



Plumpton College

# Student Newsletter

November 2011

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## Message from the Principal

Welcome to your autumn newsletter. Through this we try to keep you up-to-date with activities around the College both generally and relevant to individual departments.

I hope that by now that you have settled at College and you are enjoying your studies. It is very important to us that you find your time at Plumpton worthwhile. If there are any issues that you wish to discuss about your course, your future career or anything else that might be bothering you please do contact your course tutor, your relevant Head of Department, Student Services or make an appointment to see me.

We want this newsletter to be as relevant and useful to you as possible so please let us have your views on what you would like to see included in future editions. Please contact [valerie.raynor@plumpton.ac.uk](mailto:valerie.raynor@plumpton.ac.uk)

Please pass this newsletter onto parents/guardians/partners if you feel they would be interested.

Des Lambert  
Principal

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## Important dates for 2011/12:

### Open Day: Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2012

This will be held from 10am until 5pm. All students are involved and it is a great day for showing off the College and your department to visitors. We often get over 10,000 people attending. Please publicise this event to friends, family and everyone else you know!!

### Summer Ball: Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2011

#### Awards Ceremony: Friday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012

This is an important occasion when we recognise the achievement of all students on all courses attending the College. For those of you who haven't been here before it is held in a large marquee on the College lawns and invitations are sent to immediate family, VIPs and sponsors. All students are expected to attend this important occasion.

### College photo: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012

Please remember to attend. It takes a bit of organising but it is well worth the effort.

### FE term dates 2012:

End of autumn term: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
Spring term: 3<sup>rd</sup> January – 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012  
*Study week: 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> February 2012*  
Summer term: 16<sup>th</sup> April – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2012

### HE term dates 2012:

End of autumn term: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
Spring term: 9<sup>th</sup> January – 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2012  
*Reading weeks: 30<sup>th</sup> Jan – 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2012*  
Summer term: 16<sup>th</sup> April – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012

### Bank Holidays 2012:

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> January      Friday 6<sup>th</sup> April  
Monday 9<sup>th</sup> April      Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May  
Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June      Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June

- **Driving and road safety**

Please take a lot of care driving around the campus and stick to the speed limits and the rules as to where cars are allowed. There are often a lot of people and animals about and it is very important that traffic goes slowly. I appreciate that the speed bumps are quite severe but if you go over them slowly, which is what you are supposed to do, they are OK.

Please also take care if you drive to and from the College especially if on two wheels. As winter approaches the roads can be slippery and there are a lot of potholes about. Don't drive too fast - it is better to be told off for being late than to have an accident!

- **Sponsoring Students**

We have several students across the College who take part in outside sports and activities and events, often at a national level. If you take part in any activity where we could help to a small extent financially then do let me know.

- **Bursaries and financial support**

I am well aware that studying at college can be expensive and, for many, EMAs are no longer an option. You should all be aware that there are **a range of bursaries available** and although the amount the College has to allocate is limited if you do have financial difficulties contact your tutor or Student Services.

- **Safety and Safeguarding**

It is of the utmost importance that you feel safe at College and that you feel comfortable in your surroundings and that you are free from harassment or bullying or any other factor that might affect your safety and security. **Do not hesitate to contact a member of staff if you have any concerns**

- **Employment**

I appreciate that you have only just started your course but time goes very quickly and some of you soon will be looking for a job. The College is proud of its employment record with over 95% of students gaining employment at the end of their course last year but you need to start thinking about what you are going to do next year now and discuss it with your tutor. Don't forget there is a 'jobs board' in the main building corridor just up from the dining room.

- **Student Services**

The beginning of the year is always a busy time for everyone and in all the hustle and bustle of things we want to use this newsletter to remind you of what we're doing at the moment and what we have planned for the coming weeks.

Thanks to the students who volunteered to run the Student Social Committee – they will be adding to the events posters with their own ideas, the first of these will be a *Gladiator Night – Boys v Girls*. Please keep an eye out for the posters on this.

