

# President's Weekend

## Windsor

**A wonderful weekend in Windsor organized by our President Bernard Nelligan  
and his wife Sue**



On 30th August, 51 brothers and ladies from Croydon Circle and 4 visiting couples enjoyed a weekend together in Royal Windsor.

On arrival at the Royal Adelaide Hotel, an historic property dating back to the 1800s, there was a tangible air of excitement as we looked forward to enjoying the company of our fellow Catenians over the next couple of days. The mood was that of arriving at an elegant private house party, as Bernard and Sue had arranged for us to have the entire hotel all to ourselves. It was a perfect venue for a Catenian weekend. The hotel was situated a short stroll away from Windsor Castle and a stone's throw from the famous Long Walk.

The journey to Windsor was easy (either by car or train). After unpacking and settling into our comfortable rooms, many met in the art deco style bar, where we started off with a complimentary drink; others strolled into the town to explore our surroundings and catch a glimpse of our royal neighbours. A small group of us took a guided tour of Eton College, founded by Henry VI to provide a free education for 70 poor boys, known as King's Scholars.



Ironically, today's pupils can hardly be described as "poor", but there are still 70 King's Scholars each year who board in the old part of the school, known as College. The highlight of the tour was the Chapel (dedicated to the Virgin Mary) with its wall paintings, its fan vault ceiling and stained glass regarded as one of the masterpieces of modern stained-glass.



After our Friday afternoon activities, we assembled for pre-dinner drinks in the early evening and were warmly welcomed by Bernard. We enjoyed a delicious buffet supper which was followed by a quiz expertly hosted by Angus and Marian Hamilton. It was an absorbing quiz that was carefully structured to comprise a picture round (with a strong catholic



flavour) followed by three further rounds centered on Faith, Family and Friendship to reflect the core values of Catenian life. It was a fun, noisy and, at times, boisterous evening. Despite frequently ringing a little bell to maintain order, our Quiz Mistress almost lost her voice as the evening wore on and the competition intensified!

On Saturday morning, a few of our committed runners headed off to the Windsor Park Run. Most admirably, one of our longstanding brothers completed his very first park run (or was it a walk with a final sprint?) to loud cheers and a round of applause as he crossed the finishing line! The rest of us tucked into a wholesome breakfast, after the excitement of the previous night. There was ample choice from the breakfast buffet with an impressive menu of a variety of cooked options.

The planned activity on Saturday morning was to see the Changing of the Guards ceremony outside Windsor Castle. Unfortunately, this event was cancelled by the Welsh Guards because Extinction Rebellion had launched a weekend protest at Windsor.



Nevertheless, even though one of the most formidable regiments in the country decided to confine itself to barracks, the intrepid Croydon Catenians were not to be deterred by any protests. So, we set off on foot to explore the town of Windsor which was sunny and buzzing with activity. Some of us went on a scenic boat trip along the Thames, strikingly teeming with snow white swans; others indulged in a little retail therapy, and many sat back and enjoyed the coffee shops, tea houses and characterful public houses in the town and across the river in Eton.



After a light lunch, many of us met at the Queen Victoria Statute on Castle Hill to join a guided tour of Windsor Castle.

St George's Chapel, which has recently been the setting of Prince Harry and Meghan's wedding, and the funeral of Prince Phillip, was particularly memorable. It was a unique experience to walk up the Chapel steps and down the aisles, absorbing the atmosphere of the royal chapel we had glimpsed on our TV screens. The most poignant moment was seeing and paying our respects at



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's final resting place, a tombstone fashioned in black marble and set into the floor of the King George VI Memorial Chapel. We later walked through the banqueting and ceremonial rooms in the State Apartments with their priceless collections of art, admiring the finely decorated china and gold platters, which brought to life so many State banquets and royal events. After the tour, we

meandered back to the hotel for a refreshing cup of tea, some of us walking back along the majestic Long Walk.

Saturday evening's entertainment began as we all met in the Palm Court Lounge for a glass of Champagne and a fine selection of canapés. Bernard recounted the enjoyable events of the day in a speech interjected with a few quips from his witty wife Sue. The elegant Champagne drinks reception was followed by dinner in the Heritage dining room, where we enjoyed a 3-course



dinner with select wines. It was a most convivial evening with the sound of conversation and laughter coming from every table in the room. The conviviality continued well into the night with some retiring to the bar and others retiring to bed after a very full day!

On Sunday morning we checked out of our rooms and walked to the church of St. Edward & St. Mark; a beautiful church with a striking *redos* behind the altar and beautiful stained glass depicting various scenes from the New

Testament. We were warmly welcomed by the parish priest in a church full of parishioners. After Mass, some enjoyed a cup of coffee in the church hall, while others began their homeward journey after enjoying each other's company over a very relaxing weekend.

Our profound thanks go to Bernard and Sue for all their hard work in organizing an immensely enjoyable weekend and for their exceptional skill in creating a relaxed, informal and fun-loving atmosphere, which was one of the hallmarks of this special weekend.

*Terence de Souza*