

# LE CHEVALER



March 2021



St John's Co Cathedral Valletta

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Newsletter of the South Australia Priory  
Order of St John Of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller  
Australasia



## Prior's Report

It was wonderful to again be able to host partners at the twilight Priory meeting on Monday, March 16, exactly one year since the last 'partners meeting'. Although we were in two rooms due to Covid requirements our technology gurus Chevaliers Henry d'Assumpção and Mark Denton arranged for the evening's presentation to be shown in both rooms. And we were captivated by a very interesting and thought-provoking talk from Chevalier Henry d'Assumpção on Australia's Defence and Sovereignty.

For the past year we have seen the world in the firm grip of the pandemic with much suffering, significant economic disruption and many losing their lives. While we have had some serious setbacks, it is difficult to imagine the state of the rest of the world as we in Australia, and especially in South Australia, have been so effective in managing Covid. In many ways our daily activities have gradually returned to 'normal' with only small adjustments. Indeed, in the past few months I have travelled to several states and it would be difficult to recognise that anything untoward was in our midst. So, while we embrace our situation, let us not forget that the virus is still a serious threat and we must all be on our guard. With vaccinations now progressing it is to be hoped that the world will recover from this blight very soon.

On a brighter note we farewelled the forgettable 2020 with our annual Christmas Dinner held at the Kooyonga Golf Club. The Grand Prior, Chevalier David Wilckens and Jill Wilckens joined us in celebration and Ms Lorna Riddle, Executive Director of the Mary Potter Foundation was our special guest. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening and we were once again entertained by the magnificence of the SA Priory Choir led by Chevalier Mark Denton. Chevalier Michael Wilson has provided a more extensive report on the dinner later in this issue.

We were also very pleased to hold our Annual Church Service on the evening of Sunday, February 7. It was a most moving and inspirational service. I thank Chevalier The Hon David Bleby for his account of the evening later in these pages.

I was delighted to attend the Commissioning of The Rev Stephen Bloor as the new Rector of Christchurch on Friday, February 19. The service was conducted by the Most Rev Geoffrey Smith, Archbishop of Adelaide. It was a truly wonderful event and I very much look forward to our association with Rev Stephen.

Over the past months the PAC discussed and resolved to present a Certificate of Appreciation to those organisations that have long supported the Priory. Along with Chevalier Harold Lane, I was pleased to present the first such award to Rosemary Milisits representing Vili's Family Bakery for their outstanding contribution over many years.

At the recent Grand Priory Council meeting there was discussion regarding the Vow made by Aspirants during their Investiture. In past services the Vow has been read in full by the Prelate with Aspirants only required to indicate their acceptance. A shortened, but powerful statement, has been prepared which will now be spoken in full by each Aspirant. This will be in place for this year's June investiture.

**Chevalier Tony Woods CJSJ**  
**Prior**



### Officers of the Priory

#### **Prior**

Chev. Professor Tony Woods CJSJ

#### **Vice Prior**

Chev. Peter Robertson CGSJ

#### **Vice Chancellor**

Chev. Peter Summers OAM CGSJ

#### **Chaplain**

Chev. The Reverend Dr Carl Aiken KSJ

#### **Chamberlain**

Dame Dr. Leonie Clyne OAM DGSJ

#### **Secretary**

Chev. Jim Howard AM RFD KGSJ

#### **Treasurer**

Chev. Peter Robertson CGSJ

#### **Hospitaller**

Chev. Dr. Harold Lane OAM GCSJ

#### **Function Coordinator**

Chev. Don Stewart CGSJ

#### **Fund Raising Chairman**

Chev. Geoff Walsh JP KSJ

#### **Grand Priory Council Members**

Baliff Brian North AO, RFD, OSJ Chancellor

Chev. David Wilckens CJSJ Grand Prior

Dame Dr. Rosemary Brooks CGSJ Grand Priory  
Extension Co-ordinator Lieutenant

Chev. Prof. Tony Woods CJSJ SA Prior

Chev. Graeme Gatley JP CGSJ Secretary

Chev. Peter Robertson CGSJ Treasurer

Dame Leonie Clyne OAM DGSJ

#### **Senior Members in the Order**

##### **Grand Prior Emeritus**

Bailiff Emeritus Victor Techritz AM CMSJ

##### **Prior Emeritus**

Bailiff Emeritus The Hon. Roger Goldsworthy AO  
CMSJ

Bailiff Brian North AO, RFD, OSJ Chancellor





The next in our series of “Know your Officers”

