



Bulletin

UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND FOR PLACES

Student numbers at the Regional Technical College, Athlone, are at an all-time high. There has been an unprecedented demand for places in the current session. Enrolment in full-time day courses now stands at 618, an increase of 35% on the figure for 1980/81. The National Certificate in Business Studies, year 1, with 84 students, has the largest enrolment of any course in the college. This represents an increase of 31% on the figure for this course last year. With 42 students enrolled, the first-year science technician's course rates second in terms of size. Here, again, numbers are substantially in excess of those enrolled in 1980/81.

Amongst the wide range of engineering courses on offer, all show an increase in student numbers which is most marked

in first-year electronic engineering (154% increase on 1980/81) and construction studies (63%). Enrolment in catering management, secretarial studies, art and design, mineral science, plastics and civil engineering is in all cases higher than last year. The steady increase in demand for places on most courses over the past few years, although not as dramatic as in the current session, has had the consequence that the second, third and fourth years of courses at the college are also at record levels in terms of student numbers. To these figures must be added part-time, day-release, evening and apprenticeship students whose total enrolment in 1980/81, it is anticipated, will be in excess of one thousand.

MINISTER PAYS TRIBUTE TO WORK OF COLLEGE



Photographed together at the conferring of awards ceremony at R.T.C., Athlone, Mr. Patrick Cooney, T.D., minister for transport and posts and telegraphs (left) and Mr. Sean O'Lochlainn, C.E.O., Co. Westmeath V.E.C.

Mr. Patrick Cooney, T.D., minister for transport and posts and telegraphs, recently praised the work of the Regional Technical College, Athlone. Speaking at the conferring of students ceremony at the college on Friday, 6 November 1981, the minister said that the college had pioneered the formalisation of third-level education in the midlands. Since its establishment in 1969 it had developed and broadened its range of activities to meet the changing needs of the modern technological environment. As a result a whole range of career-oriented courses was available to students in the region, ranging from apprentice to full professional studies.

The college was making a vitally important contribution to the disciplines of engineering, science and business. It had become a focal point for the educational and training requirements of the region. The recent completion of a large extension, designed to complement and expand the existing facilities, had been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the demand for places at the college.

Mr. Cooney said that the recognition of the college by the minister for education as a centre of training for the hotel and catering industry had added a whole new dimension to its work.

LIBERAL STUDIES AWARD



Miss Ann Rowan

Miss Ann Rowan was presented with the AIB Medallion and Father Foy Trophy for best liberal studies project. Miss Rowan took as her thesis theme: 'Illegitimacy and the Irish law'. Her painstaking work was lauded by the liberal studies external examiners as a positive contribution to the literature on a subject of growing social importance. Miss Rowan is a business studies student and pursued her secondary education at La Sainte Union Convent, Banagher and the Convent of Mercy, Ballymahon, Co. Longford.

CIARAN DIFFLEY

Mr. Ciaran Diffley, Clonbrock, Killashee, Co. Longford, who graduated from the Regional Technical College, Athlone, with the National Certificate in Civil Engineering at distinction level in 1980 has passed with distinction the National Diploma in Civil Engineering (Structures) examination (summer 1981) at the College of Technology, Bolton Street, Dublin. Mr. Diffley also obtained first place in the diploma examinations and because of his outstanding achievements has been admitted to the degree course in structural engineering in Bolton Street.

CONFERRING DAY 1981

An t-Uas. Pádraig MacDiarmada, director, National Council for Educational Awards, conferred 125 national certificates and diplomas on successful students at the annual conferring ceremony on 6 November 1981 in R.T.C., Athlone. Also conferred were six graduateships of the Plastics and Rubber Institute, three college certificates and twenty-three department of education trade certificates. A number of special prizes were presented for outstanding achievements in academic and sporting fields.

Congratulating the successful students and their parents, an t-Uas. MacDiarmada drew attention to the heavy cost of securing the necessary additional resources for the development of education in Ireland. In an effort to maximise utilisation of

such resources his council, he said, would welcome the provision in the regional technical colleges on a part-time or evening basis of many courses that were currently only available full-time. Part of the additional demand for education stemmed from the desire of many to update their knowledge in an era of increasing technological sophistication. Increased leisure time and the desire to return to education by those people who never had a decent first chance were further factors stimulating demand. N.C.E.A. was willing and obliged to facilitate developments to meet these needs, while at all times ensuring that academic standards were safeguarded and maintained throughout.

ALLIED IRISH BANKS AWARDS



Winners of Allied Irish Banks Awards for achievements in 1980-81 academic year were (left to right): Michael O'Beirne (academic achievement), Ann Rowan (liberal studies), Noel Higgins (senior apprentice), Stephen Hanratty (sportsman of the year), and Eileen Kinsella (sportswoman of the year). Also included (right) is Mr. Patrick Barry, Allied Irish Banks, who presented the awards.

PRINCIPAL'S AWARD



Pictured after the conferring of awards ceremony is (centre) Frank McDermott of Geashill, Co. Offaly, who won the Principal's Award. He obtained his National Diploma in Mineral Science with distinction, receiving the highest overall marks of any student in the college in the 1981 examinations. He has now been accepted to read for an M.Sc. in the department of geology, Trinity College, Dublin. Also included in photograph are (left) Mr. E. Cowan, regional manager, Bank of Ireland, who sponsored the award, and Dr. David Fenton, college principal.

BAYER SCHOLARSHIP



Mr. Michael Vickers, Bayer (Ireland) Limited (left) and Padraig Troy.

Seventeen-year-old Padraig Troy from Ballynacargy, Co. Westmeath, has won the Bayer Scholarship Award to pursue a plastics engineering course at the Regional Technical College, Athlone. Padraig was presented with his cheque for £1,000 to cover the first year of the course, by Mr. Michael Vickers of Bayer (Ireland) Limited at the college's annual conferring ceremony. The course extends over four years and leads to a graduateship of the Plastics and Rubber Institute of London. This is a professional qualification with degree level status. Studies cover all aspects of manufacturing, processing and testing of polymers with particular emphasis on manufacturing processes. The industrial emphasis of the course is particularly suitable to the needs of the Irish plastics industry. Graduates of the course should find suitable employment in technical sales, production or process developments. Graduates from the course have a record of readily finding jobs appropriate to their qualifications within Ireland. The plastics engineering sector has a total of 200 firms in operation here and had a turnover of £132 million in 1979.

PHILLIPS PETROLEUM LTD. SCHOLARSHIP



Ciaran Manning (centre) recipient of the Phillips Petroleum Ltd. Scholarship pictured with (left) Mr. Rab McEwan, Phillips Petroleum Ltd., and Mr. D. Devlin, lecturer in plastics, R.T.C., Athlone.

GENTEX (1975) LTD. AWARD



Helen Tuffy (left) is congratulated by Mr. C. Reid, Gentex (1975) Ltd. on her success in winning the Gentex (1975) Ltd. Award. Helen produced a design which was subsequently used by the company on the packaging of continental quilts in their Constellation range.

Cassis

Falaise
 Qui inspire le malaise.
 Échos de la pétanque
 Aux profondeurs des calanques.
 Dans les cafés
 Une grande série de contes
 De fée
 Concernant les exploits
 Renommés
 Des anciens pirates de Barbarie.

Translation:

Dominant cliff/inspiring malaise./The clicking of the metal balls of the pétanque/came echoing down the depths of the sea inlets./In the cafés/a crowd telling fantastic tales/of the renowned exploits/of the ancient Barbary pirates.

— Colm Caffrey, M.A.

Technology and Scholarship in the Midlands Series

When the Regional Technical College, Athlone, 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 the foundations of a tradition in technology and scholarship of which the college is in a certain sense the successor. The series which is continued here gives a brief appreciation of the careers of the more distinguished of this group.

6. William James MacNevin (1763-1841), physician, chemist and revolutionary. Born into a family of decayed catholic gentry at Ballinahown, Aghrim, Co. Galway, MacNevin was educated locally before being sent about the age of ten to Prague to continue his studies under the supervision of his uncle, Baron William MacNevin-O'Kelly, dean of the medical faculty at Prague University. He became an accomplished linguist and classical scholar. In 1784 he qualified as a doctor at Vienna and returned to Dublin the same year where he soon established himself as a successful medical practitioner. He took a keen interest in public affairs in Ireland, progressing from membership of the Catholic Committee to the executive of the United Irishmen where he was a close associate of such figures as Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Thomas Addis Emmet and Arthur O'Connor. His character and ability impressed all who encountered him. He was arrested in 1798 as one of the ringleaders of the revolutionary movement and remained in confinement until 1802 when he was permitted to go to France. He joined Napoleon's army with the rank of captain but, disappointed at the French failure to invade Ireland, he resigned his commission and emigrated to the United States in 1805. In America his academic career blossomed. Two years after his arrival he delivered a course of lectures in clinical medicine at the recently established College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York to which he was appointed professor of midwifery in 1808. In 1810 he became professor of chemistry and in 1816 was appointed to the chair of materia medica. In 1826 he was associated with the establishment of Rutgers Medical College in New York, a foundation whose short and controversial life led to the reorganisation of the university of the state of New York. He established the first chemical research laboratory in New York and pioneered the application of chemistry to geology and agriculture. His analyses of potash, barytes, and dolomite together with his meticulous study of the mineral waters of New Jersey appeared in French and German scientific journals. His best known scientific work on the exposition of the atomic theory was published in New York in 1820 and later reprinted in French. In 1821 he published an enlarged edition of Brande's *Chemistry*. He was for many years co-editor of the *New York Medical and Philosophical Journal* and a member of the American Philosophical Society. His academic pursuits did not prevent him from playing an active role in American public life where he supported in particular Irish emigrants to America and the cause of Irish nationalism. He published numerous political tracts and literary works. Dr. MacNevin died in 1841 and is buried beneath an impressive monument in St. Paul's churchyard, New York.

ABILYMPIC ARTIST

Among the ten skilled people picked to represent Ireland in the International Abilitylympics held recently in Tokyo was Seamus Doyle, a native of Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford, and a student of construction studies at the Regional Technical College, Athlone. Seamus is a self-taught artist who has been painting for the past six years. His work includes portraits and landscapes. He was selected for the team following a national assessment which led to the Ability Exhibition held in the Mansion House, Dublin, last June. The assessments were made by the National Rehabilitation Board. As 1981 has been designated the International Year of the Disabled Persons, the Abilitylympic event has been made international for the first time. The word Abilitylympic was formed by combining 'ability' and 'olympics' and means the olympics of ability.

Mineral Science students visit Boart Hardmetals (Europe) Limited



Included in photograph taken in the board room of Boart Hardmetals (Europe) Limited are front (left to right): Jarlath McNamara, Monica Seery, Padraig Duffy, rear (left to right): Neville Lloyd, product development engineer, Frank O'Gorman, marketing sales manager, Boart Hardmetals (Europe) Limited, John Hamilton, lecturer in mineral science, and Nigel Foley-Fisher, mineral science course co-ordinator, Regional Technical College, Athlone.

As part of the 1980/81 field work programme, second year mineral science students of R.T.C., Athlone, visited the factory of Boart Hardmetals (Europe) Limited at Shannon Airport, Co. Clare. The company, which has world-wide subsidiaries, manufactures a full range of rotary percussive rock drilling tools and accessories for the mining, quarrying and civil engineering industries. The visit on 6 April 1981, at the invitation of the company, was followed by ten days of geological mapping and field investigations in Counties Limerick and Kerry. Industrial visits and field work are important integral parts of the mineral science courses at the college.

In November, Boart Hardmetals (Europe) Limited in conjunction with Tara Mines Limited, Roadstone Limited and Irish Industrial Explosives Limited cooperated with the college in hosting a three-day symposium entitled *The drilling of rock for blasting*. Mining and quarrying engineers were invited from Ireland and overseas to attend this forum and associated activities.

National University tribute to Jack McCann



Dr. Jack McCann

Jack McCann, the president of the Irish Vocational Education Association and Co. Offaly Vocational Education Committee representative on the board of management of R.T.C., Athlone, was conferred this year with the degree of Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) by the National University of Ireland. At the ceremony many tributes were paid to Dr. McCann and to the work done by the vocational education sector over the past fifty years. Dr. McCann is also a member of the National Council for Educational Awards.

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