



# historical society



**Answer to last month's question: The first official duty of the St John Ambulance Brigade in England was on 21 June 1887 on the occasion of Queen Victoria's silver jubilee.**



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

## Historical Happenings

### ANGASTON CADET CAMP

In 1950, District Officers Mrs Beatrice Williams and Mr Howard Hollands put forward a proposal that there be a camp for both Ambulance and Nursing Cadets. In today's social climate that would seem a perfectly reasonable request, but more than 60 years ago it raised eyebrows as separate camps for boys and girls would have been preferred by society. However the District Commissioner for South Australia, Dr E. A. R. Russell, gave his approval despite the views of the Chief Commissioner. It was the first mixed camp for St John Cadets in Australia and quite possibly the world.

One of the more unusual objects in the museum's collection relates back to the late 1950s when it first appeared at Angaston in either the fifth or sixth annual camp (the first camp was back in 1951). Mr Howard 'Dutchy' Hollands, the camp organiser, had asked a number of male officers to do a range of tasks in preparing for the Camp. The 'do' this and 'do' that requests led to the group being called the 'Do-Do'. This fitted in with the cadets' impression that officers were rather like extinct birds. The original extinct bird of the same name once inhabited Mauritius. In a 'formal' ceremony at the camp the Do-Dos mascot, as shown in the illustration, was unveiled and named 'Mauritius'.

Dr Hurst attended several camps, while Commissioner (1951 - 1953) living in his large two-door caravan at the campsite. On one camp day, as Dr. Hurst was about to have breakfast, there was a knock at his caravan door. He called out 'come in' and a conga line of scores of cadets filed through the caravan, in one door and out the other!

In the early years of the camp, transport to Angaston was by train, with the South Australian Railways providing special carriages. Bedding, in the form of palliasses, was courtesy of the Australian Army. 'Palliasse' is a word not often heard now. It means a mattress filled with straw. Various Do-Dos spent hours filling the empty palliasses (as supplied by the Army) with straw purchased from a supplier in Angaston. Incidentally, 'Angaston' was named after George Fife Angas, one of the founders of the colony of South Australia.

More than 10,000 people have joined in the fun, team building and companionship at the Annual St John Ambulance Cadet Camps over the years. A number of the senior participants of those camps (for example Lyn and Keith Dansie, Margaret and Bob Nunn, Raelene and Morrie Denham and David and Joy Heard to name just eight) are now members of the Historical Society. They can relate many more stories of what went on!

There were serious aspects too. Sunday morning Church Services, often in the Angaston Uniting Church, have been a feature with the collection going to the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. Over \$1,000 has been raised for the hospital in this way.

Reference: A Short History of St John Ambulance Angaston Cadet Camp 1951 - 2000 by former District Officer Cadets, Mr John Berry.

**Question: What is the geographical feature near Victor Harbor that is named after a member of the Angas family?**

**Brian Fotheringham**  
Chairman