

The Irish Australian Aisling Society.

President

Rev. Fr. Patrick O'Rourke,
33 Oxford St,
Epping 2121.
Phone: 86 2853

Hon. Secretary

Mrs Anne Stevens,
27 Bay Rd,
Waverton 2060
Phone: 929 3584

Hon. Treasurer

Miss Maureen McLoughlin,
18 Robinson St,
Eastlakes 2018
Phone: 667 4179

Annual Report 1977

The Annual General Meeting of the Irish Australian Aisling Society was held in the Clubrooms, 150-152 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, on Wednesday 2nd March 1977, at 8 p.m. The election of officers for 1977 resulted as follows:

President: Rev. Fr Patrick O'Rourke

Hon. Secretary: Mrs Anne Stevens

Hon. Treasurer: Miss Maureen McLoughlin

Council: Mr Peter Abotomey

Miss Rosemary Nugent

Miss Dorothy Payten

Miss Gwen Gilligan

Mrs Joan Ward

Miss Carmel O'Connor

Vice-Presidents: Mr Vincent Pike (Life Vice-President)

Rev. Fr Michael O'Sullivan

Mr Brendon O'Connell

Dr Plunkett Sweeney

The Annual Report and the Hon. Treasurer's Statement were taken as read (All present having copies), and were adopted. The Annual General Meeting was then closed and was followed immediately by the monthly meeting, at which were shown films by courtesy of Miss Dorothy Payten, Irish Airlines, Sydney.

The twenty-third Annual St Patrick's Day Dinner was held at Kei-Ron, Waverley, on Sunday 20th March and was a well-attended and enjoyable function when 94 members and friends joined the President, Father Patrick O'Rourke, in honouring the Day. The special guest of the Society was the newly-consecrated Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, His Lordship Bishop Patrick Murphy, who proposed the toast "The Day we Celebrate" with some charming reminiscences of what he had been told as a young boy of his Irish heritage. His Lordship, Bishop David Cremin, replied on behalf of the Society thanking Bishop Murphy, and, as always, his witty and apposite remarks delighted his listeners. The President presented Bishop Murphy with a gift of books to mark his first visit to a function of the Society.

A presentation of a cheque was made by Fr Brendan Shiel to Fr Michael O'Sullivan on behalf of individual members of the Society, who wished to express to Fr O'Sullivan their appreciation of all the unselfish

effort, loyalty and support he has shown the Society over many years, as well as their congratulations on the 25th anniversary of his Ordination. The gift of a gold pen was made to the Treasurer, Miss Maureen McLoughlin, on behalf of members by Mr Vincent Pike. With it went best wishes for a happy and well deserved overseas holiday.

In April, the Society was privileged to hear the eminent critic and author, and Deputy-General Manager of the A.B.C., Dr Clement Semmler, speak on the subject, "Brian O'Nolan and His Place in Irish Literature". This was one of the most enjoyable and most appreciated addresses the Society has heard in recent years, given in a relaxed and informal style, yet crammed with scholarship, wit and a great deal of good fun.

In May, Mr Peter Abotomey spoke to us about the charming and remarkable works of that engaging pair of Irish authors, "Somerville and Ross". In a most enjoyable talk Mr Abotomey was able to convey to his listeners so much of the delicious flavour of these works, with their marvellous portrayal of Ascendancy life, that many of us rushed home to dust off "Experiences of an Irish R.M.", or resolved to beg, borrow or steal the desired treasure.

Mrs Joan Ward gave a tremendously interesting talk in June on the subject, "The Islands of Ireland". Few of us had any idea of the number of these islands and of the richness and diversity of their history and culture, extending as they do back into neolithic times. This was an exceedingly well-researched talk, with solid fact skilfully interwoven with myth and romance, and not a little humour. Did you know Robert Bruce's spider was Irish before this talk? (Be honest!)

In July, Mrs Maureen Whelan, of the Dwyer-Cuddy School of Irish Dancing, gave a most detailed and interesting description of Traditional Irish Dance and how this has altered since the 1950's. These changes in steps and technique were demonstrated by a group of her colourfully costumed and talented pupils.

No meeting was held in August as our scheduled speaker, Mr Philip Lee, who was to talk on the subject "Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu", was called to Ireland unexpectedly on family business. Mr Lee has agreed to give the talk in 1978. We look forward to hearing the story of the man responsible for some of the eeriest stories in the English language.

In September, Father Michael O'Sullivan gave us one of his most delightful talks - and there have been many of them - this one "Recent Sailing in Ireland". Father O'Sullivan, schoolfriends Henry and Paschal, and the 83 year old Elsie (a yacht) made an unbeatable combination, whether scouring the Cork coast for mackerel, or coming in first in the annual Cork to Kinsale Ocean Race. We thoroughly enjoyed the marvellous photography of some of Ireland's most beautiful scenes as Elsie and friends skimmed along with all the panache of the Corsair and none of the ill-luck of Wolfe Tone in the same waters.

Our last talk for the year was in November when Rabbi Michael Alony, of the Sydney Central Synagogue, spoke on "Human Rights and Human Duties". Irish born and the son of the Chief Rabbi of Dublin, Rabbi Alony asked the question what Judaism could offer the present-day world when we define our imperatives in terms of rights - human, legal, constitutional, etc. He suggested an answer may lie in looking at the problem from the Jewish point of view - there is no word for rights in Hebrew. The Rabbi stressed duties not rights - rich to poor, have to have none. "Forget our rights and assert our duties." This was a stimulating and provocative talk, which aroused much interest in the members privileged to hear it.

