

PAPER 1

EARLY IRISH ORGANISATIONS OF QUEENSLAND and THE QUEENSLAND IRISH ASSOCIATION

The subject of this paper has been listed as the Queensland Irish Association but it is intended also to discuss other early Irish organisations of Queensland with particular reference to those related to formation of the Queensland Irish Association. Information on this theme has progressively fragmented and is in danger of being totally lost. The Centenary of the Queensland Irish Association occurs in nine years' time and hopefully action to find and record information on these organisations now will enhance the accuracy of Association history when it is written.

May I say by way of introduction that the Annual Dinner of the Queensland Irish Association has attracted a wide cross-section of people since its inception and most if not all speakers feel that it is incumbent on them to commence in similar fashion. They seem to feel that it is necessary to indicate their Irish background as if to justify being called on to speak. In this vein I am reminded that Archbishop Rush, when welcoming President Hillery to Queensland, at a function in Tara House, indicated that his parents were both Irish born. The President felt constrained to reply in like vein, and in expressing his delight at the Archbishop's antecedents he indicated that his Grandparents were also Irish born, (to considerable applause) and (after a dramatic pause) on both sides.

Continuing this trend I merely indicate that seven of my Great Grandparents were Irish born and the other, I believe in N.S.W. of Irish parents.

EARLY IRISH ORGANISATIONS OF QUEENSLAND

The first Irish organisation of note after Queensland was proclaimed a colony was of course the Queensland Emigration Society. Many of you would be familiar with details of this organisation and I am sure that Fr Tom Boland is more so than most. Therefore I will not dwell on it at length but merely mention a few facts for

those who are not acquainted with it.

The Society was established in 1862 by Bishop Quinn to bring Irish emigrants to Queensland. Over the next three to four years the Society brought out some 4,000 people to the Colony. The figure was variously quoted between 3,000 and 7,000, depending on who was doing the counting and how they counted. This was a most significant addition to the population of the area, so significant in fact, that, after an enquiry by a Parliamentary Committee, the Society was closed down. (or more specially a change was made in the basis on which Land Orders were issued and resulted in dissolution of the Society.)

The next Association noted as being formed was the Irish National League. This had been founded in Sydney in 1864 and established in Brisbane in 1865. It is apparent that it did not meet with the approval of Bishop Quinn. He is quoted in the *Freeman's Journal* in March as objecting for a number of reasons but the major problem appears to have been that it was established without discussion with him and not subject to his control.

Next we have the formation of a Gympie Hibernian Society in 1868. There is a considerable amount of confusion between the Hibernian Society and the H.A.C.B.S. about this period. An "Historical Sketch of Gympie" published in 1927 states that the H.A.C.B.S. was formed in 1868 but this would seem to be inaccurate. To the best of my knowledge the H.A.C.B.S. was formed in Ballarat somewhere between 1868 and 1871, the first Queensland Branch was formed in Rockhampton in 1874 and a Toowoomba Branch in 1878.

It is probable that the Gympie Society either evolved into the H.A.C.B.S. or disappeared after its formation. Other newspaper reports record that the Gympie H.A.C.B.S. was inaugurated at a meeting in the Hibernian Hall on February 27th, 1881.

The formation of the next Association can be precisely documented. That is the St Patrick's Society in Toowoomba. Quite by chance I came across an entry in the index of the John Oxley Library Special Collections for the "Rules of the St Patrick's Society, Toowoomba Branch". Intrigued by the Branch notation I sought information on the parent body. There was no mention in the rules which however did note that the Branch was formed on 25/11/1871.

On the occasion of a visit to Toowoomba I consulted Br Ansell, the Diocesan Archivist at the time, to see if he could throw any light on the matter. Although able to provide considerable information about the Society in Victoria, including Ballarat,

and other places there was no information in the Diocesan Archives on the Toowoomba Society. He did however refer me to Mr Kevin Cronin, recently retired Secretary of the H.A.C.B.S. On a later visit to Toowoomba I found that Kevin had in his possession the original Minute Book of the Society, including the minutes of the eleven sessions it took to form the Society, together with the full minutes of the H.A.C.B.S. (These volumes have since been lodged in the Diocesan Archives.)

