

## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Editorial</b>	
<i>P. Fitzpatrick</i>	3
<b>Irish Mathematical Society</b>	
Meetings	4
Errata	7
<b>News and Announcements</b>	
Summary of Results of 1985 Irish National Mathematics Contest	8
Summary of Results of 1985 Irish Invitational Mathematics Contest	10
Personal Items	12
<b>Articles</b>	
A Matrix Joke	13
Free Topological Groups	17
Hyperbolic Behaviour of Geodesic Flows	21
Remarks on 'An Elementary Number Theory Result'	31
<b>Mathematical Education</b>	
Report on the Basic Mathematical Skills Test of First Year Students in Cork RTC in 1984	33
Undergraduate Projects in Group Theory: Commutativity Ratios	44
<b>History of Mathematics</b>	
J. MacCullagh and W.R. Hamilton. The Triumph of Irish Mathematics 1827-1865.	50
<b>Book Review</b>	
George Boole. His Life and Work	62
<b>Problem Page</b>	
<i>P.J. Rippon</i>	72
<b>Conference Report</b>	
Groups in Galway	79
<b>Conference Announcement</b>	
<i>R. Dark</i>	81

### *Editorial*

*I am very happy to take over as editor of the Newsletter, and it is my first and most pleasant duty to thank Donal Hurley for the unstinted dedication, energy and professionalism that he brought to the editorial task during his period of tenure. He has achieved a remarkable transformation of the Newsletter: from A4-format, stencilled and duplicated broadsheet, to the present high-quality publication. The measure of his success is the great enjoyment with which the Newsletter is received by the mathematical community in Ireland. We wish him well as he moves on to other activities.*

*It is a pleasure also to welcome Martin Stynes as associate editor. We intend to continue the editorial policy already established, encouraging contributors to write in an expository style as far as possible. The current issue shows that, to a large extent, our aims in this direction are being met by authors.*

*It is interesting to notice, as well, that this issue contains a large proportion of articles and papers not written at the invitation of the editors. We would like to encourage this trend - perhaps it is a sign of increasing acceptance of the Newsletter as a repository for interesting mathematics, with a bias towards exposition aimed at a wide readership, rather than research. So keep those articles coming!*

*As always thanks are due to our typist Leslie Brookes, whose knowledge of mathematics ensures that proofreading becomes a very minor task, and to the NBSST for printing the Newsletter on behalf of the IMS.*

*Pat Fitzpatrick*