



Celebrating
75 years
1947 - 2022

An oral history of St John Scotland,
its work and its volunteers



St John
Scotland

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This book is indebted to the work of Charles Burnett KStJ and the late Henry Tilling KStJ, whose 1997 history of the Order of St John in Scotland forms the backbone of our understanding of the organisation's founding and its work.

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FOREWORD

When the Priory of Scotland of the Order of St John was established in 1947, its founding members were committed to providing services that would make a real difference to people in Scotland. Seventy-five years on, St John Scotland continues to fulfil that aim, with our volunteers across the country serving their communities, improving health and saving lives.

Commissioned to celebrate our 75th anniversary, this book brings to life the history of our charitable work through the voices of the people at the heart of St John Scotland – our members and volunteers. I am very grateful to everyone who contributed to this book, so that we could capture where we are now, how we got here, and create this record as a legacy for the future.

If, reading this, you are already involved with St John Scotland, I hope you enjoy learning more about our history and some of the people who – like you – have played their part over the years.

And if you're not involved with us – yet – I hope this inspires you to become part of the St John Scotland family. In doing so you'll be joining an organisation with a proud history, and a bright future.

Eleanor Argyll

Chair, St John Scotland and Prior, Priory of Scotland of the Order of St John

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INTRODUCTION

As St John Scotland celebrates its 75th anniversary, this is the perfect time to reflect on how this organisation came into being, the work that it has done and that it continues to do, and the amazing people who made it all possible. Explored through archival research and oral testimony, this book brings to life the personal experiences of St John Scotland's members and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to improve lives since 1947.

Over thirty people shared their memories with us and in so doing have generated an impressive oral history archive exploring the organisation's rich history of service. Respondents talk about their involvement in fundraising activities, and recall the many ways that St John Scotland has sought to improve lives, from opening hospitals, care homes and hospices, to supporting local charities and Scottish Mountain Rescue, to delivering St John Scotland's own volunteer-led services such as CPR training and Patient Transport. Understated selflessness and a passion for helping others is evident throughout the testimonies, which tells its own story about the generous and determined nature of our volunteers.

Respondents also share their happiest memories of working with St John Scotland and their hopes for its future. What becomes clear from these testimonies is that St John Scotland and its volunteers are exceptionally well-placed to continue to serve the people of Scotland and beyond, and are ready to take on the challenges of the next 75 years.

This book is the culmination of a project undertaken to capture the 75-year history of the charitable work of St John Scotland. But to understand how we arrived at the founding of the organisation in the 1940s, we need to go back much further, to the time of the Crusades...

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

The Order of St John of Jerusalem was founded in the late eleventh century to care for the growing number of pilgrims making the long and dangerous journey to the Holy Land. The Order of St John established a hospice, dedicated to St John, which later became a hospital. It also managed hospitals on the pilgrim routes in modern France and Italy. In 1113, the Order of St John was formally recognised by Pope Paschal II and over time acquired properties throughout Europe, thus making it very wealthy. As its reputation grew, the Order became an international Order of Chivalry with established bases across Western Europe.



The Order of St John's headquarters were moved from Jerusalem after Muslim forces regained the city in 1291; the Order moved first to Cyprus, then to Rhodes, and then to Malta, in 1523, where they stayed until 1798 when forced to leave by Napoleon.



The Hospitallers came to wear on their black robes a white cross with eight points which, after their move to Malta, became known as the 'Maltese Cross'.



In Scotland, St Ninian had brought Christianity to the Lowlands in the fifth century, and had a small chapel built in Torphichen, West Lothian. When the Order established itself in Scotland in the twelfth century, it was granted Torphichen by King David I; this became the headquarters, or 'Preceptory'. The Order held land throughout the country, and when the Knights Templar were suppressed in the 14th century, the Order of St John acquired their property in Scotland, further adding to its wealth. From Scotland, men and money were sent for the work of the Order in the Mediterranean.

It being Catholic, the Order was dissolved by Henry VIII in the 1500s and the Order of the Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem ceased to exist

in the British Isles. All Order property in England was confiscated by the Crown, while in Scotland the property was transferred to lay owners.

Torphichen Preceptory



Centuries later, in the 1820s, émigré knights from France joined in a plan to found a non-Catholic branch of the Order in England; this was not recognised in Rome. Nevertheless, it continued to grow propelled by the medieval Hospitallers' traditional mission to care for the sick and injured. By the 1860s it was well established and had attracted some attention from the Royal Family. In 1881, Queen Victoria granted it a charter making it a British Order of Chivalry, with the Sovereign as head of the Order throughout the British Realm.

The Order continued the traditional work of caring for the sick and was responsible for the founding of the Eye Hospital at Jerusalem (1882), the establishment of the St John Ambulance Association (1877) and Brigade (1887), which provided first aid and ambulance care as increasing

numbers of people moved to cities and were living and working in dangerous industrial conditions.

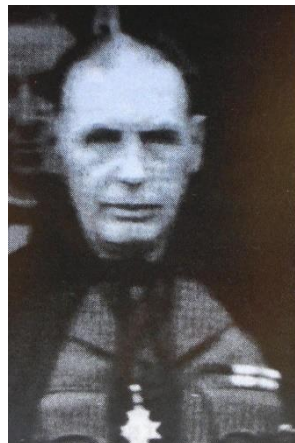
Around the same time, the St Andrew's Ambulance Association (founded 1882) was starting to provide similar services in Scotland. However, in 1908, the Order reached a formal agreement that decided that St Andrew's would provide first aid services in Scotland, and St John in England. This meant that there was no real opportunity for a separate St John organisation in Scotland, and explains why even today, unlike other St John organisations around the world, St John Scotland does not provide the first aid services others are famous for. It would take until the 1940s for the Order in Scotland to establish significant charitable services, when Scottish members of the Order decided, despite not being able to provide first aid services, that there was still plenty a St John organisation could do to fulfil the Order's aims to care for the sick and vulnerable here.



1947 – 2022

In March 1945, three Scottish Knights of the Order met in Glasgow and decided that it was time for the Order to resume work in Scotland. The Order's chapters around the world are known as Priories, and the Knights were granted permission to petition the Grand Prior of the Order that there should be a Priory of Scotland. Two years later, in 1947, the Priory of Scotland of the Order of St John was officially made an independent establishment within the Grand Priory of Britain. On 26th June that year, the first Prior of Scotland, the Earl of Lindsay, was installed in the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh. The pre-existing agreement not to compete with the St Andrew's Ambulance Association made it possible for the Order in Scotland to be more flexible in its approach, and it has

been involved in a greater variety of charitable services than most other St John establishments.



**Founding members Capt. W.D. Cargill Thompson,
Col. Sir Colin MacRae of Feirlinn, and Major John Forrest-Hamilton**



**First Investiture of the Priory of Scotland,
Palace of Holyroodhouse, June 1947**

Today using the name 'St John Scotland,' it and the other St John organisations around the world are unusual in that they operate both as registered charities and as chapters of an order of chivalry. In Scotland, the two have always been intertwined and the Board, as well as being responsible for the organisation's charitable services, is also responsible for looking after the Priory of Scotland's operations, including nominations for membership of the Order, and the Order's annual service and investiture.

Gordon Casely, a Member of the Order in Scotland, explains its structure:

"On the chivalric side, a person joins as a Member, moving up to Officer, Commander, Knight, Knight Grand Cross. People are recognised for their work, contribution to the community, or to the Order itself. St John is a confraternity; both men and women equally working towards the same goal. They also hold an Annual Festival which moves around Scotland, and a religious service and Investiture, and an Annual Service is held in Torphichen.

[St John Scotland] is also split into geographic areas. These are headed by local people and his/her associates who may or may not be members of the Order. They bring local people into their local committees, get them involved [in the organisation's charitable work], get them enthused and inspired."

In the early years, local committees of St John were established across Scotland; these had a two-tier structure. A local Order committee was made up of Order members, would be involved in ceremonial activities, and oversee how a local Area's funds were spent. Alongside them, a 'Friends of St John' committee (later renamed St John Associations) were made up of both Order members and volunteers and were often involved directly in running the organisation's charitable services, such as care homes, as well as raising money to fund these and other activities.

St John's Scotland Head Office, 21 St John Street, Edinburgh



Margaret Balfour, Edinburgh Area, shares her impressions of the Order when she became involved during the 1960s, and how it has since changed:

“The Order was very male dominated, even the Festivals; it was quite some time before ladies were even asked to help at the Festival, and that was by handing out the Order of Service. But previous to that, the ladies weren’t asked to help. But then it got to the stage where it was difficult probably to get sufficient men



to cover it, that they had to ask the ladies to help. It didn't bother me, I just thought, 'ladies are doing a lot of work and weren't getting the recognition for it', and that's why I thought it was really an honour when I was asked to be Chairman [of the Edinburgh committee].

I think, just the way society has changed, that people have

realised that there are more equal opportunities now. They had to move with the times. It was businessmen, probably, that originally started it and resurrected it in Scotland, and eventually all the wives got involved, especially in running the fayres, the cake stall and that, and gradually from there."

The two-tier structure remained in place until 2006, when the Chapter (Board) of St John Scotland decided it would be best to amalgamate the committees, creating just one committee in each area. This was done to streamline processes and avoid duplication, while simultaneously making it easier for all people involved in St John, whether they were a member of the Order or not, to contribute fully. The change was also intended to create a stronger sense of togetherness across the organisation.

Douglas Dow (pictured next page, back row, third from left), Dunbartonshire Area, recalls that period:



“[I] became the Depute Chairman to Donald Fullarton of the St John Order Committee for Dunbartonshire. There were people on both Committees doing the same things... It made a lot more sense; it's a lot more efficient now than it was, no question about that.

In the Association we had a say in the proposals to the Order Committee, saying we would like to raise money for the Arrochar Mountain Rescue Team, because we raised money for Mountain Rescue at Arrochar long before the Order nationally supported Mountain Rescue. We would have to make a proposal to the Order Committee, who would normally sanction it, and if they had any reservations they went up to HQ. If we needed any money, we would have to refer to them, the Order Committee, to see if they would release money... to spend some money on setting up costs for whatever project we were doing, which would be fundraising. And then when we raised the money, we didn't keep the money, we gave it to them and it went up to the Order because it was all Order money, and then we had to ask to get it back to hand it over to Mountain Rescue. So, it was a cumbersome bureaucratic

process, which I don't think we needed to do in terms of checks and balances and so forth. I think what we've got now is infinitely superior."

Alex Craib, Highland, also commented on the change:



"Historically, the Association raised the funds, and the Order dispersed the funds. In the Highlands, most people in the Association were members of the Order as well, so we all mixed, and we all worked together for the good of the Order.

It was quite a number of years ago now, I don't remember the exact year, I do remember that we had a transition from having the two separate organisations to moving into one, and in the Highlands, it was fairly seamless. We had no big problems with the transition from losing the Association to everyone being in the Order."

The relationship between the two sides of the organisation has been reflected in the names it has been known by over the years. Founded in 1947 as the 'Priory of Scotland of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem' (or 'Priory of Scotland of the Order of St John' for short), it conducted charitable activities as the 'Order of St John' across Scotland. The Associations would also brand themselves as, for example, the 'Fife St John Association', raising funds and organising the events on behalf of the Order.

In the mid-2000s, around the same time the local committees were changing to a single structure, the organisation began to informally use the name ‘St John Scotland’. Some felt it was more attractive (and perhaps memorable) to the general public. In 2017, the organisation became incorporated, legally changing its name for all operations to ‘St John Scotland’. In 2022, in keeping up to date with modern thinking around brand identity but not wishing to lose sight of its origins and traditions, the organisation carries out charitable services as ‘St John Scotland’, and reserves use of the Priory of Scotland of the Order of St John for chivalric and ceremonial activities. For simplicity, those terms will be used throughout the rest of this book.

St John Scotland Areas, 2022

Area	Year of establishment
Aberdeen & North East	1948
Angus & Dundee	1980
Ayrshire & Arran	2008
Central	1972 (as ‘Stirlingshire’)
Dumfries & Galloway:	
West Galloway	1977
Dumfries	1988
Dunbartonshire	1977
Edinburgh & South East:	
Edinburgh	1948
South East	2001
Fife	1974
Glasgow	1962
Highland	1977
Perth & Kinross	1975
West Lothian	1969 (as ‘Torphichen’)



FUNDRAISING

THE WORK BEGINS

Founded as Scotland was emerging from the Second World War, the Priory of Scotland of the Order of St John was established to help the sick and vulnerable, and provide services not yet readily available on the fledgling NHS. Whilst the Order had some big plans, it needed funding and volunteers to actualise them. It already had an eager membership, and the Order's long and laudable reputation quickly attracted many new volunteers.

Fundraising started immediately, with members across Scotland arranging social events, flag days, sales of work, and by seeking legacies. As the decades went on, Aberdeen and Edinburgh opened gift shops, and these proved a valuable source of revenue. Monies were used to support a host of national commitments and the Hospital in Jerusalem, but time and effort were spent on discovering how each committee could cater for the sick and vulnerable in its own area. Many of these projects were small-scale, but collectively the Order continued to fulfil its aims and obligations.

As time went on, members continued to raise funds by these tried and tested means and also experimented with new and creative ideas, some of which succeeded, some others less so. That passion to raise funds for

St John Scotland's services remains vibrant and energetic. Read on to learn more about these activities.

**Charity Ball at Wishaw to raise money for the Foundation Hospital,
March 1947**



“I was introduced [to St John Scotland] by Mrs Ellen Hay, who was the Chairperson of Leven Branch, who asked me to join as they were needing help with a project in Leven... In 1976 I started working as a volunteer, providing home baking and spending time with the elderly residents in the care home in Leven. At Christmas we would give the residents a Christmas present and an extra special event with carols and homemade mince pies. We used to have coffee mornings twice a month in Ellen Hay's home to raise money for Fife projects, as well as social evenings and sometimes coffee mornings, at Mrs Jean Bingham's home in Newburn. [I enjoyed the] satisfaction of being able to chat with the elderly people in the care home and see their faces smiling, and to learn what a hard life it was for them when they were young. Some had

husbands who worked in the local coal mines. Most of all, it brightened up their day and they looked forward to the next week's coffee morning. I also enjoyed working with the local Leven Branch members, with some becoming good friends."

Mary Speirs Gilmour, Fife

"We would do bucket collections at football grounds. We had two premier league teams, one in Dingwall and one in Inverness, who very generously allowed us to have bucket collections at their games; so, we would do these every year. Sadly, [with Covid], that's not been possible, but we would like to do that again. We've had fashion shows organised by Mrs Fullerton. She took command of that and did an excellent job. One of the national department stores in Inverness allowed us to have the fashion show there and she had the local TV news reporter to come there. She did very well, and it was successful. We've had 'Antiques Roadshow' evenings where a local antiques expert would give a talk on some of his antiques and also encourage members to bring along an antique and do a valuation on it. That was very successful. We've had musical recitals. We've had one of the eye surgeons from the hospital in Inverness, who served in the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem; he worked there with his wife, and they've come back to Inverness; and they gave talks on their experiences in Jerusalem. We had an evening where a military colonel gave a talk on his experiences in the army... We've had various fundraising events. One of our members had a stall at RAF Lossiemouth on their Open Day and that was very successful. So, we try to vary our activities to raise money."

Alex Craib, Highland

In Aberdeen, Sheena MacBride recalls the St John Association raising funds by holding coffee mornings that were quite well attended, and some of the members went to the St John Hospital to ensure that the

older people enjoyed a lovely Christmas Day; they looked after them and presented them with treats.



“We also had a musical evening at the Bridge of Don Barracks, and we had ‘The Doctors of Swing’, who were all doctors, and they had jazz, and then we had Gardeners’ Question Time at David’s house, and we had a strawberry tea afterwards. We had carol services in Torry Church, cinema evenings; we went to see ‘The Last King of Scotland’, it was a private viewing of it. We go to the [Highland] games, and Banchory Show, and Friends of Duthie Park, and we have raffles, prizes for the kids, lucky dips for the kids.”

Sheena MacBride, Aberdeen & NE

“One of the things, when I was most active, was that I spoke to Valerie Dunbar’s husband, Pete, about having a Scottish Concert Night, because obviously, the Fiddlers’ Rally had run out of steam; so he agreed to organise the Scottish Concert, this was in 1995. It’s a bit sad really, because I got a date for the 1st of September from the Council, and in June, Pete had a heart attack and died. And I said, ‘Well that’s it, just forget about it.’ But then Valerie phoned me up and said, ‘I’d like you to go ahead with the concert. I will organise it and we’ll dedicate it to Pete.’ I thought this was very nice. So, we did that, and one of the things that happened was free publicity on this, as the Alexander Brothers were coming along, because Valerie knew them, and they’d been in the Pride of Scotland, and Pride of the Clyde, and things like that. So, we had

Peter Morrison, Valerie Dunbar, and the Alexander Brothers. So, they were top of the bill."

David Waddell, Central

STAGE SHOW FOR CHARITY

SOME of the biggest names in Scottish entertainment get together in Falkirk Town Hall next month.

And thanks to their efforts more local blind and disabled people will enjoy a free luxury holiday.

The occasion is a gala Charity Concert on Friday, September 1, and the star line-up includes such great Scots as lovely songstress Valerie Dunbar, hilarious comedian-compere Eddie Devine, and legendary singing duo, the Alexander Brothers. Add on the famous Linn Choir from Greenock

and concert-goers can look forward to a great night out.

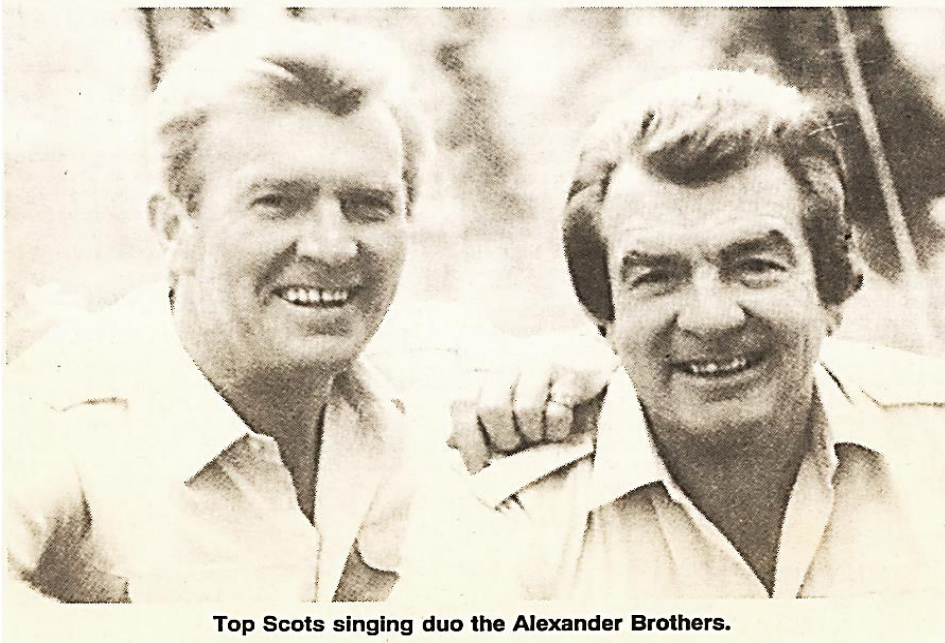
Organising the event are members of the local branch of the St. John Association of Scotland. Spokesman David Waddell said: "Valerie Dunbar has been a great supporter of the Order of St. John for many years and we're delighted she has agreed to bring so many big names to Falkirk."

It will be Valerie's first public appearance since the sudden death in June of her husband and manager, Pete Shipton. He was arranging the concert, so Valerie

decided to carry on the organisation and dedicate the show to her husband.

All proceeds will go to the St. John Association's Sir Andrew Murray Holiday Home for the Blind and Disabled at Strathyre. The Home provides free holidays in beautiful surroundings for 400 people every year from Central Region — and 70 per cent of those come from Falkirk District.

Tickets cost £5 (£4 concessions) and are available now from the Steeple Information Centre, Falkirk. Tel. 628038 for details.



Top Scots singing duo the Alexander Brothers.

