

LETTERS

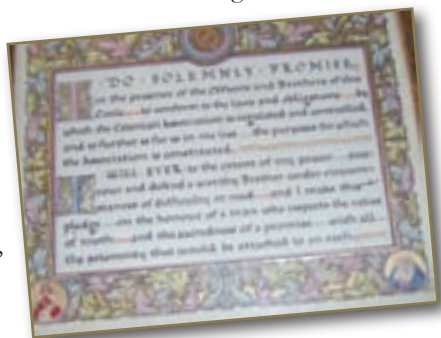
Sir,

Catenian Promise

As part of the Centenary Conference I am putting together some memorabilia for a small exhibition to be held in the Manchester Central Reference Library. I have visited Head Office in Coventry on a couple of occasions, firstly to see what was kept there and what might be of interest for people to see within the exhibition itself. The exhibition was not just designed to be viewed by the delegates attending for the Conference weekend, it was booked to run prior to and after the Conference itself for about six weeks. It is being hosted within the Local Studies area of the Library and should be seen by many thousands of people who visit the library from Greater Manchester and beyond, and so advertise our Association to the wider community.

Among several items to be displayed is a very ornate Early Catenian Promise which would appear, by examining the language of the promise, to have been in use some time after 1910. The Promise is held in a small gilt frame

with the inner mount holding the "Promise" in situ. It is ornately decorated in what would have been, when new, very vibrant pink, yellow, brown and blue decorative leaf-like fronds, interspersed with gilt work.



In the middle of the matting at the top is the Catenian logo highlighted in gold with the chain links filled in with bright red and blue colouring. In the bottom left hand corner is a circle within which there is an image of Our Lord with a halo around his head dressed in crimson and yellow robes, and clearly visible on both hands is the stigmata. At the bottom right is a similar circle with an image of Our Lady, hands together praying wearing blue and white robes similarly with a halo around her head.

The Promise has colouration lines which break it up into what I will describe as speech lengths and therefore I can only assume it is intended to be read as the following:

I DO SOLEMNLY PROMISE in the presence of the Officers and Brothers of this Circle to conform to the laws and obligations by which the Catenian Association is regulated and controlled, and to further as far as in me lies the purposes for which the Association is constituted.

I WILL EVER to the extent of my power succour and defend a worthy Brother under circumstances of difficulty or need and I make this pledge on the honour of a man who respects the value of truth and the sacredness of a promise with all the solemnity that would be attached to an oath.

Obviously if anyone has any knowledge of the oath as described above it would be very useful if they got in touch with me so that we could extend our knowledge.

John Woodhouse

Manchester (1) and Rochdale Circles

Sir,

Our Founders Got It Right

During recent years much discussion and research has taken place within the Association with the objective of solving the problems of an organization about to celebrate its centenary which was founded when the social status of Catholics was very different from today. It is not surprising that yesteryear's social needs have changed considerably during the ensuing decades and created argument as to how our future course should be plotted.

I do not write to offer any solution to these problems but merely to reassure the fraternity that at least one of the original objectives conceived by 'The Pals' of offering help to a Brother in distress is still very much part of Catenianism. My wife and I, both in our eighties, have happily lived at our address in Wetherby for over 35 years but on 25th June last year an expanse of water, which had accumulated over several days from very heavy rain in an adjoining field, burst its boundaries and our home was engulfed in what appeared to be a miniature tidal wave. We were evacuated by the Police and the Fire Brigade and fortunately sustained no physical injury but the mental shock was immense. All our furniture and belongings on the ground floor were lost, floorboards were ripped up and plaster hacked from the walls to allow humidifiers to dry out the building. This took several months before the builders could start the renovations. Our bedroom furniture was put into storage and we moved temporarily into a furnished flat.

