

The Catenian Association



**CONTINUING
THE STORY OF A CIRCLE**

**A history of the City of Winchester Circle from
1952 to 2005**

Michael N Bell

Dedication

This booklet is dedicated to the deceased members of the City of Winchester Circle:

Stanley Evans
John Wells
Peter Louth
Alex Blair
Harold Percy
Fred Rimell
Joe Kelly
Maurice Bickers
William Conway
Barney Fothergill
Vic Bannister
Eric Kearney
Ben Fraser
John Etherington
Denis Donnelly
Bob Good
Harry Kelly
Alan Birtwistle
Norman Marguerie
John Knight
Mike Ford-Jones
Reg Williams
George Stirling
Dick Robson
Bob Curtis
Jim Diamond

together with members of Brothers' families and those who in the past
have been Brothers within the Circle.

**“Eternal rest give to them, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.
May they rest in peace.”**

Aims of the Catenian Association (2005)

The Association, which shall be named the Catenian Association, shall avoid involvement in party politics and have the following aims:

- (a) to foster brotherly love among the members;*
- (b) to develop social bonds among the members and their families;*
- (c) to advance the interests of members and their dependants by individual or collective action;*
- (d) to advance the interests of young Catholics and to assist them in the choice or pursuit of a career;*
- (e) to establish, maintain and administer benevolent funds;*
- (f) to promote and support The Catenian Association Benevolent and Children's Fund ("the Benevolent Fund") and the Catenian Bursary Fund Limited ("the Bursary Fund").*

Human society must primarily be considered something pertaining to the spiritual. Through it, in the bright light of truth, men should share their knowledge, be able to exercise their rights and fulfil their obligations, be inspired to seek spiritual values; mutually derive genuine pleasure from the beautiful, of whatever order it be; always to be readily disposed to pass on to others the best of their own cultural heritage; and eagerly strive to make their own the spiritual achievements of others. These benefits not only influence, but at the same time give aim and scope to all that has bearing on cultural expressions, economic and social institutions, political movements and forms, laws, and all other structures by which society is outwardly established and constantly developed.

Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in terris*

Preface to 1996 (first) edition

The inspiration behind this little history of a Catenian Circle arose from concern that, as members died or moved away, records became mislaid and memories dimmed, the origins of the Circle and its formation and past character would be lost for ever; which would be a pity. Furthermore it was believed that such a record might be of interest to newer and future Brothers in giving them some idea how things worked in the past, perhaps even to help them build on the work of their predecessors as they in turn feel their way forward, trying to maintain a balance between earnestness and frivolity, formality and chaos.

The present author took on the initial task not only as a congenial challenge; it seemed an exercise worth doing in itself, but also gave an opportunity to make a personal contribution, in some measure to say thank you to the Circle for many years enjoyed – and I hope a few more yet to come!

To put the activities chronicled into context I have first set out the Aims of the Association, together with some words of Pope John which to me seem apposite. That the circle has managed in general to live by the Aims is, I hope, borne out in this account. With regard to the sometimes controversial third one it has been my experience during 19 years with Winchester Circle that special favours sought or granted are such as might be expected between the good friends which we are; in a wider sense prayers and Masses for deceased Brothers, keeping contact with Catenian widows, the maintenance of a redundancy register and the building of a wheelchair ramp may be regarded as examples of corporate action taken within this Aim. As to external charitable activity the Association's dominant role in practice is seen to be actively catalytic, with a wide range of activities being pursued by Brothers and groups of Brothers, either individually or as members of specific charitable organisations. The extent of this activity and the Association's influence should not be undervalued; thus the subject takes its rightful place in the story, although due to lack of relevant records from the earlier days it tends to shine through mainly in the most recent period. There is also, I fancy, a special Winchester Factor which is difficult to define, and of course is felt not only in Catenian affairs, but I suspect may be discerned in the whole ambience and history of Catholicism in and around the City. Its influence may, I am sure, be seen at work in and through the Circle and its members. Its causes and effects are many; however that is, as they say, another story and I must leave the reader to ponder on it if he will.

The story of the Circle has evolved as a partly factual, partly personal, account of events. It is based mainly on old minutes, circulars, accounts, registers, returns and other documents which have come to light, further illuminated by the recollections of surviving Past-Presidents and other Brothers. I am indebted particularly to Philip Walsh and Charles MacMahon, both long away from the Circle, who have provided me with much valuable information and reminiscences of the early days which were well before my time in Winchester. However some periods and events are but sketchily covered and for these shortcomings and all omissions and errors I most sincerely apologise.

I have arranged the chronicle in periods spanning the landmark events which tend to attract grand celebrations, that is to say the 'Hundred' meetings. May I suggest that if the exercise be deemed worth while the story might be brought up to date and re-published at the conclusion of each such period in the future – rather than be left for another 500 meetings!

Preface to 2005 (second) edition

In order to allow this edition to stand alone I have recast the story, omitting much of the original material except in summary and for more significant matters, but including the inauguration account in full. Some of the continuing regular activities of the Circle I have outlined separately, just in case anyone outside the Association should read the account and wonder how we spend the rest of our time. Three such activities – John’s Walks, Golf and Travel Club – seem to me to merit special attention due to their popularity amongst significant sections of the Circle. I have therefore included some further details of these activities, based on information given by John Perry, Mark Herbich and Tony Smith respectively to whom I am indebted.

For those wishing to delve further into the earlier years I assume that hard copies of the 1996 version will remain available.

