



**St John**



**The Commandery of Ards**

**St John  
Ambulance**



A charitable company limited by guarantee

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Whilst every effort is made to provide totally accurate information, no responsibility is taken for inaccuracies and omissions contained herein.

## Welcome from the Knight Commander

I am delighted to have the privilege and pleasure of welcoming you to the St. John Directory.

As I review the past year from the perspective of the Order of St. John and the Commandery, I noted that we have just celebrated our Annual Service of Rededication for 2010 in Bannside Presbyterian Church, Banbridge. This event was led by Rev Dr Gordon Gray with his usual dedication. We were honoured to have the Lord Lieutenant of County Down as our principal guest. The occasion afforded an opportunity to welcome colleagues from the St John Ambulance Brigade of Ireland and members of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

It is, perhaps, my most pleasurable duty to recognize merit and long service at Investitures and Awards Ceremonies and held this year in Belfast Castle in May and at Hillsborough in October 2009. The former occasion provided an opportunity to welcome the Chancellor of the Priory and his wife, Mr and Mrs Robin Oake, as special guests.

At the enthusiastic instigation of our Hospitaller, a substantial donation was made in 2009 to the refurbishment of the Eye Hospital and I look forward to attending the celebration of that refurbishment in October. In May further funds were raised for the Hospital from the opening, on two consecutive days, of the beautiful garden of Mr Paul Osterberg FRCS in conjunction with the charity Independent Age.

It was with delight that I renewed old friendships during my attendance at a St. John Fellowship 'Get-Together' at Erne in April 2010.



*His Honour John McKee, Dr. Dominic Pinto, Professor Anthony Mellows and Mr. Robin Eyre-Maunsell.*

The Commandery Ladies Committee organized two fundraising events which were entirely successful in that pleasure was afforded to all who attended and generous funds were raised. I extend my renewed thanks to the chair, Mrs Liz Shanks, and her hard-working colleagues.

It was entirely appropriate that Mr Sam Hall should have placed the Order Cross in the Garden of Remembrance at the City Hall in November, in tribute to all of those who lost their lives in war service. I am most grateful to him for discharging this duty.

I particularly enjoyed recognizing and celebrating the achievements of many volunteers when I hosted a Reception at Erne in November 2009.

The Commandery was privileged to have been chosen by the Lord Prior as the venue for a meeting of the Council of the Alliance of the Orders of St. John, (a worldwide convention) in October 2009. Careful and detailed plans were laid beforehand, including a fundraising Cathedral Choral Concert, organized jointly with the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in St. Peter's Cathedral and other events.

It is my pleasure to attend two Social Evenings each year, accompanied by a senior volunteer officer. I was therefore delighted to attend Western Area Trophy Evening in May 2010 and witness for myself the sterling work of St. John Ambulance volunteers in the West of the Province.

The Sir Otto Lund Competition between St John, North and South, was held at Greenmount in October 2009. Again it was my privilege to attend and I much enjoyed witnessing some excellent demonstrations of emergency first aid which culminated in the retention of the main trophy (plus two others) in the North.

The Northern Ireland District Competitions, which I attended, were also marked by intense individual and team rivalries as volunteers sought to win coveted places to compete at National level in Croydon in July 2010.

As my second Triennium approaches its close I take this opportunity to acknowledge the support and good advice, which I have had from a talented team who have combined to make my role most enjoyable. Furthermore, I have had an opportunity to meet colleagues in London, and in Dublin, whose friendship I value. I look back in appraisal of my time in office and I am content that, 'on my watch', St John in Northern Ireland has contributed significantly to the well being of the community at large by providing significant benefit to the public. Memorable events have included the visit of HRH The Duke of Gloucester to the Commandery and in early 2009 the dedication of the St. John window within St Anne's Cathedral. Through reaching out to the Order of St John in other countries, I hope that the profile of the Commandery has been maintained and enhanced.

My wish is that from June 2011, everyone together, members, volunteers and staff, will combine to render to my successor the loyalty and support that they have shown me so that St John will continue to build on sure foundations to fulfil the mottoes of the Order namely- Pro Fide Pro Utilitate Hominum For the Faith and in the Service of Humanity.

**His Honour John McKee RD QC  
Knight Commander**



*Dr Wilson Clarke with the YMCA/Ashfield Team at District Finals.*

I present my report in the role of Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Since June 2008, circumstances have prevailed, such that, whilst Chairman of the Board of Trustees of St. John Ambulance (NI), I have also delivered the responsibilities of the Commander and of course that of Lieutenant.

I have pleasure in reporting that the charitable organization of St. John Ambulance in Northern Ireland continues to prosper.

Work continues to maintain good governance, health and safety standards, child and vulnerable adult protection standards and moderation and management of risk.

