

Winter 2010

Principal's Welcome



Welcome to the Winter edition of Newbattle News.

This edition of the Newbattle Newsletter covers our Medieval Study Weekend, Battlefield Band, our Annual Award Ceremony and new courses. This edition also features former students returning to the college to marry, as well as new students from Burma and a new staff member joining our team. Firstly, I must mention our trip to America.

The college was recently invited to Chicago to meet with the Presidents of the St Andrew's Societies of North America. This was particularly timely given the fact that establishing the College as a Centre for Celtic Studies, through national and international links, is one of our strategic priorities for 2010-2011. Marian Docherty, Depute Principal, joined me and together we promoted the history, work and cultural heritage of Newbattle Abbey College. Several of the people we met had attended Homecoming 2009 and are already planning a return visit for Homecoming 2014.

Continuing with the North American theme we have, during recent months, also welcomed to the college an intern from the University of Wisconsin. In August 2011 we will also be welcoming The Possum Holler Fiddlers from Missouri, USA who will be

participating in the Edinburgh 2011 Festival.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support during 2010 and to send you Christmas greetings from the Newbattle staff and students.

With all that's happening at the College, I hope you enjoy reading our latest addition of Newbattle News.

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A Taste of Medieval Scotland



Battlefield Band **Pg 2**

Newbattle Abbey College in partnership with Rosslyn Chapel invites people of all ages to visit and learn about the two historic buildings on a Medieval Study Weekend.

The afternoon will have a variety of topics for learners to engage in, from medieval dancing, food, costume and lifestyle, to literature influenced by Rosslyn and Newbattle.

Annual Award Ceremony **Pg 3**

The evening and day will immerse guests in the world of Medieval Scotland, from the Cistercian Monks of Newbattle Abbey, to the mysterious stone of Rosslyn Chapel.

The weekend programme will finish with entertainment including medieval music, dance poetry and song.

Wedding Bells **Pg 4**

Based at our college, guests will be treated on the first evening to a tour and lecture on the history of Newbattle followed by a performance of medieval music and dance. The following morning will consist of a trip to Rosslyn Chapel with the opportunity to study the medieval period and how it affected the two buildings.

The Medieval Study Weekend will run on 18/19 February 2011 costing £150 on a residential basis including bed and breakfast at Newbattle, or £120 non-residential.

To register interest in the weekend contact Gill Hamilton at Newbattle on 0131 663 1921 or call Fiona Rogan at Rosslyn Chapel on 0131 440 2159.

Scotland's Newest Traditional Music Festival

Scotland's newest traditional music festival was launched at Newbattle on Friday 17 September, organised in partnership with the legendary Scottish music group Battlefield Band.

The festival, entitled Battlefield Band's Music Tryst, ran over three days from September 17 to September 19 and began with an opening concert featuring Battlefield Band and special guests including the 2009 Scots Trad Music Award Winner, Christine Primrose; internationally acclaimed Scottish harpist, Alison Kinnaird; Glaswegian singer-songwriter, Peter Nardini and renowned singer-songwriter, Archie Fisher. The festival was designed for music lovers of all ages and is part of our college's wider Pan Celtic Programme, which raises awareness of Celtic culture and heritage through events and short courses.

We launched the Pan Celtic Programme in May with a Celtic Festival which attracted over 4000 people. After this success, we are keen to host more events celebrating Celtic culture and the Scottish music weekend with Battlefield Band was an excellent addition to our 2010 Celtic events calendar.

Battlefield Band has been entertaining audiences around the globe for over 40 years, fusing bagpipes and fiddles with electric guitars and synthesisers, and although the original line-up may have changed over the years, the band's passion for music remains as strong as ever.



The festival marked the last performance of original member Alan Reid (60), and the first performance of their newest and youngest member, Ewen Henderson (23).

Our festival kicked off at 5.30pm on Friday 17 September and the final concert took place at 2pm on Sunday 19 September. Guests were encouraged to bring along their own instruments to take part in an open mic session which lasted until midnight. Saturday and Sunday had a number of activities available throughout the day including children's musical entertainer Mr Boom, music workshops from artists appearing in our festival and evening performances from Battlefield Band.

