



# historical society

## Historical Happenings

### THE SERVICE MEDAL OF THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

Many of you will have seen, and some of you may have been awarded, the St John Service Medal. It may be awarded to members of St John who have given valued and efficient service over many years. It is a "Service" medal, not a "Long Service" medal. The medal was first awarded in 1898.

If you look closely at the front of the medal (the "obverse" side) you will see the image of someone you may well recognise, but have never met. It is a representation of Queen Victoria, the first Sovereign Head of the Order of St John.

The words around her image are:

**Victoria + D + G + Britt + Reg + F + D + IND + IMP.**

Translated this means: Victoria = Queen Victoria; DG = De Gratia = by the Grace of God; Britt. Reg. = Britannium Regina = Queen of England; FD = Fidei Defensor = Defender of the Faith; Ind. Imp. = India Imperatrix = Empress of India.

On the outer circle of the back of the medal (the "reverse" side) are the words:

**Magnus Prioratus Ordinis Hospitalis Sancti Johannis Jerusalem in Anglia.**

Translated from the Latin this means "Grand Priory of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England".

Also on the reverse of the medal are:

in the centre, The English Royal Coat of Arms,  
on the left, The Badge of the Order bearing a shield charged with the Arms of the Order,  
on the right, The Badge of the Order bearing a Shield charged with the Arms of the Prince of Wales,  
at the top there is a Crown and below there are the Prince of Wales Feathers and the Prince's Motto "Ich Dien" = "I serve".

There is more to find on closer examination of the medal. You may note St John's wort as the floral emblem. More details are set out in an exhibit in the St John Museum in Unley.

**Question: What makes the St John Service Medal different from any other currently issued medal?**

The answer will be in the next edition of Open Airways.

**Brian Fotheringham**  
Chairman



**Answer to the question in the last edition of Open Airways: The training aid purchased by St John using money bequeathed by the late Sir Joseph Verco was a skeleton. It is on display at the St John Museum in Unley.**