In particular in the matter of child and vulnerable adult protection standards, a new comprehensive policy known as Safeguarding was issued by our mentor St John Ambulance based in London. In the light of that policy the Board of Trustees in Northern Ireland decided to recruit a team of four sessional safeguarding officers to deliver the mandatory monitoring visits to adult, cadet, badger and quadrilateral units. We therefore welcomed, in that capacity, our new Safeguarding team comprised of Tanya Blamphin, Clare Boyd, Marie Hayes and Ken Garrett.

Paul Geraghty has been appointed to the position of Operational Support Officer (Compliance). Thus the only position remaining to be filled is that of Finance Officer whereupon the present incumbent, Margaret Turner, will take up her new role in support of the Secretary.

In addition I can report that action was taken in 2009 in support of the continued development of our services in all key areas, namely training of the public in first aid, provision of first aid at public events and within local communities, provision of transport and personnel in support of the statutory ambulance services including times of emergency, delivery of care and development of young people. I commend to you the reports of the Director of Training and the District Commissioner for further detail.

On the property side, the Amalfi Room was declared open at Erne, affording additional 'state of the art' accommodation to enhance all our St. John activities. We were privileged that the Lord Prior of the Order, Professor Anthony Mellows performed the opening ceremony together with Bishop McMullan who dedicated the extension to the work of St. John.

And thus change and new working practices are readily embraced but within the long and proud heritage of St. John. To all of those contributing to the work of the charity, be they members, fellow trustees, staff, volunteers or stakeholders, I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation.

**Dr J W Clarke OBE MB BSc**

The Commandery of Ards in Northern Ireland is privileged to receive guidance and support from the Priory based at Clerkenwell in London.

But in terms of company law, charity law and day to day activities, it is an independent entity governed by the laws of Northern Ireland and not controlled by the Priory. In practice this means that if trouble comes it must be dealt with by the Board of Trustees of St. John Ambulance (NI).

On the other hand, in terms of positive marketing St John Ambulance in Northern Ireland often benefits from the activities of St John initiatives on the mainland. And so we have found it to be in respect of 'The Difference'.

### The Difference



On 12 April 2010 St. John Ambulance launched a Marketing Campaign Nationwide called the Life Lost campaign with national newspaper advertising and PR.

The campaign dramatically depicted first aid – and St John Ambulance – as 'The difference' between life and death.

This campaign was developed and funded by St. John Ambulance in England.

The content of the campaign was a major departure from the image which would be routinely perceived of the charity by the average member of the public.

The advertisements were much harder hitting than anything from St John Ambulance in the past. The concept was based on the perception that the public does not see first aid as important, so the charity needed to be far clearer about the difference that trained first aiders or even people with some basic first aid knowledge make – including the difference between life and death. Most charities show you what they are trying to put right. The NSPCC show you children in distress; the RSPCA show you mistreated animals. Here was similar material from St. John Ambulance. It set out to remind the public that tragedies can occur every day, and illustrated starkly the consequences of what can happen when people need life-saving first aid and do not get it.

And I am glad to report that the campaign has been very successful. Here in Northern Ireland we have received positive results both in increased awareness of St John Ambulance and uptake of first aid training opportunities within St John.

We have reproduced the principal promotional material for you here and let you be the judge.

**Dr J W Clarke OBE MB BSc**

## Order of St. John

The foundation year of the Order of St. John was 1099 when, as a result of the First Crusade, Jerusalem was captured from the Muslims. The Crusaders found a hospice for Christian pilgrims, to which rich gifts were sent on their return home to enable it to be enlarged. In 1113 Pope Paschal II issued a bull which created the Order of Hospitallers. The Order was later based at Acre, Cyprus, Rhodes, Malta and Rome.

In 1540 Parliament passed an Act dissolving the Order. In England the Order's properties were confiscated finally by Elizabeth I in 1559.

The Order was revived in England in 1831 with the appointment of a Prior. The St. John Ambulance Association was formed in 1877 and the St. John Ambulance Brigade in 1887, each a separate Foundation of the Order. In 1882, in recognition of its origins, the Order opened the St. John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem.

In 1888, Queen Victoria made the Order a Royal order of chivalry with the Monarch as its Sovereign Head. Since then the Grand Prior has always been a member of the Royal Family.

In 1968 the separate Foundations of the St. John Ambulance Association and the St. John Ambulance Brigade were amalgamated to form St. John Ambulance Association and Brigade, with the short title of St. John Ambulance.

### Organisation

There was a restructuring of the Order in 1999. The Grand Council became the governing body for the eight Priors, two Commanderies and a number of overseas St. John Councils. The Priors are of England and the Islands, Scotland, Wales, South Africa, New Zealand, Canada, Australia and the United States of America. The two Commanderies are of Western Australia and Ards in Northern Ireland.

