One St John

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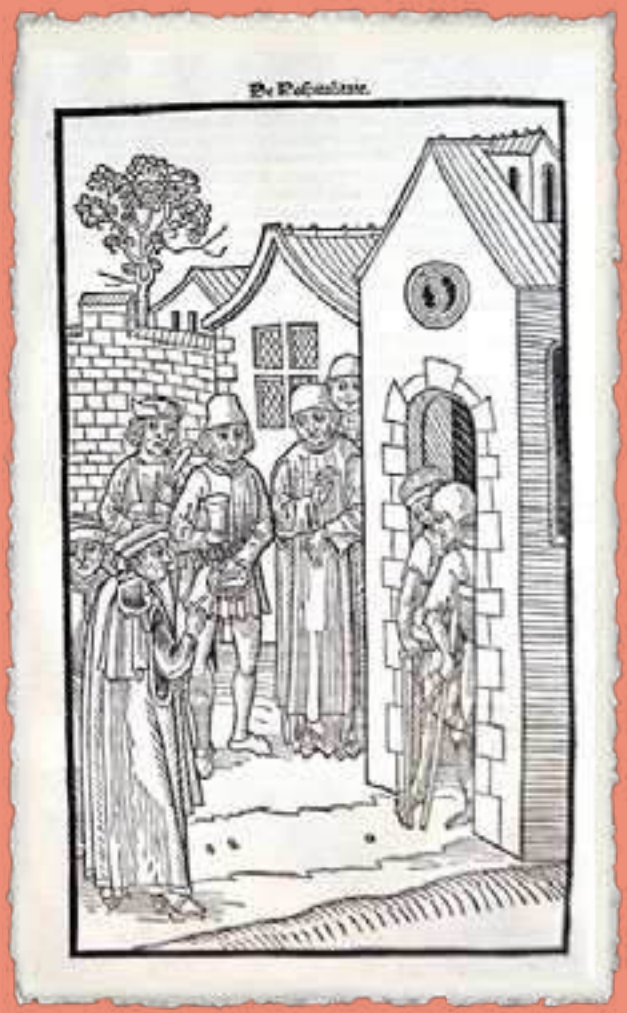

The 'logo' of *One St John*: 'Almsgiving by the brothers of the hospital of St John of Jerusalem', from *Stabilimenta Rhodiorum Militum* by Guillaume Coursin, 1493. Reproduced with permission from the Museum of the Order of St John.

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The Life Saving Medal and Certificate of Honour of the Order of St John.

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Origin and development

The decision by the Chapter-General of the Order of St John in 1870 to institute a medal for award to those who had saved or attempted to save life on land needs to be seen in two contexts: that of the history of the Order itself and of the availability at that time of civilian decorations for gallantry.

After some success in assisting with the wounded in the Franco–Prussian War of 1870, the Order was beginning to look for an area where it could exercise its declared charitable and hospitaller function. Eventually, of course, this proved to be the area of civilian first aid, first in the teaching and later in the practice. The institution of the Life Saving Medal (and subsequently the Certificate of Honour) falls into this period and is, perhaps, the earliest attempt to initiate a wider sphere of action for the Order in its home country.

By the 1870s the practice of awarding bravery medals to the military and naval forces of the Empire was well established. The Victoria Cross was instituted during the Crimean War of 1854–56 and extensively awarded during the Indian Mutiny of 1857–59. Also available to those of non-commissioned rank in the army was the Distinguished Conduct Medal and, in the navy, the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal. Civilians, however, were poorly served and, though there were medals available to reward various acts of gallantry, these were almost entirely awarded by nationally recognised charitable organisations rather than the state. They were also heavily biased towards bravery on or in water. The Royal Humane Society, founded in 1774, gave most of its awards for acts in rivers, docks and harbours and the medals of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society are self-explanatory. Practically the only exception was the medal of the Society for the Protection of Life from Fire, founded in 1836, but this was of obviously limited application. The Board of Trade Medal for Gallantry in Saving Life at Sea (more commonly known as the Sea Gallantry Medal), instituted by an Act of Parliament in 1854, was a large medallion, which was not at that time specifically designed for wear. The only wearable state decoration awarded for civilian gallantry was the Albert Medal, instituted in 1866 for saving life at sea.

The Life Saving Medal

There was, therefore, at the time when the Order's Life Saving Medal was instituted, a need for a medal which could be awarded for life saving acts of gallantry on land, and particularly in those areas of employment where the vast majority of deaths seemed to occur—mines and other extractive works, potteries, factories and railways.[1] It is to the credit of Sir Edmund Lechmere (1826–1894), Secretary-General, that the Order was able to spot this gap and fill it.

