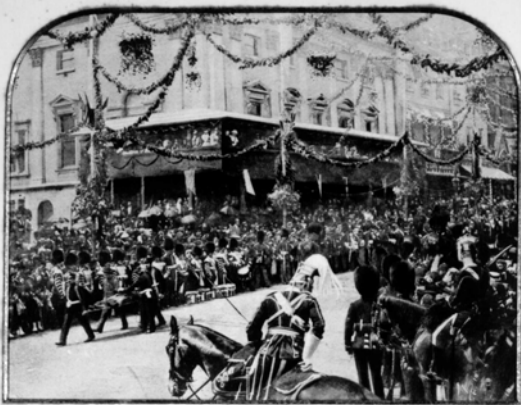


The St. John Jubilee and Coronation Medals

Ever since Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887, it has been customary to award a commemorative medal to celebrate Coronations and Jubilees, a tradition which was continued at the recent Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2002. There is normally one design of medal that is awarded to all recipients whether military or civilian but, for a short period between the Golden Jubilee of 1887 and the Coronation of George V in 1911, a second type of medal was issued to members of a number of organisations that participated in the celebrations. The obverse of these medals bore the head of the Sovereign, but the reverse varied slightly as it incorporated the name of the various organisations. Because the majority of these recipients were from various police forces, these medals are normally known as the 'Police' Jubilee and Coronation Medals.



The St. John Ambulance Brigade at work on their first public duty, Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887.

The practice of awarding a 'Police' Jubilee Medal commenced in 1887 but, as the St. John Ambulance Brigade had only been formed in that year, there were only a small number of members on duty during the Jubilee and no special issue was considered for the Brigade.

The 1897 Jubilee Medal. This medal was issued to those who were on duty during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The obverse shows the head of Queen Victoria with the words VICTORIA REGINA. The reverse

has a central legend JUBILEE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA within a crowned wreath. Outside this appears, at the top, the name of the organisation served and, at the bottom, the date 1897. There are five different versions: Metropolitan Police, City of London Police, Police Ambulance, London County Council Metropolitan Fire Brigade and St. John Ambulance Brigade. The medal was issued to St. John members in bronze and has the rank and name of the recipient engraved around the rim. An analysis of the reports made after the event shows that there were 910 members of the Brigade on duty: 36 Honorary Surgeons, 771 officers and men and 103 Nursing Sisters.



St. John Jubilee Medal, 1897



Coronation Medal, 1902

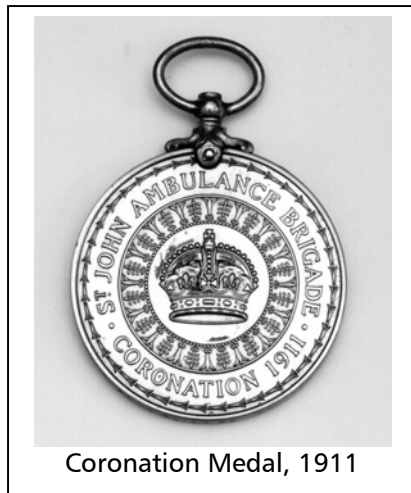
The 1902 Coronation Medal.

This medal, also in bronze, shows on the obverse the crowned bust of Edward VII with the inscription EDWARDUS VII REX IMPERATOR. On the reverse are the words CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII 1902 above a crown upon oak and laurel leaves. The same five organisations that took part in the 1897 celebrations also served in 1902 and their names will be found around the upper edge of the medal. The title of the Fire Brigade, however, was shortened to the initials L.C.C.M.F.B. The

engraved naming on the rim is similar to the previous issue except that the rank follows the name.

It was originally planned to have a large number of St. John Ambulance Brigade members on duty from all parts of the country, but the King's illness made it necessary to postpone the Coronation. When it eventually took place, the much-shortened route used for the procession needed fewer members and it was decided not to use personnel from outside London apart from representative Deputy Commissioners. It follows that almost all of these medals were granted to members of No. 1 (Metropolitan) District. Reports show that 912 members of the Brigade were on duty, consisting of 34 Honorary Surgeons, 47 officers, 715 men and 116 Nursing Sisters.

The 1911 Coronation Medal. Issued this time in silver, the medal followed the pattern of the previous two. The obverse shows the crowned and robed bust of George V with the legend GEORGIUS V REX ET IMPERATOR. The reverse shows a central crown within an ornate band. Outside this at the base is the date 1911 and at the top the name of the organisation. Firemen recipients again found a changed inscription, London Fire Brigade, and a five additional organisations had their own medal: County and Borough Police, Scottish Police, Royal Irish Constabulary, Royal Parks and St. Andrew's Ambulance Corps.



Members of St. John Ambulance were drawn from all over the country and this medal is the commonest of the three issues to members of the Brigade. An exact number of recipients cannot be established, but an editorial in the magazine *First Aid* reveals that the Coronation procession would need 1,756 members from London District on duty and the Progress through south London on the following day would require 2,616 who would be drawn, additionally, from the provinces, India, Malta, New Zealand and South Africa. Assuming that the majority of those of the Metropolitan District on duty for the Coronation would also serve on the following day, the final issue total could not have been below 3,000.