



Out of Africa

Grand Vice President's Visit to Zimbabwe

Catenians in Zimbabwe were very concerned when Grand President, John Clarke, decided not to undertake his Grand President's Tour of Africa due to the Human Rights situation in that country. Whilst acknowledging the truth of his concerns and welcoming Grand Council's recently adopted position on Human Rights, the consensus in Zimbabwean Circles had been that the benefits of such a visit to the Catenian family in Zimbabwe would far have outweighed the impact of a boycott which, in effect, would pass un-noticed by those at whom it was directed.

However the decision by Grand Council to send a smaller private group under Jim Kelly, Grand Vice President, was an outstanding success and perhaps, justified both points of view.



Clockwise from left: Malcolm Hollingworth, President Harare Circle, Dawn Hollingworth, GVP Jim Kelly, Althea Farren and Larry Farren, President Bulawayo Circle, Mrs and Kimon Ratopolous, President Harare North Circle and Barbara Kelly at the Harare Circle dinner.

And so it was that the three Circles of Zimbabwe, Bulawayo Circle 187, Harare Circle 188 and Harare North Circle 289 were delighted to welcome Grand Vice President Jim Kelly and his team in late September for a 10 day visit. The party comprised no fewer than five current and one past, members of Grand Council, and three accompanying wives. Included were Jim and Barbara Kelly, Chesterfield Circle, Jim and Anne Quinn Droitwich Circle, Frank and Bebe Hinds Cheshire Circle, John Hall Cardiff Circle, Past Grand President Dick Jones Chester Circle.

Some would argue the best was saved until last when, 24 hours later, much to the surprise of the party, the visiting "circle" was completed by the unexpected arrival of John Fry Luton Circle and Milton Keynes Circle.

John, as organiser 'par excellence' of this and three previous trips to Zimbabwe, succumbed at the last minute to the pull of Africa, to partake in his fourth Zimbabwe tour much to the delight of his friends and hosts in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the

observation was made that John, on his fourth trip, and Dick Jones on his third, had attended more meetings than some of the locals!

With Harare Circle as official hosts and Secretary John Graham as organiser, the tour took its traditional itinerary to Bulawayo, Harare and Victoria Falls. The visitors were kept busy attending meetings of all three Circles: Bulawayo under President Larry Farren, Harare under President Malcolm Hollingworth and Harare North under President Kimon Raftopolous. The Harare Circles opted for separate gatherings so as to ensure maximum interaction with the visitors. At the well attended dinners which followed the formalities, Jim Kelly's message of solidarity and support was very well received whilst the inimitable Dick Jones, never short of a word or two, contributed

hugely to the success of the evenings with his eloquent and highly amusing presentations.

In a change from tradition, the visitors were 'home hosted' which provided far better opportunity for more personal contact and understanding of respective viewpoints. Without doubt the strategy was a success for those concerned. It is to be hoped that this contributed to an improved understanding of the true picture in Zimbabwe and the

strength and needs of the Brotherhood. With a similar objective Redemptorist, Fr Ronnie McAinsch, hosted the visitors on a tour of his parish of Tafara, a less privileged suburb of Harare, which provided, not only a brief insight into the huge problems he faces in his tireless work, but also into the way of life of so many in Africa.

Despite the demanding programme there was time for golf in Bulawayo and again in Harare where Circle 188 hosted the annual All Africa Golf Tournament. Representatives from all three Circles joined 5 overseas visitors in a field of 36 including 2 ladies on a very hot, dusty day at Ruwa Country Club just outside Harare. There was no serious challenge for Ryder Cup places, but Paul Hodgson of Circle 289 did well to win with 33 points whilst Bulawayo and Harare North Circles shared the team prize. The visitors were not to leave without a trophy as Dick Jones won the coveted Silver Badza (a traditional hoe, dubbed The All "Over" Africa Trophy), for the most golf and, we understand, would put this traditional African

farming implement to good use in a Welsh coal mine but will probably settle for a little gardening instead.

The tour concluded with a well attended Catenian Mass in the Chapel of Hartmann House, the primary sector of St George's College, Zimbabwe's oldest school started in Bulawayo by the Jesuits in 1896 and still going strong under their control. Its beautiful setting and that of Royal Harare Golf Club where breakfast followed, provided a fitting end to an excellent and enjoyable trip which left the visitors a little weary but, hopefully, better informed on Zimbabwe and the Brotherhood.

Kingsley Went, Harare North Circle

Southern Africa Visit 2004

The opportunity to host Grand Vice-President Jim Kelly and his party at the start of their Southern Africa Tour was one of immense pleasure and value to Johannesburg Circle. Only those of us who are a little outside the main stream can really appreciate the reinforcing of the links in the chain that take place from such visits. The split arrival flights provided the opportunity for our President to discuss Overseas Liaison Affairs with Director Jim Quinn. The delayed arrival of Jim Kelly and Party ensured that a somewhat weary Group were whisked away to meet their hosts and to rest up for the coming activities. It was also good to meet up again with Past Grand President Dick Jones who had led the last tour of Southern Africa.

The first evening saw a fully attended Circle meeting followed by a most enjoyable Ladies Night. The role played by the Ladies on the tour cannot be overstressed. They provide that important extra personal touch to the social activities.

The next two days were a whirl of going here and there; the visit to the lion park being of special interest. On the final evening a braai at the President's home provided the last chance to consolidate the knowing between us all. Grand Vice-President and Barbara must have been pleased that they were *in situ* rather than having to travel back with their hosts as the rest had to do. Before returning to the UK, Grand Vice-President flew down to Cape Town to a meeting with the Bishop. From this meeting we have hopes that a Catenian Group might emerge. Thank you Brothers and Ladies - Jim and Barbara, Dick and John, Frank and Bebe together with Jim and Anne for your most welcome visit so truly appreciated.

George Matthews Johannesburg Circle

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