The St Patrick's Society was formally established on 25/11/1870 (not 1871 as noted in their rules). It was founded on the principle that it would be "A St Patrick's Society on the basis of that in Melbourne and that the said Society be independent and self-governing." It was essentially a Benefit Society and was transformed into the H.A.C.B.S., Toowoomba Branch in 1878,

The other Association of significance of that decade was the Hibernian Society of Queensland. Dr Ross Patrick is probably the resident expert on this subject as it was formed under the auspices of Kevin O'Doherty who has been the subject of considerable research by Dr Patrick. I will also return to this organisation in more detail.

In 1880 the first Branch of the Land League in Australia was founded and included John Flood, who had been transported as a Fenian, then residing in Gympie. In quick succession Branches were formed in Ipswich, Charters Towers, Warwick, Rockhampton and Brisbane.

In addition to these more formal Associations the Irish had a penchant for establishing Funds and Committees at the drop of a hat, and there seemed to be endless opportunities in view of the conditions existing in Ireland during this time.

On January 4th, 1880, an Irish Relief Fund was inaugurated in Brisbane, and when it closed six weeks later £1150 was transmitted to Dublin for relief of victims of whichever disaster was most significant at the time. The Archdiocesan Archives hold a typed copy of a press report of the final meeting of this fund.

In 1884/5, the precise date is a little difficult to determine but it is relevant to later events, the Brisbane Hurling Club was formed. Apart from the fact that they were operating about that time, that they co-operated in organising St Patrick's Day festivities in 1885 and that a hurling competition was still being conducted in 1910 for the Scanlan Cup, I have little information except for one specific item to which I will refer shortly.

In 1887 the Queensland Irish Volunteers were formed. I will also refer to them

later as they are central to the subject under discussion.

In 1898 the Queensland Irish Association was formed.

In August 1916 there was a very significant Relief Committee. For obvious reasons this was called the Central Dublin Relief Committee and it operated for about eighteen months. There are two interesting items about this group. Firstly the Honorary Secretary of the Appeal Committee was Mr P.J. Stephens (Founding Secretary of the Q.I.A.) and secondly the list of final contributors shows a donation from the Australian Irish Association (as a result of an Art Union and Euchre Tournament) but I have been unable to locate any other mention of this group. It is possible this latter Association was the forerunner of the Irish National Association, Queensland Branch which was established late in 1916.

In 1920 the League for Self-Determination in Ireland was started. We hold, in the Q.I.A. records a letter book from this group, not necessarily complete, but a useful reference. There is also a copy of a receipt for a contribution of 50 guineas from James Duhig so it apparent that he supported this group which was disbanded in 1925.

Moving away from the immediate Brisbane area an Irish Club was formed in Tully in 1920 and was active up to the 1960s. The few records I have located include a photograph in the Oxley Library of those attending the inaugural meeting. The Mt Isa Irish Club was formed in 1955 and the Darling Downs Irish Club in 1958. Both these Clubs are still active and own their own premises. The Mt Isa Club is regularly listed as one of the leading trading Clubs in the State.

The Gaelic Athletic Association was formed in Brisbane in 1973 and still holds regular sporting and social functions. Numerous other organisations have been established but have either disappeared or have a very low profile. Examples with a mainly social orientation include the Gaelic Association formed about 1970, St Brendan's League which operated in the Valley-New Farm area in the 50s and 60s and the Harp and Shamrock Club. Two organisations of relatively recent origin, with cultural claims, still operating are Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann and the Australian Irish Dancing Association.

It is not suggested that the foregoing is a complete list but it will give an indication of the number and diversity of organisations with an Irish background which have existed in this State.