## **Chev. The Reverend Doctor Carl Aiken JP KStJ**

### **SA Chapter Conventual Chaplain**



I am married to Mary and we have three adult children.

My early working life as an electrical fitter was in shipbuilding and diesel electric generation. During theological college I ran an electrical contracting business and managed the family rental properties.

My main church pastoral role was at Richmond Baptist Church for 25 years in the Western Suburbs. I was heavily involved in local community partnerships including establishing two community centres, working with unemployment support groups, advocating for a mobile library, and initiating a food co-operative and a community garden.

I left Richmond to become the lead chaplain at the Women's and Children's Hospital from 2000 to 2017. My role saw me work across the whole hospital campus and engage with clinicians and other staff from all areas. My manager at the time, the Chief Operating Officer, would observe that I was the only one in the wards and units to have a global view of the hospital and able to 'take the pulse' of the organisation. I was awarded one of the inaugural WCH Distinguished Service Awards in 2018 following my retirement

I am an advocate for holistic, quality, patient centred care which led me to be involved in the Australian Health and Welfare Chaplains Association. In 2005, with a desire to be a more professional organisation, Spiritual Care Australia (SCA) was established and I was one of the founding directors and its second National President. As such I was involved in setting up the company and implementing the processes and strategy for an effective organisation. The focus of SCA include accreditation, professional development, advocacy and research. I was instrumental in the development of the first national Standards of Practice for Chaplaincy and under my leadership the first Executive Officer of the organisation was appointed. I was awarded life membership in 2015. Locally I served on the Heads of Churches Chaplaincy Committee that became Chaplaincy Services SA from 2001 to 2015. Chaplaincy Services advocated for chaplaincy in public institutions and negotiated with government for funding.

I served in the Australian Army Reserve as a chaplain from 1993 - 2017 and have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. The role of chaplain saw me operate initially at the unit level providing pastoral care and advice to command. My last three postings were at the executive level in headquarters, reporting directly to the Chief of Army. In my Army career I have worked in training, logistic and strategic environments. I have been responsible for the performance of a number of key chaplaincy staff. My wider military experience has had me work in humanitarian and conflict operational environments overseas. In 2005 I visited the USA on a Defence scholarship to gain exposure to programs not available in Australia. I worked at Rush Hospital in Chicago and with the US Navy at Naval Station Bremerton in Seattle. In addition to my planned studies, while in the US the Principal Chaplain arranged for me to review the Chaplain's Trauma Response course at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.

I served on the Association's Executive Committee, in the Baptist Church, for 10 years, the Theological College Board for 4 years and the Ordination and Accreditation Committee for 4 years. A number of significant due diligence issues were addressed during my time on the Executive Committee. There was also a strategic change in the focus of key denominational roles that were implemented smoothly.

One of my key interests is research and I sit on the Human Research Ethics Committees for the Women's and Children's Hospital and the Adelaide University. I am also on the Board of the Naval Military and Air Force Club. Another interest is cars and I am a member of the Street Machine Association of SA and the MG Car Club. I am currently restoring an MGB.



## Christmas Dinner 2020



The annual Order Christmas Dinner was held at to Kooyonga Golf Club on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December.

In a delightful setting, drinks were served on arrival before being seated for dinner, Dame Carolyn Grantskalns was Master of Ceremonies for the evening.

Graeme Gatley said Grace followed by the Loyal Toast from Peter Summers

In his address Prior Tony Woods reflected on the past year and the trial and tribulations they caused. The Order's Investiture in October was the only one conducted across the world for 2020. The Prior also thanked the contribution the PAC and members for their support during the year.

