EDITORIAL

Whenever some task is handed over from one person to another, changes are likely. It is also likely that changes will be welcomed by some, while others will regret that a steady line has been broken and feel that the alterations are not for the better.

My first task, as the incoming Editor of the Bulletin, *must be to thank my predecessor, Prof. Rod Gow of UCD, for his steady efforts in compiling and producing a publication of the Irish Mathematical Society that both served as a voice of the Society as well as a mathematical periodical. He, with the Production Manager, Dr. Mícheál Ó Searcóid, without doubt succeeded in producing a well-recognised journal on a very regular basis.*

Among the changes envisaged are a new format and layout; this, as it turns out, cannot be realised immediately but will only come into effect gradually. (Albeit this volume of the Bulletin *does already look different.) Other novelties may include a greater emphasis on refereed research articles (not yet in this volume), the detailed listing of the programme of, and abstracts of contributions to, the Society's September Meeting (as in this volume), and regular conference announcements. It has been suggested that abstracts of PhD theses conferred at Irish universities should be included, and also a section on departmental news. In particular the latter, of course, depends heavily on the co-operation of the local representatives of the Society in forwarding the relevant information to the Editor.*

It has been a tradition to publish lucid and informative survey articles on significant new developments in various branches of Mathematics in the Bulletin. *This important service to the mathematical community certainly shall be maintained. Our* Bulletin *has to serve many purposes: it is a means of communication on matters of im-*

portance to Society members (such as the minutes of meetings), on matters of general interest to mathematicians in Ireland (such as conference announcements), it is supposed to present a picture of what sort of Mathematics is done within Ireland to the wider mathematical community (through abstracts of talks and posters and of PhD theses), and, not least, it should contain some interesting Mathematics. Expository articles are a good means in trying to achieve (some of) these objectives. Hence they will certainly stay at the core of the Bulletin.

As A. W. Knapp writes in the December 2000 issue of the AMS Notices, it is vital for an expository article to "be addressed to a particular audience and to be free of ambiguity". A carefully composed survey is far more than a summary of 'the great theorems I, and my pals, have proved in the last few years'. Fortunately, in the present volume, the reader will find three nicely composed surveys allowing non-specialists rather deep insights into intricate areas of modern Mathematics.

I am hopeful that the Bulletin *will, in the new millenium, continue to serve the Irish mathematical community as a source of information and a forum for exchanging mathematical ideas.*

—MM