

# Caring For Our Catenian Records

**D**r James Hagerty, Honorary Archivist of the Association, presents some suggestions for the preservation of Circle and Provincial records and memorabilia.

## Introduction

The recent centenary celebrations emphasised the importance of the Association's history. The past informs our present but if we have few or no records to consult then it becomes increasingly difficult to write about the past or refer to it for clarification.

While researching the Centenary History I became increasingly aware of the paucity and inconsistency of the Association's records. Even Grand Circle and Grand Council records are not, as you would expect, readily available, comprehensive or sequential. The same is probably true of Circle and Provincial records and Catenians who have been asked to write commemorative histories of their Circles will know of the problems.

## Records Management Policy

Having a structured approach to records is very important. It should not be left to succeeding Secretaries, at all levels, to personally determine the care of records. There should be guidance which defines the procedures involved.

Grand Council has formally adopted a Records Management Policy which is based on that used by Church of England authorities. The Records Management Policy refers to data protection, which records and artefacts should be preserved, by whom, in what categories, and for how long. It also refers to where and how documentary and computer based records may be adequately and safely stored. This is now available on the Catenian website and may be downloaded for local use.

## Essential Records and Artefacts

Regardless of a Circle's decision to either adopt or ignore a Records Management Policy there are some records and artefacts which must be kept safely and in good order. For example, the Circle's charter, enrolment scroll, registers, Circle and Council minutes, and regalia must all be cared for. The maintenance of financial records must comply with current financial practice and data protection must be implemented.

Items such as commemorative booklets should be kept, as should lists of Presidents. Other memorabilia such as photographs, CDs, DVDs, home-movie films and 35 mm slides are very useful but only if identified with dates, places and names.

The proper care of both Grand Council and Circle-Provincial records are complementary activities.

## Storing and Accessing Archives

This is a very difficult aspect to deal with. The older the Circle the more records there are likely to be. Keeping them in the Secretary's garage or loft may keep them out of the way and probably safe but this is usually a temporary measure, prevents ease of access and necessitates them being moved with a change of Secretary. Additionally, environmental conditions may not be suitable and can be positively harmful to records.

Some Circles have already deposited their records with diocesan archives or local authority repositories. This is tempting and normally a good idea but cost and access factors may need to be taken into account.

Grand Council has recently installed special cupboards for the proper storage of its documents, books, photographs and artefacts. These include some records of defunct Circles and past copies of Catena and the annual Directory. Grand Council has also considered having its older and more fragile minute books re-bound. The arranging and proper cataloguing of Grand Council's records, however, is a long way from completion.

## Closing a Circle

Sadly, this happens and it should be the responsibility of the Circle Secretary and other officers to ensure that all records are labelled, packed, itemised and sent either to Catenian Headquarters in Coventry, diocesan archives, or the local authority archives. Whilst personal items and memorabilia may belong to an individual Catenian or his family, the official records of the Circle belong to the Association and should be returned accordingly.

## Our Catenian Family History

The joys and frustrations of researching family history are readily understandable to those who have undertaken such an important personal activity. We enjoy the hunt for past relatives and their stories but somehow we are prevented from finding out the truth or the full story because the information is unavailable. Writing Catenian history is a bit like that. Recording the collective memory is an important responsibility.

## Unpaid Volunteers Required

Work will begin shortly on the organization and cataloguing of the Association's records in Coventry. If you live near Coventry and would like to be involved in this then please submit your name to Brother Grand Secretary. Any help would be appreciated.

## Contacts

The Records Management Policy may be consulted on the Association's website. James Hagerty is available to discuss the care of records on 0113 2250853 or by email at james.hagerty@ntlworld.com

## A Special Australian Invitation

### To CATENIAN MEMBERS, THE ROSARY GROUP, FAMILY and FRIENDS TO PARTICIPATE IN A SPECIAL 'MARY'S ROSARY CHAIN' DEVOTION

Mary's Rosary Chain is a Rosary Devotion to Our Blessed Mother, where people are invited and encouraged to pray one decade (10 Hail Marys) of the Rosary each day in communion with other participants in this great powerful chain of prayer. The great benefit of praying (one decade) of the Rosary each day in union with tens of thousands of other participants around the world is the abundant Grace of Combined Prayers together with the Daily Prayers of the Pauline Order for the needs and intentions of the participants.

All participants are invited to enrol their Names on a list and have their Names permanently placed under the Blessed Sacrament in a Monastery of St Paul the First Hermit, "Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy", Penrose Park, New South Wales or "Our Lady Help of Christians", Marian Valley, Canungra, Queensland, where the Order will pray daily for their intentions. Also, Holy Mass is celebrated for all the participants every Saturday.

The Order of St Paul the First Hermit have warmly welcomed this Devotion and have given their full support and blessing for the inspiring Rosary Cards to be distributed and promoted wherever possible to encourage the people of God, and especially children and youth, to pray, through the intercession of the Mother of God, for the many urgent needs of the Holy Church and the world in general.

#### Further information can be obtained from:-

**Brother Greg Smyth (City of Sydney Circle) Tel: 0295220034,  
email: smythgc@bigpond.com - Mary's Rosary Chain Inc,  
PO Box 3127, St Mary's South, NSW 2760. Please Telephone  
Jeffrey Vassallo on 0288077888/0424032200**

\*Could all participants' names be passed on to Brother Greg Smyth, 44 Belgrave Espl Sylvania, NSW 2224 for inclusion in the Pauline Fathers' Daily Prayers.