

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

A geography journal devoted entirely to papers by students is at once a platform for free expression of academic interest and a celebration of academic achievement. It is a window on a student community, an insight into minds-in-the-making, a means whereby those minds and that community can find expression, and a standard towards which future students can aspire. It is also a way of showing others, students and non-students alike, how the value of old disciplinary wines can be enhanced by being presented in new vessels. A good student research journal should also be proof that 'thinking high' is not incompatible with 'living low'. It should be all of these things and something else besides. That 'something else' should make it a link between the journal's contributors, the people from whom they derive and the wider community within which they live and work. When well forged that link can weld the privileged individuals working in the turrets of academia's ivory towers with the not-so-privileged who work, or are condemned not to work, in the mean streets that surround, but rarely lead into the academy. When ill-forged it can cut student writers apart from society at large and set them adrift in the heady, but alienating world of the professional academic.

The decision to set *Chimera* loose among geography students in U.C.C. and on the streets and fields of Cork in general was taken en route from a well-attended conference in a town in West Cork. The latter was dominated by local people who showed more than a curious interest in things political, things historical and things academic. The task of cutting *Chimera* loose was a difficult one that took all of six months to complete. The joy of seeing it free resides in the papers herein.

The first paper by Patricia Campbell, a Third Arts student, is a socio-contextual approach to the writings of Akin Mabogunje, an urban geographer turned development theorist in the late sixties and early seventies. It applies insights derived from a second term course unit which Professor Anne Buttmer teaches at the department and supplements these with video recordings of interviews with Mabogunje. Majella Flynn, an M.A. student, historical demography, highlights the value of parish registers to students of the Church of Ireland minority in the nineteenth century. Paper three is by a Second Year Geography student, Joan Casey. She argues that much of nineteenth and early twentieth century geography is political ideology in the guise of a social science that justified colonial expansion, participated in empire building and contributed to political indoctrination in the educational establishment of early twentieth century Britain and Europe. Paper four by Colm Halbert, a postgraduate student with an interest in a sense of place in modern literature, distills the sense of place in John Montague's poetry. Paper five by Ann Whyte, also a postgraduate in geography, is a study of the ways in which cultural nationalists and a philanthropic minority in the Anglo-Irish ascendancy perceived underdeveloped Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It points up the role of the Congested Districts Board as a self-help development agency in an Ireland where nationalists either ignored or mythologised the peasantry. Paper six by Ann-Marie Gillman, an M.A. student in the Department of Social Theory and Institutions, is a critical history of urban and regional planning in Northern Ireland from the thirties to the early fifties when 'planning for security' became an integral part of the planning process in and around Belfast city. Paper seven by Rosaleen McCarthy, a First Arts student, is a perceptive statement on the importance of landscape appreciation and earth-structuring processes to modern Physical Geography. Paper eight by Barry Keane, a postgraduate student with an interest in the Church of Ireland minority in early twentieth century Cork, is an analysis of that minority's decline in Cork City and County between 1911 and 1926. Paper nine is by Catherine Curtin, a postgraduate geography student with an interest in the geography of folk beliefs and folk customs in nineteenth century Limerick. It is based on her B.A. dissertation and examines the impact of famine and ways of looking at the geography of famine in nineteenth century Kerry. Paper ten by Mick Healy, an M.A. student whose research interests include the reconstruction of plant histories, is a brief description of the plant history of the Killarney district from the early post-glacial period to the present.

The year 1985-86 also saw members of the department lead a week-long field trip

to Brittany. Marie Foley, a Corkonian "fieldtripper" from Toronto, has given a tale of this herein which tries to do justice to all who took part and to all of that of which they partook. Adrian Heffernan, the outgoing auditor of the Geography Society, has given an account of the year's events and a list of visiting lecturers to the department in the past year. The final item in the journal is a brief statement on the research interests of the current postgraduates and a catalogue of B.A. and M.A. dissertations completed in the department.

If the task of setting Chimera loose from a reluctant hibernation took more than six months to complete, the most crucial week in that liberation struggle was undoubtedly the last one. It is for this reason that the present editor is only too glad to acknowledge the assistance given by the postgrads and the back-up staff in the department. Particular thanks are due to Catherine Ketch who was present at the birth of Chimera and treated it with all the care due to a newborn, to Colm Halbert and Ray O'Connor who provided help and transport when required, to Ger Delaney who helped with sponsorship, to Connell Foley who, with Catherine Ketch, was responsible for clothing Chimera in a sacred cover, to Dan Murphy whose task it was to reproduce the graven image of Chimera for all to see, and to the two Annes, Phelan and Foley, whose secretarial assistance was prompt and efficient as ever. To all those who have not been mentioned, and particularly to the contributors who submitted to the rigours of a strict editorial policy, I would like to offer a note of appreciation and a hope that they are at least half-satisfied with our newborn idol. To future students, particularly undergraduates, I would like to extend an invitation to contribute freely to Chimera and thereby make it their own. Finally, I thank our sponsors for their support and their money, two items indispensable to the success of a good student journal.

Jim MacLaughlin
Editor