



The Aisling Society
of Sydney

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1998

THE COUNCIL OF THE AISLING SOCIETY 1998

PRESIDENT
LIFE VICE-PRESIDENTS

VICE PRESIDENTS

HON. SECRETARY
HON. TREASURER
ARCHIVIST/LIBRARIAN
PUBLICITY OFFICER
COUNCILLORS

HON. AUDITOR

MS EVE ROSS
FR PATRICK O'ROURKE
MR VINCENT PIKE
MR JOHN RYAN
MR PHILIP LEE
MRS MARY LEE
MR PETER GRAY
MISS MAUREEN McLOUGHLIN
MR PETER GRAY
DR MARIE LEECH
MR DAVID VAUGHAN
MRS AILSA HOBAN
MRS KATH STEWART
MR BRENDAN O'CONNELL
DR PETER KUCH
MR TOM POWER
MR BRENDAN O'CONNELL

Marie Leech also continued her invaluable work in an unofficial capacity as Minutes Secretary, which is very much appreciated.

MEMBERSHIP

The Society has 82 financial members and 5 honorary life members. 4 University prize winners were honorary members in 1998. New members welcomed in 1998 were Brian O'Neil and Peter Hoban.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1998 Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 25 February.

The Annual Report for 1997, which had been prepared by Mr Peter Gray and circulated to members beforehand, was presented. Miss Maureen McLoughlin tabled the Treasurer's report which disclosed that our financial situation continues to be healthy. The President, Ms Eve Ross, thanked Maureen for her continued hard work. Both these reports were ACCEPTED.

An Election of Office-Bearers was held, resulting as set out above.

ORDINARY MEETINGS

- FEBRUARY** The February Ordinary Meeting followed on the Annual General Meeting and consisted of general business and correspondence, followed by two special items, firstly an hilarious talk by **David Vaughan** on the subject of Golden Oldies Rugby Union in Ireland, and secondly the showing of a splendid video of the inauguration of President Mary McAleese.
- APRIL** **Ms Jenny Somers** presented a most interesting, thoroughly researched talk on Jack B. Yeats, the great painter and somewhat neglected brother of the celebrated poet.
- MAY** Our distinguished member, **Professor Muredach Dynan**, travelled from Brisbane to present a memorable talk, *"From '68 to '98: a personal perspective on the Irish peace agreement"*. This talk attracted a huge audience which was privileged to hear a spellbinding account, from a sometime participant, of the 30 years leading up to, and the factors which might enable the endurance of, the peace agreement, which was ratified by referendum only two days after Muredach's address.
- JUNE** **Father Michael O'Sullivan**, our former President and long time councillor, delivered as usual a splendid paper, particularly timely in this instance, on *"The 1798 Rising as depicted in the Waverley Cemetery memorial"*, illustrated with colour photographs taken in Sydney and Ireland.
- AUGUST** We were delighted to welcome **Professor A.M. Gibbs**, Professor of English in the School of English, Linguistics and Media at Macquarie University, who treated us to a wonderful evening with his Talk on *"Ascendancy Down Under: George Bernard Shaw's Irish and Australian relations"*.
- SEPTEMBER** **Billy Cantwell**, Editor of *The Irish Echo*, the Irish-Australian newspaper published fortnightly throughout Australia, presented an entertaining account of his experience in publishing an Irish newspaper in Australia, just as *The Irish Echo* celebrated the 10th anniversary of its foundation. It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening.
- OCTOBER** As the Sydney Olympics approached, **Belinda Wentworth Abel**, a descendant of D'Arcy Wentworth (Irish-born pioneer surgeon and magistrate, founding director of the Bank of New South Wales, father of William Charles Wentworth), presented a talk on her distinguished ancestor entitled *"D'Arcy Wentworth: Homebush - the beginning"*.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

ST PATRICK'S DAY DINNER: Our St Patrick's Day celebration was another resounding success, held again at the Renaissance Hotel. 150 members and their guests attended. The President, Eve Ross, welcomed the guests. The National Anthems of Ireland and Australia were sung to accompaniment by Caoimhe MacMillan. Grace was said by Fr Brendan Shiel and an excellent meal was enjoyed by all. Dr Brian Kennedy, the outstanding Irish Director of Australia's National Gallery, was our speaker for the evening, and he held our attention effortlessly with a lively and typically provocative discussion of the state of the arts and culture in Australia. An appreciative vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Aedeen Cremin.

MID YEAR LUNCHEON: This year the luncheon returned to Curzon Hall and was attended by 60 members and friends. Guests of honour were Professor Tony Gibbs and Mrs Gibbs. The fourth annual Joan Ward Memorial Address was delivered by Professor Jarlath Ronayne, Vice Chancellor of Victoria University. Jarlath presented a fascinating story of the amazing impact of 19th century graduates of Trinity College, Dublin on colonial Australian society, particularly in Victoria. The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Peter Kuch.

