

Editorial

Since the appearance of the last issue of the Newsletter, there have been two developments which will be of great assistance in consolidating and developing the production of the Newsletter.

Firstly, as you will be immediately aware on receiving this issue, the printing is a welcome improvement on the duplicated production of the last issue. The National Board of Science and Technology have very generously agreed to print the Newsletter for us, beginning with this issue. The Irish Mathematical Society appreciates very much this assistance from the N.B.S.T., and indeed other forms of support it is providing which you can read about in the Secretary's report. We are indebted to Sean Dineen, the Secretary of the I.M.S., who negotiated this deal with the N.B.S.T.

Secondly, Mathematical Reviews Editors wrote to me requesting copies of the Newsletter as they are interested in reviewing the publication. This is a reflection of the quality of contributions to the Newsletter in the past.

However, there is still much room for improvement. On the technical side, the layout needs to be improved so as to have a more visually attractive Newsletter. On the other hand, the range of articles needs to be broadened. One of the major criticisms of the last issue was that it was an almost exclusively Pure Mathematics publication. I have tried to rectify this by requesting articles from several Applied Mathematicians for inclusion in future issues. In this issue there is some material of particular interest to Statisticians which provides the kind of balance I wish to have between the Pure and Applied areas of Mathematics.

Again, I encourage all members to consider writing for some of the various sections of the Newsletter. For those who may have brief comments on any articles, I intend to introduce a Letters to the Editor section as soon as some material is at hand.

Finally, I take the opportunity to wish all members of the Society a happy Christmas and the best of luck for the New Year.

*Donal Hurley*

Dr. James J. McMahonObituary:

J.J. McMahon died in September 1981 after a brief illness. His unexpected passing was a shock to all who knew him, but most of all to his wife, Catherine.

J.J., as he was called, was born at Woodford, Co. Galway in 1924 and went to school at St. Joseph's College, Garbally Park, Ballinasloe. He then studied at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth where he received his B.Sc. degree in 1946 and his M.Sc. in 1948 and was, in fact, the first M.Sc. graduate of Maynooth (in Mathematics). Having worked under J.L. Synge at the D.I.A.S., he obtained his Ph.D. degree from N.U.I. in 1953, and was the first person ever to receive a Ph.D. in Mathematical Sciences from N.U.I.. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1950.

His early interests were in applied mathematics, studying electricity and magnetism, and quantum theory for his M.Sc.. His Ph.D. thesis concerned the hypercircle method. During his stay at Stanford University (1952-54), where he worked with Polya and Szego, he developed an interest in pure mathematics - mainly differential geometry and algebra.

He returned to Maynooth as a lecturer in 1954 under Professor McConnell who was then head of the (single) department of Mathematics and Mathematical Physics. They both lectured the entire range of Mathematics courses (pass and honours). J.J. spent a sabbatical year (1959-60) at Fordham University and in 1960, he was appointed Professor of Mathematics in Maynooth. Another sabbatical year (1972-73) was spent at the University of Ottawa. While Professor, he supervised some master's theses.

In June 1974, J.J. resigned as Professor and became a layman. He lectured for a year at University College, Galway and then spent a term teaching at Worth School, Crawley, Sussex while awaiting a visa for Nigeria. In January 1976 he went to the University of Benin as Senior Lecturer and stayed there until 1979 when he returned to Ireland to take up a position at Thomond College of Education in Limerick.

He was an enthusiastic member of the Committee of the Irish Mathematical Society and was appointed Editor of the Newsletter in the year before his untimely death.

*R. Timoney*