



Bulletin

OPEN DAY 1981

A large number of secondary and vocational schools in the midlands were represented at a most successful Open Day held in the Regional Technical College, Athlone, on 20 March 1981. The occasion was organised to enable second-level students, parents, teachers and the public to visit the college, view the facilities, and become more familiar with the courses available and the career prospects for graduates. The enthusiastic response is best highlighted by the fact that close to a thousand students attended. This was very encouraging and the management and staff of the college greatly appreciate the interest shown by the schools concerned.

During the day visitors went on a conducted tour of the college and attended a series of talks on the courses provided by the schools of engineering, business studies and science. Staff from each school were available for discussion and to answer queries. A documentary film on the college was shown at intervals, and the demonstrations and experiments on display offered further insight into the practical aspects of the courses concerned.

While Open Day is designed to cater for a large number on a formalised basis, the college wishes to emphasise that the same service is available at a personal level to interested individuals throughout the year. Enquiries about courses and related matters are always welcome and should be made initially either to the principal, the head of the particular school or any of the department heads. If you require additional information please ask; every effort will be made to assist you.

FULL-TIME DAY COURSES AT R.T.C., ATHLONE, 1981-82

- National Certificate in Secretarial Studies
- National Certificate in Business Studies
- National Diploma in Business Studies (Management Finance)
- National Diploma in Computer Programming
- National Certificate in Catering Management
- Certificate in Art & Design
- Professional Accountancy
- Foundation Certificate in Visual Education
- National Certificate in Civil Engineering
- National Certificate in Construction Studies
- National Certificate in Construction Studies (Farm Buildings)
- National Certificate in Electronic Engineering
- National Certificate in Mechanical Engineering
- National Certificate in Plastics Engineering
- National Diploma in Plastics Engineering
- Graduateship of the Plastics and Rubber Institute
- Bachelor of Engineering Degree in Polymer Engineering
- National Certificate in Science (Applied Chemistry)
- National Certificate in Science (Applied Biology)
- National Diploma in Applied Science (Analysis)
- National Certificate in Mineral Science
- National Diploma in Mineral Science



The Regional Technical College, Athlone, at night.

SPORTS TEAMS TRIUMPH



Members of R.T.C., Athlone, hurling team, who won their division of the All-Ireland Higher Education Hurling League are shown here receiving a special award from Mr. M. King, Ulster Bank, Athlone, following an exhibition match. Picture shows back (left to right): Stephen Hanratty, Brendan Coffey (team P.R.O.) and Noel Molloy. Front (left to right): Michael Kinsella, Mr. M. King, Ulster Bank, Michael Kenny (Captain) and Pat Cleary. Also on the winning team were: D. Fox, J. Donnelly, C. Spain, E. O'Brien, J. Sullivan, P. Finnerty, J. Grehan, M. Corrigan, P. Cleary, M. Cleary, M. Morony, J. Carey, C. McIntyre, B. Egan and E. Flaherty. The team was coached by Mark Doyle and Camillus King, staff members, R.T.C., Athlone.



R.T.C., Athlone, Gaelic football team who went all the way to the final in the Higher Education League, division three, where they were narrowly defeated in extra time by Carysfort College. The team was coached by Mr. A. Dunne, staff member, R.T.C., Athlone. Picture shows back (left to right): M. McEnroe, B. Crowley, C. Conneely, A. Brennan, D. Mannion, J. Quigley, L. Dunne, F. Mullen. Front (left to right): J. McNeill, D. Dowd, M. Tiernan, D. Mulooley, S. Hanratty, P. Grennan, E. Murray.

Harbison Memorial Prize

A civil engineering student at R.T.C., Athlone, Mr. John K. Connolly of Cloncoose, Co. Longford, was awarded the 1980 Harbison Memorial Prize. This award is made annually by the National Council for Educational Awards to the best civil engineering student taking the National Certificate in Civil Engineering examinations.

Mr. Connolly is now studying for the National Diploma in Civil Engineering (Structures) at the College of Technology, Bolton St., Dublin.



Picture shows left to right: Dr. P. Mulhern, head of school of engineering, R.T.C., Athlone; Mrs. Eleanor Harbison; Professor John O'Donnell, chairman of board of studies, construction and civil engineering, N.C.E.A.; the winner Mr. John K. Connolly and his parents Mr. and Mrs. J. Connolly.



Les sons martiaux chantant de l'orchestre
 Du premier régiment
 De l'infanterie étrangère
 Passant noblement et triomphalement
 Vers le fort St. Jean
 Inspirant ardeur
 Au sein des passants
 Vers le vieux port excitant
 Où les yachts attendent
 Avant de prendre le large
 Vers la Côte d'Azur et l'aventure.

(The musical martial sound of the band/of the first regiment/
 of the Foreign Legion/passing nobly and triumphantly/to the
 fort of St. John/inspiring ardour/in the breasts of the passers-by/
 towards the exciting old port/where the yachts await at anchor/
 before heading out to open sea/to the Côte d'Azur and splendid
 adventure.)

— Colm Caffrey, M.A.

COURSE ON EXPORT PROCEDURE AND DOCUMENTATION



Twenty-six participants from industrial firms in the midlands and west attended a two-day course in export procedure and documentation held at R.T.C., Athlone on 1-2 April 1981. The course, which is part of the college's overall programme to meet the education and training needs of industry, commerce and the public service in the region, was organised in conjunction with C oras Tr acht ala. Included in the photograph are Sheila Blake, manager of the trade information section, C oras Tr acht ala, Sally O'Reilly, C oras Tr acht ala and John Cusack, head of the management and computer studies department, Regional Technical College, Athlone.