CHRISTMAS PARTY: This year's party was a memorable event, held at our new venue, The Bowlers' Club of New South Wales and attended by 78 members and friends. Mary O'Connell, ably assisted by Clare Dunne, Marie Leech and others, presented a feast of songs, poems and stories on the theme of "*An Irish Christmas*". There were readings from David Vaughan, Marie Leech, Clare Dunne, Brendan O'Connell and Peter Hoban, songs from Michael Reagan and a most stylish mise en scene created for the occasion. A splendid supper was served by the Club, and Maureen McLoughlin again produced a beautiful Christmas cake. In the absence of our President, Eve Ross, who was unfortunately unable to attend because of a family bereavement, David Vaughan ably chaired proceedings and made a short speech in which he expressed special thanks to Maureen McLoughlin for her organisation of the party.

AISLING SOCIETY MILESTONES IN 1998

- Sister Victoire Pearce celebrated the 50th anniversary of her profession in the Sisters of Charity in a ceremony on 2 August 1998 attended by many members.
- Dr Peter Kuch was honoured by an appointment as Head of the School of English, University of New South Wales.
- Eve Ross presented the 1998 Aisling Society Prize for Macquarie University to Kathleen Ford at the University's Prizegiving Ceremony.
- Tom Power and Ailsa Hoban represented the Society at the Sydney University Faculty of Arts Prizegiving when the Aisling Society Prize was presented to Mr Devadas Krishnadas.
- Peter Moore unfortunately has had to retire from the oral history project; Eve Ross and Peter Gray are arranging for the project to be continued under other hands.
- Reverend Father Patrick Fahy was appointed Provincial of the Augustinian Fathers in Australia.
- After more than 19 years association with the NSW Leagues Club, the Society has taken up residence for its monthly meetings at the Bowlers Club of New South Wales, at 95 York Street Sydney. Our parting from the Leagues Club was most amicable, and made with a good deal of regret. Extensive renovations at the Leagues Club and consequent uncertainty of tenure necessitated the move. The association had originally sprung from the fact that Laurie Ward, the husband of our long-time secretary Mrs Joan Ward, had been a distinguished Australian footballer, touring with the Kangaroos in 1934 and playing many Tests for Australia. Largely in deference to the memory of Laurie Ward, the Club had made available its facilities to us on very generous terms. Mr Rocky Massaria, Secretary-Manager of the Bowlers Club and his staff have already made us very welcome in our new surroundings, and we look forward to an equally long and harmonious association with the Bowlers Club.
- Dr Jack Best was awarded membership of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours.
- Mrs Anne Stevens and Sister Moira O'Sullivan, for different and compelling reasons, stepped down from membership of the Society's Council, after distinguished and lengthy service. We look forward to the day when they will be able to return to the Council.
- The Australian Dictionary of Biography sought, and was of course willingly provided with, information about James Anthony Meagher, one of our founders, for its forthcoming publication.
- Our long-time and much loved member, Agnes Baine, mother of our former President Tony, died in February. She was farewelled in a moving funeral attended by very large numbers of family, friends and admirers. Tony Baine gave a beautiful eulogy at the Requiem Mass. May she rest in peace.
- Stephanie Walker (nee Holmes), old friend of Maureen McLoughlin who has for many years played the national anthems at our St Patrick's Day dinners, suffered a terrible blow of the death of her baby daughter, Alice Margaret, in June 1998. We again express our deep sympathy to Stephanie and her family.

- Michael Lyons, presenter of the Sydney Irish radio program every Sunday morning on Radio 103.3 FM, kindly made available air time on a number of occasions to interview our Secretary, Peter Gray, about forthcoming Aisling meetings. In addition, Michael never fails to publicise the Society and its activities throughout the year.
- The *Irish Echo* gave extensive coverage in its pages both to Dr Kennedy's St Patrick's Day Dinner address and to Professor Dynan's Talk on the Anglo-Irish Peace Agreement.
- Bill Tanner, father-in-law of our President, Eve Ross, died in November 1998 and we again extend our sincere sympathy to his son Peter who is a frequent and welcome attender of our meetings and functions.