“St John had a meeting in Edinburgh; we all got notice. I believe it was in Princes Street, and it was to be about fundraising, and my husband and I went along and were talking to people about how we raised funds, and Glasgow area were there talking about the Annual Art Exhibition. I said to David, ‘We have a big space, and we have car parking, we could do this, we’ll have an art exhibition.’ So, we did have an art exhibition in the MacRobert Restaurant [at Archibald Russell Court], which had been all converted. It’s amazing what you can do. I put an advertisement in the *Falkirk Herald*, inviting people to display their work. I contacted Falkirk Art Club, because it dawned on me that all these pictures would need to hang up and I’d been at their exhibitions before. Anyway, they kindly lent us all their stands for hanging pictures. We had a huge number of paintings; everything had to be catalogued. We did sell quite a lot of paintings.”

Charlotte Waddell, Central

St John Association Gift Shop, No. 24a Albyn Place, Aberdeen



"It was the beginning of the [19]90s and that's when I got involved with working in the [St John] shop at the hospital. I was asked if I'd like to work with a Miss Sheila Smith. She was something else. She was really a nice lady but if you didn't do what she wanted to do, it wasn't done that way. So, we worked in the shop on a Monday... I think we started about 10am and then people dribbled in and out. We sold china, glass, table covers. Sometimes somebody brought something in that someone worked out was quite expensive, so, Daphne Boyle, I think it was, would take it away and get it valued and if it was worth more, it was sent to the auction house or something, so that it wouldn't go for a £1 or whatever in the shop... The shop closed when the hospital closed, around 1995, and by that time, I was part of the Association."

Sheena MacBride, Aberdeen & NE

"In those days [1980s and 1990s], we could run a race night in Helensburgh and have three hundred people at it, and there was raffles and things; and we raised quite a lot of money that way. We also had the usual can collections. One of the Order Committee members' wives had a connection with the fashion industry and she ran fashion shows and they made a lot of money. We ran fashion shows in Helensburgh, too, in my time as Chairman of the Association for Dunbartonshire. A very nice lady, Pamela Lyons, sadly deceased, she ran them and we made a lot of money and it was a very popular evening. We've done various things; we've had Bridge Nights and we had a garden party in the grounds of a large house in Helensburgh and it was a very well supported thing in the summer. It was one of those houses with the grounds that went down to the sea, so there was a lot of people there and we were able to do stalls and spinning wheels, all the usual stuff... We also raise money, and have for many years, through what we call 'The Hundred Club'; you pay £12 a year and you get a number, and if you pay £24 you get two numbers, and basically, we have four draws a year for £10, £10, and £50, that's £70 four times a

year. Basically, that's the reward people get if they're lucky enough to win."

Douglas Dow, Dunbartonshire



"My favourite event was a good while after I was enrolled in the Order. I organised three fashion shows, three years running, because we had been to a meeting and heard about a lady who worked in the Children's Ward in Raigmore Hospital. They're actually called 'play therapists'; it sounds as if all they do is play with the children, but they don't, they do an awful lot more than that. They were struggling to be able to provide things for the

children and [we] decided that St John would support the Children's Ward for three years. I think we raised over £3,500 in the three years and that was great fun, it was absolutely brilliant, it really was. You've no idea the people that I had to model clothes, everyday people. My husband worked at the garage at that time, and he had some of the mechanics and salesmen were doing the male modelling, the women in the offices were doing that. I worked in the hospital; I had nurses, male nurses as well, doing the modelling; it was great fun... My own hairdressers came and did the girls' hair, and friends did their make-up, everything. People were so willing to do it and do it for nothing, because it was for charity. It was really, really, good, super fun."

Gwen Fullerton, Highland

"A lot of them were the bucket collections at football because, I think, some of the gentlemen had connections at the two football teams, Caley Thistle here and Inverness Ross County further north, especially as Ross County were getting higher up the tables and up into the higher leagues... We tend to do a couple of small [events] and a big one. Over the first few years my Mum organised fashion shows and things like that. We've also had daffodil teas. A lady who lived up on the hills just outside Inverness, she opened her garden up for a daffodil tea one afternoon and we had stalls, and she actually opened up the ground floor of her house as well, and there were stalls with baking and there were chairs outside where people could sit and have their tea. It was always that we would try and do one big event if possible, and put a lot of focus on that and get as much as we could, and then do a couple of smaller ones like a bucket rattle in the high street, things like that. So, there's always been something."

Kirsty Fullerton, Highland

"We've had collection cans in the whole area. I put quizzes into some of the shops. At the cattle shows, we've had stands but,

sadly, although it's a charity, we are still actually charged for putting a charity stand in at some of the shows. I have gone out to various organisations in the Machars, and when people get to know what you're involved in, they'll say, 'Will you come and talk to us Guilds, or Women's Guilds', so we go along and give them a background of what we do, and very kindly they give a donation at the end towards it. And it's amazing when you do these talks, how many people didn't know about us. We also have leaflets, so we put them into doctors' surgeries and some of the shops take them too, and it gives them the details of what we do."

Liz Hamilton, West Galloway



"Other than the last thing that I did, which was standing outside Tesco with a can in my hand, was the Glamis Extravaganza. The Glamis Extravaganza was held every year, until Covid came along,

with its vintage motor vehicles; and it's in the grounds of Glamis Castle. And we always had a stall and people came along and we told them a bit about CPR and defibrillators and handed out flyers. That was on a Saturday and Sunday, once a year you were doing that. It was very well organised, and we all took a share of four hours each on the stall, and it was lovely; we nearly always had sunshine."

Bill Harvey, Angus & Dundee



"The fundraising activities in Glasgow were social events, like dinners, and a lot of things like tombolas, raffles, and things like that, to make money for Glasgow... A great deal later we moved here [Dunbartonshire]. So, I organised a St John soiree every year at Ross Priory, and I had one this year; and that's dinner and professional musical entertainment, and people came to that. I had fifty-two [guests] at it this year, which is really remarkable, and it raised a lot of money for St John. I paid for everything myself. I feel that as a Dame of the Order I can't sit back and do nothing. I want to do something and I'm very keen to do this, and they all love it; Jim Bingham, and Douglas

Dow, and all these people come to it, they all love it. So, it's nice, very satisfying for me. So that's what I've done for several years now, apart from giving money myself to St John in Edinburgh. And if I'm not going to the Festival, I would send them a cheque for £100 to help with the organisation. I do that regularly."

Katharine Liston, Dunbartonshire



‘For our first [art] sale in 1999, we were fortunate to hire what seemed an ideal venue just off the city centre. The display area was a spacious room with large north facing windows giving excellent light. Although one floor up and with no lift, we set to carrying all the equipment and paintings to our area, then set to laying out the display. Strangely, we noticed that the permanent staff working in the building were not that welcoming. With our setup almost complete, I was summoned to the manager’s office to be confronted by him and the workers’ union representative who was threatening to close the place down by calling a strike of his staff. The building was the headquarters of St Andrew’s Ambulance, and the staff were under the impression that our presence was the start of a takeover bid by St John. It took much discussion to convince the union representative that our choice of venue was based solely on the available space and north-facing light source. Eventually, all was settled, and our first sale could go

ahead. It proved to be successful, achieving a substantial profit.'

Charles Munro, Glasgow

"I think we've had some fascinating fundraising events... We've had 'Beating the Retreat' with pipe bands, which are normally two pipe bands, and the Army Training Core have been very good at providing one, and in Aberdeen, the Robert Gordon School has another; they have their own school band and seeing the two put together and playing the traditional 'End of Day' has been wonderful. It's a kind of different event where people will come, and I would always say that the money that is extracted is extracted painlessly, and they very happily give up and help us."

Stuart MacBride, Aberdeen & NE

Keith Stirling, Chairperson, West Lothian Area, has for many years been involved with Torphichen Preceptory, of which St John Scotland now has custodianship through Historic Environment Scotland. The West Lothian committee maintains the premises and offer tours and admission each year between April to September. Around twenty-five volunteers assist. The venue also is available to hire for weddings.

"I took on the sort of fundraising and the publicity side [of St John Scotland's work in West Lothian] and also the Preceptory rota. During the summer months we spend quite a bit of time there, but I tend to keep myself to the sides as a stand-in, in case there are any hiccups; and what we tend to do between Ian [Wallace] and I, we cover the Preceptory rota and also any tours or weddings that take place. We are trying to increase the wedding activity and we've had quite a few enquiries recently, and they seem relatively positive - because we get £500 income from that, which is a nice cash generator. And then with Historic [Environment] Scotland, we get the key-keeping fee for that, which is approximately £2,500 a year. So, it's quite nice to have that; it's a nice money-spinner. We have some interesting visits from various groups. We had the



700th Anniversary, we had the Clan Wallace people from America, and then we had groups from Australia, and then on a regular basis we have all sorts of people coming from China, America, the Far East. It's a very interesting thread of visits, and I think possibly, when Dan Brown wrote the Da Vinci Code and the Rosslyn Chapel thing, it generated interest in our part of the world as well, because invariably, we get quite a number of

people who have been to Rosslyn Chapel and then come to Torphichen.

We regularly ran cabaret evenings with a guest artist, and stuff like that. We ran a Whisky Trail Exercise for a £1 a go, and you can raise a couple of hundred pounds in that direction. Up until Covid, we had a regular Robert Burns Tribute Evening, and we had Christmas Eve activities, and at my previous house, The Beeches, we held an annual garden fête, which was a nice fundraiser and which we will be doing at the farmhouse, here, in the future, when things settle



down a bit better. [Keith explained that] The Whisky Trail Exercise is basically a card, with one hundred malt whiskies [instead of numbers], and it costs £1; you might sell 200 or 300, sheets raising £300; and the winning prize is a £40 bottle of malt whisky... The Cabaret Evenings can generate from £600 upwards, and the garden fêtes can raise almost £1,000.”

Keith Stirling, West Lothian



“Because I was involved, I ended up with my daughter and my husband becoming involved, just through helping me, and Susan started off helping in the [St John Association charity] shop [in Stockbridge], especially when we were doing the Saturday, unpacking goods that came in, or displaying them. And this friend... was able to tell Susan how to display things on the shelf. So, she got a flair for that and for doing the window, because we had a shop window, so we were able to display goods.”

Margaret Balfour, Edinburgh

“Obviously, Covid has restricted our activities quite badly, but that’s for the future, and we have about five projects that we intend to do for our 75th Anniversary. We’re going to have a ‘Wine Tasting’ in the Preceptory; I’ll be doing a garden fête; we’ve got our Lord Lieutenant who’s going to do a sponsored walk; and we’ve got our local Committee member who’s also our local Councillor, and he’s going to be doing Ben Lomond; and my new fundraising officer, he’s going to be doing Hadrian’s Wall. So, there are quite a few things in the pipeline that should create quite a bit of activity. And also, there are three civic weeks in Bathgate, Linlithgow and Whitburn, and we intend to set up St John’s stalls there on their particular days to do St John activities and a bit of CPR, and generally promote the activities of St John Scotland.”

Keith Stirling, West Lothian

A page from David Waddell's fundraising scrapbook

St John Auction 2000
Debra Harte - Albert Hall

ORDER OF ST. JOHN: The Central Branch is promoting a Silent Auction to raise funds of the Order's Home for the Blind and Disabled at Strathyre. The Auction will be held in the Albert Hall, Stirling, on Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. Tickets are £3 (including a glass of wine and savouries. If you would like to donate an item, or wish to book tickets, contact David Waddell on (01324) 624735. A date for the diary is April 20 when the Order will hold a Fashion Show by Options of Linlithgow in the Inchyra Grange Hotel, Polmont. Tickets (£10) from committee.

promotes Fashion Show

2009
ORDER OF ST. JOHN: A large party of members from the Central Branch attended the Annual Festival of St. John at Dumfries on June 20 and Galloway Council on the Thursday; and on Friday the service and investiture were held in Crichton Memorial Church followed by lunch. Central Branch members who took part in the investitures were: promotion to Commander - David Waddell (past chairman) and Alasdair Gillies; to Officer - Robert Ferguson and Alexander; to Serving Sister - Jean Gardner and Margaret Hay.

** Festivals **

2000

ORDER OF ST. JOHN: A large party from the Central Branch attended the annual Festival of St. John in Dunfermline. A reception was hosted by Frife Council took place in the Glen Pavilion, Pittencrieff Park, on June 22. The Festival Service and Investiture was held in Dunfermline Abbey last Friday. Several Central received appointments and promotions. In particular, it was announced the Mrs Agnes Barr had been promoted to 'Dame'. Dates for the diary: September 20 - Antiques Roadshow by Christie's of Edinburgh in the Dobbie Hall; and October 28 - Ceilidh in the Dobbie Hall. In a recent fundraiser of the Order's Home for the Blind, Disabled and Aged at Strathyre, the sum of £800 was raised through the bottle stall and the sale of ice cream, eggs and rose bushes at the combined charities fete at Viewforth, Stirling, last Saturday.

1999
ORDER OF ST. JOHN: A large party from the Central Branch attended the annual Festival of St. John which was held in Aberdeen. A reception was hosted by Aberdeen City Council in the Beach Ballroom, giving members the opportunity to socialise with those from other districts. The Festival Service was held in St. Machar's Cathedral and several members from Central Branch took part, receiving appointments and promotions in the Order of St. John. Future branch fundraising are: concert in Falkirk Town Hall on September 26; and ceilidh in the Albert Hall, Stirling, on

promotes Norwegian Band & Ceilidh

Stirling Fete Antiques Road Show Ceilidh

ORDER OF ST. JOHN: The annual sherry party of the Central Area Association took place on August 11 when the social evening was combined with a raffle, once again, by Mrs Joyce Ross and Mrs Jeanette Smith. A large group of members and friends raised £800 for the association's holiday home for the blind and disabled at Strathyre. The next fundraising event is a concert by the Norwegian Army Brass Band on September 26. The evening is being co-

hosted by Falkirk Council and the Order of St. John.

1999
Sherry Parties

ORDER OF ST. JOHN: The Sherry Party of the Central Area Association was once again the summer highlight last month. The social evening, combined with a raffle, was organised by Joyce Ross and Jeanette Smith. Members and visitors and friends from other areas helped raise £700 for the association's Holiday Home for the Blind, Disabled and Aged at Strathyre. A date for the diary is Wednesday, Sept. 20, at 6.30 p.m. when the Antiques Roadshow by Christie's of Edinburgh will be held in the Dobbie Hall, Larbert. Tickets are £5 which includes the valuation of one item and a glass of wine. You can pay at the door or phone chairman David Waddell on (01324) 624735.

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Co-hosted by
Concert by Norwegian Army Brass Band Sept 26

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Antiques Road Show by Christie's of Edinburgh
Selt 20



As fundraising efforts continued, St John Scotland began to put its hard-earned funds towards good causes that served older and vulnerable people across Scotland. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the organisation built and operated hospitals, care homes and accommodations. In later years, St John Scotland's local Area committees supported other charities and organisations that were meeting local needs. This included, from the 1990s onwards, developing an enduring relationship with Scottish Mountain Rescue, which has seen St John Scotland become the biggest charitable donor to the teams, providing funds for vehicles and bases across the country.

In addition to its core services, which will be explored in the next chapter of this book, St John Scotland continued to support the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem, and more recently became involved with St John Malawi to provide effective healthcare in one of Africa's poorest countries.

Always seeking to help those in need, St John Scotland's members have delivered some remarkable results over the past seventy-five years. Read on to learn about some of those activities.



THE ST JOHN HOSPITALS

1st September 1947 saw the opening of the Order of St John Foundation Hospital at 7 Park Circus Place, in Glasgow. The Foundation Hospital was organised:

‘... for the benefit of the ‘black coated’ section of the community, without distinction of class, race or creed. The poor are very adequately catered for in the general hospitals, while the rich are usually able to make such arrangements as they require. Unfortunately, those of moderate means have often been unable to receive treatment under the conditions best suited for their speedy recovery.’

J. Forrest Hamilton, Chairman, Hospital Committee



Order of St John Foundation Hospital, 7 Park Circus Place, Glasgow



Fees were set within the means of those with relatively moderate incomes. A Linen Guild organised the supply and maintenance of all napery, bedding, cutlery, crockery and kitchen utensils. The first hospital functioned until December 1956 when the organisation opened a new one, the St John Foundation Hospital, known as Park Home, in 12 Claremont Terrace, Glasgow, in a building gifted to the Order. The new hospital was

operational until 1966, by which time the upgrading of National Health facilities in Glasgow had resulted in it hospital being underused. The organisation had never charged patients the full cost of their treatment and with low occupancy, losses could no longer be sustained.

In May 1949, the organisation acquired the Armstrong Nursing Home at Albyn Place, Aberdeen, which had an attached nurses' residence, and immediately renamed it the St John Nursing Home. Funded solely by private individuals rather than the public, St John ran the nursing home with some charity beds, eventually developing it into a



St John Nursing Home, Nos. 21, 22/23, and 24 Albyn Place

The house on the right was gifted to the Aberdeen Committee of the Order by Mrs J A Ross, OSTJ.

The ancient St John's Well, which was formerly sited in Gilcomston, is on the bottom left of the photograph.

full-scale hospital. In 1973, the Aberdeen nursing home was enlarged to provide a new operating theatre and ten private rooms. Operating difficulties and a subsequent drain of financial resources forced the organisation to make difficult financial decisions, which led to the sale of the St John Hospice at Lossiemouth to raise funds.



St John's Well

Notwithstanding, another major extension was constructed and the new facility, now named St John Hospital, was officially opened by the Duke of Gloucester in 1987.

The 1980s was a time of huge expansion for Aberdeen and the hospital benefitted from an increase in business from the thriving oil and gas industry. However, in 1995, St John Hospital was sold to a management buyout and its name was changed to Albyn Hospital. The sale came as a huge shock to Association members and staff alike:

“To have the staff of the hospital who knew it was owned by St John, discover from the local radio or from the Evening Express newspaper that the hospital had been sold, it was a disaster. They were in tears, they didn’t know where to look, what to say, it was a terrible, terrible thing to happen and hopefully a very large lesson was learned from that. Even the local Association Committee had no idea, they were kept totally out of it, so it did not go down well. They sold it to the General Manager, who in turn within two years sold it on for double the price. However, the money that came in from the hospital, we believe, was the start of the real money in St John Scotland; we think that is the nucleus that has been built on, so it served a very good purpose.”

Stuart MacBride, Aberdeen & NE



MEDICAL COMFORTS DEPOTS

Twenty Depots were opened during the organisation’s first year and another eleven in the next year. The first Depot was opened in Hamilton and was quickly followed by others in

Inverness, Isle of Skye, Jura, Kirkcudbright and St Andrews. These Depots were places where anybody could borrow commodes, crutches, bed rests and other aids. However, with the advent of the National Health Service, the provision of such resources became the responsibility of local health authorities and use of the depots dwindled (see below). By the late 1960s, the service ended.

PRIORY-CHAPTER MINUTE No. 894 (c) of 15th. DECEMBER, 1958.

"that Council after considering a report from The Lady Marjorie Dalrymple, on her recent visit to Medical Comforts Depots in the Western Highlands, and thereafter fully discussing the position as a whole of the Medical Comforts Depots throughout Scotland,- Recommended that where Depots have been consistently showing a Nil return, and where there is no efficient controller, such Depots would be considered redundant. Council further recommended that no new Medical Comforts Depots be opened, unless they could be operated by an efficient local organiser or Member of the Order!"



HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The first of St John Scotland's homes for older people was opened on 4th October 1950, at Carberry. The primary purpose of St John's Hospice for Elderly People, near Musselburgh, was to provide short-term holiday accommodation for up to ten guests during the summer, and longer-term rest during the remainder of the year.

The Carberry hospice (pictured on next page) was not always used to full capacity and, in 1981, it was closed after it had become increasingly expensive to maintain.

Margaret Balfour recalls helping to raise funds for the residential homes. When she left school in 1962, Margaret helped her aunt serve coffees at the Autumn Fayre, and her involvement with St John Scotland snowballed from there:



“The fayres were to raise funds for the St John’s homes in Lennox Row in Edinburgh, and in the grounds of Carberry Towers. Although the homes were residential, the original idea was for people coming out of hospital and needed a bit of convalescing before they went home to their own house. It was supposed to be a maximum of six weeks they stayed for; sometimes it stretched, it could be less, it could be more. If an elderly relative stayed with relations, they could go in there for a little holiday.”

When the Carberry hospice was later sold, Margaret remembers that St John Scotland used the capital from the sale to purchase another

property. After viewing several premises, the organisation settled on the house at Cramond and ran this jointly with Alzheimer's Association Scotland.

For over thirty years, Margaret and other volunteers also raised money through St John Scotland's charity shop. She was Convenor of the shop, working there Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, along with two young women who were participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme. The St John team also continued to raise funds through their various fayres, and volunteers did house-to-house collections in Musselburgh every week. They raised enough funds for minibuses, defibrillators, Mountain Rescue teams, and supported the 'Talking Newspapers.'

