

## THE NEWBATTLE ABBEY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE GARY TRAILL

I am writing this piece about my own personal experience and benefits I have gained from Newbattle Abbey, for inclusion within the local newspaper. I hope this will give people the confidence and encouragement to consider applying.

My own experience of education was a very traumatic and unhappy one from my very first days of primary school through to the last day of secondary school. Upon leaving school at 16 years, I had no qualifications to speak of and no hopes or dreams of any kind. The feelings of joy and happiness when I vowed never to return to education again!

Due to my lack of qualifications I went into retail jobs and was very happy with what I had in the beginning. Soon every job I became involved with led me down the same road and I became bored, unhappy, even depressed. I then realised that I was looking for something that just wasn't there. After 13 years doing the same things over and over again I knew the only way to change was to get qualifications. The one thing I thought I didn't need I now needed more than ever but at 29 years old I felt I was past it and nobody cared.

It was then a friend of mine who was a mature student at Newbattle informed me that this might be the place for me. I was taken on a visit to the College and fell in love with the place. Before I knew where I was I had applied, been interviewed, given a placement and was then moving into the residential wing of the College. It all went so fast, I was nervous but was looking at it as being a fantastic challenge and opportunity for me to change.

Newbattle, with the motto "Late but in Earnest" has been the ideal place for me to come and study. The College has wonderful grounds and a big Italian garden to the rear of the building which is ideal for sitting in and gathering inspiration or even just enjoy the views of the River Esk which runs at the side of the grounds.

I found that the range of course choices are of the highest standard and these range from Ecology (environmental) through to Psychology. I personally have enjoyed each subject I have taken. Being a residential student has been a great help to me as there is always a form of support available either from a fellow student or the tutors who are always there if you need a chat. I have found my self-confidence and outlook on life and education has changed through coming to Newbattle. I have made lots of friends whom I hope to continue seeing when I leave.

I have to be honest and admit 5 years ago I would never have believed I could achieve so much for myself. I am now looking forward to getting accepted into University

where I can continue my studies in Psychology I believe if I can do this, then anyone can.

I hope that people who are reading this piece and are unsure of what they would like to do or where to turn next will be inspired to do as I did. Make that one small step.