The majority of organisations existing during last century co-operated with

one another. This is illustrated by a report in the *Australian* of March 23rd, 1889 concerning the St Patrick's Day Sports:

The procession was very imposing...it formed up in Elizabeth Street and marched along Elizabeth, George, Queen, Wickham and Brunswick Streets. It was headed by the band of the Brisbane Volunteers, then came the Irish Volunteers Band, the Pipers of the Queensland Scottish and Irish Volunteers Regiment. Next followed the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society, preceded by their splendid banner. Then came the members of the Hibernian Society, backed up by the City Band. Behind the Band marched the members of the Catholic Young Mens' Society.

The report continues on with details of the events and stated that the attendance was a highly satisfactory 9,000. In an era when a crowd of 1,500 at a Sheffield Shield match is considered satisfactory, this must be regarded as a very good turnout.

GENESIS OF THE QUEENSLAND IRISH ASSOCIATION

I would first like to elaborate a little about some of the organisations which have a direct connection with the formation of the Q.I.A.

The first is the Queensland Hibernian Society. An advertisement in the *Colonist* in August 1871 reported that a meeting held on August 23rd under the chairmanship of His Worship the Mayor decided to form the Society. Kevin O'Doherty was the President and the Vice-Presidents were Robert Travis Atkin and H.E. King (who was subsequently M.L.A. for the Wide Bay area.) The Treasurer was the Mayor, F. Murray Esq. and the Honorary Secretaries were Wm O'Carroll and J. Hayes. (Probably O'Carroll is the well-known name in early newspaper history).

A critical resolution adopted was "That the Hibernian Society of Queensland shall be open to ALL Irishmen or gentlemen of Irish parentage willing to submit to the rules of the Society and pay the stipulated subscription" (of course).

A fortnight after the inaugural meeting O'Doherty addressed a General Meeting and I would like to quote from his opening sentence, albeit a lengthy one.

Gentlemen, Many curious people outside have been, I understand, occupying themselves surmising the aims of this Queensland Hibernian Society of ours - some insisting that it is nothing else than a Fenian Association, whilst others will have it that it is intended to be used as an instrument by the Roman Catholic clergy for some of those dark purposes which are so frequently and stupidly credited to those reverend gentlemen; whilst again there are those who, seeing such staunch Protestant champions as my friends Messrs Atkin and King

elected as its Vice-Presidents, smell a far-off Protestant ascendancy in its councils; and amidst this conflict of opinion we cannot, I think, do better on this, the first auspicious occasion of our meeting, than endeavour to set at rest all such foolish surmises.

O'Doherty's stated aim was to organise the Irish to band together in one organisation irrespective of political or religious affiliation.

In January 1872 the *Colonist* stated that Toowoomba Branch is holding its inaugural meeting, "although only a fortnight old it already numbers 80 members. The Ipswich Society decided on Monday night to join their Brisbane fellow countrymen somewhere half-way between Brisbane and Ipswich on St Patrick's Day", each having chartered a boat for the occasion.

A sub-committee of the Brisbane group met to form a band and fourteen men and four boys offered their services while a Benefit Society of the Branch was in full working order. The Ipswich Branch was in process of forming a Benefit Branch with every prospect of success. Although in existence for less than six months the membership numbered nearly 500 members.

Confusion frequently arises between this Society and the H.A.C.B.S. The Queensland Hibernian Society was to continue on as a Benefit Society into this century when it appears to have withered away while the subsequently formed (at least in Queensland) H.A.C.B.S. continued on to the present day. (The *Brisbane Age* in its issue on May 27th, 1889, stated that the members of the former Hibernian Benefit Society were inducted as the St Mary's, South Brisbane Branch of the H.A.C.B.S.) The latter was a Catholic body which achieved a far higher profile with a much wider membership and a very prominent benefit role. Press and other reports frequently confuse the two and the indiscriminate use of the terms "Hibernians" easily leads to confusion on the part of any current day researcher.

The other significant organisation was the Queensland Irish Volunteers. It was the formation, or more correctly the dissolution of this organisation which was the trigger leading to the formation of the Queensland Irish Association. The history of the formation of the Volunteers is interesting in its own right.