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The suggestion that the Order should award medals first surfaced as part of a paper read by Lechmere in 1869 at a meeting of the Hanley Castle (Worcestershire) Commandery of the Order. After first discussing the benefits which might flow from the establishment of an ambulance system in colliery and mining districts, he continued:

> Another useful branch of such a work would be the recognition by the Order … of those who had distinguished themselves by acts of personal bravery and humanity on occasions of accident and danger. This might be done either by parchment testimonials or by medals of bronze, and occasionally of silver. The Order of St John would thus occupy the same position in reference to accidents on land as the Royal Humane Society, the Royal National Life Boat Institution and the Royal Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, do to those on the sea and on our coasts.[2]

The following year, the proposal was put forward to the Chapter of the Order, a discussion documented in the *Report to Chapter-General thus:*

> [A] suggestion has been made by the Secretary relative to the establishment of means for rendering the Order of St John useful in cases of accident in the mining and pottery districts, and generally for granting a medal for acts of gallantry in saving life on land, as is done by the Royal Humane Society in cases of disaster on water.[3]

The proposal was approved at the meeting of Chapter-General held on St John's Day of the same year (24 June 1870). At that time, a revision of the Statutes of the Order was in progress and the opportunity was taken to incorporate the following in its objects:

> VI. The award of silver and bronze medals for special services on land in the cause of humanity, especially for saving life in mining and colliery accidents.[4]

The whole project then appeared to sink without trace for some four years. Why this was so can only be speculated upon but, in the latter part of 1870 and the first half of 1871, the attention of the Order would have been mainly focused on its activities in the Franco–Prussian War, and the revision of Statutes seems to have occupied a considerable amount of attention during 1871 and 1872 as does a redesign of the insignia of the Order. The initial system of rewards, consisting of silver and bronze medals, was finally adopted by Chapter-General in 1874, with Certificates of Honour following as a third level award almost a decade later in 1885.

In order to further the project, in December 1874, Lechmere generously offered to present to the Order dies for the medals.[5] The following year, the design of these was 'carefully reconsidered, the Donor desiring that the Medal of the Order should be as perfect as possible, both in design and execution',[6] though what precise features of the design or initial specimen strikings were thus reviewed is unstated. It is still not clear who was actually responsible for the end product, but a rather charming watercolour of St John's wort held by the Order Museum has the following statement written on the back of the mount:

> I painted this for my father when he first became Secretary-General of St John … I studied the St John wort and also designed the medal with the flower design for 'saving life on land' which is given by the Order about the same time.[7]

The hand-written statement is signed 'Alice M. Cecil' and the painting is identified by the initials AMTA. This is Alicia Margaret Tyssen-Amherst (1865–1941: later Mrs Cecil), whose father was the Member of Parliament, William Amhurst Tyssen-Amherst (1835–1909), who, in 1893, became Lord Amherst of Hackney. Whilst it would be pleasant to make this attribution for the first time, there is a problem. Amherst was Secretary-General of the Order

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from 1891 to 1893 and no changes were made to the medal during this period. However, he was Genealogist of the Order from 1884 to 1891 and was involved with its redesign following the 1888 Charter (see below). It is very doubtful whether Alice would have been involved with the original design of the medal as her father did not at that time have any connection with the Order and she would have been a very young girl. Perhaps she painted the new designs of 1888 which were, however, heavily based upon the then existing pattern.

There does seem to have been some confusion at first as to which side of the first type medal was the obverse and which the reverse. This was complicated by the fact that the ribbon had embroidered upon it the badge of the Order as it existed at that time (i.e. without the lion and unicorn between the arms of the cross). The first illustration of the medal, published in 1876, shows the side bearing the St John's wort design on the right of the page pendant from the ribbon bearing the embroidered white badge. On the left of the page appears the other side with the badge of the Order pendant from a plain black ribbon.[8] Neither side is labelled but the obvious assumption is that the obverse is on the left. In later illustrations, probably to save having a new block cut, the position of the two faces has been reversed and the St John's wort side is labelled 'reverse'.

This action had the unhappy effect of showing the embroidered white cross on the ribbon of the reverse. The result of this would mean that the cross would always rest on the coat when the medal was worn and would never be seen. Though, in practice, the medal would have been presented with the white embroidered cross showing to the front, this illustration caused some consternation when a new design was considered at the time of the granting of the Royal Charter in 1888. The confusion was evidenced by a letter from the Genealogist, Lord Amherst, to Sir Herbert Perrott.

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6th Nov 1887

My Dear Perrott

The details are very difficult to arrange. It appears there is no description (and I take it all from the printed form) of the material of the medal. Are there not also two kinds, Bronze and Silver, and are not both struck from a die? The obverse is the side that shows and on this is I believe the eight-pointed cross of the Order commonly known and described as the 'Maltese Cross'. In that case the said Maltese Cross on the riband is useless as it would not be seen, but if it is right that the words 'For Service in the cause of Humanity' should be on the obverse and the legend awarded by the OSJJ on the reverse – the legend had better be changed from one side to the other, so described, and a new die struck. It looks as if for some reason the reverse was to be shown in front and as the Maltese Cross would not then appear it was put on the ribbon. That would be very well if it did not appear on the medallion – as it does it should be on the obverse and always show. If it does not matter which legend is outside let the die stand and simply as I have done describe the obverse as having the Maltese Cross … Have Messrs Wyon of Regent Street the die in their charge? If not where is it?[9]

Type 1 medal in silver, obverse, with ribbon (courtesy Dix Noonan Webb, London).