At the end of term we will be holding the annual *Snow Ball* which is a ticketed event open to all students. Tickets will go on sale in November from the Student Services office.

Every Thursday from 10:30am onwards we have a Sexual Health Advisor in the Common Room near the dining hall. She is here to help you with any concerns you may have about sex or your sexual health; you can also obtain free condoms from her.

Every Tuesday afternoon Reverend Godfrey Broster visits the College and you'll find him in the dining hall from 2:30pm onwards. Godfrey is certainly not here to preach but he is here to help you on things that you might be struggling with at the moment either at home or at the College. You don't need an appointment to speak to him and it doesn't matter to him what your religious views are – he is just here to help.

If you need to speak to any of our staff and you find the Student Services office is empty please use the buzzer on the wall outside the office. Don't forget that we are here to help.

- **Student Voice**

We want your time at Plumpton to be as fun and rewarding as possible and we do our best to make sure this happens. However, we don't always get it right and we need to know when we don't. You will be asked to take part in several student surveys and course meetings in your time at the College in which you can let us know what is going well for you and your colleagues and what we need to do better. Please do use the surveys and course meetings to let us know these things. If you feel that you are not getting the responses you think you should have or are not seeing improvements being made then please talk to your Programme Leader about this.

If you wish to talk to someone other than your Programme Leader about anything that needs to be done better that is affecting your learning, then please contact the Quality Development Manager, Richard Pemble, either through Reception or by email on [richard.pemble@plumpton.ac.uk](mailto:richard.pemble@plumpton.ac.uk)

## News from Departments

- **Foundation Learning and Learner Support**

### **Foundation Learning:**

Welcome to all our students. Recruitment on to foundation learning programmes has been excellent this year (over 40 students) and we look forward to working with all of you over the coming year. We have had a good start to the year with successful days grape picking for the Wine Department, at the end of which we were able to taste some of the grape juice produced here at Plumpton. Our students were also given the opportunity to go beating on the Plumpton Shoot working alongside students studying gamekeeping. A number of our students have been timetabled to participate in weekly sessions with other FE groups on a range of vocational programmes, including equine, agricultural machinery, gamekeeping, horticulture, animal care, agriculture and floristry. Visits have taken place to Sheffield Park and the World Skills Competitions at Excel in London.

### **Learner Support:**

It has been a busy start to the year with a number of learners requesting and being offered regular additional support sessions. Appointments have also been offered on a daily basis to assess for dyslexia and many of these learners have then taken the opportunity to have a weekly support session with a member of the Learner Support Department.

If you believe you would benefit from support with your literacy, numeracy and/or organisational skills please contact the Learner Support Department.

- **14-16**

Plumpton College continues to support large numbers of 14 year old students who are studying their GCSEs at school but who want to start to get some experience and a qualification in a land-based subject. We are also grateful for the schools who continue to support these students by releasing them for one day a week to come to College to study.

Many have said how important it is to be treated like an adult and to have a break from the academic rigours of GCSEs and this opportunity helps them to refocus on their studies when they return to school for the rest of the week.

The land-based sector is extremely wide and in these days of high unemployment these youngsters will 'reap' the benefits from getting practical experience in an area that they are interested in when they eventually join the College full time and qualify and enter the industry. Currently there is a distinct skills shortage in many of the land-based areas such as agriculture, horticulture and forestry and a large number of students who study with us after leaving school find employment. Joining the College is like joining a club and many employers advertise through us and seek references.

We hope you are enjoying your time with us and making full use of our outdoor classroom and hope you pass this on to as many prospective 14 year olds as possible so that they too can benefit from your experience.

- **Horticulture and Floristry**

Following the completion of the planting of our 2010 award-winning Hampton Court design and guild garden at a local hospice, it was formally opened in the early summer for the staff and patients to use as a garden of contemplation. Meanwhile this summer saw two more garden builds win awards at both the South of England Show and the RHS Hampton Court Show.

The planting around the College's west wing extension is starting to mature and now helps to provide a good selection of named plants for identification and maintenance; this site also includes a rock and water feature.

