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**Transcript**

Minutes the 29th Annual General Meeting of

the council of Irish County Associations held

at the Irish Centre on Sunday February 7th 1982.

The meeting opened under the chairmanship of

Mr S Troy.
For his opening address Mr Troy expressed his

pleasure at seeing such a large and repr-

esentative gathering.  He extended a warm

welcome to Mr Gerry Corry from the Irish Embassy.

Mr Michael Hogan,  Chairman of the Federation of

Irish Societies & Mr Gerry Feeney of B+I.
the chairman said the recent death of Mr Tadhg

Feehan was a source of sadness to us all and

proposed a vote of sympathy to Mr Feehan's

family.
The next item on the agenda was the adoption

of standing orders.
The adoption was proposed by Mr John O'Keeffe

and seconded by Mr Michael Sills.
The appointment of tellers was agreed as follows

Mr John Dee, Mr lam Reeves and Mr M Kiruran.

The minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting

were read and adopted on the proposition

of Mr Bob Daly, and seconded by Mr B Aulsberry.
The secretary's report was read and adopted

on the proposition of Mr J O'Keeffe and seconded

by Mr B Aulsberry the Chairman thanked Mrs Fleur

for her efforts throughout the year.
Treasurers Report: this was given by Mrs B Shaw

whom Mr Troy thanked for her dedicated work

throughout the year.

The report was adopted on the proposition

of Mrs Teresa Doyle and seconded by Mrs B Dack.

Welfare Fund Report. We had paid out £5,460

in grants during delivering 1981. The fund now

stands at £15,358-76.
The report was adopted on the proposition of

Mr S Dunbarr, and seconded by Mr R Porto.

The Chairmans address was reset on the agenda,

Mr Troy said it is once again my great pleasure

to address you all on the occasion of our Annual

General Meeting and I begin by thanking you

for your attendance in such representative numbers

and your delegates who have regularly

attended our monthly meetings. For as far back as

we care to remember we have poised ourselves

It at this time to review and analyse the events of the year

 of year gone by, whilst looking forward to what we

hope will prove to be a more successful and `

rewarding period in our lives.
Inevitably the old cliches come readily to mind

and although we exercise a firm determination

to ease these aside we nevertheless find that

there are many common denominators which

contribute to our thoughts and sentiments.

Peace has always taken a prominent place and

as we look back on 1981 and forward to 1982

that same subject "peace"  must once again

take top priority.

1981 was the year of the disabled but I doubt if

this title will feature match in the writings of

of the historians when they record the events of

this period.  More likely 1981 will be recorded as a

year of violence,  tragedy and loss of innocent life.

Who ever would have dreamed that in our

Life time we would have witnessed an attempt

on the life of his holiness the Pope.
How can we  visualise or measure the anguish

of the parents of those young victims of the starts

fire tragedy in Dublin,  or know the extent of

the heart break suffered by the mothers and fathers

of those young men who slowly edged to

their death,  while on hunger strike in the

Maze prison;  Shirley in God's name there

must be another way.

Of course you may well ask,  what relevance

have or how do we begin to equate them with

the workings of this meeting or this Council.

At first glance one might well be excused for dismissing

them as just the inevitable norm and nothing more

than a true reflection of the society in which we

live.  But I believe that upon closer scrutiny we

will find that they have a much greater

significance because however great a personal

problem may appear or how inevitable a

difference of opinion may seem to be, surely

such situations pale into insignificance when

compared to some of the events I have outlined.

Ireland has always been looked upon as a Nation

whose people take great pride in their culture and

traditions, their heritage and Christian ideals and

it is not without good reason that our Country

has been given the title, " Island of Saints and Scholars"

and the land of a thousand welcomes.  But how-

ever commendable these attributes may be there

has remained a singular flaw in the Irish

character and make up a flaw which regretfully

is as prevalent today as at any time in our history

that is our apparent inability to work together

in unison and harmony.  That flaw manifests

itself at all levels in our Society,  from the highest

national level as exemplified by the appalling

state of affairs that continues to exist in Northern

Ireland, right down to the grass-roots level so

to speak of organisations and societies such as

our own.
In my earlier remarks I have said peace would

again be a dominant factor in our lives during

1982. To that factor I would now like to add the

qualities of unity, mutual respect, understanding

and good will, and in such a context take a brief

look, first of all at our Council and it's role within

our Society of today.
In do so I propose to categorise at least three

areas of our activities namely, youth, welfare,

and image & effectiveness.

Like myself I imagine that all of you welcome

and are appreciative of the degree of attention given

to the youth within our organisations during the

past year and it is to be hoped that this positive

step forward has not come too late.
It is imperative that we render every possible

assistance in the fostering and for nation of youth

groups, but in doing so we must also be most

careful not to overstep the mark in terms

of domination, but rather to act and be seen as

a united and efficient body who pursues its

ideals and objectives in a manner likely to

inspire those young people into carrying on our

work in the years ahead.
Welfare, turning to the question of welfare. I feel I

can do no better than reiterate my word at

last year's AGM when I said that in times of

recession, organisations like ours, can perhaps play

their most effective role.