“We had a very successful 30th birthday party for the volunteers from the shop, and we were able to hold it at the house in Cramond, in 1999.”

Margaret Balfour, Edinburgh

The St John Home, 'Lindores', Cramond



In cooperation with the Lothian Hospitals NHS Trust, the Cramond Home accommodated people from south-west Scotland who needed treatment at the Oncology Unit in the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh. Although out-patients, these people needed accommodation as they lived

so far away but the only other accommodation on offer would be in a hospital ward. The project was operated in conjunction with St John Scotland's Dumfries and Galloway Area, who helped to transport the patients to and from Edinburgh. The patients benefited from the homely atmosphere of the comfortable house and its tranquil, semi-rural setting and were very appreciative of the service, particularly at such a difficult time for them and their families.

The next home emerged from the Edinburgh Home for Working Mothers with their Children. St John Scotland initially undertook to manage the home on behalf of a society; however, there was little demand for the service by that time and the owners decided to disband and sell the building. The organisation then bought it and began to operate it as a holiday home similar to the one at Carberry.

In 1957 a house named Skerry Brae near Lossiemouth (now a hotel and restaurant; pictured below) was gifted to St John by Mr G Boyd Anderson, Commander of the Order, to be used as a holiday home in summer and a convalescent home in winter. Later the building was adapted for use as a conference centre in winter, while remaining a holiday home in summer.



In 1977, the Fife St John Association opened the Old People's Holiday Flat in Leven as a venue for the elderly. This was followed two years later by St John Central Area's creation, in Strathyre, of Sir Andrew Murray House, Holiday Home for the Blind, Disabled and Elderly. The latter, a purpose-built holiday home, was a major undertaking, which cost £50,000 at the time. It was designed and equipped for older people and holiday guests with physical disabilities.

Set amidst some of Scotland's most scenic country, in the village of Strathyre, the accommodation consisted of four double rooms with private bathroom and kitchen, and one unit with two rooms, each with two single beds, bathroom and kitchen. There was also a comfortably furnished communal lounge, a large conservatory and a games room.

Sir Andrew Murray House



The Strathyre home offered opportunities for other charities to provide holidays for their clients at reasonable cost. Unfortunately, over a number of years, there was a steady decline in clients, so Chapter (the Board) took the decision, in August 2012, to close the facility as no longer sustainable.

Unfortunately, many of the holiday homes were not viable in the long term due to the reasons outlined above – declining visitor numbers, and new requirements to improve fire and safety standards and equipment, of which the cost of upgrading when balanced with the potential return was found to be unfeasible. Skerry Brae also suffered the disadvantage of being comparatively isolated, especially once the rail service began to diminish following the widely lamented Beeching cuts, which was a plan to increase the efficiency of the nationalised railway system in Great Britain. The eventual outcome was that St John Scotland decided to cut its losses and the short-stay homes were gradually sold.

It may be argued that, since 1947 St John Scotland had shown flexibility in adapting to changing social needs and circumstances. When one service became redundant, attention was turned toward a different area of concern. In selling the short-stay premises, the organisation freed up time, funds and energies, thereby allowing members and volunteers to explore new ways of helping those in need.

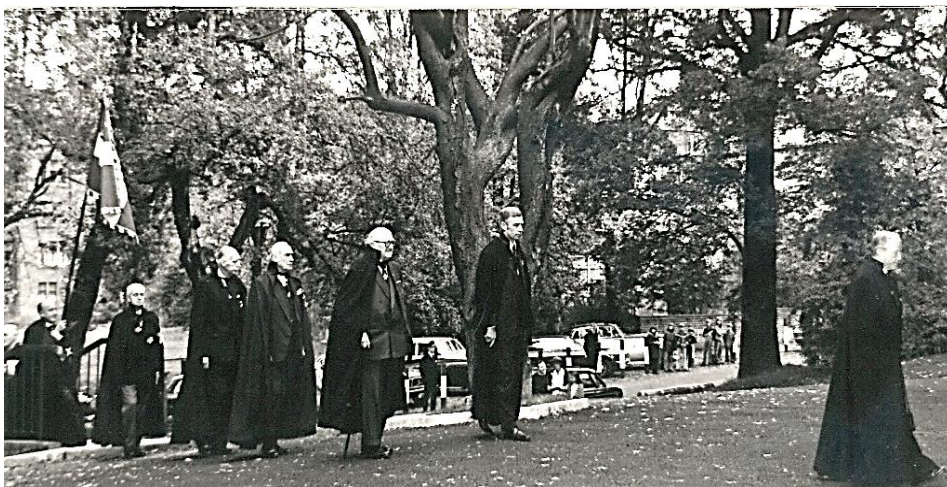
In October 1975, the St John (Glasgow) Housing Association opened St John Court in Partickhill. This was a first for St John Scotland - the provision of sheltered housing. St John's Court (pictured below) is located in an attractive residential part of Glasgow's west end where shops and public transport are nearby. The sheltered housing accommodation provided for twenty-five tenants in self-contained flatlets. Each had a bed/sitting room, a kitchenette and a bathroom, and a resident warden stayed in the premises. Tenants were able to retain their independence and privacy whilst also being able to access the company of other residents when they wished.

Iain Smith's involvement with St John Scotland was largely with the St John (Glasgow) Housing Association. He remembers that "The building was perfect, purpose built, big wide corridors, full double-glazed

windows, good ventilation throughout the building.” Iain thought St John Court was ideal for residents:

“This was one of the great benefits of this communal living in that the warden was the key to dreaming up ideas like bus runs. It wasn’t weekly. There wasn’t an Entertainments Officer like they have now in a care home, but if you got a sparky warden, they would organise indoor carpet bowling, quizzes, bridge, social afternoons, and a film. I remember one time, my wife and I enjoy dancing, and I remember we brought along our ceilidh band from Bearsden Church one Christmas, and they played for a sing-along, all the old favourites, and we’d take our children along and the residents just loved these tiny tots roaming. These are the touches you cannot buy. It was very nice times.”

Opening of St John’s Court, Glasgow,
by the Grand Prior, HRH The Duke of Gloucester
11th October 1975





The Association managed the premises and the running of the complex quite successfully but over time, members became frustrated and then concerned at the changes to care regulations and visits by care regulators:

“Oh yes, and these [visits] accelerated from probably an annual casual visit in the mid [19]70s when I joined, and these were just checking that the residents were happy, the building was safe and that the support to those subsidised residents’ rents was being properly managed. That accelerated dramatically from the mid-[19]80s through to the turn of the century, so that these visits were becoming far more serious, far more emphasis on safety. We were looking after more vulnerable people, therefore we had to adhere to more strict regulations about training for the warden and all the procedures regarding managing the place, so we had a wall full of policies eventually. Now, in the early stages you can manage that with a volunteer management committee, a warden and a paid secretary, like in this case, the solicitors, but the minute you go into constant rewriting of policies and what have you, the warden can’t do it, so it starts to be hard work for the volunteers and that was not fair on the volunteers, so the pressure was

growing. It was very gradual at first but towards 2003/2004/2005, we were under a lot of pressure that we would be better served - the residents wouldn't necessarily be better served because they were happy, and in all the reports that came up they couldn't be happier, they loved it as it was, that was important – but from a regulation point of view it was obvious that the powers that be really thought that we should be part of a bigger group. There was no connection between us and the other St John houses, which were more care home orientated, whereas we were, as I said, sheltered housing; and it was very sheltered, and you got on with your own business. So that's the pressure of policy making and Government controls, and a lot of the Government controls were well meaning but involved a lot of bureaucracy, and involved added pressure on people who don't sign up to that when they initially said, 'I can help out here.'”

Iain Smith, Glasgow



Meanwhile, more homes had been opened in Glasgow, including St John Residential Home, 23 Mansionhouse Road, Langside. It is now classed as a Category B listed building. **John Ford** recalls:

“I noticed that things were happening in St John, and Bill Gordon kept on telling me about it, and then he told me they were opening a home in Langside, in Glasgow. He was the Chairman of the Committee that was looking after it and he wanted me to be on the Committee and I said, ‘No, I can’t’. Then he wanted me to do some cleaning there [John was at this time an Administrator for Office Cleaning Services] and I went out and had a look at it and said, ‘Yes, I think we can do that... You need every assistance you can get here.’ So, we waived the charge, and he was very grateful for that. He still wanted me on the Committee, but I couldn’t do it; business was everything at that time and we were really busy and doing quite well really.”



St John Residential Home, Langside

John did join St John Scotland a few years later:

“[St John] Glasgow by that time had a home in Langside, a home in Newton Mearns, and it had a sheltered housing complex in Partickhill in Glasgow, all run by the Committee. And of course, the St John Associations were the workhorses... they were the people who did all the work at the functions, etc. Glasgow was very fortunate, there were lots of ladies, wives of members who were so enthusiastic, they ran these homes.

I always felt very privileged they wanted me to be Chairman. Ewan Murray was a devoted Secretary, and he and I got on very well. One day Ewan Murray came in and said we’ve got to sign a new contract with Glasgow City Council for the transfer of people coming into our homes. They would send people to live in our homes. I was quite concerned because of all the conditions, and the document was so thick it was unbelievable, but the responsibility for this really came down to me and at the end of the day, the buck stopped with me. And I was really a bit concerned about this. And I spoke to Jim Brown, who said, ‘Oh, don’t worry about this, it’s not been a problem before’. But we had two committees, a committee to run the Langside home and a committee to run the Newton Mearns home, a house that had been donated to the Order by a family called Ross. These homes were superb, run very well indeed by the staff there and supervised by our committees. The sheltered housing complex had a board of directors.”

John Ford, Glasgow

Discussing the Partickhill complex, Iain Smith was asked whether the site closed down. Iain replied:

“We didn’t close down; we formally transferred the management and ownership of the site to Loretto Housing Association in 2009.

I joined in 1987 and 22 years later I said goodbye. The reason for that was back to this pressure that we were under, but the Government said, 'No, no, we've got two or three very committed Care Home Managers that we think should sit on your committee, whether you like it or not.' So, they came and sat on our committee and gave us advice; but it was clear it wasn't advice, they were scheduling to get us transferred to a part of a bigger organisation. So, after a year they had been scurrying around in the background and said, right here you can either join them, them, or them, and so... we chose Loretto Housing. We had 25 flats and they had something like 2,000, everything from care homes to sheltered housing, to social housing. So, they were a big landlord and well set up and at the end of the day with all the pressure it was a great relief to everybody. By this time, the committee was down to about five or six, or four or five, and were quite glad to see the back of it. So, it was a shame and what disappointed me most was the happiness we were leaving behind that we had created, and it couldn't possibly be the same after that."

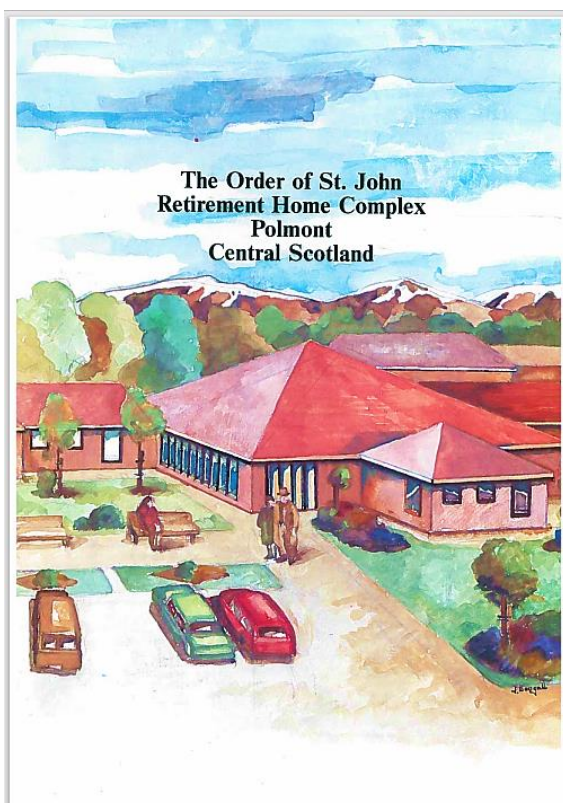
Iain Smith, Glasgow

John explained that Glasgow and all the areas at that time looked on themselves as individual units, raising and spending their own money, and St John Scotland's headquarters had little involvement. With the new rules and regulations surrounding homes coming into force, the Chapter (Board) discussed the problem:

"We raised the problem about these homes, and it was quite obvious that we were going to have to get out of this, that it was going to be a real problem, and eventually that happened. We closed down Langside and were able to get every one of the patients, customers, clients, well suited and placed. It was all done in a very good way; it was amazing how it happened... We had this one in Newton Mearns, which we tried to change into a day centre

for respite care coming in. We spent a huge amount of money adapting it and were promised help from East Renfrewshire and Glasgow who had been sending people, but in the end they didn't [help], as by that time they had started developing things of their own... so eventually, after our huge expense, it had to be sold off... At the same time OSCR, the regulator for charities, was coming into operation and we had to adapt accordingly. That was in the [19]90s and James Stirling became Prior, and he had seen what was coming."

John Ford, Glasgow



During this same period, a St John retirement complex, named Archibald Russell Court, was opened at Polmont. This eleven-flat complex was completed in November 1993. Each flat had two bedrooms, a lounge, kitchen, and bathroom. Patio doors from the lounge opened onto large, professionally landscaped gardens. A separate residents' lounge provided a friendly meeting place for residents and friends. The complex had gas central heating, a

modern security system and a caretaker service. David Waddell and his wife, Charlotte, recall how a waiting list was established and how management of the complex was problematic for an inexperienced management team:

“Initially, I think there was a convenor for Polmont, and I think if he liked you, you got in, but that had to change. So, we had to get a waiting list and people were on the waiting list and the person at the top was offered the flat. This had to change because of OSCR, they were better at flexing their muscles in those days, so that was something else I had to do, but that was how it was before.



[There was] a Management Committee, which consisted of Archie [Russell] as Chairman, myself as Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Convenor, but things were very much left to the Convenor and that was just the way it was. When I took over, it wasn't the fact that I felt things had to change, not just because I wanted them to change, but because the world had changed. There was legislation. I remember getting a flyer in from the gas board saying this change in law was taking place from next April, we're happy to come in and do the work for you. I had no idea; we didn't have any expertise in our Management Committee... I was in my

seventies and some of them were older than that. And it always bothered me that if anything happened, if there was a fire and somebody was injured, or worse still, lost their life, the press would have a field day. It never happened, fortunately, but that was always what the concern was. So, after the restaurant conversion and all this happening, everything had to be more organised, and that's when we moved to proper waiting lists and everything being done properly."

David Waddell, Central

"I was Secretary for seven years when David was Chairman. I worked in the little office up the stair; there was all sorts to do. Archibald Russell Court was in place, of course, by that time, and it was all run on a voluntary basis, so there was a great deal of toing and froing with things to be seen to. I think we took fright eventually when the firemen did their annual audit and they spoke about fire doors and all the rules being changed. And we came to realise that the layman doesn't know what was required, and it's a responsibility, with all the elderly people being in the accommodation. That was when we went to Bield to run it; as that was their line of business, they knew about the new rules and could carry them out."

Charlotte Waddell, Central

The Archibald Russell Court retirement complex at Polmont is still owned by St John Scotland but it is now managed by Bield Housing and Care on their behalf.

Douglas Dow, an experienced lawyer, was asked about the properties that were disposed of overtime by the organisation:

"Basically, over the years, the Order of St John in Scotland was donated properties of all kinds by wealthy people. One of the things that was donated to the Order was bits and pieces of

property in the Aberdeen area, in Aberdeen itself, buildings and so forth, and they joined up together to form a private hospital, in effect, which was run under the name of the Order of St John. And I think there were concerns that people were paying fees for treatment in this private hospital, and these fees were going to the Order of St John. And the issue, I think, from a tax point of view, was whether this was a charity, or was not a charity but actually a trading entity. It was decided, this was before my time, it was decided to sell this private hospital in Aberdeen, and they did, for millions of pounds, and that really is the core of funds that we have today for what we need.

I mentioned to you all this money we got coming in from Aberdeen. Well, we didn't sit on it. Sir James Stirling, who was the Prior at that stage, said, 'We can't just sit on all this money, can we not do something with it?'. And he had interests and connections with hills and mountains, so we started supporting Scottish Mountain Rescue, and we bought and provided Mountain Rescue stations for a whole series of Mountain Rescue teams in Scotland. These stations had, typically, parking, storage, and all the rest of it. Subsequent to that, we've now given all these to these [teams] because, again, we were paying all the insurance money and things and we were partly responsible for them, but didn't have any control over them. We also supported Mountain Rescue by giving them specially adapted Land Rovers for use by the teams, and there's a scheme for that. So, we haven't been sitting on the money doing nothing; it's being used all the time.

With regard to the properties that we had, we had over the years acquired a number of homes, old Victorian houses, which were used as retirement homes and they got harder and harder to operate with all the new rules and regulations, so we got rid of those. That was really before my time. However, we were left with

odd bits of land and what we got rid of in my time, recently, was we had two large plots of ground at Carberry Towers in East Lothian. We sold them for around £130,000 and that made sense because these were pieces of land with large trees, some of which were falling or stopped from falling by hitting the other trees, and it was full of dog walkers, and we couldn't really build on it, so we got rid of those because there was a big risk there. We also had a property, which we had built, called Andrew Murray House, which was at Strathyre, which was a house originally for blind people and was tied in with Erskine Hospital. So, we eventually had this house that was costing us a fortune to run, so we got rid of that. We also sold a plot of ground there at Strathyre, and we had a plot of ground in Glasgow, which we sold. So, all of that went, and we gifted some plots of ground at Strathyre. We gifted them because it became clear that the lady who had gifted a lot of ground at Strathyre had wanted these particular bits of ground to be available for use by the locals. So, we couldn't really sell them for profit [so we] donated it to them. We also have the [former charity] shop in Edinburgh that we lease out; it's a commercial outlet and makes a good rental for us."

Douglas Dow, Dunbartonshire



SCOTTISH MOUNTAIN RESCUE

By the 1990s, St John Scotland was turning its focus to support other organisations providing valuable services locally, including significant support for Scottish Mountain Rescue teams, to which they have provided funds for vehicles and bases to allow them to carry out search and rescue work more effectively. Funds have financed the purchase, adaptation or new

build of Mountain Rescue bases, and essential vehicles and equipment, including Land Rovers and radios.

Lawson Rennie was involved with the Ski Rescue Service at Glenshee, which was also funded by St John Scotland, and from that became involved with St John and Scottish Mountain Rescue:

“My first involvement with St John Scotland was with Mountain Rescue and Ski Patrol up in Glenshee. St John partially funded the Ski Rescue Service there and I was one of the ski patrollers, and I ended up actually being in charge of all the ski patrollers at the time, mainly because I could get most weekends off and I could get up there. I was living in Dundee at the time, I wasn't very far away.

In those days it was Venture Scouts that we used, and it was a free service to the public. There were two different venture units came along every weekend and, basically, we split them up into teams and they skied the various pistes, basically looking for accidents.



They also had radio, so if anything was reported in to us, we could send the nearest team to them to bring the patient down off the hill. We had our own ambulance at the time, and we took the patient, usually down the hill, to the Spittal of Glenshee Hotel and sort of left them there for the public service ambulance to come up and pick them up, because the public service ambulance had to come up from Blairgowrie, pick up the patient, and then take them down to Bridge of Earn Hospital, unless it was a very serious injury, in which case we would call in a helicopter.”

Lawson Rennie, Fife

Lawson explains that all of the rescuers had basic first aid training before joining the ski patrol, and the ski patrol staff trained the recruits in the use of specialised equipment, specialised splints, and stretchers. A couple of ski instructors ensured that everyone were competent skiers, and a mountain climbing instructor taught them snow and ice climbing.

“We would arrive at the rescue post as soon after half past eight as we could, depending on the weather and the road conditions. We would check out all the equipment, make sure all the emergency bags had all the proper equipment in them, and then split the teams up into various sectors depending on if all the tows were running or not, and not all the tows were running due to lack of snow. The teams would go out and start patrolling. They would look on the pistes to make sure there was no big holes or anything that could be of a danger, in which case the chairlift staff themselves would come along and sort a piste out. Otherwise, they would just free-ski until an accident happened. Sometimes we could get virtually no accidents at all. Saturday was usually fairly quiet, but Sunday was chaotic. Some weekends we could have maybe fifty accidents, not all broken legs, some dislocated shoulders or broken arms, and minor things that could be taken away by themselves and have to go by ambulance, depending

again on the snow conditions... In the early [19]90s the chairlift company decided that they would get professional people in themselves. Some of the ski instructors and some of the tow operators are the actual ski patrollers now. One or two St John people did stay on but most did not.”

