

Nine Hundred Years of Caring

An Introduction to St John

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The Priory of England and the Islands of
The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem

For the Faith and in the Service of Humanity



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FOREWORD

What is St John? Each of us probably has a different view based on our own experiences, but in practical terms St John is two quite different, but inseparable, entities: a Christian Royal Order of Chivalry and a major international healthcare charity.

At its heart, St John is best described by its original purpose, one that began in a simple hospice for sick pilgrims established in Jerusalem over 900 years ago – the idea that all those in need of care should receive it.

Since then St John has been a great many things. It has been the defender of Christendom, a great patron of Renaissance art and one of the largest landowners in Europe.

Throughout those nine centuries, two things have remained constant. They are neatly encapsulated in our twin mottos, **Pro Fide** and **Pro Utilitate Hominum** (For the Faith and In the Service of Humanity), which together emphasise the integral connection between faith and action.

St John has developed into a modern charity, always looking to the future, but ever mindful of our ancient beginnings.

Today St John is a global movement delivering first aid, care and similar services, through a dedicated team of over 250,000 volunteers and staff, in over 40 countries and territories. It is open to those of any faith, and no faith, who are prepared to share in its mission.

This guide has been prepared to introduce you to St John. I hope you find it useful.

Surgeon Rear Admiral Lionel Jarvis CBE KStJ DL
Prior of the Priory of England and the Islands
Chairman of the St John Ambulance Board of Trustees

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1 THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

Introduction

The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem – commonly known as the Order of St John – has a unique combination of features. It is an organisation which:

- stems from roots that began in the 11th Century;
- in its current form, was incorporated in the United Kingdom by a Royal Charter granted by Queen Victoria in 1888;
- is an Order of Chivalry of the British Crown;
- is by its constitution a Christian community;
- is one of five mutually recognised Orders of St John;
- is a major international charity, recognised at the United Nations, that carries on its activities in more than 40 countries; and
- has about 25,000 members worldwide and is supported by over 8,000 salaried employees as well as by 250,000 regular volunteers and numerous other supporters.

Objects and purposes

The key objects of the Order are:

- The encouragement of all that makes for the spiritual and moral strengthening of mankind in accordance with the first great principle of the Order as embodied in the Motto '*Pro Fide*'; and
- The encouragement and promotion of all work of humanity and charity for the relief of persons in sickness, distress, suffering or danger, without distinction of race, class or creed and the extension of the second great principle of the Order as embodied in the Motto '*Pro Utilitate Hominum*'.

Unlike other Crown Orders of Chivalry, the Order of St John is very much a working Order and this places special obligations and responsibilities on its Members.

Constitution and governance

The constitution of the Order is to be found in the Royal Charter, Statutes, and Regulations of the Order and Instructions issued by the Grand Council. Together these form the constitution of the Order.

There have been several Royal Charters since Queen Victoria granted the initial Charter of 1888. Royal Charters granted in 1955 and 1974 are currently in force.

The Sovereign of the United Kingdom is the Sovereign Head of the Order, and the Grand Prior of the Order is always another senior member of the British Royal Family. His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester has held this role since 1974.



In addition to the Grand Prior, the other Great Officers are:

- the Lord Prior (the senior non-Royal member who Chairs the Grand Council);
- the Prelate (the senior ecclesiastical member);
- the Chancellor (who is responsible for Order discipline and Honours and Awards); and
- the Sub Prior (who supports the work of the St John Associations).

The governing body of the Order worldwide is the Grand Council. The members of the Grand Council are the Great Officers, the Priors or Chancellors of each of the Priories, and the Order Hospitaller who represents the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group. In addition, some Chairmen of St John Associations attend meetings of the Grand Council as standing observers and participate fully in its deliberations.