Brother Stanley Evans KSG
Mayor of Winchester 1950-51
Founder President, City of Winchester Circle



City of Winchester Circle No 163

Presidents

1952-53	S.R.Evans	1993-94	M.J.Etherington
1953-54	S.R.Evans	1994-95	J.Marchesi
1954-55	E.N.Egan	1995-96	D.J.Platt
1955-56	J.Wells	1996-97	P.Finn
1956-57	R.A.Good	1997-98	M.R.Jakeman
1957-58	S.L.Hancock	1998-99	B.J.Whelan
1958-59	P.J.Walsh	1999-2000	H.A.Harris
1959-60	A.P.F.Rothman	2000-01	C.M.Walker
1960-61	J.A.Birtwistle	2001-02	H.R.A.Townsend
1961-62	W.B.Fraser	2002-03	P.J.Bolger
1962-63	S.L.Hancock	2003-04	D.N.Shields
1963-64	R.A.Good	2004-05	A.F.Smith
1964-65	R.A.Good		
1965-66	J.R.Bean		
1966-67	A.C.Newbury		
1967-68	A.A.Blair		
1968-69	J.D.Drayson		
1969-70	J.D.Drayson		
1970-71	C.D.MacMahon		
1971-72	D.P.Donnelly		
1972-73	M.S.Hynes		
1973-74	J.Blake		
1974-75	E.H.Hogan		
1975-76	P.J.C.O'Donoghue		
1976-77	P.A.E.Gardner		
1977-78	J.E.Banyard		
1978-79	J.E.Banyard		
1979-80	J.R.Robson		
1980-81	E.H.Hogan		
1981-82	G.R.Thomson		
1982-83	J.A.Hayward		
1983-84	M.F.Osborne		
1984-85	N.G.Marguerie		
1985-86	H.A.Harris		
1986-87	J.F.W.Exworthy		
1987-88	D.E.Kemp		
1988-89	S.J.Cutts		
1989-90	M.N.Bell		
1990-91	J.F.G.Perry		
1991-92	W.E.R.Howard		
1992-93	R.W.Curtis		

The price of this publication includes a donation to the
Catenian Bursary Fund Limited

Formation of the Circle

The initiative to form a new Catenian Circle centred on the Winchester area was taken early in 1952 by members of Southampton Circle. This enterprise marked the beginning of a period in Southampton's history (having themselves been inaugurated as Circle No 12 in 1913, only five years after the founding of the Catenian Association) during which they became particularly active in the formation of new Circles in Hampshire and Dorset. A big debt is owed by the Association as a whole, as well as by the Circles spawned due to their efforts, to the Brothers of Southampton Circle in respect of this vital activity during the early post – World War Two period. Their leadership greatly enhanced the strength of Catenianism in the South of England.

The idea of starting a Winchester Circle was developed into a firm proposal at informal meetings during the early part of 1952, with Brother George Batty of Southampton Circle contributing most to the effort made. George, a popular man who helped to motivate people, fulfilled the role of principal midwife. Further influence came from Brother Teddy Tindal of Portsmouth Circle who later became Provincial President and was a Catenian to the marrow. These preliminary meetings were held at the Southgate Hotel in Winchester where Major Paddy Ryan, one of the founder members to be, was manager, and they took place in any unoccupied bedroom. Paddy was a perfect 'mine host', ramrod erect and with a fine moustache. It was good of him to help in this way, although it cannot be said that a fairly cramped bedroom added to the dignity of the proceedings. In spite of these efforts and the active encouragement of Canon Mullarkey, the Parish Priest at St Peter's, attendance of a dozen or so was considered good going. There was a constant problem as to how the minimum number of twenty required under the Association Rules for the formation of a new Circle could be achieved. However sufficient confidence was eventually generated and thus on 12th June 1952 a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Brother Stanley Evans, who had been President of Southampton Circle from 1939 to 1942, at which it was decided that the proposal should go forward with a view to inauguration in or about October. In the mean time further informal meetings were to be held monthly throughout the summer for exchange of ideas, to see matters arising more clearly and to arouse the interest of other people in Winchester and the surrounding districts. At the first of these meetings, on 10th July, application and transfer forms were issued to prospective founder-members and it was resolved unanimously that the first Thursday in each month should be recommended to the Winchester Circle when formed as the regular monthly meeting date.

The formal application to Grand Council for the establishment of a Circle of the Catenian Association in Winchester was sent to the Provincial Secretary on 25th July and a further meeting was held under the chairmanship of Brother Norman Egan at the Southgate Hotel on 7th August at which a number of decisions were taken, including the following:

“The name of the new Circle should be ‘City of Winchester Circle’.

The inaugural meeting should be held on a Saturday in October – 11th, 18th or 25th, according to the hall bookings, and followed by dinner.

The Winchester Guildhall should be taken for this occasion.

His Lordship the Bishop of Portsmouth and all the local Clergy should be invited to be present.

The Grand President (J J Lawler), Provincial President (F G Connor) and officers of the Province and those responsible for the organisation of the rally (*sic*) should be advised as soon as possible of the date fixed and of all arrangements and given a hearty invitation.”

It may seem incredible that it should have been deemed possible to organise such an event at barely two months notice, including the invitation of v.i.p. guests likely to have full diaries and the prosecution of what would inevitably have been fairly complicated logistical arrangements. Nevertheless Grand Council seems to have shared the prevailing optimism, and indeed responded with alacrity, as the Provincial Secretary wrote on 12th August confirming that a Charter had been granted for what was to be known as the City of Winchester Circle No. 163, to be inaugurated by Brother Grand President on Thursday 2nd October. In the event, if not surprisingly, the Guildhall proved unavailable at such short notice and the ceremony was held at the Cadena Café in Winchester on Thursday 6th November. Even the achievement of this date must have called for some accomplished footwork on the part of the organising sub-committee and others involved!

