



The Aisling Society
of Sydney

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1994

THE COUNCIL OF THE AISLING SOCIETY 1994

PRESIDENT
LIFE VICE-PRESIDENTS

VICE PRESIDENTS

HON. SECRETARY

HON TREASURER
ARCHIVIST/LIBRARIAN
PUBLICITY OFFICER

COUNCILLORS

HON AUDITOR

MR JOHN RYAN
FR PATRICK O'ROURKE
MR VINCENT PIKE.
MR PHILIP LEE,
MRS ANNE STEVENS
MRS MARY LEE
MRS JOAN WARD
(deceased 26 April 1994)
MRS MARY DYNAN
(from May 1994)
MISS MAUREEN McLOUGHLIN
MR PETER GRAY
PROFESSOR COLM KIERNAN
(resigned November 1994)
MRS EVE ROSS
MR DAVID VAUGHAN
MRS TRUDI O NEIL
MRS MARY O CONNELL
(resigned June 1994)
MR PETER MOORE.
MR BRENDAN O CONNELL

Mrs Eve Ross continued to act in an unofficial capacity as Minutes Secretary which is very much appreciated

MEMBERSHIP

The Society has 95 financial members and 4 honorary life members. Two University prize winners were honorary members in 1994. New members welcomed in 1994 were Miss Sandra Coogan, Professor Oliver MacDonagh, Mrs Marilyn Kelly and Mrs Judy Murray. A list of members is attached to this report.

OBITUARY

Members of the Society were shocked and saddened by the sudden death on 26 April 1994 of Mrs Joan Ward. Joan was an outstanding contributor to the Society. As a foundation member and as its indefatigable secretary for seventeen years she was an inspiration to the members. In the words of the tribute to her prepared by Mr Peter Gray, her nephew and a council member, which was circulated in May, "She sought out new members and made them unfailingly welcome; she procured the talents of an endless line of interesting and often very distinguished speakers; she did the lion's share of the work of organising the Society's social affairs, with flair and imagination and meticulous attention to detail; above all she ensured that in both conception and execution, the activities of the Aisling Society were to be measured against no other bench mark than that of uncompromising excellence. It is a legacy of which her family, and the Society may be justly proud."

The Council of the Society at a special meeting on 2 May 1994 passed the following resolution: "That the Society expresses its deep sorrow at the death of its long serving Secretary and Life member, Mrs Joan Ward, on 26 April 1994, and records its heartfelt appreciation of the sterling work performed by Mrs Ward on behalf of the Society over many years as Secretary, as member and as loyal friend."

A large number of members attended Joan's funeral at St. Patrick's Church, Summer Hill on 29 April. Fr Jim McLaren officiated and Mr Peter Gray spoke movingly about Joan's life. The Embassy was represented at the funeral, as well as other Irish associations such as the Irish National Association and the Kerry Men's Association.

Joan Ward Memorial Address

The Council has also decided that the annual talk to be given at the Mid Year Luncheon should be designated the Joan Ward Memorial Address.

Bequest

A bequest of \$1000 was left to the Society in Joan's will. This will be dedicated to a specific function rather than being put into general revenue.

EVENTS DURING THE YEAR IN WHICH MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY PARTICIPATED

- St Patrick's Day Parade: In 1994, as on previous occasions, Mr Pat Costello, President of the Kerry Association, very kindly lent his utility to be the 'Aisling Car' in the Parade. It was driven by Mr James Costello. Our Treasurer, Maureen McLoughlin, organised the decoration of the car. In 1994 the Aisling Society donated \$150 to the Parade Committee, and also gave \$100 to the Irish Week Committee on which Mrs Kath Stewart was the Aisling Society representative
- Bloomsday. Many of the members were present at the all-day readings at the State Library, and at the readings by Aisteoiri at the Thurles Castle Hotel, as well as talks given by Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien at the Queen Victoria Building and the University of New South Wales. The Aisling Society donated \$200 to the Joyce Foundation towards these celebrations.
- Several functions of the Celtic Foundation, particularly their magnificent Celtic Banquet hosted by the Minister for Ethnic Affairs, Mr Michael Photios, held at Parliament House Sydney in November.
- Victor Couch Lecture, Australian Catholic University. In October, Aisling Society member Professor Oliver MacDonagh gave a very important talk entitled *Why Irish History for Australians?* A large number of members were in attendance