Amhurst's suggestions were mostly adopted and the redesigned medal which arose out of the Royal Charter of 1888 reflected the logic of his remarks, of which more later.

The dies for the original, or first type, medal which Lechmere sponsored in December 1874 were executed by the London firm J.S. & A.B. Wyon, with the first medals being struck the following year. The design incorporated an eight-pointed Maltese cross on the obverse circumscribed by the wording 'AWARDED BY THE ORDER OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM IN ENGLAND', reflecting the title of the Order as introduced in the statutes of 1871. The reverse design centred on a sprig of St John's wort, with two ribbons interlaced, bearing the words 'JERUSALEM', 'ACRE', 'CYPRUS', 'RHODES', and 'MALTA', circumscribed by the legend 'FOR SERVICE IN THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY'. Both obverse and reverse dies carried the name of the Wyon company, Alfred Benjamin Wyon (1837–1884), being probably responsible for their execution, his brother Joseph Shepherd Wyon (1836–1873) having died by the time of this commission. The Wyon company appear to have produced the initial medals, several examples being known in their monogrammed cases, with production moving to Phillips Bros & Son by 1885.

The first medals presented went to two coal miners, Elijah Hallam and Frederick Vickers, for bravery in the rescue of a group of miners trapped in the Albert Colliery, in Newbold, near Chesterfield, on 6 September 1875. Approved on 13 October 1875 and presented on 18 November that year, these appear as medals number one and two in the Order's Register of Life Saving Awards. The third medal in the Register was something of an anomaly. Awarded to John Smith Young for rescuing a wounded Prussian soldier during the siege of Paris in December 1870, this was in fact the earliest act recognised by the Order and the first medal

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approved by the Chapter-General (on 11 May 1875), though its presentation was delayed until 17 March 1876. Subsequent awards appear in the Registers more or less chronologically according to dates of approval (which generally closely follow the date of the acts). In total, just 34 silver and 18 bronze medals of this original type were issued prior to the Royal Charter of 1888.[10] In publicising these early awards, emphasis tended to be placed on elite elements in each case. Thus, for example, in an 1878 brochure by the Order, Young, as an officer, gets mentioned by name as does the fact that his medal was presented by Major-General HSH Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, while a group of miners who all received silver medals go unnamed, their receipt of Albert Medals being the signifier that got emphasised.[11] Such publicity was arguably strategic, in promoting the status of the Order and shoring up its legitimacy. It inevitably also reproduced existing social hierarchies.[12]

Type 1 medal in bronze, obverse and reverse (courtesy Dix Noonan Webb, London).

Shortly after the institution of the Life Saving Medal, the need for such a national reward became obvious even to government and, in 1877 in the wake of the Tynewydd Colliery disaster, the Albert Medal was extended to acts of courage on land. The Tynewydd disaster itself led the Order to issue five silver medals,[13] the recipients of four of these also receiving the Albert Medal in gold. While Edmund Lechmere had publicised a proposal that the Order might also grant bronze medals and parchment certificates on this occasion,[14] none were forthcoming, although a further 21 Albert Medals in bronze were also awarded by the State for these events as well as awards by various other bodies. The Order's flagship Life Saving Medal was thus suddenly competing in a turf war, the field crowded with non-governmental awards by various societies and now the State's Albert Medals in gold and bronze. With respect to the Order's medal, Lechmere argued these were rewards for:

> … acts of bravery in saving life on land—and more especially with those connected with accidents in mines and collieries—on a system in every way similar to that pursued by the Royal Humane Society and [the Royal National] Lifeboat Institution in cases of saving life on water.[15]

This assertion about the scope of the Order's medal, that it was for saving life on land, and his situating the awards of the RHS and RNLI as for 'water' rescues, sought to demarcate spheres of operations for the Order and those competing supposedly parallel bodies. It was, however,

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a unilateral decision and—with respect to the RHS at least—did not absolutely reflect the full range of awards they made.[16] With respect to the State and its introduction of the Albert Medal, the Order denied any real conflict with its own medals and overtly welcomed the new arrival, the *Report to Chapter-General* of the same year remarking:

> … the Chapter rejoices to think that, whilst the extension of the Albert Medal to cases of bravery on land is a proof of the existence of that want, the value of the medals of the Order is in no way affected by this gracious act on the part of Her Majesty the Queen.[17]

Such a response did nothing to clarify the role or standing of the Order's life saving awards vis-à-vis those granted by the State or indeed other bodies, a situation that would be made more acute in due course by a growing reluctance in some circles to award multiple medals to an individual for a single act, the so-called two medal doctrine.[18] Leaving the latter aside, how the Order's three (and from 1907 four) tiers of life saving awards related to State and other societal awards remains a debatable point.