In the mean time, meetings of what, perhaps somewhat prematurely, but in want of a better name, were known as ‘full Circle meetings’ were held on 18th September and 9th October, among other matters it being resolved to invite Mr Christopher Hollis MP and Col Crosthwaite-Eyre MP to the inaugural dinner – the former gentleman being, of course, the father of a future Bishop of Portsmouth. Both local and Catholic press were to be notified to attend. Nominations for officers were sought and received and two rehearsals arranged. The regalia to be worn by officers of the Circle were most generously provided as a personal gift by Stanley Evans.

Thus it came to pass that, albeit in surroundings less appropriate than had been hoped and a trifle marred by Brothers who had little experience and did not take seriously the need to learn their lines, but no doubt amid general rejoicing, the inaugural meeting was duly enacted and the City of Winchester Circle came into being on 6th November 1952, having as its founder-members, in order of enrolment:

S R Evans	President	M Evans
N Egan	Vice-President	L W Smith
W B Fraser		W S Conway
J C Quarrie		R J Pearce
S L Hancock	Provincial Councillor	L Bowen
T P Howkins		R H B Whitehead
R A Good		J A Birtwistle
P T Ryan		J Wells
P J Walsh		J Dynan Secretary

The last Founder-Brother to remain within the Circle (Alan Birtwistle) died in 1988.

The First Five Hundred Meetings (abridged)

Progress to Maturity

The fundamental problem throughout the early years of the Circle was that there were not enough members. Everyone ended up taking office more as a duty than as an honour. The pressure on small numbers meant that it was always the same ones who visited other Circles, whereas occasional embarrassment was caused by the relatively large numbers who, for the best of motives, visited their new Brothers at Winchester. In general terms the Circle was not a particularly affluent group and some wives felt, probably rightly, that too large a proportion of family money was being spent on Catenian activities. Many Catholics who could have joined saw it as merely a social organisation which did not appeal to them. Too often the members felt that they must attend functions as a duty rather than really wanting to do it as a pleasure. Double the membership would have made all the difference.

As had been the case with the pre-inauguration meetings the first regular monthly meetings of the fledgling Circle were held at the Southgate Hotel. Stanley Evans, the Founder-President, had the necessary presence for the office and was a dignified man. He ran his own timber business and only the previous year had completed his term as Mayor of Winchester, one of the very few Catholics to have held that office since the Reformation. The annual subscription was three guineas, but this did not include the cost of the Directory, at four shillings, or *Catena*, the journal of the Association, at nine pence per copy. Attendance at Circle meetings was generally about ten or eleven Brothers, and soon concern was being expressed over resignations and problems encountered in trying to increase membership. Social activities in this early period embraced an annual dinner and a children's party which included a film and conjuring show.

The first meeting of the Circle Council was held on 10th June 1954. Prior to that all administrative minutiae must have been dealt with in full Circle meetings; with attendances only just achieving double figures, and indeed sometimes down to a mere five, such a procedure would have been practicable, if a little tedious.

The most notable social event in 1954-55 appears to have been a dinner-dance at the Potter's Heron to celebrate the Jubilee of Bishop John Henry King, who had strong Winchester connections. The entertainment of Archbishop King, as he later became, continued in subsequent years and always gave the Circle great pleasure. Certain observances were required. It had to be red wine with everything; nothing else would do. On the other hand John Henry King was a greatly loved figure who never lost the bond he had established with his people.

Other activities in the early years included a Circle bridge club, film shows, a treasure hunt, ladies nights and a pantomime outing for children. Talks were arranged, including one on prisons and capital punishment.

From around 1955, meetings, followed by sandwiches, were being held in the Winchester Hotel. A formal dinner was held at the Potter's Heron to celebrate the Circle's

fiftieth meeting, 64 tickets being sold and 14 guests entertained, ten other Circles being represented. In November 1955 the clergy of members' parishes were entertained to dinner at the Royal Hotel, a building in St Peter Street having had strong Catholic associations during its earlier history and which was to see many more Catenian functions over successive years. In 1957 the Royal became the regular venue for Circle meetings.

1958-59 was the Golden Jubilee Year of the Catenian Association and Winchester's 30-year-old President had the honour and pleasure of attending the Golden Jubilee Banquet at the Savoy when the presidents of most of the Circles in the country were there and Cardinal Godfrey was guest of honour. A dance for St Peter's parishioners in Milner Hall was organised by the circle at the request of Canon Mullarkey, aimed at drawing in people not usually attending parish functions.

The first meeting of the Council of a revised Province 11 was held at the Royal on 1st May 1958 and the Provincial Jubilee Mass was celebrated at St Peter's. Founder President Stanley Evans was made a permanent member of Circle Council and 39 tickets were sold for the first recorded theatre visit to see 'My Fair Lady'.

In 1959 membership rose to 28. The dinner dance was held at the Potters Heron; no less than 92 tickets were sold, at 14s not including wine, and dancing was to The Ambassadors four-piece band. Brother President held a cheese and wine party and film show, with proceeds going to the World Refugee Fund. It was about this time, also, that moves were set in train by Winchester to try to establish a new Circle based at Basingstoke, a process that came to fruition some four years later. With membership reaching the mid-thirties the Hundredth Meeting was held in the Royal Hotel on 1st December 1960.

In 1961-62 a 'Special Fund' was started to provide a source of Brothers' ready money for instant use in ways which might be strictly outside the remit of official Circle funds but within the spirit of Catenianism, such as charitable donations attracting the particular support of the Circle. The aftercare of discharged prisoners was a topic raised in Circle meetings at the behest of Father Patrick Murphy O'Connor and a group of four members each from Winchester and Southampton Circles met to discuss what might be done to try to assist in the re-entry of ex-prisoners into society. In due course, as the result of much effort, this led to the formation of the Society of St Dismas, based in Southampton. Money was raised in a number of ways and suitable houses and a small hostel were purchased.

