

PROFESSOR DAVID JEFFREY—AN APPRECIATION

One of David Jeffrey's commonest admonitions was to those who persistently miss-called him and addressed him as "Prof. Jeffreys". This would be politely corrected with the reminder that there was only one of him. This, in a nutshell, is the truth: there is only one of him and he has made a unique contribution to so many aspects of environmental science. Intertidal ecology has been only one of the many arrows to his bow.

His first degree was at Sheffield, which some might say showed remarkable (but typical) broad-mindedness for one born under the red rose, and this was followed by a PhD in Melbourne. Australia clearly inspired him, and he has maintained contact with friends and colleagues there throughout the years. Then followed four years at the fledgling University of Lancaster as a post-doc. Two of these years were spent on coastal ecology of Morecombe Bay, establishing his long interest in the intertidal zone. David Jeffrey came to the School of Botany in Trinity in 1969, although even then he would point out that his brief extended beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries and that he was appointed to teach Biology and not just Botany.

In the early 1970's he was drawn, by An Taisce, into the legal controversies regarding the North Bull Island. This led him to realise both the international value of the site, and the fact that a large amount of unpublished material existed. He proposed that a volume should be prepared bringing this material together. This was eventually published by the Royal Dublin Society in 1977 as "North Bull Island, Dublin Bay—a modern coastal natural history." This episode established an interest in environmental activism and in the value of presenting scientific studies to the public.

One of his plans for the future is an update and expansion of the latter volume in the light of the advances made largely as a result of his efforts. Over the years, David Jeffrey has been involved with Bull Island and its management in many ways, from the science underpinning the decisions, through its designation as a UNESCO Biosphere reserve and other national and international designations, to explaining its unique character and attractions to school children and the general public. That it has now achieved such recognition is due in no small part to his endeavours.

The Irish Estuaries Research Programme was another of David Jeffrey's innovations. Not only was it one of the first of many EC-funded sciences projects to come to Ireland it established an interdisciplinary strand of research that persists to the present day. Arising out of his interdisciplinary interests was the founding of the Environmental Sciences Unit (now the Centre for the Environment) in TCD and the introduction of the first MSc in Environmental Science in Ireland, followed a few years later by an undergraduate Environmental Sciences degree.

He has always been able to appreciate the broad view, and his publications reflect these wide interests with a volume on *Soil-Plant Relationships* (1987), two on *Bioindicators* (1991, 1994) and one on *The Heritage of Clonmacnoise* (1987). The last encompasses so many of David's personal ideals: the scientific and professional knowledge as the

basis for education (in its widest sense); the interdisciplinarity, this time bringing in historic and socio-economic expertise; and last but not least the creation of something out of (practically) nothing. Outside his professional life, he is a keen and knowledgeable gardener. His annual plant sale, assisted by his wife Janet, herself a teacher and a keen gardener, was initially on behalf of the local national school, later other charities. It raised such sums as to convince us that he could have done this for a living, and a very handsome one at that.

Over the years I have worked with him, I, like others, have always found him an encouraging and stimulating colleague, never short of new ideas or suggestions. All this he has done with the greatest good humour while never shirking his share, and sometimes more than his share, of the routine and administrative tasks. Although he will (officially) retire in 2003, he leaves a legacy of ideas, of initiatives and of concrete (literally) achievement for which we can all be grateful.

J.G. Wilson