- The visit of an Taoiseach, Mr Albert Reynolds. The Aisling Society was represented at the Reception held at the Regent Hotel. The President Mr John Ryan was also present at the State Dinner at Parliament House Canberra and some members also attended the NSW State Dinner at the Australian Museum.
- Seamus Heaney. A poetry reading at Elizabeth Bay House was organised by our member Mrs Mary O Connell in her capacity as President of the W B Yeats Society. This event was greatly enjoyed by all present. The vote of thanks by Professor Muredach Dynan also an Aisling member was given particular piquancy by the fact that he and Seamus Heaney had been at Queen's University Belfast together and had worked together in St Joseph's College of Education in Belfast at a formative stage in their two careers.
- The launch in November of a new book by Aisling member Professor Patrick O Farrell entitled *Through Irish Eyes*
- Vice President Mrs Anne Stevens made her annual appeal for funds for the Michael Collins Foundation. She was able to send a cheque for £300 to the organisers in Dublin. She expresses her gratitude to Aisling members who contributed.
- The Society entertained Mr Joe O Sullivan, the Secretary of the Australian Irish Heritage Society from Perth. Mr O Sullivan has hopes that his society and ours might engage in some joint projects. He assured people of a welcome should they visit Western Australia. A group of members also entertained Mr Fergus McGuinness of the Garda Siochana who was here to organise the visit of members of that force for St Patrick's Day. It is hoped that a group of them will join the Aisling Society for the St Patrick's Day Dinner.
- Masses: Aisling members, particularly Bishop David Cremin, Fr Michael O'Sullivan and Fr Brendan Sheil were very involved in the Irish language Mass on 23 September, the Mass televised to Ireland on Christmas Day and the Scots Gaelic Mass held to celebrate the Beatification of Mary MacKillop. Other members contributed to the music and other organisational aspects. Congratulations are due to Fr Michael for the Celtic Honour bestowed on him during the year.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1994 Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 23 February

The Annual Report for 1993 was presented by Mrs Joan Ward, who was commended by the President for her excellent presentation and also for the quality of the speakers during the year. Miss Maureen McLoughlin tabled the Treasurer's report which is record of a healthy financial situation. The President thanked her for the diligence and expertise with which she carries out her duties. Both these reports were ACCEPTED.

An Election of Office-Bearers was held.

ORDINARY MEETINGS

FEBRUARY The February Ordinary Meeting followed on the Annual General Meeting and consisted of general business and correspondence only.

APRIL Despite the fact that he and the other members were shocked by the death of Joan Ward the previous evening **Mr Peter Moore** delivered a very interesting talk entitled '*Free and Independent*'- *Leaves from Irish Newspapers of the 1830s* which he dedicated to Joan. Peter's knowledge of the topic and the skill with which he exposed the propaganda aspect of newspapers led to lively discussion.

The President John Ryan paid tribute to Joan and called for a minute's silence.

MAY Aisling member **Mr Philip Lee** presented another of his inimitable talks this time on *Irish Ghost Stories*. The talk which was put together as a result of request from Joan Ward that he share his personal experience of

events of a supernatural kind almost managed to capture the spooky atmosphere of a ghost story telling session around a turf fire on a Hallowe'en night!

- JUNE** **Professor John Molony** from the Institute of Advanced Research at Australian Catholic University was our speaker in July. His topic was *Thomas Davis 1814 -1845 Irish Poet and Patriot*. Professor Molony shared some of the excitement of his original research in Dublin and the fortuitous coincidences that led to his findings. This together with his mixture of erudition and anecdote led to an enjoyable evening.
- AUGUST** **Dr Aedeen Cremin** spoke on *The Celts in Spain and Portugal* and brought first hand knowledge from her recent field trip to bear on a fascinating topic. The extent of the Celtic heritage in these countries was a revelation to many Aisling members. Dr Cremin presented the Society with a copy of her recently published book on the topic *The Celts in Europe*.
- SEPTEMBER** **Miss Rowena Finnane** who is a solicitor and also teaches in the Celtic Studies Department at the University of Sydney spoke on *The Legal Status of the Irish in Late Medieval Ireland*. The enduring importance of the Brehon law and the influence of oral tradition in reaching a proper understanding of the legal status of the Irish was the underlying point of the talk.
- OCTOBER** **Dr Andrew Korda** who was the Aisling Society Prize winner at Sydney University in 1992 addressed the questions- *Was Ireland a Colonial Society after 1603? What were the Major Problems which faced her Government and People?* Dr Korda, who is of Hungarian background, brought the impartial eye of a sympathetic outsider to the topic and presented an excellent talk.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

ST PATRICK'S DAY DINNER: The dinner on 18 March 1994 was held at a new venue, the Renaissance Hotel which was favourably commented on by the 87 guests who attended. After a welcome by President John Ryan the Irish and Australian National Anthems were sung, accompanied by Mrs Mary Dynan, and Fr Terry Goodall said Grace. At the conclusion of the meal Vice-President Mr Philip Lee read the message sent each year to Irish Embassies from Mrs Mary Robinson President of Ireland, and then proposed a toast 'To the day we celebrate'. The guest speaker for the evening was **Professor Patrick O Farrell**, no stranger to Aisling events. His theme was *The History of the Celebration of St Patrick's Day in Australia*. It was an apt subject and the speech was interesting, informative and enjoyable. The well-deserved vote of thanks was proposed by Sr Moira O Sullivan.