Type 2 medal (x1.5) in silver, hallmarked 1961 (courtesy Dix Noonan Webb, London).

Returning to the evolving design of the medal during this period, the Royal Charter of 1888 inaugurated a redesign of all the Order's insignia. The Order itself was now rebranded 'The Grand Priory of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England', wording which was incorporated into what we here refer to as the second type medal. The obverse still carried an eight-pointed Maltese cross, though this time with two lions and two unicorns between its interstices. This was circumscribed by the legend 'FOR SERVICE IN THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY'. The reverse again centred on a sprig of St John's wort, with a ribbon interlaced, this now bearing just two words 'JERUSALEM' and 'ENGLAND'. This design is circumscribed by the legend 'AWARDED BY THE GRAND PRIORY OF THE ORDER OF THE HOSPITAL OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM IN ENGLAND'. This design, in use until 1980, carried Allan Wyon's (1843–1907) name as the die engraver on early issues, with production being carried out by various companies including Phillips Bros & Son (up to 1895), Carrington (from 1895–96 to 1902, at least), and Vaughton & Sons (from at least 1913 to at least 1972). In 1957, the Council approved the finish on the medal should be modified from the traditional 'dull' (or matt) finish to a 'bright' finish.[19]

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Just as the place of the first type medal was challenged by the extension of the Albert Medal, the place and status of the second type medal would be challenged by another new State award. The introduction of the Edward Medal, instituted by a Royal Warrant dated 13 July 1907, was the brainchild of Sir Henry Cunynghame of the Home Office who had a particular interest in mining affairs. It was intended to parallel the Sea Gallantry Medal on land and was for award in two classes, silver and bronze, solely to miners and quarrymen, occupations which had traditionally figured large in the lists of the Order's Life Saving Medal.[20] Some two years later it was decided to extend the scope of the Edward Medal to industry in general.

The institution of a new award which so closely paralleled the Order's medal had an obvious effect. The Edward Medal was available in silver and bronze, was intended for those who saved or attempted to save life in mines, quarries, factories and railways and required a lower standard of bravery than the Albert Medal. It had the advantage of being a national or state award bearing the royal effigy on its obverse and could almost have been designed to replace the Order's medal. Whether King Edward VII, who had frequently presented the Order's medals and seen the accompanying citations in his role as Grand Prior of the Order of St John from 1888 until his accession in 1901 and its Sovereign Head thereafter, perceived such a conflict is a moot point.

It was in this context that the Order approved the issue of the Life Saving Medal in gold, this being authorised on 30 July 1907. Thus, the Order adopted the hierarchical four tier system of awards (three classes of medals and the Certificate of Honour), to attempt to better recognise varying degrees of bravery, that continues today. While internally this probably entailed some degree of recalibration of the standards set for awarding the Order's existing silver and bronze medals and the Certificate of Honour, externally it was arguably one means of maintaining the status of the Order's awards vis-à-vis the newly instituted Edward Medal. Other efforts to manage such status or credibility issues followed.

Thus, shortly after his accession in 1911, George V agreed to present some Life Saving Medals and the Secretary-General, Sir Herbert Perrott, took the opportunity to try to gain some increased status for the Order's medal. In a letter to Lord Knutsford, the Prior, dated December 1913, he wrote:

> As yesterday was the first time that the King has presented our Life Saving Medals since he came to the throne it has occurred to me that I might ask Lord Stamfordham whether we might appropriately ask that our Life Saving Medals should be called 'The George Medal of the First and Second Class of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England'.
>
> The institution by the late King of the Edward Medal has rather wiped the eye of our own. A large number of cases in which the Edward Medal is now awarded are of such a nature that in the old days the Order's Medal would have been awarded, and I think we should greatly improve our position if we were able to give our own medal the above designation. People would then be just as proud to receive the George Medal of the Order of St John as they now are to receive the Edward Medal, and with our very wide connection through the Ambulance department all over the world it would give it very great publicity.[21]

Unfortunately, the King was not willing to accede to this suggestion and the nation had to wait another 27 years for a different kind of George Medal. The year 1913 was, consequently, the last in which large numbers of Life Saving Medals were awarded for a mining disaster (the Cadeby Main Pit explosion), and these only to supplement a number of Edward Medal awards.

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In spite of the competition, however, the Life Saving Medal survived and new uses were found for it during the First World War, particularly when the Order's Hospital at Étaples was severely bombed by enemy aircraft on 19 and 31 May 1918. The movement for Irish independence provided another area where Brigade services could be recognised and 25 medals and 75 Certificates of Honour were awarded during the 1916 Easter Rising, with still further awards being made during the War of Independence and the subsequent Irish Civil War. Such awards markedly contrast with the many awards of the Life Saving Medal and Certificate of Honour which were given for purely civil bravery.