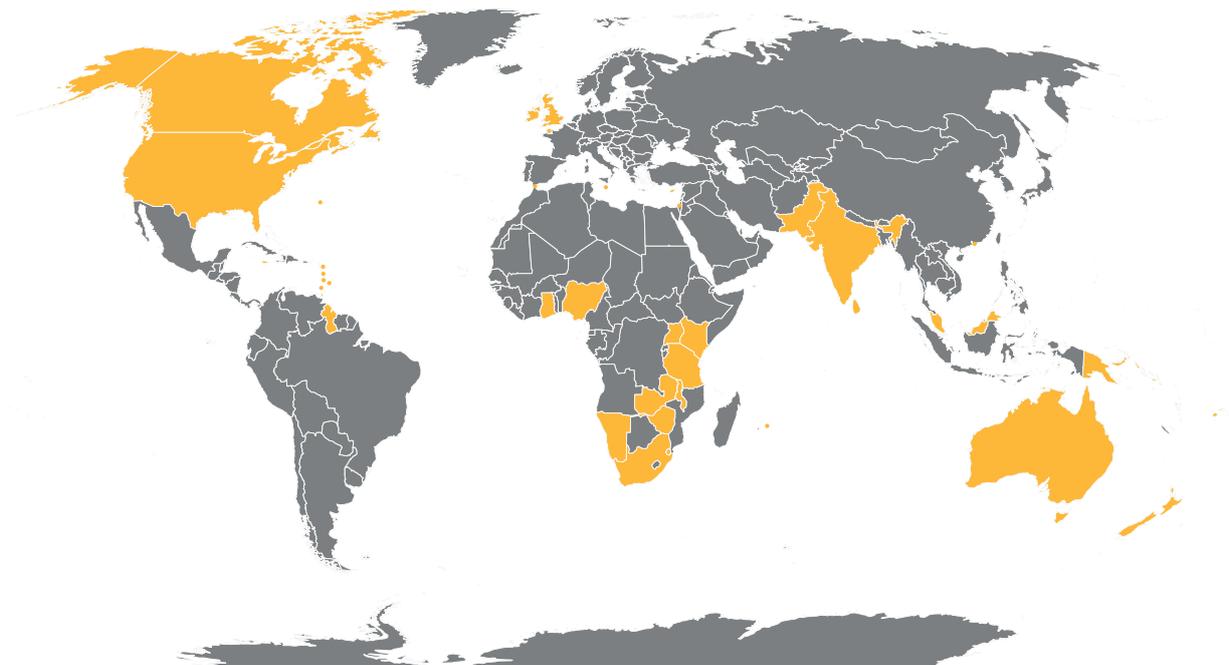
The Trustee Executive Committee comprises the charity trustees of the Order of St John for the purposes of the Charities Act and consists of the Great Officers and selected Priors or Chancellors who are appointed on a rotating basis.

The Great Officers, the Grand Council and the Trustee Executive Committee are supported by the Secretary-General, who heads a small headquarters in London known as the St John International Office.

St John Worldwide

The Priories, Commanderies and St John Associations each have their own constitution, known as Rules. They are subject to the Charter, Statutes and Regulations of the Order, but within that they have varying degrees of autonomy, particularly in delivering charitable services within their territory.

Very broadly, Priories are the larger and more established organisations of the Order; Commanderies are organisations within Priories with a significant degree of practical autonomy; and St John Associations are, with some notable exceptions, generally smaller organisations, although they play an important part in the role of the Order.



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The Priors, Commanderies and St John Associations are self-supporting entities and are collectively known as 'Establishments'. As of November 2018, there are:

a. eleven Priors:

- The Priory of England and the Islands;
- The Priory of Scotland;
- The Priory for Wales;
- The Priory for South Africa;
- The Priory in New Zealand;
- The Priory of Canada;
- The Priory in Australia;
- The Priory in the United States of America;
- The Priory of Kenya;
- The Priory of Singapore; and
- The Priory of Hong Kong.

b. five Commanderies:

- The Commandery of Western Australia¹;
- The Commandery of Ards in Northern Ireland²;
- The Commandery of the Bailiwick of Guernsey²;
- The Commandery of the Bailiwick of Jersey²; and
- The Commandery of the Isle of Man².

¹ Dependent upon the Priory in Australia ² Dependent upon the Priory of England and the Islands

c. 30 St John Associations — in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Bermuda, Cyprus, Dominica, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), Fiji, Ghana, Gibraltar, Grenada, Guyana, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

There is also an Associated Body in the Republic of Ireland.

The Priors, Commanderies and St John Associations generally carry out their charitable activities, which include first aid and first aid training, ambulance and rescue services, home-based care, maternal, newborn and child health care, and hospitals and care homes for the elderly, under the name of St John or St John Ambulance.

Specialised care activities have been developed to meet particular needs in different countries. These include a kidney dialysis service in Malaysia, a therapy pets programme in Canada and the Mother and Baby Programme across sub-Saharan Africa.

St John is also a major organisation for the training and development of young people.

The St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital

One of the Order's best-known Establishments is the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. Its holding company is a subsidiary of the Order.

Its modern 49 bed hospital in Jerusalem with operating theatres, specialist diagnostic and treatment rooms, and a busy outpatient department is the only provider of high quality eye care to the population of the occupied Palestinian territories. It also has the latest DNA screening for genetically inherited diseases.



There are also 2 well-equipped modern hospitals in Gaza and Hebron, a clinic in Anabta, and mobile outreach programmes on a daily basis to smaller villages in the West Bank and Gaza, frequently operating in very difficult conditions.

In addition there is now a walk-in clinic and Peace Garden at the Muristan, close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem, on the site of the original 11th century hospice.