Lawson Rennie, Fife

Gordon Casely talked about the origins of the relationship between Mountain Rescue and St John in Scotland:

“It was peculiarly an Aberdeen involvement. Pioneers had thought about Mountain Rescue, which back in the 1960s was still the local bobby and a couple of gamekeepers. It was that kind of thing. Bill Marshall, a great mountaineer, and who became a member of the Order, was my mentor in Mountain Rescue and who got me involved in it, he was looking around for funding. They were desperately poor, providing all their own gear and equipment. And Tony Wyness got involved, as well, and brought the Order’s focus in Aberdeen on to Mountain Rescue. So, it was a meeting of minds, a meeting of charitable minds, and a meeting of active money-raising minds, and it really was a welcome collision. And out of Aberdeen’s pioneering efforts, St John Scotland today is a serious backer of more than two dozen Mountain Rescue Teams, in funding headquarters for them, and vehicles, and equipment. We’re talking big money. When, fifteen years ago, Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team had a base set up, opened by the Duke of Gloucester, the cost then was a quarter of a million pounds for a fairly basic set up. So, it’s no small beer now, it’s a major business.”

Gordon Casely, Aberdeen & NE

Mario Di Maio has been involved with Scottish Mountain Rescue in Aberdeenshire for over fifty years and is hugely appreciative of the support given by St John Scotland.

“I joined the Rescue Team in June 1970 and met the then Team Leader, Bill Marshall, who really was the founding member of the Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team, and he did that through an organisation which was the Aberdeen Venture Club, which was really an organisation designed to give, predominately young lads but also some lasses, as well, the opportunities to get into outdoor-type activities. At that point there were very few Mountain Rescue teams around. This was the mid [19]60s, and in 1964 Bill decided that there was a sufficiently effective group of young folk in this organisation and he could mould them into a Mountain Rescue Team; and in 1964, a formal Mountain Rescue Team was formed, but as you can imagine it was very basic. They didn't have any real Mountain Rescue equipment; they didn't really have very much in hill equipment. And Bill spent a lot of time and effort and energy in gathering together from various local sort



of people that he had contacts with, either getting bits and pieces of equipment, or gathering some money to get equipment. At that point he made an approach to the Order of St John because we were looking, basically, for somewhere that we could use as a base, and that wasn't all that easy to find at that time around Aberdeen. And through a connection in the Order at that point, we got access to a garage



at the bottom of what was the St John's Hospital in Albyn Place, Aberdeen. Albyn Lane runs parallel to Albyn Place and there was a small, basically a one-vehicle garage, there, and it had a sort of upper floor; so, we stowed a vehicle there, and the upper floor became the meeting room for the team. It was very basic and my memories of it when I joined the team was that in winter it was really very cold, there was no heating in it apart from a one-bar electric fire. So, when we had our team meetings, I mean everybody sat with all their clothes on, big jackets and all the rest of it, because it was so bitterly cold, but it was a start. And from that we got access to a second building that was part of the hospital and owned by the Order of St John at that point, and a second vehicle. So, we had two vehicles and a meeting room there, and that really was the team's base for a lot of years, right through until the mid [19]90s, and was, in fact, where we worked out of, and effectively too. So that was my first contact with the Order, basically because Bill [Marshall] had managed to get a contact within the Order who was able to provide us with accommodation at that time.

Subsequent to that [the] connection with the Order really sort of grew and developed, and as the years went on, I think the Order obviously decided that Mountain Rescue was a very worthy cause in terms of their objectives, and Bill [Marshall], and subsequently myself when I took over as Team Leader in 1993, were involved in supporting the Order, going out to other Mountain Rescue Teams and basically trying to persuade rescue teams that having a connection with the Order would be a really beneficial thing for them, because out of that, the likelihood was they were going to get support.



Fundamentally, the Order and its continued support of Mountain Rescue and the continued support of the Aberdeen team, I think, was a huge factor in taking Scottish Mountain Rescue from what was, I think, a very ad-hoc type of organisation, and giving them the equipment to actually become much more professional than what they did. And the Order has continued to do that over decades, in fact, and they're still doing it to a certain extent. I think there are a lot of Mountain Rescue Teams in Scotland who would not be in the financial position they're in now, and have the equipment and the vehicles and the accommodation that they have got, if it were not for contributions made by the Order."

Mario Di Maio, Aberdeen & NE

A new base for the Aberdeen Mountain Rescue Team was opened in 1997. Two smaller bases were completed for the Skye Mountain Rescue Team in 2000, one each side of the Cuillins. By 2007, bases had been built for

the Arrochar, Dundonnell, Lomond, and Moffat teams and an existing building had been bought for the Oban team. Additional help has since been given to Arran, Assynt, Tweed Valley, Galloway, Kintail, Lochaber, Ochils, Tayside and Torridon teams. Activities are wide-ranging as teams are often called out to help find vulnerable individuals at risk of harm or self-harm, or hillwalkers or injured climbers missing in rural or remote areas, including moors and coastal areas, and may involve working with HM Coastguard, RNLI, Police Scotland, or SARDA (Search and Rescue Dog Association). Searches and rescue operations may involve crashed vehicles or aircraft.

In the Highlands, St John Scotland has made generous contributions to search and rescue operations, as explained by Alex Craib:

“If I remember correctly, every Mountain Rescue team in the Highlands of Scotland were given vehicles. Either Land Rovers specifically manufactured and kitted out for Mountain Rescue, and also ambulances which are designed specifically for travelling on the terrain. The Dundonald Rescue Team were given four bases because they cover such a big area. They found that with the time lost in travelling to the central base to pick up the gear, and then travelling out to the location, they were losing so much time there that it is more advantageous to have separate bases. So, they have four bases across Ross-shire that are all kitted out. When the call goes out, they go to whichever base is closest to the incident. Aviemore Mountain Rescue Team, we were involved in their new base, quite a number of years ago now. They purchased a church, and I was involved in it, from the Order, in the kitting out, and making the church an appropriate place for the Mountain Rescue base. So, all the Mountain Rescue Teams in the area have support.”

Alex Craib, Highland



By 2016, St John Scotland reported that it had been the single-biggest supporter of the voluntary mountain rescue movement in Scotland, investing over £3.5 million and donating bases to 11 of the 27 teams and at least one emergency vehicle to every team. St John Scotland has since transferred ownership of the bases to the teams, though they still proudly display the St John Scotland logo. As well as bases, St John Scotland began a rolling programme of providing vehicles to Mountain Rescue teams and all teams in Scotland have taken delivery of a new and updated vehicle to be used on callouts. St John Scotland's support for Scottish Mountain Rescue continues.

Kev Mitchell, Vice-Chair of Scottish Mountain Rescue, wrote to describe how St John Scotland has supported Ochils Mountain Rescue Team:

“The Ochils MRT first received support in the shape of a bespoke Land Rover in 2001; this replaced the gas guzzling, second hand V8

Land Rover we managed to buy from our somewhat more affluent neighbours, the Lomond MRT!



At that time, the team was based in a double sectional garage behind the council nurseries in Menstrie; this was basic to say the least, without running water, toilet, and with four plug sockets to charge the torches! In 2006, the team started the journey to build a purpose-built Mountain Rescue Post, and due to a large number of setbacks and problems, the new post was [finally] opened by HRH The Duke of Gloucester in 2010, with the build costs fully met by the Order of St John.

The new post has completely transformed the way the team operates and has allowed us to be able to set up a control and communications base, facilities to run courses... and we will host a Scottish MR equipment course in February. In addition, we have a never-ending programme of visits from schools, youth groups, community groups and hillwalking clubs, which allows us to promote our message of hill safety and promote the work of Scottish MR and [St John Scotland]. The post also allows us to put

in place admin and recording systems, which would have been difficult without a permanent water-tight base!

The post has enabled the team to develop in a more effective, and professional manner and has allowed us to serve our community better, and to provide not only Mountain Rescue assistance, but also community resilience assistance to local communities.”

Kev Mitchell, Ochils Mountain Rescue Team



MOUNTAIN SAFETY

Additionally, since 2015 St John Scotland has also worked in partnership with Mountaineering Scotland to provide mountain safety training to young people across the country. The St John



Photograph courtesy of John Davidson

Scotland Mountain Safety Instructor programme offers free training to university and college mountaineering groups throughout the year. The aim of the training is to ensure that young people coming into the sport and developing an interest in outdoor pursuits can do so safely. Courses are delivered in real life conditions, on a range of terrain and in all weathers, to equip young people with practical skills that will stand them in good stead for life.



INSHORE RESCUE BOATS

St John Scotland's support for outdoor safety and rescue extends beyond the hills, and in 2006, its commitment was further extended to lochs, with a major donation to a new rescue boat for Loch Lomond. The Arctic 22 was a Rigid-Hulled



Inflatable Boat, which cost £108,000, and St John's donation of £32,000 made it the main contributor. As a result, the boat carries the St John name and logo. With two 115 horsepower engines and a top speed of 45 miles an hour, the St John was designed specifically for the Loch Lomond Rescue Boat Committee and includes a large deck area for stretchers and fire-fighting equipment. Additional donations from St John Scotland have since contributed to the boathouse at Luss, which provides much improved training, changing and drying facilities for the crew.



In 2004, St John Scotland funded a Land Rover for Nith Inshore Rescue. This search and rescue unit is based just south of Dumfries on the estuary of the River Nith. It was formed in 1982 following several fatal incidents in the area which highlighted the need for rapid response. The main areas of operation are the hazardous tidal stretches of the River Nith and the Solway Firth but rescues are deployed to other rivers and to inland lochs. The Land Rover was equipped with a radio, first aid equipment and, on the roof, an 8-foot inflatable dinghy with an outboard engine. The all-volunteer crew have saved adults and children who were missing or cut off by the tide or floods or otherwise at risk; animals have also been saved. The unit operates closely with the police, HM Coastguard, RN and RAF helicopter crews, the RNLI and also with Mountain Rescue teams.



THE SEARCH AND RESCUE DOG ASSOCIATION (SARDA)

The Search and Rescue Dog Association arranges the training and provision of dogs for search and rescue operations. It works very closely with Mountain Rescue teams and other emergency organisations and is affiliated to Scottish Mountain Rescue. St John Scotland supports the association by providing equipment and meeting the modest running costs of its call out system.

“The Search & Rescue Dogs Association, SARDA, we support them as well, and they work very closely with the Mountain Rescue Teams; we presented SARDA with a new trailer [which] was very similar to a base, all kitted out with their equipment, and when the rescue was required, the trailer would be taken to the area. They gave us a demonstration to see the dogs at work and it was absolutely fantastic. We had no idea how a dog would work on the



hills, but when they had the harness put on, they changed into a working dog. It was really fantastic and when they found the patient, or the person who was lost, their reward for that was to play with their particularly favourite toy. So, they would get to play with the toy for a few minutes having achieved their objective, and when that was taken away and the harness taken off, they were family pets again. It is absolutely fantastic; we are very happy to support this service.”

Alex Craib, Highland

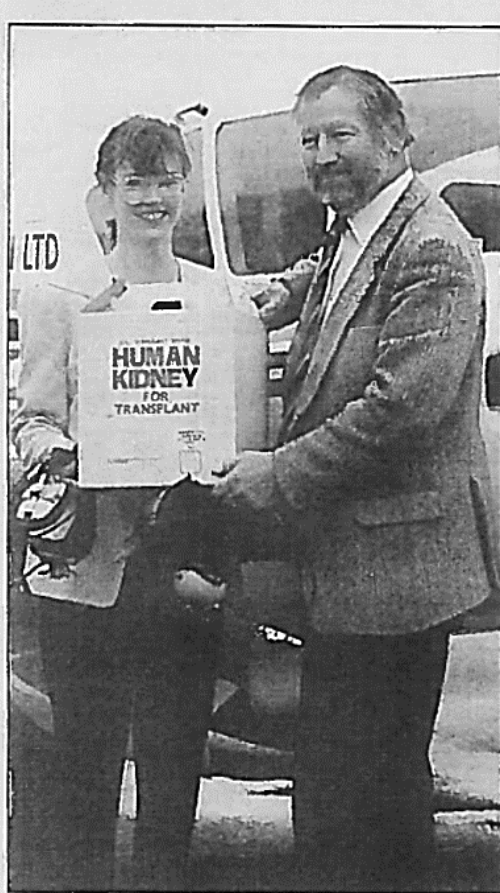


THE AIR WING

The St John Ambulance Air Wing was formed in 1972 to provide a volunteer service for the rapid transport of organs, drugs, blood supplies, and patients in emergencies when other means are not available. In Scotland, the Air Wing was operated from Dundee Airport and manned entirely by volunteers. The pilots in the scheme were St John’s auxiliaries who, with the establishment of the St John organisation in Angus, became members of St John Association of Scotland.

The function of the air wing was to assist ‘by any possible means’ in lifesaving or emergency missions in the UK or abroad that were within the scope and ideals of St John Ambulance Association. By 1980, there were over 100 pilots in the UK with more than 60 single and twin-engine aircraft. The majority of pilots were formed into groups covering the whole of the UK and were able to fly to and from small airfields and landing strips as well as the major airfields. The majority of flights were for the carriage of transplant kidneys at night, though there was also a demand to carry patients, and the Air Wing also supplied medical and nursing air attendants and medical equipment.

Air Wing pilot Sandy Middleton and his daughter Fiona, who was also a pilot and joined her father on several flights, became used to getting called out at the most inopportune moments:



■ Sandy and Fiona Middleton prepare for take-off. The plane is a Piper Aztec, used on many missions.

in his kilt!

DUNDEE BUSINESSMAN Sandy Middleton is one of the transplant transport pilots.

Though unpaid, he's on stand-by all year round with the St John's Ambulance Air Wing.

Since his first donor flight—a kidney from Glasgow to Sheffield in 1973—Sandy has carried out more than 30 mercy flights all over the UK.

These flights have “ambulance priority”.

Says Sandy, “London air traffic control once asked if I wanted Jumbo jets diverted so I could land, but it wasn't necessary.

“Once, leaving Aberdeen for London, two kidneys were thrust at me and I was told to ‘Just head south’. Not until I was airborne did anyone tell me exactly where I was going.

“On 24-hour stand-by, I've been called off the squash court, out of the bath and once in the middle of a party.

“I was still wearing my kilt when I delivered the organ. That's happened a few times.”

Devotion

SANDY'S DAUGHTER Fiona (26) holds a commercial pilot's licence and has often joined dad's mercy missions—including the first-ever delivery of a donor heart without a medical team on board.

Over the years, Sandy has delivered 30 kidneys, one liver, one rare blood, one heart and two passengers. And he has seen the results his kind of devotion can bring.

“My friend Frank Ripley received a donor kidney,” says Sandy.

“He had many years of active life after the transplant. It was an excellent way of seeing someone's quality of life returned to normal.”

In June, the St John's Ambulance Air Wing will be disbanded. But, with the assistance of Tayside Aviation at Dundee Airport, Sandy will continue to offer his services.

After more than 20 years of service, Air Wing ended in June 1993.

SUPPORTING LOCAL CAUSES



With few services of its own at that time, as well as supporting Mountain Rescue teams, St John Scotland's volunteers focused on raising money to support other organisations making a difference in their local area.

Through the 1980s, 1990s and into the 2000s, hundreds of causes were supported, making a real difference to individuals and communities across the country.

Douglas Dow discussed some of the projects supported by the Dunbartonshire Area during his time with St John Scotland:



"The first one was Arrochar Mountain Rescue, then we took on several others, one of which was support for the Loch Lomond Inshore Rescue Boat, called 'St John', which is based at Luss at the

moment, which is very active indeed. Then we also supported and continue to support the St Margaret of Scotland Hospice in Clydebank, which is run by a Roman Catholic order of nuns. Sister Rita is in charge there and it's open to all; it's not just for Roman Catholics, anybody can go to it, religion or no religion, and it's a really lovely environment for palliative care. It relies wholly on funds, which are raised privately. The fourth one is at the Vale of Leven Hospital in Alexandria. There is a special unit called The Acorn Unit, which is a unit that is devoted to the treatment of

children, normally young children, with multiple disabilities, and the objective is to facilitate their treatment in such a way that they can go and get several or all of their disabilities treated at the same time, so they don't have to go to different hospitals for their treatments. It's an NHS hospital but they are always needing a little bit of help. And some of the specialists they have, we've funded them going on courses for their speciality, which, because of the extra expenditure, the NHS would have liked to have put them through but couldn't, because of the money. We can do that."

Douglas Dow, Dunbartonshire

Asked how she became involved with St John Scotland, Gwen Fullerton's daughter recalled:

"It was through my Dad; he was involved through the work he was in. He would say, 'Come along and see this', and 'Come on, we'll go up for a run and we'll help these people', and it was through the charity helping the Chernobyl children, over having a holiday and getting health treatment and things, and we would go along to some of their social events and just be there with the children. And a couple of times, we went swimming and things like that, so we'd be helping the younger ones in and out the pool and sometimes learning to swim. So that was my first one. Then bucket rattles at the Caley Thistle football ground on cold Saturday mornings!"

Kirsty Fullerton, Highland



“The Giving Tree is an idea that I saw in Aberdeen... I was intrigued by the idea so I went to look and there were these little cards, and the idea was that you would take a card and buy a gift for the child on the card. For instance, if it was a ten-year-old girl, you would buy a gift for a ten-year-old girl, wrap it and take it to the manager of the centre, and it would be distributed to a child in care. So, when I came home, I mentioned that to the Chairman at the time and we agreed that it was a good idea... So, we

organised it the first year and we had thirty-five children. We had a tree made up by a friend of ours who had a sign company, they made up an imitation Christmas tree. We put that up in Eastgate Centre in Inverness. The Social Work Department in Inverness gave us names of children and we attached these to a Christmas card and put it on the tree and the public would come along, take a card and buy a gift, go to the Eastgate management, and we'd deliver it from there. My wife and I have maintained that every year since and we had agreed recently that this was our twenty-

first year but on looking through some old paperwork I discovered that it was twenty-six years and in that time it's grown huge."

Alex Craib, Highland

"We do carry out a lot. The one that people may not have heard of was that at one time there was an athlete in Aberdeen called Kenny Herriot, and Kenny was an ex-Army PE Instructor, and his motorbike came to a stop and toppled over onto him. It was only moving two or three miles an hour and he thought, 'Oh well, that's not a problem', until he tried to move and suddenly found that he couldn't. However, nothing ventured, nothing gained, he went through his rehabilitation and realised that he wanted to do things still, so he took up wheelchair racing, and St John in Aberdeen purchased a brand-new racing machine for him to compete in and he did wonderfully well. He had to go to Denmark to get the machine made and fitted because it had to be high quality for him to be able to compete properly, and on his two large wheels was 'The Order of St John', and he did quite a bit of motivational public speaking and was brilliant. That was a nice one for us to do. The Cancer and Leukaemia Action in Aberdeen, known as CLAN, they required a vehicle and we provided that. We also helped provide for the Portlethan Ambulance Service. It's not an ambulance as such, it's a patient transport vehicle for need in the community. One of the main things it does is to pick up prescriptions and deliver it to people who are stuck at home and can't get out. So, we helped them with that... There is also the Aberdeen Sitter Service, which is 25 plus years we've been supporting them, although I haven't seen much of them over the recent past."

Stuart MacBride, Aberdeen & NE



SEAGULL TRUST

1979 was the year that St John Scotland moved into another new area of assistance. The Reverend Dr Hugh Mackay founded the Seagull Trust in Scotland, an organisation which provides cruising on Scotland's canals for people with disabilities. With his guidance and drive the Edinburgh Committee agreed to provide a specially adapted barge, which was named the St John Crusader. This was berthed on the Forth and Clyde Canal at Ratho, near Edinburgh.



“I was living in Edinburgh at the time so I became involved with the Edinburgh Branch and helped out with various things, can collections, the annual sale. The Edinburgh Branch at that time, they'd bought an old barge, and the prisoners at Saughton Prison had done it up and it was presented to Seagull Trust up at Ratho. The idea was to take disabled people and children for a cruise along the canal at Ratho, so I got involved with that and I quite

enjoyed that. It's different, I sailed anyway, but it's entirely different with these barges. The steering can be quite difficult because a barge's pivot is in the centre, and you have to actually go past a corner before you turn the rudder to get successfully round. It took a wee bit of getting used to, but I enjoyed that."

