 ("Be Prepared for Accidents") <sup>18</sup>, Camp Fire Yarn No. 24 ("Accidents and how to deal with them") and Camp Fire Yarn No. 25 ("Helping Others") into a single chapter – Chapter VIII which he entitled "Saving Life, or How to Deal with Accidents".



In his Camp Fire Yarn No. 23, "Be Prepared for Accidents", he recounted some stories about chivalrous deeds performed by the Knights of St John, and other recent English accounts of heroism by young people. One of these concerned a courageous attempt at a cliff rescue:

*Three boys were climbing up some cliffs from the seashore, when one fell to the bottom and was very badly hurt.... The third one, Albert Abraham, climbed down to assist the boy who had fallen and he found him lying head downwards between two rocks, with his scalp nearly torn off and his leg broken. Abraham dragged him up out of the reach of the tide, for where he had fallen he was in danger of being drowned and then replaced his scalp and bound it on, and also set his leg as well he could, and bound it up in splints, having learned the 'First Aid' duties of the St John's Ambulance Society. He then climbed up the cliff and gathered some ferns and made a bed for the injured boy. He stayed with him all that day and when night came ... even then when a great seal climbed on the rocks close to him and appeared to be rather aggressive, he drove it off with stones...*

<sup>18</sup>.

The cover of the early edition of *Scouting For Boys*.

Baden-Powell followed this account with details of a practical training game called 'Flinging Squaler':

*This was a piece of weighted stick attached to a life saving line. A crossbar with a simulated head, "life-size, representing the head and arms of a drowning man, is planted in the ground 20 yards away. Each competitor throws in turn from a ...line drawn on the ground – whoever throws the furthest wins, provided the line falls on some part of the dummy, so that it could be caught by the drowning man <sup>18</sup>.*

Camp Fire Yarn No. 24 recounted stories of heroism of young people rescuing victims of drowning, from fire, from bolting horses and from bites by rabid dogs. Baden-Powell set practical exercises which included the practice of crowd control, knowing the positions of "fireplugs and hydrants and police points, fire alarms, fire stations, ambulances, hospitals etc., and how to prevent a man shooting another with a pistol".

In Camp Fire Yarn No. 25, he summarised detailed instructions on first aid skills. These included the Schafer method of artificial respiration, then regarded as best-practice <sup>19</sup>, lifts, carries and dragging techniques to rescue victims in fires; the treatment of burns, the splinting of broken limbs, and the treatment of a range of conditions including snakebite, grit in the eye and the management of threatened and attempted suicide victims.



The 'Esmarch Bandage'—the illustrated triangular bandage developed by Professor Friedrich von Esmarch, the great German pioneer of the First Aid movement. St John Ambulance later adopted and popularised his bandage, which is sometimes now called the 'St John Bandage'.

Baden-Powell emphasised the importance of realism in first aid training:

*In practising First Aid, it is a great thing to bespatter the patient with blood to accustom the rescuer to the sight of it, otherwise it will often unnerve it in a real accident. Sheep's blood can be got from the butcher's shop.*

Emphasis was also given on practical simulations of burning buildings and the drills of shutting windows and doors, checking for people in need of rescue and survival techniques used to minimise inhalational smoke and gas injury <sup>8</sup>.

Many of the First Aid techniques taught by St John Ambulance and which "B.P." promoted in *Scouting for Boys* have subsequently been discounted. For example, his 1908 recommendation for the treatment of convulsions or an epileptic seizure was:

*Fits — it is no good to do anything to him but to put a bit of wood or cork between his jaws, so that he does not bite his tongue.*

For the treatment of snakebite, the 1908 recommendation was:

*The great thing is to stop the poison rushing up the veins to the body. To do this bind a cord or handkerchief immediately around the limb above the place where the patient has been bitten... then try to suck the poison out of the wound, and if possible cut the wound still more, to make it bleed, and run the poison out... the patient should also be given stimulants, such as coffee or spirits, to a very big extent and not allowed to become drowsy, but should be walked around and pricked and smacked in order to keep his senses alive—practise this process in make-believe.*

This latter technique persisted in much First Aid teaching until the experimental work of Dr Struan Sutherland proved its ineffectiveness in 1979; and the first demonstration, in humans, by the author <sup>20</sup>, of the effectiveness of Sutherland's compressive-bandage and splinting technique.

In other areas, "B.P.'s" proposed First Aid management was wise, undoubtedly culled in derivative fashion from the teachings of the St John Ambulance Association <sup>5</sup> and from other sources <sup>21</sup>. As a cavalry officer, it is known that Baden-Powell was called upon to administer first aid in the field on a number of occasions. A specific example of this, in which he referred to himself as the "doctor", is recounted in one of the biographies, *The Piper of Pax*, written by E.K. Wade in 1924 <sup>21</sup>. Wade described the aftermath of a skirmish in Zululand, when Baden-Powell (as ADC to his uncle, General Smyth) together with Major McKean (of the Inniskilling Dragoons) completed building Fort McKean, near the township of Etshowe in Zululand. A Zulu girl had been shot and abandoned by her people. Wade recounts how:

*The doctor having been left behind at the Garrison at Fort McKean, it fell to Baden-Powell to act as doctor to the sick and wounded with his column, and for such a task he had prepared himself some years earlier by studying 'First Aid'.*



*Among his patients were two traders, whose wounds had been shockingly neglected, also a white women, who was suffering from dysentery and fever and several wounded neighbours, all of whom were recovering under the 'doctor's' treatment, although one of them had been wounded in the stomach. [another] Zulu girl had been shot through the abdomen. McKean and B.P. made a fire for her and gave her a restorative. The 'doctor' bandaged her up and got a sack and blanket for her.... In spite of being wrapped in the officers' waterproof cloaks, the girl died <sup>22</sup>.*

Although much of the First Aid teaching espoused by Baden-Powell has changed, in the "full circle of life", some of the original techniques which he proposed and were subsequently changed, only to revert (in the twenty-first century) back to what was proposed in that era of the first decade of the twentieth century. For the treatment of burns, for example:

**Burns...** *Instead of flour or oil to stop the pain of a burn, put a piece of paper firmly over the wound, and the patient will be relieved in a few seconds.*

In the case of depressed individuals in whom the First Aider knows that suicide is a significant risk, after speaking with the patient:

*Then, if possible, try to get a Salvation Army Officer to see him; he will probably set him right and in this way you may be able to save lives.*

This totally naïve and facile exhortation was well meant; and was advocated in an era before specialist counselling or an understanding of the potential risk of suicide, which is a risk to all depressed patients, was appreciated.

#### **'BE PREPARED'**

In Camp Fire Yarn No. 2, written in one of the early pamphlets published prior to their codification as the bound folio of *Scouting for Boys*, on 1 May, 1908 "B.P." had written about "Saving Life". He wrote:

*Many .... will at one time or another get the chance of it [saving life] if you are prepared to seize the opportunity. That is, you must Be Prepared for it; and you should know what to do the moment an accident occurs – and do it then and there... you must actively practise how to open a manhole and let air into a gassy sewer, how to lift and carry an insensible person, how to collar, save and revive apparently drowned people and so on... when you have learnt all these things you will have confidence and when everybody is in a state of fluster, not knowing what to do, you will quietly step in and do the right thing <sup>23</sup>.*

The novel spectacle of boys undertaking simulated training for such things as accident site control, crowd control and competitive First Aid games-drills, inevitably subjected them to ridicule:

*Like members of early Christian sects, the first Boy Scouts were subject to frequent ridicule... the ridicule seemed a small price to pay for this organised example from repressive school-masters, moralising parsons and coddling parents... there was no radio then, no cinema and too few playing fields and most schools were tyrannical places—Scouting seemed heaven-sent to boys and to those who cared for them ...<sup>24</sup>.*

A hundred years later, uniformed and disciplined training of the youth of both sexes also does not find favour with all. Nevertheless, Baden-Powell's foresight and advocacy that boys, as well as adults, should learn First Aid drills was pioneering in its concept and salutary in its motives.

In one of the several biographies of Lord Baden-Powell, that of Bill Hillcourt and Olave Baden-Powell, the authors summarised *Scouting for Boys*, as "a jumble of seemingly unrelated subjects, written in simple language ... not a book to be read in a stuffy room. It was meant to be talked about, dreamed about round a camp fire. It was meant to stir the imagination, to challenge the reader to action" <sup>25</sup>.

That it certainly did. *The Times* of London filled two columns on its editorial page to comment on it. *The Spectator* reviewed *Scouting for Boys* and noted:

*It is very unconventional, and whether the boyish fancy will be captured by the precise mixture of seriousness and madness which it prescribes as a working rule of life we cannot undertake to say. Let us hope it will.*

Within months of the May (1908) publication of *Scouting for Boys*, "Scouting had swept like a tidal wave across the length and breadth of the United Kingdom" <sup>26</sup>; and "mothers were pressed into cutting knickers and trousers into shorts, while the boys bravely folded down their long, black stockings to expose their pale knees to the harsh English winter –

according to Baden-Powell's drawing of what the well-dressed Scout should wear. Hardware stores had a run on broomsticks to be used as Scout staves" <sup>26</sup>.

In all this, the teaching of first aid skills held an important "hands-on" place. The Scout scarf was modelled on the St John triangular bandage. The St John First Aid Badge was the only "other-organisation" badge, other than military campaign ribbons on Royal decorations, which could be won on the Scout uniform.

Although many of the techniques of First Aid have changed, the principles of Baden-Powell's teaching remain as true and as appropriate today as they did a century ago. "B.P.'s" advocacy of the *desiderata* of First Aid and rescue training was not primarily for self-interest. It was to enable children and youths, just like adults, to "Be Prepared" to help others who suffered the injuries of daily civilian life; and those who were victims of life-threatening emergencies. The basic ethos of St John had similarly stressed the Good Samaritan ethic. One of Baden-Powell's legacies, highlighted in this Centenary audit of his work, was to promote and extend the altruistic and humanitarian work of the Order of St John, and to offer it to the young. St John later adopted this concept also with its uniformed St John Cadets, lowering the bar progressively in the later decades of the twentieth century to include safety training and basic first aid skills for primary school children. Lord Baden-Powell would have approved.

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21. **NOTE:** Baden-Powell's sources of first aid doctrine remain unreferenced. Undoubtedly he had had experience with the First Aid drills of military stretcher-bearers. In one of his biographies, *The Piper of Pax*, the author, E.K. Wade, recounted (pp.66,67) how Baden-Powell had administered First Aid to a wounded Zulu girl near Fort McKean, Zululand on 11 July 1888. Baden-Powell knew of Dr H.W. Gell's *Aids to the Injured or Sick*, and recommended it as a text for Scouts in Chapter VIII of *Scouting for Boys*.
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# **SERVICE ABOVE SELF: AN EXAMINATION OF THE LIFE SAVING MEDAL OF THE ORDER**

by James Cheshire

**THE AUTHOR:** *Mr James Cheshire is the Historical Society's deputy secretary and a Member of the Order. He was a member of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch in Victoria for many years and from time to time still helps the Branch there with advice. He is an officer of the Australian Federal Police, in which he is a Federal Agent in the Joint Counter Terrorism Team in Melbourne. His forensic research skills are evident in this paper, which is an abbreviated version of the full-length, comprehensively documented essay he tabled at the Society's history seminar in Adelaide on 19 June 2008.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Life Saving Medal of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem is generally considered by most to be the preeminent and significant accolade that can be bestowed by the Order on any person. The award was created in 1874, with the Gold award introduced in 1907, to fill a gap in the then existing awards so that acts of gallantry by civilians done in order to save life on land could be appropriately recognised. In the 134 year history of Life Saving Medal of the Order, and in the 125 year history of the Order in Australia there have been only fourteen people recognised for their bravery and gallantry in eleven separate events with the award of this medal.

There are some remarkable observations to be made about the awards that have been made.

- ✱ The first award was made to Mr Edward Nicholls a resident of Western Australia in 1906 and the last to Volunteer Ambulance Officer Colin (Sandy) Bourne a resident of South Australia in 1979.
- ✱ Seven of the eleven events have been rescues from caves or other confined spaces, two involved a person armed with a gun, two involved fire rescues, one from a house the other a vehicle.
- ✱ Remarkably, seven of the awards have been made to Western Australians equal to all other jurisdictions put together.
- ✱ There has only been one award made to a female, Mrs Helen Dyer, a resident of Western Australia in 1972 for rescuing children from a house fire.
- ✱ There has only been one award made of the gold medal, to Sergeant Eddie ('Spider') Briner. a resident of Victoria who in 1968 travelled to Tasmania and rescued a teenager trapped in a cave.
- ✱ No awards have been made in the twenty-nine years since the award made to Volunteer Ambulance Officer Colin (Sandy) Bourne in 1979.

As this year marks the fortieth anniversary of the actions that gave rise to the only award of the medal in Gold in Australia it is perhaps timely to review the award and consider its position within the current life of the organisation in Australia.

## **LIFE SAVING AND BRAVERY AWARDS**

In Australia acts of bravery may be officially recognised within the Australian Bravery Decorations which were created in 1975 as one of the original elements of the then completely new Australian system of honours and awards.

The four levels of bravery awards for individuals are:

- The Cross of Valour,
- The Star of Courage,
- The Bravery Medal, and
- The Commendation for Brave Conduct.

There was added a group Bravery Citation which was instituted on 5 March 1990. It is awarded for a collective act of bravery by a group of persons in extraordinary circumstances that is considered worthy of recognition.



Prior to the establishment of these Australian awards, conspicuous acts performed by Australians were recognised with awards made under what is known as the Imperial awards system or what might be otherwise known as British awards. Over time this has included awards as diverse as: the Sea Gallantry Medal (1855–1989); the Albert Medal (1866–1971); the Queen's Police Medal for Gallantry (1954–1977\*); the George Cross (1940– ) and George Medal (1940– ); the Queen's Gallantry Medal (1974– ); the Edward Medals for Mines (1907–1971) and Industry (1909–1971); and the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct (1954–1994). It should be taken into account that with the change from the Imperial system each Australian State was required to individually accede to the new Australian honours and awards system. As a result it took some years for all States to move fully from the Imperial awards to the Australian system.



(left to right)  
Cross of Valour; Star of Courage; Bravery Medal; Commendation for Brave Conduct; Group Citation for Brave Conduct.

## CURRENT AUSTRALIAN BRAVERY AWARDS STATISTICS

Award	Post Nominal	Active Dates	Awards Made	Award Dates	Notes
Cross of Valour	CV	Since 1975	5	1989	
Star of Courage	SC	Since 1975	134	1976	
Bravery Medal	BM	Since 1975	923	1976	
Commendation for Brave Conduct		Since 1975	1409	1976	
Group Bravery Citation		Since 1990	481	1990	481 individuals have received awards. It is unclear to how many events this applies.

Source: Prime Minister and Cabinet Awards Database June 2008

## IMPERIAL GALLANTRY AND BRAVERY AWARDS TO AUSTRALIANS

In the period before the introduction of the present Australian system of bravery awards, a relatively small number of Australians had received Imperial honours. The total number awarded was 678 compared with a total of 2952 under the Australian system since 1975. The statistics for the various types of Imperial awards are as follows: the Albert Medal (27 awarded); the Sea Gallantry Medal (5); the King's and Queen's Police Medals for Gallantry (45); the Edward Medals [for] Mines [and] Industry (9); the Empire Gallantry Medal (1); the George Cross (14); the George Medal (121); the King's and Queen's Commendations for Brave Conduct (416); and the Queen's Gallantry Medal (40).

Notwithstanding the official awards created, whether by legislation or more commonly under Royal Warrant, there have been a very large number of awards made by organisations to also recognise gallant acts. Over time these have included organisations specifically established to recognise these endeavours as well as other groups who have established formal recognition within their own internal awards system of their employees or of those people with whom their business or activities had ordinarily brought them into contact.

The Royal Humane Society was established in 1774 primarily as a group to critically review and share knowledge in relation to the techniques of resuscitation. Most of the early awards made however were more in the form of financial grants and testimonials. However it was not until 1867 that an award or what would be commonly referred to as a medal was designed and awarded by the society. Originally though the Society only recognised individuals who had rendered noteworthy endeavours in connection with rescue or saving of life in environments substantively around docks, harbours and rivers. The Royal Humane Society is still perhaps the preeminent non-government organisation in providing formal recognition.

There are, however, a plethora of organisations, bodies and philanthropic individuals which have made awards in order to recognise individuals. Among more than 40 known to me these have included awards made by: the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade; the Glasgow Humane Society; the Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society; the London, Midland & Scottish Railway; the London Passenger Transport Board; the Plym, Tamar, Lynhar & Tavy Humane Society; the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents; the Salvation Army Girl Guards; the Shipwrecked Fisherman & Mariners Royal Benevolent Society; the St Andrews Ambulance Association; the Royal National Lifeboat Institution; and the Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire.

In addition, there have been a large number of rescues or disasters for which medals or awards for bravery or significant service have been made. Some of these awards might be considered similar to what we would now be known as a group citation. Among the 22 on a list I have compiled, these have included: the Carpathia and Titanic Medal; the Hong Kong Plague Medal; the Maharajah of Burdwan's Medal; the Maidstone Typhoid Medal; the Moray Floods Medal; the Sacriston Colliery Medal; and the Wreck of the Chusan Medal.

It is clear from the above less-than-exhaustive lists that there have been increasing efforts since the late nineteenth century to have appropriate recognition for those men and women who decide to place themselves at risk in order that the lives of others might be saved. In this it is clear that the Order of St John was no exception.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BRAVERY AWARD BY THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

The Life Saving Medal of the Order was established by Statutes of the Order in 1871 but not actually instituted as an official award of the Order until 1874. At the time there was no award, either official or unofficial, available to recognise extraordinary acts done to save lives on land. It was Sir Edmund Anthony Harley Lechmere, one of three great personalities in the establishment of the Order in the modern era, who first gave spark to the idea of an award to recognise those who whilst endeavouring to save life had endangered their own.



The Albert Medal, named after the Prince Consort Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha had been instituted in Gold in 1866, five years after his death, and in Silver in 1897 to recognise 'gallantry in saving life at sea'. It was not until 1877 that the regulations were amended to permit it to be awarded for acts on land. The British Parliament had bizarrely in the Merchant Shipping Act 1854 (UK), and maintained with the updated legislation in 1894, created the Sea Gallantry Medal. This award included a financial reward to recognise acts in saving life at sea. I say that it was bizarre as this was an award established not by Royal Warrant but rather by the legislature. Hitherto there had been no official award of any kind recognising specific acts of gallantry. There had however been what would now be generally grouped as non-government organisations who had recognised this omission and had endeavoured to make awards recognising acts in connection with the water, either at sea or rescues from rivers, canals or other waterways.

*The Albert Medal in Gold, an Imperial honour, presented posthumously to Sergeant David Emmet Coyne in May 1918.*

Acts of gallantry in saving life on land, underground and in industry were not recognised by any existing award at the time of the establishment of the Life Saving Medal of the Order. It is clear that those within the Order were trying to emulate the Royal Humane Society activities in recognising these acts. It is also interesting that once the Order of St John commenced recognising the forgotten class of acts that other societies and the Crown followed in changing their regulations to permit their award for acts done on land and similar circumstances.



*Life Saving Medal of the Order in Silver awarded to Mr Alfred Tonge for actions in the Pretoria Pit Disaster at the Hulton Colliery Company mine in Lancashire on 21 December 1910.*

The first award of the Life Saving Medal was made to recognise the actions by two coal miners on 6 September 1875 at the Alberta Colliery. At imminent risk to their own lives Elijah Hallam and Frederick Vickers rescued six of their fellow workers at the coal mine where they all worked. During the course of their shift a cage used to transport men from the surface to the coal face broke down at the half way point of its journey. At great personal risk the two men managed in climbing to and fro to convey the six occupants to safety. Sir Edmund Lechmere presented the medals to the men personally at a ceremony at which he said:

*I trust you may live long to wear these medals and that they may be handed down to your children as memorials of their gallant fathers...*

It is clear from the early records of the award of this medal both in the United Kingdom as well as in Australia that a great number were awarded for acts in connection with mines and industrial accidents. Perhaps not surprising given the involvement of St John in the provision of training and advancing pre-hospital care in those industries in the organisation's own infancy.

## THE AWARD IN THE CURRENT DAY

The awarding of the Life Saving Medal of the Order continues to be made and receives attention in Order publications and indeed the wider media when such awards are made. Formally the Life Saving Medals of the Order are provided for under a provision of the Statutes of The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem (2004) (2004 Statutes) issued by the Order Secretariat in December 2003. The statutes act as an enabling head of power or authority for the creation of the award. In Statute 52(1) of the 2004 Statutes it provides for the Order to create under regulation "Medals, Certificates of Honour, and Votes of Thanks". Further the 2004 Statutes provide at 52(3) for the removal of such awards from those whose subsequent conduct has become "unworthy".

Interestingly at Statute 52(2) of the 2004 Statutes it provides the manner in which the award of the Life Saving Medal shall be made. It states that the awards is made:

*in the name of the Sovereign Head, by the Grand Prior on the recommendation of the Grand Council and where appropriate of a Priory Chapter, save that in the case of the Life Saving Medal an immediate award may, where the circumstances so justify, be made by the Grand Prior on the advice of the Lord Prior.*

However at Statute 17(b) in a section entitled "Delegation to Priories in respect of Honours and Awards" the Statutes grant the power to Grand Council to delegate to Priories the award of the Life Saving Medal. The medals are specifically created by Regulation 36 of the St John (Order) Regulations 2003 and described in award and form at Annexure III to those same Regulations. Section 3 Part 2 of the Annexure to the 2003 Regulations gives us the circumstances under which an award may be made. The Life Saving Medal is awarded to a person who has performed a conspicuous act of bravery; in performing that act has endangered his own life; and has performed that act in saving or attempting to save the life of one or more other persons.

The 2003 Regulations provide that an award may be made to any person. The Regulations specifically pick this up in describing eligible recipients and says that an award may be made "irrespective of" whether or not he/she is a member of the Order or of one of its Foundations; his/her nationality or country of residence; or the place in which the act was performed. Also within this same section at 5(c) there is a reference to what would appear to be the tip of a potential exclusion to making such an award. The sections says:

*In deciding whether to make an award regard shall be had to the existence in the country in which the person is resident or of which he is a national of any applicable national bravery awards or awards made by other bodies of standing.*

Further at section 7 there is a specific prohibition of receiving the Life Saving Medal of the Order in conjunction with any other award.

### **7 Non-duplication of Awards**

*7(1) The Medal or a Bar is not awarded to a person who for the same act has received a national bravery award or an award from another body of standing.*

*7(2) Where the Order is minded to award the Medal or a Bar to a person and an intimation is made to that person that a State or other body of standing is minded to make to him a national or other bravery award for the same act then that person shall elect which he wishes to receive.*

The Life Saving Medal of the Order is very much a current award in the life of the organisation in other parts of the world. The two most recent gold awards come from acts by residents of the United Kingdom which like Australia has a system of official awards also available to recognise brave or gallant acts.

The first of these acts occurred about 11.20am on Tuesday 22 April 2003 when Cadet Leader Paul Swift a 16 year old apprentice electrician of Birch Hall Avenue, Darwen was walking along the banks of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal with his girlfriend Leanne Duce. At the back of The Moorings public house on Bolton Road, Leeds, he noticed Ruksana Hashim, a 35 year old mother from Blackburn, struggling in the water. Cadet Leader Swift immediately discarded his coat and shoes and jumped in to the water. Upon reaching the woman she pushed him off and told him to 'leave us'. At this point Cadet Leader Swift noticed a six year old girl, the daughter of the woman, face down and unresponsive in the water. Now swimming against a significant current caused by the opening of a nearby lock, Cadet Leader Swift managed to retrieve both mother and daughter and extricated them from the canal to dry land.



Once there he rendered immediate first aid to both and arranged for their transport to hospital. Both the child and mother survived, with the mother subsequently being criminally charged with cruelty to a child under 16. She pleaded guilty was convicted and sentenced to a two year community rehabilitation order. Since then she has received psychiatric treatment at Queen's Park Hospital and has significantly recovered. In 2004 the Right Honourable The Lord Slynn of Hadley, Prior of England and the Islands, presented Cadet Leader Swift with the Life Saving Medal of the Order in Gold.

*Cadet Leader Paul Swift with his Life Saving Medal of the Order in Gold.*

The most recent Gold Award was made on 29 June 2006 to 29 year old Surgeon Lieutenant Michael Henry Lindsay RN for his actions in October 2004. The Canadian Navy submarine HMCS *Chicoutimi* broke down in the Atlantic and suffered a serious fire that killed one officer and destroyed amongst other things all of the medical supplies. The HMCS *Chicoutimi* drifted for two days whilst nine crew members needing urgent medical attention remained on board. Winds of up to 50 knots (92 kilometres per hour) and sea swell reaching heights of up to 25 feet (7.6m) prevented a helicopter rescue.



Surgeon Lieutenant Lindsay with Chief Petty Officer Dave Wilton moved from the HMS *Montrose* onto an inflatable vessel and then after getting alongside the hull of the drifting submarine they leapt onto a rope and climbed aboard. Once onboard the submarine, Surgeon Lieutenant Lindsay gave medical support to six people. He remained onboard overnight before the six casualties could be escorted to the safety of the Royal Navy's Primary Casualty Receiving Ship the RFA *Argus*. The medal was presented to Surgeon Lieutenant Lindsay on 29 June 2006 by the Prior in the Priory Church, Clerkenwell, London. Lindsay was invested as a member of the Order of St. John at the grade of Serving Brother.

*Surgeon Lieutenant Lindsay RN outside the Priory Church, Clerkenwell, London on 29 June 2006.*

Given that one of the driving factors behind the creation of the Life Saving Medal was to fill the gap of there being no award to recognise gallantry on land rather than rescues from the water, it is at first glance ironic that the last two awards made of the medal in Gold have been for actions performed in a canal and on the high seas.



## THE DESIGN OF THE AWARD



When the first Royal Charter was granted to the Order by Queen Victoria in 1888 the Life Saving Medal and some other awards were already in existence. Today the award's design is provided for at Section 9 Part 2 of Annexure III to the St John (Order) Regulations 2003. However this current design has changed little since the first award was made. In order to best explain the designs I will lapse in to some technical numismatic language and so will explain that as we go. The obverse of the award is the front of the medal when worn. The reverse being the rear of the medal.

*Drawing of the reverse of the Life Saving Medal of the Order (2<sup>nd</sup> Pattern) from the Cadet Manual Third Edition.*

There have been three different patterns of the medal although in real terms there are noticeable differences between the first and second pattern while the difference between the second and third it is a matter of wording on the reserve of the device. Although I have been unable to find any authority, it is apparent from the images of the different awards struck that there is some variation within the three patterns of the claw, the ornate connection between the medal flan and the suspender. In simple terms some seem to be more raised or larger or indeed have greater detail in their design. This is clear from the images below.

The principle jewellers and designers of insignia to the Order, Phillips Brothers & Son of Cockspur Street, London, manufactured the original awards from dies cut by the Messrs Wyon. The company Phillips Brothers and Son had been jewellers to the Order since 1858. The first pattern of the medal was in existence from the inception of the award in 1874 until the granting of the first Royal Charter in 1888. The obverse depicts the badge of the Order without beasts, or as early descriptions describe it 'without embellishments'. Surrounding the badge are the words 'AWARDED BY THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM IN ENGLAND'.



