What the Rotary Wheel Represents

A wheel has been the symbol of Rotary since our earliest days. The first design was a simple wagon wheel, with a few lines to show dust and motion. The wheel was said to illustrate “Civilization and Movement.” Most of the early Rotary clubs had wheel symbols on their publications and letterheads. In 1922, it was decided that all Rotary clubs adopt a single design as an exclusive emblem of Rotarians. Thus, in 1923, the present gear wheel, with 24 cogs and six spokes was adopted. A group of engineers advised that the geared wheel was mechanically unsound and would not work without a “keyway” in the center of the gear to attach it to a power shaft. So, in 1923, the keyway was added and the design which we now know was formally adopted as the Rotary International emblem.