MID YEAR LUNCHEON: The Brennan Room at St John's College was again the venue for this enjoyable function which was attended by 72 people. Guests of honour were Mr Michael Lyons, Irish Australian of the Year for 1993 and his wife Celine and the 1994 Sydney Irish Rose of Tralee, Miss Geraldine Costello. Grace was said by Life Vice President Fr Patrick O Rourke. Our guest speaker was **Mr Paul King**, actor/director from Aistoiri Irish Theatre. He spoke about why Australian Theatre needs an Irish voice. Mrs Mary Lee (who was accompanied to the lunch by her sister, Sr Monica Devine, visiting from Africa) proposed the vote of thanks

CHRISTMAS PARTY: This pleasant and happy event was enjoyed by 60 Aisling members. The 3rd floor of the NSW Leagues Club had been specially decorated and the catering staff looked after us well. As last year Mary Dynan organised some entertainment, the

highlight of which was undoubtedly that provided by the talented students from the Jan Currie-Henderson School of Irish Dancing. Maureen McLoughlin again organised a beautiful Christmas cake. The president expressed thanks to all involved, and in particular thanked Mr Paul Yu, the Club Dining Room Manager and gave him a token of the Society's gratitude for his assistance over the year. The Society's year ended on a high note with this function.

AISLING SOCIETY PRIZES

In 1994, prizes of \$150 were offered to students from the University of New South Wales, the University of Sydney, the University of Wollongong, Macquarie University, the University of Western Sydney and Australian Catholic University. Prize winners whose names have been announced at the time of writing are

Macquarie University

Ms Kathryn Hilferty for a first year essay on whether politics first came to NSW with the arrival of the Irish

Australian Catholic University

Ms Helen Grainger for MA thesis entitled
'Who will write the Noble Story?' The Faith-Formed Women of John O'Brien's Poetry.

CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude this report on what has been happening in the Aisling Society during 1994 by wishing all members best wishes for the year ahead. I would like to thank particularly those who have helped me since I took over the Secretary's role in April, especially Miss Maureen McLoughlin and Mrs Eve Ross. .On behalf of the Society I would also like to expresses its deep gratitude to the NSW Leagues Club for giving us the free use of its Conference Floor for our Meetings. I am pleased to have been able to offer a service to the Society following Joan's death and can only wish everyone in the Aisling Society in its fortieth year *Go gcuire Dia an t-adh oraihh!*

115 St Georges Crescent
DRUMMOYNE 2047

Mary Dynan
HON SECRETARY

THE AISLING SOCIETY OF SYDNEY
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1994

Last Year

This Year
\$

INCOME

2575	Subscriptions Received	2450.00
5280	St. Patrick's night dinner	5220.00
2340	Mid Year Dinner	2970.00
1450	Christmas Party	1525.00
75	Donations Received	1050.00
182	Suppers	312.00
461	Interest Received	411.56
15	Sale of Aisling Cards	10.00
<u>12378</u>		

13948.56

LESS EXPENDITURE

180	Advertising	-
150	Aisling Prize - University N.S.W.	150.00
-	Aisling Prize - Macquarie University	150.00
150	Aisling Prize - Sydney University	-
150	Aisling Prize - Wollongong University	-
34	Bank Charges	34.72
4784	Cost of St. Patrick's night dinner	5086.25
2244	Cost of Mid Year Dinner	2892.50
1158	Cost of Christmas Party	1344.80
* 650	Donations	450.00
64	Entertainment distinguished guests	20.00
-	Flowers for sick members	58.00
251	Gifts for Guest Speakers	315.00
250	Honoraria	250.00
10	In Memoriam	101.15
122	Miscellaneous Expenses	109.95
797	Postage & Telephone	583.05
423	Printing & Stationery	638.80
525	Suppers	525.00
-	Aisling Prize - Aust. Catholic University	150.00

11942

12859.22

436

SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR

1089.34

9008

Surplus - Beginning of Year

9444.63

9445

SURPLUS AVAILABLE as at 31st December 1994

10533.97

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Donations

Irish Week	100.00
St. Patrick's Day Parade	150.00
James Joyce "Bloomsday"	200.00
	<u>\$450.00</u>

THE AISLING SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31st DECEMBER, 1994

Last Year
\$

This Year
\$

ACCUMULATED FUND:

9445

Balance of Fund - End of Year

10533.97

REPRESENTED BY:

CURRENT ASSETS

502
8000
500
9002

Cash at Bank
Interest Bearing Deposits
Prepayments

616.47
9000.00
500.00

10116.47

FIXED ASSETS

305
138
443

Filing Cabinet - at cost
Library - at cost

305.00
137.50

442.50

9445

TOTAL ASSETS

10558.97

LESS LIABILITIES

-

Subscriptions in Advance

25.00

-

TOTAL LIABILITIES

25.00

9445

NET ASSETS

10533.97

TREASURER'S STATEMENT

The accompanying Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet are true and correct.

Maureen Mc Loughlin F.N.I.A.
Honorary Treasurer

AUDITORS' REPORT:

The above balance sheet and the accompanying Income and Expenditure account for the year ends 31st December 1994 are in my opinion correct statement according to the books

Brendan P. O'Connell F.C.A.
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT