

Newbattle News

The latest news from Scotland's life changing college



March 2009

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Welcome to the Spring edition of Newbattle News.

In this edition of Newbattle News, the very first of 2009, we will share with you some of our most recent developments and activities in and around Newbattle Abbey College.

To celebrate homecoming we decided to hold a Burns supper with a difference incorporating our work in Burma. This was a hugely successful night and we were thrilled to welcome John Htetkin, a prominent member of the Burmese community present as our guest speaker.

We also recently took part in a wonderful star gazing evening to celebrate the International Year of Astronomy and last month introduced Beekeeping classes to students and staff, courtesy of Depute Principal Norah Fitzcharles.

We will also welcome representatives from the HMIe later this month and visitors from the USA. Read on for more information on the above and lots more interesting stories in the Spring edition of Newbattle News.



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For further information on Newbattle Abbey College please contact 0131 663 1921 or visit www.newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk.

A Burns Supper with a Burmese twist!

The college recently held a Burns Supper which united the work of Scotland's national Bard, with the people and culture of Burma.

The supper was run in partnership with the Burma Educational Scholarship Trust (BEST), who help us deliver English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses to political refugees in Burma. Through our links with BEST, we have also welcomed three Burmese students to study at the College over the past few years.

The Burns Supper brought together College staff and students, and guest speaker John Htetkin, a prominent member of the Burmese community

Having piped in the haggis, Fergus Cook kicked off the night of celebrations by leading the toast. After tucking into haggis, neeps and tatties, three Newbattle



students provided after dinner speeches. Colin McLachlan delivered the immortal memory based on 'A Mans a Man for a' That' which reflected the theme of the evening, which was 'the rights of man and woman'. Following this, Stuart Dinning led the Toast to the Lassies and Cassandra Johnston delivered the Reply before the night was rounded off with a traditional Scottish ceilidh.

Newbattle Abbey College Principal, Ann Southwood, said: "The night was an astounding success and staff, students and guests all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The Burmese theme was a great way to bring the two cultures together and highlighted the plight of the people of Burma, as well as raising awareness of the work being carried out to provide educational opportunities for Burmese people in Scotland."



Reach for the stars

Students and staff at Newbattle Abbey College were seeing stars after the college held its first ever Star Gazing event.

The event, which was run in conjunction with the Forestry Commission and Dark Sky Scotland, was held to mark the International Year of Astronomy, which

commemorates the 400th anniversary of Galileo's use of a telescope to study the night sky.

Twenty-two students and staff took part in the event and were provided with star gazing equipment, including an inflatable Planetarium, which was erected in the college's Drawing room enabling all those who took part to closely study the planets and stars in both the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

Norah Fitzcharles, Depute Principal of Newbattle Abbey College, said: "Thanks to clear skies on the night, we were able to get great views of many planets and constellations. We were very grateful to have experts from Dark Sky Scotland on hand to answer any questions we had. Learning about the night sky helped us find out more about how the universe works and we were delighted to be involved with this event."



There's a buzz about Newbattle Abbey College

The college is helping to halt the decline of the UK honey bee by running beekeeping classes for staff and students.

The classes will give students and staff the chance to learn more about the art of beekeeping and the reasons behind the recent decline.

Although the beekeeping classes are out with the College curriculum, a number of students and staff have already put their names forward for the fascinating course. The classes will run on Wednesday evenings up to the Easter holidays, by which time, the bees should be awake and ready to start collecting pollen.

Classes will be delivered by the college Depute Principal Norah Fitzcharles, who is a keen beekeeper in her spare time. Norah said: "I'm delighted to be able to share my skills and experience with students and fellow staff. Hopefully each person taking part in the course will be able to take home their very own 'Newbattle honey' in June!"

Newbattle welcomes students from the USA



Later this month, we will welcome students from the University of Wisconsin in the USA when they arrive in Scotland to study at Dalkeith Palace for a semester.

University of Wisconsin students have been coming to Dalkeith Palace since 1985 and around 80 students are expected in this year's Spring intake. The American visitors will receive a tour of Newbattle Abbey College and learn about the college's fascinating history during their visit.