Grand Prior David Wilkins spoke of the responsibility of his position. He congratulated Peter Herriman on his appointment as a Judge of the Petite Counsel, one of only three. He also noted the elevation to the Knight of the Grand Cross of John Jackson and David Wotton.

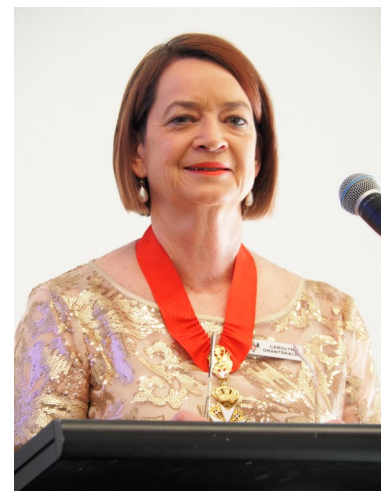
Treasurer Peter Robertson in presenting Mary Potter Foundation's Executive Director, Lorna Biddle a donation of \$13,000 making a total of \$25,000 for the year, said that collectively over the last 28 years The Order has donated \$460,000.

Lorna responded by thanking the Order for their longstanding and endearing support of the Mary Potter. She highlighted the importance of this support in enabling the Mary Potter to provide the unique care of a hospice setting. Noting the challenges that Covid restrictions had placed on access to Mary Potter she said, "When you strip back all the programs and wonderful things we do, it is the gentle loving care people remember". This was reinforced by a video clip in which Claire spoke of her fears, how they had been addressed, and how some wonderful memories had been created for her and Gary during her final times.

The Order's choir under the Baton of Mark Denton, gave two special recitals of carols, no knowledge of a recording contract forthcoming for the choir to this time

Ian Olver gave the final Blessing that concluded a lovely evening.

**Chevalier, Michael Wilson AM KGSJ**



MC for the night

Dame Carolyn Grantskalns DSJ



## Christmas Dinner 2020







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## Christmas Dinner 2020







## The Annual Church Service 2020

The Annual Service of the Order was a fitting and significant event to mark the beginning of the formal activities of the South Australian Priory in 2021. A large number of Dames and Knights and their partners joined the 6 PM Choral Evensong at Christchurch North Adelaide on Sunday, 7 February 2021.

The Anglican service was conducted by the Locum Tenens of the parish, the Reverend Adrian Stephens, whose interregnum will finish with the installation of the Reverend Stephen Bloor as the Rector on 19 February.

The service was Evensong from the Book of Common Prayer. Psalm 146, the Canticles, the Responses and the Anthem were beautifully sung by the church choir led by Mr Andrew Georg, with the congregation joining in the singing of three well-chosen hymns.

The first lesson from Numbers 21: 4 – 9 was read by Chevalier David Meyer KSJ. It records the discouragement of the Hebrews in the wilderness, their encounter with poisonous serpents, the erection at the Lord's command through Moses of a bronze serpent on a pole which, when looked at in faith by a bitten person, would cause that person to live.

The second lesson, St John's Gospel, chapter 9, was read by Dame Mary Withers DSJ. It records the healing of a blind man by Jesus on the Sabbath and the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees who considered Jesus to be a sinner because he restored the man's sight on the Sabbath.

In his sermon Fr Adrian linked these two readings in his exposition of how a symbol of looking to God in faith can become an idol when the symbol is worshipped for itself, just as adherence to the law by the Pharisees had become an end in itself rather than a by-product of faith in God. He explained how many modern-day symbols, such as success, wealth, freedom and power, can become idols in themselves.

The anthem sung by the choir also appropriately reinforced the link, with Edward Bairstow's "As Moses lifted up the serpent", the words being taken from John 3: 14 – 16; 12:32.

A sumptuous light supper and drinks in the parish hall followed the service, to which other members of the congregation were also invited.

Our thanks go to all those involved in the organisation and presentation of the service and the supper.