*Obverse of the first pattern 1874 to 1888.*



*Reverse of the first pattern 1874 to 1888.*



*Obverse of a Silver award, second pattern issued 1910.*



*Reverse of a Silver award, second pattern issued 1910.*

On the reverse of the first pattern is a sprig of St John's Wort with intertwined scrolls bearing the words 'JERUSALEM', 'ACRE', 'CYPRUS', 'RHODES', and 'MALTA'. This design is surrounded by the words 'FOR SERVICE IN THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY'. The second pattern, in use between 1888 and 1980, swapped the words in the surround such that the words 'FOR SERVICE IN THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY' now appeared on the obverse with the amended attribution of 'AWARDED BY THE GRAND PRIORY OF THE ORDER OF THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM IN ENGLAND' on the reverse. Also changed on the second pattern was the design on the reverse of the award. The design now only made reference to 'JERUSALEM' and 'ENGLAND' on the scrolls which intertwined the St John's Wort.

In 1980 the wording on the reverse was again amended. The change was again by way of an update to the attribution of the origin of the award. The reverse now states 'AWARDED BY THE MOST VENERABLE ORDER OF THE HOSPITAL OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM'.



*Obverse of a Gold award, Second Pattern issued 1969.*



*Reverse of a Gold award, Second Pattern issued 1969.*

While the medal device has only had three changes in its 134-year history, there have been five different styles of ribbons from which the device was suspended. Summarised below are those ribbons.



**First Pattern of Ribbon 1874–1888:** A black unwatered ribbon 1¼ inches in width with the badge of the Order without beasts sewn or embroidered on the ribbon in white.



**Second Pattern of Ribbon 1888 (Royal Charter):** The ribbon is a black unwatered ribbon of 5/8 of one inch in width. This ribbon commenced at the time of the first Royal Charter of the Order and is not known when it ceased being the ribbon used for this award.



**Third Pattern of Ribbon until 1950:** It is not known when this ribbon replaced the 1888 update of the ribbon to the award. This ribbon is a black watered ribbon being 1¼ inches in width.



**Fourth Pattern of Ribbon 1950–1954:** The ribbon is a black watered ribbon 1½ inches in width with a scarlet outer and white inner stripes at each edge with the white and scarlet stripes separated by a very narrow black stripe. This ribbon replaced the previous pattern in 1950 and was used until 1954.



**Fifth Pattern of Ribbon 1954:** This is the current ribbon of the award. The ribbon is substantively the same as the previous pattern save that there is no narrow black strip separating the scarlet and white stripes at the ribbon edge.

## AWARDS MADE IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

I commence this section of the paper with a clarification of terminology. For the purposes of this paper I am considering all awards made in the geographic area known as the Commonwealth of Australia as opposed to the Priory of Australia. To do so would mean not including the Commandery of Western Australia and thus ignoring the state that has had half of all Life Saving Medals awarded to people from that jurisdiction.

There is quite a variance of the amount of detail known about each award made. I commence with a summary of all awards made in Australia. I believe from my research that this is the first time that all of the Australian awards have been summarised in the one document.

Year	Name	Medal type	Action for which medal was awarded	Place
1906	Edward NICHOLLS	Silver	Mine Rescue	Kalgoorlie, WA
1907	Francis HUGHES	Silver	Mine Rescue	South Kalgoorlie, WA
1910	Arthur YOUNG	Bronze	Mine Rescue	Edjudina, WA
1912	Leonard CULLEN	Bronze	Mine Rescue	Perth, WA
1919	Frederick ZARAH & Frederick MARTYN	Silver & Bronze	Confined Area Rescue	Mortlake, NSW
1956	Cuthbert THORPE & Colin THOMSON	Bronze	Confined Area Rescue	Mt Lawley WA
1957	Gregory PETERS	Bronze	Man with Gun	Woollahra, NSW
1968	Edward BRINER & Alan SMITH	Gold & Bronze	Cave Rescue	Claremont, TAS
1972	Helen Dyer	Bronze	Fire Rescue	Bunbury, WA
1979	Jim TOSHACH	Bronze	Man with Gun	West Torrens, SA
1979	Colin BOURNE	Bronze	Actions at motor vehicle accident	Murray Bridge, SA

In the pages that follow I have reproduced the information from the Register of the Life Saving Medal of the Order held at St John's Gate Clerkenwell London. I am greatly indebted to Ms Pamela WILLIS the Curator of the Museum for sourcing and providing this information.

### 1906: MR EDWARD NICHOLLS, SILVER AWARD



Mr Edward Nicholls, a miner from Lake View near Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, was an employee at the Cussols Mine at Kalgoorlie. A miner named Bently with two others named Nicholls and King charged a round of holes with dynamite, lit the fuse and were returning to the surface for safety when one of the charges exploded prematurely. All lights were extinguished by the explosion and the remaining charges were timed to explode at a short interval. Nicholls, hearing his comrades calling for assistance, groped his way back in complete darkness and found Bently on whose body a big stone was resting. He succeeded in freeing him and getting him to a place of safety and meanwhile the charges in the other holes exploded. The date of the above act of gallantry was 18th April 1906. Presented by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia, Admiral Sir Frederick Bedford GCB, on behalf of HRH the Prince of Wales, Grand Prior, at Perth, Western Australia on 18 September 1906. The actions of Mr Edward NICHOLLS are recorded in the Register of Medals Book No: 1. He was awarded the silver award number 189.

*Mr Edward NICHOLLS winner of the Life saving Medal of the Order in Silver.*

#### **1907: MR FRANCIS HUGHES, SILVER AWARD**

Mr Francis Herbert Hughes was a driver and miner at the South Kalgoorlie Gold Mine at Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. For great gallantry in saving life at a flooded mine in Bonnievale on 19 March 1907. Owing to a sudden downpour of rain, an inundation occurred in the West Australian East Extension Mine and an Italian miner became imprisoned. Hughes had to descend through 100ft (30m) of water and then proceed along a shaft for 250ft (76m), through scree 12in (304mm) thick, with the added danger of the passage becoming blocked by a fall of ground and the great strain of going such a distance under such unfavourable circumstances. Hughes was also awarded the Albert Medal 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. Presented by the Lieutenant Governor at Perth, Western Australia, on 1st March 1908, on behalf of HRH the Prince of Wales, Grand Prior, at a Church Parade of the Metropolitan troops and Cadets and in the presence of the President and Council of the Perth (WA) Centre of the St John Ambulance Association. The actions of Mr Francis Hughes are recorded in the Register of Medals Book No: 1. He was awarded the silver award number 202.

#### **1910: MR ARTHUR YOUNG, BRONZE AWARD**

Mr Arthur Young was a Miner at Senate Gold Mine located near Edjudina in Western Australia. On 14 November 1910, two miners—Arthur Young and Edward Brown—were engaged in fixing a number of holes in the Senate Gold Mine, Edjudina, below the 200ft (60m) level. Immediately Young had hit his fuses he ascended the chain ladder some 6 or 7ft (2m), at the same time warning Brown. Brown was delayed by having to relight a fuse and as he sprang to the ladder the first of Young's shots exploded, inflicting severe injuries and tendering him unconscious. The shot had extinguished the candles and had also slightly wounded Young's left leg, but he immediately jumped back and while in the act of carrying Brown up the ladder the second shot exploded, a flying piece of rock inflicting a severe wound on the upper part of Young's leg. In spite of this he continued to half drag, half carry Brown up the ladder. The third and following shots went off in quick succession but the two men were then above the roof and out of their reach although the heavy concussions continued to shake the ladder and made it extremely difficult for Young to retain his hold. On reaching the surface it was found that Young had sustained a rather severe flesh wound on the upper part of the leg and a lesser wound on the lower part, while Brown had been severely wounded in the chest, also having a bad scalp wound and a cut on his left cheek and a broken finger. Brown was conveyed to Brooklyn Hospital and has since made good progress towards recovery. The manager of the mine in reporting the case to Lieutenant-Colonel John Campbell, the Honorary Secretary of the Western Australia St John Ambulance Centre, stated that Young refused to sign a statement and did not wish his heroic conduct to be recognized or published in any way. Presented on behalf of Field-Marshal HRH the Duke of Connaught, KG, Grand Prior, by His Excellency the Governor of Victoria, Sir John Fleetwood Fuller, Bt, KCMG, on 20 October 1911 at Old Treasury Buildings, Melbourne, in the presence of the Premier and several Ministers of State, the President and Council of the Victoria Centre of St John Ambulance and many others. The actions of Mr Arthur Young are recorded in the Register of Medals Book No: 1. He was awarded the bronze award number 235.

#### **1912: MR LEONARD CULLEN, BRONZE AWARD**

Mr Leonard Cullen was a Miner at the Bullfinch Gold Mine located at Bullfinch in Western Australia. On 4 January 1912, three men, Cullen, E Hayne and H Trott, were engaged in blasting operations in the main shaft of the Bullfinch Gold Mine at a depth of 320 ft (97m), and after the fuses attached to a dozen charges had been lighted the three men got into the bucket and the signal was given to the engine driver to haul up. The bucket had ascended only about 10 ft (3m) when the first charge exploded, extinguishing the lights, knocking Hayne and Trott to the bottom of the shaft and leaving Cullen in the bucket, which was being hoisted out of danger. Cullen immediately signalled to be lowered to the bottom where the other shots were about to explode. Arriving there in complete darkness he found Hayne and assisting him into the bucket, signalled to be taken to the 210 ft (64m) level. Leaving him there in safety, Cullen again descended the shaft, in which the charges were still exploding and facing flying rock and dynamite fumes, went to the assistance of Trott, whom he found buried to the waist in broken rock and water. He at once set to work to dig him out with his hands being still in darkness and when assistance arrived refused to leave until both his mates were taken to the surface. Although Cullen escaped without injury there is no doubt that he twice risked his own life in descending to the rescue of Hayne and Trott, who were so badly injured that the manager of the mine stated in a letter to the Honorary Secretary of the Western Australia St John Ambulance Centre, that he anticipated it would be two months before they were able to return to work. The Council of the Western Australia Centre strongly recommended this case to the Order of St John. Presented on behalf of Field-Marshal HRH the Duke of Connaught, KG, Grand Prior, by His Excellency the Governor of Western Australia, Sir Gerald Strickland KCMG, at Claremont, Western Australia on 9th October 1912. The actions of Mr Leonard Cullen are recorded in the Register of Medals Book No: 1. He was awarded the bronze award number 267.



#### 1919: MR FREDERICK ZARAH, SILVER AWARD & MR FREDERICK MARTYN, BRONZE AWARD

Mr Frederick Zarah was employed as a Storeman and Mr Frederick Martyn as a Fitter with the Australian Gas Light Company's Works at Mortlake, a Sydney suburb. On the morning of 13th August 1919 at the Tar Still, Australian Gas Light Company's Works, Mortlake, Michael Arrig entered the Tar Still to carry out repairs and was overcome by a rush of fumes. Robert Allen and James Crombie went into the Still in succession to rescue him and both were overcome by fumes. Frank Martyn volunteered to rescue these men and tied round the waist with a piece of rope, was let down into the Still. He managed to get James Crombie onto his feet but having to stoop to pick him up, caught the fumes himself and had to let Crombie drop, Martyn then remembered no more and had to be pulled up. Frederick Zarah then descended three times and although suffering from the gaseous fumes, each time was successful in attaching rope to one of the unconscious men to whom first aid was rendered as soon as they were brought to the surface but without avail. The Directors of the Company gave both Zarah and Martyn a cheque of £50. The Royal Humane Society of Australia also awarded a Bronze Medal to both of them. The presentation of the awards was made at Government House on 26 June 1920. The Governor warmly congratulated them upon their readiness of resource and courage that they both displayed in a moment of great peril. "I am proud" said His Excellency, "to pin these distinctions upon your breasts". The actions of Messrs Frederick Zarah and Frederick Martyn are recorded in the Register of Medals Book Number 2. Mr Frederick Zarah was awarded the silver award number 356 and Mr Frederick Martyn was awarded the bronze award number 357.



*Investiture at Government House Sydney 26 June 1920. L to R. Naval Aides Sir Walter Davidson (Governor) child and father Frederick Martyn, child and father Frederick Zahra, Jane Starkey, Gertrude Clark, Frank Holmes, William Harris, Boles Rainsford and Dr Storie Dixson (NSW Commissioner).*

#### 1956: Ambulance Officer Cuthbert THORPE & Station Officer Colin THOMSON, Bronze Awards



*A/O Cuthbert Thorpe photographed just after the rescue.*

Ambulance Officer Cuthbert F Thorpe was a Driver with the St John Ambulance Perth ambulance depot and Station Officer Colin W Thomson was a Station Officer with the Fire Brigade in Perth. At dusk on the evening of Thursday 9th February 1956 Thorpe and Thomson were called in the course of duty to the scene of an accident in Mount Lawley, Western Australia, where Roy Fenner, a well-sinking contractor had fallen to the bottom of an 85 ft (25m) well shaft, sustaining severe injuries. The shaft, as Fenner later said, was 3 ft (1000mm) by 2 ft 8 in (853mm) and many of the timbers were rotted and unsafe. He was spread-eagled across the motor which was at the bottom of the well and was in the shape of a half open jack-knife. Endangering their own lives and without apparent thought of personal risk, in the outstanding display of devotion to duty, both Thorpe and Thomson proceeded to save the life of Roy Fenner by immediately descending the well shaft, although only the most hastily improvised equipment was available for the descent.

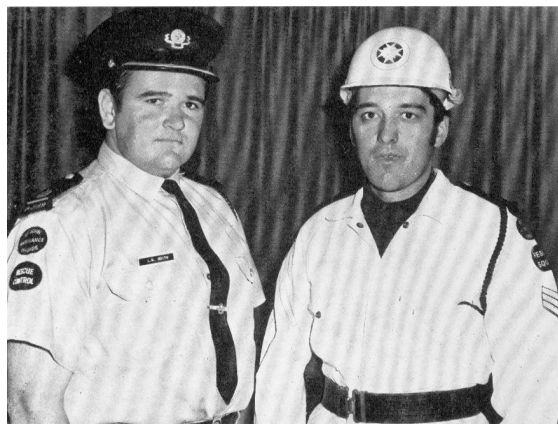
Thorpe went down the well first, on a rope which only reach the top of the ladder, about 10 ft from the bottom, to render what assistance he could. Thomson then went down and with the assistance of Thorpe rigged up two bosun's chairs (the space was too confined for the use of Lowmoore Jacket). Fenner was then placed in one chair and Thorpe was suspended in the other, underneath, to support and steady him. Thomson remained down the well in case of mishap during the hauling and to enable him to break any fall back if necessary. The great difficulties of rescue and the rendering of first aid to the injured man in the very restricted area of the well were increased by the presence of the necessary pumping equipment, the essential rescue equipment and the lack of natural light, it being dusk. At great personal risk, the rescuers carried out the hazardous task of raising Fenner to the surface, where Thorpe, even after the ordeal down the well, carried out his normal duty of transporting Fenner to medical aid and the hospital as soon as possible. The actions of Cuthbert Thorpe and Colin Thompson are recorded in the Register of Medals Book Number 3 and were awarded the life saving medal in bronze numbered 522 and 523 respectively.

#### **1957: PRIVATE GREGORY PETERS, BRONZE AWARD**

On 23 March 1957 Private Gregory William Peters was 18 years of age and a member of the Paddington–Woollahra Ambulance Division in New South Wales District of the St John Ambulance Brigade. At about 6.30 pm on 23rd March 1957, a Mrs Joyce Molly Hood and her husband David Hood, were walking along Queen Street, Woollahra, and when near the intersection of Moncur Street, they were accosted by a man who asked Mrs Hood for the loan of two shillings, which she refused. Thereupon the offender struck David Hood a violent blow on the face and Hood collapsed in an unconscious condition in the middle of Moncur Street. The offender then aimed a heavy blow at Mrs Hood, which missed but she fell to the roadway. At this time Mr N.L. Wilson and his daughter Miss D.R. McLachlan, were walking along Moncur Street. They did not see the assault but saw Mr Hood lying prostrate on the road. Wilson went to Hood's assistance and as he bent over, the offender approached and struck him a heavy blow on the face. Wilson was knocked from the middle of the road to the gutter. The offender followed and as Wilson attempted to rise, he was struck on the head with some hard object, rendering him unconscious. Peters and Mr R.E.G. Fischer were assisting a blind man to his home when they saw Hood lying on the roadway. Peters approached Hood with the intention of rendering first aid and as he was bending over, the offender approached and struck him on the face with his fist. Peters rose to defend himself and the offender then drew a loaded revolver, with which he struck Peters across the mouth. Peters immediately closed with the offender, at the same time calling out, "He's got a gun!" and a violent struggle ensued. In this struggle Peters was successful in gaining possession of the firearm and he immediately moved a short distance away from the offender. Fischer had joined in the struggle at the time Peters gained possession of the firearm and he continued to struggle with the offender until the arrival of the police, when the offender made off. He was pursued by the police and arrested shortly afterwards. The firearm seized by Peters was handed to the police. It was found to be a .038 calibre revolver which was loaded with five live rounds of ammunition and one spent shell. Messrs Hood, Wilson, Peters and Fischer were all conveyed to St Vincent's Hospital where they received treatment for injuries sustained in the assault. Wilson received hospital treatment for five days but the other persons were allowed to leave after treatment. The actions of Private Gregory Peters are recorded in the Register of Medals Book Number 3. He was awarded the award in bronze numbered 530.

#### **1968: SERGEANT EDWARD BRINER, GOLD AWARD & SECTION OFFICER ALAN SMITH, BRONZE AWARD**

Sergeant Edward Briner and Section Officer Alan Smith were members of the Broadmeadows Recue Section of Broadmeadows Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Victoria. I examine this event in some more detail later in this paper but include the detail from the award Register for completeness. On the evening of Saturday 14 December 1968, it became known that one member of a party of four boys, Timothy Walters, was trapped 80 ft (25m) underground down a narrow cave in the country behind Hobart. Rescue attempts were immediately organised. A party of seven experienced cavers reached the cave by 11.00 pm and were able to make their way to the trapped boy. He had been trapped by a fall of rock in an almost vertical funnel in the cave. Efforts to free him continued for the next 24 hrs against a constant fear that any attempt to move the rocks would precipitate a further and disastrous fall.



*Section Officer Alan SMITH and Sergeant Eddie ('Spider') BRINER.*

The St John Ambulance Brigade Rescue section was summoned from Victoria and flew to Hobart the following day, arriving at 4.30 pm. Section Officer Smith and one other member were immediately flown to the scene in a helicopter and went down the cave to investigate at 5.00 pm. The cave consisted of very narrow and winding tunnels to a depth of approximately 80 ft (25m). Several rock falls had taken place and progress was slow and hazardous. About 40 ft (12m) underground it widened to the 'middle cave', and an area big enough to hold several men and their equipment; here Section Officer Smith made his headquarters. From the middle of the cave the tunnel was very narrow and passed directly under a rock fault involving several tons of rock supported by a key stone and precariously balanced. A little further on, the tunnel narrowed to a squeeze measuring only 10" x 18" (254mm x 457mm) and through which Smith could not pass.

Other members of the St John team arrived at 6.00 pm and were briefed. Sergeant Briner was able to pass through the squeeze and to assess the problems of freeing the boy. He returned to the middle cave with his report and his suggestions and then went back to the boy. Meanwhile Smith returned to the surface and gave orders for the necessary equipment to be collected and passed down. He then went back to the mouth of the squeeze and passed in a small transceiver set to Briner, thus establishing two-way communication with him. Meanwhile a mining engineer had given his opinion that there was no safe way of getting the boy out without a collapse of the cave; he recommended amputation. A doctor then passed through and examined the boy with Briner. He found that amputation was completely impossible because of the restricted position and returned to the surface. Briner then appears to have taken charge. Though he was warned by experienced miners that the cave was so dangerous that there was only one chance in a hundred of success without causing a calamitous rock fall he determined to employ hydraulic power and move the rocks. He bravely and carefully prepared his attempt well knowing the extreme danger in which he was placing his own life and those of other helpers in the cave. The rocks were moved and the boy was brought to the surface a little before midnight. The conduct of everyone engaged in this long drawn out rescue appears to have been admirable but in the final analysis it was Briner who, after 24 hrs of unavailing attempts to free the boy, made the decision to use the hydraulic power to move the rocks. This required determination and great courage and displayed conduct that is indeed a credit to the Brigade. The actions of Edward Briner and Alan Smith are recorded in the Register of Medals Book Number 3. Briner was awarded the Life Saving Medal in gold numbered 572 and Smith the Life Saving Medal in bronze numbered 573. As Briner's has been the only Life Saving medal in Gold awarded in Australia, it will be considered in greater detail below.

#### **1972: MRS HELEN DYER, BRONZE AWARD**

Mrs Helen Marion Dyer was a State Enrolled Nurse and member of Bunbury Combined Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Western Australia. On the morning of Sunday 18 October 1970 at 5.30am a 4 year old boy left his unresponsive sisters, aged 3 and 5 years in a smoking house in Flaherty Street, Bunbury. The children were home alone. He trotted off in his pyjamas to get help from his grandparents who lived about a mile away. His crying attracted Helen Dyer's attention. She heard him sobbing as he passed the front of her home. She spoke with him, subsequently waking her husband and after putting on a dressing gown, arrived with her husband at 6am at the badly smoking house. The child was told to stay in the car and to keep tooting the horn to attract attention; which he did. Mr and Mrs Dyer entered the smoke-filled asbestos-clad house a total of three times, before the two unconscious girls were found. They were carried out by Mr Dyer, one child under each arm. They were not breathing and Mrs Dyer commenced EAR alternately on each child, whilst Mr Dyer went to get assistance from a neighbour who was a nurse. The front window collapsed and the asbestos walls started to explode while the children were being resuscitated on the lawn. With the arrival of the second nurse, both women continued EAR on the children as Mr Dyer drove them to the Bunbury Regional Hospital. By the time a doctor attended, both children had resumed breathing. Dr Killerby later wrote, "There is no doubt in my mind that but for the courage and knowledge of Helen Dyer, the children would have died." John and Helen Dyer both received recognition from the Royal Humane Society, which presented them with a Bronze Medal and Certificates of Merit respectively in 1971. For this outstanding effort Mrs Dyer was awarded the Bronze Life Saving medal of the Order of St John in 1972.



*Mrs Helen Dyer (on right) winning the Donaldson Cup with Doreen Motram (Left) and Laurel Wells (Centre).*

### 1979: DIVISIONAL SUPERINTENDENT (CADETS) JAMES TOSHACH, BRONZE AWARD

Divisional Superintendent (Cadets) James Robert (Jim) Toshach was a Volunteer Ambulance Officer and Superintendent of the Eastwood Cadet Division in Adelaide. On the 27 September, 1979 at about 11 p.m. the South Australia Police attended a flat in Marleston and were confronted with a mentally disturbed person armed with two rifles. He was a member of a St John Ambulance Cadet Division, had just been suspended for two months for drunkenness and had just refused to admit himself to a Psychiatric Hospital. As Police retreated the offender fired a shot at them from a distance of about 20 meters. Shortly after this, additional Police arrived, as did Mr. R. J. Toshach, a member of the St John Ambulance Brigade who had known the offender for seven years because of his Brigade involvement. Police called the offender to put the rifles down, but he continued to advance in a threatening manner. At this stage Toshach walked towards the offender to reason with him in spite of a warning by Police that he was placing himself in great danger. Fortunately the offender, although still armed, was receptive to the approach by Toshach and was able to take the rifle from him. There is no doubt that without the efforts of Toshach, Police would not have been able to disarm the offender so quickly and diffuse a very dangerous situation. Following the incident, the person has had psychiatric help at the hospital and was later released when emotionally improved. Toshach continued helping him in this regard. The actions of Jim Toshach are recorded in the Register of Medals Book Number 4. He was awarded the Life Saving Medal in Bronze.

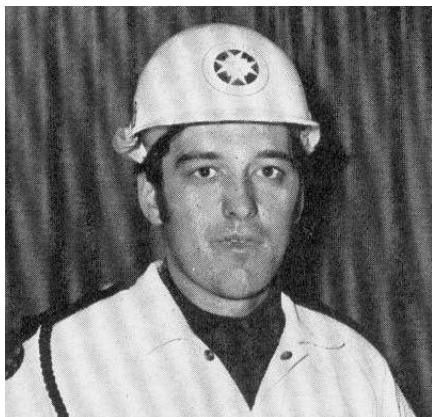
### 1979: VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE OFFICER COLIN BOURNE, BRONZE AWARD

Volunteer Ambulance Officer Colin Stainer ('Sandy') Bourne was a member of the Meningie Combined Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade in South Australia District. On the 7 September, 1979 Bourne was the attendant in an Ambulance transporting a patient from the Meningie Hospital to the Repatriation General Hospital at Daw Park, Adelaide. At approximately 11.10 p.m. the ambulance was involved in a head on collision with another vehicle on the Swanport Deviation near Murray Bridge. As a result of the accident Bourne, who had been sitting alongside the patient, was flung forward and finished up on the floor in the front of the ambulance. He suffered massive lacerations to the scalp, concussion and extensive blood loss. Immediately following the crash, the driver of the ambulance who was seriously injured, told Bourne that he was trapped by the legs and could not move. It was then found that the ambulance was on fire. Despite his injuries, Bourne got out of the ambulance by kicking out a window as the door was jammed, extinguished the fire with a fire extinguisher, disconnected the battery and then collapsed. Bourne was a patient at the Royal Adelaide Hospital for ten days. Had it not been for Bourne's action, it is fairly certain that the ambulance driver would have been incinerated. Unfortunately the patient died after admission to the Murray Bridge Hospital and the driver, Alan Guy, was hospitalised for six weeks. The actions 'Sandy' Bourne are recorded in the Register of Medals Book Number 4. He was awarded the life saving medal in bronze.



*Volunteer Ambulance Officer Colin BOURNE, winner of the Life saving Medal of the Order in Bronze.*

### SERGEANT EDDIE ('SPIDER') BRINER



*Sergeant Eddie ('Spider') Briner, December 1968.*

In the history of the Life saving Medal of the Order there has only ever been one Gold award made to an Australian. It was to recognise events in December 1968 and it was made to Sergeant Eddie Briner of the Broadmeadows Division Rescue Section in Victoria District. 2008 marks the fortieth anniversary of the rescue. I was very fortunate on 17 February to be able to meet and speak with Eddie Briner about his time in the Brigade in general, about his time in the Rescue Squad and more specifically about the rescue of Timothy Walter on 15 December 1968. As is often the case with winners of such awards, Briner is an engaging man and with an incredible personality which gives only a hint of his ability, intestinal fortitude and tremendous courage.

Briner joined the Brigade as a Cadet at the age of 11 years about 1959 at Broadmeadows Division in what would now be described as in Melbourne's northern suburbs; however at the time the area was more sparsely populated and paddocks were more prevalent than townhouses. As is often the story with youth joining the organisation, he





did so with a friend from school. He was interested in the being able to go on public duty at the football, hospital duty at Western General Hospital, Footscray, and the added bonus that girls liked the uniform. Within six months of joining the Briner had been made up to Cadet Sergeant and was taking a significant part in the training life of the Cadet Division. He remembers as a 12 and 13 year old Cadet going out to Broadmeadows shopping centre and teaching the new cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) techniques that were just coming in to wider use in first aid.

*Presentation of The Life saving Medal of the Order to Sergeant Briner by the Governor Maj Gen Sir Rohan Delacombe 24 April 1971 at Government House Melbourne.*

In the mid-1960s the closest Victorian Civil Ambulance Service branches were located at Headquarters in Latrobe Street Melbourne and Footscray, both about 15km away, and at Preston about 10km away. Should these cars be out then it was not uncommon to have an ambulance travel from Camberwell a little over 20km away. As a result of this both the local police and tow truck operators started seeking informal assistance from members of the local Brigade at car accidents.

These members would meet on a Friday and Saturday evening at a member's house, of which the local police and tow truck operators would be aware, and would be called out to assist at car accidents as they could respond far quicker than could the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service cars. Briner believes that this was probably the catalyst for the establishment of the groups that became the Rescue Sections of the Brigade in Victoria District.



