
Obituary - Fergus Edmund O'Brien



Born on 29th October 1910 Fergus was one of nine children, and the seventh of eight boys. He was educated at Bowdon College, and married Cathleen Hardy (Cath) on October 1939 and in August 1940 their first child, Mary Theresa was born.

Fergus then joined the Army, (REME's) and in addition to his main duties became a motorcycle courier. In a bad accident he suffered a severe head and facial injury and was later diagnosed with MS and honourably discharged. After leaving the Army he joined the family business of H. F. O'Brien & Co Ltd, an oil packaging and processing company in Altrincham, which had been started by his father.

In his post-war years of 1942, 1947 and 1952 Fergus and Cath had three more children, Peter Catherine and Nicholas.

A significant milestone in Fergus's life came in 1954. Together with a few friends, he helped established the St Christopher's Trust, a charity which started Redcourt, a residential school and home for children and adults with Special Needs in Glossop, Derbyshire. This was of particular significance for Fergus and Cath as their daughter, Mary, had profound multiple learning difficulties. Mary spent many happy years in Redcourt following its completion. She died in February 1981, aged 40 years.

In 1958 Fergus became a founder member of the Catenian Circle in Knutsford and its President five years later whilst still being a member Of North Cheshire. Of course his Catenian background is, I believe, unbeatable. His father was the signatory on the original Chums Roll and his uncles were the 11th, 17th and 80th. Over the years, the 'second generation' of the O'Briens, Fergus and five brothers were members of No. 1 Circle, then founder members of North Cheshire and since they were all consummate musicians, the O'Brien's band was known

throughout the Province.

In his private life, Fergus always had an eye for an opportunity, and liked to have a sideline in addition to his work in the family business. These included a grocer'S Shop in Timperely, a garage in Mere as well as occasional, speculative dealings in the property market. After retirement from the family business he and Cath bought a motel in Harlech but the work was too great and they moved back to Cheshire.

In the late 1980s they moved down to Crowthorne, Berkshire, but ill health soon necessitated a move into a nursing home where the owner (being a close friend of Catherine's) looked after them as if they were her own family. Here they saw out their final years until they died within three weeks Of each other, Fergus on 290 December 1996 (aged 86), Cath on 17th January 1997 (aged 83).

MAY HE REST IN PEACE