**Chevalier The Hon. David Bleby QC KSJ**





## The Annual Church Service 2020







## The Annual Church Service 2020





Continued from the cover page.



## St John's Co Cathedral Valletta

Despite its somewhat austere exterior, St John's Co-Cathedral's interior is a fantastic gem of Baroque art and architecture and a must-see for any visitor to Valletta in Malta. The building was initially built as a conventual church for the Knights of St John. The Grand Masters of the Knights of St John and several of the knights donated gifts and money to fill the church with incredible works of art.

A co-cathedral is a cathedral which shares the function of being a bishop's seat with another cathedral. In Malta, since the 1820s, St John's Co-Cathedral in Valletta has shared this function with St Paul's Cathedral in Mdina was the former capital of Malta.



The construction of what is now St John's Co-Cathedral was commissioned in 1572 by Grand Master Jean de la Cassière. The church is dedicated to St John the Baptist, the patron saint of the Knights of St John.

After the Great Siege of 1565, when the Ottoman Empire tried unsuccessfully to take Malta, the Knights decided to build a new fortified capital city. In the centre of the new city, 'Valletta' was to be the church. The church was completed in 1577.

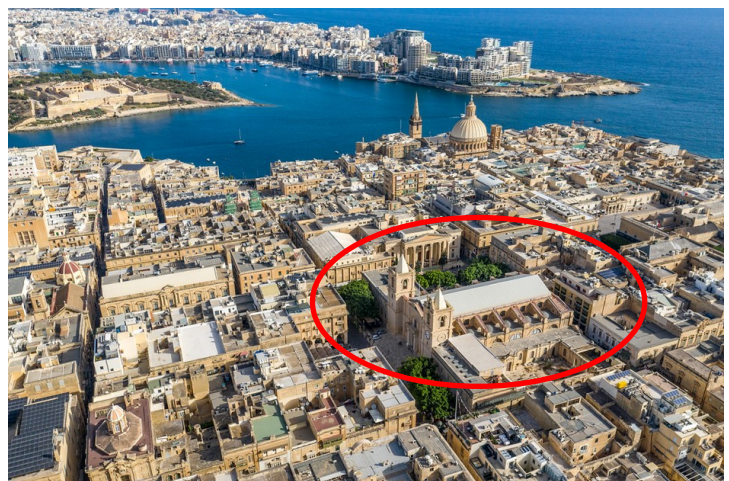
The plain façade with its two tall bell towers is rather austere and, in some ways, resembles a fortress. However, the sheer size of the church was built to express the power of Catholicism. This huge conventual church became the Knights of St John religious headquarters.

It was during the seventeenth century that the Baroque style was introduced. The Knights were extremely keen to have a church that would rival the great churches of Rome.

Artist Mattia transformed the interior of the church into a fabulous celebration of Baroque art that we see today. It is the contrast between the plain architecture of the exterior and the flamboyance of the interior that makes St John's Co-Cathedral so unique and so worthy of a visit.

In 1798, After the Knights of St John were expelled from Malta by Napoleon troops, the church no longer functioned as the Knights' conventual church. Napoleon Bonaparte decreed the church was to serve and operate as the co-cathedral for the Bishop of Malta.

Two years later, in September 1800, the French surrendered to the British in Malta. But it wasn't until 1816 that Pope Pius VII confirmed the election of St John's church to Co-Cathedral. The island of Malta finally gained its independence from Britain in 1964.







Today, St John's Co-Cathedral is a venue for many cultural events and one of Malta's most popular attractions in Malta

The marble floor is a work of art in itself.

It's a marble patchwork of 405 tombstones belonging to the Knights of St John and other noblemen. Latin inscriptions and baroque imagery on the tombstones attest to the Knights' virtues, with proclamations of fame, victory, triumph and death.



Inside the Oratory, is the impressive oil on canvas painting 'Beheading of St. John the Baptist'. Painted by Italian artist Caravaggio in 1608 during his time in Malta. It is considered to be Caravaggio's masterpiece and is the only one of his paintings to bear his signature.