*Mr Eddie Briner with his Gold Award, February 2008.*

There was, however, a hiccup prior to the formal recognition within the Brigade of the work that this group was doing. On preliminary examination there appears to be an entire paper if not two just in the detail of the events in the life of the rescue section at this juncture, though I will just briefly touch on them here. In short, as a result of the amount of work being done, increase in the skills of members in extricating trapped persons from motor vehicle accidents, and the increase of equipment having been 'acquired' from various sources, the members of this group purchased a vehicle from funds made available by the Divisional Auxiliary. The vehicle was a former Port of Melbourne Emergency Service vehicle.



*Front Page of Hobart Mercury Newspaper detailing successful rescue of Timothy Walter Monday 16 December 1968.*

Briner believes that this was the first vehicle owned in the District. This watershed seems to have caused some concern in the Brigade command, which caused the Broadmeadows group to create the Victorian Volunteer Rescue Service. This continued for a period of time before the Brigade officially started the Rescue Sections and provided overall management and direction for the project. In his time in the Rescue Squad, Briner was an extremely active member and was in attendance at all of the major rescue events at that time. He attended the search for the Rt Hon Harold Holt at Cheviot Beach near Portsea on Sunday 17 December 1967, the Southern Aurora Train Disaster at Violet Town Victoria on 7 February 1969, and the West Gate Bridge Collapse on 15 October 1970. Briner says he remembers the call out to the Tasmanian caving accident in 1969 well as it occurred twelve months after the search for Harold Holt at Cheviot Beach.

The circumstances surrounding the award of the Life Saving Medal in Gold to Briner and Bronzer to Smith are simply remarkable. Not least of which is the fact that this same event is the subject of the largest number of awards made by the Royal Humane Society for a single action. The tally was seven silver and sixteen bronze medals. The citation of the award is contained earlier in this paper. I do not seek here to repeat that information but rather to provide collaborative detail.

On the afternoon of Saturday 14 December 1968 a group of six schoolboys aged in the early teens who were walking in the hills outside Claremont near Hobart decided to go on an impromptu climb through a cave which they had accessed on a number of previous occasions. The dolerite rift cave was known as the Devil's Den and was located near the top of Mt Fawknor approximately 24km north of Hobart and 602km from the Broadmeadows Divisional Hall built by the members of the division including Briner. A short way in to their exploration a rock fall caused four of the group to be trapped. Three of them pinned by their shoulders and heads and the other merely prevented them from being able to exit the cave. The remaining two members of the group were at the time of the rock fall outside the cave. Upon hearing the rock fall they re-entered the cave and realised the problem their comrades were facing. These two then returned to the surface and ran to the local police station to raise the alarm.

Local police and rescue units, including volunteers from the Tasmanian Caverneering Club and the Southern Caving Society, attended and by 9.30pm on the evening of Saturday 14 December 1968 freed all but one of the boys—Timothy Walters, a 15 year older from Abbotsfield Road, Claremont. Local miners were called in to assist and were able to free the rocks from Walters' shoulders but not from his legs. The two main issues with accessing and freeing Walters was that to get to him rescuers need to pass through a gap of only 10" x 18" (254mm x 457mm) and that the main rock pinning Walters' legs had become the main structural element preventing further collapse of that passage and was now a very unstable environment.

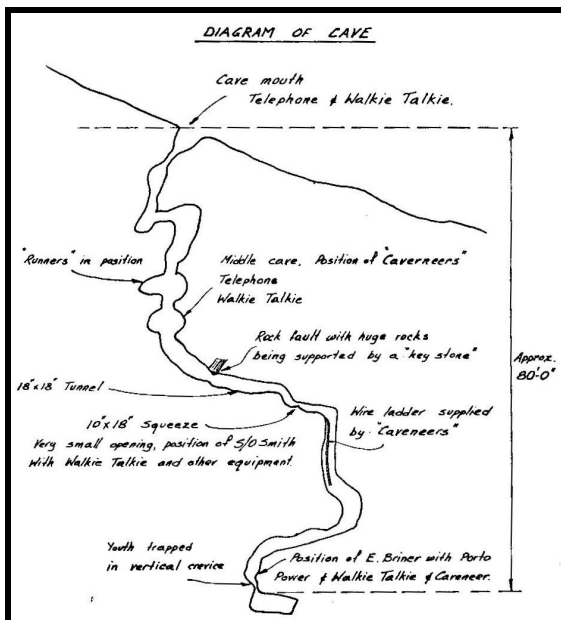


Diagram of cave in report of Section Officer Alan Smith..

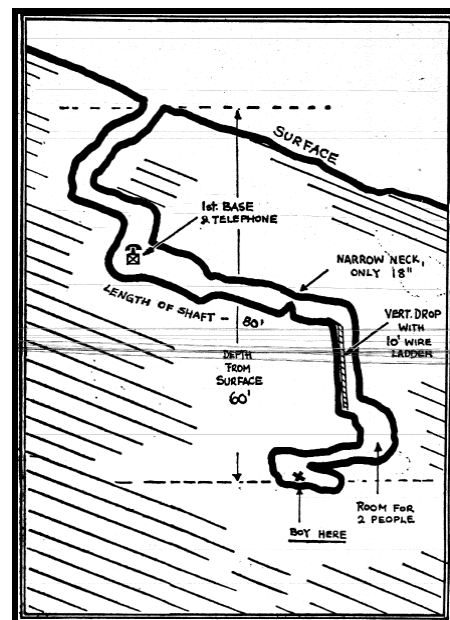


Diagram from the Hobart Mercury.

On the morning on Sunday 15 December 1968 the Tasmanian Police Force, who were responsible for the coordination of the rescue effort, made contact with Victoria Police in order to source additional specialist resources. The rescue to date had already involved many dozens of specialist and support services, including cavers, miners, police rescue, Hydro Electric Commission, Salvation Army and the Australian Army. About mid-morning on the Saturday Victoria Police communications known as 'D24' made contact with St John Ambulance Rescue in order to source what support they could. A joint team comprising two members of St John, Section Officer Alan Smith and Sergeant Eddie Briner, and four members of the Victorian Speleological Association, Messrs Graeme Wilson, John Driscoll, Peter Mathews and Mal Downes, were brought together for their combined caving and rescue expertise.

Although being advised they did not need to bring any equipment the team took five assorted flexible wire ladders, a 'cheese' of 100 feet (30 metres) of manila rope, 1000ft (300m) of manila and nylon rope, karabiners and hook belts, hammers and assorted chisels and entrenching tools, hand lamps, rescue harnesses, transceivers and a comprehensive kit of 'Porto-Power'. It was this last item that was to come in to its own during the course of the rescue efforts.

The original plan was for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) to provide air lift for the crew and their equipment to Hobart Airport. However it was decided that the lead time required by the RAAF was too long and instead seats were found on the domestic Trans-Australian Airline (TAA) flight. The team departed Essendon Airport on the DC9 jet aircraft at 2.20pm. Upon arrival at Hobart Airport at 4.30pm local time the group was met by police and Section Officer Smith and Mr Wilson were flown by helicopter to the scene. The remaining members of the group were taken by police with lights and sirens activated to the scene by road.

Section Officer Smith and Mr Wilson conducted an appreciation of the scene on their arrival. Section Officer Smith summarises their appreciation in his report to the District Superintendent as follows:

*The cave consisted of very narrow and winding tunnels descending to a depth of approximately 80 ft. Several rock-falls had taken place and progress was slow and hazardous. We reached the "middle cave", which was an area that could hold several men and their equipment. We decided that this would make an excellent staging point. The tunnel from the middle cave was very narrow and passed directly under a "rock fault"; this involved several tons of rock supported by a wedge-shaped "key stone" and balanced precariously. The tunnel continued on to a "squeeze", a narrow opening about 10" x 18" through which I was unable to pass. Wilson continued on and reported that the youth was trapped in a vertical shaft and his legs were pinned by boulders. We decided that an attempt could not be made until the arrival of the rest of our crew and equipment.*

The other members of the team arrived on scene about 6pm. What the Victorian team was able to achieve upon their arrival was to establish good communications from near the entrapped boy and then set to work in order to conduct a complete medical assessment. A doctor from the Royal Hobart Hospital went down the cave and assessed Walters. He recommended that given the assessment on the stability of the cave and likelihood of further collapse the most appropriate cause of action was to amputate the trapped leg and free Walters to be extricated to medical attention forthwith. Briner and the Victorian team members viewed the entrapment and struck up rapport with Walters. It was on the advice of Briner that an attempt to free Walters using the 'Porto-Power' kits. 'Porto-Power' is brand name for a hand operated hydraulic apparatus to which a number of attachments can be applied, more often used at the scene of motor vehicle accidents. The more common devices used are 'spreaders' used to separate damaged doors of motor vehicles or 'cutters' used to cut through the pillars of motor vehicles to access entrapped persons. Briner recalls that Walters leg was pinned by the rock in a slight concave part of the wall of the cave so that rather than being crushed flat against the floor of the cave it had been wedged in that position. It should also be recalled that these rescuers were working in conditions usually hanging upside-down in hot cramped conditions in the full knowledge that the cave was unstable and had collapsed in a number of places of the previous hours.

During the course of this first attempt to extract Walters, the Victorian team failed when there was a further fall of rock which only served to highlight the danger of the work being performed. It was about 10pm that Briner radioed Smith advising, "We've done it! He's free and he has no fractures." It then took an additional 70 minutes for Walters to be conveyed to the surface by initially being dragged on canvass and then in a Neil Robertson Stretcher.

The level of assistance, resources, and multi-agency cooperation provided in the course of this rescue was quite amazing. Section Officer Smith makes mention of it in his report, Briner mentions it in his recollection of the events and it is clear from the media reports that this was also the case. To quote again Smith's report:

*Although the actual release of the youth was effected by a St. John Rescue Squad member, using our own civil defence equipment, the rescue was achieved through close teamwork of everyone connected with the operation.*



After reaching the surface himself Briner was approached by a male who congratulated him on his efforts, which Briner acknowledged. Briner was then directed to an esky next to a tree by the male who said to Briner words to the effect that he would know what to do with it. Briner found the esky contained some cold beer which he then availed himself of and sat for a rest. It was at this point that another person came up to Briner and explained that the male who directed him to the refreshments was the Commissioner of Tasmania Police.

*Timothy Walters with his Father Jim Walters recovering in Royal Hobart Hospital , 16 December 1968.*

A short time later the Commissioner of Police made arrangements for the Victorians to be transported back to Hobart and to be put up in Hadley's Hotel, perhaps the most exclusive venue of the day. When the group arrived around 3.00 a.m. on the Sunday morning the Commissioner insisted to the hotel management that the kitchen opened to feed them and that the bar be opened at his expense. After some remarks from management expressing concern about the legality and appropriateness to open a bar at that time of the morning and on a Sunday, the Commissioner was able to persuade the staff of the benefits associated with opening the bar given he was responsible for the issuing of liquor licences within the State. The following day the Victorian team were returned to Melbourne by domestic jet aircraft and the Devil's Den entrance was destroyed by the Tasmanian Mines Commission, workers of which used explosives to collapse the cave mouth.



*A 3.00 a.m. victors' feast at Hadley's Hotel, Hobart. Clockwise from left Mal Downes, Alan Smith, Graeme Wilson, Eddie Briner, John Driscoll, and Peter Matthews.*

## CONCLUSION AND COMMENTS

The Life Saving Medal of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem is certainly a distinguished and respected award, not only amongst members of the Order and its foundations but also across the globe. The acts of those individuals are simultaneously breathtaking and awe-inspiring. Indeed it is without question that those fourteen Australians who have had their gallantry recognised with the award of the Life Saving Medal of the Order are more than deserving of their accolade. Acts of going in to burning houses to save a child only to go back to get other siblings, of returning to a mine shaft in which you know is about to have many explosive charges detonate in order to recover a colleague, of being critically injured and fighting your way out of a wrecked vehicle only to return to extinguish a fire and recover your colleague, of going forward to a man who is ill at ease and has been firing on police to provide him with comfort and reason. Such endeavours displaying the highest levels of human compassion, strength, courage and cold blooded bravery warrant our acknowledgement and respect.



What must also be very, very obvious is that there will be others whom the organisation as a whole has probably been remiss in not recognising. It is beholden on us to ensure that great acts of whatever sort should be in the appropriate manner recognised. Be that recognition by the Order or indeed by the wider community through the Australian Honours System. St John Ambulance volunteers are experts in resuscitation and promote the use of it in the Australian community. Perhaps we should look at resuscitating the soul of the Life Saving Medal of the Order in Australia. In reflecting on this, we might well consider the words of one of the most eminent men of the twentieth century, Britain's wartime Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, who in a parliamentary speech in 1944 said:

*The object of giving medals, stars and ribbons is to give pride and pleasure to those who have deserved them. At the same time a distinction is something which everyone does not possess. If all have it, it is of less value. There must, therefore, be heart-burnings and disappointments on the border line. A medal glitters, but it also casts a shadow. The task of drawing up regulations for such awards is one which does not admit of a perfect solution. It is not possible to satisfy everybody without the risk of satisfying nobody. All that is possible is to give the greatest satisfaction to the greatest number and to hurt the feelings of the fewest.*

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# THE SELF-INFLATING RESUSCITATOR—EVOLUTION OF AN IDEA

by David Fahey

**THE AUTHOR:** Dr David Fahey of Brisbane is a medical practitioner who has grown up in St John Ambulance. He joined the Goulburn Division in New South Wales as a 13 year old Cadet in 1983 and later belonged to Parramatta and Fairfield Divisions in Sydney. He became a State Staff Officer in New South Wales in 1998, but the next year he moved to Brisbane, where he joined Brisbane Central No. 2 Division as Divisional Medical Officer. He is currently the Regional Medical Officer for Brisbane Region and a member of the Queensland State St John Council. He's also a Member of the Order. Dr Fahey's daytime job is as an anaesthetics registrar at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane. He is in the fourth year of training for a Fellowship of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists. When he finds time, one of his hobbies is delving into the history of pre-hospital medical devices, a hobby that lies behind this paper.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper will provide an historical overview of a piece of equipment with which you will all be familiar—the self inflating bag and mask resuscitator. This journey traces important discoveries in respiratory physiology itself, as well as the clinical necessities of more recent times which drove the final invention. We will also meet some of the fascinating people whose innovative ideas now empower us to support life in virtually any environment, simply by squeezing a bag.

Today, the self inflating resuscitator is ubiquitous in hospital, ambulance and first aid practice. Invented little more than 50 years ago, this device has proven itself as an indispensable resuscitation tool. Unfortunately, an illustration in *Australian First Aid* shows a lay bystander bagging a patient. If you look closely at the photograph you will see that the oxygen is turned off, and the reservoir bag is deflated. This publication error, however, can be used to remind us of one of the key design features which was intended by the inventor – this bag needs to work independently of an oxygen source.

## SIMPLE FIRESIDE BELLOWS

My inspiration for doing this talk actually came from the coat of arms of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists. The motto “Corpus Curare Spiritumquae”, translated as “to care for the body and its breath of life”, not only summarises the work of an anaesthetist, it also reminds us of those pioneering anaesthetists who literally invented and manufactured devices for mechanical ventilation—including the self inflating resuscitator. We shall meet Ruben, Elam and Safar a little later.

But what really struck me was the image of Andreas Vesalius standing there on the left of the shield, holding a simple fireside bellows. So our journey begins with Vesalius and two others, who each contributed to our understanding of respiratory physiology and resuscitation, by experimenting with the humble bellows. These three individuals are:

- Galen, who was the first to understand the way in which the lungs are ventilated with air
- Vesalius, who was the first to record the use of mechanical ventilation to sustain the life of an animal, and
- Paracelsus, who was the first to attempt to revive a human using mechanical ventilation.

The link between these three great men is that they all utilised fireside bellows to perform intermittent positive pressure ventilation. Let's now look at each one in turn.

### Galen

Claudius Galenus, commonly known as Galen, was born in 130 AD in Pergamon, located in the west of modern day Turkey. Galen realized that a knowledge of anatomy was fundamental to understanding disease, and his teachings were to remain authoritative for 15 centuries. Unfortunately, the dissection of human cadavers was prohibited at that time, and some of Galen's teachings were erroneous, because he assumed that human organs would be identical to those in other animals. Respiratory physiology interested Galen greatly, and he demonstrated that air entered the chest cavity when it was expanded by the action of the diaphragm. Further, he realized that the trachea (which he termed the “rough artery”) was the conduit for air into and out of the lungs. In about 177 AD, Galen used bellows to inflate the lungs of dead animals:



Simple fireside bellows.

*If when the animal is already dead, you blow air in through the larynx, you will of course fill the rough arteries and you will see the lung expanded to its greatest extent.*



Galen thought that the “crude air” drawn into the lungs, was transformed into pneuma, an undefined life giving vital spirit. Here, Galen was using a religious or philosophical explanation for the substance we now understand to be oxygen. After the fall of the Roman Empire, and throughout the Middle Ages, Galen’s teachings remained unquestioned. Fifteen centuries would elapse before scientific medicine was renewed.

Galen (Claudius Galenus).

## Vesalius

And so we return to Andreas Vesalius. He was born in Brussels in 1514, into a family with a great medical tradition. After graduating with a Master of Arts degree, he entered the University of Paris to study medicine in 1533. Vesalius became frustrated with the way anatomy was being taught, based entirely on the centuries old writings of the divine and indisputable Galen. Vesalius wanted to do dissections himself—a controversial idea indeed which probably bordered on heresy. Nonetheless, his skill at dissection, and his blossoming understanding of anatomy soon overtook that of his professors. Vesalius completed his masterpiece *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* in 1543—this single work marked a turning point in the history of medicine.



Vesalius, the left armorial bearer on the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists’ coat of arms. is pictured holding a bellows.

During the preparation of *De Fabrica*, Vesalius described his technique for keeping an experimental animal alive to examine the thoracic contents:

*But that life may ... be restored to an animal, an opening must be attempted in the trunk of the arteria aspera [trachea], into which a tube of reed or cane should be put; you will then blow into this, so that the lung may rise again ... [if] the lung is inflated at intervals, the motion of the heart and arteries does not stop.*

When he wrote that, no one yet understood the process of gas exchange, or the function of the circulatory system. But Vesalius demonstrated that fireside bellows could be used to artificially reproduce the action of breathing, and that this could sustain the vital functions of an animal which would otherwise have died.

Vesalius does not mention any correlation between this experiment, and attempting to resuscitate a human. Did the thought occur to him? Who knows. Perhaps he thought that challenging Galen was risky enough, without affronting the church by attempting to perform a resurrection!

## Paracelsus

But one who did try was Paracelsus. Born in 1493, near Zurich, he was an eccentric, if not erratic academic and physician of the Renaissance. Fundamental to Paracelsus was that all teachings should be based on experimentation. He dared to speak out against the ancient Greek concept of the four bodily humours, to which Galen had adhered, and he spoke out against the extravagances of the church. Ultimately, he fled to escape arrest, leaving behind his university post.

Paracelsus is said to have used bellows to attempt to revive an apnoeic patient. He did this by inserting the nozzle into one nostril, and pumping the bellows to inflate the lungs. It is said that the attempt was unsuccessful because the bellows was full of cinders! Few of Paracelsus' works were published, so it is not known exactly when these events took place. Did Paracelsus perform this resuscitation attempt after hearing of Vesalius' animal experiment, or did these events occur in complete isolation? There is no written evidence to answer this question.



Paracelsus.

## Humane Societies

Over 200 years elapsed until the practical application of bellows for resuscitation was again reviewed. This renewed interest followed the establishment of the Humane Societies, dedicated to the resuscitation of victims of drowning. The first was formed in Amsterdam in 1767—the canals in that city made drowning an unfortunately common event. Many other cities followed suit, with the Royal Humane Society founded in London in 1774. The Dutch society had recommended mouth to mouth ventilation as the preferred method, but this was condemned by the English society as [quote] “a method practiced by the vulgar”. In addition, it had just been discovered that expired air contained carbon dioxide, and therefore was noxious and unfit to enter any lungs again. Resuscitation methods utilised instead included application of hot water bottles, insufflation of the rectum with tobacco smoke, and rolling the victim over a barrel. The manual methods of artificial respiration of Hall, Schaeffer *et al.*, did not appear until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Dr John Hunter.

In 1776, Dr John Hunter presented to the Royal Humane Society the results of ventilation experiments he had conducted. His method was basically the same as that used by Paracelsus, except that Hunter used a double chambered bellows of his own design – with one chamber for positive pressure ventilation, and the other chamber for negative pressure exhalation. Hunter also wrote of the effects of respiration on cardiac function – essentially repeating Vesalius' experiments. In an animal with the chest opened, Hunter found that when he [quote] “stopped the motion of the bellows, the heart became gradually weaker and less frequent in its contractions, until it ceased entirely to move. By renewing the action of the bellows the heart again began to move” Further, Hunter states “I shall consider an animal apparently drowned as not dead; but that only a suspension of the actions of life has taken place.” This comment reflects a real change in attitude towards the possibility of resuscitation – medical intervention was now seen as entirely appropriate and scientifically justified.





*The Royal Humane Society resuscitation kit.*

In 1782, the Royal Humane Society recommended bellows ventilation in preference to the mouth to mouth method, and specially designed kits containing bellows and various airway tubes, were kept at eleven receiving stations near waterways in London. Despite a number of reports of successful resuscitations, the bellows were abandoned in favour of various manual methods of artificial respiration. I suppose this was due to the inherent simplicity of these methods (no equipment was needed, and the task was aesthetically acceptable), and possibly due to exaggerated claims of barotrauma resulting from bellows. Hall's method was the first to appear, in 1856. A multitude of techniques soon followed, none of which were very effective. It took until 1958 for mouth to mouth ventilation to be readopted.

### **Kreiselman**

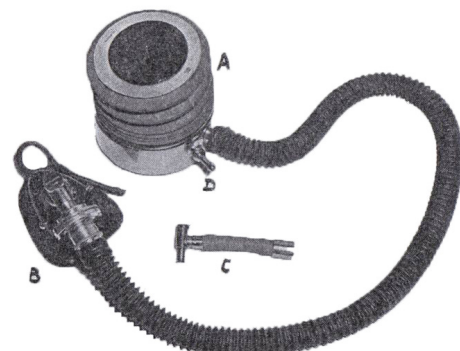


*The Kreiselman resuscitator.*

Bellows were "rediscovered" by Dr Joseph Kreiselman, an American anesthesiologist, in 1943. Kreiselman was a pioneer in the fields of neonatal resuscitation and anaesthesia for thoracic surgery, and he was an adviser to the US Army Surgeon General. He recognised that the manual methods of artificial respiration were inefficient, so he designed a hand operated bellows, which could be directly attached to a modern type of anaesthetic mask to create an effective seal. Supplementary oxygen could be added, and an optional right angle connector made it possible to use the device with the patient in the prone position, so that back-pressure could be applied to augment expiration. This device seems to have been mainly supplied to the US military.

### **Other Bellows**

John Blease was born in England in 1906, and although he had no formal training in engineering, he managed to establish a successful business designing and patenting anaesthetic machines and ventilators in the 1930s, 40s and 50's. He collaborated with many anaesthetists to understand their evolving needs. In the early 1950s, he designed a bellows type resuscitator in response to the large numbers of patients needing ventilatory support as a result of the polio epidemic. Unlike the Kreiselman resuscitator, a spring was included inside the bellows to make them self-inflating.



*The Blease resuscitator.*



The Cardiff and Oxford bellows are further examples of this type of apparatus, also developed in the 1950s. Their intended application was in anaesthesia, but they were also utilised to manage respiratory failure in other settings, including the pre-hospital environment, as you can see here.



*The Cardiff bellows.*



*The Oxford bellows.*

## NEW APPROACH

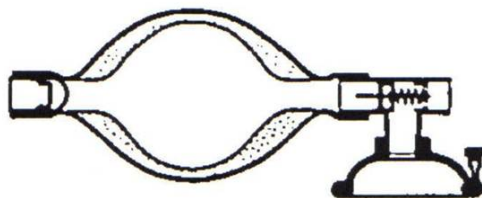
By the 1950s, no entirely satisfactory method of providing emergency positive pressure ventilation was readily available. The bellows devices were cumbersome, and did not gain widespread popularity. At this time, anaesthetists were increasingly providing assisted or controlled ventilation during surgery, after paralysing the patient with curare, but this was often accomplished with a Magill's type breathing circuit attached to the anaesthetic machine. This partial rebreathing circuit requires a gas supply to work, and was rarely employed outside the operating theatre.

However, several pioneering anaesthetists recognised the need for a new type of resuscitator, based on the "bag and mask" design. It needed to be simple, so that it could be used by non-anaesthetists, in any situation. The final drive to invent such a device came from the tragic loss of life which was occurring in the poliomyelitis epidemics.

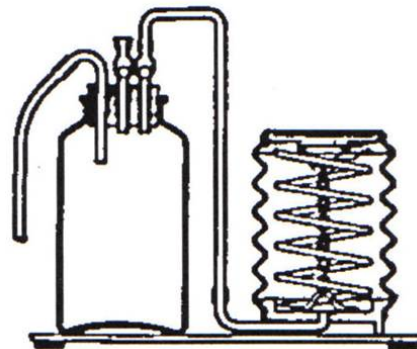
## THE SELF INFLATING BAG

### *Dr Henning Ruben and the "Ambu Bag"*

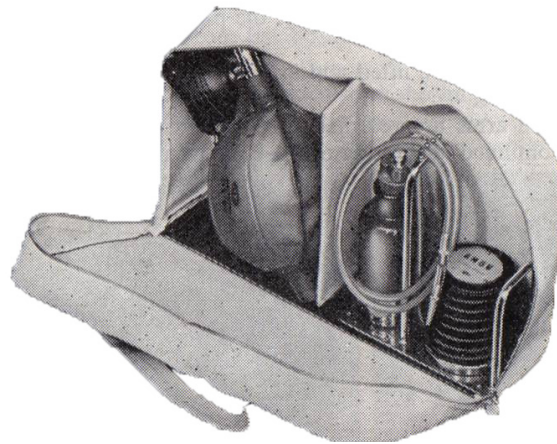
Henning Ruben (191–2004) was born in Copenhagen. He initially studied dentistry, but then went on to pursue a medical degree. His studies were interrupted by Nazi occupation, and he fled to Switzerland, where he worked as a dentist until the war ended. Ruben graduated as a doctor in 1946, and decided to specialise in anaesthesia. Apart from academic studies, Ruben possessed many other remarkable talents. He was a professional dancer and dance teacher (the tango was reputedly his specialty), and he represented his country in fencing. Ruben was also adept at magic, illusion and thought reading! He was also an imaginative inventor, and is credited with the first electrically driven syringe pump, an efficient unidirectional valve, a foot operated suction pump, and a resuscitation training manikin.



*Ambu-Bag design.*



*Suction pump design..*



*Ambu-Bag resuscitation kit.*

In the midst of the polio epidemic, a strike by truck drivers in 1954 caused oxygen supplies in Danish hospitals to run dangerously low. In addition to wards full of patients in iron lungs, dozens of the most serious cases were being hand ventilated around the clock by nurses and medical students, using simple rebreathing circuits. Near disaster provoked Henning Ruben to conceive the idea of a self inflating bag, which would work without an oxygen supply. He welded together the ends of four bicycle spokes, and fed these into a rubber anaesthetic reservoir bag. Using a piece of string, he then pulled the spokes into an oval shape. This created an internal spring which caused the bag to re-expand after it was compressed. By combining the bag with the non-rebreathing valve he had already invented, the prototype self inflating bag was born. Ruben showed his idea to Dr Holger Hesse, an engineer and friend who had helped him with earlier inventions. Hesse suggested some modifications to the bag design, including replacing the bicycle spokes with a foam rubber lining. In 1957 the bag was marketed as the "Ambu Bag", under the umbrella of Hesse's company, later to become Ambu International.

