



**The Aisling Society
of Sydney**

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2000

THE COUNCIL OF THE AISLING SOCIETY 2000

PRESIDENT
LIFE VICE-PRESIDENTS

VICE PRESIDENTS

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

HON. AUDITOR

DR PETER KUCH
FR PATRICK O'ROURKE
MR VINCENT PIKE
MR JOHN RYAN
MS EVE ROSS
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
MR PHILIP LEE
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 71 financial members and 4 honorary life members. This year, for the first time in many years, there were no University prize winners. We welcomed Peter Tanner in 2000 as a new member.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2000 Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 23 February.

The Annual Report for 1999, which had been prepared by Peter Gray and circulated to members beforehand, was presented. Maureen McLoughlin tabled the Treasurer's report which disclosed that our financial situation continues to be healthy. The President, Peter Kuch, 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 an entertaining talk by **Peter Kuch** recounting some memorable moments from a career in the vales of academe.
- APRIL** **Fr John McSweeney** presented a memorable, bewitching Talk on "*John Joseph Therry: a Meddling Priest*". Fr McSweeney's book on the pioneering Fr Therry was published later in the year, as noted below.
- MAY** We were delighted to welcome **Tom Brady**, newly arrived Consul-General of Ireland, who gave us a thoughtful overview, from the perspective of a particularly well-informed and well-travelled observer, of Ireland's engagement with her European neighbours, entitled "*Ireland in Europe, and Europe in Ireland*".
- JUNE** **Professor Joan Kerr**, of the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research at the Australian National University, spoke to us about "*Irish Artists in Australia*", illustrating her Talk with a wealth of slides of the works of many of these little-known painters.
- AUGUST** **Frank Featherstone** enlivened his Talk on "*The Irish Brigade in the American Civil War*" with numerous carefully chosen excerpts from his own documentary film about the Civil War.
- SEPTEMBER** It was a tremendous pleasure to have with us **Maeliosa Stafford**, an accomplished man of the theatre in both Ireland and Australia, who gave us a spellbinding evening, filled with passion for literature, drama and life, with his thought-provoking Talk entitled "*Theatre Today – Ireland and Australia*".
- OCTOBER** **Jilli Streit**, having earned our gratitude for her enthusiasm, commitment and skill in compiling an oral history of the Society, revealed some of what she had unearthed with her Talk simply entitled "*The Making of an Oral History of the Aisling Society*".

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

ST PATRICK'S DAY DINNER:

Our St Patrick's Day celebration was a wonderful night, held in the Strangers' Dining Room at Parliament House, Macquarie Street. This proved a superb venue, thoroughly appreciated by the 108 members and their guests who attended. The President, Peter Kuch, welcomed the guests, who included Mr Tom Brady, Irish Consul-General, and our host Mr Johnno Johnson MLC. The National Anthems of Ireland and Australia were sung to accompaniment by Miriam Devitt. Grace was said by Sr Moira O'Sullivan, and an excellent meal was enjoyed by all. **Susan Ryan AO**, former Federal Cabinet Minister, was our speaker for the evening, and she gave us a warm and entertaining series of reflections on some of the massive changes which have taken place in both Ireland and Australia over the last twenty years. A stylish vote of thanks was proposed by Eve Ross.

MID YEAR LUNCHEON:

This year, for the second time, the venue for the luncheon was the Sydney Rowing Club at Abbotsford with its dramatic views of the Parramatta River. 57 members and their guests attended. **Trevor Waters**, heritage architect, delivered the sixth annual Joan Ward Memorial Address, entitled "*Building St Mary's Cathedral*." This was an absolute *tour de force*, which those present will long remember: laconically witty, packed with fascinating information about not only the recent addition of the impressive new spires (supervised by Trevor) but also the mighty history of the building over more than a century, and brilliantly illustrated with astutely selected slides. The vote of thanks was proposed by David Vaughan.

CHRISTMAS PARTY:

This year's party was a very happy event, held at a delightful new (for us) venue, The Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM) at the University of New South Wales, and attended by 57 members and friends. A splendid supper was served, and Maureen McLoughlin again produced a beautiful Christmas cake. Our President, Peter Kuch (in whose debt we are once again for arranging our use of the AGSM's facilities), ably chaired proceedings and made a short speech in which he elegantly captured some of the year's highlights.

AISLING SOCIETY MILESTONES IN 2000

- This year saw two successive and significant changes of venue for the Society. First, the Bowlers Club having become an uneconomic proposition for us, we found a temporary and very welcome home in May with our old friends at the Gaelic Club. Our most sincere thanks to Michael Moran of the Gaelic Club, and our own Sandra Coogan and Maureen McLoughlin, in particular, for their efforts in helping us make that move. Then, since June, we have been fortunate in being able to enjoy the marvelous facilities of the newly established Consulate-General of Ireland in their handsome rooms at 400 George Street. This time, particular thanks are due to our President Peter Kuch, and to Consul-General Tom Brady and Ruaidhri Dowling, for their assistance in making this move possible. Tom and Ruaidhri have been unstinting in their co-operation and welcome ever since, for which we are very grateful indeed. We hope and believe that we have now found our ideal base for many years to come, one where we will have every opportunity to develop and flourish.
- Brother Alan Bradstreet celebrated his Golden Jubilee, 50 years in the Christian Brothers Congregation.
- The Society ventured into cyberspace, first with its own email address (aisling@bigpond.net.au) and also by deciding to avail itself of the opportunities offered by a new website devoted to matters Celtic, namely "celtcity.com".
- Aedeen Cremin stepped down after 10 years as Director of the Celtic Studies Foundation at the University of Sydney. The Celtic communities are greatly in her debt and we wish her a very happy retirement.
- Ms Jilli Streit completed the long awaited oral history of the Society, and presented an absorbing Talk in November on the way in which the project took shape.
- David Vaughan was awarded an Australian Sports Medal for services to rugby refereeing in Australia, recognising his status (after 42 years and almost 600 matches!) as the longest-serving referee in New South Wales.
- Two long-standing members, Betty Gillies and Averil Walder, have suffered serious ill-health this year and are unable to join us for our gatherings, at least for the moment. We extend to each of them our warmest good wishes for their recovery.
- Four people very dear to the Society died during the year. They were Roma Drew, revered as one of our founders and also one of our honorary Life Members; Joe Connolly, a much loved member for some 25 years, who died suddenly on 23 June; May Teychenne, another member from the early days who died at a great age; and Paul Yu, who looked after us for so many years when we held our meetings and many of our social events at the NSW Leagues Club, and died early in the year after a long illness. May they rest in peace; we extend our deepest sympathy to the families of all three.
- The Council has decided that, from the beginning of 2001, **our monthly meetings will commence at 7.00 pm instead of 8.00 pm.** This change, it is hoped, will make it possible for more of our members to attend more of our meetings and still be home at a reasonable hour.