The annual Christmas Party held at Kei-Ron on 27th November 1977 ended the Aisling Society year on a happy note; 55 members and friends joined Father O'Rourke for a buffet dinner, which was well up to the high standard of food and service we have experienced so many times at Kei-Ron.

Welcome new members this year are:

Mrs Pauline Littlefair
 Mrs Kathleen Strano
 Mr Tom Capplis
 Mr Peter Gray
 Miss Fay Doherty
 Mr & Mrs Kevin Murphy
 Mr & Mrs Walter Ryan
 Mr & Mrs John Ryan
 Dr & Mrs Michael Ryan
 Mr & Mrs Peter Ryan
 Mr & Mrs Patrick Ryan
 Rev. Fr John McSweeney

We very much regret the resignation, due to ill-health, of Miss Mildred O'Connor, a Foundation Member of the Society, and send best wishes to her from all in the Society.

The current financial membership stands at 58 members.

We record with great regret the death, in August, of Miss Clare Walsh, a long-time member of the Society and extend our very sincere sympathy to her sister, Mrs Catherine Bailey. We wish to express sympathy with our President, Father O'Rourke, on the recent death of his father in Ireland, and to Mrs Moya Lichtenbergers (nee Bishop) on the death of her husband.

Our thoughts are also with Miss Elizabeth O'Connor, a valued and long-time member of the Society and a constant attender at meetings. She has not been able to come recently because of ill-health. We send our best wishes. Mrs Avril Walder and Mrs John Harris have both spent time in hospital during 1977. We hope that 1978 will bring them both renewed and continued good health.

We would like to wish Mr and Mrs Angel much happiness in their marriage. Members knew Mrs Angel previously as Mary Leahy.

We congratulate Fr Michael O'Sullivan on the 25th anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. We would also like to thank Father O'Sullivan, who for the past 18 months has seen to the printing of the monthly notices and various reports. In so doing, he has contributed very considerably to conserving the funds of the Society, previously spent on printing, but, of course, at the cost of his own valuable time. Father O'Sullivan also stepped in at a moment's notice to give the talk at our September Meeting. For these things and his continued support we express our thanks.

Our sincere thanks once again to Mr Senan Ryan, who has been our Honorary Auditor for many years.

We would also like to thank the Knights of the Southern Cross for the courtesy and helpfulness they have shown to us over the past year.

One of the world's foremost scholars of Irish and Irish-Australian history, Professor Patrick O'Farrell, of the University of N.S.W., who has given the Society several brilliant lectures in recent years, and who had agreed to give our September talk, was unfortunately taken ill at that time and confined to hospital. In spite of that, Professor O'Farrell wrote to the Society to say how much he regretted being unable to fulfil the commitment and showed concern that he had been able to give us little time to find a replacement speaker. He hoped that we would ask him again at a future date.

We have always considered it a great honour to have Professor O'Farrell address us and the Council knows that all the members of the Society will join with them in sending our very best wishes to Professor O'Farrell and our sincerely felt hope that 1978 will see him fully restored to good health.

One of our most valued and faithful members, Mr Peter Abotomey, member of Council, has recently left Wollongong University, where he has been lecturing in English Literature, and will be spending this year travelling. Peter has given us great support by his constant attendance, never missing a meeting since he joined the Society in 1975, although each attendance involved a train trip from Wollongong and back. He has enhanced our meetings by his knowledge and insight, by his humour and friendliness. His talk on "Somerville and Ross" was surely one of the best addresses the Society has heard and very much enjoyed. We wish Peter well and hope wherever he settles will be within commuting distance of Sydney - a hope doubtless shared with equal fervour by the New South Wales Railways.

To all our speakers, who have done so much to make our meetings enjoyable and informative, we send our sincere thanks.

Signed on behalf of the Council

Anne Steiner
Hon Secretary

THE IRISH AUSTRALIAN AISLING SOCIETY.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1977.

<u>RECEIPTS.</u>	<u>LAST YEAR.</u>	<u>THIS YEAR.</u>	<u>PAYMENTS.</u>	<u>LAST YEAR.</u>	<u>THIS YEAR.</u>
Opening Balance	40.40	63.58	Postage	151.65	148.00
Subscriptions Received	424.50	436.50	Subscriptions O/Paid Refunded	-	4.00
Subscriptions in Advance	-	63.00	Rent of Rooms	80.00	80.00
Interest Received	3.54	3.26	Flowers for Sick Members	34.35	42.00
Suppers	51.90	32.28	Suppers	73.20	63.00
Donations	48.00	14.00	Secretarial Fees	30.00	30.00
Proceeds of raffles	130.85	135.65	Cost of raffles	67.60	8.20
St. Patrick's Night Dinner	840.00	1,162.50	Cost of St. Patrick's Night Dinner	817.00	1,143.50
Christmas Party	405.00	715.00	Cost of Christmas Party	407.00	687.50
			Gifts for Guest Speakers - Hon. Treasurer	8.95	109.28
			Stationery	12.93	24.68
			Donation Bishop Daly's Gift	20.00	-
			Wreaths for Deceased Members	20.00	-
			Phone Calls	2.00	-
			Printing	155.93	70.95
			Cartage	-	3.00
			Closing Balance	63.58	211.66
	<u>\$1,944.19</u>	<u>\$2,625.77</u>		<u>\$1,944.19</u>	<u>\$2,625.77</u>

HON. TREASURER:

Maureen Mc Loughlin.

AUDITOR'S REPORT:

The above Statement of Receipts and Payments is in my opinion a correct statement according to the books.

27th January, 1978.

SENAN J. RYAN, F.C.A.

Registered under the Public Accountants'
Registration Act, 1945, as amended.