Around the mid-sixties it was customary to hold three ladies nights during the year at various locations in and around Winchester, as well as an annual dinner dance held usually at the Potters Heron in conjunction with Southampton and various less formal events. Meetings continued at the Royal, which was considered the Circle's home, sometimes with dinner to follow, sometimes with a buffet. An annual Votive Mass was established on 13th November 1964. The Circle membership dropped to 26, no doubt due to the transfer of many Brothers to the new Basingstoke 'daughter' Circle, but was soon starting to recover.

Towards the end of the decade, with Circle membership into the forties, the venue for meetings moved to the Hampshire Club, at that time located in Southgate Street, a relaxed establishment specialising in deep armchairs and with its membership seemingly

dominated by retired judges. Balancing this somewhat refined ambience the practice of engaging other Circles in skittles matches at country hostelrys took root.

Around 1970, the 200th meeting having been passed, the social round really took off, with Ladies Nights at the Hampshire Club, West Tytherley, West Meon Hut and Romsey, together with a Christmas buffet dance at Ampfield and the annual joint dinner dance at the Polygon, Southampton, which attracted 224 people including 52 from Winchester. Visiting other Circles, golf and darts came to the fore about this time. In more serious vein a submission was prepared and a discussion held on ethical matters, including such topics as racialism, married priests and a perceived lack of communication from the Hierarchy on affairs of the Church.

In 1972 a Mass for deceased Brothers was established as an annual event. The first function at the new Wessex Hotel was held to entertain the clergy, ten of the latter attending. The dinner dance in Southampton that year was chiefly noteworthy for a speech by Winchester's mayor on the new pedestrian precinct and sewerage layout – which lasted at least three-quarters of an hour. After this incident interest in this function began to decline and in 1975 Winchester withdrew from participation in favour of an annual joint event with Basingstoke Circle. For a couple of years Circle meetings were held at the Winton Court Hotel, before returning to the Hampshire Club, at which point Winchester became a regular dining Circle. During this period much effort was employed to raise funds in response to an appeal to support the provision of a jumbulance to transport disabled people to Lourdes.

With the Hampshire Club premises due to close in 1977 meetings were moved to the City Tavern in Jewry Street – except for the Circle's Silver Jubilee meeting which, together with a banquet, was held at the Potters Heron and attended by the Grand President. In the following year the Circle moved to the Georgian Restaurant at 29 Jewry Street, which, in Archbishop King's time as Parish Priest, had been St Peter's presbytery. The situation and historical resonance helped to counterbalance certain practical shortcomings and the Circle continued to meet at the Georgian until 1988. Family parties ranged widely – even as far as the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton – whilst more local activities included square dancing.

1979 saw John Blake as Provincial President. His official visit to his own Circle drew no less than 120 Brothers and their ladies – far more than expected – packing every square inch of the Georgian. Later the Circle provided ushers for the first generally publicised Mass to be held in Winchester Cathedral since the Reformation. Reg Williams, as the only Catholic member of the staff of Earl Mountbatten of Burma, stood in attendance at his lying in state in Romsey Abbey.

In 1980 the custom of inviting after-dinner talks by Circle members and others was revived, whilst social activities included a Glyndebourne opera evening and a visit to Circus Oz at Chichester. Hania Banyard led an informative tour of central Winchester. About this time the number of IBM personnel within the Circle had risen to six and was to remain at or just below that level until 1993. In the following year activities veered towards the bucolic with a visit to Bridgets experimental farm and a motorised treasure hunt in the Hampshire countryside.

In 1982 a series of country walks was initiated – and progressed from strength to strength thereafter, becoming a Winchester phenomenon. About this time an effort was

made to develop a more structured approach to welfare within the Circle's sphere of influence and a system of disseminating urgent information was devised and set in motion. Musical interests ranged from barber shop to Brahms, and in transportation from the Watercress Line to the Kennet and Avon Canal.

Christmas 1983 was celebrated at Bartley Lodge in the New Forest, during which guests were serenaded from the gallery by the Musetta Singers. Around this time particular effort was undertaken by certain members, and by the Circle through the Special Fund, in raising money for various charities.

In 1985 Canon France addressed the Circle on Catholics' attitude to work, unemployment and overemployment, and on another occasion led a Day of Recollection for the Circle at Medstead.

On 27th February 1987 the Circle's 400th meeting was held at the Guildhall and was attended by representatives of 22 Circles. Many of those present attended Mass in the Gardiner chantry of Winchester Cathedral the following day, which made a deep impression on the Grand Vice-President, among others. Later that year a squad of 16 members with civil engineering pretensions laboured for a weekend to build a ramp to improve Chris Hall's wheelchair facilities.

About this time the Circle had become the third largest in Province 11, with some 52 members having an average age of 53 years. John Blake was installed as Grand Director for the Province and a former Brother, Desmond Carter, was ordained priest. The social programme continued apace.

By 1988 it had become politic to leave the Georgian and find a new home. This led to the Circle meeting in no less than five different venues within a year. On one occasion the establishment concerned was found to have changed hands the previous day to become a Chinese restaurant and the new regime was unaware of the Circle's existence, let alone its booking. The ensuing proceedings were, as might be said, somewhat *ad hoc*, and gave the Vice-President, who was acting President for the first time that evening, an interesting initiation. From January 1989, however, the regular meetings and Circle dinners settled at the Wessex Hotel, in a spacious room having a splendid outlook to the Cathedral. Some doubts were expressed, particularly as to the greatly increased dining cost, but in practice it was found that, once the new venue was established and the value for money and the pleasant ambience became evident, attendance was greater than before. Function venues ranged, rather grandly after the transitional hiatus, from Winchester Guildhall to Rhinefield House.