Lawson Rennie, Fife

"We have supported the Seagull Trust which does cruises. There is one in Inverness and one down towards the Central belt. We have given the Seagull Trust support over the years. Our ex-Provost Bill Fraser was a Chairman of the Seagull Trust in Inverness. Seagull have a boat that takes tours up and down Loch Ness and they take tours of vulnerable people, disabled people, and people who live in care homes. In fact, Ramsay [McGhee, St John Scotland Highland chair] was a crew member."

Alex Craib, Highland



Support for the Seagull Trust continued, with a second boat, the St John Crusader II, gifted in 1996.

PALLIATIVE CARE



“I believe it started in 1976 in the Stranraer area. When Dr [John] Calvert came to the area he was invited to a committee meeting to address them on medical issues and this is how this started... And when I went on the Committee, in 1986, I used to go along to the old Dalrymple Hospital, which was for elderly people but there was an area reserved for the respite people; I think it was three times a week they went in, and they could have a bath, have their hair washed, have their lunch, played games. They were usually for elderly people. I went along to help, and it was really very encouraging, and we did a lot of that at that particular time.



It was in the early [19]90s when Dr Calvert said we need a new project now and we had people from the Guide Dogs came down, but they said at that time they had sufficient money to meet their commitments, they weren't really expanding the way they are now. So that kind of died a sudden death and then again, through Dr Calvert's contacts, he worked fairly closely with a Dr Martin who was a Consultant Oncologist at Dumfries

Royal Infirmary, and she was a lovely lady, and she put him in touch with one of our nurses here who was on a diploma course for the Macmillan people, and part of her course was to write a thesis in palliative care in the community. And she had done that and she had presented it to the Health Board in Dumfries, and they said it was a very worthy cause but they had no money. So that's how we got to hear about it. Sister Irene Hunter came with Dr Martin one evening to our committee meeting and she laid forth this thesis, and we quickly looked through it, then they went away and we discussed it. Dr Calvert was very enthusiastic and so was I. I was one of the newer members at this time and I said, 'Definitely, I would back him the whole way.' He said, 'Well if we accept this we'll have to work, because, really, we've not got the money for this kind of thing.' And we thought, 'what can we do?' So, we thought about it, and liaised with the Health Board, and so it came about that Dr Martin came in on it, and in the end she agreed that if we could set up the necessary arrangements, she could come through periodically, and she could maybe have a little clinic here, so they gave her a little broom cupboard, that was all they had, in the old Garrick Hospital. Anyway, it was accepted... this was for cancer patients, of course. Over months that proved successful. It was to cost us £5,000 a year to keep her here. Well, we had to find that money, so of course fundraising started. The art exhibition was still once a year, we had monthly curry suppers, we made bird boxes and bird feeders and sold them at the art exhibition... Jan Holak made Christmas cards because she's an artist. We had a most wonderful fayre in the front lawn of the Ardwell Estate; that was where our Lord Lieutenant lived, and that was a great success, they came from all over. We organised a jazz concert in the Ryan Centre in Stranraer, and that was a big success. Of course, we had the shop cans. We had one member who went round and collected them about every three months, and it brought in £500 or £600.



Then the Rotary Club became interested in this project we had of palliative care, and they said they would help out and, in the end, I think they gave us £20,000. They were very, very, generous and there's a plaque in the hospital dedicated to the amount that they gave. There is also a plaque dedicated to the Order of St John, in the John Calvert Unit. Then Dr Martin and her little cupboard, we realised we had to do something better than that, and she then went round some of the patients' homes and interviewed them there. That necessity of going on the domiciliary visits was highly successful too, but we knew she couldn't continue doing that, she had her own things, and so we got in touch with the Health Board and it was our hope that we could have a medical unit if possible. So, they agreed, and they transferred a part of that hospital, and they built an archway between the hospital and our unit. Even the nurses said it was a very special place, the carpets were different, the walls were different and you walked into each bedroom and we provided flowers, sweets, magazines for them, the drapes on the windows, and some of the early furniture, we were responsible for all that. There was a little quiet room for the relatives to sit and the nurses allowed them to use their facilities

to make a cup of coffee. That's how it all started. And then the bombshell came when a new hospital was built, and we said, "We've got to have a unit there, this unit's established now."

The new hospital was opened in May 1996, and that was when we took the first patients in and in August 1996, Her Majesty the Queen officially opened it, and she was very taken with it. It's a nice place, it's not the same as our initial unit, but it does a lot of



good work and the unfortunate thing is, and we've got to be practical about it, is we get a lot of money from relatives who have lost someone... So, it was a success, but not by me, it was the people, particularly Dr John Calvert; he was the mainstay."



Ann Calderwood, West Galloway

"They raised hundreds of thousands of pounds through fundraising in the local area and funded the new unit there. It was two palliative care rooms for patients who were either, sadly nearing the end of their life through cancer, or for respite care to give families a break at home. Latterly, they did chemotherapy; I'm not quite sure about that but they did that as well and it was very well supported... They also ran Patient Transport in the area and they also did Hospice At Home, which was for cancer patients who

needed looking after or help at home, and they did that as well.”



Liz Hamilton, West Galloway

“In addition to the transport and palliative care unit, we also have Hospice at Home. Some people quite naturally want to spend their last days at home and, basically speaking, I think the Macmillan Nurses will go in and do their business, so to speak. The Health Board, I think, are charged by Macmillan for doing that. The Health Board then send us an invoice and we pay it; again, we were doing our bit for palliative care. We’re not too involved, a lot depends on who the administrator is. A number of years ago there was a particular administrator and she was very good and kept us fully advised. It ticks over, we get the bill, we pay it. I think if there’s a particular demand for, let’s say a specialist nurse or something like that, we would do our best to help them out. So, Hospice at Home, that’s been going on for many years.”

Kenneth Paterson, West Galloway

As well as in Stranraer, other hospices in Fife and Clydebank have received support from the local St John Scotland committees over the years.

“Over the last few years, we have bought quite a few things for the hospices, for instance, The Queen Margaret, we bought a rise and recliner chair for them because some patients had to live in a chair all day because they couldn’t do anything else, so we bought a chair for them, and we did the same for Adamson Hospital in Cupar, and we bought a few things for Glenrothes Hospital as well. A few years ago, we bought an ECG machine for the hospital at St Andrews, just before they moved to the new hospital when it was the old cottage hospital, and a couple of TVs as well, for long stay patients in the wards. The Relatives’ Room at Glenrothes Hospital, we used to look after that and make sure it was neat and tidy and they had sufficient cups and things like that for relatives.”

Lawson Rennie, Fife



ST JOHN TRANSPORT SERVICE

In the late 1990s, as well as growing its support for Mountain Rescue teams, St John Scotland used some of its funds to help other charities buy much-needed vehicles they could not otherwise have obtained so quickly, if at all. The vehicles were mainly minibuses; in many cases specially adapted to meet the particular requirements of those who use them. Among those organisations to benefit from the scheme were:

- Acredale House, Bathgate
- The Arbroath Town Mission
- The Bannockburn branch of Riding for the Disabled

- The Berwickshire Association of Voluntary Services ('Berwickshire Wheels', pictured below)



- Borders Disability Forum ('Gala Wheels')
- Braendam Family House
- Carberry
- Disability Sport Fife (pictured below)
- The Dumfries Community Day Centre for Older People
- Edinburgh Zoo

- The Eric Liddell Centre, Edinburgh
- Erskine Hospital, Bishopton
- Fairbridge
- Macmillan House Perth
- The Marie Curie Cancer Care Hunters Hill Centre
- Mental Health Aberdeen
- OASIS Care, Perth
- The Ogilvie Centre Dundee
- Penumbra
- The Portlethen and District Community Ambulance Association
- The Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice, Glasgow
- PUSH, Edinburgh and the Lothians
- Sense Scotland
- Strathcarron Hospice, Denny
- Sue Ryder Home

Neo-Natal Ambulance

One major exception to St John Scotland providing minibuses was its support for a new purpose-built ambulance for the Scottish Neonatal Transport Service (SNTS), which took over a year to design and build. The fully equipped ambulance, which cost £212,000, was specially designed for the SNTS and at the time of manufacture, was the most sophisticated of its type in Europe. This was a matched funding project between St John Scotland's Glasgow area and the charity's national funds. St John Glasgow put to good use monies received from a bequest by the late Walter and Doreen Crichton.



“We never ran ambulances, although we have provided an ambulance. One of many things that I was very pleased to be involved with was the presentation of the Neo-Natal ambulance at Glasgow around the year 2015. It cost around £140,000 and this was to treat babies, mainly recently born babies, who couldn’t take the risk of being put in a helicopter for the pressure on their heads. So, they needed a vehicle to take them that would have the equipment of an operating theatre within the vehicle, and it was done for two children at one time, and for the outlying areas, and take them to hospital in Glasgow. So that was a terrific thing. You save lives there, and we must have saved quite a lot of lives. That was a great thing.”

Douglas Dow, Dunbartonshire



BLOOD TRANSFUSION TRIAGE SERVICE

More recently, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, St John Scotland actively sought ways to help the public, and began to support the work of the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service (SNBTS) by volunteering at blood donation sessions around the country. Alex Craib describes how this was implemented in Moray and the Highlands:

“Recently, we have been involved in the Blood Transfusion Triage Services, so our two volunteers from Forres and Elgin got involved there with a volunteer from the Grantown area. The Chairman, [myself] and another volunteer get involved in activities outwith the Inverness area. We do the triage, so we meet the donor at the door; we have a list and a timed appointment, so when the donor comes, we mark them off as having attended. We take their temperature, and we ask fairly generic questions about their



health - if they've got a high temperature; if they've had a continuous cough recently; if they've had Covid, or any Covid symptoms. Once we're satisfied that the requirements have been achieved, we then introduce them to the receptionist and the donor then goes into reception, and into the

system from there, where there are more detailed questions; but we ask generic questions just to make sure they haven't had Covid and they are safe to enter the building. It's a very satisfying time to be in the system there."

Alex Craib – Highland

ST JOHN SCOTLAND ABROAD



ST JOHN EYE HOSPITAL, JERUSALEM

The St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group is a subsidiary of the Order of St John, and all St John organisations support its vital work.

Founded in 1882, the main hospital in East Jerusalem has been operating for 140 years. The hospital is the main provider of eye care for Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and sees many of the most complex eye cases from across the oPt (Occupied Palestinian Territories), which are referred to them from medical centres across the West Bank and Gaza. The St John Eye Hospital has a large outpatients department, specialist eye units, operating theatres and 24-hour eye emergency services.

The St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group is the only charitable provider of expert eye care in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. Supported by St John organisations and individuals across the world, the

hospital provides sight-saving eyecare to thousands of patients each year, regardless of ethnicity, religion or ability to pay. In the past, donations from Scotland to the hospital in Jerusalem came from individual members, and from St John Scotland Committees and Associations. The original aim, in the 1940s, was to send at least £100 a year to Jerusalem, a fairly substantial sum in those days.

Now, St John Scotland supports the work of the Eye Hospital through annual grant funding for key pieces of work, most recently supporting outreach clinics which reach the most vulnerable patients who have least access to healthcare. St John Scotland was also the major donor to the Hebron hospital, part of the Eye Hospital Group which opened in 2015. This facility was built to better serve the population living in the West Bank and has greatly improved the accessibility of services in the area.



Ian Wallace is a former Hospitaller for the Order of St John in Scotland – traditionally, the link between the organisation and the Eye Hospital. He recalls how he was chosen for the position:



“One of my fellow Chapter (Board) members was, of course, the then Hospitaller, Dr John Calvert, who was the General Practitioner down in Stranraer, and on his death, much to my surprise, I was asked if I would take on the role of Hospitaller. After I’d done that for a spell, I was promoted to a Knight of the Order. So, I was very lucky. I don’t know if you’ve ever heard of ‘Imposter Syndrome’, but I think many of us have this feeling that , ‘How on earth did I get here?’ I’m sure some people think, ‘I’m in the right place, I jolly well ought to be here’, but most of us, I think, are slightly surprised to find ourselves in a particular place, I certainly was. One of the great joys of being Hospitaller was of course that I was expected and did go to visit the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem on a number of occasions, and I was also involved in making some quite important financial decisions from Scotland. Particularly,

one I'm very proud of on behalf of the Scottish Priory is the funding we were able to give for quite a big outreach building for the Eye Hospital in the town of Hebron, which is south of Jerusalem where there's a day clinic, at which there's things like cataract surgery. Laser surgery for eye disease was carried out. And Scotland was a major contributor to the funding of that building, and the [then] Prior, Mark Strudwick, and I, and others, were there at the opening of that building. It was a really great pleasure to be involved in."

Ian Wallace, West Lothian



Ian went on to explain what kind of people received treatment at the Eye Hospital:

"[The] patient population is pretty much exclusively from the Palestinian community, who of course are not cared for within the Israeli community. The Israeli hospitals are excellent, really good, but the Eye

Hospital has continued its tradition of treating eye diseases; and it's not just the hospital, which is in East Jerusalem, but there is the day hospital I've already mentioned in Hebron. There is a really big hospital in Gaza, which of course, is a very, very hazardous place, and we try to deliver care and various outreach clinics throughout the whole of the West Bank. So, it's a very extensive service which is provided. The reason it's eye diseases, is, when the original hospital was founded back in the 1880s, the main eye disease was probably infective trachoma, which is common in hot countries; now the majority of eye disease is either diabetic, and diabetes is very common in Palestinian population, cataract is common in all ageing populations, and congenital eye disease. Then of course, the other big problem is trauma, which unfortunately is rife in the Holy Land from time to time, particularly in Gaza."

Ian Wallace, West Lothian

Ian added that the Eye Hospital in Jerusalem is a purpose-built building in beautiful surroundings. The hospital is staffed by both Christians and Muslims, though the majority are Palestinians who have been trained as doctors, nurses, and administrators. They are assisted by specialists from Europe who visit and teach or carry out specialist surgery. The overwhelming feeling is that of a group of people from very different backgrounds with one objective - to deliver an excellent service, and this is recognised worldwide.

"Another [memory] is, they had a big fundraising event one time I was visiting, and the hospital is built around a beautiful open courtyard, lovely magentas in red and orange flowers, sitting there in the twilight, and everybody, people from all over the world who support the Eye Hospital, from America, from Australia and other parts of the world, and just this sense of being part of this worldwide community supporting this particular endeavour."

Ian Wallace, West Lothian



ST JOHN MALAWI

Since 1988, St John Scotland has supported its sister organisation, St John Malawi, with a community-led healthcare programme to improve the lives of children and families living in one of Africa's poorest countries.

Malawi has a poor life expectancy and high infant mortality, and it ranks lower than any other country in which St John operates. In addition to first aid training and support, St John Malawi runs a Primary Health Care Project. Begun in 1988, the project helps prevent illness through education and immunisation, with particular emphasis on the health of

young children. The volunteer Community Health Workers also provide other medicines and training in the home-based care of seriously ill people. They work in the most densely populated townships of Malawi's commercial capital, Blantyre, where living conditions are very poor. Since 2004, St John Scotland has provided funds to help meet the modest running costs of the project, allowing the number of workers to be increased.

Former Chief Executive of St John Scotland, Richard Waller, recalls how the organisation first became involved with Malawi:

“Our partnership with St John Malawi is related to the reorganisation of the Order internationally, because that certainly increased the awareness of us in Scotland about the existence of St John overseas. And there was a lovely New Zealander called John Strachan, who had been the Chancellor, effectively Prior, of St John New Zealand, and one of his roles in the early 2000s, as the Order’s Sub Prior, was to act as a link between the governance of the Order internationally and the Associations. So, he travelled extensively and he noted that whereas the other Pories had developed links with Associations, I think as much as anything through helping them with their first aid equipment or training, because obviously they’ve got a lot of first aid common ground, Scotland hadn’t done anything like that at all. For example, England had links with multiple Associations and sent them equipment, and similarly for Canada, and for Australia with Pacific Associations.

John suggested it was something that would be helpful for both us and an Association, and he suggested Malawi because of the obvious Scotland-Malawi links. But he said, ‘Don’t think just because I’ve suggested Malawi, that you have to go with Malawi, it’s up to you. If there’s some other Association that doesn’t have

a link which might suit better, you can go with them if you want'. Anyway, I was going to a Priory Executives' meeting in South Africa and it was suggested that I make an exploratory visit to St John Malawi on my way back. I set this up with Dr Dick Chilemba, who was the Chair of the Association, and Tom Kanyuka, who was the Secretary and said, 'We have a possible link in mind. Would you be happy and can I come, and are the dates all right?' and so on and so forth. And they said, 'Yes', so I visited for a couple of days. And I said beforehand, 'Look, I don't want to raise your hopes, because Scotland might not take up the idea of a link with an Association at all, or it might take it up but not with Malawi, so please don't get your hopes raised. And please, I would suggest, keep it very



tight to just the two of you and whoever else on your Council you might want to bring into your confidence’.

So, on a Friday, I landed at Blantyre airport, just! A very dodgy landing during a huge tropical storm when there just happened to be a gap in the clouds and blue sky. It was like the eye of a hurricane! And we landed, and the water on the runway was so deep that we had to take off our shoes and socks and even roll our trousers up a bit. And there was Tom, who was then, the Chairman I think, of Malawi Airlines. Anyway, he was there, so he and I go in through the VIP bit of Blantyre Airport, which only means you use this door instead of that door; you don’t get champagne or anything! But it was very nice, and Tom took me to my hotel and we had a chat when we got there and he said, ‘We’d like to take you to show you our headquarters tomorrow [which was Saturday], would you like to see them?’. ‘Yes please, I’d like to.’ ‘Well, I’ll pick you up at 9 o’clock and we’ll go off and do that’.

So, Tom picks me up, we drive off to their headquarters, and, lo and behold, there, of course, are all the volunteers! ‘Right, this is Richard Waller from St John Scotland who’s come to visit us, and Richard, would you like to tell us about your visit and St John Scotland?’. So, I did that, through an interpreter because the volunteers speak Chichewa, the local language. Anyway, did that. A clever move by Dick and his Council, but it was delightful because, as it subsequently transpired, a link with them fitted like a hand in a glove; it was just so perfect for us and for them. We asked, ‘How can we help?’, and what they really wanted was funding for their Community Health Workers, who are volunteers who go round the townships around Blantyre helping with illness prevention and healthcare, and particularly for expectant mothers, babies and children - weight monitoring and that sort of thing and also, importantly, immunisation and other provision of

medicines. They also provide training in how to look after people who are ill in their own homes – Home-Based Care.

So, we helped with an annual grant, from 2004, and this enabled them to double the number of volunteers to their target number of 60. And since then, we've helped St John Malawi in other ways, of course, as well as other Associations, in Africa and elsewhere.”

Richard Waller, Former CEO, St John Scotland

As well as long-standing support for the Blantyre project, in 2018 St John Scotland was granted funding from the Scottish Government to support a new project based around the Lilongwe area. The five-year programme is helping thousands of people improve their health, and will reach 57,000 people at home, including more than 10,000 expectant and new parents. It is hoped the programme, which has been funded until 2023, will also contribute to the sustainable development of Malawi's health sector in the long term.





VOLUNTEER LED SERVICES

In addition to fundraising and delivering its own services, and supporting local initiatives and charities, over the past twenty-five years St John Scotland has developed four core volunteer-led core services, all aimed at saving lives. These services are Patient Transport, CPR Training, Public Access Defibrillators, and Community First Responders.



PATIENT TRANSPORT

Around 1997, Dr John Calvert, a St John Scotland volunteer, was instrumental in creating a Patient Transport Service to serve patients living in the Dumfries and Galloway Area. The service was operated by volunteers using their own cars to take people to and from their homes for the regular journey between Dumfries and Edinburgh for cancer treatment in Western General Hospital. Four years later, in 2001, the service's capability was increased by buying a people carrier vehicle to complement the existing service. By 2007, the service had two dedicated people carriers funded by St John Scotland, driven by volunteers from both Stranraer and Dumfries. In addition, volunteers continued to use their own cars when necessary.