The Mutually Recognised Orders

There are five mutually recognised Orders of St John, all of which come from the same beginnings.

These are:

- the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (www.orderofmalta.int);

And the four Alliance Orders:

- the Order of St John (www.orderofstjohn.org);
- the Johanniterorden of Germany (www.johanniter.de);
- the Crown Order of St John in The Netherlands (www.johanniterorde.nl); and
- the Crown Order of St John in Sweden (www.johanniterorden.se).

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta is the direct descendent of the original Order. It is an Order of the Roman Catholic Church and its Grand Master ranks as a Cardinal.

The Johanniterorden was previously an Order under the protection of the King of Prussia and is now recognised as an Order of Chivalry by the Federal German Republic.

The Orders of St John in The Netherlands and in Sweden are recognised by the Sovereign authorities in those countries.

All five Orders use the eight-pointed white Maltese (or Amalfi) cross, either by itself or with distinguishing features.

Each of the Orders is autonomous, but there is increasing co-operation between them, particularly at the practical level.

One or more of these Orders has a presence of some form in about 150 countries of the world.

2 THE PRIORY OF ENGLAND AND THE ISLANDS

Introduction

Before 1999, the Order – then known as The Grand Priory of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem – was directly responsible for both the charitable activities in England and for overseeing the work of the Order worldwide.

This situation was increasingly unsatisfactory and so the Priory of England and the Islands was established to manage the charitable work of the Order in England, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

This major re-structuring of the Order's constitution introduced the Grand Council as the international trustee body of the Order and removed restrictions as to nationality and religious belief in relation to full membership of the Order.

Governance

The Priory of England and the Islands is governed by the Prior and the Priory Council of Trustees.

The Priory Chapter is a consultative body, with representatives drawn from across the Priory. It provides advice to the Council and has certain legislative powers with regard to changes to the Priory Rules and the appointment of Trustees.

St John Ambulance is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Priory and exists to carry out the majority of the Priory's work in England. It has its own Board of Trustees who are appointed by the Priory Council.

Upon its creation, the Priory inherited St John's Gate and the Priory Church in Clerkenwell, which it maintains on behalf of the Order.

The Priory also assumed oversight over the Commandery of Ards in Northern Ireland, which is legally separate from the Priory. In 2012, new Commanderies were created in the Bailiwicks of Jersey and Guernsey and in the Isle of Man. The Priory oversees them in the same way as it does for Ards.

Objectives

The Priory's objectives are the same as those of the Order and the majority of its work, principally in the areas of first aid, care and young people, is carried out by St John Ambulance.

The other activities of the Priory are:

- the maintenance of the traditions and integrity of the Order;
- honouring those who have faithfully served the Order;
- the upkeep of the historic buildings and the Museum;
- supporting the St John Eye Hospital Group;
- supporting smaller St John Associations overseas; and
- other charitable activities in the service of humanity, such as the Organ Donor Award.

These activities are carried out by volunteers and staff in St John's Gate and through a large network of County Priory Groups, made up of local volunteers, who act as ambassadors for St John.

Charitable Activities

St John Ambulance

Information about the history of St John Ambulance can be found in Chapter 3.



Each year, over 250,000 people learn lifesaving skills with St John Ambulance, either through their workplace, or through charitable work in communities around the country, while over 250,000 young people learn first aid thanks to St John Ambulance resources. St John Ambulance teaches first aid to more people than any other organisation in the UK.

Over the years, St John Ambulance volunteers have played a vital role in safeguarding others and preventing loss of life in communities around the country. 100,000 people a year are treated at events, and more than 80,000 patients are transported to and from hospital. Community First Responders attend many thousands of local emergency calls, providing lifesaving first aid in the crucial minutes before the arrival of an ambulance.

St John Ambulance offers a broad range of volunteering opportunities, based on its core activities of teaching lifesaving skills to the public and delivering first aid at events.

Its volunteer roles not only deliver assistance and support to local communities but also offer lifelong learning and personal development to people of all ages.



Over 10,000 young people aged 18 or below learn first aid, teamwork and leadership skills in Badgers (for 7-10 year olds), and Cadets (for 10-18 year olds). Many of them go on to serve their community as adults, either through university based student groups, or a wide range of adult volunteer roles.

St John Ambulance also campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of first aid, and to provide the public with free information on commonly needed life saving techniques.

A free iPhone app has been downloaded over 200,000 times, while each year online training videos receive over 500,000 views.

County Priory Groups

The Priory is represented locally in England by 43 County Priory Groups (CPGs) with around 500 members whose main responsibilities are to:

- liaise with HM Lord-Lieutenant as The Queen's representative in each county;
- encourage and make nominations for honours and awards;
- support St John Ambulance units;
- organise local St John Awards ceremonies;
- arrange Church services (such as services of rededication or at Christmas);
- act as ambassadors for the Priory;
- fundraise for the general work of St John; and
- to promote St John heritage matters within their county.