Ruben had already invented a foot operated suction pump, which had been inspired by the type of foot pump used for inflating a "Li-Lo" mattress. The suction pump was combined with the Ambu bag, in a compact resuscitation kit which could be used anywhere, fully independent of oxygen or electricity. The Ambu bag was an immediate success around the world, and has undoubtedly been one of the greatest life saving devices ever created.

### ***Asmund Laerdal and the "Resusci Folding Bag"***

In the 1950s two American anesthesiologists, Drs Peter Safar and James Elam, had each been independently studying the feasibility of expired air resuscitation. Elam had personally performed mouth to mouth on asphyxiated polio victims, and had shown experimentally that expired air was suitable to sustain life. A chance meeting of the two men in 1956 led to a lasting friendship, and a combined effort which finally led to the validation of mouth-to-mouth ventilation in 1958, by performing it on paralyzed volunteers! The real challenge lay in devising a way to train as many people as possible. Some sort of manikin was obviously needed. Now enter Asmund Laerdal.



*Asmund Laerdal of Stavanger, Norway.*

Laerdal was a businessman based in Stavanger in Norway. He initially began in the field of publishing, and manufacturing wooden toys. However, he gained expertise in the use of soft plastics, and changed the focus of his company to plastic toys and dolls. In 1953 Laerdal was asked by the civil defense authorities to make lifelike imitation wounds out of plastic – this had never been done before, but Laerdal devised an extremely realistic product. The research involved led him to develop an interest in first aid, and the newly publicised technique of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Instinctively, Laerdal began to conceive the possibility of a training manikin, and he contacted the anaesthetist at his local hospital, Dr Bjorn Lind, to discuss the idea. Incredibly, Peter Safar had only just delivered a paper on expired air resuscitation at a conference in Norway, which was attended by Dr Lind, so he realized the potential for a manikin. Lind suggested that Laerdal meet with Safar and Elam, which he did, and their combined efforts led to the production of Resusci-Anne.

But Laerdal wanted to develop a range of resuscitation products, including a self-inflating resuscitation bag. A suggestion from Elam resulted in a prototype made of soft plastic with moulded ribs. Further development led to the "Resusci Folding Bag". This was quite different from the Ambu bag, as it was constructed entirely of plastic, and could be folded in on itself for compact storage. Its one-way valve was based on the 'duck bill' principle, and high inspired oxygen concentrations could be given, by the addition of a reservoir tube (later a reservoir bag). As a further design improvement, from around the mid-1980s, the bag was manufactured from silicone in adult, child and infant sizes. A high quality disposable product is also now available. Laerdal also designed a pocket resuscitation mask, and a battery operated suction unit.



*The Laerdal Resusci folding bag.*

### ***The CIG "Air-Viva"***

Commonwealth Industrial Gases (CIG) was an Australian company formed in 1935 by Sir Wilfred Russel Grimwade (1879-1955), with responsibility for large scale manufacture of oxygen and other gases. CIG also manufactured apparatus for oxygen administration, and resuscitation. One such device was the "Air-Viva", a self-inflating bag and mask resuscitator, first manufactured in 1963. The device consisted of a stiff plastic ventilating bag, a non-rebreathing valve (of a disc and spring mechanism), and transparent masks, all contained in a portable case. Supplemental oxygen could also be added. Subsequently, the Air-Viva 2 and Air-Viva 3 have followed a pattern quite similar to the Laerdal bag.



*The CIG 'Air-Viva'.*

## **CONCLUSION**

Today, the self inflating resuscitator is considered to be a "basic" piece of equipment, and is found in every setting where resuscitation might be needed. Only 50 years ago, the options for emergency positive pressure ventilation, especially outside a hospital, were extremely limited. The story of the invention of the Ambu Bag by the Danish anaesthetist Dr Henning Ruben, using bicycle spokes and a piece of string, is not widely known. But it's a story of triumph in the face of adversity, and reminds us how far resuscitation medicine has progressed in recent decades.



# BRIGADIER SIR WILLIAM JOHNSTON: 4<sup>TH</sup> VICTORIAN COMMISSIONER, 2<sup>ND</sup> AUSTRALIAN CHIEF COMMISSIONER

by Allan Mawdsley

**THE AUTHOR:** Dr Allan Mawdsley has spent most of his life in St John. He joined the Malvern Cadet Division in Melbourne almost 60 years ago in 1949 aged 11. Since then he has held nearly every position available to a volunteer, including three years as Commissioner in Victoria and more recently as Deputy Chairman of the State St John Council and as an elected committee member of this Historical Society. Away from St John, Allan has spent his professional career as a psychiatrist but has always been interested in history. He is prominent among the group who have developed the Victorian St John Museum at Williamstown and have helped the former Museum Committee evolve into the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Victoria, a fully fledged State branch of this national Society. His paper is one of a continuing series of biographical studies of the Victorian Commissioners.

## INTRODUCTION

William Wallace Stewart Johnston (1887-1962), was born on 21 December 1887 at South Yarra, Melbourne, second son of William Edward Johnston (1856-1918), a barrister who became a county court judge, and his Victorian-born wife Clara Jane, née Wallace (1856-1902). His older brother, Donald Stewart Johnston, born in 1885, died in 1895 of appendicitis, aged ten years. His grandfather was James Stewart Johnston (born in Scotland in 1811, died in 1896), politician and *The Argus* newspaper manager.<sup>1</sup>

William was educated at Melbourne Church of England Grammar School. His interest in military matters commenced at an early age when he was a member of the school Cadet Corps. During his medical course at the University of Melbourne he was resident at Trinity College. Whilst at the University of Melbourne he was an active and enthusiastic member of the University Rifles, attending the usual parades and camps. In this he attained the rank of sergeant.<sup>2</sup>

This photo shows him in final year, third in the back row. He graduated M.B., B.S., 1914. He was a resident medical officer at the old Melbourne Hospital when World War 1 broke out.<sup>1</sup>



The graduating class in Medicine, University of Melbourne, 1913.



Johnston the graduating medical student, from his 1913 class photograph.

On completion of his term as resident doctor he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in 1915 as a Captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps. From here he became attached to No.1 Army Hospital Ship, *Karoola*. From this he became attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Ambulance until his appointment as regimental medical officer to the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion in 1916. <sup>2</sup> In August, at Mouquet Farm, a farm on high ground a couple of miles north west of Pozieres, France, he braved an intense barrage to treat the wounded and was awarded the Military Cross. Les Carlyon's book, "The Great War" said of it, "*Pozieres, a dowdy farming village that didn't show on many pre-war maps, had brought sadness to thousands of Australian homes*".<sup>13</sup> In less than seven weeks 23,000 casualties occurred in an area of about a square mile.



*Captain Johnston, regimental medical officer of the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 1916.*

Promoted Major in August 1917, he was mentioned in dispatches.<sup>2</sup> At Hooze, east of Ypres, Belgium, he went out in the open in September to attend the wounded where they lay and continued working until he was severely injured by shell-fire. He was recommended for the Victoria Cross but received the Distinguished Service Order. After recovering in England, he rejoined the battalion in February 1918. <sup>1</sup> His work was outstanding and he was recognized in the Official History of the First World War as probably being the best regimental medical officer in the AIF. The men of his battalion held him in the highest regard.<sup>2,3</sup> He was outspoken in his opinion that a wounded prisoner was as deserving of the best medical care as any of our own men.<sup>4</sup>

Johnston returned to Australia in 1919. He completed the M.D. higher degree in medicine in 1921. His military appointment terminated on 27 January 1920 <sup>1</sup>, but as soon as the Citizen Military Forces came into being after the war, he joined up and in 1929 was appointed to command the 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Ambulance, 4<sup>th</sup> Division, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Despite the difficulties of peace-time training, he was able to instill enthusiasm into his unit, and it became the outstanding medical unit in Victoria. <sup>2</sup>

While practising as a consultant, he was one of the honorary medical staff at the old Melbourne hospital. He gained his Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 1938. On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1923 at Scots Church, Melbourne, he married with Presbyterian forms his cousin, Jessie Mary Clark, a niece of Alister Clark. <sup>1</sup> Alister Clark was President of the National Rose Society of Victoria, Chairman of Moonee Valley Racing Club, and Master of the Oakland Hunt Club from 1901-1908 where Dr Arthur Sherwin used to ride. Clark is commemorated in a memorial rose garden in St Kilda. Johnston was tall and distinguished in appearance, and bore a striking physical resemblance to his wife. They subsequently had two sons: Stewart, born 1925, who became a medical practitioner and St John Divisional Surgeon; and Donald, born 1928, who became an Anglican missionary at the Martyrs School in Papua-New Guinea.<sup>12</sup>

The years immediately following the First World War saw the birth and early development of post-graduate medical education as we know it in Australia today. This development resulted in the formation by clinicians and university teachers of post-graduate bodies throughout the Commonwealth. The Melbourne Medical Post-Graduate Committee, originally named the Melbourne Permanent Post-Graduate Committee, came into being in 1920, and, though not one of its founders, Dr Johnston came to be associated with it in its early days.<sup>5</sup>

Dr Johnston began his service with St John Ambulance by teaching and examining First Aid classes and was made an Honorary Life Member of the Association in 1929. He began with the Brigade in 1931, when he was appointed a Divisional Surgeon for the Metropolitan Gas Company Division. At that time a number of Divisions were linked to large industrial organizations such as the Railways, Tramways, and Electricity Commission, or had special roles such as the Motorcycle Division. This was when Rupert Downes was Commissioner, Arthur Sherwin was President of St John Council and Frederick Raven had just become Secretary. Dr Johnston was admitted as an Officer Brother of the Order of St John in 1940.



On completion of his term of command at 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Ambulance in 1934, Johnston became Assistant Director of Medical Services for the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, and as a full Colonel in 1938 was called up for full-time duty on the staff of Major-General Rupert Downes, Director-General of Medical Services, as the Assistant Director-General at Army Headquarters. <sup>1,2</sup> During General Downes's absence abroad, he acted as Director General. This photo shows HQ Senior Medical staff in 1940. In addition to Downes (front row, center) it includes Colonel Johnston and Major (later Colonel Alexander) Christie who became St John District Superintendent and in 1956 the inaugural Chief Superintendent. As soon as he was released from this position after the second World War broke out he was appointed Colonel, AIF, commanding the 2/2 Australian General Hospital, which he formed and took overseas, arriving in Palestine in March, 1940. <sup>2</sup>

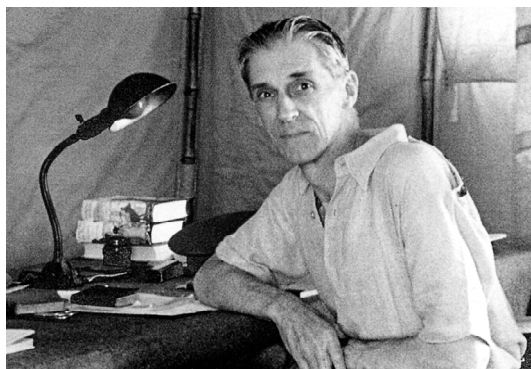


Colonel Johnston (right end of front row) as a member of the Army Medical Directorate in 1940, after the outbreak of World War II.

There he established his hospital at Gaza Ridge, and until the hospital began to function as such, he was able to see that his officers and nurses were attached for duty and training with the 2/1 Australian General Hospital and British military hospitals in Palestine. <sup>2</sup>

Dr Leonard Linden reported:

*When his general hospital was in camp near Gaza, drafts and reinforcements arrived at Gaza railway station at the unattractive hour of three o'clock in the morning. For him it was not enough to send a transport officer to meet the new arrivals; he invariably went himself as well and brought them back to camp. This may sound very trivial; but it is just an example of his observance of the little acts of courtesy and kindness for which he was so genuinely loved by his men. <sup>4</sup>*



After the arrival of Colonel Samuel Roy Burston in Palestine and the formation of the AIF headquarters overseas, Colonel Johnston took over Colonel Burston's position of Deputy Director of Medical Services, 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Corps, Colonel Burston being promoted to Brigadier and later Major-General as Director of Medical Services of the AIF.

Colonel W.W.S. Johnston at the 2/1 Australian General Hospital, Gaza, Palestine, 1940.

During this period, Colonel Johnston was in charge of medical arrangements for AIF troops in Palestine, and when the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Corps took over from the British Command in Libya towards the end of the first desert campaign, Colonel Johnston was responsible for all evacuations from that area covering over 200 miles. However, it was not long before the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Corps was recalled to Egypt to prepare for the campaign in Greece, and in late March 1941, he proceeded to Greece, where he had the unenviable job of trying to coordinate the working of the 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Division Medical Services with those of the British and New Zealand forces in a campaign in which the situation was never stable for even a day, and units came under and went out of command with great rapidity.<sup>2</sup>

With the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Corps Headquarters, he was evacuated to Cannea on Crete on April 26, and there his time was spent in trying to visit various medical units as they disembarked from Greece and to see that the nurses who had been evacuated from Greece were cared for. Very soon afterwards he was flown out with his headquarters to Egypt. During this period he was awarded the Efficiency Decoration.<sup>2</sup>



Johnston in camp in Palestine, 1941.



Brigadier (later Major-General) S.R. Burston and Johnston conferring in Gaza, Palestine, late 1940. In 1957 Johnston succeeded Burston as St John Ambulance Chief Commissioner. Burston and Johnston were close friends as well as colleagues, having been contemporaries at Melbourne Grammar and Trinity College.

After the return of the Australian Corps from Greece and Crete, the campaign against the Vichy French in Syria was commenced, and the Australian Corps headquarters with Colonel Johnston as Deputy Director Medical Services took control of this. He was in charge of the medical arrangements for the campaign, working in conjunction with the British Medical Services.<sup>2</sup> His work brought him a further mention in dispatches and the award of the CBE.<sup>1 2</sup>

The entry of Japan into the war necessitated the return of the Australian troops to Australia, and on the regrouping by Sir Thomas Blamey of the forces into First and Second Armies, Colonel Johnston was appointed Deputy Director of Medical Services, 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Corps, with the rank of brigadier. The corps very soon moved to New Guinea where it became known as the New Guinea Force. Much had to be created out of practically nothing, and the military position was far from being stable. The campaign at Milne Bay showed the necessity of very strict anti-malarial measures, and the advance of the 7<sup>th</sup> Australian Division across the Kokoda Trail presented almost insurmountable difficulties regarding supplying of medical stores and evacuation of sick and wounded. Brigadier Johnston worked night and day trying to help the forward troops, and that the results were as successful as they were was very largely due to his efforts.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Clive Fitts wrote:

*Quiet and unassuming, but full of purpose and determination, he was probably able to get much more done by such methods than by blustering tactics. Working with Allies is not always easy, however much good-will there may be, and this was so with the Americans, whose methods differed considerably from ours. The only time the writer ever saw him really angry was in such circumstances, where, however, by quiet perseverance his will prevailed.<sup>2</sup>*

*To "Bill" Johnston the care of a private was equally important as that of a general - perhaps more so, since the latter could look after himself more easily than a private could. Conscientious to a degree, he never spared himself, and the night before he left New Guinea, he set off at 10 p.m. to see that two nurses who were reported sick at the 2/9 Australian General Hospital some seven miles away were all right; this, when he could hardly keep awake himself.<sup>2</sup>*

His health during the whole of the campaign remained remarkably good, especially as he was never very physically robust; but it was considered wiser for him to have a spell from the tropics and to return to the mainland in December 1942. After leave he was appointed Deputy .Director .Medical Services, 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Corps, where he remained until he retired from the Army. On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1943 he was placed on the reserve of officers.

Resuming both his practice and his honorary post at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Johnston served successively as Secretary and Director (1947-56) and from 1956 till the end of his life, Chairman (1956-62) of the Melbourne Medical Post-Graduate Committee.<sup>1,5</sup>

Many week-ends were spent in attending lectures and courses arranged in country districts in Victoria. Sir William's stature in the medical community was such that all centres felt honoured by his presence, and his unfeigned interest in all he met earned the admiration of doctors in all branches of the profession. He was much sought after as chairman and speaker by the leaders of medicine's allied professions, nursing and physiotherapy. He drove himself hard with all these engagements.

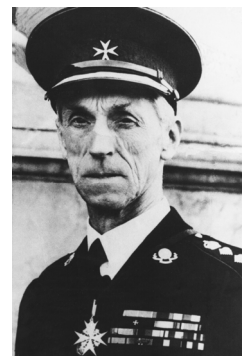


*Jonston's portrait, painted for the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.*

He made a great contribution to post-graduate medicine in Australia and in particular to the development of the Australian Post-Graduate Federation in Medicine, of which he was one of the pioneers. The Federation, which at the time of his death was the national academic medical body in post-graduate medicine in Australia, owed much to his advice and wise counsels. On behalf of the Post-Graduate Committee in Victoria, of which he was Chairman, Dr Johnston took a leading part in the early negotiations which led to its formation. He became one of the first Presidents of the Federation, and throughout its history has remained one of its leaders and chief councilors. His association with the Federation has at all times inspired the confidence of others. In recognition of his unique contribution, the Federation at its meeting in Adelaide in May, 1962, appointed him an Honorary Life Governor of the Federation, the highest honour it can confer on those who have served it well.<sup>6</sup>

In 1945 he was appointed District Surgeon of St John Ambulance Brigade in Victoria, following Colonel Arthur Sherwin who became Commissioner on the death of Rupert Downes. He received his Long Service medal in 1942, with bars in 1947, 1952 and 1957. In 1947 he was made a knight of the Order of St John. In 1951, upon Sherwin's retirement, he was appointed Commissioner for Victoria.

He was a member of the St John Ambulance Association Committee from 1950. In 1953, with the creation of the St John Council for Victoria, which included representation of the Brigade as well as the Association, Dr Johnston was elected unopposed as chairman in 1954, and had continued unopposed each year in that post for the next eight years to 1962.<sup>7,11</sup> He was also a Vice-President from 1955 to 1962.



*Sir William Johnston as Chief Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Australia, late 1950s.*



In 1956 he was appointed Chief Commissioner to the Priory in Australia. He is shown here inspecting the Victorian Cadet contingent with District officer Ern Madeley at the annual Cadet camp.

*Dr (later Sir) William Johnston inspecting a group of Victorian St John Ambulance Cadets, 1950s.*

Douglas Donald said

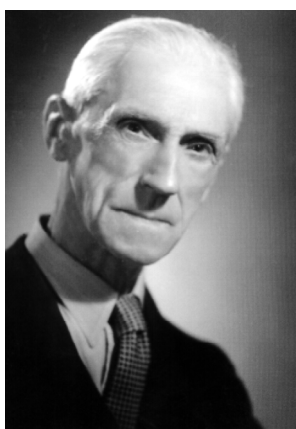
*At every official occasion of the Order, Sir William was certain to be found. Not only did his presence add to the occasion, but he took a keen personal interest in everyone and everything, so by his own devotion making it of more personal importance to everyone.*<sup>7</sup>

He was a member (1945-52) and medical director (1943-44) of the national council of the Australian Red Cross Society, and vice-president (1958-60) of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians.

He joined the University of Melbourne Graduate Union in 1950 and was President in 1958 following Sir John Latham, contributing much to its development. The Library at Graduate House was named after him and officially opened in 1971.<sup>10</sup> In 1960 he was knighted. This event gave the most genuine and widespread satisfaction to the medical profession and to his other colleagues in the Services.<sup>4</sup> He was a council member of the University of Melbourne from 1961.

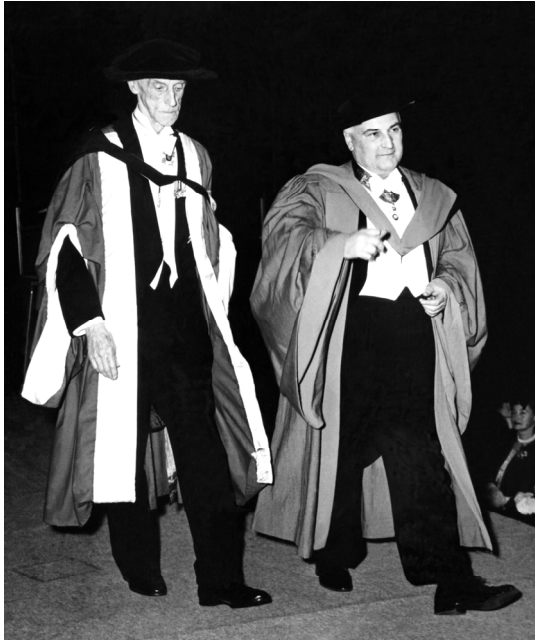


*Sir William Johnston carries the 'Queens' Beasts' in a Priory capitular procession, late 1950s. The Prior, Sir William (later Lord) Slim is behind the sword-bearer.*



*A portrait of Johnston, after he had received his knighthood in 1960.*

About this time Sir William began work on a historical paper which was to have been the subject of his address to the annual meeting of the Australian Medical Association. He died shortly before its completion and it was finalised and presented on his behalf by Associate Professor Bryan Gandevia, published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*.<sup>8</sup> It was on the subject of that remarkable man, Dr James Edward Neild, the founder of St John Ambulance Association in Australia in 1883. Physician, forensic pathologist, city coroner, leading office-bearer in the British Medical Association, Victorian Medical Society, Alfred Hospital, Austin Hospital, Children's Hospital, editor of the "Australian Medical Journal", journalist and famed writer, theatre critic, great patron of medicine, medical education and the arts, his name is commemorated in *Darwinia neildiana*, or Neild's Scent Myrtle (as reported in John Pearn's book, "An Australian Cadaster"). He took part in starting Melbourne "Punch" magazine and publication of "My Notebook" which included works by Marcus Clarke and Adam Lindsay Gordon. He is also reputed to have 'discovered Dame Nellie Melba' at a concert in which she was a pianist, advising her to concentrate on voice rather than piano, which she had considered her forte.



*Johnston attending a degree conferring ceremony,  
University of Melbourne, 1950s.*

Sir Clive Fitts records:

*On Monday, August 13, 1962, at the centenary ceremony of the Medical School, the University of Melbourne conferred on Sir William Johnston the degree of doctor of laws, honoris causa. On that day degrees were conferred on others whose names are justly honoured throughout the scientific world; but the applause that greeted Sir William was a tribute of admiration and affection for one who without doubt the best-loved physician in Victoria, and probably in the whole of Australia. On the days that succeeded this ceremony, Sir William attended the scientific symposia and lectures. He was not well enough to attend the banquet in Wilson Hall on August 16. <sup>9</sup>*

Johnston died a week later, on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1962, of an acute bowel obstruction, in East Melbourne and was cremated.<sup>12</sup> Jessie and their two sons survived him. Lady Johnston was, for several years, a member of St John Council for Victoria.<sup>11</sup> Rex Bramleigh's portrait of Johnston is held by the Museum of Medical History, at the University of Melbourne.<sup>1</sup>

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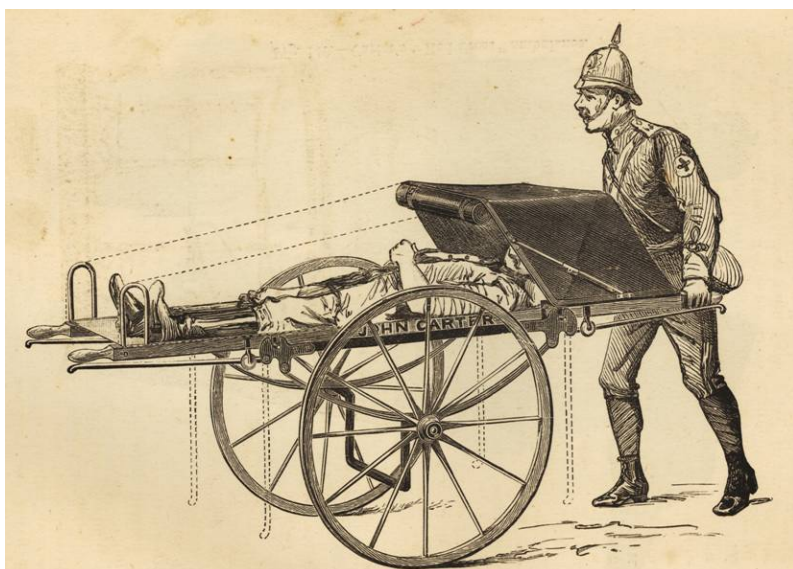


# **SURGEON-MAJOR W.G.N. MANLEY VC CB—FIRST SUPERINTENDENT OF THE AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT OF THE ORDER OF ST. JOHN**

by Heather Fogerty

**THE AUTHOR:** Dr Heather Fogerty of Toowoomba, Queensland, is a medical practitioner. For many years she ran a large general practice in Toowoomba. Since February 2008 she has worked on contract at St Andrew's Primary Health Care Centre, Toowoomba, having sold her practice to St Andrew's. She has been in practice for some 40 years after graduating from the University of Sydney. She has also been a lecturer with the University of Queensland, lecturing in Anatomy and in recent years tutored medical students in General Practice. Dr Fogerty has been a member of St John Ambulance Australia Queensland First Aid Services for 14 years and is the Medical Officer for the Toowoomba Division. Away from St John Ambulance and medical practice, she is a past president of the Toowoomba Literary Society and presently holds the position of treasurer. Her main extracurricular interests are the history of medicine, quilting and literature. She has also been tutored in the Japanese tea making ceremony and Ikabana. Earlier in 2008 she and her husband Mr Vince Little (the author of the next article in this journal) holidayed in South Africa, travelling from Cape Town to Livingstone in Zambia, during which they retraced in the tracks of the great Scottish medical missionary of the nineteenth century, Dr David Livingston.

**D**r. N. Corbett Fletcher wrote as follows about the origins of St John Ambulance in his succinct history of the organisation: "15<sup>th</sup> March 1873, Ambulance service initiated this day by the Order of St. John through the efforts of Surgeon-Major William George Nicholas Manley of the Royal Artillery, who contributed One Hundred Pounds towards expenses." This notable event was not just a serendipitous happening but the result of the efforts of a man who gave a lifetime of dedicated service to the sick and injured both in times of war and peace. This paper is to explain how this man of courage and vision inspired by his actions the beginnings of the work now carried on by many all round the world through St John Ambulance to this day.



*The 'St John ambulance' or 'Ashford litter'—the patented two-wheeled stretcher that gave its name to the organisation founded by W.G.N. Manley VC.*

Born in 1831 in Dublin, Ireland, the son of a clergyman, W.G.N. Manley elected to follow the profession of his maternal grandfather, that of Medicine. His initial medical training was at Trinity College, Dublin, followed by surgical training in London, where he then qualified as Member of the Royal College of Surgeons. After completing further in hospital training he joined the Army and was appointed Assistant Surgeon in the Royal Artillery His first posting was to the Crimea, where the war between Russia and Turkey had been joined by both British and French forces. Manley saw action at the Siege of Sebastopol and at some stage heard of Florence Nightingale's nursing skills but he did not believe that the battlefield was the place for women. After this war finished the British forces had another problem to deal with and this was the rebellion in the North Island of New Zealand, where well organised Maori troops had commenced what we now know as the Maori Wars. Manley was posted with the Royal Artillery to Tauranga, landing there in the January of 1864 with two Infantry regiments, the 43<sup>rd</sup> and the 64<sup>th</sup>.