Newbattle Welcomes Burmese Students

We are delighted to welcome two students from Burma this year who have enrolled on our Arts and Humanities Award course. The two mature students, originally from Rangoon (Yangon), decided to return to further education this year and have enrolled at our adult only residential college, to launch their future careers.

Thant Zin Htike (31) who moved to Newbattle from London decided our college was the best option for him to get back into education after the college was recommended by a friend. Thant Zin, who is keen to move into Politics, expressed his desire to improve political relations within his home country as the motivation for moving back into further education. The ambitious student is looking to stay in Scotland for the foreseeable future to hopefully study Politics at Edinburgh University.

Thant Zin told us: "Newbattle has a real community spirit and the people and staff at the college have welcomed me into college life. The lecturers provide excellent feedback on course work and their tuition is excellent. The location and environment of the college is beautiful, it has really given me a new lease of life.

"The political situation in my country is very different to that of the UK; however I hope to learn as much as I can while studying here and hopefully improve political relations between Burma and other countries once I finish my studies. This will hopefully improve the economic, health and political situation within my country.

"Newbattle has a real community spirit and the people and staff at the college have welcomed me into college life"

Newbattle Abbey College Celebrates Annual Award Ceremony

Newbattle Abbey College, Scotland's only adult education residential facility, celebrated our 2010 Annual Awards Ceremony with 41 students successfully completing the full-time Newbattle Abbey Arts and Humanities Award.

Over 80 proud friends and family attended the ceremony, which was held in our college's historic Drawing Room, and looked on as their loved ones took to the stage to receive their certificates.

On behalf of the college, I would like to extend special congratulations to our students who received awards.

Newbattle is dedicated to lifelong learning and for over 70 years, we have been giving adults throughout the world a second chance at education. Each one of our students has taken the decision to return to education and improve their situation or fulfil long-held ambition, often facing challenges along the way.

We are proud of each and every one of our students and have no doubt that they will continue to achieve everything they are capable of.



We had several students who received additional prizes at the award ceremony including Lynne Gallagher, who received the Newbattle Award for Academic Excellence, and Hytham RYanne and Jenna Beadle, who both received Distance Travelled prizes for their hard work over the past year.

Our Arts and Humanities Award is custom designed for adults with few or no qualifications, covering areas including English literature, sociology, IT, history and politics. Our award can be studied on a full-time or open learning basis and on successful completion, allows students access to a range of university programmes.

Gardens, Genealogy and Bees: This Year's Short Courses



This year's refreshed short course programme has proved popular with people from across the Lothians who want to gain new skills, develop an interest or indulge a hobby.

Our very popular beekeeping course once again ran at full capacity, beginning earlier in the year so that our aspiring apiarists had a chance to work with the bees before they went to sleep for winter.

Other short courses on offer include our genealogy class, which has had outings to Register House in Edinburgh and will also visit Loanhead to find out more about their family trees, and the garden design class which helps participants completely change their outdoor spaces.

New for this year is our 'Strictly Irish' adult Irish dancing class for beginners which complements our focus on all things Celtic, while our Art of Storytelling evening class is teaching adults the techniques and practices behind spinning a good yarn. We also ran successful courses in the history of Newbattle and Introduction to Gaelic

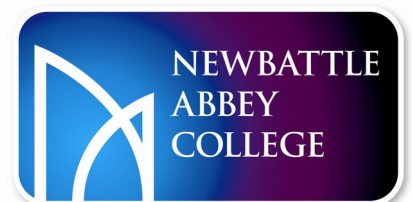
Case study: John McFarlane

John McFarlane has joined our college as the new Facilities and Estates Manager. John has been employed at our college to manage the college, grounds and business park covering all aspects of facilities and property management and brings with him over 30 years of engineering, building services and facilities management experience.

John (47), from Loanhead in Midlothian, has worked as an engineer since 1979. He joins our college from Standard Life, where he was Estate Operations Manager, and has been with our college for one month now. John commented: "I had been looking for a wider facilities role for a while, when I came across the position of Facilities and Estates Manager at Newbattle Abbey College. I was successful with my first interview and I was invited back to have a tour of the facilities and grounds at Newbattle. I was attracted by the history of the building and beautiful grounds, while the position also offered me the diversity I was looking for.