The Order of St. John is a working Order of charitably-minded men and women whose charity is principally, but not exclusively, expressed through its two Foundations, the St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital and the St. John Ambulance.

The Order is unique in British life, being a Christian order of chivalry under the Crown, with its own corporate existence and an active job of work - the service of those in need, for which the original Order was founded in the twelfth century.

Membership of the Order, which is an honour conferred with the sanction of The Queen, is limited to those who profess the Christian faith or who endeavour to uphold the aims of this Christian Order.

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The Royal Charter which incorporates “The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem”, designated for brevity as “The Order of St. John”, and the Statutes made thereunder, regulate the administration and organisation of the Order. Under The Queen, as Sovereign Head, the supreme direction of the Order is exercised by the Grand Prior, at present HRH The Duke of Gloucester.

The Statutes and Regulations of the Order may be found in [www.orderofstjohn.org](http://www.orderofstjohn.org).

### Grades of the Order

Under its Sovereign Head, HM The Queen, the Order has five grades:

- I Bailiff and Dame Grand Cross
- II Knight and Dame (of Justice or of Grace)
- III Commander (Brother or Sister)
- IV Officer (Brother or Sister)
- V Serving Brother and Serving Sister

### The St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital

Opened in 1882, the St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital is supported by the Order worldwide. It is open to all who suffer from eye disease without regard to race, creed, social class or ability to pay. Situated in East Jerusalem, it serves predominantly the Arab population.

The hospital is a 49-bed specialist ophthalmic hospital, offering the full range of modern eye medicine and surgery. It is also a teaching establishment for ophthalmic nurses, linked to the Moorfields Eye Hospital in London and accredited by Thames Valley University.

Each year 40,000 patients are treated at the main hospital and 4,000 major eye operations performed. In 2008 the Hospital Group treated in total 94,426 patients – 25,579 under the age of 18. The service continues despite the current political turmoil. The situation is therefore extremely challenging, both administratively and financially.

The hospital is the responsibility of the Grand Council and is managed by a board of directors.



St. John Eye Hospital.



John Williams at HQ control.

The Tall Ships were in Belfast from 12 to 15 August 2009. Up to 800,000 came from all parts of Northern Ireland and the Republic, as well as 100,000 tourists from abroad.

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Naomi Long, said “The visitor figures were beyond our wildest expectations. The Tall Ships have put Belfast firmly on the map as a city more than capable of organising and hosting world class events.” The visitors came to

see the *Bounty* (of Marlon Brando fame), the *Cisne Branco* from Brazil, the *Europa* from the Netherlands, the *Sagres* from Portugal, the *Belle Poiule* from France, and a host of other sail training vessels.

The headquarters of all the emergency services were based in a room at the top of W5, overlooking the harbour. Here were to be found the NI Ambulance Service, the Police Service, the Harbour Police and St John Ambulance. Their co-location meant that fast responses were made possible to reported incidents.

Large first aid posts with beds and emergency supplies were established on both sides of the harbour in temporary buildings. The post on the Odyssey side was controlled by the Red Cross, while St John managed the post on the Harbour Office side.

The Red Cross brought their control vehicle and one ambulance. St John had four ambulances plus two bicycles with panniers filled with emergency supplies. The latter proved their worth in getting quickly to casualties, as the incidents occurred at up to two miles from the first aid posts. The riders carried radios to keep in touch with control.

470 patient report forms were completed, ranging from sprains to heart attacks. Twenty casualties required hospitalization, which was controlled by the NIAS.

John Williams, District Operations Officer, was in control headquarters. Ground operations were controlled by Jackie Dalzell, Eastern Area Public Duty Officer. The duty was undertaken by members from Eastern Area and as many as 40 were on duty each day. Their services were greatly appreciated by those treated.

Commenting on the duty, the Commissioner, Len Murray, said “This was the largest ever public duty carried out by St John in a 4-day event. The successful handling of the high level of casualties was made possible by the first aid skills of our members and the close cooperation with NIAS, Red Cross and Police. I feel proud that we performed so well. My thanks go to the members who volunteered their services for this memorable event.”