EVENTS DURING THE YEAR IN WHICH MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY PARTICIPATED

- Mary Lee and other dedicated colleagues have established the Committee for the Endowment of a Chair in Modern Irish Studies at the University of New South Wales. This is a wonderfully imaginative project and all congratulations are due to Mary. Dr Peter Kuch among others is on the Committee. The Inaugural Dinner of the Committee was held at the Roundhouse at the University on 2 November, and was supported by a large contingent from the Aisling Society.
- President Mary McAleese had a triumphant tour of Australia in August-September 1998. Numerous receptions and dinners were held for her throughout the country, including several in Sydney at all of which the Society was represented. One event had particular connection with one of our members, namely the dedication by the President of the Monument to Commemorate the Great Irish Famine, which has been commissioned and is to be erected in the grounds of the Hyde Park Barracks in Macquarie Street. Our member, Mr Tom Power, is the chairman of the committee responsible for this project and was the worthy recipient of a salutation from President McAleese at the unveiling of the foundation stone on 2 September 1998.
- Clare Dunne delivered the 1998 Mary Durack Memorial Lecture to the Australian Irish Heritage Association of Western Australia. Her topic was "*Mother Ireland Mother Earth*".
- Irish Ambassador Richard O'Brien spoke on "*Irish reconciliation and the European adventure*" as he delivered the Robert Schumann Lecture at the University of New South Wales on 9 May 1998.
- Bloomsday. This year's celebration featured a reading of all of "*Ulysses*" over the week from 9-16 June, and among other things a remarkable "*Bloom's Breakfast*" at Edna's Table Restaurant in Martin Place on the day itself - featuring "Inner Organs" served with Irish coffee and Jamesons whiskey. The Society again supported the James Joyce Foundation, which is responsible for the Bloomsday celebrations, with a donation of \$200.
- St Patrick's Day Parade: In 1998, Pat Curran and sundry Curran family members of all ages again decorated, drove and populated the 'Aisling Car' in the Parade. The Society again donated \$100 to the Parade Committee, and also gave \$100 to each of the Irish Week Committee and the Irish Week Mass Committee, on both of which Mrs Kath Stewart was the Aisling Society representative.

AISLING SOCIETY PRIZES

In 1998, 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 the Australian Catholic University. Prize winners whose names have been announced at the time of writing are:

Macquarie University	Ms Kathleen Ford
University of New South Wales	Mr J.L. Morton and Mr K.H. McPhail
University of Sydney	Mr Devadas Krishnadas

CONCLUSION

I would again like to thank the members of the Aisling Society for the honour they have given me by allowing me to serve as Secretary. I wish to thank also Eve Ross as President, Maureen McLoughlin, John Ryan and Marie Leech in particular, and all the Council members generally for the help and support which I have received during the year. Eve has now sadly come to the end of her three year term as President. She has been an ornament to the Society in the position, and we thank her for all she has done. I record also the Society's sincere thanks to the NSW Leagues Club (up to June) and to the Bowlers Club of NSW (from July onwards) for giving us such splendid assistance and co-operation in holding our meetings in their rooms. I look forward to another enjoyable and successful year in 1999.



Peter Gray
HON SECRETARY

THE AISLING SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31st December 1998

	1998 \$	1997 \$
<u>ACCUMULATED FUND:</u>		
Balance of Fund - End of Year	10,305.81	10,591.64
<u>REPRESENTED BY:</u>		
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Cash at Bank	863.31	1,199.14
Interest Bearing Deposits	9,000.00	9,000.00
	9,863.31	10,199.14
<u>FIXED ASSETS</u>		
Filing Cabinet - at cost	305.00	305.00
Library - at cost	137.50	137.50
	442.50	442.50
TOTAL ASSETS	10,305.81	10,641.64
<u>LESS LIABILITIES</u>		
Subscriptions in advance	-	50.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	-	50.00
<u>NET ASSETS</u>	<u>10,305.81</u>	<u>10,591.64</u>

TREASURER'S STATEMENT

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

Maureen McLoughlin
Maureen McLoughlin F.N.I.A.
Honorary Treasurer

AUDITOR'S REPORT:

The above balance sheet and the accompanying Income and Expenditure account for the year ended 31st December 1998 are in my opinion correct statements according to the books.

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

Brendan P. O'Connell

THE AISLING SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st December 1998

	1998 \$	1997 \$
<u>INCOME</u>		
Subscriptions Received	2,040.00	2,075.00
St. Patrick's night dinner	10,950.00	7,910.00
Mid Year Dinner	2,520.00	5,005.00
Christmas Party	1,900.00	1,125.00
Suppers	350.00	336.00
Interest Received	433.10	310.52
Sale of Aisling Cards	5.00	-
Raffle	695.00	-
	18,893.10	16,761.52
<u>LESS EXPENDITURE</u>		
Aisling Prize - University N.S.W.	300.00	300.00
Aisling Prize - Macquarie University	150.00	150.00
Aisling Prize - Sydney University	150.00	150.00
Bank Charges	46.43	36.77
Banner for Aisling Society	225.00	-
Cost - St. Patrick's night dinner	10,521.40	7,463.04
Travelling Costs-guest speaker	528.50	-
Cost of Mid Year Dinner	2,405.00	4,542.50
Cost of Christmas Party	1,580.00	1,076.45
Donations	500.00	550.00
Flowers	115.00	45.00
Gifts for Guest Speakers	445.85	377.86
In Memoriam	-	60.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	209.85	71.95
Postage & Telephone	489.65	619.90
Printing & Stationery	562.25	460.15
Suppers	950.00	600.00
	19,178.93	16,503.62
<u>SURPLUS (DEFICIENCY) FOR THE YEAR</u>	(285.83)	257.90
Surplus - Beginning of Year	10,591.64	10,333.74
<u>SURPLUS AVAILABLE as at 31st</u> <u>December 1998</u>	10,305.81	10,591.64