Part-time courses have recruited well at both Plumpton and our out-centre at Stanmer Park on the outskirts of Brighton. Stanmer is offering an increasingly wider link with other College disciplines including countryside and forestry. The end of the summer term culminated in every leaving horticultural student finding a job within the industry, whilst Matt Perks, a greenkeeper on a work-based learning course working at Ham Manor Golf Club won the *Toro Student Greenkeeper of the Year Award*. This is the second time that one of our students has won this award. HE Garden Design students produced a very high standard of work during the last year - a fact commented on

by the external examiner; and one student as a result was awarded the accolade of the overall HE student at the College's Awards Ceremony.

The department has a wealth of talented lecturers imparting skills which are needed in this diverse industry and this is the time to share the enjoyment of learning horticulture at Plumpton. Autumn term is an exciting time for new and returning floristry students. We had a big trip on the 7<sup>th</sup> October to ExCel in London to see the International WorldSkills event, a huge competition covering over forty skills from floristry to fashion technology. Steph Willoughby, our floristry lecturer at the College is judging the floristry competition along with 18 judges from around the world.

November sees an early morning start to visit Covent Garden for all Level 2 students – to see beautiful flowers flown in from around the globe. Victoria Richards and Joe Massie (both WorldSkill champions) are planning to demonstrate. Sue Maguire is organising this trip so if you are on other courses and would like to join us please let her know as soon as possible. There are workshops as well as a Level 3 “buy, barter and make” competition against colleges from around the UK.

In December, Level 3 floristry students are decorating the beautiful Manor House at Wakehurst Place - a wonderful opportunity to experience large scale event work.

- **Animal Care**

Welcome to all new animal care students to the department and welcome back to returning students. We have had a busy summer and enrolment weeks, interviewing and inducting the largest number of students ever! The department will be delivering a wide range of courses: Level 1 courses to 14-16 groups from a variety of schools, Level 2 and Level 3 Diploma programmes and Foundation Degrees in Animal Science as well as Veterinary Nursing. We are also running additional part-time and evening courses in canine behaviour, dog grooming and dog agility as well as a course in animal healing. We have developed the dog grooming courses which are now accredited with City and Guilds.

We also welcome new staff to the department: Kevin Avins, Emma Barrow, Claire Fletcher who will be involved with teaching FE and HE courses, and Nikki Lock who is joining Vicki Mitchell in dog grooming.

The animal care unit is busy too with a wide range of species and animals to help develop practical skills and knowledge. However, students can also look forward to a variety of speakers and outings which include trips to Whipsnade and Colchester zoos and a talk and demonstration from *Xtreme Falconry*.

- **Business Training**

Based in the Sussex Rural Business Centre (SRBC), Business Training look after the administration of short courses, so when you need to book on to an Additional Qualification (“Ad Qual”), we are the team you will come and see. We are responsible for the administration of the College's apprenticeships and deliver training to managers and supervisors from commercial horticultural farms, who are sponsored by Concordia. The Centre for Sustainable Food, Farming and Forestry, based at Flimwell, offers a wide range of short courses to support Land Based businesses – for details, visit [www.foodfarmingforestry.co.uk](http://www.foodfarmingforestry.co.uk)

We also regularly host meetings and seminars for rural organisations in the SRBC. Many events are open to students and you are very welcome to attend. Some events are free and others are often offered at a discount to students. For example, equine students may be interested in the regular evening talks by Cliffe Veterinary Group – please contact Michelle Johnston, Head of Equine, if you would like to attend.

Are you thinking of starting a business when you leave College? During the summer term the *Let's Do Business Group* will be offering a one-day *Start Up* workshop for those of you with a specific business idea. The workshop will help you develop a business plan and start you on your way to success, and is free! These courses proved very popular last year. We also offer regular *Business Accounting Surgeries* with partners from Knill James, a well-known local firm of accountants – an hour's free advice on setting up your business. The next one is on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012 – to book, contact Don Cranfield on the email below.