QUEENSLAND IRISH VOLUNTEERS

In 1860, only three months after the proclamation of Queensland as a separate Colony, one of the perennial invasion scares arose. There was considerable talk of establishing militia, and after a meeting held by a group of Irishmen in 1862, twenty

men offered their services to form a Royal Irish Volunteers Corps. This was promptly rejected by the Government of the day, who probably considered it unwise to give Irishmen weapons, much less teach them how to use them.

Many groups were established over the next twenty years but in 1885, after a review of the almost non-existent Defence Forces of the Colony, it was determined that the Volunteer group should be formalised. The Queensland Volunteer Rifles was formed, followed by the Queensland Scottish Volunteers, which both quickly attracted considerable numbers. Then quite remarkably as the speed with which it occurred is almost mind-blowing, the Irish Volunteers was established.

A petition, organised by the Secretary of the Brisbane Hurling Club was submitted on February 18th 1887, to the Commandant of Volunteers, seeking the establishment of the Irish Volunteers, referred to the Governor on the 23rd, approved and gazetted on the 26th, and by March 18th three companies of the Queensland Irish Volunteers had been enrolled.

It is almost unbelievable that this could happen so quickly. However, happen it did, and I believe can be attributed to the fact that A.J. Thynne was a member of the Legislative Assembly, Commandant of the Volunteers and dyed in the wool Irishman.

H.E. King, whom I have already mentioned, was formally commissioned as Captain of A Company on 25/3/87; James Carroll, whose name will appear again later, was his Lieutenant. G.E. McFarlane was Captain of B Company with F.V. Murphy as Lieutenant. C Company was established a couple of weeks later with T.J. Byrnes, subsequently to become Premier, as the first Captain and S.R. O'Sullivan as one of his Lieutenants. It is unclear whether this is the same man but the Secretary of the Brisbane Hurling Club, responsible for the original petition, was named Stephen O'Sullivan.

The Volunteers prospered. D Company, based in Gympie, was formed some eighteen months later although the petition to form it was submitted only three months after the others with signatures of 100 volunteers. The covering letter was signed by John Flood. It is not unrealistic to assume that the prospect of Jonathan Flood (who had been transported to Western Australia convicted of treason) as its captain may have contributed to the administrations's delay in replying. Eventually it was established and by 1890 there were four companies in Brisbane and one each in Gympie, Ipswich and Maryborough.

In 1891 disputation arose surrounding the activities of the B Company Com-

mander, Capt. Charles Borromeo Fitzgerald, a son of T.H. Fitzgerald of Innisfail area sugar industry fame and promoter of a company of which some original All Hallows nuns were nominal shareholders. C.B. had come to Brisbane, received a commission as Captain, stood for election to the Legislative Assembly for Bulimba, been defeated and was holidaying in the Longreach area when he wrote an unwise letter to the Adjutant of the Q.I.V.

Fitzgerald's letter was referred to the Regimental Adjutant and after considerable discussion concerning his intentions, with at least the implication that he was proposing to utilise the volunteer organisation for political purposes, his commission was cancelled. Undaunted he subsequently stood again for the Legislative Assembly and was elected member for Mitchell.

In 1897 the significant event occurred which triggered the formation of the Q.I.A., the Volunteers' Commandant, A.J. Thynne stood down. On the recommendation of the Commandant of the Defence Forces, the Government appointed Lt.Col. K.J. Hutchinson, who was not an officer of the Volunteers, to command the Regiment without consulting the Officers of the Volunteers. This was a very sensitive point and the officers apparently objected to this action. The objections being ignored, the Q.I.V. resigned as a body as did a number of other officers of the Scottish Volunteers and the Volunteer Rifles.

The Q.I.V. at that time were still numerically the strongest group of the Volunteers. Following the resignations the only member of the Q.I.V. left appears to have been the Commandant Captain P.J. Stephens. As custodian of the weapons and equipment he was unable to resign without first obtaining a receipt for these items. In due course he submitted a request to be transferred to the Unattached List but this was refused and his commission was cancelled.