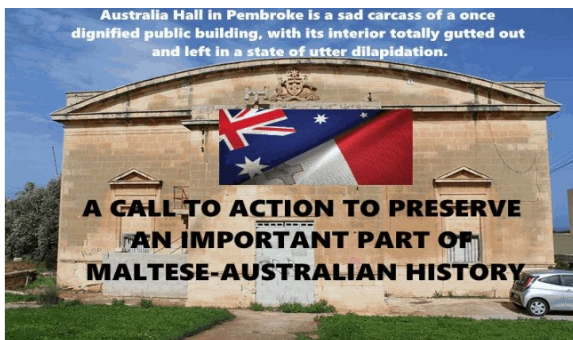




## Gerald Strickland and the Australian Connection

Gerald Strickland was born in Valletta, Malta in 1861 to a Maltese captain. This gave the young Gerald Strickland the opportunity to venture the world – including his visit to Australia where he met other Maltese sailors in Queensland. This began his connection to Australia, where he ultimately became an important figure in Australia in his official capacities of Governor of Tasmania during 1904-1909; Governor of Western Australia during 1909-1913 and Governor of NSW during 1913-1916.

He was married to Lady Edeline Sackville-West who also contributed to the war effort during WW1 through her affiliations with the Australian Red Cross. Following her sudden passing in 1918 Strickland was soon re-married to Margaret Hulton. Gerald Strickland returned to Malta and became Prime Minister between 1924–1932 becoming one of the longest reigning prime ministers in Maltese history.



Like many of the Maltese, Gerald Strickland had multiple allegiances – British, Maltese and Australian. Similar to his predecessors, he too identified the need to effectively and sustainably manage the Maltese population whilst also recognising the collective benefits of opening up for them to relocate to Australia where they could readily apply their skills in Agriculture, Construction and Management and prosper accordingly in Australia. What Prime Minister Gerald Strickland ultimately set out to do was find a way to help his Maltese brothers and sisters improve their lives by migrating to Australia.

In a bold and entrepreneurial move, Gerald Strickland acquired a weatherboard “Queenslander” home and had it dismantled and shipped to Malta. In Malta, almost all construction was of stone. His objective was to teach the Maltese how to construct with wood so that they could adapt and thrive in their new Australian homeland.

The house was built and deconstructed constantly at various training schools in Malta. It also served as an immigration office for the Maltese leaving for Australia and was most recently as a residence and training centre. Today this building is in disrepair and the Maltese Government are undertaking plans to relocate and restore it.

### The Strickland House Australia Hall Connection

There is a property in Vacluse, Sydney, Australia, known as Strickland House, which Australis managed for Government Property NSW for many years. At the time the history was not generally known and its connection with Maltese heritage. The property also served as a Women’s Hospital thanks to the Strickland’s involvement in the Red Cross in Australia.

On a street in Pembroke, Malta stands a building known as Australia Hall. This heritage building bears the Australian Coat of Arms and is emblazoned with the Australian Army’s Rising Sun. This is probably the only emblem of its type in the world and the plaque on the front of the property reads:

*This building was erected and funded in November 1915 by the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society for the benefit of the soldiers of the Empire. It is most likely that the Strickland’s were involved in this construction as a welcoming gesture of goodwill for our ANZAC troops who were based in and passed through.*





## Mary Potter Care

### Race-Day-ready

You were there behind the champagne and celebratory lunch for Hospice patients and families on Melbourne Cup Day. And on that day, Mike made sure Mandy was right in party mode.

“On Cup Day, Mandy and her friends would always get together and celebrate. She’d make sure she had all the right decorations for the event – everything was a dress-up day. So I decked out every part of her Hospice room with her Melbourne Cup decorations from home. She wore her fascinator, the room was decorated like she would want it to be, and we had some champagne while we watched the race on TV.”

“It was a great day”.

Mike is so grateful to the doctors and nurses for their care of Mandy.

“It was just spectacular” said Mike.



With acknowledgement the Mary Potter Newsletter



### Newsletter Production

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