CPGs also have the unique responsibility for organising the annual Order of St John Award for Organ Donation ceremonies throughout England in partnership with NHS Blood & Transplant. This is a posthumous award in recognition of the amazing gift of life given by organ donors to others.

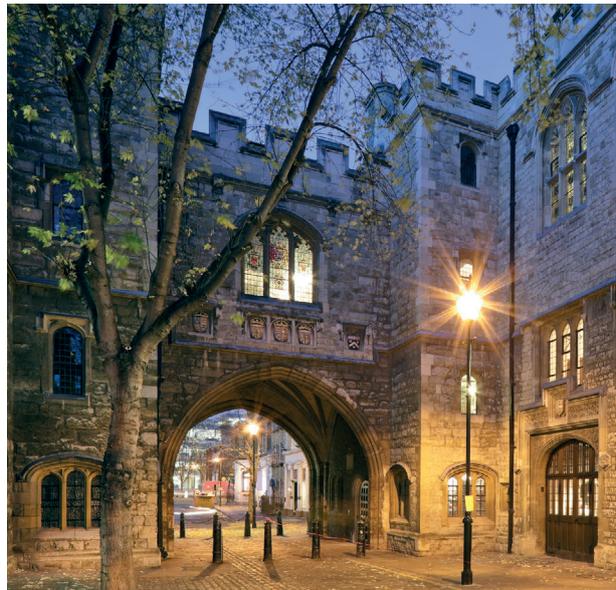
County Priory Groups play an important role in the work of St John and bring a wealth of experience, skills and knowledge which is invaluable to the charity.

St John's Gate

The Priory is also the custodian of St John's Gate and the Priory Church, the historic home of the Order.

The original Priory at Clerkenwell was founded in the 1140s and the Order owned a substantial amount of land in the area.

Most of the original Priory buildings were damaged during the Peasant's Revolt of 1381. The Priory was slowly rebuilt and the southern gatehouse, now called St John's Gate, was completed in 1504 by the then Prior of England, Thomas Docwra. The buildings in Clerkenwell were put to different uses in the years that followed the Reformation. During the sixteenth century, they were used as the offices of the Master of the Revels. Thirty of Shakespeare's plays were licensed there.



In the eighteenth century, the Gate was briefly used as a coffee house, run by Richard Hogarth, father of the artist William Hogarth. Dr Samuel Johnson was given his first job in London at St John's Gate, writing reports for The Gentlemen's Magazine. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Gate was used as a pub, The Old Jerusalem Tavern, where artists and writers, including Charles Dickens, used to meet.

The Priory Church

The Priory Church stands on the site of the original round church built by the Knights of St John and consecrated in 1185. Only the Crypt of this church survives, however the outline of the circular nave can be seen in the pavement outside. The Church stood at the centre of the Priory in Clerkenwell, of which only the Church and St John's Gate remain.

Rebuilt several times, the Church fell into disuse following the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII in 1540. The Church was then used as a private chapel and later as a parish church until 1931 when the Church of England transferred ownership back to the now restored Order of St John. The building was repaired again following bomb damage caused during the Second World War.

On the walls hang the banners of the Sovereign Head, the Grand Prior, the Priorities and Commanderies and the Bailiffs and Dames Grand Cross (the senior Grade of membership).

The Museum of the Order

The Museum of the Order of St John, housed within St John's Gate, tells our unique and fascinating story from its origins in 11th century Jerusalem, through to its role today with St John Ambulance and the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem.



Museum of
THE ORDER OF
ST JOHN

The Museum's diverse collections explore all aspects of the Order's history and include rare manuscripts, silver and armour, as well as historic first aid equipment and memorabilia from St John's role in the First and Second World Wars.

The Museum is open daily (except Sundays). For more information about our Museum, please visit: www.museumstjohn.org.uk/

The St John Fellowship

The Priory also has a flourishing St John Fellowship, with branches throughout England and the Islands, whose members continue to provide vital support to the Priory and to St John Ambulance. The Fellowship is open to people of all ages. www.stjohnengland.org.uk



Associated Charities

In partnership with the British Association of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the Priory supports the Orders of St John Care Trust, which operates high quality residential care homes across Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. Further information is available from their website: www.osjct.co.uk



Additionally, in partnership with the British Red Cross Society, the Priory also supports the Defence Medical Welfare Service who provide practical and emotional support to members of Her Majesty's Armed Forces, their dependents and some civilians, in operational and non-operational areas, while they are in hospital, rehabilitation or recovery centres. Further information is available from their website: www.dmws.org.uk



3 NINE HUNDRED YEARS OF CARING

Jerusalem and the Crusades

The exact date when the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem first came into being is unknown although it was about 1070, when a hospice — a place of care — was established in Jerusalem, in a district called the Muristan, by monks from a neighbouring Benedictine abbey to care for the growing number of Christians making the long and dangerous pilgrimage to the holy city.

