'Small Places like St Helena have Big Questions to Ask' The Inaugural Lecture of a Professor of Island Geography Stephen A. Royle Queen's University Belfast Northern Ireland, United Kingdom s.royle@qub.ac.uk Abstract: This publication takes the form of a written version of my inaugural lecture, which was presented at Queen's University Belfast on 10 March 2010. It is more

personal and considerably more self-indulgent than would normally be acceptable in an article, with more of my own experiences and also my own references than would usually be considered proper. However, the heuristic of such a title as Professor of Island Geography is something of a marker of the maturity not just of me but maybe also for island studies. After a section describing my path into island geography, the lecture deals with the negativities of islands and the seeming futility of studying them, only then to identify a new or at least enhanced regard for islands as places with which to interact and to examine. Reference is made to islands throughout the world, but with some focus on the small islands off Ireland. The development of island studies as a discipline is then briefly described before the lecture concludes with reference to its title quotation on St Helena by considering that place's islandness and how this affects/influences it in both the 17th and 21st centuries. Keywords: island geography, island studies, Irish islands, St Helena © 2010 Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada.

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