*Surgeon-Major Manley VC in full dress uniform.*

On the night of April 28<sup>th</sup> of that year, Manley and his fellow officers were enjoying a meal with the local Anglican clergyman, Archdeacon Brown and his wife. The following morning the artillery barrage on the Maori position at a place called the "Gate Pa" began. Late on the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> no Maoris had been seen and the order was given to storm the Pa on foot. Unbeknown to the attackers, however, the Maoris were unharmed, having built deep trenches within the Pa. As the Officers who were in the vanguard of the attack entered the Pa, the Maori defenders attacked with great ferocity and within minutes all the officers were either killed or mortally wounded. The leaderless soldiers then totally confused deserted. In fact they just ran down the hill and out of the range of fire. Manley however stayed to tend to the wounded under heavy fire. At one stage he had to draw his own revolver to kill a Maori chief who was threatening his life. Eventually the battle subsided leaving a heavy toll of casualties. For his act of valour Manley was awarded the Victoria Cross (VC), then and still the highest award for bravery in battle.



*An 'Armstrong' 6-pound field gun used by the British in their attack on the Gate Pa..*



*Initial burial ground for the British dead of the attack on the Gate Pa..*



The following year Manley again performed an outstanding act of courage, though this was not in battle. When a young trooper fell overboard into the Waikato River, Manley, who was a good swimmer, jumped in fully clothed to save him and for this he was awarded the Bronze Medal of the Royal Humane Society.

*The Gate Pa battlefield, 29 April 1864.*

After the medical disaster of the Crimea, when many died unnecessarily, the medical officers of the Army started to develop improved techniques of patient care. Thus of the total wounded in the Maori Wars, some 688 men, 500 did well. Casualties were treated in either tented or hutted hospitals with improved air circulation, more hygienic treatment of wounds and the disposal by incineration of infected dressings. In addition they were well fed, though previously they had been starved, and blood-letting became a thing of the past.





The Maori warrior Henare Taratoa. He was imbued with Christian teaching; hence the cross on the flag.



St George's Anglican church now stands on the site of the Great Pa battlefield. A small memorial of the battle is in the foreground.

After the end of the Maori Wars Manley returned to Europe, where there was yet another conflict—the Franco-Prussian War. By now Manley had considerable experience with battle injuries and he played such an invaluable role that he was awarded the Iron Cross. He remains to this day the only person to receive both the VC and the Iron Cross.



The present-day graves of the British dead from the battle of Gate Pa..

From these small beginnings the St John Ambulance First Aid Service as we know it today had its inception. Manley was not to play any further role, however, as he was posted to India, where he saw service in Afghanistan. After retirement he moved to Cheltenham, where he died in that momentous year 1901 just a few weeks short of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Today we can look back with pride at the results of his efforts. Colleagues, I give you W.G.N. Manley VC CB, Man of Courage and Vision!

The grave of Surgeon-Major Manley VC at Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England.

After the Franco-Prussian War had ended Manley returned to England and, putting his knowledge and skills to good use, founded the Ambulance Department of the Order of St John at two adjacent sites. These were in Staffordshire, first at Burslem and then Wolverhampton. They were staffed by trained Army personnel and equipped with Prussian-designed wheeled litters which Manley had used and then modified in the Franco-Prussian conflict. This region had a high concentration of potteries as well as mines and thus had a high casualty rate.



# THOMAS AND FRIENDS: VARIATIONS OF THE THOMAS SPLINT IN FIRST AID AND AMBULANCE PRACTICE

by Vincent J. Little

**THE AUTHOR:** Mr Vince Little, from Toowoomba, Queensland, has worn many St John hats. Within the St John Ambulance Operations Branch he rose to be Deputy Commissioner in Queensland, having started his St John career many years earlier in New South Wales. Mr Little has spent much of his professional career both as an ambulance officer and a part-time member of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps. This has not only benefited St John Ambulance but has brought benefits to places beyond Australia, most notably East Timor. His efforts to establish an ambulance transport service there after the Indonesian withdrawal in 1999 are widely admired. He later recounted that experience in his book *Candle of Hope*, which was launched by Professor John Pearn during the St John Ambulance Australia national conference in Adelaide in June 2008. Mr Little has many other accomplishments. He has university degrees in teaching and psychology and a Master's degree in Counselling from the Queensland University of Technology. He is also an accomplished St John Ambulance historian with a particular interest in St John 'collectibles'. He is married to Dr Heather Fogerty, the author of the previous article in this journal.

## ABSTRACT

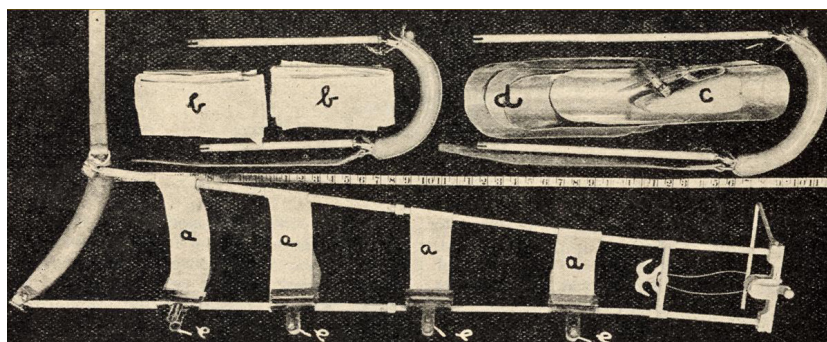
The Thomas Splint is named after its inventor, Hugh Owen Thomas, who was a remarkable orthopaedic surgeon of the nineteenth century. Although his splint is accredited with a significant reduction in the mortality rate from fractures of the femur in war casualties, its first aid application required a lot of practice and was not generally taught as part of the first aid curriculum in civil practice. Over the years since its introduction many variations of the Thomas splint have been put into practice; but although the aim was always to simplify the application of the splint, the one principle that remained constant was that of reduction of the fracture by the use of traction. One could suggest that fracture management involves more principles of engineering than those of science. This paper examines the more commonly known variations and their implications in first aid and ambulance practice.



Dr Hugh Owen Thomas, inventor of the Thomas Splint.

## INTRODUCTION

It is not the aim of this paper to present a detailed biography of Hugh Owen Thomas, the inventor of the Thomas Splint; however it is noted that his life spanned the period 1834–1891 and over that time he became regarded as a pioneer in British orthopaedic surgery. He began his training in fracture management as the son of a bone-setter in Northern Wales. His father deemed that Hugh Owen should have a formal medical education and for that purpose apprenticed him to his uncle, Dr Owen Roberts. Later he studied medicine at Edinburgh and University College in London. In 1859 he set up a medical practice in Liverpool, where he spent most of his professional life in the slums of Liverpool treating the poor rather than the wealthy Victorian middle classes.



The various constituent parts of a modified Thomas Splint.



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE THOMAS SPLINT

A search of the available literature failed to produce an exact date when Thomas introduced his splint. The internet source *Wikipedia* (an on-line encyclopaedia) cites a range of publications by Thomas that span the years 1876–1890. A number of these works covered the management of fractures and dislocations. Proctor (1962), suggests that Thomas developed his revolutionary splint circa 1862, at which time he published the results of his previous trials. In 1927 Maurice Sinclair, an orthopaedic surgeon, wrote a comprehensive textbook on the Thomas splint but provided scant information on its inventor, or the first aid application of the splint. As in the case of other authors he does mention the successful use of the splint during World War One, citing the dramatic drop in the mortality rate from fractures of the femur and in particular the mortality rate resulting from gunshot fractures of this bone. According to Proctor (1962), when the Thomas splint was introduced into military medicine, its value almost reversed the previous 80% mortality of open fractures of the shaft of the femur (Carling, 1939) (Proctor, 1962) (Sinclair, 1927) (Sir James Cantlie, 1928) (Storey and Thomas, 1936).



*Medical Corps personnel applying a Thomas Splint during World War I.*

## A 'BAPTISM OF FIRE'

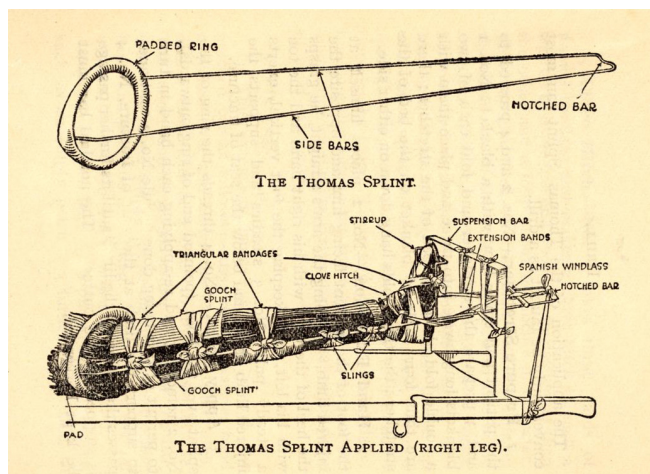
The Thomas Splint truly received its 'baptism of fire' during the great war of 1914-1918. Butler (1940), the official Australian medical historian of World War I, had a number of significant entries regarding the successful use of the Thomas Splint on the battlefields of Europe. The second of Butler's volumes contains several illustrations of stretcher-bearers demonstrating the application of a Thomas Splint outside of an Advanced Dressing Station in Ypres, Belgium. On page 348 of this volume there is a very strong testimonial to the high regard that doctors of the Australian Army Medical Corps had for this splint. Quote:

*First Aid; Fractures. The Femur. "My experience of the rifle splint," wrote a Regimental Medical Officer (Major M. V. Southey) "was that it was damnable and so was any other splint but the Thomas." And it cannot be too strongly stated that, excepting the treatment of wounds by excision and primary suture, no greater advance in wound treatment was to be made in the war than the use of the Thomas Splint in the front line to prevent shock. The unedifying history of this advance has already been stressed. Of the use of this splint in the Palestine Campaign, the officer in charge of the Desert Mounted Corps Operating Unit writes:*

*"In one of the Amman raids, one of our colleagues, then a combatant officer received a gunshot fracture of the thigh. He was put in a Thomas splint and travelled all the way to Jerusalem, some of the journey on a camel cacolet, the roughest ride imaginable, yet he had an excellent result. At the same time a brave New Zealand officer died at my feet about two minutes after his arrival at Jericho simply because he had travelled with a fracture of the thigh unfixed. "*

*It is interesting to know that Sir Alexander MacCormack was one of the first, if not the first, to advocate strongly in the Great War the use of the Thomas knee splint for the transport of patients with fractures of the thigh due to gunshot wounds. It is claimed that he actually bought and took across to France, early in 1915 the first Thomas knee splints used for transport purposes in this war.*





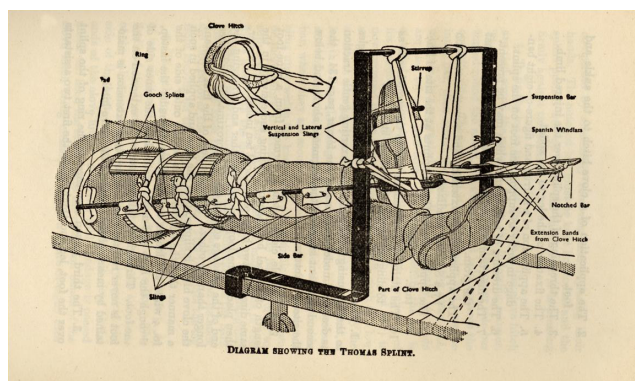
*The Thomas Splint, as illustrated in the 1928 edition of First Aid to the Injured ('The Little Black Book').*

Butler goes on to explain that the technique for applying the splint varied from army to army and a number of modifications and improvements were made. By the end of the Great War a very exact procedure had been worked out and this was embodied in a system of drill, by numbers, for the instruction of stretcher-bearers. Appendix 13 of Volume 2 of Butler's history outlines the procedures and directions for the application of the Thomas Splint under field conditions.

## THE THOMAS SPLINT MODIFIED FOR SYDNEY AMBULANCES

In 1936 A.J. Thomas, Superintendent of the Sydney Municipal Council Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade, introduced a variation on the Thomas splint designed to overcome the problem of variation in the size of thighs, necessitating the carriage of several sizes of splint. Incidentally, A.J. Thomas was unrelated to Hugh Owen Thomas, the original inventor of the traction splint. Another problem identified by A.J. Thomas was that many of the ambulances of that time were unable to accommodate the length of a standard Thomas splint when applied to an adult. With these issues in mind, he came up with the idea of modification that would allow the

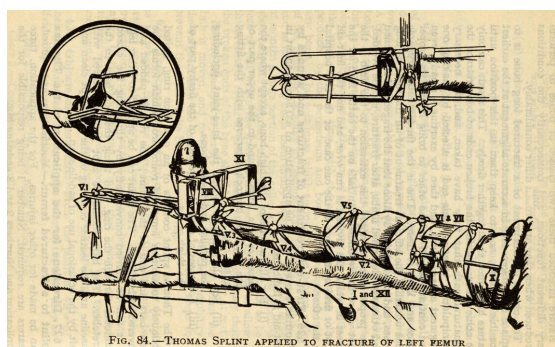
sides of the Thomas splint to be adjustable to the size of the patient's leg, while at the same being able to fit the newer ambulances that were coming into service in Sydney. This was done with the co-operation of Mr Mitchell, the then Superintendent of Central District Ambulance (Storey, 1936). Mitchell was also instrumental in developing the telescopic cliff rescue apparatus used at the infamous "Gap" at Watson's Bay cliffs, Sydney, the scene of many suicides and rescues of fishermen who got into difficulties while fishing from the rocks below the cliffs.



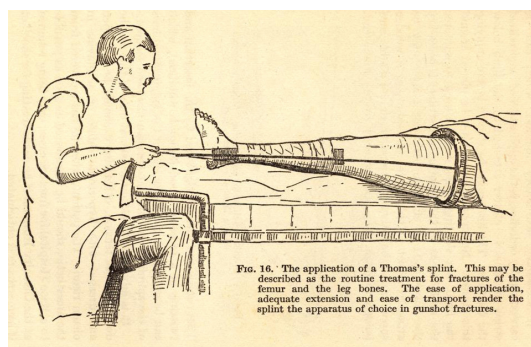
*Using the Thomas Splint requires the application of traction, as this diagram demonstrates.*

## A QUEENSLAND MODIFICATION

In 1939, Edward Acre an officer of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade (QATB) introduced a major modification in the application of traction provided through the use of the standard Thomas Splint. At the time Acre was an ambulance officer with 14 years experience, attached to the Brisbane QATB's Anne Street Headquarters. His new splint was said to be the result of months of research and construction, expected to revolutionize ambulance and hospital treatment of fractures of the lower limbs. With this modification the entire limb is open to constant supervision. The splint is constructed of stainless steel with chrome fittings, and is remarkably simple to apply. Acre's splint stood the test of time and was still in use in the Queensland Ambulance Service well into the early 1990s. After Edward Acre demonstrated the use of his variation of the Thomas Splint, it was allegedly described by a Brisbane doctor in these terms: *"The perfect splint; a surgical instrument rather than a first-aid appliance."*



This diagram demonstrates the means of applying the traction required by a Thomas Splint.



Physical strength is required to apply the traction necessary for using a basic Thomas Splint, as this diagram suggests.

## SOME PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The author had been trained in the use of this splint after being employed by the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade (QATB) in 1980. This was to prove useful in 1999 when establishing an ambulance service in East Timor. The only splints available were of the Acre type, sent to East Timor with the Ambulances donated by the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS). By that time the *Donway* Splint was coming into service in the QAS. The *Donway* splint is really another version of the original Thomas Splint, with traction being applied through the use of compressed air.

## THE THOMAS SPLINT IN ST JOHN AMBULANCE FIRST AID MANUALS

Literature of this and later periods alludes to the great benefit of the first aid and surgical application of the Thomas splint in the management of fractures of the femur and lower leg. The splint as a useful tool in the first aid management of fractures of the femur and lower leg really made its debut into civil first aid and ambulance practice post World War I. The 1928 edition of the St John Ambulance manual is the first time the use of the splint received official recognition by the medical committee of the St John Ambulance Association responsible for the manual *First Aid to the Injured*; and it appears in the manual as an appendix on page 226, as quoted below:

*Appendix III.*

*THE THOMAS SPLINT.*

*INTRODUCTORY.*

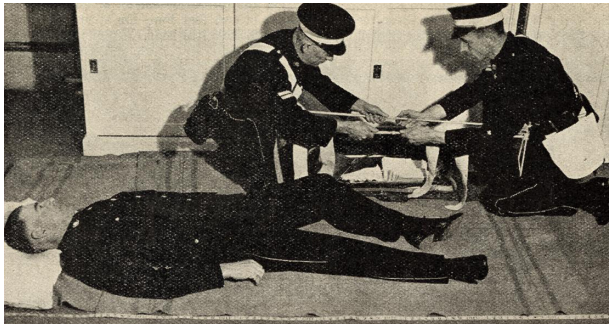
*This splint is named not after the famous hospital in London, but after the eminent surgeon, the late Mr. H. O. Thomas.*

*It was used extensively during the Great War and was the means of saving many lives and much suffering. Indeed it has been written that it was the "only splint which was found of universal and inestimable value" in the war. The same writer has criticized the St John Ambulance Association for making no mention of the Thomas Splint in its manual, but he overlooks the fact that while at least two and possibly three, first aiders trained to work together are required for the correct and convenient application of the splint, the manual of the Association deals primarily with "casual" first aid rendered by an individual with improvised material, as distinct from "organized" first aid as practised by a first aid unit trained to work together and equipped with suitable appliances.*

*The application of the Thomas Splint is included in the syllabus of training of Voluntary Aid Detachments, and a knowledge of its use will be of value to the other Technical Reserves for the Medical Services of the Forces of the Crown, founded by the St John Ambulance Brigade, namely the Royal Naval Auxiliary Sick Berth Reserve and the Military Hospitals Reserve, and also to other trained first aiders who have opportunities for practising and working together in parties which are equipped with the necessary*



appliances and have not to rely upon improvisation. For this reason instruction in the use and application of the splint is included in the manual, not as part of the syllabus of the first aid course, but as an appendix.

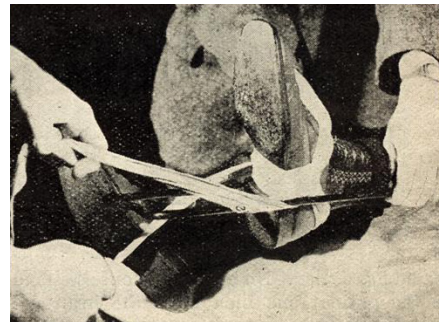
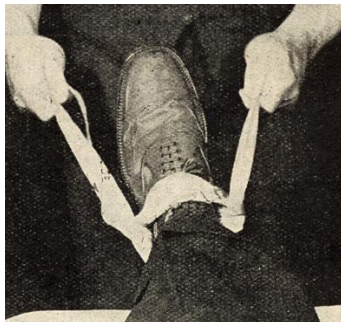
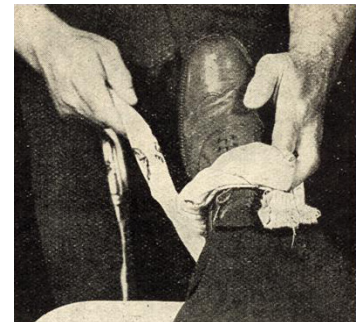
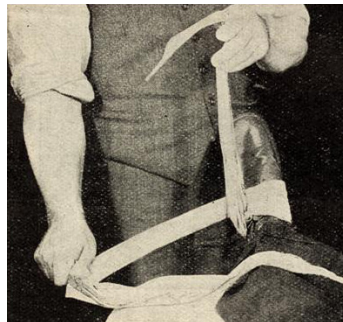
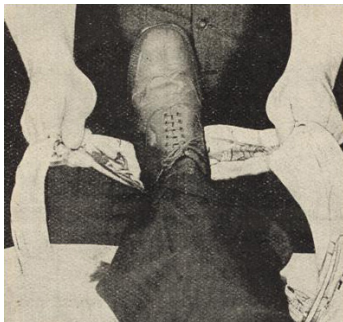


The use of the Thomas splint continued to be included in the St John Ambulance first aid manual into the 1960s but did not make it into the Australian Edition, first published in 1969.

A pair of St John Ambulance Brigade members practise the application of the Thomas Splint upon a colleague.

## CONCLUSION

In the space and time available this paper has only provided superficial insight into the remarkable but simple device introduced by Hugh Owen Thomas nearly 150 years ago. A simple splinting device which has brought great relief from suffering to many, who in another time may have not healed so well and may have even lost their lives.



These photographs from an early first aid manual demonstrate the five stages for bandaging a foot in order to apply traction when using a Thomas Splint.

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# WHO WAS AUSTRALIA'S FIRST ST JOHN AMBULANCE CHIEF COMMISSIONER?' A CLAIM ON BEHALF OF SIR SAMUEL ROY BURSTON

by Ian Howie-Willis

**THE AUTHOR:** *Dr Ian Howie-Willis is the Priory Librarian for St John Ambulance Australia and the foundation secretary of this Historical Society. A professional Canberra-based historian, he is the author of various articles and books on St John history. He has also writes other books on non-St John topics. His next book-writing project is a biography of the subject of this paper—Major-General Sir Samuel Roy Burston, a distinguished physician and soldier who led the Australian Army Medical Corps for most of World War II and then through the early post-war years.*

## INTRODUCTION: FOUR CLAIMANTS TO THE TITLE OF 'FIRST AUSTRALIAN CHIEF COMMISSIONER'

**B**efore the establishment of an Australian Priory of the Order of St John in 1946 there had been three Australians who had enjoyed the status and role (if not the actual title) of 'Chief Commissioner' in the St John Ambulance Brigade. With Sir Samuel Roy Burston, the Chief Commissioner who took office at the Priory's inauguration, they are rivals for the honour of having been the first. I have no doubt as to whom the honour properly belongs. This paper argues Burston's case. Before staking his claim, however, I must consider in turn those of the three other contenders.

The first was Dr George Lane Mullins (1862–1918), the Brigade Commissioner in New South Wales 1902–14. As well as being the NSW Commissioner, he held the position of 'Commissioner for Australia' 1904–12. The latter was a title conferred on him by the London-based Chief Commissioner for the Brigade Overseas [i.e. beyond the UK], Major-General James C. Dalton, who hoped Mullins might establish local divisions and State-level districts of the Brigade elsewhere in Australia. Such a task was beyond the ability and resources of any one individual; and so although Mullins did his best to stimulate interest in the Brigade interstate, few divisions outside New South Wales formed as a direct result of his efforts. Eventually the London headquarters of the Brigade Overseas recognised the futility of the situation and abolished the position in 1912.

The second to hold the title, which was now 'Australian Chief Commissioner for the Brigade', was Dr Thomas Storie Dixon (1854–1932). Dixon, who had been the New South Wales Commissioner 1914–23, held the title during the period 1921–32, when he was also president of the short-lived Central St John Council for Australia, the first attempt at Australian St John Ambulance federation. I won't now analyse the reasons for the council's abolition in 1933, because I've done so previously. Suffice to say that the personality of Dixon, the council's architect and chief proponent, was a major factor in its failure. In his time as 'Chief Commissioner' Dixon might have maintained intermittent contact with the Commissioners in the three Brigade Districts that affiliated with his council, but that was about all. He was accordingly a titular office-holder only and chief of very little.

The third title holder was Dr Sydney Letts Dawkins (1873–1963), who had been Brigade Commissioner in South Australia from 1931 and continued in office there until 1945. He also served as the 'Commandery Commissioner' of the Brigade in four of the eastern States—New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria—in the five-year period 1941–46 when Australia's first successful federal St John Ambulance organisation was in existence. This was the Australian Commandery of the Order, the forerunner to the Australian Priory of the Order. He was not, however, an Australia-wide Chief Commissioner because the Western Australians refused to join the Commandery and Queensland as yet had no Brigade divisions; and so Dawkins' jurisdiction never extended across the borders between his State and theirs.



*Chief Commissioners with claims to have been the first in Australia. Let to right are: Dr George Lane Mullins; Dr Thomas Storey Dixon; Dr Sydney Letts Dawkins.*



*The first Chief Commissioner for all of Australia: Major-General Sir Samuel Roy Burston: his portrait by the war artist Ivor Hele.*

The fourth person to hold the position of Chief Commissioner is the subject of this paper: Major General Sir Samuel Roy Burston (1888–1960). Burston was the Australian Army's Director General of Medical Services, i.e. commanding officer of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, for most of World War II. An earlier Brigade Commissioner in South Australia 1945–47, when he succeeded Dawkins in the position, he became Chief Commissioner in 1947 soon after the Australian Commandery had been upgraded to Priory status (in September 1946) as the first fully national federal organisation of St John Ambulance. He remained Chief Commissioner for the 10½ years 1947–57 and then during the last three years of his life 1957–60 served a triennium as the Priory's second Receiver General.

Unlike Mullins, Dixson and Dawkins, Burston was the Chief Commissioner in every sense of the modern use of the term, even though his title in the earlier years of his period in office was 'Priory Commissioner' rather than 'Chief Commissioner', the title adopted in 1954. Thus, he presided over the Brigade Standing Committee at the annual Priory meetings. He conferred with his six State Commissioners and visited their Districts in turn. He represented the Brigade's interests as a key member of the Chancellor's Executive Committee. During his watch the Brigade rallied after a predictable post-war slump in membership. It regained its strength and set itself well on the way towards achieving its maximum strength in the decade following his period in office. At the same time it finally began emerging as a national entity rather than a series of separate, parochial, State-based organisations. In short, although Burston was not the first to be called 'Chief Commissioner', he is the one with the only clear claim to having been its first effective national head.

## **BURSTON'S FAMILY BACKGROUND, CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION**

S.Roy Burston (his preferred style) came from a family that was a part of Melbourne's commercial, political and social elite. His grandfather, Samuel Burston, had migrated to Victoria from Somerset during the gold rushes. He had settled at Kilmore, about 80 kilometres north of Melbourne on the road to Sydney, married, fathered a family of three children, ran a pub, prospered as a storekeeper and acquired an interest in a brewery. Moving to Melbourne in the early 1870s, he bought a malting firm in Flinders Street, learned the malting trade and became an innovative, prosperous manufacturer of malt for the brewing industry. Through buying out and merging with competitors the firm expanded, eventually becoming the leader in its field in the years before World War I. The firm survives to the present day as Barrett Burston Malting Co. Pty. Ltd.



*The logo of the Barrett Burston Malting company.*



*Lieutenant-Colonel (later Major-General) James Burston.*

Burston's parents were James Burston (1856–1920) and his wife Marianne (*née* McBean), the daughter of a Melbourne jeweller. James was a versatile chap. He joined the family firm of maltsters at 14, worked his way up and with his brother took over management of the firm before their father's death in 1886. His brother George was a champion cyclist, when that still meant riding a penny-farthing with solid tyres. He held the 100-mile (161-km) road racing record with a time of 8 hours 9 minutes—a respectable time even on a modern machine with pneumatic tyres. In 1900 James was elected to the Melbourne City Council, a member of which he remained for 12 years, including two terms as Lord Mayor.

James Burston's chief interest, however, was the part-time army. He joined the Victorian Volunteers, a colonial militia unit, at the age of 17. He was commissioned as a lieutenant at 23, was promoted to captain in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion at 25, then to



major at 33 and eventually lieutenant-colonel at 39. His battalion won the Brassey Medal four of the six times it was awarded. This was an inter-unit award for marksmanship donated by the Victorian governor, Lord Brassey (the widower of the St John Ambulance 'evangelist', Annie Brassey; he served as governor 1895–1900). James Burston transferred into the new Australian Army at Federation. Although he was 58 when World War I broke out, he enlisted for active service, joining the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) for overseas service. Appointed colonel in charge of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, he led the brigade to Egypt in June 1915 for training prior to service on Gallipoli. The brigade arrived there in mid-September 1915, five months after the initial Anzac landings and three months before the final withdrawal. He remained on Gallipoli for less than five weeks, however, because the life there proved too arduous for someone of his age. It was his son, S. Roy, who had the unenviable task of telling him he was too old and unfit for front-line duty. Burston Snr. was withdrawn in mid-October and stationed at Mudros, the Anzac staging camp on the Greek island of Lemnos, 80 kilometres south-west of Gallipoli, where he became officer in charge of reinforcements. James Burston left Mudros for leave in London in February 1916 but unlike most of the Anzac infantry commanders he did not go on to lead troops in the fighting in France and Belgium. Instead, by now 60, he returned home to Melbourne, where he was promoted brigadier-general and placed on reserve. He finally retired from the army as an honorary major-general in January 1920 two months before his death from a cerebral haemorrhage and four months short of his 64<sup>th</sup> birthday.