As well as same-day treatments, the service also provided transport to take patients to St John Home Cramond, which operated in conjunction with the Western General Oncology Department to provide accommodation for cancer patients from South-West Scotland who were undergoing longer radiotherapy or chemotherapy treatment sessions in Edinburgh. However, in 2007, the opening of a new unit at the Western General Hospital meant that the St John Home Cramond was no longer required for this service and it closed at the end of November that year. In 2009, Patient Transport in Dumfries and Galloway transported 490 people a total of 50,716 miles.

By 2006, St John Scotland Angus and Dundee Chair, Bill Spence, and his Area Committee had investigated the need for a Patient Transport Service for their area similar to the service running in Dumfries and Galloway. Having established that there was indeed a need for transport, the team started making preparations and turned their attention to recruiting volunteer drivers. The new service, which got underway on 1st May 2008, was initially geared to transporting up to four chemotherapy patients to and from Ninewells Hospital in Dundee, on five days a week. Drivers used their own cars and were reimbursed for their expenses. Requests for the service were made through the hospital. In addition, at the request of the Scottish Ambulance Service, transport was provided for people travelling to the Dialysis Unit in Arbroath and this increased the workload of the volunteer drivers immensely. A dedicated vehicle became necessary and was bought in 2009, though volunteer drivers continued to use their own cars and claim back expenses as required. The new vehicle was purchased thanks to a very kind legacy left by a local resident who wanted to support the service. During 2010, a total of 3,083 (2009: 2,100) patient trips covering 125,000 miles (2009: 55,100 miles) were undertaken by St John Scotland's Angus and Dundee Patient Transport Service.

Today, St John Scotland's Patient Transport Service provides free, comfortable and reliable transport to patients across the country. St John Scotland works closely with NHS Boards and the Scottish Ambulance Service to support patients who are being treated for cancer or receiving renal dialysis. These reliable services are coordinated and delivered by local Area volunteer teams. Following Angus and Dundee, further services were established in Fife (2017), Central (2020) and Edinburgh (2022). St John Scotland continues to work to expand Patient Transport services to new parts of Scotland, with valuable input from existing volunteers.

**To learn more about St John Scotland Patient Transport, see:
www.stjohnscotland.org.uk/home/patient-transport**

Patient Transport has been a passion of many St John Scotland members and volunteers for nearly twenty-five years, and several of them shared their memories with us.

“John Calvert was a very pro-active person and Stranraer is very geographically isolated, so I think, at that time, and I think it is still the case, people that required cancer treatment, in essence, have to go to the Western General in Edinburgh and, as I understand it, NHS Dumfries and Galloway have a contract with NHS Lothian for treatment. The problem was, yes, turn up at the hospital in Dumfries and we'll get you to Edinburgh. How do people get from Stranraer, the western end of the region, to Dumfries? That was something that was picked up by John Calvert, so that's where the transport service started and apparently, it's been an absolute godsend and it's been appreciated by so many people, and I don't know how some people get on without it. It's not exclusively to Dumfries, sometimes maybe people go to Carlisle for treatment. There's been quite a bit of rumble in the local press about why go

to Edinburgh when, nine times out of ten, on the buses leaving from Stranraer, you're going through Glasgow on a motorway to the big cancer centre in the west end of Glasgow, and there's been quite a lot of local opinion on driving past Glasgow to go to Edinburgh, 'So why can't we go to Glasgow'. So, people go to Glasgow, people go to Crosshouse in Kilmarnock, they get some treatment there, and on one occasion it was an exceptional thing, but somebody panicked and I'm not sure about the treatment but it was very cancer-orientated, and two of our guys took somebody to Aberdeen and back. It wasn't Christmas Eve, but more or less that sort of time, but it just shows the volunteers, the type of people we have, that if someone needs help, let's do what we can."

Kenneth Paterson, West Galloway

Willie Waterson [pictured below on the right] is now the Patient Transport Coordinator in the West Galloway Area and explains his role:



"[When I started as a driver] the role involved them phoning up and asking if I'd be able to drive to Glasgow, Edinburgh, on so and so a date, and I'd say, 'Aye, no bother'. So, I just phoned the hospital, go into A & E to collect the keys, and on you go. When you come back, you fuel up and put the keys back into the hospital. It's only transport of cancer patients we do; some are going for treatments; some are going for consulting; it's different

categories, but they are all cancer patients in different levels. It's good to know I've done something to help someone that's going through this terrible, terrible, time of their life. That's the way I look at it.

I'm still a driver and became Coordinator about seven years ago... The Coordinator duties is just organising the transport. I've got the phone here and it's just for St John's, it's not personal to me; it's paid for by St John's and the number of this phone. The college's secretary uses [the number], the drop-in centre in Stranraer, doctors' surgeries and patients use it. As long as it's cancer related, we'll do what we can for them. That's the way it was set up in the Stranraer and Wigtown area by the late Dr John Calvert, and how it was to get to these hospitals when they have no other means of getting transport and that's why it's open to all cancer patients in this area. So I note the dates in the diary, contact the patients and when I've got a driver, I phone and say a driver will pick you up at the hospital or at home at so and so a time, and they'll take you, and the driver's name is so and so, and I pass the patient's name and a contact number on to the driver so the driver knows who they are, where they are going, and away they go. The driver takes them up, makes sure they get to the right department where they are going at whatever hospital and brings them back home. If I couldn't get hold of a driver, I would go myself but there's always a driver because they're a good bunch."

Wille Waterson, West Galloway

"I was approached by a couple of people from Headquarters in 2016 because I used to work in Fife in the Health Board; they were wanting to set up patient transport within Fife and they thought I would have some contacts. So basically, I went to a couple of people that I knew, and they pointed me in the right direction to the people to get it sorted out. We had a meeting with the dialysis

people, and they said, 'How soon can you start?', basically, because otherwise they would have to rely on the ambulances and sometimes they are rather draughty, so the patients would much rather be in cars if they could. We only take patients who can walk themselves; anybody else, the Ambulance Service has to cope with that, because our people are just drivers, they're not trained in patient handling. Basically, we have a pool of about twenty odd drivers, and we started off at Queen Margaret Hospital because it was a smaller unit than Kirkcaldy, and then after a year, it was so successful that Kirkcaldy wanted us to start off there as well. So, we now run a service with both units.

The drivers of the first shift in start about six o'clock in the morning because the patients have to be in by seven, so the drivers have to pick up the car, check it, make sure it's alright and then go and pick up the first patients and have them in for seven o'clock. With Covid, it's been a bit more difficult because it's been one patient in a car at a time, whereas before we could take up to four, so the drivers have a wee bit of a longer day just now. The drivers who come in for the lunchtime shift, they bring in the afternoon patients and take the morning patients home and the evening shift comes in about five o'clock and they bring in the evening patients and take the afternoon patients home. We do this five days a week at both hospitals."

Lawson Rennie, Fife

"I was thinking, 'What am I going to do when I retire?', and Mary [Bill's wife] having had her stint of breast cancer, we were at the doctors and saw the flyer just saying, 'Drivers Required' to transport patients to the hospital. And after having the flyer for two years, I picked up the telephone, dialled the number, and I made contact with someone who I admired one hundred per cent. His name was Bill Spence. He's no longer with us; he died just about 18 months ago, but Bill sort of took me through everything

that he expected of drivers, and how he wanted St John Patient Transport to be the best, not just as good as, it had to be the best. You know, you were treating the patient, giving them that extra bit of comfort while they were on their way. Initially I was taking patients to the Cancer Unit in Dundee, and the first patient I had was an old lady of 84 and she was fearful of going for this first piece of treatment, and I said, 'Oh my wife's been through it', and she immediately told me all about it. Eventually, she was like an old friend. Every time I turned up to take her to hospital she said, 'Oh, you're here', that sort of thing. I took her in [the clinic]; the treatment only lasts about ten minutes; she lived about ten minutes from the hospital, so you'd ten minutes in the car with her, took her in and she got her treatment for ten minutes so you were only waiting for ten minutes, so that was the shortest I ever had. And I had one which was outside Blairgowrie, and that was about thirty-eight miles, and so you were taking them in, they've still got the ten-minute treatment, and it was 30-45 minutes to take them back again."

Bill Harvey, Dundee



“We’re a bit late to the party here but we are up and running now. Other areas in St John have been doing this for decades. We thought we would start and then the pandemic came and then we realised we’re going to have to start this during the pandemic and it has been done. So yes, in Edinburgh we are very proud to be offering volunteer Patient Transport to renal patients at the Royal Infirmary. We are just coming out of the pilot phase at the moment but we hope to be offering more opportunities for more volunteers and providing a regular transport service for more people who require just that little bit more assistance to get to their dialysis appointments.



As you can imagine there's lots of contracts you have to go through, so you have to wade through that with the local health board. The day to day is dealt with by NHS staff who run the unit on the ground, developing and maintaining relationships there. They understand the value a volunteer patient transport driver can bring to their patients and so we have a couple of coordinators who assign people to patients and patient journeys and they work very closely with the unit administrator who oversees who's coming in and at what time."

Andrew Smith, Edinburgh



Ian Clarke and Carol Campbell are drivers in the West Galloway Area. Here, they recall how they got started and their first experiences.

"I'd been up here about three years [from Yorkshire] and I was talking to a chap, Adam, who used to be one of the organisers for

the transport. I was talking to him and he said, 'Do you like driving', and I said, 'Yes, all my life I've done driving', and he asked me to go with him to Glasgow, to Gartnavel Hospital. He told me about the organisation, so I went with him and we had a client, so he asked me if I'd like to be a driver. So, I started, and it's about 12 years I've been driving for them. I thoroughly enjoy it. I enjoy talking to people. Having had the problems that a lot of people I take up have had, I can relate to them, talk to them, put them at ease about what they're going to go through when they get to the hospital, with the radium treatment and that sort of stuff, because I've been through it. I am fine, I am one hundred per cent... I think having been through treatment, it does help; you can relate to them and relieve their anxieties more. The first operation I had, I was told if I had left it a fortnight, they wouldn't have been able to do anything for me; it was that close because the type of cancer I had was doubling in size in 24 hours. So, I was seen by the doctor on the Friday, I was in hospital on the Sunday, and operated on the Monday. It was as quick as that, but that was in Yorkshire and I've had it in my neck since I've been up here, and touch wood, I'm fine, a check-up every three months. So yes, I believe you can talk to people, you know what their fears are, especially if it's their first time going up to have treatment. So, it's easier to talk to people and put them at ease."

Ian Clarke, West Galloway

"I think it's a good service, it's a great service, and I know with the few I have done, they are all very appreciative of it, and that's good, isn't it? I mean, it's terrible if you are sitting at home worrying about how you're going to get to hospital. I stopped at the bus stop one day in Dumfries, a man was waiting for the Stranraer bus and I was doing some shopping, and he said, 'Oh this awful. I had to come up this morning and I had to get out from the hospital to here, and then I have to get back to Stranraer.' And this was before I knew about St John's, and I thought, it is awful. It is

awful. I thought that man should've been offered help by his GP or his consultant. That's really my view on it. I think, make it more available, if possible. Everybody has constraints on what they can do, and Willie [Waterson] explained when they bought the second car, it was because they were so busy.

It's a great service that St John offer and I'm really quite proud to be part of it. It's something that's lacking. I mean, [this area] is a long way to any of the major hospitals and there are people who probably wouldn't know which way to turn to get there. So, I think it's great, and when Willie explained it to me, he was very open and honest and welcoming, and he seems to do a really good job."



Carol Campbell, West Galloway

"It's the best thing [a volunteer] could do, it really is the best thing they could do. They'd get a lot out of it, a lot of benefit out of it themselves, meeting people and understanding some of their problems, and feeling that you've done something worthwhile to

help somebody. It's a joy. So, anybody that can drive and can drive safely and properly, it's the biggest worthwhile cause, the biggest charity that's going, and they can help; they'll see something at the end of it."

Ian Clarke, West Galloway

Patients are indeed appreciative, as illustrated by this letter from a patient in West Galloway:

Dear Liz,
I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the fantastic St John Transport Team.
When I was diagnosed in March this year (that is in 2021) one of the major concerns my wife and I had was how we were going to get back and forth from Hospital appointments. I was unable to drive and my wife does not drive. Most family and friends are working.
A friend suggested we contact St John's that they might be able to help. We contacted Willie. After a five-minute conversation he assured us that he and his team would look after us, this really did take a great weight off our shoulders.
I have to give a special mention to the drivers, nothing was too much trouble. If I was a bit late coming out of Hospital it did not matter as long as I was comfortable, they took their time and got me home. They could sense when I wanted to talk or when you wanted a quiet time, a rare gift indeed.
I will always be thankful to St John's Team as they give up so much of their time to help others. Long may they continue with this fantastic work, they give so much to our community.
Best Regards

Diana Orr Ewing was one of the recent patients to receive assistance from the West Galloway team:

“I think I was just told about it because I ended up requiring to go to Edinburgh for therapy in the winter and it wasn’t feasible to have driven up every time and so I asked around... This was in March this year... [The service] was absolutely wonderful. They came and met me, collected me at home, collected my bags. They were really good on the journey, you didn’t have to chat all the time, they had great empathy to know when you were ready to have a chat or when you weren’t. And they delivered me in Edinburgh and picked me up at the end of my month’s treatment and brought me home.

I’d just like to say how very grateful we are and I shall be telling everybody about the wonderful service in Stranraer, and I will pass the word far and wide. I think anybody who needs hospital transport should always remember St John Scotland.”

Diana Orr Ewing, West Galloway



CPR TRAINING

In 2015, Scotland’s survival rates for cardiac arrest lagged far behind those of other European countries, at only 5%. In response, the Scottish Government brought together emergency services, charities and community groups to tackle the issue, and set out the target to save an extra 1,000 lives by 2020. St John Scotland joined this partnership – known as ‘Save a Life for Scotland’, to help strengthen the fight to save lives from cardiac arrest. By 2019, CPR training was an important focus for St John Scotland and across the country, St John Scotland volunteers were working hard to

spread knowledge and awareness in their communities. They knew that this was making a difference as the then latest statistics revealed that bystander CPR had increased more than 20% in the previous five years, and as a result, survival rates from cardiac arrest had doubled.

Improving public awareness was paramount as quick action is vital to saving lives. Most cardiac arrests happen in the home, with many more occurring in people's workplaces, or out and about in the community. That means that it is members of the public, rather than medical professionals or paramedics, who are often needed to act first and start CPR before the ambulance arrives. For every minute that passes without action, the person's chances of survival decrease by 10%. To give someone the best chance of surviving, it is important that someone nearby understands what has happened, knows what to do, and has the confidence and skills to take appropriate action.

Across the country, St John Scotland volunteers have taken and continue to take this message into their local communities. From shopping centres to summer fairs, community drop-ins to youth group meetings, local teams of St John Scotland volunteers provide free training to groups, and each year they have helped thousands more people learn the skills to save a life.

**To learn more about St John Scotland CPR Training, see:
www.stjohnscotland.org.uk/home/cpr-training**

“One of the things that we have become immersed in over the last few years is the CPR training, and the husband-and-wife team, [Malcolm MacBean and Jane MacBean], they travel extensively to

do CPR training, and whilst they are there, they have encouraged new trainers to join, which they have done. We have a young volunteer in Wick, who does the CPR training. We also have one in Skye.”

Alex Craib, Highland

“We also have a demonstration defibrillator and will show people how to use them as well, but some people are scared of them, they think they’re going to electrocute themselves or the patient, although electrocuting the patient is the object of the exercise. So they think they’re actually going to hurt the patient, so we have a demonstration defibrillator that we can show people how easy it is. The machine talks to the people and tells them exactly what to do... if the machine detects a heartbeat, it won’t allow you to shock the patient, so they are fool proof.”



Lawson Rennie, Fife

Anne Mitchell (pictured below right) teaches CPR to a volunteer



“When I first retired, I was looking for what I could do to fill in my time, I had been a very active person, I was still working full time, not so much nights but did on-call at nights. I was used to being active and ‘Save a Life Scotland’ was advertising quite widely at that point, and I contacted them and was put in touch with St John and I’ve been with them ever since. I’ve gone from being a CPR champion to a CPR Lead for the ‘St John in the City Defibrillator Project’ in Edinburgh.

The actual sessions are relatively short. You have to assess, particularly with Covid, you have to assess where you are going to be teaching in, but it varies hugely. You could be doing a primary school with Primary 7 and working your way down [the school years], and what you teach is very different from Primary 1, with a teddy bear and “Do you know where you live?” [if you have to call emergency services], to the Primary 7s who want to know how to do [CPR] but they may not have the strength, but they could show an adult what to do. Your language and body language is very different to an older group, perhaps in sheltered housing, again, who for fragility reasons might not actually be able to do the process, but they can understand it and they can tell that person who’s passing by and would like to help but doesn’t know what to do, how to do it.”

Anne Mitchell, Edinburgh

“I previously heard about St John’s Ambulance, I was under the illusion that St John Scotland was under the same branch, but one of my close friends said to me that St John Scotland is a totally different organisation in Scotland, taking to do with CPR and defibrillator training, and with that going through, he asked me if I would be interested in volunteering, because he knew my background to do with first aid and training. And I said, “Yes, certainly I’ll come along.” That was on the 27th of November last year [2021]. I dooked my toe in the water, shall we say, and it’s taken leaps and bounds from then, and I have now taken on the role of CPR Lead Champion in Ayrshire and Arran.

My role in St John Ayrshire and Arran is basically training volunteers to do CPR and defibrillators. We call them CPR and Defib Champions. My role is basically to train them up to a standard that they can go out and train the public. I am already a



hands-on kind of person so I actually go along with them to every training session. I conduct the training, and then I get them up to a standard that I am happy that they can deliver that training. Now, when that's done, we, in private, without the public being there, give them [volunteer trainee trainers] practice on the defib, and give them practice on the manikins. Predominately, I am there to try and train them and give them the support and any help they need, and build confidence, so that they can deal with the general public and answer

any questions that's asked."

Brian Gibson, Ayrshire & Arran

"So, there are very different groups, and drop-in sessions. We did Port Edgar Open Day with the Water Centre down in South Queensferry, and we had 365 people all pass through our hands, all having a go on a manikin, but it was a beautiful sunny day so our problem there was not hypothermia, it was sunburn! So, it's just trying to pre-empt what you're going to need on the days, how many volunteers you're going to need to carry out this training, whether it's one, two or six people that's needed and therefore

how many manikins you need and spacing out now particularly post Covid and thinking about the safety of the volunteers as well as the people who attend... [The] challenges are getting volunteers that are available through the day because businesses want CPR taught through the day, Monday to Friday. Unless I'm using retired people like myself, then there's not a lot of us available."

Anne Mitchell, Edinburgh

"One of our volunteers was a young boy who volunteered to come and do CPR and Defib training, and he came along to a couple of sessions. He was very good. I saw the potential in him. I asked him would he be interested in talking to the school he was at. He was a sixth former. He spoke to the Deputy Head. The Deputy Head was really interested in it. So, what we did was ask Callum [the school student] if he would be interested in organising that. He organised it and it happened on Tuesday 19th April. We had twenty sixth formers who turned up to do CPR and Defib training, and that was just out of one boy who showed an interest. It was a



really good day, actually. That boy has now gone on to be one of our volunteers, and he's keen as mustard to come along to every session we've got."

Brian Gibson, Ayrshire & Arran



"Now we've started doing CPR as well at the same time, we teach people to do CPR. We've been to the Bon Accord Centre a few times and taught people to do CPR. The amount of people in Aberdeen who know it is unbelievable. We also go to two secondary schools and teach them to do CPR as well, one is quite good now, they can teach their own kids."

Sheena MacBride, Aberdeen & NE



PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATORS

A defibrillator can save the life of someone whose heart has stopped beating normally ('cardiac arrest') by re-starting it with a controlled electric shock. Modern defibrillators are portable and easy to use, and those used as Public Access Defibrillators are designed to be used by a person with no previous training; they give visible and audible instructions and will only administer an electric shock if required.

In 2006, Angus and Dundee Area Committee paved the way for a new St John Scotland project – providing defibrillators to local organisations. Tayside Police and Carnoustie Health Centre were keen to receive the machines, which cost around £1,200 each. Two were purchased at the end of the year. Angus and Dundee were to trial the project in the hope that it would prove successful and be rolled out to other areas and then extended nationally.

The following year, 2007, St John Scotland's West Lothian committee allocated money to purchase two defibrillators, one for a local health centre and the other for a shopping centre.

In 2010, St John Scotland announced that it would develop work nationally to provide defibrillators for use in the community. Since then, they have worked with the public and several businesses and organisations, including golf clubs, Network Rail, community councils and others, to place lifesaving "heart-start" equipment across Scotland. In August of 2016, St John Scotland's Edinburgh committee launched the St John and the City public access defibrillator project at a Civic Reception in the City Chambers.

