



# Bulletin

## SURVEY SHOWS SUCCESS OF 1978 GRADUATES IN OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT

A survey conducted last November into the career progress of 1978 graduates of Athlone Regional Technical College shows that the remarkably high figure of 93% were already in employment or had gone on to further studies. At that time only 7% remained unemployed and it is believed that this figure has since been substantially reduced. The demand for students from some courses was so great that even the small number who had failed to complete the programme successfully were also immediately employed. This was true of the Science Technician Certificate (chemistry) and all three plastics programmes.

A total of 140 students graduated, 105 with certificates, 29 with diplomas and 6 with degree-equivalent awards. There

were 13 distinctions and 48 credits. The majority of the 29% of the graduates to go on to further education were drawn from this latter group.

In a comment on the figures the college principal, Dr. David Fenton, said that the good overall examination results reflected the high level of commitment by the staff and students of all three college departments, while the outstanding success on the jobs front demonstrated in the clearest possible way the relevance to industry and higher technology of the various programmes offered by the college. He added that staff kept in close touch with potential employers and in the light of these contacts, course content was constantly under review.

The following table shows the result of the survey:

Course	Total no. candidates	Total no. graduates	No. of passes	No. of credits	No. of distinctions	No. of graduates to enter further education	No. of graduates employed	No. of graduates unemployed
Business Studies Certificate	43	38	22	11	5	17	19	2
Science Technician Certificate (chemistry)	11	9	9	—	—	—	9	—
Science Technician Certificate (mineral science)	8	8	2	6	—	4	3	1
Mechanical Engineering Certificate	7	6	3	3	—	—	3	2*
Civil Engineering Certificate	14	14	6	3	5	7	6	1
Construction Studies Certificate	8	8	7	1	—	1	6	1
Plastics Engineering Certificate	17	14	10	2	2	6	8	—
College Certificate in Art & Design	8	8	2	6	—	1	3	3**
Diploma in Management Finance	17	17	4	12	1	—	16	1
Diploma in Mineral Science	5	5	4	1	—	—	5	—
Diploma in Plastics Engineering	9	7	4	3	—	4	3	—
Graduateship, Plastics and Rubber Institute	8	6	6	—	—	—	6	—
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>11</b>

\* Excludes one student on whom no information is available.

\*\* Excludes one mature student who did not seek employment.

### Minister for Education attends Graduation Ceremony

Mr. John Wilson, T.D., minister for education, was amongst the attendance at the college's award presentation ceremony on 10 November 1978. Mr. Wilson is shown (third from right) with (from left to right) Mr. P. MacDiarmada, director, National Council for Educational Awards (N.C.E.A.); Mr. P. Russell, chairman, board of management, Athlone R.T.C.; Dr. Tom Walsh, chairman, N.C.E.A.; Mrs. Mary O'Rourke, member, board of management, Athlone R.T.C.; and Dr. David Fenton, principal, Athlone R.T.C.



# Irish Industrial Explosives Ltd. present Scholarship



*Mrs. Mary O'Rourke, board of management, Athlone Regional Technical College, receives the Irish Industrial Explosives Ltd. Scholarship from Mr. Martin Kelly.*

Irish Industrial Explosives Ltd. has presented a scholarship valued at £750 to the college. The purpose of the scholarship is to subsidise students of mineral science while they are conducting field investigations. Presenting the award, Mr. Martin Kelly, managing director, Irish Industrial Explosives Ltd., expressed the hope that it would assist and encourage students to pursue courses in mineral science and

added that it represented a token of appreciation by his firm for the development of these courses at the college. Mrs. Mary O'Rourke, who replied on behalf of the college board of management, thanked Irish Industrial Explosives Ltd. for the award and Mr. Kelly for his kind words. She assured him of the college's commitment to the education of technologists for the mineral industries.

## SOCCKER STAR

Michael McEnroe, a second-year plastics student at Athlone Regional Technical College, played in goal for the Irish technical colleges soccer team in their 2-2 draw with the Welsh universities this year. He was also selected to play against the English universities but the match had to be postponed due to bad weather. Michael comes from Athlone, where he received his secondary education at St. Aloysius College. He started his football career with Athlone G.A.A. and played for Westmeath minors in 1977 and 1978 when he was named under-age footballer of the year for the county.



*Michael McEnroe*

## Paul Kerrigan: Industrious Scholar

An essential ingredient of any institution of higher education is original research work and one of the most active of the staff of Athlone Regional Technical College in this respect is Paul Kerrigan, lecturer in architecture. Paul is one of the best-known authorities in the country on architectural history. He studied at Brighton College of Art, Sussex, before qualifying as an architect in 1963. He subsequently worked in private practice and as assistant inspector of National Monuments, Office of Public Works, Dublin, before coming to Athlone in 1973. He is best known as an authority on fortifications and military buildings and in recent years has lectured to the Military History Society of Ireland, the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, the Ennis Archaeological Conference, the Irish Maritime Institute, the Industrial Archaeological Society of Ireland, and various local historical and archaeological groups. Amongst the more important of his recent publications are 'The defences of Ireland' series in *An Cosantoir, passim*; 'The Shannonbridge fortifications' in *The Irish Sword*, xi, no. 45; and 'The Batteries, Athlone' in *Old Athlone Society Journal*, i, no. 4. Forthcoming publications include 'Seventeenth century fortifications, forts and garrisons in Ireland' in *The Irish Sword* and 'The Shannon defence works' in *Midland studies in memory of N.W. English*. He is also collaborating with Andrew Saunders, chief inspector of ancient monuments, Department of the Environment, London, on the Irish aspect of the Leverhulme Trust sponsored *Forts and fortifications*.