COLLEGE PICTURE COLLECTION



Michael Farrell, *The little tent of blue that sometimes prisoners call the sky* (1978)

In conjunction with the Arts Council, the college has over the last seven years acquired some twenty-five works by modern Irish artists. The pictures are hung throughout the college, and are thought to represent the best collection of modern Irish art on public display in the midlands. Further items are annually added and some works have been loaned to exhibitions elsewhere, including the Edinburgh Festival. Amongst the artists represented in the collection are Maurice MacGonigal, *Currachs*

Connemara, Louis le Brocqy, *Study towards an image of W.B. Yeats*, Charles Harper, *Heliocentric timespot*, Tom Carr, *Snowscene*, Colin Middleton, *Birds on wire*, Robert Ballagh, *Delacroix print*, Barry Cooke, *Sleeping figure* and Thomas Ryan, *Snowy road*. Recent acquisitions include Anne Yeats, *Plane II*, Simon O'Donnell, *Milton Friedmania* and Michael Kane, *Head V*.



Martin Gale, *Artichoke window*

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.

5. Charles Algernon Parsons (1854 - 1931), engineer. The youngest of the six sons of William Parsons, third earl of Rosse, the celebrated astronomer [q.v.], he was educated privately at the family home in Birr, Co. Offaly where, from childhood, he was fascinated by mechanical toys and spent much of his time in his father's workshop. At seventeen he won an entrance scholarship to Trinity College, Dublin, and after two years went on to St. John's College, Cambridge, where he was noted for his unconventional behaviour and his distinction at mathematics. After serving his apprenticeship as an engineer, Parsons experimented with torpedoes and rockets, before developing his most famous and important invention, the steam turbine engine of 1884. In this he overcame the practical difficulties of using steam to directly drive electric dynamos by subdividing the whole expansion of steam into a number of stages so that only comparatively moderate velocities had to be dealt with. This principle still forms the basis of all efficient turbine design. His firm, C.A. Parsons and Company of Newcastle, developed the first turbo-generating power stations and later the first turbo-alternators. The use of steam turbines for the propulsion of ships was another advance, introduced to a disbelieving public and sceptical admiralty in highly dramatic circumstances. In 1897 at the jubilee naval review, Parsons created a sensation by racing in and out through the lines of warships in his turbine-driven *Turbinia* at over thirty-four knots, a speed far in excess of that attained by the posse of naval craft despatched in pursuit by the infuriated admirals. It was a gesture that admirably reflected the 'eccentric gentleman-inventor' side of Parsons's character. Subsequently the steam turbine was adopted for use in all classes of ships, including the great trans-Atlantic liners and today still drives many of the world's largest vessels. Parsons also did important work in improving the design of ships' propellers, was a major figure in the advance of optics and even invented a steam-driven helicopter which as early as 1893 was able to lift itself several feet into the air. Charles Algernon Parsons was without any doubt the most distinguished Irish engineer of all time and in world terms one of the shapers of the twentieth century. The authoritative *Dictionary of national biography* rates him the most original engineer to work in Britain since John Watt, an accolade that places him ahead even of such giants as Thomas Telford and I.K. Brunel. Clearly the under-developed Ireland of his time was too small a stage for an engineer of such genius, but Parsons never lost interest in the land of his fathers and, before his death, was the recipient, amongst his many other honours, of an honorary degree from T.C.D. On 12 March 1981 he was one of four Irish inventors commemorated by a special issue of postage stamps under the general title Irish science and technology. The stamp, which is the 16p denomination, features a portrait of Parsons and a drawing of his celebrated steam turbine of 1884.



1981 stamp depicting C.A. Parsons and his steam turbine.

International Catering Exhibition Success

At the International Catering Exhibition in the R.D.S., Dublin, three students of the college catering school won top awards. Ms. Catherine Diviney was awarded a gold medal for her *coq-au-vin*. Sergeant Danny McConnell was also a gold medallist for his *chicken Marengo* and Private Patrick Shields received a bronze medal for his *cutlets reforme*. Ms. Diviney is a whole-time student in the college while Sergeant McConnell and Private Shields serve with the army in Custume Barracks, Athlone, and attend the college as day-release students.



Left to right (top): Captain R. O'Leary, command catering adviser, western command; Pte. Pat Shields; Mr. J. Ryan, head of catering section, R.T.C., Athlone and Sergeant Danny McConnell.

Left to right (bottom): Mr. M. Gantley, food production lecturer, R.T.C., Athlone; Ms. K. McNulty, food production lecturer, R.T.C., Athlone and Ms. Catherine Diviney.

A.C.A. Jubilee Scholarship awarded to Declan Connolly

The Association of Certified Accountants has awarded its prestigious 1981-82 Jubilee Scholarship to Declan Connolly, A.C.C.A. Declan, a native of Ballynacargy, Co. Westmeath, completed his full-time education at R.T.C., Athlone, where he obtained a National Certificate in Business Studies with distinction in 1975 and a National Diploma in Management Finance with distinction in 1976.

He then moved to London to work firstly as a trainee accountant and then later as assistant to the group accountant of Hunting Associated Industries. He joined the Fred Olsen Group in 1978, becoming deputy financial accountant and then financial accountant in 1980. In 1979 he completed the professional examinations of the Association of Certified Accountants and was admitted to associate membership in 1980.

The Jubilee Scholarship is awarded each year to allow the recipient to pursue a course for an approved university or C.N.A.A. higher degree specialising in accounting or other related subject. Declan plans to use his award to read for an M.B.A. at Trinity College, Dublin.

R.T.C., Athlone, Bulletin is edited by
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