A further ninety Public Access Defibrillators were installed across the country in 2019, sited in prominent locations, including main streets, schools, gyms, scout halls, riding schools, and churches. Communities both rural and urban have benefited from access to the equipment.

Today, St John Scotland's support for Public Access Defibrillators is through their Community Defibrillator Scheme, whereby community groups are offered part funding, advice and support to install the equipment. This is then followed up with free volunteer-led community training to help raise awareness, teach locals bystander CPR, and demonstrate how easy defibrillators are to use.

**Learn more about St John Scotland's work in
Public Access Defibrillators at:
www.stjohnscotland.org.uk/home/defibrillators**



St John Scotland volunteers Lynn Cleal and Andrew Smith talked about how they started the St John and the City Project in Edinburgh:

“Now, Lynn and I moved from Edinburgh to Cove [on the Rosneath Peninsula] seven years ago. On the drive from Edinburgh to Cove we realised that we were passing through all these villages, and in the villages, we saw telephone boxes, and instead of the word ‘Telephone’ at the top, it had ‘Defibrillator’. We saw these boxes on the sides of community halls and you think, ‘Defibrillator, defibrillator, defibrillator.’ So, we got thinking about Edinburgh – urban area, large amounts of footfall, lots of tourists, and to us we just simply couldn’t see the boxes on the walls. And so spurred by the use of the defibrillators at Waverley Station and realising that there are plenty of big businesses, as well as individuals in Edinburgh, who are wanting to help, and they think the defibrillator is a good idea. We need to find a way to make it simple for them to provide funds to put defibrillators up, and where we thought we, as St John, could add value, is sorting all that out for them. You might have a large company wanting to say, “Well here’s enough money for ten defibrillators”, that’s great, but they don’t know where to put them, how to order them, all that sort of thing; and we figured it all out. We found the walls to hang them on, we found guardians to take care of them, so if their act was simply that of a financial donation, we can turn round and say to them, “We can put that money to good use - that by providing so many defibrillators, so many cabinets, we’ll get them up, we’ll provide a plaque with your name on it.”

That was how we’ve gone from that initial helping Waverley Station, the charity helping them by providing two defibrillators, and they provided two of their own, and it’s kind of mushroomed now, half a dozen years later, to having over 325 public access defibs in and across Edinburgh.”

Andrew Smith, Edinburgh



“I engaged with the Lord Provost of Edinburgh at the time and he gave permission to have a civic reception, twice in fact, two different Lord Provosts, and on the back of that we got quite a lot of advertising. The problem we have with St John Scotland is, the majority of people think we are St John Ambulance, and it was really hard to educate people and to get them familiar with the brand in Scotland. So, the publicity was quite a big thing for me, so people could see it, and from the civic reception it ended up - it grew arms and legs. Obviously, everybody knew about it, so the airport wanted defibrillators, and the police stations wanted defibrillators, so I said to the Lord Provost, ‘Why don’t we look at the trams?’. And they’d had really bad press with digging up the roads, and I thought it would be a great way to give back, so they could show what they were doing. So, they agreed to put a defibrillator in every tram. So, we got thirty donors, and we installed them on the trams. So really, you’ve got a defibrillator passing every three minutes either side and they have been used several times. And the idea was, if there was an emergency

anybody at the tram stop could push the emergency button and the next tram would come and stop with the defibrillator, and the call handler at the trams would notify the Ambulance Service, so that they would make it. Some of the tram stops are in awkward positions and it would be a case that they would make room for the ambulance to come up. So, it works. It's a great team, and often where we'd had defibrillators, the tram would put a spare set of pads on to one of their moving trams so one of my volunteers could get them and replace the pads.

It worked out perfectly for us and on the back of that, which is really excellent, is the trams now allow us to stand through the International Rugby stand at Murrayfield can collecting and usually after two or three sessions of can collecting at Murrayfield, we have enough money and we purchase a defibrillator and a cabinet. So, I think we've got five now, that the volunteers have fundraised off the back of the defibrillators and can collecting."

Lynn Cleal, Edinburgh



“The idea was to try and take the fear out of everything to do with the defibrillators and make it easy, you know, because I’m sure the adrenaline must be pumping if somebody’s running to get the defibrillator. So, what we did was, we created this plaque, and it’s got ‘St John and the City Defibrillator Project’, and it has who it’s donated by, and underneath it’s got an emergency reference. So, if you were phoning 999 you would quote the reference, and I’ve already uploaded all the information on to the Circuit, which is the national database for defibrillators, and with that code they can then say, “We know you’re at EH6. The ambulance is on its way”, and it allows the person to take the defibrillator and go; they don’t have to worry about where they are, and I’m sure, myself, if there was an emergency, I wouldn’t know what part of town I was in, let alone your international community that we have, and the tourist business in Edinburgh. So we try to make it as easy as possible and the beauty of that, too, is that as soon as it has come off the database, that it’s away to be used, they then send me an email to say the defibrillator is being used in an emergency, so I know then to call upon one of my volunteers, or myself if I’m in town, to have a spare set of pads to replace it, so it’s then put back in the cabinet ready for the next emergency. We’ve two or three that’s been out through lockdown; the Scott Monument one has already been out the cabinet six times over the last year or so, and the idea is to make sure that as soon as it goes back into the cabinet, it’s in working order and we’ve got all the information back on to the Circuit so it’s ready for the next emergency. The Scottish Ambulance and myself started to organise this about five years ago, and then the Circuit came on board. So, all of that information has gone over to them and the programme, as far as I’m concerned, is working really well, apart from when I get pinged at two o’clock in the morning to say the defibrillator is now out of the cabinet; so, I just send a quick email to somebody to check it the

next day. So, it's very good, it's working well. It's a great project."

Lynn Cleal, Edinburgh

Outwith Edinburgh, community defibrillators are also a priority:

"We've just had the Prior hand over a defibrillator to the National Trust for Scotland, at Hill House in Helensburgh, the Rennie Mackintosh House. We are doing defibrillator training; we've been doing it through youth groups and churches. So, we're developing that training and the supply of defibrillators where necessary... There are other charitable groups who are doing defibrillators, it's become a popular thing, so we don't really want to be trying to steal anybody else's thunder. It's just where there are gaps, we will fill the gaps if we can."

Douglas Dow, Dunbartonshire



“We also can provide defibrillators if we hear of places that need them. We have done it in Stranraer, and we did it at Newton Stewart Golf Club; we gave them a defibrillator there, and we don’t ask for any donation. The only thing we do ask is that once it is handed over, they register it with the Ambulance Service and they have the upkeep of it.”

Liz Hamilton, West Galloway

“The defibrillators came first but the CPR was very, very close on its tail. From the word go, it was always a case if you’ve got a defibrillator, either the donor or the host, we would provide them with bystander CPR training. If you can imagine you are the owner of a business and you’ve got this yellow box on your wall, and you’re kind of wondering about what it is and what it does, and you might be a bit anxious about opening that door, then we have, since the beginning, provided that bystander CPR training, to help demystify it; to help reassure people these are automated defibrillators, they’ll talk you through it and under what circumstances you would do CPR, and how the defibrillator provides the icing on the cake in those circumstances. Yes, it’s a piece of kit, it’s a very clever piece of kit, but it’s not one that you need to be afraid of, and, just giving people that reassurance... We pitch up at local fayres, at libraries, community centres, people who ask. However, we have got a bit of a backlog at the moment because of the pandemic and we’ve continued to roll defibrillators out, so our CPR volunteers have got a very busy 2022, and probably into 2023, playing catch-up with who’s asked for bystander CPR training.”

Andrew Smith, Edinburgh



COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS

Throughout 2011, St John Scotland conducted a National Project Review, headed by Bill Spence, Chair of St John Scotland's Angus and Dundee committee. The review explored additional areas of need, identifying possibilities for cooperation, whilst avoiding duplication.

Bill's initial report suggested two promising contenders as new national projects - an expanded patient transport service, building on existing provision, and 'First Responders', essentially providing rapid assistance to a person in suspected cardiac arrest before an ambulance arrives. Both these projects had been considered whilst keeping in mind the longstanding agreement between St John Scotland and the St Andrew's Ambulance Association, which was intended to avoid unhelpful duplication and competition between the two charities. Following discussions between the two organisations, St Andrew's open-mindedly agreed that the demand for patient transport and first responders was so great that there was plenty of room for multiple providers for the foreseeable future. As St Andrew's raised no objections to St John Scotland pursuing these programmes, the latter began preparations.

Under his leadership, in 2012, Bill Spence introduced a pilot First Responder Scheme in Angus and Dundee. First Responders are members of the public who volunteer to help their community by responding to medical emergencies while an ambulance is on its way. They are trained in a range of emergency skills, including CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and the use of defibrillators and oxygen masks. A First Responder is then able to provide an early intervention in situations, such as a suspected cardiac arrest, if they are able to reach the scene before the ambulance crew can get there. This can save the life of a patient or increase the chances of them making a full recovery. Volunteers are

deployed by the Scottish Ambulance Service in response to an emergency call. They arrange to be on an on-call roster for specific periods, during which they have access to a defibrillator and other equipment.



Bill Spence working with Scottish Ambulance Service representative Murray McEwan on arrangements for the First Responder scheme

When a report of an incident is received by the Scottish Ambulance Service, they dispatch a paramedic crew, but where a First Responder is also available locally, and the incident is within their level of competence, they will task that volunteer to attend. This may be as a lone responder or with a supporting trained 'buddy'. They then apply their skills in resuscitation to a patient that has collapsed with suspected cardiac arrest or similar symptoms. On arrival of the Scottish Ambulance Service crew, the First Responder(s) hand over treatment to the paramedics and assist them in any task they are given, which could be to support relatives at the scene.

During that first year, around twenty St John Scotland volunteers received training, and responded to 202 calls. Volunteers must pass a proficiency

test before being authorised to attend calls; they then receive continuity training to maintain their skills.

During the following years, and outwith Angus and Dundee, St John Area committees have supported existing local Community First Responder Teams with funding. In 2014, St John Scotland's Highland committee funded two Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) meters for the Point First Responders on the Isle of Lewis; the Ayrshire and Arran committee provided start-up funding to the Fenwick First Responders; in East Renfrewshire, the Glasgow committee supported the Neilston & Uplawmoor First Responders.

**Learn more about St John Scotland Community First Responders at:
www.stjohnscotland.org.uk/home/community-first-responders**



William Harvey, known as Bill, explains how he got involved as a Community First Responder:

“Two years after I joined as a [Patient Transport] driver, Bill [Spence] had another project which he was bringing online and he was looking for people in the area to be First Responders. People who would turn out when the 999 call came in, and the Ambulance Service would notify the First Responder closest to the patient, and you’d be there performing your duties, maybe half an hour before the ambulance arrived, or maybe longer. In the time I was First Responder for this area, I was out five times but I was on duty maybe one hundred times.

The training for that is first class. You are trained in CPR, and you’re trained in the use of the defibrillator... People would come along from the Ambulance Service and give a talk or a show, sort of thing; they would have different scenarios that they would put to you and you’d talk your way through them, say what happens. And if there’s a shout for an ambulance, and if there’s a defibrillator close by, and if the First Responder is needed, they’ll say, “That’s where your defibrillator is”, and within minutes you’ve got someone who can apply the defibrillator, if that’s necessary, because it’s the first 8-10 minutes that makes all the difference. If you can get there quickly and get the defibrillator on, there’s a 25% chance of saving a life.

Bill Spence organised the first defibrillator in our village hall. I think it has just snowballed; there must be close on 100 all over Angus and there’s a lot of private ones as well. People have a bereavement and they say, “I want to put £1,000 towards a defibrillator in the area”. I think Carnoustie has something like five on the High Street but the important thing is you want them to be

available 24 hours a day. Some people have a defibrillator in their shop and when the shop is closed the defibrillator is not available. Those days of mouth to mouth are long gone; it's CPR done the proper way. To see it being done on 'Casualty', on the telly, that bears no resemblance to shaving the chest and making sure the pads are gripping; and once you've pressed that button you've got to be clear because it gives a kick. It is an experience I'll always be thankful for."

Bill Harvey, Angus & Dundee



FAVOURITE MEMORIES AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

Speaking at a special event held in Glasgow on 5th March 2022 to celebrate St John Scotland's 75th anniversary, Chair of St John Scotland, and Prior of the Order in Scotland, Eleanor Argyll, said:

"As we reflect on our 75th anniversary, we naturally look back at what we have achieved since 1947, providing services which have made a real difference to individuals and to communities. A lot has

changed since those early days, but Scotland's communities still need us. St John Scotland, through the work of our dedicated volunteers, has a valuable part to play in creating a caring Scotland, where more of us will survive a health crisis to live longer, and better."

St John Scotland members and volunteers have also spent time reflecting on their experiences within the organisation, as shared throughout this book. When asked to sum up their favourite memory of their time with St John Scotland, the responses were reflective and heart-warming, and when asked to sum up their hopes for the organisation as it moves beyond its 75th anniversary, their answers were considered and thoughtful, with every one of them hoping that St John Scotland goes from strength to strength over the next 75 years. Here are some of those responses.



FAVOURITE MEMORIES

"I've probably had quite a few [happy memories]. I think my most enjoyable time was when we spent four days, two years running, at the Highland Show, and everybody laughed at me in my blue wellies. I must admit it was hard work, but it was very enjoyable... Also, having the honour of being able to go to London to go to the Queen's Birthday Parade and being able to shout to Peter Phillip and saying what a wonderful job he'd organised. I spoke to Princess Anne's husband, because the whole family sort of split into the different groups in the Mall, and I thought, 'Okay, we had to pay for our own tickets for that, but it was still an honour to be there, representing Scotland.'"



Margaret Balfour, Edinburgh

“One of the [CPR training events] we did, it was a few weeks ago now, it was a parent came along and she brought her kids, and she asked if it was okay for them to come along, they were ages maybe seven to ten years old, and we said, ‘Certainly, they can come in and they can go through the training as well.’ They were kind of shy... the mother took a try on the manikin and the defib and we got the boy to do it, and as we were going through it you could see the boy was a wee bit apprehensive, but what we did was, we turned it into a kind of game between him and his sisters to see who could compress the manikin the most, because you’ve got to compress the chest down to get the compressions in. So, the boy did his and then his sister came and did it, and you saw at the end of it that they both turned round and said how easy it was to do it. They thought it would be really hard. CPR can save somebody’s life and was a really traumatic thing, but they realised that even

though they couldn't do the compressions the same as an adult, any compressions at all can save somebody's life. Even from a child it can save somebody's life, so that was one of those moments you could say, 'Well, they'll go away and tell their friends', so a seven-year-old is teaching another seven-year-old first aid and CPR on a manikin. That was a good evening that, I enjoyed that one."

Brian Gibson, Ayrshire & Arran

"Everybody comes with a different reason. Some people enjoy the social aspect of it, that they meet each other and they're doing things together. Everybody wants to be doing something for other people, they all want to impart their knowledge, they're all very passionate about CPR. Some of that may come from knowing



somebody or losing somebody, you know, 'if I'd known I could've done', or just, 'This is something I like doing', and there's quite a group fall into that category. I enjoy the social aspect of it; I like bouncing in front of people and being able to talk to people and talking to strangers and being able to feel that I've given them a skill that might just make a difference. I very much feel that the CPR Lead role is empowerment, be that to your learners or the volunteers that you're bringing with you."

Anne Mitchell, Edinburgh

"As a journalist I moved around Scotland, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and in London so I've been involved in St John in Glasgow principally in my early life in Aberdeen, to begin and conclude, and so working with the Area Committee was always interesting and then in 1999 there came a call would I serve on Chapter additionally and that was both an honour and an onerous task and not one anyone would wish to shirk. You meet some very interesting people, and you get another glimpse of life. I'm old enough now to think back to 1967, my first ever St John Festival, and know that in those days it was top drawer, it was old family, it was slightly stuffy, but the Order has itself modernised. It hasn't had modernisation thrust upon it, you've only to look at today's office staff who run the executive side to realise who we are, a very modern 21st century organisation with a substantial balance sheet and you compare it to on the chivalric side and you see the welcome new blood that comes in. This is not to knock old family in the slightest. Our new Prior, Eleanor, Duchess of Argyll, is a delightful addition, we make her most welcome, and she is the Head of the Order, and she will sit and chair board meetings now, she will have a lot of work on her hands, but it's delightful to have someone like her with her own business background on board."

Gordon Casely, Aberdeen & NE

“At our second civic reception, I decided not to make it the same way as the first one, so I brought together [eight] cardiac arrest survivors, and actually brought them together with the person who saved their life... And we presented the person that saved their life with a certificate of appreciation. But what I found really nice, was the eight men got together and they’ve now formed their own little group, because they range from about 38 on, and until you go down that road you don’t know what’s going through their mind. And good for them to be able to talk to each other. One of the survivors, Michael, wouldn’t mind me telling the story, he bought a winter jacket, and he’d been fitted with an internal defibrillator, and all of a sudden, he thought the house alarm was going off. He took his jacket off and said, ‘Oh, I don’t feel great’, so it ended up he phoned his cardiologist, and the jacket had magnetic bits at the back of the zip and it set off his internal defibrillator! So, of course, he was then telling the other seven men about it and they all went, ‘I didn’t know that!’. So there again, the education, you know, out of somebody’s near tragedy came a wonderful thing. There’s a picture we have of the eight of them all together and their eight rescuers behind them and I think that’s my favourite moment, that is my favourite moment.”

Lynn Cleal, Edinburgh

“I think the big Garden Party, it was a lovely day, so it was terrific. I also enjoyed visiting Toronto with Sir Malcolm [Ross] and his wife and my wife to attend the Grand Council Meeting there. Obviously, I enjoyed being Inducted into the Order as a Knight, that was in London 2012, and I got a medal for 32 years’ service as well.”

Douglas Dow, Dunbartonshire

“My favourite memories? My wife and I attended the Queen’s Garden Party in Holyrood in 2008, that was a highlight. Another

highlight was in Haddington this year, when I was invested as a Commander of the Order, which I was very, very, proud of. I remember one time we, the Chairman and I, were in Wester Ross, in a place called Inchnadamph, which is the headquarters of the Assynt Mountain Rescue Team, when Colonel Stirling presented the team with a Land Rover, and that was a memorable day. I have many happy memories of the Order, of days out and functions. I am really enjoying my time as a member of the Order. I am hugely proud of the work we do in the Highlands.”



Alex Craib, Highland

“I think my favourite memories are probably about my own St John soirées at the [Ross] Priory, which were all so nice. And my

Investiture as a Dame must be a favourite memory; and I can remember Dr Morrow speaking to me after that, he was the Lord Lyon at the time, he was lovely. He was such a cheery person. It was a great eventful day.”



Katharine Liston, Dunbartonshire

“From the start of the project, in 1975, from building this purpose-built home [St John Court, Partickhill], to the handover 34 years later I just thought, ‘Very few people know why it was built, who built it, how it was run, what an example of foresight with people who didn’t want to be bothered with the Government; they got on with the job, rolled their sleeves up, built it, ran it’. And it was a lesson for these sort of projects that may never be able to be returned again, but it just shows you how. We think we’re so smart nowadays, but these were people with great foresight, they should be praised, and of course, many people don’t realise that

now. They were doing it for their own satisfaction, nothing else, and it was a great project to be involved in. I was happy to ultimately chair the committee, and I'm proud to have played my part."



Iain Smith, Glasgow

"There are so many [great memories], and there's so many for different reasons. When you pull something off and you get a result, that's fantastic, and there's a sense of achievement. When we raised what we raised at that tombola stall ten years ago; there was a sense of achievement when we got some funds to put a couple of defibrillators in Waverley Station. There was an unbelievable sense of achievement when we got the cardiac arrest survivors together at the City Chambers and let them meet, for the very first time, the people who'd assisted them."

Andrew Smith, Edinburgh

“There are so many. I suppose seeing Nelson Mandela was probably one my key memories of being with St John and meeting the people down in London in Clerkenwell. The Honourable Bruce, Lord Elgin’s son, was being knighted at the same time I was, but the memory of seeing Nelson Mandela addressing the hall was a special memory, really amazing.”