"The position has kept me busy these first few weeks, while I have enjoyed getting to know the staff at Newbattle during this time. The position has the variety I was hoping for, and I am keen to use the experience I have gained over the past 30 years to help the college deliver a great learning experience for all students and staff by providing an excellent working environment."

Part of John's position involves managing our Business Park, that we lease to third parties, while he is also covering health and safety, planned and reactive maintenance and cleaning, electrical and fire safety.



Former students return to tie the knot

Two students who fell in love while studying at Newbattle returned to our college's beautiful 16th century building and grounds on Saturday 18 September for their wedding.

We are often referred to as Scotland's 'life-changing' college because it gives mature students a second chance at education, but for John Foster (27) and Samantha Outhwaite (27) it also meant the start of true love.

The pair met on our college's one year Newbattle Abbey Arts and Humanities course and, after graduating in 2007, made their way to Manchester together to begin their studies at university. The couple have both since achieved First Class Honours degrees and their happy memories of Newbattle Abbey College made it their number one choice for a wedding venue.

Following their time at Newbattle, John, originally from Carlisle, gained a BA in Economic & Social Studies at the

University of Manchester and Samantha, originally from Harrogate in North Yorkshire, graduated with a BA in Politics & Criminology at Manchester Metropolitan University. United by a mutual love of learning, the couple hope to eventually achieve PhDs in their chosen fields.

John mentioned that the last four years have been the best years of his life, from studying at Newbattle and meeting Samantha, to achieving an honours degree at the University of Manchester. He left school at the age of 16 and had struggled to find employment as a labourer. With no qualifications, he couldn't see a way to improve his situation but Newbattle gave him the fresh start he was looking for.

The journey also led him to his future wife and he will always look back on his time at Newbattle fondly. John talked about seizing the opportunity at our college and was very supportive of his lecturers.

The course John studied covered a variety of interesting areas including history, psychology, sociology and politics. It was a perfect reintroduction to education for him and set him in good stead for continuing his studies at university.

Samantha talked about Newbattle being like home and will always hold a very special place in her heart. Because of this, and its beautiful surroundings, John and Samantha decided to make our college their wedding venue and they were married in our college's medieval chapel."



A 'Taster' of the Rural Life at Newbattle

Seven pupils from three Midlothian high schools have just finished a six week 'Taster' course on rural skills as part of the growing Rural Skills programme at Newbattle. The 'Taster' course was completed by S4/S5 pupils from Newbattle, Penicuik and Dalkeith High Schools.

Our 'Taster' course was introduced after the success of the Introduction to Rural Skills Intermediate 1: Skills for Work course, which launched in April 2010. Our Rural Skills programme has been developed in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland, Access to Industry, Living Solutions (Scotland) and Midlothian Council Community Learning and Development and is aimed at providing relevant skills in Estate Maintenance that can be transferred to the workplace.

School pupils finished the six week course recently with a final presentation on the skills they have learned.

Our 'Taster' course focuses on practical tasks in the community garden with activities carried out by the pupils ranging from digging soil and removing stones, cutting back & planting shrubs, care of equipment and health and safety, to sowing seeds and clearing drainage channels in Lord Ancrum's Wood.

Richard Burton, Ecology and Rural Skills Group Tutor, commented: "Skills for Work courses are a great resource for schools as they introduce pupils to college life and help them to gain new skills in a practical setting while working towards obtaining a formal qualification. These courses are not available at school and we feel it is important for the college to develop links with secondary schools in order to provide a broader range of skills and qualifications to help support the development of pupils interested in land based industries.

"The Rural Skills programme has proved successful since our pilot programme earlier this year.

"Our beautiful grounds, woodland and developing community garden provide students with an ideal environment in which to learn and practise their skills. We look forward to developing our links with schools in the Midlothian area that are keen to get involved in the 'Taster' and more in-depth Rural Skills courses."

Our Rural Skills 'Taster' course provides students with the first half of a qualification in the unit 'An Introduction to Estate Maintenance'. This can be completed on a follow-up 'taster' course or by following the slightly longer 'introduction' course. These practical courses cover areas such as garden maintenance, repairing and maintaining hard surfaces, fences and wooden structures, and basic drainage.