The hospice soon developed into a hospital and in 1113 the Pope confirmed its independence. Over the next forty years it developed into a religious order, with its brothers and sisters (commonly known as Hospitallers of St John) providing care to the poor and sick of any faith.

Later, they adopted the additional role of defending all Christians and others within their care when they were threatened.

In that enormous 2,000-bed hospital, the 'sick poor' received nursing care which might surprise 21st century patients.



'... there were separate beds for the sick at a time when only the grandest lords had their own beds ... the beds had feather mattresses and coverlets and the patients were provided with cloaks and sandals, so as to protect them when they went to the latrines ... every Monday and Thursday barbers employed by the Order washed the feet of the sick with hot water, removed hard flesh with pumice stones and dried their feet with soft towels.'

Although the main Order hospital was always at its headquarters, there were many smaller ones, usually along pilgrim routes. Each hospital was run by a Knight and caring for the sick was part of the duty of all Knights. Given the crusading role of the Hospitallers, it is perhaps unexpected, but true, that care was provided to people of all religions.

Hospitallers' medical work in the middle ages is very similar to trends in modern health care. They believed that the quality of nursing care was key to recovery, used surgery as a last resort, had an excellent knowledge of the available medicines and understood the significance of hygiene, tranquillity and isolation.

Rhodes and Malta

The Order was removed from Jerusalem in 1187 and established its headquarters on the coast of Palestine, before moving to Cyprus and then on to Rhodes. In 1530, it settled in Malta, where it governed until it was expelled by Napoleon in 1798.

¹ Riley-Smith, Professor J. C. 1999. *Hospitallers: The History of the Order of St John*. London: Hambleton Press

It was in Malta, in 1565, that one of the most celebrated events in the history of the Knights took place — the Great Siege of Malta. Between May and September, 600 Knights and less than 7,000 soldiers and local militia withstood the onslaught of over 30,000 men of the Ottoman army.

Throughout their sovereign years on Rhodes and Malta, the Knights' medical work continued. In Rhodes, the hospital had separate wards for infectious disease and maternity care. In Malta, the Order ran a health service for the Maltese people and set up a famous school of anatomy and surgery. The great ward in Malta's hospital was the longest room in 18th century Europe.

The Knights also led one of the world's first international relief operations, sending a fleet of ships carrying physicians, medicines and tents to Sicily, when an earthquake devastated the city of Messina in 1783.

The Order in Britain

From the beginning, the Order grew rapidly and was given land throughout Western Europe. Its estates, called Commanderies, were managed by small groups of Brothers and Sisters who lived in communities that provided resources to the headquarters of the Order. These communities were gathered gradually into provinces called Pories or Grand Pories.

In Britain, the estates were first administered from the Commandery at Clerkenwell in London from about 1140 and the original Church was built at the same time.

However, over time, the extensive amount of land that the Order owned in Britain meant that it needed to be managed by several different Commanderies.

In 1185, the Commandery at Clerkenwell became a Priory. It had responsibility for Commanderies that had been set up in Scotland and Wales as well as those in England. Ireland became a separate Priory.

Henry VIII

In 1540, the Order in England was suppressed by King Henry VIII, as part of the process known as the Dissolution of the Monasteries. It was restored and incorporated by Mary I in 1557, but when Elizabeth I again confiscated all its estates in 1559 she did so without annulling its incorporation.

These acts by English Sovereigns did not directly affect the Order in Scotland, but the influence of the Reformation ended the Order's activities there in about 1565. The Order in Britain then fell into abeyance.

The religious Order of the Hospital of St John, which is now known formally as The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta, went through a time of disarray after it was expelled from Malta, but in the middle of the nineteenth century it was re-established, with headquarters in Rome. It is still often called 'The Order of Malta' and its members are frequently referred to as 'Knights of Malta'.

Revival in Britain

In the 1820s, in an attempt to revive the dormant Grand Priory of England, the Knights of Malta living in France offered knighthoods to specific people supporting the Order in Great Britain, irrespective of their Christian denomination. Their approach was not part of the official policy of the Order of Malta, but the English Knights devoted themselves to charitable activities which eventually lead to the creation of St John Ambulance.

It was this British group which, in recognition of its charitable works, was incorporated under Royal Charter by Queen Victoria in 1888 and which became the modern Order of St John. Victoria's empire spanned the world and the Order saw it as part of its role to spread Western medical practice as far as possible. Today, St John is still active in over 40 countries across the world.