Joan and I are indebted to the Brothers of Wetherby Circle. They offered us temporary accommodation, they washed and ironed our clothes, they fed us, they cut the grass and they gave us the moral support to live with our problems. A few days ago after all these months we moved back home. I have been a Catenian for over 57 years and I have heard that pledge 'to help a Brother in need' more times than I can possibly remember but now I know what it means and I think our founders got it dead right.

Ken Hines

Wetherby Circle

Sir,

"Special" Thank You

May I on behalf of His Eminence Cormac Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, Bishop Brain, Bishop Noble, and all the Clergy, who took part in the Mass at the Bridgewater Hall, on the occasion of our 100th anniversary, take the opportunity to pass on our thanks to all the Special Ministers of the Eucharist, who assisted with the distribution of Communion, and to make the Celebration run so smoothly. Without their help this would have been an impossible task. With every blessing in your chosen Ministry.

Deacon Malcolm Cunliffe

Wigan Circle

Sir,

What a Conference!

What a GRAND beginning for Grand President David Taylor of his presidential year. This Conference had everything: the highest attendance in 100 years, good attendance from overseas brothers, with first class organisation. As usual Director Tony Godden looked after the overseas visitors with his normal jovial bearing and wearing a kilt.

I was one of the lucky ones who attended The Manchester Experience hosted by Immediate Past Grand President Philip Gidman. The food was gastronomic. The band made us old fogies feel young, with tunes from the 40's and 50's; wine was in abundance (free), which added to the merriment.

As I am wheelchair-bound I found the facilities and care was first class.

A great thank you is due to the organisers. Brother Grand President has a job on his hands to carry on performing at this level.

Bob Marks
Mensija Circle

Sir,

Southern Celebration

Now that the Manchester Celebrations have been joyfully concluded may I now, through you, tell the Association of the plans to celebrate the Centenary of the Association in the South of England.

London Circle was formed on 13th December 1909 and from it has grown all the Circles in England and Wales south of, but including, Birmingham. On Saturday 12th December 2009 we will hold our 1200th meeting, a consecutive meeting every month since foundation. The meeting will be at 4pm and will be followed by attendance at Mass in Westminster Cathedral at 6pm and then a banquet at 7.15 for 8.00.

The venue is the Park Plaza Victoria Hotel in Vauxhall Bridge Road, two minutes from Victoria station and four or five from the Cathedral. Attendance at the meeting is free and for the Banquet £70 per person for a four course meal, half a bottle of wine and half a bottle of water.

The Guest list is not complete but we have invited the Cardinal and the Lord Mayor of Westminster as well as the Grand President.

This is a preliminary notice so that Provincial Councils and Circles can note the event in their forward diaries and Brothers can write in the space at the end of their diaries. Grand Council has acknowledged the significance of this event and we are sure we can rely on the membership to support us fully.

Peter Wurr
London Circle

Centenary Ode

Sir,

A number of our Catenian brothers will know John Doyle of Portsmouth Circle. John has some difficulty in joining us at our Circle meetings, but remains committed to the Association.

He regularly composes 'odes' for our special occasions, and composed the following one for our Centenary year. He is anxious to ensure that today's Catenians continue to take on the challenge to move the Association forward – I will let his ode say the rest:

*'Tis with great pride we celebrate
Our Brotherhood's first century.
Recall our famed Patron Bishop
And courageous founding brothers.
The problems of those early days
Were dealt with most successfully
And our Brotherhood developed,
Adding strength to our Catholic Faith.
We start our second century
And it would be appropriate
To re-examine our objectives
In a changing, challenging world.
Our second century will need
A strong leadership in God's name.
Catenians have a roll in this
Which merits our attention.
We are blessed with abilities,
Individually and as a group.
From Australia to Ireland
We have great opportunities.
In prayer, study and action
Our potential is enormous.
This is a critical moment.
With God's backing how can we fail?*

Stuart Thomson
President, Portsmouth Circle

PEOPLE

Cyril Conroy 100 Not Out



Our photograph shows Cyril seated with Peter Coughlan (left) and Martin Clust (right)

Just a brief note to let the brothers of Cheshire North Circle know that brothers from Seaford Circle visited Cyril Conroy on the occasion of his 100th birthday and now residing at the Haven Nursing Home in Peacehaven. Province 18 Director Martin Clust, Seaford President Patrick O'Donovan and Peter Coughlan a Seaford brother and Eucharistic Minister all visited Cyril after Mass in The Immaculate Conception of Our Lady Church, Peacehaven, and brought him Holy Communion.

