



London Central Circle Celebrates Its Centenary



The Brothers of London Central with Grand President

London Central Circle, the second Circle of the Association, celebrated its Centenary on Saturday 12th December 2009, 99 years and 364 days after it was founded.

The Circle was formed as the London Lodge of The Chums at the Gaiety Restaurant in the Strand with three new members and its Founder President Edward Hogan, who had already joined The Chums in Manchester. There was a demonstrable demand for such an organisation and by the end of 1914 the Circle had enrolled its 400th member.

From the start the Circle was heavily involved in the development of the Association and Edward Hogan, who frequently travelled to Manchester on business, persuaded Manchester to change the name from The Chums Benevolent Society to the Catenian Association.



Grand President Joe McNally with President Peter Wurr

He also persuaded Manchester to join in the development of the Association with Manchester Circle taking from north of Birmingham and London Circle taking from Birmingham south as their development areas.

Birmingham Circle was founded in 1912 followed by South London, Portsmouth, Southampton, East Essex (now Southend on Sea) and the old North London Circles the following year. These Circles in turn developed the Association locally by founding new Circles in their area. London Circle also continued developing the Association in the London and Home Counties area. In April 1997 the Circle amalgamated with Central London and London Belgravia Circles to form London Central Circle.

It is fitting that of the 70 Circles represented at the Centenary Meeting, all but 12 could trace their origins back to London Circle. Billericay Circle, who had five members at the meeting, is the Great Great Granddaughter of the Circle.

The Centenary celebrations started at 4pm with the Circle's 1200th consecutive meeting in the Victoria Suite of the Park Plaza Victoria Hotel. Circle President Peter Wurr opened the meeting with 166 brothers in attendance including Grand President Joe McNally, Grand Vice President Vernon DeCruz, Grand Secretary Jim Quinn and Grand Treasurer Phil Roberts, six Past Grand Presidents, eight Directors and eight Provincial Presidents.

The meeting began with the enrolment into the Association of Anthony Carey, Jim Kelly and Chris Linton-Ford. Jim Kelly was the 1000th member to sign the Circle's roll which is believed to be a Catenian landmark (see page 12).

President Peter Wurr welcomed those present who had come from as far afield as Valetta, Glasgow, Swansea and Norwich to which Grand President responded congratulating the Circle on its achievement.

Whilst the brothers were having their meeting, the Ladies had been treated to tea and biscuits and had an opportunity to view the Circle memorabilia, some of which went back to the time it was founded.



Bishop Arnold gives his Homily

Following the meeting, the brothers and their ladies walked to Westminster Cathedral to join the congregation for the 6pm Mass. The celebrant of the Mass was our own Bishop John Arnold ably assisted by two permanent deacons from the Association, one of whom, Rev Paul Lipscomb, is a member of London Central Circle. Grand President Joe McNally and President Peter Wurr read the lessons and Province 2 Director Bernard Noakes, who is also a member of the Circle, read the Bidding Prayers.