Alongside such developments, there occurred two further iterations of the Life Saving Medal, in 1980 and 2011, here referred to as the third and fourth types respectively. In both, the design of the medal was largely unchanged, superficially at least. The most obvious changes were to the legends on the reverse. The 1980 (third type) carried the wording: 'AWARDED BY THE MOST VENERABLE ORDER OF THE HOSPITAL OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM', reflecting the manner in which the Order was formally styled in the Supplemental Royal Charter of 1974.[22] The 2011 (fourth type) wording runs thus: 'AWARDED BY THE GRAND PRIORY OF THE ORDER OF THE HOSPITAL OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM'. The latter styling of the Order reflects more its historic 1888 Royal Charter title than its current formal title. The third type medal was mainly produced by Manhattan-Windsor, while the fourth (current) type is produced by Worcestershire Medal Service Ltd. In Canada, the type three medal was supplied by Joe Drouin Enterprises Limited, the issuance of this type anomalously continuing there up to the present time.

Type 3 medal obverse and reverse (courtesy Order of St John Museum, London). Note the hair line strip that appears between the red and white stripes on the ribbon, in comparison with the ribbon of the silver medal on page 40.

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Type 4 medal: obverse and reverse (courtesy Roger Willoughby).

Bars to the Medal

For almost a hundred years there was no necessity to even consider the concept of a bar to the Life Saving Medal.[23] In 1961, however, the need was foreseen and an application was made to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Kilmuir, for permission to institute a bar. Consent was duly given in the same year and an addition was made to the description of the Life Saving Medal of the words: 'A Bar to the said Medal may be awarded in each of the three categories'.[24]

The following year the Order's Director of Ceremonies, Colonel Philip H. Catt, submitted his design for the Bar:

> The Bar shall be 19/16 inches in length and 5/16 inches in width. The depth from front to back shall be 1/16 inch leaving the minimum to allow one thickness of ribbon to pass freely. Obverse to have a double raised edge and be ornamented with laurel/oak leaves having the badge of the Order in the centre, all in relief. Reverse plain and flat of the same length and width. The recipient's name to be engraved thereon with the date of the act below, for which the Bar is bestowed.[25]

Catt was of the opinion that, the Medal having been instituted in 1874, the Bar should reflect the style of its time and deliberately designed it with this in mind. He thought it appropriate to include the badge of the Order on the obverse, but rejected the use of the St John's wort as it already appeared on the reverse of the Medal. He suggested laurel from its usual associations with gallantry but offered oak leaves as similar to the Royal Humane Society's awards. Laurel was adopted. He had obviously not thought through the mounting as he specified that the bar should slide over only one thickness of ribbon as 'it has to rest at the bottom but above the fold of the ribbon to the medal ring'. If, indeed, it was to be slipped over one thickness of the ribbon, then the second thickness would totally obscure the engraving on the reverse of the Bar. He also suggested that a small badge of the Order with embellishments in the appropriate metal should be worn on the ribbon when in undress uniform and was most emphatic that the usual unembellished cross as worn on the Order ribbon should not be used. These designs were approved by Chapter-General on 5 June 1963.

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In the following month the first bar ever issued to a Life Saving Medal was authorised in gold for a second act by Reginald H. Blanchford on 21 February 1962. The bar was manufactured in 9 carat gold by Toye, Kenning & Spencer, who had only recently obtained the contract for the manufacture of the Order's insignia, at a cost of £5.15.0.

The question of a bar did not arise again until 2003 when a recommendation was submitted in the Priory of England and the Islands naming an existing recipient of a Silver Medal (John Le Page). No photograph or drawing of the original bar could be located and it was not known whether the one manufactured in 1963 had been struck from a die or manufactured as a 'one-off'. A search of the archives, however, located the description by Colonel Catt quoted above and a new die was manufactured in 2004 by Messrs Cleave of St James's, London, using that specification.[26]

Ribbons

The initial ribbon was plain black, one and one quarter inches (31.8 mm) wide, with the unembellished cross of the Order embroidered thereon in white. From 1888, the ribbon, now watered, omitted the cross of the Order. At some (as yet unestablished) point after the First World War, the width of the ribbon was altered to one-and-one-half inches (38.1 mm). In October 1949 the Investigation Committee was asked to consider whether the ribbon should be of a more distinctive pattern and on 3 March 1950, the Chapter-General approved the new design. By 29 September that year, the Grand Prior had approved the new pattern, the ribbon was manufactured and the Secretary-General was able to distribute samples to various priories, which he described being one and a half inches (38.1 mm) wide, in watered silk, and consisted of a one inch (25.4 mm) black centre bordered on either side by one twelfth of an inch (2.1 mm) white stripes and edged with two twelfths of an inch (4.2 mm) scarlet stripes.[27] It is recorded that the first batch of ribbon supplied was wider than stated above.

