

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In 1987, the editor of Chimera No. 2, Catherine Ketch wrote:

"The survival of any new venture is in doubt until it gains momentum and becomes a tradition in its own right".

This edition celebrates the fourth appearance of Chimera and it has now gained that essential momentum and its survival is no longer in question. Levels of interest in the journal among Geography students and European Studies students have been remarkably high. This year the journal aims to consolidate its position as one of the better student journals, to build on its inherited tradition of excellence and to continue to extend the frontiers of discussion within its pages. As a result some themes which have appeared in previous editions of Chimera reappear and are discussed in the light of more recent research, while other issues emerge for the first time.

Catriona Ní Laoire, a third year undergraduate European Studies student, opens up one such new area of discussion for the journal with her paper on the emergence of a European consciousness. In future editions, no doubt, many European topics will grace the journal's pages. This paper's appearance in Chimera reflects the increasing interest of the Geography Department in U.C.C. and of geographers generally, in Europe, the E.E.C. and all matters European. As 1992 approaches, geographers have a very important role to play in shaping the European Community. Because of the discipline's broad base straddling cultural, social, economic and political spheres, geographers are uniquely equipped to anticipate where the difficulties of integration may lie and suggest strategies by which these may be overcome.

Paul Ryan and Kieran Hickey have established themselves as the most regular contributors to Chimera. Since 1987 both have contributed three papers to the journal. Paul's article this year is based on some of the detailed methodological work he has completed as part of his Masters degree and should serve as a useful guide to other students interested in pursuing similar research projects. Kieran (whose article appears sixth in the journal) returns to a topic he first researched two years ago as part of an M.A. Qual. research project. He deals with the treescape of Cahir, Co. Tipperary, in a very comprehensive and scholarly manner.

David Storey and Catherine Ketch, both editors of Chimera in former years, combine to address a very important issue for the discipline of Geography. They attempt to explain the absence of women from the teaching staff of the Geography Departments in Ireland. Even at postgraduate level they note an absence of female students. Are very subtle processes of inequality in operation here? It is an intriguing discussion that raises many such questions which the discipline will sooner or later have to face.

John Crowley, a first year postgraduate student, discusses the advantages of some research philosophies over others. This paper is of particular interest to students of human and social geography who may be inclined to adopt research strategies without being fully aware of what is implicitly involved in them.

Joanna Ellison, senior demonstrator in the Geography Department advances the theory that a continent called Pacifica once existed and that this helps to explain the distribution of flora and fauna in this region of the world. This survey of the literature will be of interest to all students of biogeography and those who have studied Wegener's Plate Tectonic theory.

Both Mary Kelleher and Geraldine Coakley are geography graduates and H.D.E. students. Mary writes on land-drainage in the barony of Muskerry, Co. Cork, while Geraldine focuses on the different standards of living found in disadvantaged peripheral rural areas as opposed to rural areas located in close proximity to urban centres in the Rural Districts of Bandon and Clonakilty, Co. Cork.

Anne Behan, a third year undergraduate Geography student, provides an interesting insight into the brewing industry in Ireland while Professor W.J. Smyth explores the personality of West Cork, a region famed for its scenery and steeped in history. In this, the first part of a two part paper, Professor Smyth attempts to delimit the region, grapples with all of the intangibles and discusses some of its many links with other countries and regions..

Bernadette Moriarty and Leonard Corcoran provide the two final papers. Bernadette, a third year Geography student, takes a very interesting look at a quite unusual topic, the geography of love, while Leonard, a B.Sc. graduate, offers some insights into the geology of the Kinsale coastal region.

Davina McLaughlin, the outgoing vice-auditor of the Geographical Society, has the final word with a summary of this year's academic and social programme.

There is also, as usual, a summary of recent undergraduate research completed in the Geography Department, U.C.C. This year the survey of postgraduate research has been extended to include all postgraduates working in Geography Departments throughout the Republic of Ireland. The Editorial Committee and all those involved with Chimera wish to thank both the secretaries of the various departments and the postgraduates themselves for helping us to compile this very useful list.

This year a strong emphasis was placed on increasing undergraduate participation in all aspects of production. The names of those who served on the various committees are listed elsewhere and their efforts on behalf of the journal are very much appreciated. Many people, however, became involved with the journal at the latter stages of production. In this regard the work of Anne Sinnott, Majella Flynn, Michael Murphy, Dan Murphy, David Storey and Connell Foley, must be acknowledged. A very special thanks to Catherine Ketch, Mary Quinlan and Eileen Boyce for their much needed and much appreciated help and good humour.

Thanks also to our wonderful and patient typists Anne Donovan and Anne Phelan who not only typed the journal but also became actively involved with the Sponsorship Committee in securing the necessary finance for the journal. It would be appropriate at this point too, to express our gratitude to our sponsors for once again supporting the journal.

I would like on behalf of all involved with Chimera to congratulate the contributors for enduring the often-times wearisome and niggling alterations requested by the editor and the editorial committee. Also I would like to thank those who contributed articles which were held over until the next edition of the journal.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of the Geography Department who, among other things, patiently endured the monopolisation of the Departmental photocopier by Chimera in the days immediately preceding its publication.

All that now remains is for me to wish the next editor of the journal, whoever that might be, the very best of luck with Chimera No. 5 and express the hope that our readers both enjoy the journal and find its contents useful, provocative and informative.

Raymond O'Connor