

Historical Happenings

The Ambulance Cross

Members of St John Ambulance will be familiar with the eight pointed cross, the official badge of the Order of St John.

Some of you may have noticed a variant of the badge on some old First Aid to the Injured manuals. This so-called Ambulance Cross was devised by a Mr W Edwards in the 1920s when he was the Secretary to the Order of St John in England. It appears on the front cover of several editions of First Aid to the Injured.

The words surrounding the cross represent the eight qualities of an effective first aider as judged by Mr Edwards. They are: Resource, Dexterity, Sympathy, Perseverance, Discrimination, Explicitness, Observation and Tact.

Fred Lee is the author of a book with a rather intriguing title: "If Disney Ran Your Hospital; Nine and a Half Things You Would Do Differently". When his wife became ill with encephalitis and subsequently died, he later recalled that there were two kinds of hospital workers – those who showed compassion and those who seemed to treat patients with indifference. Thankfully, most were in the first category.

There is an old adage, "A satisfied patient has no story to tell. Only the dissatisfied and the very satisfied do". In a first aid context, a first-aider cannot be a great first-aider if they are just a good worker. They must provide a service that is better than people expect. No corporation, whether it be Disneyland or a hospital or a first aid service has a culture of just giving satisfaction. The aim is always higher than that. In Disneyland, Fred Lee writes, guidelines such as dress guidelines were treated as standards to be met. In some hospitals, standards were treated like guidelines with poor attention to detail.

Fred Lee's book aims to help hospitals to achieve a culture where compassion, kindness, empathy and comfort are increasingly evident and valued.

In his way Mr Edwards was seeking much the same outcome for St John.

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Next Question:

The heraldic unicorn on the St John badge arose from which country?

Brian Fotheringham
Chairman

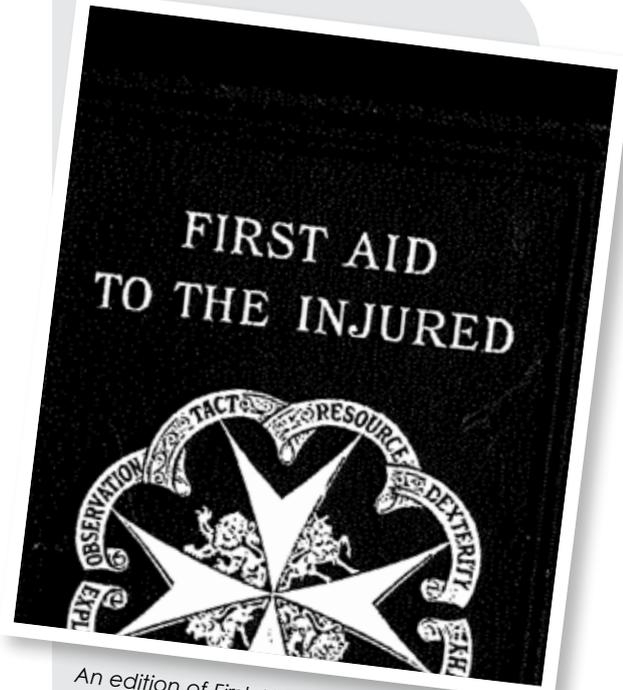
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Answer to the last question:

The story of the Good Samaritan is in Luke, Chapter 10, verses 30 to 37.



historical
society



An edition of First Aid to the Injured, featuring the St John Cross.



The St John Ambulance
Historical Society
of South Australia