Much has been made by ribbon specialists of a black hair line which appeared during the lifetime of the type three design medals (1980–2010) situated between the red and white stripes. No provision for this design change has been found in the Regulations. The reason for its appearance is presently unknown.[28]

The Certificate of Honour

The Certificate of Honour was initially introduced in 1885, at which point it was titled a 'Certificate of Merit'. The immediate spur to its inauguration was the rescue of a child from a well by one Alfred Coxon, who did so 'at some personal danger'. The Chapter General at the time declared that:

> In order to meet the cases of persons who have exerted themselves in saving life, without sufficient claim to one of the medals, a diploma form has been prepared under the supervision of the Assistant Almoner, which has been adopted by the Chapter.[29]

The second certificate issued (which was presented to Joshua Stone three years later in 1888) was titled a 'Vellum Diploma' in the Medal Register, following which these were retitled as Certificates of Honour. The first such award under what became its ongoing official title was presented to Robert Stoops in June 1893. The procedural route for the award of the Certificate follows that of the Life Saving Medal. Traditionally, Certificates have been signed by the Grand Prior (or the Lord Prior of the Order as their Deputy), the Chancellor and the Secretary-General.[30]

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The Grand Priory of
The Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem
in England.

At a Chapter-General of the Order holden at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, London, on the 30th June, 1916

It was unanimously resolved that this

Certificate of Honour be awarded to

Sybil Saunders Knox Gore,

in recognition of gallant conduct in tending the wounded at great personal risk during the Sinn Fein riots in Ireland in April and May, 1916

In witness whereof we have set our hands.

Sub-Prior.

Chancellor.

Secretary-General.

Certificate of Honour to Sybil Knox Gore, for Dublin 1916 (courtesy Spink, London).

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Certificates were typically produced and illuminated by a heraldic artist to a set pattern. During the 1950s the Priory of Southern Africa was issuing Certificates in English and Afrikaans, and was offered by the Secretary-General the option of either a printing block to use to locally manufacture Certificates or having the awards produced in Britain for £5 5s each, to include postage to South Africa.[31] It is unclear which option they took up at the time, however the point of particular note here is that Certificates there (and possibly elsewhere) were being produced in a range of languages.

Officers and Members of the St John Ambulance Brigade who received the Certificate of Honour were for a time authorised to wear a rectangular emblem in gilt metal, measuring 38 mm x 9 mm, in uniform, immediately above the right breast pocket. Reference to this bar appears in the dress regulations from 1980, however it is unclear when exactly this was introduced and similarly when it faded out of use.

Analysis of awards

Clearly, the use of the Life Saving Medal has changed over time, in response to changes in the pattern of life and work. The dangers of 1874 were not those of 1927, still less those of 1987. It has already been noted that the first pattern medal was awarded on only 52 occasions and an analysis of the reasons behind those awards illustrates well the original vision of those who designed and introduced the award.

Distribution of the first Life Saving Medal, 1870–1888

Mining	23
Fire	6
Runaway horses, bulls and mad dogs	5
Wells and sewers	5
Rescues from heights	4
Railways	4
Other	5

The second medal followed much the same pattern and, though the average annual number of awards increased somewhat, the high standard set from the beginning was maintained. Throughout the 1890s about eight awards were made annually and this average was only distorted in the early 1900s by the earthquake at Dharmsala in 1905, in which year 31 awards were made. In 1911 the total reached 27, mostly due to the Hulton Colliery disaster on 21 December 1910, and a further peak in 1913 was caused by the Cadeby Main Pit rescues. The peak number was reached in 1916 when 35 awards were made and it is instructive to see how the background has changed. Of the 35 awards, only 2 were awarded for service in England.

Distribution of the second Life Saving Medal during 1916

Services to Prisoners of War	6
Dublin Easter Rising	24
Battlefield life saving	1
Cliff rescue	1
Explosion	1
French civilian	1
Fire	1

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This number of awards in a single year was not approached again until the 1980s and, after the First World War, numbers settled down to single figures. Rescues from cliffs and sewers or culverts continue to figure but, now and again, perhaps where the standard was not considered high enough for the Edward Medal, the Order was able to reward those who faced the constant dangers posed by coal mining. Thus, in 1927, of the one gold, three silver and seven bronze awards made, the explosion at Ebbw Vale Mine (Monmouthshire) and the rescue at South Crofty Mine (Cornwall) accounted for the gold, one silver and six bronze medals.