Paul Kerrigan at the drawing-board.

## SEMINAR FOR CAREERS TEACHERS



Photographed at the seminar for careers teachers organised by Athlone Regional Technical College were (left to right): Mr. P. MacDiarmada, director, National Council for Educational Awards; Dr. David Fenton, principal, Athlone R.T.C.; Sister Joseph, St. Joseph's and St. Saran's Fербane; Mr. G. Gray, head of business studies, Athlone R.T.C.; and Mr. John Maher, principal, Mullingar Vocational School.

Over forty teachers involved in careers counselling in secondary schools attended a careers seminar organised by the college on 2 March 1979. Welcoming the attendance Dr. David Fenton, the college principal, outlined the role of the college since 1969 in providing technical and technological education to meet the growing demand of industry in the midlands. The continued growth in the number of students seeking places at the college had necessitated a new extension which was already under construction. In general he felt that Irish students were forced to make a career selection at a comparatively early age and this meant that the role of the career counsellor in advising them was one of particular responsibility. He hoped the seminar would inform them more fully on the large number of courses available at Athlone Regional Technical College and the sort of employment prospects which they generated.

Mr. T. Rochford, midland regional manager of the Industrial Development Authority, told the seminar that the traditional bulwarks of employment such as the civil service and the various state bodies would be unable to absorb the large number of job-seekers coming on to the labour market in future years and it was clear that the main employment opportunities would arise in the industrial area, crafts and the scientific and technical fields.

Other speakers were Mr. P. MacDiarmada, director, National Council for Educational Awards; Mr. Pat Rafter, Gulf and Western Ltd.; Mr. C. Dunlop, G.A.F. (Ireland) Ltd.; Mr. V. Byrne, Rio Finex; Mr. Noel O'Shaughnessy, Department of Education; Mr. G. Gray, head of business studies, Athlone R.T.C.; Dr. J. Murphy, head of science, Athlone R.T.C.; and Mr. A. Hinton, head of engineering, Athlone R.T.C.

# £1,000 Ulster Bank Scholarship



Miss Betty Horan is presented with the first instalment of the Ulster Bank Scholarship by Mr. D. Fay, area manager, Ulster Bank Ltd.

The Ulster Bank Ltd. awarded a £1,000 scholarship tenable over a three-year period to Miss Betty Horan of Ballinakill, Moate, Co. Westmeath. Miss Horan won the scholarship on the basis of her leaving certificate examination results and an interview. She is now enrolled in the professional accountancy course at Athlone Regional Technical College and hopes to be a fully qualified accountant after three years study. She is a registered student of the Association of Certified Accountants and sits her first professional examination in June 1979.

## Chamber of Commerce President



Dr. David Fenton, principal Athlone Regional Technical College, who is currently president of Athlone Chamber of Commerce. He is also chairman of Athlone Tourism Subcommittee.

## U.S.I. Vice-President



Kieran Burns

Kieran Burns of the college Students' Union has been elected vice-president in charge of welfare of the Union of Students in Ireland. He takes up his duties in July 1979 and will remain in office for a year. His particular responsibility will be to deal with health, accommodation, family-planning and welfare matters as they affect students in the universities and technological colleges in both north and south. His election is regarded as something of a breakthrough for regional college students as he is one of the first from this sector to hold high office in the national student movement. He is also incoming president of the college Students' Union. Kieran is a second-year business studies student at Athlone and comes from Ballinasloe. He received his secondary education at the Cistercian College of Mount St. Joseph, Roscrea.

## Technology and Scholarship in the Midlands Series

When Athlone Regional Technical College first opened in 1970, higher education in the Irish midlands may be said to have formally commenced. However, over the preceding centuries, there were many who showed distinction in science, engineering, architecture, scholarship and the learned professions and who either originated in the midland area or spent a significant portion of their careers here. Collectively they laid foundations of a tradition of technology and scholarship of which the college is in a certain sense the successor. The series which here commences, and which will be continued in future issues of the *Bulletin*, will give a brief appreciation of the careers of the more distinguished of this group.

1. MILES SYMNER (c. 1610-86), mathematician and engineer. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin, which he entered as a scholar in 1626, he afterwards took orders in the Church of Ireland and was beneficed in the diocese of Elphin. He was one of the earliest in seventeenth century Ireland to reject scholastic philosophy in favour of the new experimental learning associated with the genesis of modern science. He corresponded with Robert Boyle, Thomas Salesbury — the English translator of Galileo — and Samuel Hartlib, the tireless deviser of scientific schemes with whom he collaborated on an abortive plan to publish an enlarged edition of Gerard Boate's *Ireland's natural history*. Symner turned to military life during the upheavals of the 1640s and held the rank of major and the post of chief engineer in the parliamentary army. In this capacity his principal association with the midlands arose, for between 1651 and 1654 he was much involved in the erection of costly modern fortifications at Athlone. With Sir William Petty he played an important role in the implementation of the Cromwellian land settlement. In 1652 Symner was appointed first professor of mathematics at Trinity College, Dublin, a post which was the special creation of the parliamentary commissioners and which as a consequence lapsed at the restoration in 1660. Complaining that 'the times had lately frowned upon him' Symner returned to his old career as a clergyman. However, on the revival of the chair of mathematics at Trinity in 1675, Symner was re-appointed and retained the post until his death in 1686. In his role as a teacher he is thought to have been an important influence on those who founded the Dublin Philosophical Society in 1683, the short-lived Irish equivalent of the Royal Society and the Académie des Sciences of Paris.

Athlone R.T.C. Bulletin is edited by Harman Murtagh.