Rae McGee, Heritage Development Officer at Newbattle Abbey College, was instrumental in organising the students visit to Newbattle. Rae said: "The University of Wisconsin has been bringing students to Scotland for many years. By staying in such a historic building, students can learn first-hand about much of Scotland's fascinating history. Dalkeith Palace was home to the Buccleuch family from 1642 through to 1914 and has welcomed guests including Bonnie Prince Charlie, and Queen Victoria in 1856.

"We are looking forward to welcoming the next intake of exchange students to the college and are thrilled to have the opportunity to share Newbattle's fascinating history with our visitors from across the pond."

HMIe visit



This month, we will welcome representatives from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) as they make their annual visit to the college.

Last year, we received a glowing report from HMIe, and we hope to achieve the same successes this year. Areas highlighted for praise in last year's report included our learning and teaching, and guidance and support, which HMIe found to be 'Very Good'. The college's learning process and outcomes, educational leadership, direction and management, access and inclusion, resources and services to support the learner, staff, quality assurance and quality improvement all received 'Good' results from the inspection.

Funding update

Our recent funding applications for a new state-of-the-art bridge linking Newbattle Abbey College to the magnificent Lord Ancrum's Wood, is coming together nicely.

Together with the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS), we plan to make the woodland even more accessible by replacing the current Grotto Bridge with a new stress laminated timber bridge.

The original wooden Grotto Bridge was constructed in the 1940s by the Army when they occupied the Newbattle estate and site. It has now reached the end of its life and a more modern bridge is planned to replace it. The new bridge, which is dependent upon a successful grant application, will replace the original bridge in order to provide even greater public access to the unique woodlands in the College grounds.

Blended learning

From September, we will be offering the Newbattle Abbey Arts and Humanities Award on a part-time basis for those students who are unable to commit to a full year residential course.

This will be available via blended learning, incorporating classroom learning with online learning, allowing students to study on a part-time basis over a two year period.

Thanks to an additional grant of £200,000 from the Scottish Funding Council, we have been able to develop our ICT Infrastructure. This development has allowed us to incorporate the blended learning approach into our curriculum.

For further information on studying at the college on a part time basis please

contact 0131 663 1921 or email office@newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk.

Students get creative

Students at Newbattle Abbey College had the pleasure of welcoming film director Robert Rea and professional dancer Laura Proudfoot to the college this month as they held creative film and dance workshops.

Robert is known for his work on the film, Trouble Sleeping, which tells the tale of a Palestinian refugee living in Scotland and was screened on the BBC last year. He is currently the director of the Theatre Workshop in Edinburgh while professional dancer Laura is currently is currently a lecturer in Dance at Telford College.

Gill Turner, Curriculum Manager at Newbattle Abbey College, arranged for Robert and Laura to visit the college. Gill said: "We were thrilled to have Robert and Laura come to the college to hold workshops. The students seemed to really enjoy themselves. Laura's class, Jazz funk, was really good fun and really got the students moving while Roberts workshop tied in excellently with some of the Human Rights issues students are writing about in class."

Expo 2009

Newbattle Abbey College is strengthening Midlothian's representation at the VisitScotland Expo 2009 attending with the Scottish Mining Museum, Dalhousie Castle, Rosslyn Chapel and Snow Sports Centre.

VisitScotland Expo is Scotland's only business to business event for the tourism sector. Midlothian Tourism forum approached Newbattle in January to ask if they would be part of their showcase for this years event.

Heritage Development Officer at Newbattle Abbey College, Rae McGhee said: "The opportunity of demonstrating to the rest of the tourism industry our facilities at Newbattle Abbey College was too good to miss! We are thrilled to be part of this years VisitScotland Expo and are keen to showcase our excellent tours, bed and breakfast facilities and conference facilities. The beautiful setting of Newbattle is also ideal for small weddings, christenings, funerals and much more!"

Events at Newbattle Abbey College

The historic backdrop of Newbattle Abbey makes the perfect setting for christenings, weddings, funerals or blessings.

The small, intimate Chapel seats a maximum of 50 people. For more information on booking a ceremony or a tour please contact 0131 663 1921 or email office@newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk



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