**J W Hughes OBE**  
Librarian

McCAVANA Cup 1st Year Adult	Christopher Hagan Larne	FRAZER Cup Adult Male Member FA	Stephen Coyle Ballymoney
LAVERTY Cup FA Team	Comber Q	BRENNAN Cup Adult Female Member FA	Linda Heaney Belmont
BIRNIE Cup Cadet FA Team	Northland C	STEWART Shield AMB Male Cadet FA	Ronan McFeely Northland C
PALMER Cup Public, Hospital & Welfare Duties	Newtownards	NC Cup Nursing Female Cadet FA	Nadia Workman Ballymoney C
BRIDGES Trophy Transport, Hospital & Welfare Duties	West Belfast	KNIGHTS Shield Adult Individual - CFS	Richard Middleton Comber Q
GREGG WILSON Trophy Progress in an Adult Division	QUB Links	MARVIN J GOWDY Cup Cadet Individual - CFS	Lauren Friel Belmont C
WALLACE Trophy Progress in a Cadet Division	Northland C	GREER Cup Health Care Professional Individual	Andrew Kerr Comber Q
BROADHURST Cup Outdoor Pursuits & DOE Scheme	Northland C	LOCKHART Cup Cadet Caring for the Sick	Lisnagelvin/ Northland
NEILL Cup Cadet Proficiency Scheme	Northland Q	WHITAKER Cup Adult Caring for the Sick	Belmont
JOHNSTON Cup Cadet Special Service Shield	Northland C	HALL Cup Highest Marks in First Aid	YMCA/Ashfield
FAULKNER Cup Administration in an Adult Division	Belmont	Yvonne Macartney Cup	Scrabo Badgers
LUTTON Cup Administration in a Cadet Division	Ballymoney C	Badger Subject Shield	Castle Badgers
FRASER Cup Adult FA Team - Uniform	Ballymoney	Badger Overall Winners	Richmond Badgers
JOHNSTONE Cup Adult Nursing Team - Uniform	Comber Q	DISTRICT SURGEON'S Cup Cadet First Aid	Ballymoney C 'A'
WATSON Cup Cadet FA Team - Uniform	Ballymoney C 'A'	BELFAST CHALLENGE Cup Adult First Aid	YMCA/Ashfield
GARRETT Trophy Cadet Nursing Team - Uniform	Lisnagelvin Q 'A'	ROAD SAFETY Trophy Ambulance Challenge	Belmont

## A Short History of Belfast Headquarters Transport Division

### Published to mark the Diamond Jubilee of the Division 1949-2009

Formed originally in 1949 as Headquarters Transport Section with 15 members, its main task was to provide a full-time ambulance under a contract with the (then) Hospitals Authority. This service provided a valuable source of income to the Commandery until it was terminated in 1986.

The Division was first based in a refurbished garage in St John's Hall at Queen's Quay. In 1956, it moved to garages at 1a Skegionel Avenue. In 1987 the Division transferred to a disused byre at Purdysburn when Erne became the Brigade hub. It took over the pigery in 1991 and over the next six years the members converted it into lecture room. Further improvements were made over time but the threat of redevelopment led to a search for new premises. Brackenvale was selected.



*Myles Humphries (District Transport Officer), Lord Glentoran, James Green (Superintendent), John Mairs (First Aid Motor Cyclist), Kathleen Gill, Pearl Waring and Doreen Sandford.*

The first Superintendent was Myles Humphreys (later to be knighted as Lord Mayor), followed by James Green and Tom Smyth.

Edgar Williamson was in charge for 14 years from 1969 until 1983. When Edgar joined the Division in 1956, he was working as a bread server and on Sunday mornings always brought unsold bread and morning goods for members on duty. Kathleen Gill was a member and recalls that in those days one had to belong to a nursing or ambulance

division before being allowed to join the Division. She remembers Edgar with great affection and how he organised bacon, eggs and potato bread after big events. Her memory of the social side is that it was very strong and great fun. Edgar was known affectionately as the 'Boss' and his catchwords were 'Leave it with me'. It was appropriate that when the ambulance station at Purdysburn was opened in 1997, the lecture room was named 'The Edgar Williamson Hall'.

Edgar Williamson was in charge of the full-time ambulance, which operated from Monday to Friday. It was crewed by volunteers on Saturday and Sunday. In later years Jimmy McAllister and Jimmy McIlwaine 'Bungey' were in charge, supported by the volunteer members at night and weekends.

In 1957 the Division acquired a motorcycle combination unit, with a stretcher mounted on the side car. The unit was designed by Myles Humphreys, who was by then the District Transport Officer. The unit was dedicated on Sunday 5 May 1957, along with the first diesel ambulance to be in service in Northern Ireland. Lord Glentoran HML accepted both vehicles on behalf of the Order.

During the thirty years of civil unrest from 1969, the Division was involved in numerous mercy missions, sometimes against a background of bombs, gunfire and rioting. Bravery awards included BEMs to Kay Blankley and Hayden Elliott in 1972 (for actions during rioting) and the Order's Life Saving Medal in Bronze to David Blair and Daniel McAreavey in 1988 (at Lisburn mini marathon).



*Hayden Elliott (Transport Sergeant), W A McMaster (Divisional President), Tommy Patterson (Area Public Duty Officer) with keys of new ambulance, Sgt Kay Blankley with PRO News Letter.*

The 1970s saw a tremendous growth in the size of the Division. The highest numbers were recorded in 1972, with 65 members on the books. Today the strength is around the 45 mark.

