

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AISLING SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

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The Annual General Meeting of the Aisling Society of Sydney was held in the Library of the Irish National Association Cultural Centre, 64 Devonshire Street, Sydney on Wednesday, 23rd February 1967 at 8 p.m. Election of Officers for 1967 resulted as follows :

PRESIDENT	--	MR. PHILIP LEE
VICE-PRESIDENTS	--	REV. F.X. O'BRIEN, S.J. MR. JAMES A. MEAGHER MR. VINCENT PIKE
HONORARY SECRETARY	--	MISS MARY M. HEGARTY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY	--	MISS MOYA BISHOP
HONORARY TREASURER	--	MR. BRENDAN O'CONNELL
COUNCIL	--	REV. MICHAEL J. O'SULLIVAN MRS. PAT LONGSTAFF MISS GWEN GILLIGAN REV. PATRICK O'ROURKE MR. WM. J.A. McSWEENEY MR. PATRICK CULLEN MRS. B. KINSELLA DR. PLUNKETT SWEENEY

The Annual Report and Hon. Treasurer's Statement were taken as read, all present having copies, and adopted. Rev. F.X. O'Brien, S.J. showed us some colour slides of his 1966 visit to Ireland.

St. Patrick's Day dinner at the "Alexis", Kingsford, was a most successful function. Eightythree members and friends were present, the guests of honour being Mr. Florence O'Riordan, First Secretary of the Irish Embassy, and Mrs. O'Riordan. Our President, Mr. Philip Lee, welcomed Mr. O'Riordan, who proposed "The Day We Celebrate" in felicitous terms. Mrs. Pat Longstaff arranged the musical programme, enjoyed by all.

In April the President, Mr. Philip Lee, gave us a talk on "Dublin Port, Past and Present;" in May there was a symposium on the Irish language, the principal speakers being Mr. Philip Lee, Rev. Michael J. O'Sullivan, Mrs. Patricia Vasey, Miss Mary M. Hegarty, Mr. John Reavey and Mr. Padraig Kehoe.

Mr. Padraig Kehoe addressed us in June on "A Practical Look at the Irish Economy", his very well-documented talk evoking a lively discussion. In the same month a cocktail party to farewell the Ambassador of Ireland, Dr. Eoin MacWhite, and Mrs. MacWhite, was held at the Wentworth Hotel.

At the July meeting Irish films were shown; and in the same month Mr. James A. Meagher, Vice-President and Mrs. Meagher entertained Padraig Colum, distinguished Irish poet and lecturer, at their home, members of Aisling Council being also invited.

Mr. Bernard Dowd addressed us in August on the life and times of Edward Butler, legal and political celebrity of Sydney a century ago. In October we had hoped to hear from Mr. Dermot Nolan, Irish Consul in Hong Kong, but troubles there cut short his leave. Instead films were shown, notably John Huston's "Return to the Island".

In November our Meeting took the form of a Musical Evening in honour of pianist Moya Bishop; other artists were Sean Gilroy, violinist, Pauline Lammey, soprano, and Tom Ahern, tenor. The annual harbour picnic (26th November) was well-attended and a very happy outing.

Members who were off to Ireland in 1967 for trips long or short were Dr. Katherine Hyndes, and Miss Peg Dunphy, Mrs. B. Kinsells, Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Fay, Rev. Michael J. O'Sullivan, Mr. and Mrs. David Litster, Messrs. Sean Gilroy, Brendan O'Connell, and Dermot McKeever. We enjoy hearing their travellers' tales.

We are glad to welcome 20 new members to the Aisling: Miss Mary Carey, Mr. Eddie Cottor, Mr. Patrick Doyle, Mrs. Ann Feely, Mr. Sean Gilroy, Miss Siobhan Harte, Mr. Padraig Kehoe, Mrs. Pauline Lammey, Mr. & Mrs. David Litster, Mr. John O'Toole, Mrs. E. Ryan, Mrs. M.R. Sheppard, Mr. Patrick Tierney, Mrs. Pat Vasey. Five are country members: Mr. John Aylmer, Mr. Christopher Aylmer, Rev. H. Quigley, Mr. Ralph Martin, and Mr. M. Boles, all from Orange and district. They are hopeful of forming an Orange Aisling branch.

We record with deep regret the deaths of Mr. Bill Dwyer and Mr. Jerry Tansey. Bill Dwyer, Secretary of the I.N.A. and a valued member of Aisling, was widely known and respected for his sterling character and quiet courtesy. Jerry Tansey's happy personality won him many friends. Both sadly missed.

Mr. Francis Evers, a councillor for several years, has left Sydney to take a French cultural scholarship in Paris; we wish him well in the world of theatre and literature.

A new venture attempted this year is the organising of an Aisling Group air tour to Ireland for six weeks (July-September, 1968). Interest has already been shown by several members, and enquiries from others are invited. (Ring 71-1475 or 28-4119).

We end by thanking all speakers and artists who have made our meetings instructive and enjoyable, with a special word for Sean Gilroy and the Irish Musicians' Club. We thank His Excellency Dr. Eoin MacWhite for his interest in this Society, and encouraging words of farewell. We welcome his successor, His Excellency Mr. Brian Durnin, and wish him a happy and fruitful sojourn in Australia.

Signed on behalf of the Council,

MARY M. HEGARTY,

HON. SECRETARY.