

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

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ST JOHN AMBULANCE, NORTHERN HEADQUARTERS COLLECTION

Ambulance Services, Launceston

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INTRODUCTION

The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem, one of the oldest Orders of Chivalry in the world, had its origins in the First Crusade in the 11th century. The modern order in England dates only from 1858, but was responsible for the founding of the St John Ambulance Association in 1877. The Association's activities subsequently spread to the larger English towns and to the colonies. St John Ambulance Brigade evolved through trained St John workers forming ambulance stations. In Australia, these effectively pioneered our ambulance transport services.

The history of St John Ambulance in Tasmania began in Launceston where a committee was formed on 31 March 1887. Its main aim was to teach and provide first aid. Segregated into male and female divisions until after the Second World War, the majority of its male members were recruited from Launceston Railways employees. St John in Hobart was not established until 1909, and the two sub-centres remained separate entities governed by the parent body in England until they became one Tasmanian centre in 1942. At that time, the Order of St John in Australia became a Commandery. It was elevated to the status of Priory in 1946. The Priory, the controlling body for both the St John Ambulance Association and St John Ambulance Brigade, has its national headquarters in Canberra, ACT, where a library for the Order is also maintained. The Tasmanian state headquarters are located in Hobart.

In Tasmania, St John workers played an active role in wartime civil defence, and have subsequently continued to provide voluntary first aid services at major public functions and sporting events, and train young people in first aid and home nursing. By the late 1970s there were 23 adult and 15 cadet divisions located throughout the state.

St John House (previously known as Waratah House), 12 York Street, Launceston, was purchased by St John Ambulance and renamed in 1959. At the time it was sold by St John in 1996, it was the Northern Headquarters for all St John Association and Brigade activities in Tasmania, including cadet training. Part of the premises was also leased to other bodies.

Most of the papers dating from the 1950s and 1960s were originally kept by Dr Geraldine Archer. She was instrumental in the purchase of St John House and maintained an active interest in the work of St John Ambulance until her death in October 1992.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in November 1997.

1. Legal Records

1/1	St John Ambulance Association Tasmania Centre constitution and rules for sub-centres c1955; agreement re resident caretaker, St John House c1959; policy re use of caravans 1975; agreement re window 1976; preamble to amend St John Holdings Articles of Association 1979; agreement re contractors; suggested constitution for divisional auxiliaries January 1980; draft regulations for the administration of St John Ambulance Australia-Tasmania April 1994	c1955-1994
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2. Minutes of Meetings and Annual Reports

2/1	Minutes of meetings, Northern Area committee (includes some minutes of annual general meetings and annual reports)	1974-1994
2/2	Minutes of meetings, St John House committee (includes Dr G Archer's papers relating to the opening December 1959, newspaper cuttings etc)	1958-1967
2/3	Minutes of meetings, St John House property committee (includes some notices, agenda and annual reports)	1991-1996
2/4	Minutes of meetings, St John Holdings (includes annual report 1975, financial statements, some notices and agenda for meetings)	1975-1993
2/5	Minute book of meetings, St John Ambulance Brigade Nursing Cadets Auxiliary, February 1960-February 1968 (to April 1966 known as the social committee)	1960-1968
2/6	Minute book of meetings, St John Ambulance Brigade Cadets Auxiliary, March 1968-June 1971 (includes financial statement 1971-1973)	1968-1973
2/7	Minute book of annual general meetings, St John Ambulance Brigade Nursing Cadets Auxiliary, May 1954-April 1971	1954-1971
2/8 1979	St John Ambulance, Northern Headquarters, annual reports, Launceston No 1 Nursing Division 1959, 1979 and Welfare Committee 1966	1959-
2/9	St John Ambulance, Northern Headquarters, minutes of meetings, state committee (includes agenda, notices of meetings and annual reports)	1958-1993
2/10	Minutes of meetings, Brigade standing committee (Dr G Archer's papers)	1974-1978

3. Correspondence

3/1	Correspondence re Dr G Archer Commemorative plaque	1992-1998
3/2	Correspondence re office bearers	1976-1993
3/3	Financial correspondence (includes statements, insurance schedule, miscellaneous receipts)	1964-1994
3/4	Certificate holders 1973 and qualified instructors 1991	1973-1991
3/5	Inveresk Railways proposal	1993-1994
3/6	Training, competitions and examinations	1959-1995
3/7	Circulars, notices	1959-1995
3/8	St John House	1958-1996
3/9	General correspondence re appeals; St John House; functions; finance etc	1959-1966
3/10 1995	General correspondence re competitions; functions; first aid training; Asthma Foundation; instructor/organiser applications 1971; R Hinds' long service; visit of Lord Prior	1971-

4. Miscellaneous Records

4/1	Immunisation record book	1961-1965
4/2	Workshop teaching plan, November 1978	1978
4/3	Senior First Aid activity booklet	nd
4/4	Public First Aid course manual	1982

5. Plans and Drawings

5/1	Plans and drawings, St John House	1958-1991
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6. Ephemera

6/1	Launceston Area: St John Ambulance stationery; nomination form 1942; certificates; program, St John House opening December 1959; invitations; Australian Railways First Aid Competition results November 1975; National Council of Women Launceston exhibition program 1959; Royal Showground plan;	1942-1995
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Launceston Chamber of Commerce invitation September 1959; Punchbowl Primary School Environmental Awareness Day program November 1991; Launceston Bank for Savings stationery

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| 6/2 | State: leaflets; flyers; order of service St John annual service, St David's Cathedral, Hobart July 1981; centenary logo; program Cadet Championships, George Town May 1972; bag; <i>Newsletter</i> December 1986 | 1972-1991 |
| 6/3 | National: lapel pins; leaflets; programs; invitations; advertising brochures mainly relating to the Priory of Australia | 1960-1985 |

OTHER SOURCES

Launceston Reference Library, Local History Collection, newspaper cutting files, 'Buildings - Launceston - York Street' and 'St John Ambulance Association'

St John Ambulance State Headquarters, Hobart, holds St John Ambulance Association, Launceston Centre minute book, 1887-1893

Ian Howie-Willis, *A century of service: history of St John in Australia 1883-1983*, Canberra, Order of St John, 1983