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*Introducing...*



**British  
Red Cross**



## International Aid

War.... earthquake.... flood.... famine – the British Red Cross is ever on the alert to respond to a call for help from a sister Society.

When catastrophes occur overseas, the British Red Cross rushes aid. This can be in the form of money, supplies, or people: whichever the Red Cross or Red Crescent Society of the disaster-struck country asks for as their highest priority. Close links with overseas Societies ensure that aid of a kind most needed reaches those most in need without delay.

In addition to emergency disaster relief, the British Red Cross is increasingly providing help to overseas Societies on a more long term basis – aiming at prevention and development wherever possible.

THE BRITISH RED CROSS SOCIETY  
HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM CENTRE  
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01-602 1987

Help us  
to help



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**H**enry Dunant, a young Swiss business man, witnessed the Battle of Solferino in 1859. Deeply moved by the appalling suffering and the almost total lack of care for the wounded of both sides, he proposed that every country should create a voluntary agency of trained members who would care impartially for the wounded of all sides, under the protection of international treaty. This led directly to the founding of the Red Cross in 1863, and to the adoption of the Red Cross as an international symbol of protection.

Today the International Red Cross Movement is the world's largest voluntary organisation, with a worldwide membership close to 250,000,000. Based in Geneva are the International Committee of the Red Cross (the I.C.R.C.) and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

The I.C.R.C. is a non-political independent humanitarian institution, whose role is defined in international law by the Geneva Conventions. It acts as a neutral intermediary during international wars and civil conflicts, providing protection for civilians, prisoners of war and the wounded.



The signing of the First Geneva Convention on 22nd August 1864



There is a national Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in almost every country of the world, each dedicated to the same humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality. All are represented in the League, which co-ordinates the aid they provide to the victims of natural disasters.



First and foremost, the Red Cross is an international symbol of protection for the sick and wounded victims of armed conflict, enshrined in international Law.

The Red Cross (in some countries the Red Crescent) is also used by the national Societies to indicate membership, and to identify their buildings and vehicles. The British Red Cross Society uses the emblem of the Red Cross in this way under the authority of Act of Parliament.

The volunteer members of the British Red Cross help people impartially when they are in need or in crisis, in their own homes or in the community, at home and abroad, in peace and in war.

There are 96 Red Cross Branches operating throughout England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and more than 1,100 local Red Cross Centres. A total of over 80,000 Red Cross volunteers together with some 20,000 Red Cross Youth and Juniors work in and out of these Centres, providing caring and emergency services for their local communities, working in hospitals, and manning first aid posts.

Jointly they undertake a massive annual training and education programme for people of all ages, Red Cross members and the general public alike. Subjects include Red Cross principles; first aid, nursing and social work; the facts about HIV/AIDS; and management skills.

## Helping throughout the local community

### First Aid and Emergencies

The Red Cross is one of the premier first aid and emergency organisations in the UK. Every week uniformed Red Cross volunteers man first aid posts at sporting and public events up and down the country, drive ambulances and mobile first aid units. Other volunteers are trained to help in all

kinds of emergencies, from personal crises to major disasters.

Red Cross Instructors, trained to rigorous standards, provide first aid courses for industry which are Health and Safety Executive approved. Equally important, they run courses for members of the public – both adults and children – as well as for Red Cross members.

### Care in the Community

Red Cross services for the frail elderly, the sick, the handicapped and the housebound, range from home visits and providing nursing care in the home to running clubs, and providing day care centres and special holidays.

### Hospital Services

Red Cross volunteers undertake nursing duties in hospitals, visit patients and provide trolley shops and libraries, and help people through the first few days back at home from hospital.

### Transport & Escort

Red Cross volunteers drive cars or ambulances, and if needed, provide qualified escorts, so as to enable housebound and other handicapped people to make journeys that would otherwise be impossible for them.

### Medical Loan



Red Cross Medical Loan depots throughout the country meet urgent needs for the short term loan of medical equipment such as wheelchairs, walking frames, and commodes, whether for use at home or on holiday.

### Beauty Care and Cosmetic Camouflage

When people are ill they tend to lose interest in their appearance. Red Cross Beauty Care volunteers boost patients' morale and hasten their recovery by helping them to look their best.

A complementary service, Cosmetic Camouflage, is also provided by Red Cross volunteers. People with disfiguring marks are shown how to cover them with special creams, making it easier to live normal lives.

### Youth and Juniors

Boys and girls as young as 6, and young people generally have a vital role to play in the Red Cross. Working alongside adults, they may help with a rescue operation, develop a community scheme, raise money to relieve suffering in the Third World, or learn the skills needed to look after a sick or handicapped relative at home.



They can find themselves helping to man first aid posts, having the chance to abseil down a high building, or enjoying themselves in any number of other ways.

### International Tracing

One of the tragedies of war and natural disasters is the separation of families. Using its worldwide network centred in Geneva the Red Cross is constantly striving to reunite families, no matter how long the separation. The British Red Cross manages to trace, on average, one person every day of the year.

### First Aid and Emergencies

To provide this range of first aid and emergency services, the Red Cross is dependent on people. People who are prepared to volunteer their



time, and to take advantage of the superb training the Red Cross provides free of charge to its members.

### Care in the Community

All are dependent on volunteers, many of whom have taken advantage of the training the Red Cross provides to enable its members to be of greater service to their local Communities.

### Hospital Services

Some Red Cross volunteers working in hospitals decide to take advantage of the free training the Red Cross provides. Others undertake work which does not require specialist training. All give their time to help people in hospital.

### Transport & Escort

This greatly appreciated service is only able to operate because suitably qualified Red Cross volunteers are ready and willing to give up their time to provide it.

### Medical Loan

The equipment has to be stored and maintained, each loan recorded and, telephones enquiries dealt with. To do this the Red Cross relies on its volunteers who give their time.

### Beauty Care and Cosmetic Camouflage

Both the Cosmetic Camouflage and Beauty Care Services require special training. The Red Cross provides this free of charge to its volunteers.

### Youth and Juniors

When children and young people join the Red Cross they receive free training in their chosen subjects. They can progress to develop their personal skills through leadership training. Indeed, the quality of its

Youth leaders is one of the keys to the success of British Red Cross Youth, with over 20,000 members. The Red Cross is always on the look out for suitable people who are prepared to devote time to this rewarding work.

### International Tracing

Red Cross volunteers, operating out of Red Cross Centres throughout the country, play an essential role in this service. It is they who go out and make the door to door enquiries which ultimately result in a happy and reunited family.

## How you can help us to help...

### Financial support

Apart from devoting time as a volunteer, there are a number of other ways people can support the Red Cross and help its work at home and abroad. They can donate money to the Red Cross, make a covenant, join the 'Give As You Earn Scheme' or remember the Red Cross in their wills.

### Behind the Scenes

Volunteers not only provide services to local communities; they have also to raise the money to support these services and the international work of the Red Cross.

So the Red Cross needs people to work in shops; to make collections; to organise fetes, bazaars and car-boot sales; to promote the Red Cross by giving talks and in other ways; to do such

basic but essential tasks as typing and filing; in fact anything to help raise money and take some of the load off the members who are out providing services to their local communities.