Terry Belshaw was in charge of the Division for three years, followed by Dennis Killiner. Dennis had joined the Division in 1965 and was the longest serving member when he retired in 1991. He gave outstanding service and commitment as Transport Officer before becoming Superintendent.

There then followed a decade when John Fallon was in charge. A member since 1977, John was known affectionately as 'the gasman' (having retired from Belfast Corporation Gas Department). John managed the division on a near full time basis. When his health began to fail, he handed over to the present Superintendent, John Amos, who has been a member since 1984.

Dr James Rutherford has been Medical Officer since 1989. His predecessors were Dr R K McElderry (1958), Dr J A J Ferris (1964) and Dr R A McKeown (1974). Miss J R Elliott (1964) and Samuel Carson (1970) were Nursing Officers. Sadie Greer was Nursing Officer from 1982 to 1996, when she was succeeded by Jim McGlinchey. Lynn Williams took over in 2008.



*John Amos (Superintendent) receives the Golden Jubilee certificate from Mrs Joyce Cooper (District Commissioner). In front row are Leslie Smallman (Divisional President), Len Murray (Area Commissioner) and Ron Tiernan (Divisional Vice-President).*

The Division celebrated its Golden anniversary in 1999 with a magnificent dinner in the Queen's Sports Pavilion at Malone.

In 2002 the Division was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for services to the public.

The Division maintains a fleet of half a dozen fully equipped ambulances, as well as a 4-wheel ambulance for rough terrain and a mobile control unit. In 2006 it acquired two bicycles.

The opening in 2008 of the new state-of-the-art ambulance station at Brackenvale Business Park, about one mile from Erne, was a fitting acknowledgement of the important role which the Division plays in the provision of voluntary ambulance cover at sporting and other public events in Belfast.



Roy Harris

YMCA/Ashfield Division as we know it today began life in 1959 as North Belfast Ambulance Cadet Division with 16 Cadets. George Fox was the first superintendent but after a year he handed over to Billy Ellis, who laid the foundation for the future successes of the division. The Scout room in the YMCA in Wellington Place was the base and, despite the restriction of space, first aid training, care, drill and competition training took place. Annual events included a camp in the Southport YMCA and a day trip by train to Portrush. Cadets were taught to take a pride in wearing their uniform and encouraged to observe the highest standards.

John Linton became superintendent in 1966, continuing the tradition of strong leadership. The name was changed to YMCA and William Dornan MBE, Director of the YMCA, was appointed divisional president. Cadets from both traditions travelled from all parts of Belfast. Sadly the troubles from 1969 made it unsafe for young people to travel into the city centre on a Friday evening and numbers declined.

In 1971 Marvin Gowdy, who had joined the division as a cadet in 1963, began his teaching career in Ashfield Boys' High School. He secured permission from the Principal, Mr Hugh Montgomery, for the division to hold its meetings in the school until the troubles were over. The Division moved to Ashfield Boys' in 1972, when Marvin Gowdy took over as superintendent. Unfortunately many members who lived on the other side of the city were unable to travel and drifted away. The school became an excellent source of members, such that the strength exceeded fifty by 1979. Annual Easter and summer adventure camps were held at Drumalla House, Carnlough. In 1977 the division's status was changed to allow senior cadets to transfer as adults and remain in the division.

The division has established a strong record in first aid competitions. Successes have included winning the Area's Lord Mayor's Cup for 29 years in succession and bringing home in 2008 the Dewar Shield, the highest award at the National Finals for first aid. Members have also been in the teams for the Sir Otto Lund Trophy and Joanitter awards.

The recent superintendents have all been cadets, Gary Stoops in 1985, Des Berry in 1988, Alan Petticrew in 1990 and in 1996, the present incumbent Roy Harris, who brings his natural warmth, friendliness and good humour to a new generation of first aiders.

In 1998, in keeping with current practice, girls were admitted to the division. The first female cadet was Helen Duncan. Now there are more girls than boys on the roll. The standards of good training remain and the division is still able to attract top quality young people who are as enthusiastic and committed as the founder cadets.

The 50-year certificate was presented to the Division by the Area Commissioner, William McCormick, at the annual social evening.

**Marvin J Gowdy**

### The First Crusade (1095-1099)

Crusades were holy wars fought against those who were perceived to be foes of Christendom, for the recovery of Christian property or in defence of the Church or Christian people.

Pope Urban II proclaimed the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont in 1095, calling on western Knights to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim occupation.

### Jerusalem and the Hospital (1099-1187)

When the Knights, soldiers and Christian men and women who made up the members of the First Crusade under Godfrey de Bouillon captured Jerusalem in 1099, they found there a hospice and hospital for Christian pilgrims, dedicated to St. John the Almoner, under Benedictine control. In charge was the Blessed Gerard, who had devoted his life to this work after making the pilgrimage from Martigues in Provence.