Very bright and alert, he asked to pass on his thanks to all those who had sent him cards and good wishes. The card from his circle members was on display and when asked how he felt having reached 100 he replied 'Just the same as yesterday!' He was looking forward to his daughter Rita and family members visiting later that afternoon and cutting his cake.

Barry Donovan MBE

Barry Donovan of Colchester Circle received an MBE in the New Year's Honours List for, "Voluntary service to the community in Colchester."



Pictured: Back, left to right: President (Nottingham 20) Marcus Wakely; Grand President David Taylor; President (Nottingham 221) Bob Cordell. Front: left to right: Jane Harris (Jim Mills' daughter); Jim Mills; Mgr Thomas McGovern (Vicar General)

Jim Mills – A 100 Up

Nottingham's 20 & 221 Circles held a joint Clergy and Ladies night at The Country House Hotel, recently.

This was a double celebration. The Association's Centenary year and also that of one of their own members. Jim Mills reached his 100 years on that same day and Grand President was there to congratulate him along with over 100 brothers, ladies, clergy and visitors. (as this edition (Feb 2009) was going to press it was learned that Bro Jim had died. The family asked however that the story should still appear).

MBE for Phil Dolan



Phil Dolan is pictured with his wife Sheila and son Simon at the Royal Garden Party at Holyrood Palace Edinburgh on 1st July 2008 when he was invited in his capacity as Chairman of the Scottish Haemophilia Forum.

Philip Dolan of Glasgow Giffnock Circle was awarded an MBE in the 2008 Birthday Honours List. The citation was 'For voluntary service to Haemophiliacs in Scotland'.

When Phil received the letter informing him that he had been nominated it was unexpected. Although he was pleased the years he has spent campaigning had been acknowledged, sadly over the past ten years a number of people who started campaigning with him have died and others are serious ill.

Phil has been a Catenian for about 30 years initially of East Kilbride Circle: President 1986 and a Past vice-president of Giffnock.

He is a parishioner of St Helens in Glasgow, is married to Sheila and they have a grown up son Simon.

Twice Honoured

Bill Metcalf of The City of London Circle is seen here at Buckingham Palace, having just received his MBE from the Queen for services to the homeless. He is accompanied by his sister, his two nieces, and another Catenian, Richard Lloyd of Esher Circle, who was instrumental in putting his name forward for the honour.

This is the second award which has come to Bill in recognition of his charitable work, notably with the SVP. The weekly 'SVP Soup Run' has now



been going for over 15 years, with many a Catenian volunteering to help, and the annual 'Souper Ball' has become a fixture in the Social Calendar. Previously Bill was invested as a Knight of St Gregory, giving him the distinction of being honoured by the Pope and the Queen in a single year.

Catenian Centenary Baby!

Sacha Gabriel Mobsby was born on 5th July – mother, Michelle, and baby are doing well. Julian Mobsby joined Weston-super-Mare Circle last year, having moved down from the Midlands and his family roots. His father was a Past President (twice) of Birmingham 9 and Past Provincial President, both his grandfathers were Catenians, and he has uncles who are Catenians in Province 6. He and Michelle have two other sons



– Kirk and Connor - and his family featured in the Weston-super-Mare family group picture (plus steam engine) shown on the back page of the Centenary Celebrations Journal being distributed throughout the Association this year. Is Sacha the first Centenary baby in the Association this year?