In the 1930s, the Life Saving Medal almost became extinct. Possibly because of changes of staff, the record books in which all citation and presentation details had been recorded since inception ceased to be maintained and, during the whole decade, only 15 medal awards were made. Average medal awards per annum remained low at approximately four during the 1940s and 1950s, and dropped to under three in the 1960s. To some extent it might be said that the Order's overseas Priories came to the rescue and the 1980s saw increasing numbers of awards going outside the United Kingdom, particularly to Canada. In 1987, for instance, two gold, three silver and 15 bronze medals were awarded: of these, one silver medal went to South Africa and, of the bronzes, four went to British Columbia, four to Nova Scotia, two to Manitoba and one to Ontario. This pattern has tended to continue.

Today, people still risk their lives or serious injury to save others and the Life Saving Medal and Certificate of Honour continue to fulfil an important function, with the standard required for each class remaining high. It is not generally awarded when a national honour is given and every effort is made to ensure that the award of another organisation, such as the Royal Humane Society, is not duplicated.

Numbers awarded

Volume three of the Order's Medal Register notes that up to November 1931, 10 gold, 128 silver, and 278 bronze medals, plus 308 Certificates of Honour and vellums were awarded. Subsequent to then, 28 more gold, 126 silver, and 374 bronze medals and 130 Certificates of Honour, have been awarded up to the end of March 2021. The cumulative figures are detailed in the table below, which are further broken down into four time periods within which years the acts and rescues fall (as distinct from the dates of nomination, approval or presentation). The latter *approximately* correspond to the four distinct patterns of the Life Saving Medal issued. However, some caveats are needed in viewing these figures as they do not neatly equate to the four medal types. The number of first type medals awarded (1874–1888) are clear in the records and are agreed with other sources. The transition points between the type two, three and four medals however are less clear, with the potential using up of existing stock blurring any possibility of a neat enumeration between the different types. The demarcation between type three and type four medals is the most problematic as the Canadian Priory commissioned its own production of medals from 2000 onwards (11 gold, four silver and nine bronze medals being issues for acts performed in Canada between 2000 and 2021, though a few pre-2000 acts may have also received these Canadian manufactured medals due to the sometimes long time elapsing between an act and the presentation). The Canadian use of the basic type three design has continued up to the present (2021). The period 2011–2020 includes eight gold and two silver awards by the Canadian Priory.

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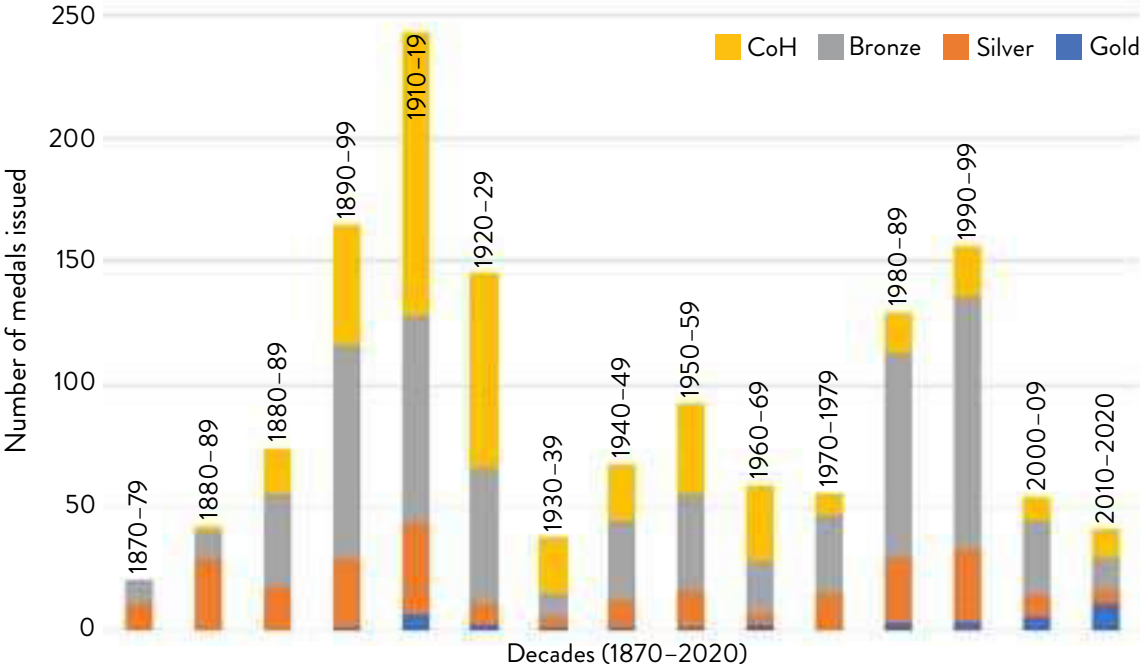
The numbers issued of the Order's Life Saving Medals and Certificates of Honour (CoH) arranged by decade, 1870–2020.



The number of the Order's Life Saving Medals and Certificates of Honour issued, by level across four time periods.