John Ford, Glasgow

“[My investiture as a member of the Order of St John], it was lovely, and it was just a super day, it really was. Everybody that was involved in organising it made me feel so at ease, so welcome. They went through everything that would be happening, and right from the very minute of getting the letter through to say that you’d been put forward for it, and would you accept, it was just a bit of a buzz and thinking ‘Oh, I’m so pleased to be able to go on and do more for years to come.’ And when I actually had my

insignia pinned to my top, I was just so proud, I really was so, so, proud, and it was a really nice day; everybody was an equal, it didn't matter who you were or what you had done or what you were planning to do, you were just a Member. You were there; it was lovely... There were a good few hundred people there, I would say possibly a couple of hundred, certainly it was a lot because I know when we do an investiture here in Inverness, I know how many people roughly attend.”

Gwen Fullerton, Highland

Kirsty Fullerton, Gwen's daughter, also has wonderful memories of her investiture:



“It was really nice, a nice time with my folks. My Aunt came up from Newcastle and it was actually on my birthday. I was invested on my 30th birthday, so I had a round of applause when we were sitting. All the postulants [people being invested or promoted] were being told how we were being seated in the church and the

order of that, and our pins added and this and that, and I got a “Happy Birthday” from everybody. It was all a bit of a blur because you had to concentrate so much on getting it right, not making a fool of yourself, and not tripping on floors and things like that in high heels, making sure you are in the right place at the right time, but I always remember the people organising it just being so calm and saying, ‘Right, here we go’, and ‘We’ll do this,’ and passing you on to the next person. And while it was exciting and quite a buzz, it was very calm as well, and just very practised and fluent and lovely. Really, really nice.”

Kirsty Fullerton, Highland



“[My most vivid memories are] just, from the very first moment of being totally committed to the objectives which we have, and it’s been an absolute delight to see how they’ve expanded and developed and how they’re very much appreciated; and I’m still

involved despite my ageing years... Memories, yes, I suppose seeing the Queen, albeit she didn't speak to me when she walked through the new [palliative care] unit. Seeing the new unit up and going was a great achievement. The opening of the Mountain Rescue Service at Newton Stewart was good because they do a fantastic job... I've been to quite a few of the annual festivals now, and that's certainly very much a religious thing; it's nice meeting other people and I've always found them very friendly and cordial. My wife has accompanied me on a few occasions, and my daughter, in fact, came along and was suitably impressed. These have been the highlights I suppose."

Kenneth Paterson, West Galloway

"My favourite memory is having the honour of representing West Lothian at Her Majesty's Garden Party at Holyrood. I've done that on a couple of occasions. That's one of the highlights of my activities with St John Scotland, although I did represent West Lothian Industry at one time. As well as the Garden Party, I also had the wonderful experience of attending the memorial service for Sir Malcolm Ross in St George's Chapel, in Windsor, which was a daunting experience as well, having never been in Windsor Castle or in St George's Chapel. It was very nice to represent St John there.

"We've always had a few laughs. My local garden fête, I remember there was a couple of our people tumbled into the pond trying to catch the goldfish with the kids. We used to do the ducks in the pond and we had the ducks down the stream, and it wasn't uncommon for the people who were running the ducks down the stream to end up in the stream! I always remember the lad who was doing the hamburger stall, he tried to have a shot at one of the ducks and he went head first into the stream, it was one of the highlights of the day! Liam Hackett was always a regular visitor at

our fêtes; Liam would come along with his Irish pipes and at the end of the afternoon, he'd play the pipes and our local Order piper would come and play us some music in the afternoon."

Keith Stirling, West Lothian

"So many, so many memories. Everything was quite nice, I have to say. Friends who are not now here. I had a friend Nancy Leask, who sadly passed away... At the launch of the 'Getting You Home' DVD, with Strathcarron Hospice; I organised that with the help of the NHS and Strathcarron. Strathcarron did all the acting and everything, and set up a room with a bed like a hospital room, and [the instructional video was about] caring for a terminally sick person at home. It was quite relevant, how to care for a person, how you would get them in and out of a car, in and out of bed, all that kind of thing. We had a launch in The Park Hotel, Falkirk. Anyway, there was a lot of to-ing and fro-ing with the NHS and Strathcarron over the time it was being made, and we went to



Forth Valley Hospital on a couple of occasions and had chats there, with them giving their points of view. At the launch, we had a meal with invited people, and there were speeches and things like that, and Nancy Leask, her husband was in Strathyre and he ran Strathyre House, which was a holiday home which they had, anyway Nancy came on three buses from Callendar to get to this event. I thought a lot of her for that; it was very nice. At the launch, we flew the St John flag on the hotel's flagpole all day. It's people who make things special."

Charlotte Waddell, Central



"[With Patient Transport] it's unfortunate that people just can't get to [hospital]. And it doesn't matter if they've got a Rolls Royce sitting up the drive, we'll still take them, because it's the hassle of

getting there and getting back, and sometimes they wouldn't be allowed to drive anyway. So, nothing like that comes into it. It doesn't matter who the people are, if they need transport and we can give them it, we'll give it. [I would] just like to say, I really appreciate being involved, and I've enjoyed being involved in West Galloway Branch, and I've enjoyed being involved with the meetings in Edinburgh. And it's a good kind of family thing to be involved in, and just doing that little bit of a thing to help somebody that needs it."

Willie Waterson, West Galloway



HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

"Every organisation says, 'You know, our profile isn't high enough, how do we expand it, how do we get out there?' The curious thing is every organisation does think this, but in our own case, I think perhaps we could have a higher profile. There is an old cliché we apply to ourselves here in Scotland, that we are Scotland's best kept secret, but there are nearly twenty-five thousand registered [charities] in Scotland, of which we are just one, but I think we are in the top eight hundred. We deserve to make ourselves better known... We are embracing new technology in trying to get ourselves out there, and the dinosaurs who say, 'Oh, I don't have email', well... we are getting out there slow but sure. When I mention St John, the first question people ask is, 'Oh, what's your website?'; in fact, youngsters don't mention it, they simply Google it while you're speaking to them! So, these are the factors we have to take into account. My abilities in public relations are now of the stone age; my old discipline has moved on gigantically. The same with the fact I am a born print

journalist; I had my career in print at the best time. Who reads newspapers nowadays? We newspapermen are a dying breed, so don't let St John be a dying breed. St John is adapting in modern times and using the best of the IT at its command. The only way to that is to have a staff that are 'tech savvy' and who can guide the present membership and the membership of the future through recruitment."



Gordon Casely, Aberdeen & NE

“Patient Transport is a good one because it doesn't necessarily involve specific medical responsibilities like First Responder does. It's also needed all the time because, as I understand it, the NHS Ambulance Service is happy to rush you to hospital to get treated but they don't want to use an ambulance to bring you home once you're better, so someone else has to do that. And people need regular treatments, and so on and so forth. We don't necessarily

need people who are members of the Order to do this work, what we need to be is facilitators to enable them, and that's what stage we're at in Dunbartonshire , trying to get enough people together to say we can now put forward a local entity that is doing this and is adequately staffed and organised. That's the objective.

My hopes are that we are better known and we get more public support, and through the public, enough members to properly discharge the objective we seek for ourselves.”



Douglas Dow, Dunbartonshire

Alex Craib was asked if St John Scotland is still as relevant as it used to be.

“Absolutely, more so probably because with society today, the calls on charity organisations are increasing rapidly. It is very difficult with the economic climate for governments to support

everything. The Highland Hospice is supported by charitable efforts, and I find that very sad, that charities should have to support the Hospice, but that is the reality. So, the work of [St John Scotland] is tremendously important to this country and internationally... I would hope that we can raise the profile in such a way that we are a household name and continue to support the charities that we do support and it would be nice if we could support more. That's our aspirations in the Highlands."

Alex Craib, Highland

"I think that what we're doing at present to broaden the base of St John activities, by CPR and Public Access Defibrillator training, we in West Lothian have been struggling a bit, but we've got a few outlets that are coming to fruition. We have about seven [CPR] volunteers at the moment. We're trying to set up... dialysis



transport to St John's [Hospital in Livingston] for the patients there, so that's all in the offing."

Keith Stirling, West Lothian

"[My hope is that St John Scotland] continue to evolve the way that it's been happening, perhaps speed it up a little. But I believe, and hope, that our new Prior will have a completely new set of eyes, and will have her own ideas of how and where we should go change, and if she wishes to have change, I would totally support her. If she says, "No, we'll have to stay as we are", I will still support her, but I will be disappointed."



Stuart MacBride, Aberdeen & NE

"The main challenge is being recognised for who we are. As has always been said for the last few years, we are the best kept secret. St John's is an exceptionally good secret organisation, not because they do anything secretly, but because people don't know

who we are at all, and it's trying to get the name out there... For a long while now I've thought, and said at committee meetings, that we need to have information boards, so that whenever we have an event, irrespective of where it is or what it is, as people come into that event, we've got information of who we are, what we've done in the past, what we are trying to do in the future, things like that, and plenty of pictures. I really do think that is one of the big, big, things, so any event that we have, if it's something formal or something else, whatever it is, wherever the venue, it's something we can take with us. And [people] can have a really good browse and have a look at them, and I think that would be one really big area where we could make a big difference, because it's not something they've heard and forgotten, it's visual and it's better, much better indeed. I'm a great believer in events as well."



Gwen Fullerton, Highland

Brian Gibson, lead CPR trainer, was asked if there were other services he would like to see promoted in his area.



“I would like to see more, predominately in schools, teaching the kids, maybe secondary schools doing more CPR and defib training. A lot of schools do have CPR and defibs in there but they don’t seem to concentrate a lot on it. The session we did the other day [in a school] was phenomenal. A lot of the questions we were getting asked were from sixth formers leaving the school, going into their adult life and career, and they can carry that forward. So, it’s something, hopefully, we’re going to promote, and talk to more local school authorities to see if we could get into schools and promote it better.”

Brian Gibson, Ayrshire & Arran



“I have always been surprised at how little the Order demands in terms of feedback, payback, for the contributions it’s made [to Scottish Mountain Rescue]. Apart from vehicles carrying badges, and we’ve got our sign on the door, ‘Order of St John’, I don’t think it gets enough back. I’m not really sure why that is, it’s certainly not because of a lack of appreciation; it’s maybe just a lack of thought, actually, that we should be doing more to make sure that the Order of St John looms large, not just in our thinking, but in what we say to people, and what we put out there in terms of ourselves. I certainly am very aware, and I do a lot of talks to groups, whether they are hillwalking clubs or Probus groups or whatever, that I always make the point that the Order of St John, certainly in terms of the Aberdeen Team, has been a hugely important factor in terms of the creation and development of the team over many years. Now this is not an organisation that has come in and done a one-off contribution and then bathed in the

goodwill that's come from that; the Order is an organisation that has consistently come up with the goods for rescue teams and asked very little in return for that, and maybe that's been a mistake, I don't know."

Mario Di Maio, Aberdeen & NE

"I would say [to volunteers], St John could not exist without you. Everything you do, whether it's exciting and sexy like saving somebody's life, or whether it's rattling a can, or whether it's running a coffee morning or whatever, everything you do is contributing."



Ian Wallace, West Lothian

“I hope that the Patient Transport service and the palliative care unit continue to get the support that they deserve. We are in a society where there are more and more demands for money, and more and more charities with very worthy causes. So just making sure we can keep things going. Perhaps a more direct challenge is trying to motivate youngsters to become involved. Inevitably, the Committee is perhaps... people that are getting on in life; however, I would like to think that we would maybe manage to get people whose motives are very good. What we are really wanting is young sensible people, who appreciate the objectives that we have and for them to carry on the management of that, and ensure it is preserved for the benefit of the community.”

Kenneth Paterson, West Galloway

Ian Clarke, Patient Transport driver, was asked what he would say to anyone wishing to volunteer with St John Scotland.

“It’s the best thing they could do. It really is the best thing they could do. They’d get a lot out of it, a lot of benefit out of it themselves, meeting people and understanding some of their problems, and feeling that you’ve done something worthwhile to help somebody; it’s a joy. So, anybody that can drive and can drive safely and properly, it’s the biggest worthwhile cause, the biggest charity that’s going, and they can help - they’ll see something at the end of it. Where, if you’re manning a table for [a charity] or something, you do it because you want to do it, but I don’t think there’s any job satisfaction out of it, whereas in St John’s, there is the satisfaction that you know you’ve helped because they couldn’t get to the hospital without it. It’s the best thing since sliced bread, as they say.”



Ian Clarke, West Galloway

“I’m very much for the education, I think the more people know [CPR is] easy, and it’s within them and their hands to save somebody’s life, you know, not just to step over somebody, then I’ll feel that I’ve achieved what I’ve always wanted to. Both Andrew’s [Smith] father and my father died of heart attacks. Andrew’s father was a cardiac arrest years and years ago, and so when we, as an area, were speaking about CPR and defibrillators, it really touched a chord with us. And, as I said, meeting the cardiac arrest survivors - their stories are unique because you don’t know what’s happened; one minute they’re out jogging, two days later they’re in hospital thinking, ‘What’s happened?’; or they’re coming off a train and have a cardiac arrest. So, you meet these people, and you know from what we’re doing, and the other charities teaching CPR as well, it is making a huge

difference. And it's just the young volunteers as well coming on board, wanting to do the same. We've got a young girl busking down at The Meadows; one of her grandfathers died of a cardiac arrest, so she went out busking because she wanted to put a defibrillator in the area where her grandfather died, and from that her school picked up on the project she did, so they then did a fun run in the park and raised enough to put up another two defibrillators! We've had quite a lot going out now in memory of somebody who has passed. So, it's really nice when you walk by and you see it; it's a proud moment to see a defibrillator out. We are very fortunate in Edinburgh, we've got quite a lot of volunteers, and they say that, when they're passing and they see the defibrillators out, it's like a proud moment for them, which is great. I feel I've done what I should have and it's with the help of everybody else. We're a team, a big team, which is good."



Lynn Cleal, Edinburgh

Andrew Smith, who as well as being a volunteer in Edinburgh is on the Board of St John Scotland, was asked what the challenges are for the organisation moving forward:



“It’s growing, and as an organisation we need to be there to enable volunteers to do what they do. Like anything in life, if it’s difficult people will avoid it, but if you can provide them with the right volunteering opportunity, so that they can spend their precious free time to do something constructive and life-changing for many in their community, then the organisation has the responsibility to make that as easy for them as possible, providing them with support, emotional support, technology and systems that will enable them to do things easily. As our numbers grow and as projects grow, then we need to make it easy for people for the time they can give. Time is a precious commodity. Money is fantastic; time and giving people service, that’s priceless.”

Andrew Smith, Edinburgh

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John Ford	Andrew Smith
Gwen Fullerton	Iain Smith
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As well as the people who contributed to this project, this work also acknowledges and thanks every past and present Member and Volunteer of St John Scotland for the work you do and the difference you have made.

Thank you.

APPENDIX (i) TIMELINE

Year Milestone

- 1945 St John Committee for Scottish Affairs draws up seven-part programme with the following aims: I) to open a hospital; II) to establish Medical Comforts Depots; III) to create a library; IV) to support the Jerusalem Hospital; V) to start a home for the elderly; VI) to open at least one more hospital; VII) to teach first aid; VIII) to operate mobile clinics
- 1947 Committee officially becomes Priory of Scotland
- 1947 Foundation Hospital opened in Glasgow, with Chancery [headquarters] in the same building
- 1947 Twenty Medical Comforts Depots opened
- 1947 Money sent to the Jerusalem Hospital
- 1948 Order Committees formed in Edinburgh and Aberdeen
- 1948 Another eleven Medical Comforts Depots opened
- 1949 St John Nursing Home opened, Aberdeen
- 1950 Hospice for the elderly opened at Carberry Tower
- 1951 Chancery [headquarters] moves from Park Circus Place to 1 Woodlands Terrace
- 1953 Edinburgh Committee takes over the running of the Edinburgh Home for Working Mothers with their Children
- 1956 Second St John Foundation Hospital opened in Glasgow
- 1957 Skerry Brae gifted to the Order
- 1962 Glasgow committee formed
- 1963 Home opened for the elderly in Langside
- 1967 Aberdeen Committee develop ties with Mountain Rescue
- 1968 Glasgow Hospital closes

- 1969 Torphichen committee created
- 1970 St John Youth Association created with branches at Denny and Torphichen
- 1971 Present headquarters opened in Edinburgh
- 1972 Stirlingshire committee formed
- 1974 Fife committee formed
- 1975 Glasgow committee open sheltered housing in Partick
- 1975 Perth & Kinross committee formed
- 1977 Old People's Holiday Flat in Leven operational
- 1977 Dumfries & Galloway (Stranraer), Dunbartonshire and Highland committees formed
- 1979 Sir Andrew Murray home opened in Strathyre
- 1979 Edinburgh committee gift a narrow boat to the Seagull Trust
- 1980 Priory of Scotland endows first bed at the St John Eye Hospital
- 1980 Angus & Dundee committee formed
- 1981 Carberry hospice closed and sold
- 1983 Glasgow Committee open new residential home at Langside
- 1986 Edinburgh hospice closed and sold
- 1986 Medical student post at St John Eye Hospital sponsored
- 1987 Albyn Place nursing home reopened as St John Hospital
- 1988 Dumfries committee formed
- 1993 Respite home for people living with Alzheimer's opened in Edinburgh
- 1993 Archibald Russell flat complex in Polmont completed
- 1995 St John Hospital, Aberdeen sold
- 1995 Second bed endowed in St John Eye Hospital
- 1996 St John Crusader II gifted to Seagull Trust
- 1996 West Lothian St John Association becomes caretaker of Torphichen Preceptory

- 1996 HM the Queen opens two bed palliative care unit within Dalrymple hospital
- 1997 Plans to build a new headquarters for Aberdeen MRT
- 1997 Patient Transport service begins in West Galloway
- 1999 Funds pledged to build further Mountain Rescue bases, following the completion of Aberdeen
- 1999 Funding committed for a rolling programme of replacement vehicles for all Scottish Mountain Rescue teams
- 2001 Extension to boat house for Loch Lomond Rescue boat funded
- 2001 South East committee formed
- 2007 Enhanced palliative care facility opened at Community Hospital Galloway, part funded by St John Scotland
- 2008 Patient Transport service launches in Angus and Dundee
- 2008 Ayrshire & Arran committee formed
- 2010 £25,000 contributed to Nith Inshore Rescue boat
- 2011 Former Thornhill care home sold
- 2011 'St John Edinburgh' boat donated to Seagull Trust
- 2012 First Responder service begins in Angus and Dundee
- 2012 Sir Andrew Murray home in Strathyre closes
- 2012 'Moving Forth' DVD launched in by Central committee, in partnership with Strathcarron Hospice
- 2013 Neonatal ambulance donated to the NHS in Glasgow
- 2015 Scottish Golf partnership provides defibrillators to golf clubs
- 2015 St John Scotland partners with Mountaineering Scotland to provide safety training for young people in the mountains
- 2015 St John Eye Hospital opens Hebron hospital, with a substantial contribution from St John Scotland
- 2016 Launch of St John and the City defibrillator project in Edinburgh
- 2017 Patient Transport service launches in Fife

- 2017 Organisation is incorporated, becomes a company limited by guarantee and changes its legal name to St John Scotland
- 2017 St John Scotland joins Save a Life for Scotland partnership to promote CPR in Scotland
- 2020 St John Scotland launches a new strategy, focusing on expanding its four core services: Patient Transport, Public Access Defibrillators, CPR and Community First Responders
- 2020 Patient Transport service launches in Central
- 2021 St John Scotland volunteers begin supporting the Scottish National Blood Transfusion service in response to the Covid-19 pandemic
- 2022 Patient Transport service launches in Edinburgh
- 2022 St John Scotland celebrates its 75th anniversary

APPENDIX (ii) DIGITAL RESOURCES

Accompanying website to this oral history book, with full video interviews and a wealth of other resources: www.sjs75years.org.uk

St John Scotland: www.stjohnscotland.org.uk

Museum of the Order of St John: www.museumstjohn.org.uk

St John International: www.stjohninternational.org



St John Scotland is the charity working to create a caring Scotland, where more of us will survive a health crisis to live longer, and better.

Commissioned to celebrate its 75th anniversary, this oral history tells the story of St John Scotland from its founding in 1947 to the present day.

It's a fascinating account of how the charity has adapted to serve the changing needs of Scotland's communities, and is brought to life through the voices of those who were - and are - at the front line of delivering its voluntary services.

Visit the accompanying website sjs75years.org.uk to watch the full video interviews, and access a wealth of other resources.

Find out more about St John Scotland:

-  stjohnscotland.org.uk
-  StJohnScotland
-  StJohnScot
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