The Volunteers were as much a social organisation as a military one and a testimonial dinner was tendered to Stephens by the officers and men. It would seem that after considerable discussion and refreshment it was decided that it would be a good idea to form a Queensland Irish Association. This was duly done and the Association was established on March 23rd, 1898 with the co-operation of the "Hibernians", although which group is unknown, probably members of both organisations.

There are two photographs on display of the Q.I.V. in the entry to Tara House, one of the Officers and N.C.Os and the other of the N.C.Os alone. The original of the first is held by the Association and the other is copied from an original held by the daughter-in-law of Sgt Hurley. Hurley, incidentally is reported to have driven the first train to run to Sandgate.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE Q.I.A.

Unfortunately most of the early records of the Association have been lost and it is necessary to rely on secondary sources to determine much of the detail. How much was lost because of an inherent Irish dislike of written records, how much in floods and how much was thrown away to reduce clutter is uncertain.

There is however one very significant item in the possession of the Q.I.A. This is the hand-written first Annual report of the Association. This six-page document in the hand of the inaugural Secretary, Mr P.J. Stephens, is a most interesting document. In the manner typical of such reports it is divided roughly into three sections.

The initial section confirms the foundation date and reveals the financial position in 1899 after the first year of operation as follows:

Assets and Property valued at	£139/3/3
A Bank Balance of	£25/9/0
Outstanding Membership Fees	£32/10/0
Offsetting liabilities	£7/19/7 and
Advance Subscriptions were	£8/8/0

It is also noted that the meeting was being held in "Commodious rooms held on a long lease, in the most central position in the city". In fact the rooms were located at 240 Queen Street, immediately opposite the G.P.O.

Having stressed the positive aspects Stephens proceeded to point out shortcomings of the Association, chided those present for the apathy of many members, particularly deplored the level of outstanding subscriptions (undoubtedly not due to those present) and warned of the danger this represented to the future of the infant Association.

Then followed a stirring challenge to the members; for example "Shall we fail where English, Scots, Welsh and German succeed?" Stephens concludes with a glowing tribute to the recently deceased Thomas Joseph Byrnes: "He, who was our Champion and our glory, has been called away." Byrnes had died after about six months in office as Premier.

Surprisingly there is no mention of Association representation at the '98 Memorial ceremony at Waverley Cemetery in Sydney where the bodies of transportee

Michael Dwyer and his wife were reinterred after a famous procession through the streets of Sydney, although this fact is recorded in other records.

Typical of the confusion in the early records is the make up of the original Q.I.A. Committee. Pugh's Almanac for 1899 lists them as J.J. Kingsbury (President), Thos. O'Sullivan and A. St Ledger (Vice-Presidents), James Carroll (Treasurer) - previously mentioned as a founding Lieutenant of the Q.I.V. - Ald. Michael Foley (Sth Brisbane), James Landy and Thos Lehane (Trustees) and a Committee comprising P.J. O'Neill, P. Valley, M.J. Kerwin and Doctors Connolly and Moloney. This listing is confirmed by press cuttings of the period.

The souvenir publication of the opening of the new premises in 1928 and subsequent memorial publications of the Association include a copy of a photograph (still in our possession) of the 1899 Executive which is noted as the first Committee. This includes Stephens as a third Vice-President, P.J. O'Neill as Secretary, with John Healion, Jas Love, Peter Murphy and Peter Scott replacing Kerwin, Connolly and Moloney on the Committee.

Peter Scott is the Sergeant Major in the centre of the two photos of the Queensland Irish Volunteers on display. The Peter Scott Memorial Trophy of the Brisbane Rugby League was named after him. (He was for many years Official Timekeeper for the B.R.L.)

Dr Moloney (who incidentally is no relation of the writer) is also interesting for other reasons. He was married to the sister of T.J. Byrnes and was first Surgeon appointed by the Geraldton (later Innisfail) Hospital. His grave is marked by a splendid Celtic Cross in Innisfail Cemetery which is clearly visible from the main highway. He was the son of Abigail Moloney, a prominent merchant and landowner in Dungarvan, Ireland.