S. Roy Burston was born on 21 March 1888 the fourth child of a family of four daughters and three sons. He spent his earlier childhood years living in 'Windarra', a bluestone house near the family firm's malthouse at the eastern of Flinders Street, Melbourne. The family later moved east to 'Carrical' in Mason Street, Hawthorn, a more prestigious address on the plateau above the Yarra River. From there the young Sam rode his pony each day to Melbourne Grammar School, in the parkland south of the Yarra.

Being from a family with military interests, it was not surprising that S. Roy like his father before him entered the part-time army as soon as he could. He joined as a boy bugler at the age of 12 in 1900 and served five years before quitting to enter medical school at the University of Melbourne in early 1906 after leaving Melbourne Grammar School. He had hoped for a military career but a heart murmur precluded that so he decided on medicine instead. While at the university he lived at Trinity, the Anglican residential college there. He completed the five-year course and graduated MB, BS in 1910.

## BURSTON'S EARLY PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Because he couldn't find a suitable position in one of the Melbourne hospitals, the young Dr Burston moved to Adelaide, where he became a resident medical officer at the Children's Hospital. He remained at the hospital for only a short period, however, because in 1911 he took a position as a medical inspector of Aborigines in the Northern Territory. The reason for this sudden move was that he'd fallen in love with an Adelaide girl, Helen Culross, whose mother refused to let them become engaged, see each other or even write to each other until she'd turned 21. He decided that being in Darwin separated from Helen by 2,600 kms would be more tolerable than being in the next suburb but unable to see her. Burston's main project in Darwin involved recording a standard set of 'anthropometric' measurements—height, weight, chest, limbs, cranium etc—his subjects being a sample of 102 Aboriginal prisoners in the local calaboose. It resulted in Burston's first publication, an official government report on the measurements he had taken. When the project

ended and after about a year in the Northern Territory, Burston returned to Adelaide by sea in 1912 and entered general practice in Henley Beach Road, Mile End, a suburb on the north-western edge of the city centre.



*S. R. Burston the medical graduate; age 21 1909.*

Back in Adelaide Burston linked up with the part-time army again. In October 1912 he was commissioned as a captain in the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC). He couldn't have known it then, but he would retain his connection with the Corps for most of the next 48 years, until the end of his life. From the outset it was probably obvious that S. Roy Burston was going to have a brilliant military career. He was good-humoured, gregarious and popular wherever he went; and he cut an impressive figure. At 6'2½" tall (1.89 metres) and weighing 12 stone 7 pounds (79.4 kg), he was tall, well-proportioned, trim and handsome, with blue eyes, a fair complexion and sandy-red hair. It was the last of these that had prompted his lifelong nickname of 'Ginger'.

The year after Burston returned from Darwin, 1913, he married Helen Culross in St Michael's Anglican Church, Mitcham, a south-western suburb of Adelaide. Their two bridesmaids, Helen's close friends, had obligingly acted as "letter boxes" during S. Roy's exile in Darwin, and so the lovers had been able to maintain contact despite her mother's ban on letter-writing. The Burstons lived where he practised in Mile End and eventually produced two sons and a daughter: Sam Jr. (born 1915), Elizabeth ('Betty', 1917) and Robin ('Bob', 1921). Both of his sons would eventually follow him into the army, Robin as a senior officer in the Medical Corps.

## WORLD WAR I

Burston enlisted in the AIF in Adelaide on 26 March 1915. Less than a month later, on 20 April, he was appointed as a major in the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Field Ambulance (4LHFA), a unit raised mainly in Queensland in June 1915. The unit departed for overseas service from Brisbane on 17 June aboard the *Borda*, a P&O passenger liner. Like other South Australians assigned to the 4LHFA, Burston joined the ship in Adelaide, departing on 23 June. After reaching Egypt, probably in late July, Burston spent some weeks training with the unit near Cairo. At first they were kept in Cairo because of the volume of work there handling casualties arriving from Gallipoli. Burston was then sent to Gallipoli, arriving there on 4 September 1915, and was then reassigned to the 7<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, another unit formed in Brisbane.

Like his father, Burston served on Gallipoli a relatively short time, less than eight weeks, before being withdrawn. In early October he fell ill with a fever later diagnosed as paratyphoid (type B), but seems to have tried to struggle on despite that. He was eventually admitted into the hospital at Anzac Cove on 29 October then sent back to the 15<sup>th</sup> General Hospital in Alexandria on 7 November. Nine days later he was sent to England for further treatment. He was admitted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital at Wandsworth, where an army medical board described him as 'convalescent but weak'. He arrived back in Egypt in mid-March 1916, but was not immediately assigned to a unit. After seven weeks languishing on the supernumerary list he returned to England, where he joined the staff of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Hospital (3AH) at the end of April. Following more than four months at the 3AH, he was again assigned to a field unit, the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance (11FA), which he eventually joined in France just before the end of the year, on 23 December 1916. Meanwhile, his family had migrated to England to be near him. They lived there until the end of the war, at first in London and later in the country after Zeppelin raids began making life hazardous in London.



*During the Battle of Messines Burston was in charge of the advanced dressing station of the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance. Stretcher bearers were in such short supply that German prisoners like these were dragooned into service by the Australian field ambulances.*

It was in France that Burston's military-medical career began gaining momentum. During the battle of Messines in Belgium in June 1917 he was in charge of the 11FA's advanced dressing station, action for which he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). Soon after this, and following seven months with the 11FA, he was appointed as the senior medical officer at the Australian General Base Depot (AGBD) at Le Havre, France, with the rank of temporary lieutenant-colonel at the end of June 1917. The promotion was confirmed three months later on 2 October. In mid-April 1918 he was appointed as commanding officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Convalescent Depot (1ACD), carrying out the responsibilities of this position in addition to his duties as senior medical officer of the AGBD. While still holding these two positions he was appointed to the command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian General Hospital (3AGH) on 22 November 1918, eleven days after the armistice. His next move was back to England in April 1919 as Assistant Director of Medical Services (ADMS) of the AIF depots in the UK. That year, too, he was mentioned in despatches and awarded his second major honour, the CBE (Commander of the British Empire). He relinquished his appointment on 20 August 1918 and after being appointed honorary colonel sailed for Australia with his wife and two children aboard the *Orsova* on 22 November. Back home in Adelaide his AIF appointment formally ended on 7 March 1920, just 19 days short of five years since his enlistment.

## BURSTON'S INTER-WAR YEARS

On returning to Adelaide Burston did not return to the private practice in Mile End that he had been developing for the three years immediately before the war. He had already sold it to a colleague who'd been repatriated earlier. Having been away from civilian medicine for 4½ years, he had difficulty securing a position because meanwhile younger doctors who hadn't been to the war had been snapping up the best jobs. Eventually he secured three positions, the first as an honorary assistant physician at the Adelaide Hospital, the other two at the Children's Hospital, where he became a medical registrar and honorary anaesthetist. He also practised obstetrics. Deciding to become a specialist physician, in 1933 he took his family back to the UK for a year so he could study for admission to the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. Passing the exams, he became a member of the college and returned to Adelaide, where he was appointed honorary physician at the Adelaide Hospital with rooms in the Gawler Chambers on North Terrace and also at his home in Robe Terrace, Medindie, a prestigious inner northern suburb. The next year, 1934, he became a foundation Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. His reputation as a specialist had meanwhile grown, and had probably been enhanced after being awarded the bronze medal of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia for rescuing someone from the surf at Victor Harbour in 1927.



*As Deputy Director of Medical Services for the Fourth Military District, Burston was head of the Australian Army Medical Corps in South Australia during the inter-war years. He is pictured here (tallest figure, centre of back row) with his fellow senior officers of the Corps during a training exercise in 1936.*

After a break of about 15 months in civilian life, Burston had resumed his part-time army career in the militia or citizens' military force. On 1 September 1921 and aged 33, he was appointed Deputy Director of Medical Services (DDMS), in effect head of the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC) in the 4<sup>th</sup> Military District, i.e. South Australia, with the rank of colonel. He retained this position until the outbreak of World War II in September 1939. As DDMS he joined the select company of the most senior AAMC officers. In his 18 years as DDMS he served under three successive Directors General of Medical Services (AAMC heads), Major-Generals Sir Neville Howse VC, G.W. Barber and R.M. Downes, and, as we shall see, he was to become one of their successors.

## BURSTON'S PRE-WAR LINKS WITH ST JOHN AMBULANCE

As well as establishing himself as a physician and senior AAMC officer, in 1935 Burston became a District Officer of the St John Ambulance Brigade. Possibly the District Commissioner, Dr S.L. Dawkins, had recruited him. Dawkins was an enterprising chap who was proving conspicuously successful in developing the Brigade from a handful of railways-based divisions into a State-wide organisation. During 1935–36, at the time of the tour of Australia by Colonel (later Sir) James Sleeman, the Commissioner in Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade Overseas, Burston served as one of Sleeman's guides; and in the months after Sleeman's departure he made a special trip to Sydney as the South Australian envoy to discuss with the St John Ambulance leadership of New South Wales the possibilities of forming an Australian Commandery of the Order.



Burston would continue undertaking such diplomatic assignments for St John Ambulance. For instance, on 27 August 1936 he was a member of a six-member deputation of senior officers of the South Australian Brigade District who met with the Minister for Defence, Sir Archdale Parkhill, to urge him to accept the Brigade as an official AAMC auxiliary unit. The deputation consisted of Dawkins as Commissioner, his District Superintendent (R.V. Bulman) and three District Officers (Burston, Dr P.G. Bice, A.E. McKee and Dr E.A.H. Russell, who in 1947 succeeded Burston as District Commissioner). It was Burston who stated the case to the Minister in these terms:

*Mr Minister, you realise we have not, in the AAMC, any reserve whatever and it is essential that we should have a reserve in case of mobilisation, to call on to support our hospitals, and this Ambulance Brigade is to my mind the one section of the community we can look to to provide that reserve of ready trained men and others ready to do medical work, and for that reason I think it is deserving of support and should be encouraged from the Military point of view.*

The delegation was not granted its wish. Instead the Minister referred the matter to his department, which soon advised him that through the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) movement the Brigade in New South Wales and Victoria was effectively a military auxiliary force already. Further, if the Brigade in South Australia wanted similar status all it need do was register its own divisions as VAD units.

## WORLD WAR II

When war came in September 1939, Burston was well placed for senior command. Now aged 51, he was at the peak of his professional career as a physician. He was also the most senior of the Deputy Directors of Medical Services in the six Australian military districts. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF began recruiting he enlisted immediately. He was appointed as a colonel and the ADMS of the 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Division on 13 October 1939. He was given the AIF serial number VX2, the second number after VX1, the number of General (later Field Marshal) Sir Thomas Blamey, the AIF commander. His appointment lasted for six months, until he was appointed DDMS of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Corps on 4 April 1940. Two months later, on 12 June, he flew out of Australia for Palestine to begin what would become nearly a two-year period of overseas service. Within a month Blamey promoted him to Brigadier (on 1 July), which made him the second most senior officer in the AAMC after the DGMS, Rupert Downes. Blamey and Burston quickly developed close personal and working relationships. That Blamey valued Burston highly became obvious on 28 November 1940, when he appointed him Director of Medical Services (DMS) in the Middle East. Some 2½ months later, on 16 February 1941, Burston was promoted to major-general, the same rank as the DGMS, Rupert Downes. Burston's achievements as DMS in the Middle East were many. His biographer in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* describes them briefly as follows:



*Burston, recently promoted brigadier, chats with his commanding officer, General Sir Thomas Blamey, Gaza, Palestine, November 1940.*

*Frequently seen at the front, he anticipated difficulties and took corrective action. Blamey relied on him and in July 1941 used his report on the health of Australian troops in the Tobruk garrison as grounds for the early relief of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division. For his services in the Middle East Burston was appointed CB [Commander of the Order of the Bath, 1942].*

Being 'at the front' in Burston's case meant seeing action with his medical units in Egypt, Libya, Greece, Palestine, Syria and later Burma and New Guinea.

Following the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941, which began with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and invasion of Malaya, Burston returned to Australia. He arrived aboard the liner *Orcades* on 14 March 1942. After a brief sojourn with his wife he went back to Melbourne to serve at army headquarters. In Blamey's wholesale reorganisation of the army in April 1942, designed to enable the US and Australia to pool their army forces to drive the Japanese from New Guinea and the islands further north, he was appointed DGMS, the eighth successive major-general to lead the AAMC since its establishment in 1903. Burston began his new duties with visits to the AAMC headquarters in the various military districts. In September that year he made his first visit to New Guinea, where the Japanese had advanced rapidly after their landings at Rabaul, Lae and Salamaua in January–March. Defeated at the Battle of Milne Bay at the tip of the south-eastern 'tail' of the island in August, they began their thrust overland towards Port Moresby along the Kokoda track in September. By the day Burston arrived in Port Moresby, 21 September, the Japanese had reached Ioribaiwa Ridge almost within sight of the town, but began pulling back several days later. It was the first of seven visits Burston would make to New Guinea over the next 22 months.



*Burston's official portrait as the Director General of Medical Services (DGMS) of the Australian Army, i.e. head of the Medical Corps, the position into which he was promoted in April 1942..*

As the Allied counter-offensive against the Japanese gained momentum during late 1942 and 1943, AAMC strength grew to an historic peak of 32,500 personnel. Burston therefore commanded the corps at its greatest historical extent. His biographer, Clerehan, summarises his principal achievements during this period as follows:

*His handling of the battle against malaria in the South-West Pacific Area was his greatest achievement. Ably supported by Brigadier Sir Neil Fairley, he ensured that measures originally proposed by Colonel Sit Edward Ford were thoroughly implemented. In March 1943 Burston adopted Fairley's suggestion and established the combined advisory committee on tropical medicine, hygiene and sanitation. Burston's appeal to Blamey led to the establishment of the Land Head Quarters Medical Research Unit at Cairns, one of the most important steps of the war taken in Australia in relation to malaria.*

Burston's interpersonal skills and great gift for leadership underlay the achievement. The ADB biography states the situation in these terms:

*Burston's personality and experience contributed to his success as medical head of the army, as did his ability to select and direct the activities of outstanding subordinates. While his advisers...were often technically superior to him, Burston was their natural leader and they knew it. He was [also] persona grata to senior members of the AIF. Because he could be trusted to keep a confidence, he was asked to be an intermediary in personal conflicts [among the AIF's generals]....A large and impressive figure,...Burston looked very much the soldier....While he liked the trappings of office, he was charming and approachable.*

That such a person should agree to be appointed the inaugural national Chief Commissioner of the St John Ambulance Brigade in Australia meant that the organisation was specially favoured.

## BURSTON'S POST-WAR CAREER

Burston continued on as DGMS for almost 2½ years after the end of the war in August 1945. In retirement he remained in his home town, Melbourne. His post-war career was a period of further achievement, varied contributions to the civilian community and accumulating honours. He had been promoted to Knight of Grace within our Order in 1944 and was appointed KBE in 1952. In 1945 he had become honorary physician to King George VI, having already become honorary physician to the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, in 1943. In 1945, too, he was appointed Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, London, the third royal medical college of which he was a fellow. In 1952 he was appointed honorary colonel of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, the honour that pleased him most of all. He spent eight years 1952–60 as the chairman of the Moonee Valley Race Club. He became a director of several companies, including David Syme & Co Ltd, publisher of the Melbourne Age newspaper, and supported various community service organisations. Burston died suddenly in August 1960 of an aneurysm at the age of 72 in the home he'd bought in Walsh Street, South Yarra. His three children survived him but his wife Helen, to whom he had been very, very happily married for 46 years, had predeceased him by a year. He was cremated after a service with full military honours.



*Burston's portrait by the artist Sir William Dargie. A print of this portrait is held in the Priory Library, Canberra. A photograph of the print accompanied the obituary for Burston in the Priory's 1960 annual report.*



## BURSTON'S ACHIEVEMENTS FOR ST JOHN AMBULANCE

By working as a key member of the national St John Ambulance leadership team during the first 15 post-war years, Burston helped ensure that the Priory of the Order, which for the first time brought together in a viable federation all six St John Ambulance State branches, became firmly founded. This in turn enabled St John Ambulance to emerge quickly as a truly national organisation. His practical achievements were many, but in concluding I'll focus on just these five:

- Burston presided over a period of modest but steady growth in Brigade strength, as noted earlier. In his first full year in office, 1947, national strength was 7835 (which was 4.5% lower than the 8202 of 1946). By his last year, 1957, it had risen to 10,608, an overall increase of 29% or average annual growth of 2.7%. (A half-century later we'd be happy if we could hold the strength steady at the 1957 level; and we'd be delighted if we could achieve annual growth of even 2% !)
- The present cycle of interstate first aid competitions began early in Burston's period of incumbency, although at that stage there were separate competitions for men and women and they were held in alternating years. The competitions did much to foster a common sense of identity and purpose across the Brigade membership. They also began serving an important quality control function in raising performance standards in first aid and patient care.
- The establishment of the new District, Queensland, was a significant achievement, gained in the face of the bloody-minded intransigence of the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade (QATB). The QATB was determined to keep out of the State any interlopers that might threaten its legislatively backed monopoly of ambulance services. To ensure that his St John Brigade gained a toehold there Burston chose well in selecting the foundation District Commissioner for Queensland: Sir Kenneth Fraser, who had been one of his AAMC colonels. A combative chap, Fraser had the necessary grit, tenacity and stamina for the job ahead. He courageously took on the QATB leadership and won, as Burston probably guessed he would.
- Most of the District Commissioners for the first 35 years of the post-war period had been Burston's AAMC officers. Here we think of luminaries like J. Arthur Sherwin in Victoria, George Stening (a later Chancellor) and Selwyn Nelson (a later Hospitaller) in New South Wales, J.R. Donaldson and Alec Dawkins in Western Australia (both later Commandery Lieutenants), E.A.H. Russell (a later Priory Librarian) in South Australia and Major-General Colin Gurner in the ACT (who came to the job on retiring as DGMS).
- Similarly, the next four Chief Commissioners after Burston had all been among his senior AAMC officers. They were Sir William Johnston, Sir F. Kingsley Norris, Colonel Douglas Donald and Colonel Gordon Young, that is all the Chief Commissioners until 1984. Similarly, the Brigade's inaugural Chief Superintendent in Australia, Colonel Alex Christie, had been the most senior of Burston's non-medical staff officers in the AAMC. Such appointments ensured that the Brigade was guided by outstanding leaders of vast military-medical administrative experience. The nexus between the AAMC and the Brigade existed before Burston's involvement, but through his influence it lasted for another four decades.

After 10½ years as Chief Commissioner, Burston demonstrated his commitment to St John Ambulance, the Order and the Priory by accepting the position of Receiver-General (treasurer) of the Priory in 1957. He held the position for a full triennium and was just two months into his second when he died. His sudden death came as a great shock in St John Ambulance circles. Something of this was evident in the obituary that appeared at the front of the 1960 Priory annual report, opposite a photograph of his portrait by Sir William Dargie. In part it ran as follows:

*The Order was indeed fortunate in having the services of so capable an organiser and soldier as Chief Commissioner from 1945 to 1957, and from 1957 as Receiver-General. ... So has passed from us a man who attained eminent distinction in many walks of life, and who possessed a high degree of personality and ability.*

What the obituary did not say was that by having lent St John Ambulance his great prestige, and having brought it authoritative leadership, he had helped ensure that the organisation had become a well loved national institution. Charitable organisations are fortunate when notable public personages take up their causes. When the notable public person is a Burston, an organisation can count itself especially fortunate. Bright stars like him are rare; more rarely still do they identify so closely with a voluntary association as he did with St John. A half a century after he left us we can be grateful to him (and his fellow Priory founders) that our organisation could rise to become a 'blue chip' national player among Australia's charities.

## OCCASIONAL PAPERS

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Most articles published in *St John History* have been delivered as papers to the annual seminars of the Historical Society or as reports at the Society's annual general meetings. As well as these, *St John History* occasionally publishes other articles relevant to the history of both the Order of St John and St John Ambulance. The following two articles are such 'occasional papers'.

**THE FIRST** of the occasional papers, 'Celebrating 125 years of St John Australia: 1883–1900', was the first in a series published in *One St John*, the monthly magazine of St John Ambulance (NSW). The series, written by Loredana Napoli and Betty Stirton, commemorated the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of continuous St John Ambulance activity in Australia, which occurred in June 2008. The first in the *One St John* series appeared in the March 2008 edition. The series is arranged chronologically, with each part covering a discrete period. At the time of writing (January 2009), nine end-on parts in the series have been published, the periods covered so far being 1883–1900, 1901–15, 1916–30, 1931–40, 1941–50, 1951–60, 1961–70, 1981–90 and 1991–2000. Each part in the series is written synoptically so as to fit across a double-page spread in the magazine; and each is lavishly illustrated. When complete, the series will comprise an excellent illustrated potted history of St John Ambulance in Australia from the earliest times to the present. The series is highly recommended to everyone interested in St John Ambulance history. Cadet leaders whose Cadets are working on the 'Knowledge of the Order' proficiency badge will find the series especially helpful as an interesting, attractive, comprehensive ready reference work.

**THE SECOND** of the occasional papers, 'St John Ambulance in Bendigo 1956–1994', began as an essay submitted to a competition for secondary school students conducted by the Bendigo Historical Society during 2008, in which it won the prize in the 'research' category. On 5 January 2009 it was published in *The Bendigo Miner* newspaper. We thank the author, Mr Jaan Butler, for giving permission to *St John History* to publish his essay. We also congratulate him on careful, methodical research that has resulted in a useful addition to knowledge of the history of St John Ambulance in regional Australia.

# CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF ST JOHN AMBULANCE AUSTRALIA

by Loredana Napoli and Betty Stirton

**THE AUTHORS:** Loredana Napoli and Betty Stirton are respectively the Archivist–Librarian and the Honorary Archivist to St John Ambulance (NSW). Both are foundation members of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia and both are members of its management committee. They are regular contributors to the Society's annual history seminars and annual general meetings. They have jointly contributed two previous articles to earlier editions of this journal.

Welcome to the first part of our keepsake feature on the history of St John in Australia. In this first instalment we look at how St John came to Australia and how the State branches were established. The history of St John in Australia begins with correspondence to Dr James Neild, who initiated the formation of St John Ambulance in Victoria. At the end of 1881, Dr James Edward Neild received a letter from Francis Duncan, the Director of the St John Ambulance Association at St John's Gate, London, advising that 'arrangements are being made for the extension of the practical and humanitarian work of the Association in Australia'.

On 2 June 1883 Drs James Edward Neild and Richard Warren had a pamphlet printed announcing their intention of forming a Melbourne Centre of the Association [now called Training Branch in Australia]. This publication detailed the necessary aims of spreading knowledge about 'the preliminary treatment of the sick and injured among all classes of Society'. Over 400 copies were sent out to leading citizens including professors, judges, parliamentarians, city councilors, 84 medicos and the editors of eight newspapers.

This is regarded as the foundation date for the Order of St John in Australia.

In the first two years, the Centre ran classes in Melbourne, Ballarat and Geelong, with 454 women and 136 men enrolling. On no account were mixed classes of men and women permitted.



The first page of the first instalment in the One St John series of 12 articles summarising St John history in Australia. The series commemorates the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of continuous St John activity in this country.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Major Arthur Carew Hunt, a member of the Association from London, gained the interest of various influential citizens to establish an Association Centre in Adelaide. This was held at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) on 15 December 1884 making this the formation date.

An 'introductory lecture' on the history and aims of the St John Association was held on 21 January 1885. Forty interested men enrolled in the first class held on 13 February 1885.

## TASMANIA

In early 1887 a group of local residents from Launceston, Tasmania, constituted themselves as a sub-centre of the Victorian Centre. As a result of a meeting held on 30 March 1887; the Victorian Centre accepted Launceston sub-centre. In the year 1887, 30 women and 23 men attended the first classes held by the sub-centre. On 16 September 1891 the sub-centre was recognised in their own authority as the Tasmanian Centre of the Association.

## QUEENSLAND

Brisbane Centre of the Association was established in 1889 with their first class held in that year and taught by Dr John Thompson. Reports describe injuries treated by people holding a First Aid Certificate included fractures of limbs sustained from collisions between horse carriages and dray.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

Dr Samuel Knaggs, a well respected member of the medical profession, encouraged the formation of the New South Wales Centre of the Association in 1890. (In 1881 Dr Knaggs had taught the first official St John Ambulance first aid course in Australia to workers at the Eveleigh railway workshops at Redfern, an inner Sydney suburb.) The first Annual Report of the Centre stated that 'the work of the Association has been extended and the usefulness is beginning to be better understood by the public'. As well as city and suburbs, classes were held in country areas and on board a naval training ship in Sydney Harbour. New South Wales made its most spectacular gain by introducing training to Sydney's industrial work force.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

In 1891 Mathieson Henry Jacoby arrived IN Australia from Adelaide. He wrote to, St John's Gate, London, requesting authority to form a Centre of the Association in Western Australia and received approval on 17 November 1891.. The first class was held on 3 March 1892 and consisted of 32 men. The Centre arranged with the Railway Commissioner for railway-men to wear a St John badge on their uniformsshowing their first aid qualification.

## BOER WAR, 1889–1901

Between 1899 and 1901 more than 16,000 Australian troops went to the Boer War in South Africa. As records show, New South Wales reported their involvement in the Boar War with members of the Association being granted leave of absence to participate in the war. Four prominent New South Wales members who took part were Dr Vandeleur Kelly, Lt.-Col. T.S. Parrott, Major T.H. Fiaschi and Dr Reuter E. Roth.

Female members of the New South Wales Association Centre organised the collection and distribution of 16 large crates of supplies and comforts to Cape Town. These included 'an invalid carriage, 54 tins of condensed milk, 48 dozen roller bandages, 40 pyjamas, shirts and nightingales, 14 bottle eau de cologne, 240 sticks of chocolate, writing paper and pencils, corn flour, cakes, wash soap, potted meats and 3 dozen bottles of 'forced march' tablets [tablets] as well as books and magazines'.

All members returned safely from the war in January 1901 and returned to the work of the Association.

## ST JOHN AMBULANCE IN BENDIGO 1956–1994

by Jaan Butler

**THE AUTHOR:** *Mr Jaan Butler is a member of the Bendigo Combined Division of the Operations Branch of St John Ambulance Australia. As explained above, this article began as an essay he submitted to a competition organised by the Bendigo Historical Society. In 2008 he completed his secondary education at the Bendigo Senior Secondary College. In 2009 he is spending a 'gap' year away from formal studies but hopes to return to full-time study in 2010. At this stage his preference is a degree in history at the Australian National University in Canberra, an ambition in which all Historical Society members will wish to encourage him. In providing his essay to this journal he explained how he came to write it as follows:*

During 2006 I started researching the history of the Bendigo Combined Division. I started at the St John Museum in Williamstown, and used local phone books and hearsay to find past members. The Division started in 1956 and was therefore reaching its 50<sup>th</sup> year. I interviewed about 10 members but got cold feet when I realised that steering around Divisional politics would be difficult—especially a huge dispute in about 1994 that caused the Divisional Superintendent and many members to resign. This year [2008] the Bendigo Historical Society announced a history competition for young people, and I thought I should enter. I wrote up what history of St John I could the night before, carefully stopping at 1990 so that it covers only the first 40 years. It won the 'Special Research Prize'.