Sadly the economic recession of 1980 carried on

in an even more devastating manner through

1981 and of course those already in need can draw

 from

little comfort from ʌ the predictions for 1982.
Coupled with the high level of unemployment there

is another area which must be of particular concern

for us all and that is the plight of large members

of our fellow country people who came to this country

in the late '30s and early '40s and through a

misguided youth or otherwise now find themselves

totally unprepared financially for their years of

retirement.   Which in no way suggesting

that the flood gates be opened in terms of

disposing of the monies in the Welfare Fund I

do nonetheless sincerely hope that nobody will

fail to utilise the fund when a case is deserving

and justified.

The existing terms of reference are I believe

adequate to cater for our requirements through in

the light of the prevailing and continuing rate

of inflation it may soon prove necessary

to reassess the limit of grants.

In my third category of analysis. I have

placed the two aspects of image and effective-

ness because, for me at any rate, these

constitute what is commonly referred to

as the thin dividing line between success

and failure, or if not failure mediocre exist-
ance.

Each and every one of us is an ambassador

in our own right and the how we act in our

private and public lives will be seen rightly

or wrongly, as a reflection on our country

of origin.
But how much more effective that

reflection becomes when we are seen to

act as a united and capable body and at

this stage I return to the question of unity,

mutual respect, understanding and good-

will. We are all by virtue of our individ-

ual constitutions in pursuit of a common

goal and in such circumstances there can be

no room within our ranks for the pursuit of

self glorification and agitation.

I thank God the day has come has gone when Irish people

wear regarded as incapable of any measure of organis-

ation, the Pope's visit certainly sword to that.
But of course we are also can take some pride in

our achievements in this field because there is

no doubt that the success story of the Revlon Irish

Festival has opened the eyes of many people.

Success breeds success but will only do so if the

all too common pitfalls such as complacency are

avoided.

Let us remember that the rewards of one success-

full festival is the power to fulfill another.
We must not fail to utilise this opportunity to its

full potential in displaying all that is best in

our national heritage and culture, but let us

also never forget that our first concern is always

the image portrayed on the day and that any finan-

cial rewards are by way of a secondary, though

of course welcome bonus.

The Irish centre: As has been my practice in the

previous years I would now like to direct my thoughts

for a short while to the Irish Centre and its future.

When I expressed some views about the Irish Centre

at our A.G.M. last year, sadly there were some who

felt unable to accept my remarks in the honest

and constructive spirit in which they were

intended, but rather saw ~~them~~ fit to use them

as a reason to try and disrupt the workings of

this council and also to make my job as

Chairman as difficult as possible for the greater

part of last year.
I do not propose to pass judgement on or to condemn

anyone, I leave their actions to their own conscience

but what I can do is to say that I stand by

all I said at the matter, as far as I am concern

-ed is water under the bridge.

What is of importance to-day is not the Irish

Centre of the past but instead the Irish Centre

of the future and firstly I would like to wish

the new Director, Father Malone, every success in

his work.

When the Irish Centre first opened its doors in the 50s

it started by offering a much needed service to the

less fortunate. That service has continued down

through the years and how gratifying it is to know

that the (facility is) now being offered are soon to be

 new

enhanced by the opening of the ʌ Welfare Wing.

I am convinced that debt or no debt, the Welfare

Service of the Irish Centre will survive, but what

can be said of the Social and Commercial side.

Recently Fr Malone wrote to invite all Chairman

and Secretaries to a meeting at the Centre and

the response resulted in 12 Counties being represent-

ed.

The purpose of that meeting was to obtain your

views on the future of the Centre, in other words

a pooling of ideas and with this aim in mind

a further meeting has been arranged for Tuesday

Feb 23.  I would ask you now to make a note

of this date and to ensure that your county is

represented here on Feb. 23rd. But to come and

listen will assist nobody. Express your views

and suggestions and provided they are meaningful

and constructive I am sure they will be

welcomed. I am only too well aware that

many of you have not been entirely happy with

the affairs of the Centre in the past, but that is

history, what matters now is that we have

an opportunity of putting matters right and we

must take that opportunity.

But as I have also said so many times in the

past, this is, is by no means a one way process

it's a two way street and any positive

contribution on the part of the Co. Assocs must

be met with an equally positive and appreciate-

ive response on the part of the Irish Centre.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my

fellow officers and members of the Executive

for their support and co-operation during the

past year.

I would like to express a special word of

thanks to the manager of the Irish Centre,

Mr John O'Shea for his courtesy and help at all

times. And I wish all of you & your Associations

a peaceful and successful 1982.