Early progress of the Association was slow. The effect of prolonged drought and general depression of trade and industry was quoted as seriously affecting the new Association. The inaugural President, J.J. Kingsbury, (who was not a Catholic) was succeeded in 1902 by Thos O'Sullivan, 1903 by P.J. Stephens and 1904 by T.J. O'Shea, illustrating the problems of the period. Notwithstanding these difficulties the 1904 membership stood at 200, a Library and Literary Section was functioning, but the bank balance stood at £45 with liabilities of £37. Certainly the finances had not improved.

It was 1908 before the Committee could confidently claim a reasonably stable position for the Association and look to expansion to larger premises. This culmi-

nated in 1910 in relocation to rooms in the "Old" Courier Building nearer to the corner of Edward Street.

A period of relative organisational stability was initiated with the election of P.J. McDermott as President in 1909, a position he was to occupy to his death in 1922. J.J. Leahy, unveiling a portrait of the late President in the Club in 1923, paid a lengthy tribute to his contribution, particularly the development of cultural pursuits and support of Irish National aspirations. A copy of this address is held by the Oxley Library.

An interesting personal connection with the earlier Organisations is that McDermott came to Queensland as a four-year old passenger from County Meath on the *Prince Consort* in 1862. This was one of the ships of the Queensland Emigration Society and presumably he arrived under their auspices. The family settled in the Warwick area and the youthful McDermott is recorded as one of the founders of the C.Y.M.S. in that city before a lengthy period as a School Teacher throughout the State. A Public Service career culminated in his appointment as Under Secretary first for Agriculture and then of the Chief Secretary's Department, which position he occupied until his death.

In 1913 while on an official Government visit to London with the Premier, McDermott shared the speakers' list at the last Irish National Banquet held at the Hotel Cecil with John Redmond, the Lord Mayor of London T.J. Condon, Joseph Devlin M.P. and the Queensland Premier Digby Denham. His presidency covered a most turbulent and significant period in the history of the Association.

An important administrative change for the Association occurred with the appointment of the first paid Secretary, Mr John Casey, in 1912, followed by Mr M. Landy in 1914. The appointment of Casey illustrates the continued connection with the Volunteers which he had joined as a Private and appears in the historical photograph as Quartermaster Sergeant.

Membership increased considerably and by 1921 had reached 1200, a most remarkable expansion. The figure was not to be repeated until 1973. This was an outstanding achievement against the background of the first World War, the 1916 Dublin Uprising, continuing civil unrest in Ireland and the establishment of the Irish Free State. It is apparent that the Association did not stand aloof from these matters, and by implication, great diplomatic skill and integrity were displayed by the President and Committee in conforming to the founding principles of the Association.

By way of illustration, apparently conflicting items noted as significant events

in Association history about this time include:

- 1911 Irish envoys Messrs Hazelton, Donovan and Redmond Jnr entertained. 50 guineas subscribed to Home Rule Fund.
- 1912 St Patrick's Day declared a Public Holiday under the Industrial Peace Act.
- 1914 Association co-operated in celebrating Empire Day.
- 1915 £2,500 invested in War Loan. (Finances obviously improved)
- 1916 Queensland Central Dublin Relief Fund instituted. (Q.I.A. Life Member Frank McDonnell Hon. Treasurer. Q.I.A. first Secretary & former President P.J. Stephens Hon. Secretary, and Q.I.A. heads subscription list with £250)

The pressure exerted by the expanding membership severely overtaxed the available premises despite extension to the rented area. A proposal to purchase the Centennial Hall in Adelaide Street for £10,500 had been approved by the Association in 1915 but apparently suitable terms could not be negotiated. (Possibly banks were reluctant to back Irish organisations at this time.) The search for suitable accommodation continued and the purchase of the current premises in Elizabeth Street was recommended by the Trustees Messrs Jas Carroll, J. Landy and M.G. Lyons, at a cost of £11,000. After renovations costing £1,120, removal to the new site was effected in 1920.

