



'The Bow Street Runners Circle' by virtue of the fact that so many members were in the Police.

This encouraged young officers to join as it gave them the opportunity to socialise off-duty with fellow professionals. It might also be helpful if a few famous people could be induced to join us. When I recently searched the Internet for 'Famous Freemasons' I found hundreds of them ranging from Mozart to Churchill and John Edgar Hoover to John Wayne. The only famous Catenian I could find was the author, JR Tolkien who joined Oxford Circle when he was based at the University. His most famous book was 'Lord of The Rings'. Now if he'd called it 'Lord of The Circles' he could have worked wonders for stimulating membership!

John Kenny
Norwich & London Central Circles

Lent 2008 – A Brave New World?

Sir, In the article by JPK (Catena March 2008) the author asserts that "this year is the earliest possible date for Easter". This is, unfortunately, not correct. The earliest possible date for Easter is, in fact, 22nd March although Easter has not fallen on that date since 1818 and will not fall on that date again until 2285. This year Easter is 23rd March. This is the first time since 1913 that Easter has fallen on the 23rd and it will not do so again until 2160.

It may be of interest to note that the latest possible date for Easter is 25th April. This last occurred in 1943 but will happen again in 2038.

J J McMaster
Carlingford Circle

Our Founders Got It Right

Sir, During recent years much discussion and research has taken place within the Association with the objective of solving the problems of an organisation 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 and wives 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

Circle Sponsorship Officer?

Sir, I know that the Catenian Association is not of itself a fund-raising organisation, but I also know that a great deal of money is raised by brothers and circles throughout the year.

I would be interested to hear the views of brothers on the idea of sponsorship within the Association.

Something which would raise funds for good causes and would also raise the awareness of the Association as a whole, thereby helping it to be bigger and stronger.

I wonder if each circle could have a Sponsorship Officer who would assist and advise circle brothers in using their own companies and businesses to help the Association by sponsoring events, eg, for Presidents' charities, the national CAFOD charity to help provide water for parts of Africa, the Bursary Fund, the Benevolent Fund, or to provide promotional funds for circle recruitment, or indeed in helping circles to clear debts and build up reserve funds for possible emergencies and difficulties.

For the past 100 years the Catenian Association has been the best kept secret in the Catholic Church. What better way to celebrate our Centenary than to raise our profile in the Catholic and secular domain?

Could there be a pilot study into my ideas? What do you think?

Brian Sharkey
City of Lichfield Circle

Flaunting the Rules?

Sir, I totally agree with Ralph Lamden of Reading Circle (Catena Feb 08) and as a brother who gives regularly to charity and joined the Association believing in the Aims, as listed in the Rules promulgated by Grand Council on 5th November 1996 with subsequent amendments, I am astounded that Grand Council see fit to not only disregard these rules but publicly flaunt them.

Surely they should change the rules governing the Aims of the Association and if The Catenian Association is to have as its main objective fund raising I feel this should be included in the Aims. I believe most Circles "foster brotherly love among members" by "developing social bonds among members and their families" organising social events. How does the Association "advance the interests of young Catholics or assist them in the choice or pursuit of a career"?

I assume from the Annual Accounts that it "establishes, maintains and administers benevolent funds and promotes and supports the Association Benevolent Fund and Bursary Fund".

I think the most neglected aim, and yet what should be the most important as it reflects deeply on the core of what the Association is about, is "to advance the interests of members and their dependants by individual or collective action".

My experience and anecdotal evidence shows virtually total neglect of this core rule and is a sad reflection of just how far the present Grand Council and the hierarchy have strayed from those gallant Chums of 100 years ago. In this our Centenary can I propose either a return to the values of what we publicly proclaim are our ideals or rewrite the rules and stop the hypocrisy of pretending "to advance the interests of members and their dependants by individual or collective action".

Look at the back page of Catena and track a name till it disappears into oblivion.

Joe Carroll
Longridge Circle