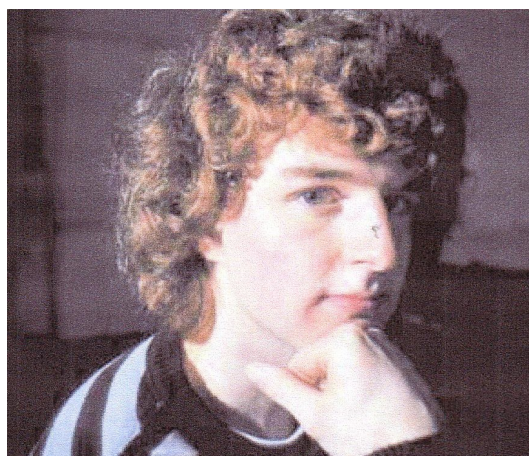
*In a subsequent interview with The Bendigo Miner newspaper, which published his essay in January 2009, Mr Butler indicated that the experience of producing it had taught him his first lessons in practical historiography. As the newspaper noted, 'In the introduction to his essay, Jaan strikes a chord common to most historians—the problem of not being able to tell the full story.' Mr Butler soon realised that various informants inevitably have their own individual recollections of any particular event and no two accounts of that event will entirely agree. The personality and motivation of each interviewee*



*will, moreover, colour his/her account of the event, with each informant recollecting 'with both truth and a good yarn in mind'. Perhaps another historiographical lesson was that organisations, like individuals, have 'personalities' and that these are periodically the source of friction and conflict. That Mr Butler has learnt well is evident in his essay, which now follows.*

**L**ike any community organisation, it is difficult to write a complete history of Bendigo Combined Division of St John Ambulance. Every member's version is slightly different, and all 'St Johnnos' past and present have stories of duties, patients and events that are told with both truth and a good yarn in mind.

St John Ambulance Australia has been running first aid classes in Bendigo probably since it began in Victoria in 1883. There are records from the turn of the century that show that local police were being trained by the St John Ambulance Association. Around this time, the local Australian Natives Association was also receiving first aid training. It would appear that these classes were run by visiting volunteers. The organisation, along with the Red Cross, had a role in both World Wars by creating the Volunteer Aid Detachments.



*The author: Jaan Butler, aspiring historian.*

By the early 1950s, Dr William (Bill) Straede was running local first aid classes. Dr Straede had been a member of the St John Ambulance Brigade since 1931 (in Melbourne) and had completed his medical training after serving in the navy. The classes must have been successful, because the Bendigo Combined Division was registered in 1956, with a Mr Knight as Divisional Superintendent and Dr Straede as Divisional Surgeon. The ten initial members had already earned varying degrees of first aid medallions. At a time when the organisation was mostly segregated into 'ambulance' (male-only) and 'nursing' (female-only) Divisions, the Division included both male and female members right from the start.

Despite the tolerance of mixed adult Divisions, mixed Cadet Divisions were still unknown in Victoria. According to Straede, this made a Cadet Division difficult to start, as boys, girls and adults had to meet separately and have their own staff. Despite these problems, an ambulance Cadet Division was rustled up- William Murley was Superintendent, and his sons, along with Straede's, seem to have been the initial members. The Murleys came from Sebastian, north of Bendigo, and the Division may have met there in its early years. Upon Murley's death in 1966, the Division established an award in his honour.

The nursing Cadets had to wait. Their Division began with Enid Russell as superintendent and was active by the mid-1960s.

The new Bendigo Division met in the ANA hall in View Street for training and had little money for anything else. Members would patrol public events on foot, carrying their own first aid kits and wearing anything black and white. One of the Division's early duties was to attend movies at the Princess Theatre. The members got a free movie in return for looking after the crowd. By the early 1960s the Division was attending the Easter Fair. Members from Melbourne and further afield would be billeted with St John members around town. One photograph shows over 40 members on parade at the hall, presumably for this event. Nursing members were in charge of food, supervised by the mother of Horace Patterson, sometime Divisional Superintendent. Enid Russell remembers the wrath when she sliced the cheese instead of grating it!



*The St John Ambulance hall, Bendigo, Victoria.*

With the Division becoming bigger and the demolition of the ANA imminent, attention turned to the acquisition of a building. It was decided to build a hall on a piece of crown land at the corner of Cedar and High Streets, Golden Square. A target of £9000 was set and fundraising began. The '1st International Science Exhibition' was held at the Bendigo Town Hall for a week with much success, followed by another exhibition at the YMCA. The obligatory raffle also took place, followed by another to make up for the debacle of the first one after the prizes didn't arrive. These efforts were supplemented by significant private donations. The resulting building now forms the front half of the

present hall. In order to build the hall, part of a small creek had to be filled in, with hopes expressed that the creek would eventually be covered over. This is yet to happen. The hall was designed by the brother of Bob Coakes (Divisional Officer) and wired by Bob himself. The first sod was turned by a St John dignitary, and warranted a *Bendigo Advertiser* photo of the crowd. The Superintendent, William Russell, was there along with Dr Straede, Bob Coakes and Bob Beasy. Councillors Albert Roy (Divisional President) and Dick Turner were also there. The opening took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 1966, with Colonel Douglas Donald, then Victorian Commissioner, presiding. Divisions from the area gathered for a march-past before the ceremony. A photo of Dr Straede was hung to recognise his role in building the hall, and an Australian flag and portrait of the Queen were presented to the Division.

Despite the acquisition of the new hall, the Division still had problems in getting members to travel into town. A short-lived Section existed in Eaglehawk during this time, but floundered without a Divisional Surgeon. More successful was the Marong Division, which quickly found a niche as a search and rescue Division. A search and rescue squad was formed in Bendigo in 1967 and was presented with a Ford F500 van by Rotary. It existed for long enough to run a demonstration at Easter by winching Alec Burns down the front of the present Cahill Chambers on a stretcher. The role of Search and Rescue Divisions was eventually taken over by the State Emergency Service.

About the time that the hall was built, the Division acquired its first vehicle. A Kombi van was fitted out as an ambulance complete with a white cross in carpet on the floor. The vehicle was temperamental and unsuited to travelling any distance. Private cars would also be used. Later on, the Division became the owner of a Dodge, a vehicle that was no doubt a saviour in its early years, but which became a source of embarrassment to self-conscious Cadets many years later.

In 1967 Bob Beasy became Divisional Superintendent, a position that he would hold for 20 years. In the 1967 *White Cross* (the Victorian St John Ambulance journal) he reported that the members were 'working well together, but there is still room for improvement.' He is probably alluding to the apparent instability of the Division up to this point. Superintendents had never stayed long, with at least five in the first 10 years. In contrast, the Cadet Divisions were small but steady, with Jim Knopp and Vi Togno both being long-serving superintendents during this time.

By the late 1960s, the Division was not as isolated as it once was. Divisions had sprung up in Castlemaine, Marong and Charlton and were for the first time grouped into a Corps that spread from Broadford to Maryborough.

One of the Division's longest-running duties was to support the Bendigo Hospital. Members would sterilise instruments and help out with odd jobs. In early years, members could be on duty from midday and into the night, but later on people would typically 'clock on' at about 7pm. St John continued to help at the hospital in this way until the late 1980s. Members also used to help out with civil ambulances.

Cadets have always had a vital but restricted role in the organisation, making up significant numbers but generally not treating major injuries. Cadets from this time remember ruling up casualty forms- a job that is now mercifully done by printers. Other than duties, the Cadet program included the traditional badges, camps and competitions. Ambulance Cadets met on Fridays (alternating with the adults) whilst the nursing Cadets met Saturday mornings. Bendigo was represented in first aid competitions, with the state championships being run at Victoria Hill in 1978. The Division was also visited by Cadets from Adelaide. One year, the Adelaide Cadet Band marched in the Easter parade. By the late 1970s, Eric and Jean Perkins were running the Cadets. The Cadet Divisions were eventually combined with Jean as Superintendent.

By the 1970s the Division had established its lean towards attending motor sports. At various times, the Division has been a regular at the Ravenswood motocross, drag racing at Heathcote, Tooleen and Bagshot, go-karts in various places and 'Speedway'. Thus, unlike metropolitan duties where members get regular practice at treating all sorts of conditions, in Bendigo members have usually either treated cuts or serious spinal injuries, with little in between. The Easter Fair, traditionally the Division's biggest duty, also clashes with the long-running state Cadet camp, as so many Bendigo Cadets have explained to their Melbourne companions over the years.

Bendigo Division has attended many natural disasters and emergencies as part of St John Ambulance. Every summer, members have volunteered for the first aid posts that spring up around bushfires and firemen. In 1983, Ash Wednesday was a memorable experience for many. St John was also at the Sunbury Pop Festival. An unusual duty was the Broadford Hell's Angels concert. In 1984, no-one wanted to do the duty until Bob Beasy pointed out that the concert was the 'final word' after a fight between gangs at Newcastle. Two members went along and ended up coming back every year for 10 years. They were both petrified and tell of treating horrific injuries. Interestingly, a photo of Princess Diana arriving in Bendigo shows a St John Cadet opening the door.

Bob Beasy retired in 1987 and was replaced by Gordon Isaacs. Beasy had been made an Officer of the Order of St John for his services and had led the Division for the longest period of any superintendent. He returned to the Division after the rules about retirement were relaxed and was highly respected both within the Division and further afield.

In the early 1990s the Division unquestionably peaked. In 1990, it was noted that given Isaacs was effectively operating both the adult and Cadet Divisions, and it was recommended that they amalgamate as a 'family' Division. Four ambulances and a bus were in use nearly constantly. Over the years, the hall had doubled in size, now consisting of two separate meeting halls, a garage and offices. A Cadet team won the state first aid championships and were only stopped from attending the national competition by the cost. The rise of the Cadet Division was significant, as, like most youth organisations, St John Cadets have declined considerably since the entertainment revolution of the 1970s and 1980s.

Since 1994, the St John hall in Golden Square has been refurbished. The hall now hosts the Division as well as being a training centre and a base for the community care branch of St John. The hall remains one of the best St John Ambulance facilities in the state. Bendigo Combined Division celebrated 50 years of service in 2006.

## GLOSSARY

### Organisations

**St John Ambulance Australia (SJAA):** The umbrella St John organisation that has existed since 1987.

**St John Ambulance Association:** The group who provided first aid training to the public. Now the Training Branch of SJAA.

**St John Ambulance Brigade:** A group of uniformed volunteers who provided first aid services at events. Now the Operations Branch of SJAA.

### Units

**Corps:** The level of administration between the Divisions and state administration. Now known as a **Region**.

**Division:** The local unit of the Operations Branch.

**Section:** The smallest local unit in the Operations Branch; usually a part of a Division.

### Officers

**Divisional Superintendent:** Person in charge of a Division.

**Divisional Surgeon:** A qualified doctor attached to the Division. Now Divisional Medical Officer.

### Slang

**Duty:** An event attended by St John members (i.e. they are 'on duty')

**Vehicle:** An ambulance.

## REFERENCES

**Bendigo Branch ANA Minutes 1870s-1980s** (held by Australian Unity, South Melbourne). Mentioned early involvement by St John Ambulance in Bendigo

**White Cross**, Magazine of the St John Ambulance Brigade (accessed at the St John Ambulance Museum, Williamstown).

The Division was, thankfully for me, a regular contributor. The magazine provided regular reports about divisional activities during the 1950s and 1960s. Promotions were also advertised in this journal, making it possible to track divisional staff during this time.

**Bendigo Division Records** (accessed at the St John Ambulance Museum, Williamstown). This collection contains a wide variety of information, including divisional inspection reports from the late 1980s and early 1990s, which include comments on numbers and morale. It also includes correspondence from this period, shedding light on divisional politics.

**Bendigo Division Records** (held at Bendigo). The division possesses the 'BF1' form which registered the division in 1956.

The divisional role book goes back to the 1980s and shows promotions and numbers. The division also has records of hospital visits, a visitor book from the opening of the hall and trophies and pennants from past first aid competitions.

**Interviews.** The majority of the research for this history was by interviewing current and former members of St John Ambulance, including: Janine Cole, Ross and Jenni Barkla, Dr W. Straede KStJ, Jim Knopp SBStJ, Gary Wyatt SBStJ, Jean Perkins, Norm and Enid Russell, The Leversha Family, Malcolm Cannan, Bruce Strachan, Doug Murley, George Trezise. I began writing the history by looking up the names of the 1966 officers in the phone book, as their names were on Dr Straede's photo. These members were able to give me impressions of their time at the division and fill in any loose ends. Where possible, I have crosschecked any information and have tried to rely on more than one source to make any particular claim. The interviews were conducted during 2006.

**Howie-Willis, Ian.** *A century for Australia: St. John Ambulance in Australia, 1883-1983.* (Canberra, Priory of the Order of St John in Australia, 1983).. A detailed history of the national organisation. It mentions early work by the St John Ambulance Association in Bendigo, and also allows some comparison between the local division and the organisation as a whole.

**The Bendigo Advertiser:** The opening of the hall in 1966 conveniently made front-page news. Various ex-members have furnished articles from over the years that chronicle the life of the division.

**Some thanks:** I would like to thank the following people and groups for their assistance in finding information: the late Dr W Straede KStJ, Jim Knopp SBStJ, Gary Wyatt SBStJ, Jean Perkins, Norm and Enid Russell, The Leversha Family, Malcolm Cannan, Bruce Strachan, Doug Murley, George Trezise; the St John Ambulance Australia Museum, Williamstown; Janine Cole (former member of Marong Division), Ross and Jenni Barkla (former members of Bendigo Combined Division).

## STATE, TERRITORY & NATIONAL REPORTS

This section of the Journal contains reports from the State/Territory branches of the Society. The reports herein were originally submitted to the Society's seventh Annual General Meeting, held at the St John Ambulance Museum, Unley, Adelaide, on 20 June 2008.

This section begins, however, with a general report on the Society's activities that is published in the 'Priory Annual Report' for 2008. Otherwise known as the *Annual Report 2008* of St John Ambulance Australia.

### *Priory Annual Report 2008*

by Dr Ian Howie-Willis (Priory Librarian)

For the past five years, the Historical Society has been given its own page in the 'Priory Annual Report' also known as the *Annual Report of St John Ambulance Australia*. As Priory Librarian and also Historical Society Secretary, one of my duties is to write this page, which I generally use to summarise the Society's significant developments. Unfortunately, not all Historical Society members receive this annual report, which is distributed to members of the Chapter of the Priory in Australia of our Order. As the Historical Society's page is of interest to all our members and not just those who are members of the Chapter, the contents of the page are reproduced below.

#### CONTENTS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S PAGE

*During 2008 the Historical Society enjoyed its most successful since its formal establishment 9½, 8½ or 7½ years ago. Which year was actually the foundation year is problematic. It depends on the year from which one counts: 1999, when the former Priory History Group coalesced following the abolition of the Priory Library Committee; or 2000, when the Group decided to constitute itself formally as an historical society; or 2001, when the Board of Directors approved the Society's draft constitution. But as we have used the last of these years for annual reporting purposes, we can say that the Society has experienced its best year in 7½.*

*Key developments during 2008 were, briefly, as follows:*

- *Our membership reached 200.*
- *We adopted a new logo (see below).*
- *We operated for our first full calendar year as a constituent part of St John Ambulance Australia, having formerly been structurally separate.*
- *Our committee circular was reborn as a quarterly newsletter for the general membership, taking the title Pro Utilitate ('for service': borrowed from one of the Order's Latin mottoes).*
- *Volume 7 of our annual journal, St John History, released in May, has been our most impressive to date. Designed for the first time by the National Manager Publications (Shirley Dyson), its front cover featured the official portrait of the former Chancellor (Professor Willis Marshall). by the artist Evert Ploeg.*
- *We conducted our tenth annual history seminar and eighth annual general meeting during the National Conference in Adelaide.*
- *During the National Conference we sponsored the launch of Vince Little's book Candle of Hope, an account of efforts made by Australian ambulance officers (many with St John links) to establish an ambulance service in East Timor.*



- For the third successive year we presented the 'Mark Compton Prizes' to the Cadets who had completed the best project work for the 'Knowledge of the Order' proficiency badge.
- In his guise as Priory Librarian, our Secretary played a key role in transferring the Priory's library and heritage collection from the former national headquarters building to the new premises of the Australian Office at The Realm Hotel.

*Considering the above points together, readers will agree that during 2008 the Historical Society succeeded in fulfilling its self-ordained brief for 'preserving and promoting the St John heritage'.*

*In presenting this report I thank all our members who toiled to make 2008 such a successful year. In particular I thank our President, Dr Harry Oxe, for his wise counsel and enlightened leadership and our immediate past President, Dr Brian Fotheringham, for his efforts to make a success of our gathering in Adelaide. I also thank our Patron (Professor Willis Marshall), the Chancellor (Dr Neil Conn), the former Priory Secretary (Len Fiori) and his successor (Ms Margaret Morton) and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Peter Le Cornu) for their interest and encouragement. We are most fortunate to have enjoyed their continuing support.*

## **New South Wales Archives and Library**

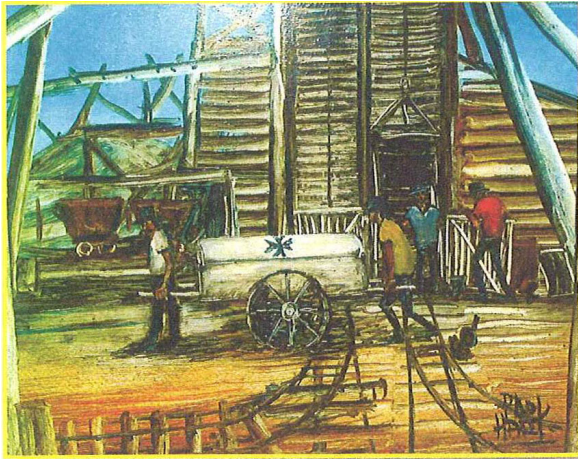
by Betty Stirton (Honorary Archivist) and Loredana Napoli (Archivist and Librarian)

**ST JOHN LIFE SAVING MEDAL:** Mr James Cheshire of Melbourne sought information re the St John Life Saving Medals presented in New South Wales. The first were on 13 August 1919 a Silver Medal to Frederick Zahra and a Bronze to Frederick Martyn. These were for Acts of Bravery at the Mortlake Gas Works in rescuing men imprisoned in a Gas Still. The medals were presented by Sir Walter Davidson Governor of New South Wales at Government House Sydney, on 26 June 1920. On the 21 September 1946 a Bronze Medal was awarded to Gordon Knowles of St George Ambulance Division for Act of Gallantry. An aeroplane crashed and burst into flames into the George's River (Sydney). Private Knowles rushed over on his motor-cycle and plunged into mud and water covered with burning petrol. He recovered two bodies before he collapsed from severe burns himself. He was presented with his Medal by the Lieutenant of the Commandery of the Order in Australia, Group-Captain H.R.G. Poate.

On 23 March 1957 Gregory William Peters of Paddington-Woolahra Ambulance Division was awarded a medal (we do not know if it was a silver or bronze medal) for going to the assistance of a man who had been attacked and knocked down in the street at Paddington. While examining the patient, he was menaced by the victim's attacker, who produced a gun and threatened him. Private Peters grappled with the man and was able to wrest it from him, and the man was later arrested.

**MENIN GATE MEMORIAL:** Stephen English General Manager, St John Ambulance Supplies (UK), has an historical interest in St John personnel who lost their lives while serving with the armed services during World War 1. In May 2008 Stephen and many others made a pilgrimage to the Menin Gate Memorial in Belgium to lay wreaths marking the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in memory of the St John Ambulance members. His list of 19 Australian names comes from a section of the Roll of Honour kept in a glass case in the Chapter Hall at St John Gate. Unfortunately only the initials and not the full first/second names were listed. The Annual Returns from 1903 to 1920 only required initials. Stephen sought our help in producing their full names. Of the 19 names, 14 are from New South Wales. We were also able to supply the names of 2 other members who were not listed.

**120 YEARS OF BROKEN HILL TRAINING REGION:** In 1885 St John Ambulance Association was formed in South Australia. Arthur Hunt, a British Army Major attached to the South Australian Military force, had been a member of St John in England and became the first secretary of the Adelaide Centre. In the same year Broken Hill Proprietary Company commenced mining in Broken Hill. Arthur Hunt in 1888 travelled to Broken Hill to encourage the mine managers to start a sub-centre attached to South Australia. Unfortunately we do not have the records of the Broken Hill classes registered in Adelaide. In 1890 the NSW Centre formed and Arthur Hunt, now residing in NSW, became a foundation member of the NSW Centre. By 1896 classes held in Broken Hill were registered in NSW for both males and females. On 26 July 1975 the Broken Hill Training Centre opened. 'Pro Hart' presented a painting and it is placed in the entrance foyer of the building. 25 May 2008 Broken Hill Training Region celebrated 120 years of service and was presented with a plaque presented by John Spencer, NSW Training Branch Chairman.



'The Ambulance circa 1900', from the original oil painting by the late Pro Hart MBE SBSJ.

**KEEPING ARCHIVES 3<sup>rd</sup> EDITION AND KEEP IT FOR THE FUTURE BOOKS:** Photographs of various areas in our NSW Archive were requested for publication in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the text *Keeping Archives*. It is a practical guide which addresses real-life challenges of working with archival records as well as offering recordkeeping theory and concepts.

The text was launched in Melbourne on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2008. If members wish to order a copy we have order forms available.

Each State and Territory recently received a copy of *Keep it for the future* (a gift from our National Historical Society). This text provides basic archival principles and terms in plain English. Practical advice is provided on deciding which records to keep and how to store and preserve them.



Betty Stirton selects photographs submitted for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of *Keeping Archives*.



The One St John series of 12 articles summarising St John history, to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St John in Australia: Part 2 (1901–1915).

During the months of June and July at the Australian Museum Sydney, a visual display consisting of artifacts, posters and PowerPoint presentation depicting 125 years of St John in Australia is on display in the children's section. As the theme is Australian animals and wildlife our display incorporates treatments of bites and stings as well.

**125 YEARS OF ST JOHN IN AUSTRALIA:** As part of St John in Australia celebrating 125 years of service, each month until December, we are producing historical highlights to be included in our NSW *One St John* Magazine. We have some copies available or you can visit [www.stjohnnsw.com.au](http://www.stjohnnsw.com.au) to view an electronic version. In our *One St John* Magazine we also advertise the Historical Society Membership for renewal and new memberships.



The display commemorating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St John in Australia.

During the month of June St John in NSW has been displaying Street Banners in Martin Place and a giant banner on the Sydney Harbour Bridge to mark the 125 Years of St John in Australia.



*Street banners celebrating the St John Ambulance 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Martin Place, Sydney.*



*Sydney Harbour Bridge Banners.*

**CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION:** We would like to present two Certificates of Appreciation. The first is to Dr Allan Mawdsley in recognition of his contribution given during 125 year celebrations to St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) Archives by supplying images for our historical articles. The second is to Mervyn Goodall in recognition of his donations given to St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) Archives, which were two St John Ambulance NSW Brigade Band records from the 1950s. We would also like to give thanks to Roxy Cowie, CEO of St John in Tasmania, for historical information she has provided us for inclusion in our 125 history-writing project.

## ***Northern Territory Branch, St John Ambulance Historical Society***

by Pat King (Northern Territory Branch)

**GENERAL STATUS:** In 2007 a few of the members of the St John NT Historical Society decided to start meeting regularly to decide the future of the group. These meetings have been attended by Dr Alan Bromwich, Pat King, Frank Haydock, Glen Denmeade, Gwyn Balch and Alan Caust (by phone). Although it has been a slow start I think we have made considerable progress and have lots of ideas for future projects.



*Part of the happy throng who gathered for the Reunion Dinner of Northern Territory St John members on 15 April 2008.*

**REUNION DINNER:** On Saturday 15 April 2008 approximately 65 people attended a Reunion Dinner that was held at the Casuarina Club. The purpose of this dinner was to allow members of yesteryear and today catch up and reconnect whilst sharing those many stories of life in St John as well as antics that members got up too. The group included members who were volunteers, paid staff, affiliates and family members.



Awards presented on the night included:

- Glen Denmeade—'Earliest Joining Date': 1945 !!!
- Daryl McPherson —'The Jet Setter Award': Having travelled the longest distance (from Perth) to attend.
- Lucy Cooper—'Commitment Plus Award': For giving up a night at the dog trials she could attend the dinner.
- Jim MacGugan—'Most Organised': Jim was the first person to pay for the dinner.
- Leigh Radford—'Closest birthday to the dinner date'.

Short greetings were given by The Commissioner, Peter Poole, and the CEO, Ross Coburn. A written message was received from Brian Carnegie-Smith which was read out.

Dr Lionel Crompton spoke about his time in St John and this was followed by a number of comical stories from Gordon Bowman, Frank Haydock and Rod Hocking. There were old photos and a number of discussions as to who was who.

All members of St John from all areas of the organisation are important and make up the history the organisation. It is important that the members are remembered and their stories as well events are recorded. As a result of the feedback forms that were completed on the night we have decided to have an Annual Reunion Dinner, a Reunion Social and a number of Reunion Events spread throughout the year.

**FUTURE ACTIVITIES:** In addition to regular meetings we intend to hold monthly lunch meetings to encourage other members to participate in our activities. We have also planning another Reunion Dinner on 22<sup>nd</sup> November which will be held in conjunction with our Annual Volunteer Parade.

**PHOTOS:** We have started the huge job of collecting, collating and indexing photos. We have also started the process of having the photos scanned and put onto disc so we can start archiving and sorting them. The recent purchase and set up of a computer and scanner at Casuarina Centre will assist us with this process.

**MEMBERSHIP:** I am happy to report that we now have 25 financial members of the Historical Society in the Northern Territory with another four former members still to pay this year's membership subscription. This is a considerable increase from 2007 and I hope there will be more in the future.



*Steve Peers and Lucy Cooper at the 2008 Reunion Dinner of Northern Territory St John members. Mr Peers is the St John Ambulance Commissioner for the Northern Territory. Ms Cooper is one of the longest-serving St John members in the Territory.*

**DONATIONS:** We have had a 6 foot glass display cabinet donated and at this stage we have it placed in our centre at Casuarina. We are yet to decide what will be displayed in the cabinet.

**ARCHIVES:** To date there has been no archiving policy in the Northern Territory but it is certainly high on our agenda as we feel that it is vitally important to identify what aspects of St John life in the NT is necessary to preserve. Thank you to Betty Stirton and Loredana Napoli from NSW for assisting us and sending some interesting reading material. We would appreciate any assistance from other states in designing an archive policy.

**FUTURE AHEAD:** We intend to tackle these tasks:

- Increase membership
- Develop Archiving policies
- Continue scanning and cataloguing photos
- Find a premises or area suitable for storing documents and memorabilia
- Hold regular activities for members
- Continue providing articles and stories in newsletters and the Outback Ambulance Magazine



## ***History and Heritage Committee—Queensland***

by Beth Dawson (Chairperson)

**T**he History and Heritage Committee in Queensland meets quarterly with working-bees held more frequently, all are well attended.

**DISPLAYS:** The National Trust of Queensland organizes Heritage Week, this year the theme was “*Coming to Queensland*”. The St John History and Heritage Committee participated with displays at St John House, Brisbane over three days in May and a week long smaller display at the St John Centre in Townsville. An evening reception was held in Brisbane to open the display. During the following two days papers of historical interest were presented by three members of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia, the other presenter was a scientific researcher from the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the Royal Children's Hospital Brisbane, her topic was “*The history of first aid for burns*”.