In 1882, the Order also established, mindful of its ancient origins, an ophthalmic hospital in Jerusalem. Known today as the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group, it is the only charitable provider of expert eye care in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, treating patients regardless of ethnicity, religion or ability to pay.

St John and the Industrial Revolution

Britain was one of the first countries to become industrial and in the nineteenth century there were many dangerous workplaces. Conditions and machinery were hazardous, and workers were exhausted by the long hours. Accidents were frequent, but workers rarely saw a doctor in time. Death or disability from untreated injuries was common.

Members of the British Order wanted to find a way to help. They decided to train ordinary people in first aid, so accident victims could be treated quickly and on the spot, and in 1877 they set up St John Ambulance to do this. Classes were set up across the country, particularly in workplaces and areas of heavy industry, but also in villages, seaside towns and middle-class suburbs.



St John Ambulance was originally two separate charitable organisations. The St John Ambulance Association, which was concerned with training the public in first aid, was established in 1877. The St John Ambulance Brigade, which provided first aid care to the public, had its origins in 1873 and was formally established in 1887. The Association and the Brigade were amalgamated in 1974 to form the present St John Ambulance; however, they maintained distinct identities for some time.

The Cadets (now aged 10 to 18) were established in 1922 with the first units formed in Gateshead and Bradford. The Badgers (now aged 7 to 10) were created in 1987.

Throughout that time, St John Ambulance was directly part of the Order, only becoming separate for legal purposes, and a subsidiary of the Priory of England, in 1999.

St John in Times of Conflict

The first war-time involvement was during the Boer War when the Central British Red Cross Committee was formed, with the St John Ambulance Association playing a major role. By 1902, over 2,000 St John Ambulance Brigade volunteers were serving with the Army Medical Services, of whom ten were mentioned in dispatches and two were awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. 61 St John volunteers died on active service; however their memorial was destroyed when the Priory Church was bombed in 1941.

In 1914, a Joint War Committee of the Red Cross and the Order of St John was set up. Ambulance and nursing members of St John served in all the main theatres of war. Ambulance personnel worked with motor ambulance convoys, ambulance trains, hospital ships and as stretcher bearers – the task of running out into ‘no man’s land’ when called for. Volunteers from Wales formed the entire 130th (St John) Field Ambulance. At home, the SJAB was heavily involved in recovering and treating the wounded when German cruisers shelled Whitby, Scarborough and Hartlepool in December 1914.

There were a number of St John hospitals in Britain and France but the best known was the Base Hospital in Étaples which opened in 1915. By the end of the war, there were nearly 750 beds in use and, in one day alone, in April 1918, over 700 men were admitted. The following month, the hospital was bombed and machine-gunned; sixteen people were killed and many more wounded.

By the end of the war over 30,000 St John volunteers had served with the Armed Forces and in Voluntary Aid Detachments. Amongst many other awards were 17 Military Crosses. The names of the 1,077 volunteers who gave their lives are recorded in the Roll of Honour which has been on public display in St John’s Gate since 1928.

In 1939, the Red Cross and St John again worked together through the Joint War Organisation. In the theatres of war this meant organising and providing aid within the terms of the Geneva Conventions. Much of this work involved dispatching comfort parcels to British prisoners of war and assisting them when released, along with helping the survivors of concentration camps. Many trained members of the SJAB were called-up as medical reserves.

In Britain, St John fulfilled numerous tasks including: first aid instruction; first aid treatment wherever needed, such as on the London Underground during the Blitz; anti-gas measures; stretcher-bearers at ports and railways; in the Home Guard as ambulance drivers; as welfare officers and guides for evacuees; and Air Raid Precautions and Civil Defence work.

The vital nature of the work done by the SJAB led to many thousands joining during the war. By 1943, over 167,000 members were serving at home and over 25,000 in the Armed Forces.

More recently, during the Cold War, St John Ambulance played a key role in civil defence planning as well as the plans to repatriate casualties from Europe and elsewhere.

4 CHIVALRY AND FAITH

*'Defend the weak, protect both young and old, never desert your friends. Give justice to all, be fearless in battle and always ready to defend the right.'*²

An Order of Chivalry

There is no law to define either 'an Order' or 'an Order of Chivalry' but the basic idea of an Order is that it is a group of people who agree voluntarily to accept a common code of rules to govern their organisation, their conduct, and the leadership of their head. The affairs of this group of people are structured or 'ordered' by this common code.

The concept of an Order of Chivalry is that the head is a Sovereign, the lawful successor of such a Sovereign, or a person appointed directly by the authority of such a Sovereign. Membership of an Order of Chivalry can only be conferred by the Sovereign or by a person acting on behalf of the Sovereign and with the consent of the member.