Meanwhile Bill Howard had become President of Province 2, Ted Hogan was ordained Permanent Deacon and Frank Beresford-Jones walked from Land's End to John O'Groats raising £428.20 for the Great Ormond Street 'Wishing Well' Appeal of which £105.80 was contributed by Catenians.

Following all this excitement a period of relative calm ensued. The dominant event of 1990 was the sudden death, as victim of a storm, of Norman Marguerie who had just become Provincial Vice-President and had been very much at the centre of affairs both at Winchester and in Province. About this time a sumptuary scheme was adopted whereby Brothers wishing to participate could defray the cost by payment of monthly sums by standing order. Social events were mostly informal, ranging from a brewery visit to grand opera.

In memory of Alan Birtwistle the Circle provided two seats and a descriptive plaque for the new sanctuary window in St Edward's Church at Chandlers Ford. A Norman Marguerie Fund was set up which ultimately attracted £826.50 in aid of kitchen equipment for the Day Centre of the Society of St Dismas, contributed largely by Circle members but augmented from within the Province. In December 1990 the Circle said farewell to Canon France and in due course welcomed Canon Peter Doyle – son of John Doyle of Portsmouth Circle and brother of Chris Doyle of Macclesfield Circle – as Parish Priest of St Peter's. Some years later Canon Doyle was to become Bishop of Northampton.

About this time the Circle strength stood at around 50 members with an average attendance at Circle meetings of 27. The annual subscription was £75. Having voted to participate in the scheme whereby a Mass for Vocations would be arranged by each Circle on a different day of the year Winchester was allocated the first Friday in June. The July 1991 meeting was held jointly with Poole Circle, under way on Southampton Water, in the presence of Brother Grand President.

The first regular Mass for Vocations was held in June 1992 in the chapel of Tichborne House. Also in aid of vocations £300 was raised to complete the Circle's contribution to meeting the cost of a series of publications aimed at informing interested people of some aspects of vocational life. In November, with Brother Grand President in attendance, the 40th anniversary of the Circle was celebrated relatively informally. On the sporting field the Circle excelled at golf, winning both the Circle Cup and best individual score at the inter-Provincial meeting which was won by Province 11. The first of a series of skittles matches (thoroughly informal) with Basingstoke was indulged in. The ladies were treated to a talk on dreams and their significance and there were walks to north and south of Winchester, whilst to satisfy cultural aspirations a visit was paid to 'Coriolanus' at Chichester. A Circle tie was brought into being.

During the Catenian year 1993-94 the Circle raised from within its ranks the astonishing total of £2,336.17 for the Association Benevolent Fund, a figure which entitled claim to the Provincial Benevolent Cup and placed them fourth in order of contributions in the entire Association. Much of the sum accrued from individual donations and covenanted payments, but also more lightheartedly from a grand raffle held during a pre-Lent supper and musical soirée highlighting a french horn quartet of young musicians including Catherine Marchesi. As an encouragement to the oldies it was decided to reduce the subscriptions of over-80s and over-75s with very long membership – but with so youthful a Circle there were no immediate qualifiers and even Brother Treasurer was able to support the motion. The idea of an occasional dinner for past-presidents was revived, and nine of them, with their wives, sat down for a relaxed evening at the Royal. Circle membership reached 58 and a record 148 visits to other Circles were made during this year.

With 1994 seeing the 50th anniversary of D-Day a fascinating visit was paid to Southwick House and village where Operation Neptune had been planned and the order to go given by Eisenhower. A New Year walk from Abbotstone developed into a polar trek in blizzard conditions and the Benevolent Fund benefitted from a 'Light Literary Night' at the Royal. Joe Hayward was presented with two stoles on being ordained Permanent Deacon. Peter Finn produced a Circle Reference Book outlining 'all you need to know' about the mysterious workings of the Circle and also took over the role of *Catena*

correspondent with the result that Winchester affairs became news throughout the Association as never before. The custom of holding Council meetings at the homes of members continued, but at the invitation of Tony Smith several were held at the Royal Hotel, a facility much appreciated. During the year Bill Howard dreamed up and ran a scheme of infinite complexity known as 'Club 20', the rules fathomable only to himself, aimed at extracting money from Circle members to the benefit of the Benevolent Fund – and in due course must surely have inspired the National Lottery?

During the long hot summer of 1995 a number of lighthearted outings were arranged, including a tour of the Westgate area led by Hania Banyard, a visit to Newbury races, an 'Art in Action' day at Highclere Castle and a visit to Ian Balding's racing stables at Kingsclere. Harold Harris's daughter Jacqueline spent a Project Trust year teaching in Uganda assisted by a grant from the Catenian Bursary Fund, closely followed within the same scheme in South Africa by Rachel Whelan. The Christmas Dinner ladies evening was weaned away from the Circle meeting date and held in the Cathedral Refectory, enlivened by a weird financial quiz and some even weirder limericks.

On 3rd February 1996, 43 Winchester Brothers and 39 visiting Brothers representing 22 Circles and including Grand President John Fry, assembled in the lofty splendour of the Guildhall's King Charles Suite for the Circle's 500th Meeting, conducted with impeccable ceremony and exemplary dispatch in just 32 minutes. At the dinner 146 sat down in the King Alfred Hall; Circle guests included Bishop Crispian Hollis, the Mayor of Winchester, Gerald Malone MP, Canon Peter Doyle and Judge Martin Tucker, together with the Grand President, Grand Director and Provincial President. Speeches were kept within five minutes each – except for the reply by Brother Circle President David Platt who claimed his presidential rights and insisted on including extracts from a leaked draft of the Circle History. After dinner, the night being still young, the dance floor was well patronised, with the oldies who couldn't stand the noise retreating to the Abbey Bar, retained for this purpose. The evident success of the whole evening amply repaid the long and thorough planning involved and I believe it fair to say that the event underlined the Circle's maturity and confidence at this stage of its development.