The First Aid Services Superintendents' meeting in March a display highlighting the role of the History and Heritage Committee, the resources of the Library and the assistance available to Regions/Divisions, particularly Cadet Divisions was arranged. The new display spyder was used on this occasion to advantage.

A display the theme being ‘*St John Ambulance Cadets in Queensland*’ is currently on show in the Geoffrey Gray Cabinet.

**DONATIONS:** Donations this year have included:

- First Aid books and various St John Ambulance Association manuals, including a first edition of Australia First Aid 1969, first impression.
- Uniform items
- Bandages
- St John Ambulance Association Anatomy Chart
- Photographs
- Correspondence files of a former chairman, St John Ambulance Association, Queensland Centre
- An Order of St John Mantle and Tudor Bonnet
- Home Nursing equipment
- 8mm. and 16mm. film of St John Ambulance Brigade activities in North Queensland and First Aid teaching.

**THE COLLECTION:** Sorting, and documenting the collection has continued, cataloguing is the task ahead, as a new computer onto which the historical collection management programme has been installed will allow this to commence.

The resources of the State Library of Queensland's conservation clinics have been attended by several members who have received expert opinion and advice on specific items of the collection. This type of service is valuable and recommended.

**GRANTS:** Success with the Volunteer Small Item Grant application enabled a **FLEXIBLE DISPLAY SPYDER** to be purchased. Two other grant applications were not successful, on the ‘First Round’; one had been resubmitted on the recommendation of the Grant Committee. The History and Heritage Committee contests with the other Queensland St John Branches for successful outcomes, the competition is strong.

**ST JOHN HOUSE:** Space is limited not only for storage, display and working areas at St John House also for the committee's day to day needs. Renovation of the section of St John House purchased in 1981 has commenced. The committee has been responsible for ensuring all pictures and other memorabilia, usually displayed in this section are suitably wrapped and safely stored, in the Library. Two important items are currently being professionally restored as a result of the renovation.

A sub-committee has recently prepared a submission to the St John State Executive proposing that ‘Recognition of Early Volunteers’ be considered, this proposal recommends St John House rooms be named to honour specific early volunteers. The chairman of State Council has indicated the proposal needs detailed consideration; the outcome will be reported in 2009.

**RESEARCH WORK:** Many requests for assistance have been received and answered, these relate to:

- Past St John Ambulance members
- St John badges and insignia

- The Order of St John Life Saving Medal
- The order's mottoes
- Aspects of the history of St John Ambulance in Australia
- Identification of St John members in the photograph collection
- Queensland's sesquicentenary 2009 – Government House Sesquicentenary Book Project.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Committee members undertake responsibilities such as members of the selection panel for the Queensland Cadet awarded the Mark Compton Award for Knowledge of the Order, preparing articles for the quarterly *"One St John Newsletter"*, attendance at functions of other History groups as well as using their Information Technology skills to develop work sheets which assist sorting the collection. The committee membership has not changed since 2007. The adoption of the revised constitution of the St John Ambulance Historical Society of Australia will require some changes to the practice of the committee, in the future. The current financial membership of the Society in Queensland is 36, with five yet to renew the 2008 subscription.

## ***The Ian Kaye-Eddie Heritage Centre—Western Australia***

by Dr Edith Khangure (Librarian and Archivist)

**GENERAL STATUS:** The general status of the Museum and Archives is satisfactory with a major change to our cataloguing being implemented. Individual aspects of our work are described below and summarise the year's activities. We continue with our membership of Museums Australia.

**DONATIONS:** Donations this year include:- Photographs, cloth & metal badges, History documents, "St John around the World" teatowel, Bandages, First Aid & Home Nursing books, assorted SJAA manuals, Uniform items, St John Diplomas and Certificates, U.K. Journals, Biographical details, First aid and ambulance equipment, Tie, Shields, CSL venom detection kit, Laerdal dolls & mannequin.

A number of people phoned and offered to donate items, promising to bring them in. Often this has not eventuated.

A copy of "A Century for Australia" by Ian Howie-Willis and the 1940 Perth edition of "First Aid to the Injured" were donated to LISWA.

A disc of the 2007 Investiture was given to a member of the Order.

The museum donated a number of old wooden photo frames, advertising them internally & via the Museums Australia, W.A. website. All frames found a new home, some going to the new Australian Museum of Motion Picture Technology.

**ACQUISITIONS & PURCHASES:** New museum brochures, display artwork & one male mannequin were purchased. A number of books have been ordered. Purchasing a lite box for 1 display was considered but rejected because of prohibitive costs.

**LOANS:** Equipment and uniform from the museum were loaned to the Bullsbrook Sub Centre for a promotional display. All loaned material has been returned. Books were loaned to the Hospitaller in September and subsequently returned.

**RESEARCH WORK:** A number of requests for assistance have been received and answered from members of the public, SJAA subcentres, SJAA National and SJAA members. These have included: Ambulance vehicles, SJAA medals, Lottery West 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, History of sub centres (Wanneroo, Kondinin-Kulin, Jurien Bay, Bridgetown and Waroona), Past and present SJAA members – Ambulance, VFAS & Commandery, Source of photographs, St John badges and insignia, Air Ambulance, The Community Care Branch in W.A., The Ladies Auxilliary 1968 – 2008, The Fellowship of St John in W.A., The Roll of the Order in W.A. & the Commandery data base, Life Saving Medal recipients from W.A.

**CATALOGUING:** We are now using MOSAIC as our cataloguing program. MOSAIC is an Australian system designed for the management of historical collections made up of a combination of objects, photographs, documents, books, archives and artworks. It allows scanned images & digital photographs to be incorporated into the catalogue entries and is compliant with current privacy legislation. Both Dr. Oxer and myself attended a training course.

**RESTORATION:** No restoration work has been undertaken this year.

**MUSEUM PROMOTION:** Major changes to 4 displays have been made this year. Three themes have continued with additional artifacts and adjustments i.e the Air Ambulance, Bandaging & Envenomation. This was a joint venture with nine Curtin University students completing a cultural heritage/museums exhibition course.

A new display featuring commemorative ceramics was completed in November 2007 and will be on view until late 2008.

A brief history of SJA in W.A. has been included on our web site.

A strategic education plan is being developed with the aim of hosting school visits. A plan now exists and the next step is to talk to local school principals. This has been scheduled for August 2008.

The Museum provided material for the Edith Cowan University's open week to support the Ambulance Paramedic Course.

An offer has been received from the owner of a number of Perth shopping centres to display historical material and promote First Aid training. This is being pursued and may commence in August 2008.

An historical display will be provided for the QEII 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in August 2008.

**MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS:** Irene Simpson, John Ree, Barbara Franklin, Des Franklin and Frank di Scerni are working on specific projects. Much time this year has been given to our photographic collection and this work is ongoing. We also thank another honorary volunteer—Terry Walton from the UK—who regularly helps us with acquiring material we would not otherwise obtain.

**SECURITY:** We have no losses this year and are grateful for the WAAS for providing our security system and maintenance.

**VISITORS:** The centre has been delighted to receive visitors from South Africa, New Zealand, Canada and country W.A. as well as local members of the public and St John staff and volunteers—adults and Cadets. We have prepared a self guided tour brochure of the Heritage Centre and are trialing it until December 2008.

**PUBLICATIONS:** Norma Olsen produced a history of the Perth No 2 Nursing Division. An item on the Eye Hospital appeared in the Annual Report. The much delayed Historical Encyclopaedia of Western Australia with a feature on St John Ambulance is expected later in 2008.

**PROJECTS 2008–2009:** Cataloguing, Restoration work as required and as funding permits, Meeting any reference questions received, Preparing a schools visit program, Changing one current museum theme, Complete the self guided tour brochure, review our policy and procedures guidelines especially in relation to deed of gifts and counter disaster issues.

**SUMMARY:** 2007–2008 has been a busy year in many respects. Planning for future directions has been undertaken and we hope to see these plans advance in the next 12 months.

## ***Victorian Branch, St John Ambulance Historical Society***

**by John Blackstock (President)**

**I**n the twelve months since our last report there has been considerable archival work to preserve the records of various sections of our organization in Victoria and to make them more comprehensive. However, there are still many gaps and much more work is needed. The collection of books, documents and photographs has been boosted by donations from the estates of Dr William Straede and Mr Trevor Macfarlane and gifts from many other members.

The safety of the Museum collection has been greatly improved this year by the installation of continuously monitored smoke detectors and the provision of fire-resistant cupboards for storage of important documents and compact disks of digital images of our most important photographs. Plans for the coming year include more systematic digital scanning of photographs and the electronic storage of old membership records.

The development of St John Historical Society into a federal structure has been most welcome and there has been a noticeable increase in local membership. By the gracious decision of the Chief Executive Officer the local

administrative costs are subsumed into the annual budget of the Museum and members are not required to pay an additional levy. The Victorian Branch has regular quarterly meetings at which Library/Museum business is dealt with and there are presentations of papers on historical St John subjects. We believe this, together with the improved distribution of publications, will go a long way towards strengthening the interest of members in our heritage.

## ***The Australian Capital Territory & the Australian Office***

by Ian Howie-Willis (Priory Librarian)

### **ST JOHN AMBULANCE AUSTRALIA (ACT) HISTORY & HERITAGE SOCIETY**

**A**t the Territory level, in St John Ambulance (ACT), there is one significant development to report, which is that there is now an Australian Capital Territory branch of the Historical Society. The St John Council for the ACT approved the formation of this body at its May 2008 meeting. At the same time the Council agreed to the "Terms of Reference" for the History & Heritage Society. The Terms of Reference are in effect the Society's constitution. This very welcome development follows a long period of negotiation between the individuals responsible for promoting the idea of the Society and the Council. All parties to the negotiations had hoped that the new Society would be well established and running earlier. The main factor causing the delay was that we decided to wait until the national Historical Society's new constitution had been approved by the Board of Directors before pushing ahead to bring the local ACT History & Heritage Society into operation. Other events, mainly the reorganisation of the national Society's membership management system and publications program, then overtook us; and so it was only during April-May 2008 that we were able to bring our Terms of Reference to the ACT St John Council.

In reporting the establishment of the History & Heritage Society, I acknowledge the advice and support of the Council chair, Brigadier Peter Evans, and the CEO of St John Ambulance (ACT), Chris Ward. I am grateful for their encouragement as we negotiated the Society into being. Now that the formation of the History & Heritage Society has been approved, we expect to become active very soon. We will begin by holding an inaugural meeting of all those interested, hopefully during July. We will then appoint office bearers and arrange a program of further meetings and activities.

### **AUSTRALIAN OFFICE AND PRIORY**

Since my last report, in Canberra on 22 June 2007, my duties as Priory Librarian have continued as previously. They consist mainly of the following tasks:

- (a) Providing advice to the Priory Secretary, and through him to the National Board of Directors and the Priory Chapter, on matters relating to the Order's history and heritage; this role includes the preparation of correspondence on these matters and liaison with individuals who contact the Australian Office about such issues.
- (b) Generally fulfilling the function of custodian of the Order's history and heritage in Australia.
- (c) Maintaining the separate Library, Pictorial and Memorabilia databases.
- (d) Keeping a watchful eye on the condition of the materials in the Library, Pictorial and Memorabilia collections, and being 'pro-active' in pursuing opportunities for further developing the collections.
- (e) Making judicious purchases of items for the Priory Library, most notably new books on the history of the Order and St John Ambulance.
- (f) Receiving materials donated to the Priory's Library, Memorabilia and Pictorial collections and liaising with the donors.
- (g) Conducting and publishing historical research on topics relevant to the history of the Order and St John Ambulance, and facilitating the research of others.
- (h) Liaising with other St John Ambulance historians and providing them with advice, assistance and encouragement.
- (i) Establishing and maintaining contact with people in overseas Pories who have an interest in heritage matters.
- (j) Continuing in the role of Historical Society Secretary, which meshes closely with the Priory Librarian's duties, especially the task of promoting interest in the Order's heritage.

As I have reported fairly fully on the foregoing matters at previous AGMs, I won't do so again this year. Instead I'll refer to four specific matters that arose in the course of fulfilling the above duties:

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONSTITUTION:** Our President, Dr Harry Oxe, has already reported on our revised, federalised constitution and its effect in bringing us within St John Ambulance Australia. I am delighted with this development, which is to the great benefit of the Historical Society. I therefore wish to make grateful acknowledgement of the efforts of my fellow committee members, Drs Brian Fotheringham and Allan Mawdsley, for their part in revising the constitution. I also gratefully



acknowledge the encouragement and advice of the Chancellor, Dr Neil Conn, the Priory Secretary, Mr Len Fiori, the Deputy CEO, Mr Peter Le Cornu, and the Priory Solicitor, Mr Chris Chenoweth, for their part in helping us achieve this highly desirable outcome.

**PRIORY TIE:** As indicated in the most recent newsletter of the Society, *St John Heritage* no. 2008-2, I have spent some time and effort having produced a tie for the Priory which better indicates that ours is an *Australian* Priory than the tie it replaces. I had hoped to have the tie on sale at the National Business Centre stall during this Priory Conference; however, although a sample has been produced for approval by the manufacturers, A. Royale & Co, the order hadn't been completed in time for the present Priory Conference. In developing the design for the tie I had the valued advice of James Cheshire, one of our committee members from Victoria. I wish to acknowledge the hard work James put in devising a range of possible designs. I also acknowledge the advice and assistance of the Priory Secretary, Len Fiori, in persuading the Board of Directors to adopt the new Priory tie project.

**THE SELF-STYLED "SOVEREIGN ORDER OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM (KNIGHTS HOSPITALER)":** As also indicated in *St John Heritage* no. 2008-2, this self-styled "order" has been causing concern and has required prolonged effort on the part of the Priory to counter its influence. The "order" has been present in Australia in a small way for perhaps the past 30 years but has become much more active and aggressive in its recruiting tactics in recent years. Sadly, some members of our own Most Venerable Order have succumbed to its blandishments and have accepted "knighthoods" in it, for which of course they must pay. (The going price is about \$1300.) This is a major embarrassment for our Order and for those foolish people who have allowed themselves to be seduced by the flattery of the self-styled "order" concerned. I don't wish to say anything more on this subject than I said in the last edition of the newsletter, other than to emphasise that the said "order" is definitely **NOT** recognised by the five official Orders of St John, i.e. our own Most Venerable Order, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the three *Johanniter* Orders of Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. Members of the Historical Society should be alert to the activities of this self-styled "order", which are a great threat to the integrity of our own Order. If you hear of it attempting to recruit our members I would be grateful if you could advise me.

**NEW PRIORY HEADQUARTERS BUILDING:** *St John Heritage* no. 2008-2 announced the sale of the "old" Priory Headquarters Building on Canberra Avenue, Forrest, ACT, after 41 years. I am now able to advise that the "new" Priory Headquarters will be in leased accommodation in "The Realm", a new hotel, office and residential complex at 18 National Circuit, Barton, the next suburb north of Forrest. ("The Realm" is next to the famed National Press Club and about 500 metres north of the old HQ building.) The move into the new premises is expected to occur during August. Provision is being made there for secure shelving and display cabinets for the Priory library and museum collections. In addition, as Priory Librarian I will have office space, which will greatly facilitate a 'hands-on' role in managing the collections. I expect to be very busy in the weeks following the move, helping ensure that what needs to be displayed is accessible and that the collection databases are updated to reflect the changed location of the collections.

## **ST JOHN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

by Brian Fotheringham (Chairman)

At the Annual General Meeting at the end of 2007 Cliff Wright was elected as the Deputy Chairman, David Heard as the Honorary Treasurer and Lyn Dansie as the Secretary, to be assisted by Julie Marshall. With people of this caliber and with their continuing enthusiasm for, and enormous experience in St John, it is no wonder that the Historical Society in this State thrives. Our meetings held each month are well-attended and are a great social get-together as well as serving a useful purpose in preserving St John history.

During the year we have added a number of items to our Museum. The main acquisition has been a new display case in memory of the late Jean Tonkin. Two more quite different display cases and a number of archival boxes, albums, cards and plastic sleeves for storing photographs were also purchased. The building housing the Museum received a fire-safety upgrade.

As usual we found a number of quite historic items in the many donations we received. We were however trumped in this regard by no less an entity than the Vatican. Late last year it was revealed that the Vatican had brought to light documents relating to the trials of the Knights Templar that had been hidden in vaults for 700 years! You may be pleased to hear that copies of these documents are available ..... for \$9,322 each. We have not purchased any despite the generous support, financial and otherwise, that we receive from the Board of St John in South Australia and its Chief Executive, Mr. Peter Gill, for which we are most grateful.

As hinted earlier, some extraordinary stories emerged from our donations. Here is one. Frank Schembri was born in Malta and came to Australia in 1915. He purchased a shop near Port Adelaide and sold icecream and later a range of sixteen different

flavoured soft drinks. Each bottle of drink was embossed with the Maltese Cross, familiar to St John Ambulance personnel. Indeed Frank's second son, Joe, was a St John volunteer. He was on duty at Port Pirie at a motor cycle race meeting when he was struck down by one of the fast moving competitors on 10 April 1954. He died of his injuries leaving a wife and five young children. Fortunately not all the stories that emerge have such a sad ending.

A number of individuals and groups toured the Museum during the year. We were especially pleased to welcome to our meeting in October two former South Australians, who for some inexplicable reason moved to Queensland: Dr. Fred Leditschke and his wife Margaret.

Please take the opportunity to view our Museum at the conclusion of this Annual General Meeting. We hope you will find something memorable in your visit.

**POST-SCRIPT:** *On Friday morning 20 June 2008 the local St John Historical Society of South Australia played host to its national counterpart. The latter held its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting in the upstairs meeting room of the St John Ambulance Museum at Unley. About 50 people attended. At the end of the meeting the interstate delegates toured the Museum, guided by their South Australian confrères. They came away greatly impressed by the hard work to excellent effect done by their South Australian hosts in "Preserving and Promoting the St John Heritage". Thank you to the members of the Society in South Australia for your much appreciated hospitality; and congratulations on what you have achieved with your Museum.*

## INDEX OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN ST JOHN HISTORY, VOLUME 1 (2001–02) TO VOLUME 8 (2008–09)

Two iterations of the index are provided. The first is sorted alphabetically according to the titles of the papers published in the journal; the second is sorted according to the author's surnames. Please note that page numbers have not been given for the papers in Volume 8 because these were unavailable at the time of writing. The page numbers for these papers are set out in the Table of Contents above. Special thanks to Brian Fotheringham for suggesting the inclusion of such an index in this volume of the journal.

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Caesar-Thwaytes, Richard	The history of the St John Ambulance Brigade and Operations Branch in the Australian Capital Territory	7	2007–08	1
Caust, Alan	Too young to die: The sad story of a young doctor and his wife who perished on an errand of mercy in Central Australia in 1942	7	2007–08	22
Cheshire, James	Origins and continuity: How the Most Venerable Order developed in the period before the 1888 Royal Charter	7	2007–08	12
Cheshire, James	Service above self: An examination of the St John Life Saving Medal in Australia	8	2008–09	
Compton, Michael	The Australian Youth Council: 10 years old in 2008	8	2008–09	
Fahey, David	Liston's splint: A forgotten first aid technique	7	2007–08	43
Fahey, David	The self-inflating resuscitator: Evolution of an idea	8	2008–09	
Fogerty, Heather	Surgeon Manley VC: The first director of the	8	2008–09	

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Fotheringham, Brian	Links between the Children's Hospital and St John Ambulance in South Australia	8	2008—09	
Fotheringham, Brian	St John's Wort: A 'troublesome' weed	2	2002—03	21
Fotheringham, Brian	The father and son Commissioners of St John Ambulance	3	2003—04	31
Griffiths, Matthew & Schneider, Karen	A 'Knowledge of the Order' project with Cadets from two Sydney St John Ambulance Divisions	4	2004—05	69
Hamilton, Tom	The hill of Fechan: Torfichen, the Scottish preceptory of the Knights Hospitaller	6	2006—07	7
Howie-Willis, Ian	A gap-filling exercise: (1) Dan Brown, <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> and the Knights Templar; (2) A short history of the published St John histories in Australia	6	2006—07	63
Howie-Willis, Ian	Almost a royal tour: Lady Mountbatten's inspection of Australian St John establishments in 1946	7	2007—08	47
Howie-Willis, Ian	Annie Brassey's last voyage aboard <i>The Sunbeam</i> : Lady Brassey and the establishment of colonial branches of the St John Ambulance Association in Australia	5	2005—06	32
Howie-Willis, Ian	A short history of the published St John histories in Australia	6	2006—07	63
Howie-Willis, Ian	Dan Brown, <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> and the Knights Templar	6	2006—07	63
Howie-Willis, Ian	How the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service grew from St John Ambulance	4	2004—05	37
Howie-Willis, Ian	Jolly good show! Carry on: The St John's Gate emissaries to Australia—from Sir John Hewett in 1928 to Tim Everard in 1991	6	2006—07	33
Howie-Willis, Ian	The federal movement in St John Ambulance Australia	3	2003—04	35
Howie-Willis, Ian	Third Aid (or occupational therapy): Researching and writing <i>The Zambuks</i>	2	2002—03	35
Howie-Willis, Ian	Who was Australia's first St John Ambulance Chief Commissioner? A claim for Major-General Sir Samuel Roy Burston	8	2008—09	
Howie-Willis, Ian	Zam-Buk and the Zambuks: Brand names and nicknames and their place in St John Ambulance history	1	2001—02	14
Khangure, Edith	Publishing the history of Perth No. 1 Division	4	2004—05	58
Langdon-Orr, Cheryl	The Historical Society's website and its potential	4	2004—05	68
Little, Malcolm	The insignia of the recognised Orders of St John	5	2005—06	28
Little, Vincent	The Australian first aid organizations 1940—45: Precursors of the national emergency services	7	2007—08	35
Little, Vincent	The literature of First Aid: A history	6	2006—07	60

Little, Vincent	Thomas and friends: The Thomas splint	8	2008–09	
Mawdsley, Allan	An Australian record: The 25 years Major-General Rupert Downes spent as the St John Ambulance Commissioner in Victoria	6	2006–07	12
Mawdsley, Allan	Colonel John Arthur Sherwin: Commandant of Heidelberg Military Hospital and third Victorian St John Ambulance Commissioner	7	2007–08	29
Mawdsley, Allan	Conserving the St John heritage in Victoria	4	2004–05	34
Mawdsley, Allan	Lieutenant-Colonel George Horne: St John Ambulance first Commissioner of Victoria District, 1909–21	5	2005–06	2
Mawdsley, Allan	Sir William Johnston: Victoria's fourth Commissioner and the second Priory Commissioner	8	2008–09	
McConnell, Ross	Key commemorative dates for St John Ambulance Australia	7	2007–08	9
McQuillen, Pat	St John Ambulance in Alice Springs: A short history	2	2002–03	26
McQuillen, Pat	Writing the history of St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory: Part 2	4	2004–05	27
Napoli, Loredana & Stirton, Betty	Celebrating 125 years of St John Ambulance Australia	8	2008–09	
Napoli, Loredana & Stirton, Betty	Displaying the history of St John Ambulance	2	2002–03	23
Napoli, Loredana & Stirton, Betty	The 80 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Australian Cadet movement	6	2006–07	26
Oxer, Harry	A shocking affair: Defibrillation—a short history	6	2006–07	3
Oxer, Harry	Some history of First Aid, particularly in Western Australia	3	2003–04	26
Oxer, Harry & Khangure, Edith	The Volunteer First Aid Service in Western Australia: The first hundred years	5	2005–06	12
Pearn, John	Crosses: Symbolism and heritage—emblematic cruciform metonymy	7	2007–08	39
Pearn, John	Snakebite, Strychnine and St John: The evolution of pre-hospital care for snakebite victims	1	2001–02	11
Pearn, John	St John and Scouting: Conjoint links in the Australian centenary of Scouting	8	2008–09	
Pearn, John	St John medals and the numismatic heritage of pre-hospital care	2	2002–03	19
Pearn, John	St Luke and St John: The foundation and influences of the Good Samaritan in contemporary Australian life	3	2003–04	22
Pearn, John	The Dispensarium: The origins of the modern outpatients' department	6	2006–07	56
Pearn, John	The plants of St John	4	2004–05	30
Schilling, Ray	Rise and Fall? The St John Ambulance Service in South Australia	2	2002–03	28

Scurr, Wendy	The St John experience at Port Arthur	3	2003—04	16
Sturkey, Douglas	For the faith and in the service of humanity	5	2005—06	65
Wajs-Chaczko, Emil	St John Ambulance, young people and building social capital	6	2006—07	71
Willis, Pamela	How to promote St John heritage through a museum: The St John's Gate experience	6	2006—07	52
Wilson, Bill	The Territory Way: A work-in-progress report on the history of St John in the Northern Territory	1	2001—02	9
Wilson, Bill	Writing the history of St John Ambulance in the Northern Territory: Part 1	4	2004—05	24

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## ***‘Preserving and promoting the St John heritage’***

**FRONT COVER:** The cover displays the Historical Society's new logo, which was adopted at the Society's eighth annual general meeting in Adelaide on 20 June 2008. One of the Society's Victorian committee members, Mr James Cheshire, MStJ JP, is the designer. He based it on the 1907 version of the arms of the Commonwealth of Australia, with its seven-point Federation star, kangaroo and emu supporters and 'Advance Australia' motto. Unlike those arms, however, the central shield displays the arms of the Priory surrounded (left and right) by the emblems of each of the States and Territories. Also displayed are (top) the Society's previous logo of the crimson badge of the Order surmounting a boomerang and (bottom) a small Federation star. The new logo therefore subtly brings together the emblems of the Order, St John Ambulance Australia and the Historical Society to produce a distinctive, unique and historical heraldic device which emphasises both the Australian and federal nature of the Historical Society and its role in 'preserving and promoting the St John heritage'.

**For queries about membership consult your State/Territory Membership Officer, whose contact details are as follows:**

**Overseas & Australian Capital Territory:**

Dr Ian Howie-Willis  
Priory Librarian  
St John Ambulance Australia  
PO Box 3895 Manuka  
Australian Capital Territory 2603  
iwillis@ozemail.com.au

**New South Wales:**

Ms Loredana Napoli  
Librarian and Archivist  
St John Ambulance Australia (NSW)  
6 Hunt Street Surry Hills  
New South Wales 2010  
loredana\_criniti@stjohnnsw.com.au

**Northern Territory:**

Ms Gwyn Balch  
Secretary, Operations Branch  
St John Ambulance Australia (NT)  
PO Box 40221 Casuarina  
Northern Territory 0811  
gwyn.balch@stjohnnt.asn.au

**Queensland:**

Ms Beth Dawson  
Chair, History & Heritage Committee  
St John Ambulance Australia (Qld)  
PO Box 1645 Fortitude Valley  
Queensland 4006  
Hospitalvolunteers@stjohnqld.asn.au

**South Australia:**

Dr Brian Fotheringham  
President, St John Historical Society of SA  
St John Ambulance Australia (SA)  
85 Edmund Avenue Unley  
South Australia 5066  
foth@airnet.com.au

**Tasmania:**

Ms Roxy Cowie  
Chief Executive Officer  
St John Ambulance Australia (Tas)  
57 Sunderland Street Moonah  
Tasmania 7009  
roxy.cowie@stjohn.org.au

**Victoria:**

Dr Allan Mawdsley  
Order Affairs Officer  
St John Ambulance Australia (Vic)  
PO Box 573 Mount Waverley  
Victoria 3149  
mawdsley@melbpc.org.au

**Western Australia:**

Dr Edith Khangure  
Librarian & Archivist  
St John Ambulance Australia (WA) Inc.  
PO Box 183 Belmont  
Western Australia 6194  
Edith.khangure@ambulance.net.au