



## PRESS RELEASE

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### 'Buzzing' Over Success

Scotland's only adult education residential college, Newbattle Abbey College in Dalkeith, is celebrating the end of a very successful year and, in particular, the success of the hugely popular bee-keeping course. Among the most recent cohort of bee-keeping students, swapping the swarm of fans for the swarm of bees, is front man of the 80's rock band Marillion, Derek Dick aka 'Fish'.

New for 2009, the bee-keeping course is delivered on a six week evening class basis by former Depute Principal and avid bee-keeper, Norah Fitzcharles. The classes give participants the chance to learn more about the art of beekeeping and the reasons behind the recent UK honey bee decline. Since introducing the bee-keeping course in March, the College has already run two blocks of evening classes, with Derek taking part in the latter block of classes which finished in October.

The vocalist, writer and TV personality began the bee-keeping course in August with his wife Katherine. Originally from Dalkeith, Derek (52) and his wife currently live on a farm just outside of Haddington and over the past 12 months, have been planting a fruit orchard on their grounds.

Derek said: "I've been lucky enough to enjoy over 25 years in the entertainment industry while also having the opportunity to pursue my interests in forestry and nature, at one point in time working with the Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS).

"Last year my wife and I decided to plant an Orchard in the grounds of the farm, planting over 40 trees including apple, cherry and pear trees. We had been reading about the benefits of bee's and were keen to find out more about the possibility of having hives in the orchard. We had also read about the recent decline and wanted to learn more about the causes behind this.

My wife came across the bee-keeping course at Newbattle Abbey College online and we enrolled in time for the second class starting at the end of August.

"The course covered many different areas and was both theoretical and practical, with hives in the grounds of the College for us to access. We even got to sample some 'Newbattle Honey' on the last evening of the course, it was delicious. My wife and I now plan to purchase two hives in spring, just in time for the bee's waking up in April."

Former Depute Principal of Newbattle Abbey College, Norah Fitzcharles, retired in August, however, was keen to continue delivering the popular bee-keeping course in the evenings. Norah said: "I enjoy bee-keeping in my spare time and was delighted to be able to share my skills and experience with the participants. I have been thrilled with the level of interest in the course and hope this success will continue throughout 2010. The decline of the UK honey bee is a serious issue and raising awareness is something that I feel passionate about."

For further information on the next bee-keeping course, or any other courses available at Newbattle Abbey College, please contact 0131 663 1921 or visit [www.newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk](http://www.newbattleabbeycollege.ac.uk).

For further information on 'Fish' please visit his website [www.the-company.com](http://www.the-company.com).

Picture 1: Derek on stage

Picture 2: Norah and her son tend to the bee-hive in her garden

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