The Order of St John recognises that an Order is an Order of Chivalry if it is founded by a reigning Sovereign (or in countries which are not monarchies by another serving Head of State) with whom The Queen, as Sovereign of the United Kingdom, has, or at the time of its founding had, diplomatic relations and which continues to be governed by the lawful successor of the founder.

The Western European concept of an Order of Chivalry developed in medieval times. It had three essential aspects:

- military;
- noble; and
- Christian.

There are still echoes of the military within the Order, with the use of terms such as knight, but the Order of St John views an interpretation of the concept of nobility and maintenance of Christianity as being the important aspects.

The Order recognises that nobility is not necessarily a matter of birth, rather that it is based on personal qualities. And so becoming a Member of the Order means not only are you granted an honour but you must also accept certain obligations.

The key obligations are to act as a person of honour, to care for the weak, the poor and the sick and to act with decency and integrity.

An Inclusive Christian Order

The Order is a Christian Order but not all of its members, volunteers and staff are of the Christian faith.

The Order is a Christian Order in that:

- it was founded on Christian principles;
- as an organisation it has a religious belief; and
- it is motivated by Christian ideals.

² Jacques, B. 2000, *Lord Brocktree*, Hutchinson

The Order welcomes people of different faiths, and those who have no religious belief, who know about the Order's Christian nature and who are able to support the aims of the Order as an inclusive Christian Order.

The Hospitallers looked after the poor and sick of all faiths because they regarded the poor and the sick as their 'lords', irrespective of the religion of such people. This is much more than looking after those people only by way of charitable duty to them.

To the early Hospitallers, a sick man or woman represented the person of Christ, and so was to be treated with the same degree of skill and care as they would have treated Christ Himself.

The principle of the 'lordship' of the poor and the sick, which inspired and motivated the members of the medieval Order, continues to inspire and motivate the members of the Order of St John today.

The essence of the Order's religious belief is that:

- the faith of the Order is in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit;
- the Order is founded on Christian discipleship;
- the Order holds to the special belief of the 'lordship' of the poor and the sick, as explained above;
- the Order is non-denominational;
- the members of the Order make up a community dedicated to the service of others;
- the two Mottoes of the Order together inspire both the life and work of the Order; and
- the works of the Order are not to be seen as separate from the Christian faith, as they are an inseparable manifestation of Christian love in action.

The Christian nature of the Order is reinforced by the fact that the Great Officers of the Order and certain others have to profess to their Christian faith formally. They also have to agree that they will make sure that the faith continues to inform, inspire and invigorate the work of the Order and that this faith remains integral to the Order's identity and tradition.

Candidates being considered for admission to the Order are assessed on their merits without taking into account their religious beliefs or their absence of such beliefs. Later in the process, those candidates for admission who are Christian may sign a declaration expressing that faith.

5 HONOURS AND AWARDS

*'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 everybody does not possess. If all have it, it is of less value. There must, therefore, be heart-burnings and disappointments on the borderline. 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 running 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.'*³

Membership of the Order

Her Majesty The Queen, as Sovereign Head of the Order, honours individuals with admission to, or promotion within, the Order in recognition of their outstanding achievement, the successful discharge of responsibility in the spirit of the Order or their notable and selfless service in furthering the objects of the Order.

All nominations for admission to, or promotions in, the Order from across the world are considered against a set of grade standards, and it must be shown that the merits of that candidate are over and above those which might ordinarily be expected of a person in comparable circumstances. This is increasingly so when a higher Grade is being contemplated. The overriding principle is that a person is admitted to or promoted in the Order on the basis of merit.

Other Awards

The Life Saving Medal of the Order

The Life Saving Medal was instituted in 1874 to enable the Order to honour those who saved, or attempted to save, the life of another and who placed themselves at imminent personal risk in doing so. It is not necessary to have performed first aid. There are three conditions for the award of the Life Saving Medal, namely:

- the nominee must have performed 'a conspicuous act of bravery';
- in performing that act, the nominee must have endangered his or her own life;
- and the nominee must have performed the act in saving, or attempting to save, the life of another or others.

The Medal may be awarded in bronze, silver or gold depending on the degree of personal risk involved and may be awarded posthumously.

³ Winston Churchill (Prime Minister), House of Commons, 22 March 1944



The Service Medal of the Order

The Service Medal was instituted in 1895, initially to recognise either distinguished service to the Order, or a period of service of 15 years. It is for this reason that the Medal is not referred to as a 'long service medal'.

Today, with the more widespread use of Order membership to reward distinguished service, the Service Medal is only issued to recognise a period of 12 years (having been reduced from 15 years in 1990) voluntary service to the Order.