Following McDermott's sudden death Dr Morgan Lane succeeded to the Presidency until the election in 1924 of Neil Macgroarty, who occupied the position until 1932. This ushered in another significant period in Association history. For this reason the Committee portrait for the year 1925 has also been included in the display this evening.

Minor extensions were made to the premises in 1924 and 1925 but it was apparent that more drastic modifications were required. This was undoubtedly reinforced by the 1925 decision that the Annual Dinner, which had been held on St Patrick's Eve since 1905, should henceforth be held in the Association's own rooms.

The confidence engendered by increased membership, apparently sound financial position and the general rosy optimism in the community was reflected by the decision to extend the premises. The decision was taken in 1926 but it was over a

year before design and tendering processes were resolved and construction could commence. The extensions were completed and opened in December 1928. Rearrangements and refurbishing undertaken since that time have modified the interior design but the overall effect, dominated by the splendid arched ceiling and high-lighted by the various leadlights is unchanged.

Although the principles on which the Association was based specifically precluded consideration of the political or religious affiliations of the members, the relatively stable position of the Association and possibly its potentially rosy future provided a convenient breeding ground for disputation about this time. Macgroarty was challenged as President on the ground that as a member of Parliament he should be disqualified from membership of the Committee. Although this specious argument was rejected, disputation between members attracted unfavourable public attention and even legal action. Such a disqualifying clause had indeed been included in the original constitution but amended some years previously.

The attack was renewed when Macgroarty was appointed Attorney-General in 1930 and the presence of "fruit machines" in the club was raised in an attempt to embarrass the President. Although ruled out of order the continuing dissension seems to have prompted his departure in 1932. (In fact he was defeated in the election by two votes.) His successor was Mr D.J. McGrath.

There were however far more immediate problems to be faced than the politics of the Committee. The effect of the Depression was most marked and the financial membership had dwindled alarmingly to below 400. Despite this the Association was just managing to survive until the failure of the Federal Deposit Bank. The building extensions had been financed by overdraft from this bank, and more significantly in the short term, it also held the working funds of the Association on deposit.

Negotiations with the Receiver over a period resulted in a reduction of the debt and the interest rate reflected the severe economic decline but this was insufficient alone to overcome the problem. In 1934 negotiations with a brewing company (with impeccable Irish credentials among the founders) produced a loan guarantee, subject to amendment of the Constitution so that, in effect, the Brewery determined the major Office Bearers for three years.

Nevertheless the finances continued to deteriorate and the Constitution was again amended in 1934 to admit Associate Members for the first time, i.e. gentlemen not of Irish extraction. Although this move was successful in reducing the membership decline the problem was not solved and foreclosure threatened in 1935.

Extension of the finance was arranged on similar terms. The declining membership bottomed out at 272 (148 unfinancial) in 1937. However the tide had turned with a more active membership and the slow recovery from the Depression. The summary of leading events in the Association history in the 1948 Golden Jubilee Souvenir had summed up 1935 in one word - "uneventful"; surely a supreme understatement.

An improving financial outlook with membership climbing towards 1,000 gave rise to optimism until the start of World War II. Despite the impact of wartime restrictions and the 30% drop in membership the decline was not catastrophic. The special constitutional arrangements were deleted in 1941 and John Keogh, a former mayor of South Brisbane, became President for an extended period.

Educational bursaries for children of members were introduced in 1941 and these continued until the progressive deletion of Scholarship, Junior and Senior Public examinations.

POST WORLD WAR II

The immediate post-war period was difficult but without the menacing aspects of the early 30s. Post-war shortages and disruption to normal living of the members slowed development of the Association but steady progress throughout the 50s and 60s paved the way for its continuing development. Some examples of post-war activities are:

The Pipe Band which had been formed in the late 1920s, and disintegrated in 1942, was reformed in 1946. It became Australian Champion Irish Pipe Band in 1952 and subsequently Overall Australian Pipe Band Champions.

