

# Historical Happenings

## When was the first First Aid Administered?

Curiously, there may be several correct answers to this question. Much depends on when to apply the term "First Aid" to various early treatments.

Some would say the best answer lies with the advent of the triangular bandage. That piece of equipment was introduced into the German Army by Friedrich von Esmarch with the specific intention that it be applied to injured soldiers to help stem bleeding or to support an injured limb. Esmarch was apparently the first to use the term first aid but he wrote in his native German.

The expression first aid was first used in English when Peter Shepherd's manual on First Aid was introduced in England in 1878.

Others would point out that the story of the Good Samaritan contained in the Bible should be the earliest example of first aid.

In the museum there is a picture of an image on the side of a vase painted by Sosias in about 500 BC. It shows Achilles binding up an arrow wound on the arm of Patroklos. Patroklos was a Greek military surgeon back in the times of Helen of Troy and the conflict she unwittingly caused. Is this the first?

Those with knowledge of the early history of medicine might well quote the sayings of Hippocrates who lived from 578 to 460 BC. Hippocrates is regarded as the Father of Modern Medicine and he pronounced on many subjects including wound care.

A study of Egyptian mummies shows that the ancient Egyptians were known to splint fractures.

So here are just some of the answers to the question posed in the title to this article.

Whichever way you look at it, as practicing first aiders, you are carrying on an ancient and honourable tradition.

Correction: The illustration of Alfred Muller Simpson's Life Membership Certificate dated 10 October 1887 was accidentally omitted from the Historical Happenings article in the June edition of Open Airways. Here it is! The original is in the museum.

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**Next Question:**

Where in the Bible is the story of the Good Samaritan?

**Brian Fotheringham**

Chairman



historical  
society .....



*Stone carving of The Good Samaritan at St John's Gate in London.*



*Alfred Muller Simpson's Life Membership Certificate - dated 10 October 1887.*

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**Answer to the last question:**

Simpson appliances are now absorbed into the Electrolux manufacturing group

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