The hospice had been founded in about 600 AD. In 1010 it was destroyed, along with other Christian buildings, but the citizens of the wealthy maritime Republic of Amalfi restored it in 1023.

The Crusaders were impressed by the good work being done by the Blessed Gerard and his helpers. On return to their own countries, they spoke so well of him that benefactors sent rich gifts. With these additional funds, the Blessed Gerard was able to free his hospice from the control of the Benedictines and to found a new Order of Hospitallers which adopted the Augustinian rule. The long cloaks of the monks had on them a white cross which ultimately took the form of the eight-pointed cross included in the arms of the Republic of Amalfi.

The Order's larger hospice included what was the Orthodox monastery of St. John Baptist and so their patron became St John Baptist in place of St. John the Almoner. In 1113 Pope Paschal II issued a Bull taking the hospice under his protection and giving it the privilege of electing its own superior.

The Hospitallers secured their presence in the Holy Land by building strategically placed fortresses, particularly two great castles at Margat and Krak des Chivaliers.

The Crusaders remained in Jerusalem until 1187, when they were forced out by Saladin and the Saracens (a multi-national army of Moslems) after the great battle of Hattin. They moved their headquarters to Margat.

### Palestine (1187-1291)

Richard the Lionheart led the Third Crusade, taking the coastal town of Acre in 1191 after a siege. Before heading for Jerusalem, he ordered the slaughter of the 2,500 Muslim prisoners, including women and children – a barbaric act which stunned even the Saracens.

Richard's army of 14,000, supported by the Hospitallers and Knights Templar, defeated the Saracens at Arsuf in 1191 but failed to regain Jerusalem or the sacred True Cross captured by Saladin.

In 1197 the Hospitallers moved their headquarters from Margat to Acre, where they built a hospital larger than that at Jerusalem. Before it became the Crusader capital, Acre was an important Phoenician trade centre and later a Roman port. The Crusader part of the city has been restored in recent years.

From 1244 the Crusaders were on the defensive in their fortified towns and castles in Palestine. In 1291 the last great siege in the Holy Land began against Acre. 100,000 Saracens and 92 battering engines were too strong against the garrison of 15,000. Of the 140 Hospitallers present at the beginning of the siege, only seven survived. The Hospitallers, under the injured Grand Master de Villiers, moved to Cyprus, so ending nearly two hundred years of occupation of the Holy Land by the Crusaders.

The Order of Hospitallers later developed a military as well as humanitarian role and, together with the Knights Templar and the Teutonic Knights, the Hospitallers of St. John became the principal defence of the King of Jerusalem and a powerful protection for pilgrims journeying in the Holy Land.

### **Cyprus (1291-1310)**

The survivors from Acre established their new headquarters in Cyprus. The Hospitallers already owned the castle of Kolossi, which had been given to them by the King of Cyprus 80 years before the fall of Acre. This castle is still standing and the Order of St. John has an interest in it.

The Order was European and was organised into eight natural "Tongues" - Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Aragon, England, Germany and Castile-Portugal. After their numbers were reinforced from the Tongues, the Hospitallers became one of the principal naval powers in the Mediterranean, fighting the many pirates.

The Hospitallers had hoped that the Holy Land would be re-conquered, so that they could return to Jerusalem. However, that was not to be and after 19 years they left Cyprus and conquered the Byzantine island of Rhodes.

### **Rhodes (1310-1522)**

The Hospitallers wished for complete independence to develop their activities. Rhodes, near the coast of Asia Minor, attracted the Hospitallers because of its fine harbour. The Hospitallers captured the island without serious loss, driving out the pirates. They later controlled a number of islands, including Cos to the north west of Rhodes. In 1334 the Christian Crusade League captured the important Turkish port of Smyrna. From 1374 to 1402 the Hospitallers were in possession of Smyrna.

In 1408 the Hospitallers captured Bodrum, on the mainland coast opposite Cos. There they made a fort, forty per cent of it from stones of the derelict mausoleum in

Halicarnassus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, which the Knights found in a ruined state on the mainland overlooking Bodrum.

At Rhodes the Order became a sovereign power and the main bulwark of Christendom in the Eastern Mediterranean. In the Street of the Knights several of the original Auberges (inns, where most of the members of the Order lodged) are still standing today. In 1919 a Knight of the Order of St. John purchased and restored the Auberge which had been used by the members from England. The Order rebuilt the hospital, the great ward being over fifty yards long. In this hospital for the first time those with incurable diseases were separated from other patients.