EVENTS DURING THE YEAR IN WHICH MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY PARTICIPATED

- St Patrick's Day: In 2000, Peter Gray and family, together with Marie Leech and family, and Peter Kuch, 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 St Patrick's Day Mass Committee, on both of which Mrs Kath Stewart was the Aisling Society representative.

- Fr John McSweeney's book, *"A Meddling Priest: John Joseph Therry"*, was launched by Irish Ambassador Richard O'Brien in the Crypt of St Mary's Cathedral on 10 August, with many Aisling members present to wish it and its author well.
- There were three Aisling tables (none the winner!) at the All-Ireland Trivia Quiz held at the Harp Irish Pub in Tempe on 5 October.
- In December a number of Aisling members supported a charity night at Harold Park Raceway in aid of the Irish Welfare Bureau.
- The Modern Irish Studies Program at UNSW presented a series of Workshops in October/November, the first of which incorporated a walking tour of Waverley cemetery and was led by our President Peter Kuch who spoke on "Irish Literature – Past and Present".
- The third annual dinner of the UNSW Chair of Modern Irish Studies Endowment Committee was held in November, again organised by the President of that Committee, Mary Lee, and well supported by Aisling members.
- The second annual dinner of the John Hubert Plunkett Society, also formed to support the establishment of the Chair of Modern Irish Studies at UNSW, was held at Parliament House on 2 July, the speaker being Sir Anthony Mason, former Chief Justice of Australia. Again, many Aisling members were there to enjoy the evening.
- Bloomsday. The Society again supported the James Joyce Foundation, which is responsible for the Bloomsday celebrations, with a donation of \$200.

AISLING SOCIETY PRIZES

In 2000, Prizes of \$150 were again 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. For the first time in many years, none of the Prizes was awarded in 2000.

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 Peter Kuch as President, Maureen McLoughlin, John Ryan, Eve Ross and Marie Leech in particular, and all the Council members generally for the help and support which I have received during the year. I record also the Society's sincere thanks to the Consulate-General of Ireland, especially Tom Brady and Ruaidhri Dowling, for giving us such splendid assistance and co-operation in holding our meetings in their new premises at 400 George Street. I look forward to another enjoyable and successful year in 2001.



Peter Gray
HON SECRETARY

THE AISLING SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2000

	2000 \$	1999 \$
<u>ACCUMULATED FUND:</u>		
Balance of Fund - End of Year	\$9,443.76	\$10,515.28
REPRESENTED BY:		
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Cash at Bank	1,036.26	1,142.78
Interest Bearing Deposits	8,000.00	9,000.00
	9,036.26	10,142.78
<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	9,478.76	10,585.28
<u>LESS LIABILITIES</u>		
Subscriptions in advance	35.00	70.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	35.00	70.00
<u>NET ASSETS</u>	\$9,443.76	\$10,515.28

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 2000 are in my opinion correct statements according to the books.

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

B P O'Connell

THE AISLING SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2000

	2000 \$	1999 \$
<u>INCOME</u>		
Subscriptions Received	2,520.00	2,480.00
St. Patrick's night dinner	8,320.00	6,525.00
Mid Year Dinner	2,800.00	3,040.00
Christmas Party	1,425.00	1,750.00
Interest Received	142.73	306.66
Sale of Aisling Cards	-	5.00
Raffle	990.00	546.75
	16,197.73	14,653.41
<u>LESS EXPENDITURE</u>		
Aisling Prize - University N.S.W.	-	300.00
Aisling Prize - Macquarie University	-	150.00
Bank Charges	34.60	17.38
Cost - St. Patrick's night dinner	7,366.00	6,217.00
Cost of Mid Year Dinner	2,688.80	3,014.00
Cost of Christmas Party	1,475.00	1,609.00
Donations	400.00	700.00
Gifts for Guest Speakers	338.65	321.35
Miscellaneous Expenses	519.05	66.34
Oral History Project	2,527.50	-
Postage & Telephone	599.75	562.05
Printing & Stationery	492.10	436.82
Suppers	827.80	1,050.00
	17,269.25	14,443.94
<u>SURPLUS (DEFICIENCY) FOR THE YEAR</u>	(1,071.52)	209.47
Surplus - Beginning of Year	10,515.28	10,305.81
<u>SURPLUS AVAILABLE as at 31st December</u> <u>2000</u>	\$9,443.76	\$10,515.28