

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

"So everywhere", said Nanny, and added, with the air of a lifetime student, "everywhere's been where it is ever since it was first put there. It's called geography."

(Pratchett, 1989)

But geography is much more than this. Geography is a complex discipline which incorporates many different philosophies, and a huge diversity of subject matter. As a result geography is a questioning discipline; a discipline which by nature is exploratory. From this constant questioning and exploring comes progress and a relevance few other disciplines possess.

Chimera, in its fifth year continues to question and explore. The articles in this year's journal have been contributed by undergraduates, postgraduates and staff members and adequately display the wide range of geographic interest, at all levels, within the department.

Julie O'Rourke, a first year undergraduate, examines the influence of merchant capitalism and its important role in the shaping and emergence of Europe. This is just one of a number of articles which show the continuing interest of geographers in Europe and topics of a European nature. Elsewhere in the journal Kieran O'Donoghue reflects on European integration, 1992 and Ireland's philosophy of membership, Caitríona Ní Laoire examines the quality of life from a subjective perspective in a region of Spain, and Patrick Leahy attempts to place the recent events in Eastern Europe in a historical perspective. Using his training as a geographer, Patrick raises many relevant and pertinent questions and this article will undoubtedly provoke much discussion.

The subject of the environment, its protection, preservation, conservation and management, over the last few years, has come to hold a new found importance and priority in the lives of many people. Martina Dineen, a final year undergraduate examines the nature of air quality in the Cork area, Darius Bartlett, a member of staff, investigates the ecology of the coastline area, while Kieran Hickey examines extreme and unusual climatic events in the greater Cork area in a historical context.

Denis Linehan, a first year postgraduate, examines the phenomenon of graffiti. To some, this may represent vandalism or mindless scribbling, but Denis, in his imaginative study, shows that it can be used to examine aspects of social and cultural urban geography. Lucy Hastings, a H.D.E. student, in another imaginative study, examines the geography of public houses in Cork city. Her study throws light on the clientele of each public house and how social classes differ in their behaviour toward the public house.

Professor W.J. Smyth concludes his analysis of the West Cork region, part I of which appeared in Chimera No. 4. Those wishing to read about the deeper structures that underlie the personality of this area, will derive inspiration from this article. David

Storey's article presents his own view of the Border between Northern Ireland and the Republic. David, originally from Co. Cavan, provides an "insider" view of the border and highlights its impact on the Irish landscape. Jean Lucey examines how individuals express themselves through their dwelling places. Aileen O'Mahony analyses the role and function of open spaces. Marie O'Neill Maher, a third year undergraduate student, comments on Time Geography, an area of geographical research which stresses time as the key variable in social transformation. Sandra Creaner, a postgraduate student from the University of Melbourne, Australia, writes about soil water dynamics in forested catchments in Victoria, Australia.

Joanna Ellison's article will prove useful for anyone who is considering research in the USA or Canada. In it she dispels a number of myths and rumours about the procedures, and her advice is comprehensive and informative. The Geographical Society has once again had a busy year, as Eileen Boyce reports in her summary of the activities. There is also a summary of research recently completed in the Department. Also the list of research presently in progress has been updated, and we thank the Geography Departments of the various colleges, for their continued help in this area.

The production of a journal like Chimera requires a substantial amount of teamwork. There are a number of individuals who need particular reference for their input. Paul Ryan, one of the editors, needs to be thanked and credited with the early work which helped to start Chimera 5. Paul read all of the first drafts of the articles, which some would argue is the most difficult stage of the journal. A special mention must go to the secretaries Anne Donovan and Anne Phelan, who I'm sure must have dreaded seeing me appear in their office, although they never showed it and their patience was admirable. To Dan Murphy and Michael Murphy who put up with their office being invaded for the photocopying of Chimera. A special thank-you also to our advertisers, whose contributions help make this all possible. The people who contributed articles must also be thanked, for without them there is no Chimera. Also thanks to Ray O'Connor, who brought his experience to bear in the late stages of production. The Editorial Committee deserve special mention for their diligence and hard work. To all the tutors who had to endure my incessant mumbling while editing. To the individuals who helped with proof-reading, map-drawing and constructive criticism. To Connell Foley for designing the cover. To Pat Leahy, Eileen Boyce and Kieran O'Donoghue who were tenacious in their support of this year's Chimera. I extend my thanks to these three for burning the midnight oil when it counted most - Cheers.

It is important that such a journal exists and that it continues to flourish, getting larger and better every year. It is hoped that the readers will enjoy the journal, but also that it allows them to question or examine in a different light the topics raised by the articles, and perhaps encourage them to write for Chimera No. 6!

Ian O'Connell  
(On behalf of the Editors)

#### REFERENCES

1. Pratchett, T., Wyrd Sisters, 1989, Corgi, London.