The Service Medal, which is approved for wear on the left breast alongside all other orders, decorations and medals authorised by the Crown, is unique in being the only British medal which retains the effigy of Queen Victoria on its current issue.



The Order of St John Award for Organ Donation

Also known as the Organ Donor Award, this award was created in 2013 in partnership with NHS Blood and Transplant to honour those who, in death, have given hope to others through organ donation.

The award, which takes the form of a pin badge and a scroll signed by The Grand Prior, is presented to the next-of-kin of the donor at award ceremonies organised by County Priory Groups. The award can also be sent by post to those who do not wish to receive it publicly.



6 CEREMONIES AND SYMBOLS

*'Great institutions of ancient lineage seldom divest themselves of their early forms and ceremonies, and those that do survive the process of evolution are usually symbols of functions or practices long since obsolete. Although these survivals may have little relation to present-day affairs, they seem to impart to those who observe them, the accumulated power of time.'*⁴

Ceremonies

St John's Day

The Priory of England and the Islands celebrates the Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist on a Saturday near to 24 June.

St John's Day provides an opportunity for the whole family of St John to join together to:

- rededicate its service to Almighty God enshrined in the Order mottos: Pro Fide and Pro Utilitate Hominum;
- celebrate the work of our dedicated volunteers and staff;
- commemorate the lives of service to the Order of the departed; and
- raise the profile of our humanitarian work.



The celebrations, which have followed a similar pattern since 1954, principally consist of:

- a celebration of Holy Communion in the Crypt of the Priory Church;
- the Priory General Assembly (its annual general meeting) at Mansion House; and
- the Service of Commemoration and Rededication in St Paul's Cathedral.

Investitures

Several times each year, the Prior holds an Investiture in the Priory Church where those who have been admitted to, or promoted in, the Order are presented with their insignia on behalf of The Queen.

From time to time, the Prior will also present other awards, such as Votes of Thanks or the Life Saving Medal of the Order.

Additionally, once every three years, His Royal Highness The Grand Prior holds an Investiture for those who have been appointed to the two highest grades of the Order.

⁴ Edwards, Major T. J. 1950. *Military Customs*. 2nd Ed. Aldershot, Hants. Gale and Polden.

Symbols

The Badge of the Order

Members of the Order are entitled to wear the Badge of the Order suspended on a black ribbon. The Badge which is worn by members is an outward sign of duty to honour and uphold the aims of this Christian Order, in the service of the poor, the sick, and the suffering.

The Badge is a representation of the eight-pointed Maltese cross (sometimes referred to as an Amalfi cross), decorated in the four main quadrants with a lion passant guardant and a unicorn passant. Frequently referred to as the Royal Beasts, their use was granted by Queen Victoria to indicate that the Order of St John is a Royal Order of Chivalry.

The four arms symbolise the cardinal virtues:

- Prudence;
- Temperance;
- Justice; and
- Fortitude.

The eight points represent the eight Beatitudes (Matthew 5) which spring from the practice of those virtues, namely:

- humility;
- sorrow for sin;
- meekness;
- thirst for righteousness;
- mercy;
- purity;
- peace; and
- suffering under persecution.



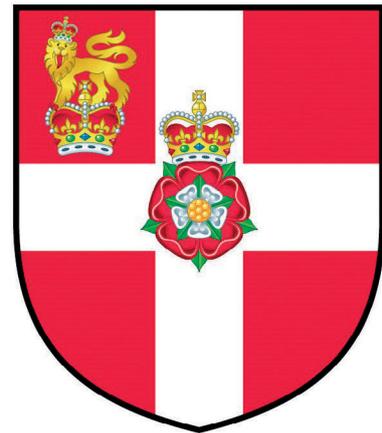
The whiteness reminds us of the purity of life required of Christ's servants.

The Arms of the Priory

The Arms of the Priory are based upon those of the Order. Each Priory and Commandery has a different symbol in the centre.

The Arms are formally described as follows: Gules (red) a cross Argent (white), in the first quarter a representation of the Sovereign's Crest, the whole differenced by a Tudor Rose Argent (white) upon Gules (red), barbed Vert (green), seeded Or (gold), and crowned by a representation of the Royal Crown proper.

The Sovereign's Crest was added to the Order's Arms by King George V in 1926.



The Robes of the Order

The Robes of the Order consist of the Sopra-Vest (cassock), which is worn only by gentlemen; and the Mantle.

The Robes are black as the early Hospitallers wore the black robes of the Benedictine Order, of which they were originally part.

The Badge of the Order on the left side, differs in size based on the Grade in the Order.

The Robes are worn on the Order's most important occasions, such as at Investitures and on St John's Day.



**The Priory of England and the Islands of
The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem**

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