In 1945 the Association played a leading role in establishing the Australia Day Committee with President John Keogh and Secretary Tom Sweeney filling those positions on the Committee. The Q.I.A. was the venue for Committee meetings for some years.

In 1947 the Committee welcomed T.J. Kiernan, the first Irish "Ambassador" to Australia, to Brisbane and in 1948 was host to Eamon de Valera and Frank Aitken with Honorary Life Membership being conferred on de Valera.

In 1953 the Q.I.A. co-operated with the Irish Embassy, Melbourne's Celtic Club, Sydney's I.N.A. and Universities in the respective cities and Canberra in sponsoring a Lecture Tour by the eminent Irish Scholar Professor Myles Dillon. This was

intended to be the forerunner of a continuing series which disintegrated after lectures by Fr Hanrahan in 1954 and Dr Percy Jones in 1955.

The grand plan to establish a continuing lecture series leading to an Irish Studies Course at one or more Universities foundered on the lack of a strong university interest and loss of a strong co-ordinator after Kiernan's departure. The Celtic Club and the Q.I.A. had made financial undertakings to the Ambassador who "hoped to turn them from cocktails to culture and booze to brainwashing (in the Irish sense)."

Notwithstanding these expressions Dillon's tour was a great success and James Duhig advised Kiernan that "the Q.I.A. certainly rose to the occasion" despite his earlier expressed opinion that "the movement cannot expect any great assistance from the said Association which is made up mostly of ordinary good people just like the Hibernians". Kiernan reported Dillon as saying that the Queensland visit was the highlight of the tour.

A continuing result of this visit, so far as the Q.I.A. was concerned, was the establishment of an Irish Studies' Prize at Queensland University in 1954. Originally valued at £25 this was first awarded in 1959 and continues to this day with a present value of \$1,000 provided by the Q.I.A. (Subsequently this has been amended to Post Graduate Bursaries of \$2,000 at both Queensland and Griffith Universities.)

Also as a consequence of the visit, Archbishop Duhig obtained a collection of some 200 historically significant Irish volumes, "The Hutton Collection", to provide a nucleus for future Irish scholars in Queensland. Due to lack of academic progress in regard to Irish Studies these are now located in the A.N.U. in Canberra. During a visit to Canberra for the Australia-Irish Convention last year my attempts over several days to locate the collection were frustrated until it was discovered that it had been dispersed throughout the general library and it was necessary to search diligently and persistently. I fear that the volumes are now merely gathering Canberra dust instead of Brisbane dust and a basic facility for any future studies in Queensland is now inaccessible.

Other activities have been more fruitful. The establishment of an Irish Dancing Class in 1959 and the continuing support to the subsequently formed Australian Irish Dancing Association and other dancing groups has at least ensured continuation of this aspect of Irish culture.

Where then does the Association stand today? A membership in excess of 2,500, good location in the very centre of the city with premises listed as a Heritage Building in Brisbane, provision of normal club facilities, continuing sponsorship of

cultural activities such as the Irish Studies' Prize, Irish Colloquium at the University, Schools' Irish Drama quest, Library facilities, Book Launches for books of particular Irish content, entertainment of Irish visitors such as the President Dr Hillery, the "Asgard" crew, and a Parliamentary delegation and the forth-coming acquisition of a full-colour copy of the Book of Kells all indicate that the Association will continue to be extremely active.

In conclusion may I say that the Association premises are located in an area of the city subject to intensive development. As I have indicated we have always been located in the centre of the city, but it is no secret that various entrepreneurial schemes have been suggested involving redevelopment or relocation. The Association has no current plans for relocation.

Leo Moloney, Q.I.A. Vice-President

Leo Moloney is a Communications Engineer with an interest in Queensland History, particularly the Irish involvement. He is a descendant of the original Irish settlers of the Logan district and Vice President of the Queensland Irish Association since 1988.