During the sojourn of the Knights in Rhodes, the strength of the Ottoman Turks grew until it exceeded that of the defenders of Christendom. By this time the Turks had replaced the Saracens as the principal Moslem power. In 1453 the Turks captured Constantinople, which had been until then the centre of the Christian Church in the East. In 1480 Sultan Mahomet the Great brought 160 ships and landed an army of 70,000 on Rhodes. To defend the island the Grand Master, Peter d'Aubusson, and 450 members of the Order had in support 4,000 mercenaries and some armed citizens. After three months of fighting the Turks left. In that time 9,000 Turks and half of the members of the Order had been killed.

In the next forty years the Turks advanced into what is now the Balkans and Hungary, but kept away from Rhodes. However, in 1522 Sultan Suleiman I sent a force which was twice as large as his grandfather had sent to the first siege in 1480. To defend the island the Grand Master, Philip de L'Isle Adam, had only 600 members of the Order and 4,500 other troops.

The Order survived several major battles, but after six months, in order to save the entire population from a massacre, the Grand Master was persuaded to surrender Rhodes, Cos and the other islands as well as the fort at Bodrum. The Sultan chivalrously granted the most honourable terms. The Knights, and as many of the citizens as wished to accompany them, were allowed to leave the island in their own galleys and to take with them arms and property. For several years the Hospitallers had no home. The survivors went first to Crete and later to various towns in the South of Italy.

### **Malta (1530-1798)**

In 1530 the Emperor Charles V gave the island of Malta to the Order, on condition that they defended Tripoli in North Africa. The Knights sailed into the harbour under the command of Sir William Weston, the Grand Prior of England, in the Santa Anna, the first armour plated vessel recorded in history.

The Grand Master arranged for the protection of the island, including the fortification of the harbour. In 1565 the last of the great sieges of the Order began. Against the Grand Master, John de la Valette, and his forces, the Turks brought an army more than three times as large. After six months of fierce fighting and thousands of deaths, the Turks left the island. Six years later the Turkish fleet was finally destroyed at Lepanto by the combined fleets of Spain, Venice, Genoa and other Christian fleets, including the Order

of St. John. During this time massive walls were built round the city of Valetta, some being 150 feet high. Many new buildings were erected, including the Palace for the Grand Master, auberges, a church the size of St Paul's Cathedral in London, and a hospital with a ward 150 yards long and 12 yards wide.

For the next 230 years the service to the sick was maintained, but the naval and military forces became less vigilant.

The Order relied on the home countries to raise men and money. The Order's properties in England had been confiscated by King Henry VIII in 1540. After the French Revolution in 1789, the properties belonging to the Tongues of Provence, Auvergne and France were confiscated. In 1798 the French fleet anchored off Malta. The Grand Master, Von Hompesch, capitulated tamely three days later.

### **Post Malta (1798-1834)**

Most Knights abandoned their vows and returned to their own countries. A remnant went to Russia, where for some years the Czars protected the Order.

### **Rome (1834-to date)**

From Russia the Knights moved to various towns in Italy, eventually settling in Rome in 1834. The Sovereign Military Order of Malta (SMOM) is the direct descendant of the medieval Order of St. John. The SMOM is a religious Order of the Roman Catholic Church with its headquarters in Rome. The Vatican is recognised as a State and has full mutual diplomatic relations with over sixty countries.

An authoritative history of the Order – Hospitallers – has been written by Professor Jonathan Riley-Smith, the Librarian of the Order.

### **England (1144-to date)**

The Headquarters of the Order in England was centred on the Grand Priory at Clerkenwell, which was established in 1144 just outside the City of London. Included in the Tongue of England were the mainly autonomous Preceptory of Torphichen, situated to the west of Edinburgh, and the Priory of Ireland at Kilmainham, near Dublin.

In 1540 Parliament passed an Act dissolving the Order in England and conferring its estates on the Crown. In 1557 Queen Mary Tudor revived the Order briefly in England. Although the Letters Patent were never formally repealed, the properties were confiscated by Queen Elizabeth 1 in 1559.

The Preceptor of Scotland surrendered the properties of the Order of St. John in Scotland to the Crown in 1564.

Attempts to revive the Order in England began in the late 1820s. The story is tangled. The enthusiasts involved were for the most part looking back to an imagined romantic age of chivalry, and were unsuccessful in obtaining recognition from the SMOM.

However, in time the idea of providing public service took hold. First aid instruction to the public began in 1877. The first eye hospital in Jerusalem was opened in 1882. The Brigade was founded in 1887. Official recognition came with a Royal Charter granted by Queen Victoria in 1888.

*Further information on the history and museum of the Order in England may be found on the website [www.sja.org.uk/st\\_john](http://www.sja.org.uk/st_john). The Statutes of the Order may be found on the website [www.orderofstjohn.org](http://www.orderofstjohn.org).*

### **Ireland (1189-to date)**

The Order in Ireland was organised into Commanderies (sometimes referred to as preceptories) under the jurisdiction of the Priory of Ireland. The Commandery of Ards was one of some twenty smaller grants of land made throughout Ireland by Hugh de Lacy, a former Earl of Ulster, in 1189.

