

Eighth Anniversary
27 August 2007



Master of ceremonies was Mike Bailey (pictured at left), former ABC weatherman, Famine orphan descendant and contestant for the seat of North Sydney in the 2007 Federal election. Guest of Honour was the Irish Ambassador (2006-2011), Máirtín Ó Fainín (pictured at right) who in his opening address showed his understanding of the strong links between Ireland and Australia. Mr Ó Fainín presented Macquarie University Honours student, Julia Kensey with her prize and later, in launching the book, *Echoes of Irish Australia* edited by Richard Reid, Cheryl Mongan and Jeff Brownrigg, convinced the gathering he was no mean diplomatic historian.



Maoiliosa Stafford, well-known actor and member of the Druid Theatre Company of Ireland, read from the poems of Vincent Wood, the prose of John Mitchell, and gave a poignant reading of Seamus Heaney's poem, 'At the potato digging'.



The Irish Consul-General in Sydney, Mr Patrick Scullion (left) whose generosity helped us revitalise our website, presented a beautiful Claddagh brooch to web-developer Jennifer Bainbridge. Our thanks go to Bruce and Julie Duffield for donating this lovely gift. Then, as is our custom, we had a minute silence in memory of all the victims of Famine. A wreath was laid and flowers placed by members of the assembled gathering as a slow air was played on violin by Pam Merrigan.

There was music and song by Galimore. The National Anthems were sung: for Ireland in Irish by Shay O Hara and for Australia by Kim Pearce. Mike Bailey, as MC, welcomed everyone. Addresses followed from Ambassador Mr Mairtin O' Fainin who presented the Famine Memorial History prize to Julia Kensey. Maeliosa Stafford read a selection of Famine readings including 'At a potato digging' by Seamus Heaney. A presentation was made to Jennifer Bainbridge, our website manager. Flowers were laid as a slow air was played on violin by Pam Merrigan. *Echoes of Irish Australia*, a book edited by Richard Reid, Cheryl Mongan and Jeff Brownrigg was launched by the Irish Ambassador.