It is perhaps appropriate to mention here the remarkable rapport which has existed throughout its history between the Circle and the priesthood of the Winchester Parish and Deanery. The active encouragement given to the Circle by Monsignor Mullarkey in early times continued unabated in the years of his successors. Circle members in their turn have given of their time and expertise in the service of the parishes, perhaps most notably in recent years in the management of the Winchester, Andover and Chandlers Ford parishes, and indeed extending this support in no small measure to the diocese. The latter phenomenon has evidently been observed elsewhere, giving rise in some quarters to an extension of the term 'Winchester mafia' – which earlier had attached to more domestic activities and one hopes is not to be interpreted too literally!

Sixth Hundred

Maintaining the Pace

Peter Finn donned the presidential mantle for 1996-97, finding the Circle in good heart and with the membership standing at an all time high of 62. On the subject of recorded statistics, members' ages, on average, apparently managed to leap from 54.90 to 56.09 during that year, thus beating normal *anno domini* by approximately two months. Circle meetings continued to be held at the Wessex, whilst meetings of Council took place at the Royal, courtesy of Tony Smith. 'Project 2008', a consultation exercise throughout the Association aimed at a comprehensive overhaul leading up to the centenary year, was launched by Head Office with a discussion document on ritual and regalia; the Circle's views on this subject were canvassed and recorded at a special meeting and duly submitted. In general, members considered many elements of the existing ritual to be archaic and much of the regalia unnecessary. Club 20 was by now in full operation and had raised some £600 for Benevolence, contributing in no small measure to Winchester's third place in the Association league table. Social events included a cricket and family day at Farleigh School, skittles with Basingstoke at the Cart and Horses and a cycle ride to the Bush at Ovington at which, regrettably, only five arrived – and a mere three by bike. The practice of inviting after-dinner speakers was continued, including Philip Ely, a past member of the Circle who had recently held the presidency of the Law Society. Having been a member of the Association for 30 years John Banyard presented a trophy to the Circle, to be awarded to a member at each meeting entirely at the discretion of the President. The first edition of this history of the Circle was put on sale at £2 a copy, the archive material on which it had been largely based being deposited in the Hampshire Record Office (ref. 2M97W).

Mark Jakeman succeeded to the chair for 1997-98. The annual Mass for Vocations was once more held in the chapel of Tichborne House and was celebrated by Father Paul Townsend. Little did we suspect that, eight years on, Father Paul was to become Parish Priest of Winchester. After an absence of 23 years in his native Scotland, Charles MacMahon was warmly welcomed back to the Circle. Outdoor events included a walk to Shawford on the May Bank Holiday and a barbecue.

1998-99 saw as President Bernard Whelan, who entertained us to a splendid 'President's Sunday' in glorious sunshine, in the spacious garden of his sister's home near Guildford. The occasion was further enhanced by a very rare visit from George Stirling, over from Ireland. The Mass for Vocations was held at St Edward's, Chandlers Ford. Social events included a barbecue and a quiz evening. Unhappily the Circle lost three members at the end of the year upon resignation and another three on transfer to Portsmouth including Bernard himself.

Harold Harris succeeded for 1999-2000, a year regarded by most as embracing the millennium. The Circle provided stewards for the Winchester Millennium Mass held on Christmas Eve in the specially erected 'big top'. As all who attended will remember, the spirit of St Swithun, perhaps, stirred abroad that night as the wind blew, the rain lashed down and the rising water threatened to engulf the tent. Happily, problems were

overcome, the Mass went ahead and all survived. In less tempestuous times several country walks were engaged in, and from March onwards John Perry undertook to organise and lead these on a regular monthly basis. From then on bands of Catenians, family and friends, would frequently be observed roaming the pathways of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. A 'pub of the month' idea was floated, but did not survive the test of time. It is difficult to believe that only the Circle's walkers are capable of working up a mid-day thirst, but there you are. Other activities included a canal voyage, a visit to the inimitable Watermill theatre for 'Irma la Douce' and a quiz with pizza and wine.

2000-01 saw Charles Walker as President, with the Circle having reverted to a more usual numerical strength of 49. Effort was made through the year to contact Circle widows and to ascertain what, if any, engagement with the Circle and its activities might be preferred. Responses, when forthcoming, were extremely varied, but it was clear that to carry out such an exercise from time to time was essential. John Murphy nobly undertook the task of Circle Secretary despite moving to faraway Christchurch. The Provincial Millennium Mass was held at St Peter's and was followed by a buffet lunch in the Milner Hall organised by Bob Curtis. A possible change of venue for Circle meetings was canvassed, but it was decided to stay at the Wessex. Out-of-Winchester events included a picnic at Farleigh School, another theatre trip to the Watermill and visits to the London Eye and to the Royal Armouries Museum at Fort Nelson. A quiz evening realised £182.29 for the Christian Blind Mission.

Allen Townsend took on the presidency for 2001-02 with membership having stabilised around the 50 mark. By this time consultation for the final section of Project 2008 was in progress, whilst in parallel discussion groups met twice and put forward suggested modifications (within the Association rules) to procedure aimed at streamlining our own Circle meetings. In due course these and other ideas were placed before the membership by Council, passed and put into action. A Sunday visit to the City of London included a glorious sung Mass (Gounod) at St Etheldreda's, followed by a themed walk in that area of the City. The first of many Vocations Masses was held at Farleigh School, celebrated by Father Simon Everson. Tony Smith expressed an interest in forming a Travel Club for weekend breaks; this was to become an established feature, thanks to Tony's hard work and initiative. A cheque for £250 was sent to the Across Trust in response to the jumble appeal. Visits were paid to a Shakespeare Evening at Wickham Vineyard, the Watermill, the Milestone Living History Museum at Basingstoke, 'Music in the Air' at Middle Wallop and the Winchester sewers. Country walks continued, but for a time were affected somewhat by foot-and-mouth restrictions.