The Commandery of Ards had its principal house or quarters at Castleboy (Yellow Castle), or as it was then called Johnston, near Cloughey in the lower Ards Peninsula.

The possessions of the Commandery lay between Glenarm in County Antrim and St. John's Point in County Down. The land in the immediate neighbourhood of Castleboy was known as the Manor of the Hospitaller. There the Order had a castle and a chapel, the outline remains of which still stand.

In 1559 the Prior of Ireland surrendered his Priory and the Commanderies to the Earl of Sussex, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Following the revival of the Order in England in 1831, the St. John Ambulance Association started first aid classes in 1881 in Northern Ireland. The first Division of the Brigade in Northern Ireland – the Belfast Fire Brigade Ambulance Division - was formed in 1892. The first Division in Dublin - the St. James Gate Division - was formed in 1904 at Guinness' brewery. Many Divisions followed.

In 1914 a new St. John District (No. 12) was formed for the Divisions in Ireland. From it, two Districts were formed following the political division between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland. However, St. John throughout Ireland continued until 1945, under the control of the Chief Commissioner in London.

In 1945 the Irish Government decided that the position of the Brigade in the Republic of Ireland was anomalous and could not be justified. Along with other British organisations, except the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, the Brigade agreed to change its constitution and title. After consultation with the Secretary-General of the Order of St. John and the Chief Commissioner in London, the Irish Government and the Irish Red

Cross Society (with which the Irish Government wanted St. John to amalgamate), a new constitution was agreed and the St. John Ambulance Brigade of Ireland was formed in 1945.

In 1947 the Republic of Ireland left the Commonwealth. Ireland thereby became the first St. John country outside the Commonwealth. The St. John Ambulance Brigade of Ireland continues to flourish, and its members meet with Brigade members from Northern Ireland in occasional joint duties and in a biennial competition for the Sir Otto Lund Trophy.

### Commandery of Ards (1952-date)

In Northern Ireland the Order was re-established in 1947 by the formation of a Committee with the Governor, Earl Granville, as President and Lord Dunleath as Chairman. The latter resigned in 1949 and was succeeded by Mr J H H Pollock.

On the revival of the Commandery in 1952, the 60 members on the Grand Priory Roll living in Northern Ireland were transferred to the Commandery Roll. The Governors accepted the invitation to become the Knight Commander of the Commandery of Ards.

In 1982 a plaque was presented by the Commandery of Ards to Rathmullan Parish Church near Downpatrick. It records that the present Rathmullan Church was erected in the year 1703 on the ancient site of a former church described in 1615 as having been dedicated to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in 1213 AD.

Northern Ireland District saw an increase from four Divisions in 1932 to 98 Adult Divisions during the Second World War, with a strength of over 3,000. The post war period was marked by a decline in the number of Divisions and in membership. Larne (1933) is now the senior Division and Newcastle (1939) the senior Cadet Division.

Following the restructuring of the Order of St. John in 1999, the Commandery of Ards became a Dependent Commandery of the Priory of England and the Islands.

The history of the Commandery was researched thoroughly by J Harris Rea MBE, FRSAI, who was Librarian from 1952 to 1990. He published a number of monographs in the annual St. John Handbook. His major work *The Order of St. John in Ireland*, was published posthumously in 1994.

A short Record of the Commandery of Ards from 1952 to 2002 was published in 2002 to mark its 50th anniversary.

*A comprehensive bibliography on the history of the Order may be found on the website [www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk](http://www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk).*



*St. John Window at St. Anne's Cathedral.*



*Professor Anthony Mellows, Lord Prior of the Order of St. John declares open the Amalfi Room at Erne.*



*Eimear McWilliams, Greenhall St Badger Sett 2010 St John Ambulance Badger of the year.*



*Right: Roy Harris, YMCA/Ashfield Division competing at Greenmount Campus.*



*Nadia Workman, Northern Ireland Cadet of the Year 2010, with Cadet RSM Ross Leckie and Khara Rennie, at Buckingham Palace.*



*President of St John Ambulance Brigade of Ireland Clive Martin, District Commissioner Len Murray and Knight Commander His Honour John McKee display the Otto Lund Cup at Greenmount Campus .*



*(Centre) Linda Heaney from the Belmont Division of St John Ambulance attends to a casualty during the 2010 District Competitions.*



*John Hughes (Left) and C T Hogg (right) join Yvonne, Linda and Nadia at the launch of the St John Ambulance 'Be Creative' 2010 Art Competition. (The competition will take place in September 2010).*