Acts between	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Certificate	Totals
1870–1888	N/A	34	18	2	54
1888–1979	15	150	404	380	949
1980–2010	12	65	219	47	343
2011–2020	11	5	11	9	36
Totals	38	254	652	438	1,382

We have further considered the distribution of the Order's awards across time in the graph below. Here, the past 150 years is subdivided into 15 decades, which makes the changing frequency of awards across time more evident. The first decade, though beginning with an award for an act in 1870, mostly encompasses awards made subsequent to the institution of the medal, while the final decade additionally includes awards from 2020.

Further analyses of the awards made for acts over the past 150 years, together with a comprehensive list of recipients and details of the circumstances that led to each award, will be included in the forthcoming book, *For Service in the Cause of Humanity*, edited by Roger Willoughby and John Wilson, which is due for publication later in 2022. Readers who wish to comment on this article may contact the authors through the editor.

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1. *Order of St John of Jerusalem: A Brief Notice of its Foundation and Constitution and its Objects in England* (London: Charles Cull & Son, 1878), p. 11.
2. *Order of St John of Jerusalem in England: Descriptive History of Medals and Grants for Saving Life on Land by Special Acts of Bravery* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1876), p. 3; the references to the RNLI and SFMRBS were added in a footnote.
3. *Report of the Chapter General* (1870), p. 17.
4. *The Statutes of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England* (1871), p. 4

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5. *Order of St John … Descriptive History of Medals*, p. 4.
6. *Report of the Chapter of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England, on St John Baptist's Day* (1875), p. 10.
7. Museum of the Order of St John, London.
8. *Order of St John … Descriptive History of Medals*, p. 5.
9. Lord Amherst to Sir Herbert Perrott, 6 November 1887: Archives of the Order of St John, London.
10. Edwin King, *The Knights of St John in the British Empire: Being the Official History of the British Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem* (London: St John's Gate, 1934), p. 223.
11. *Order of St John … A Brief Notice*, p. 11.
12. C.P. Barclay, *Heroes of Peace: The Royal Humane Society and the Award of Medals in Britain, 1774–1914* (PhD thesis, University of York, 2009), p. 351.
13. The awards going to William Beith, John William Howell, Isaac Pride, Daniel Thomas and Thomas E Wales, the latter being omitted from the list of Albert Medal recipients.
14. *Eddowes's Journal* (2 May 1877), p. 6; *South Wales Daily News* (27 April 1877), p. 3.
15. *South Wales Daily News* (27 April 1877), p. 3; see also the *Order of St John … A Brief Notice*, p. 11.
16. Barclay *Heroes of Peace*, pp. 412–414.
17. *Report of the Chapter General* (1877), p. 7
18. See for example R. Willoughby, 'A Royal Humane Society miscellany', *LSARS Journal*, Vol. 73 (2012,), p. 32 and *The Times* (12 October 1908), p. 14.
19. MVOStJ Council Minute 6350, dated 6 June 1957: MVOStJ Archives, London.
20. See for example *First Aid*, April 1908, 14, p. 153.
21. The Prior to Lord Knutsford, December 1913, Archives of the Order of St John, London; The proposed title was both unwieldly and ignored the fact that the Order's LSM was by this stage issued in three classes.
22. The Order's name changes under the 1926 and 1936 Royal Charters (namely, the 'Grand Priory in the British Realm of the Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem' in 1926, and the 'Grand Priory in the British Realm of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem' in 1936) were never reflected in the legends used on the Life Saving Medal, despite some discussion (see e.g., *Statutes and Regulations [Amended]* (London: VOStJ, 1926), p. 68).
23. Tozer suggests a bar was initially instituted on 29 November 1892. See C.W. Tozer, *The Insignia and Medals of the Grand Priory of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem* (London: J.B. Hayward & OMRS, 1975), p. 41.
24. *Royal Charters (1955, 1958 & 1970) and Statutes and Regulations of the Order* (London: MVOStJ, 1970), p. 48.
25. Philip H. Catt, memorandum, 1962: Archives of the Order of St John, London.
26. N.G. Gooding, 'The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem: An update', *OMRS Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (2004), p. 264.
27. *St John Review*, Vol. 23, No. 7 (July 1950), p. 7; Secretary-General to the Stores Manager, Mr Wrigglesworth, 16 March 1950, and Secretary-General to the Principal Secretary, Priory for Wales, 29 September 1950: Archives of the Order of St John, London.
28. Tozer notes this ribbon in use from 1954, though this seems inaccurate: Tozer, *The Insignia and Medals*, p. 40.
29. *Report of the Chapter General* (1885), p. 9.
30. *Royal Charters (1955, 1958 & 1970) and Statutes and Regulations of the Order* (London: MVOStJ, 1970), p. 49.
31. See Percy V. Collings to C.T. Evans, 20 May 1957 and C.T. Evans to The Secretary, Priory of Southern Africa, 29 May 1957: Archives of the Order of St John, London.

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