President for 2002-03 was Peter Bolger. Within his year fell the Circle's 50th Anniversary, with 77 attending the relevant meeting at the Wessex, graced with a musical interlude involving Emma Shields. A very informative Circle website (www.wincats.org) was set up and diligently kept up to date by Tony Smith. More efforts were made to contact widows, but met with limited success. Leaflets were produced for handing to potential members. One highlight of the year was a Family Day hosted by Peter and Sue, and another was the Circle's Christmas Dinner, held in some splendour at the Ghurka Officers Mess. The main charity event was a ceilidh (Winchester style) in the Milner Hall. The Travel Club was launched with a party of 16 paying a visit to Graz for the Advent Market. The Mass for deceased Brothers continued to be celebrated by Father

MacAlinden at St Thomas More's Church at Weeke. Peter Finn's role as Catena correspondent was expanded to Publicity and Press Officer. The Watermill and 'Music in the Air' extended their popularity and a visit was paid to 'Tosca' at Southampton. With the re-opening of the countryside, walks were again becoming popular.

Danny Shields took over the presidency for 2003-04. It was unfortunate that he and his predecessor were faced with the task of dealing with a disciplinary procedure under the Rules of the Association involving a member who in the past had played a prominent part in both Circle and Provincial affairs. Suffice it to relate here that the matter was handled with scrupulous care by both Presidents and in Council, in the later stages also in consultation with Province. As regards more mundane matters it was realised that most members were equipped with e-mail facilities and it was therefore decided to issue circulars and minutes by this method – with a 'buddy' system operating for those not so equipped. Due to the peripatetic habits of the Circle Secretary and an increasing work load it was decided to appoint an assistant secretary and a minutes secretary. At Circle meetings a regular prayer for Brothers in Zimbabwe was initiated. In order to avoid clashing with Remembrance Sunday it was decided to move the annual Mass for deceased Brothers into the New Year. In August Roy and Mary Harmer introduced the more adventurous to croquet at Littleton, whilst in September a party visited the Houses of Parliament. Other events included 'The Messiah' at the Cathedral, a performance of 'Les Miserables' and reminiscences of Glenn Miller at the Theatre Royal. The Travel Club visited Salzburg.

President for 2004-05 was Tony Smith. The year embraced the Circle's 600th meeting and appropriately for Tony it was held at the Royal, with 35 Winchester and 34 visiting Brothers in attendance. The problems encountered during the previous two years having abated, some members of the Circle took an active interest in the workings of the Association Bursary and General Benevolent and Children's Funds, bearing in mind Winchester's contributions which were generally amongst the most generous in the Association. Meanwhile the President's Charity – the 'Make a Wish' Foundation – was well supported. Visits were many and various, including a voyage and folk evening aboard SS 'Shieldhall', trips to RHS Wisley, to the Overlord Tapestry and to Mottisfont for music by the Hampshire Youth Jazz Band plus fireworks and the film 'Chicago'; also to Winchester Cathedral for a tour followed by Evensong and again for a candlelit 'Messiah', and to the Theatre Royal for 'Carousel'. We lost to Basingstoke at ten pin bowling and the Travel Club went to Prague.

To be continued

Regular Preoccupations

Many of the Circle's activities occur with a frequency rendering them inappropriate for inclusion under specific years. Some of these – in no particular order – are as follows, with three of them described more fully thereafter:

Prayers – All members of the Circle who have died are prayed for by name at each Circle meeting, as are those who are currently sick and those of other circles who have died recently.

President's Sunday – An informal gathering, usually in early summer, at the invitation of the president, usually linked to a particular Sunday Mass.

Past President's Dinner – A relatively formal dinner held as an opportunity to thank the outgoing president for his work and leadership.

Visitors – Visiting other Circles on their meeting evenings, often to accompany and support the Circle president, is actively encouraged. Visitors from other Circles are welcomed.

Clergy Night – A relatively formal dinner to which the clergy – usually from parishes to which Circle members belong – are invited as guests.

John's Walks – Country walks organised by John Perry on a monthly basis for members, wives, families and friends, usually involving morning coffee and a pub lunch – 49 having taken place up to the date of the 600th meeting.

President's Charity – A charity nominated by the incoming president to which the proceeds of various raffles and events may, at his discretion, be donated during the year.

Dining – It has, since the early days, been customary for Winchester Circle members and visitors to dine together following each Circle meeting. Prospective members and other guests may be invited to join them at the discretion of the president.

Golf – Many Circle members who are keen golfers support and participate in Provincial and Association events as well as between themselves.

Council – Consists of the Circle officers, immediate past-president and a few elected and co-opted members, meeting usually monthly, responsible for running the Circle's affairs.

Travel Club – An informal arrangement whereby Circle members and their wives may, as a group, make arranged visits to places of interest overseas.

Three of the above have become established spontaneously within the Circle, have attracted their own devoted following, and therefore merit more detailed treatment within a history of the Circle. Much hard work and inspirational leadership has been provided by John Perry, Mark Herbich and Tony Smith respectively in relation to John's Walks, Golf, and Travel Club, and I am indebted to them for providing the information which follows.

John's Walks

John Perry first took Brothers and their families for walks in the Hampshire countryside near Winchester on Sunday afternoons in the 1980s. These walks were from Owslebury, when 16 or so people met at the Ship pub with John leading them on circular routes before and after lunch.

