

# Historical Happenings

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! 900 YEARS!

This brief account gives some background to historical happenings going on in the world about the time of the Crusades. The third Crusade began in around 1190, when three significant people combined their resources to form an impressive army. The three people were King Richard I of England (known best as Richard the Lionheart), Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany ('Barbarossa' means 'red beard' and he had one) and King Philip II of France, who was blind in one eye.

The early Knights of St John were already serving sick and injured people in Jerusalem at this time. Indeed it was over seventy years, back in 1113, that Pope Paschal II had granted the knights the privilege of being an autonomous Order. The knights could elect their own Grand Master who could report directly to the Pope. These original Knights of St John were also known as Hospitallers, signifying their humanitarian role.

The third Crusade did not exactly go as planned! Emperor Frederick fell off his horse as he was crossing the Saleph River in Anatolia and either drowned or was killed by the fall. That left King Richard and King Philip. They were initially friends, but later they argued and after capturing the city of Acre, Philip fell ill and left the Crusade. That left King Richard in charge. He failed to regain Jerusalem, made a truce with his opponent Saladin, and left the Holy Land.

On his way back to England, King Richard was captured by King Philip's men and was imprisoned in the castle at Durnstein, a pretty little town on the banks of the Danube River in what is now Austria. He eventually found his way back to England only to find his younger brother John had crowned himself King John. King Richard sorted that out, but then died in 1199, so John really did become King of England. While in this role John raised taxes and seized property and became extremely unpopular with the public (possibly, as legend would have it, including Robin Hood!). In 1215, the barons forced King John to sign the Magna Carta, a document that ever since has influenced laws throughout much of the world.

Throughout all this turmoil the original Knights of St John continued their work in Jerusalem.

Why relate all this history? It is to remind us that this year (2013) is 900 years since the official establishment of the original Order of St John. The precise date the Ancient Order came into being is 15 February 1113, when Pope Paschal II signed the Papal Bull known as 'Pie postulation voluntatis' (above right). Prior to that signing the work in the hospice run by Brother Gerard was done by Benedictine monks. It is this original Order that provided the inspiration to form the Venerable Order to which we now belong.

**Question: Who succeeded the Blessed Gerard as Master of the Hospitallers?**

**Brian Fotheringham**  
Chairman



# historical society



Pope Paschal II



**Answer to the last question: Air Vivas were produced in Australia by CIG Australia, CIG = Commonwealth Industrial Gases.**



The St John Ambulance  
**Historical Society**  
of South Australia