He restarted the walks in 2000 at Owlesbury when 16 or so people met at the Ship pub with John leading them on circular walks before and after lunch. At the time John was a New Forest Verderer and a number of Brothers and their wives wanted to see more of the Forest than the areas popular with holidaymakers and tourists, and persuaded him to concentrate on that area. Jim and Joan Crouch were two of the most persuasive, as Jim had family connections with the Forest and Joan was spending a lot of time researching his family history. In this year there were 12 days of walking, half of them on Sundays and the rest mid-week. On six of the days John took the walkers into the heart of the northern part of the Forest which is less frequented by visitors. Several of the walks started from Fritham, long recognised as the power base of the Commoners whose several thousand ponies and cattle graze the Forest. In August, on a walk from Fritham to Frogham, John led the walkers through a group of several hundred ponies and cattle resting in Latchmore Bottom – to the trepidation of certain participants. On some of the Forest walks large groups of deer were seen, and on one occasion a Brother's dog decided to put a group of deer to flight – only to be well outpaced. On a walk to the Beaulieu Road Inn the return path proved to be flooded in parts. Some took their footwear off and waded through, and – noble sight – the gallant leader carried a lady or two across the flooded areas. On average 12 people came on each of the walks.

In later years John has more often selected venues away from the Forest, widely across Hampshire and even on the Isle of Wight. A typical day has started in comfort by meeting at a suitable coffee shop or for coffee at a pub – just in case the weather be poor and a decision to call off the proceedings needed. In the event, however, only two walks have been cancelled due to bad weather. The morning walk has usually been of four or five miles, on a mixture of footpaths, bridleways and quiet roads, followed by lunch at a country pub where the walking group has often been joined by others of the Circle. After lunch there was usually a shorter afternoon walk, on a number of occasions finishing with tea at someone's home.

Sadly, in 2001 there were only three walks, mainly due to restrictions imposed by the Foot and Mouth outbreak nationwide.

In 2002 there were seven walks, mainly during the summer months, all but one on Sundays. On a hot day in July 19 people walked from the Hatchet Inn at Lower Chute and retired to the Crouch residence for very welcome afternoon tea. The number coming on the walks again averaged 12.

Activities were extended in 2003 to 15 walks, starting in January with a notable excursion from John's house to the Plough at Sparsholt in a snowstorm. It was in this year that the first overseas walk took place – taking the ferry from Lymington to Yarmouth and walking to Freshwater and back. Walks took place both on Sundays and mid-week.

By this time John was finding it increasingly difficult to find pubs that would welcome large groups on Sundays. In 2004, therefore, he rationalised the programme so that from then on walks always took place on the Wednesday after the Circle meeting and on Bank Holiday Mondays, with no walk in December.

In 2004 there were 11 walks with, on average, 17 people attending each. The greatest number, 26, walked from Romsey along the Test Way to the Duke's Head at Timsbury on Easter Monday. Unfortunately the pub had difficulty in coping with such a large number, resulting in a somewhat delayed lunch – and hence extended drinking time. A pleasant walk along the very edge of the river (happily no one fell in) in the afternoon largely made up for the delay.

By 2005 the average number attending reached 20 for the 13 walks undertaken. The best supported was one from the Yew Tree pub at Lower Wield when again 26 people participated. The second walk of that year was the fiftieth arranged by John since March 2000. To mark the occasion he was presented by the then President Tony Smith with a GPS personal navigator. Although John remains confident he knows the routes of all footpaths he uses for Catenian walks, thanks to his GPS there is now no argument with fellow walkers as to the length of each walk, the speed of walking and the time stopped admiring views and recovering breath.

Golf

The first golf match involving the Circle and which was recorded in its annals took place in November 1970, being against West Surrey. Almost a year later Winchester played against Isle of Wight Circle at Lee-on-the-Solent for the Provincial Challenge Cup; the Island team won. However, nothing daunted, Winchester played them again – and Basingstoke – at Osborne the following month. After this flurry of activity the records are unrevealing for some years, apart for a mention that Winchester won the team trophy at the 1981 Provincial autumn meeting.

In more recent years there has been a hard core of about 15 Brothers who play regularly – and others learning. Of these Brothers, most have tended to be members of the three local clubs: Royal Winchester, South Winchester and Hockley.

In 2003 a singles competition was started within the Circle, running throughout the summer with at least 14 Brothers taking part. Winners up to 2005 were Allen Townsend (twice) and John Marchesi.

Winchester Brothers have also been great supporters of the Province 11 Golfing Society which brings in Brothers from most Circles in the Province and meets five times a year, at different venues through the summer. Mark Herbich has been its secretary since 1996 and he, John Marchesi and Tony Smith have been its most successful players during recent years.

Travel Club

163 Travel Club was started in 2002 by Tony Smith, a local hotelier. The inaugural visit was to Graz in Austria to experience the Advent market and pre-Christmas atmosphere. Building on the success of the first visit Advent visits to Salzburg in Austria and to Lille in northern France and springtime visits to Prague and Budapest followed.

Visits to date have been of two and three nights duration staying in comfortable three and four star hotels and have followed a similar pattern; a guided walking tour soon after arrival, one or two group dinners with sufficient time left free for personal exploration and shopping. Participation is open to all Winchester Brothers and their wives and Circle widows. If space is available Brothers from other Circles and friends are very welcome.

Initially intended for “foreign” trips only, there was one notable exception when a group traveled to the Cotswolds to visit Highgrove, the home of HRH The Prince of Wales. Travelling by coach from Winchester they stopped en route for coffee and ended the day with an early private dinner at a nearby hostelry before returning home.