There is a list of forthcoming events on the board in the SRBC reception and, if you would like to come along, please either contact your Head of Department or email [don.cranfield@plumpton.ac.uk](mailto:don.cranfield@plumpton.ac.uk)

- **Equine**

This year starts as busy as ever down on the yard. As you will have seen we are building a new office and classroom area. This will hopefully save you time trying to find your tutor and also for getting to some of your theory lessons after a practical ride session.

We have a lovely selection of horses for you to ride catering for those of you who are developing your handling and riding up to our more experienced students. The second year students have the opportunity to showcase their skills on the top yard when they are on routines as they are responsible for managing that yard and the range of level 3 horses there.

We have two young horses in on loan to the College for use in the Training Young Stock modules, they are *Forrest* and *Dakota*. These horses will also progress on into the normal lessons and some of you may have lunged them already. Our College youngster *Pinky* is away at pasture for the winter having a break and growing up. She will come back in February to be backed.

The Shire horses along with Brenda, Cheryl, Hollie and Emma; have been driving over the summer and working towards their driving certificate so you will see them out on the roads and around the College. The horses went out to Saddlescombe and the Ardingly show over the summer and a big thanks to all who helped with this.

Each weekend the Equine Department host or run a variety of shows in dressage, show jumping and showing. This all leads up to the big summer show organised by Kate Fuller and our Extended Diploma year 2 students, so do join in either helping or competing in all of these. We would encourage you to enter the shows to gain that valuable industry experience as well as having fun and developing your skills, so speak to your tutor and Charlene to organise using a College horse and entering.

The second year HE students are away in Ireland on study tour for a week visiting studs, the races, a horse sale to mention a few. There are a range of trips and visits arranged for all of the courses this year so please speak to your tutors so you don't miss them.

We would like to welcome the following staff to the department: Michelle Johnston, Head of Department; Kay Adams, HE programme

leader; Rebekah Viles, SD/ED year 1 course leader; Badr Al Omran, Lecturer. All the staff and students would like to offer you all a warm welcome.



*Charlene is practicing her art work ready to attend the Cliffe Veterinary open day later in the year.*

- **Forestry and Arboriculture**

This year the Forestry Department had a superb display of skills and equipment at Weald Woodfair which took place at Bentley Wildfowl near Ringmer. The event is in its seventeenth year and the department has exhibited every year. We were supported by *European Forest Machinery* who loaned us some large and exciting equipment to demonstrate and to continue to use with students at College. Also new this year was an enclosure in the woodland displaying the work of the department and some chainsaw carvings by staff.

Apprenticeships are very high on the Government agenda at the moment and we currently have seven Trees and Timber students and are recruiting from as far afield as Horndean in Hampshire. Staff from the department have also been involved in the working party to re-write the *National Occupational Standards for Greenwood Trades and Coppicing*, these standards will form the basis of all future qualifications in greenwood trades. We also will be piloting a new apprenticeship scheme in partnership with the *Smallwoods Association*.

Full time courses recruited well this year with 28 on Extended Diploma at Level 3 and 12 at Level 2, we also have a full cohort of Twelve Week Tree Surgeons who will be here until Christmas.

I am very pleased to report that Lawrence Hawkins (Level 3 Extended Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture 2009-2011) won

the Overall Top Student award at the annual Awards Ceremony in June. He also had a project entered in the South of England Agricultural Society's inter college project competition.

Developments at our Flimwell centre continue with a wide range of short woodland craft based courses on offer. A particular success was the Timber Framing course which ran for five days and culminated in the erection of an oak frame building skeleton at the rear of the Flimwell workshop. The course was designed and run by Chris Nutley who was a National Diploma in Forestry and Arboriculture student with Plumpton about ten years ago. He now runs a very successful timber framing and construction business.

New equipment includes 15 new tree climbing harnesses from *Willans and Petzl* (existing harnesses had reached the end of their permitted working life), along with 12 new chainsaws to replace losses and saws that were uneconomic to repair. On long term loan from *European Forest Machinery (Jas. P. Wilson)* in Scotland we have two new *Posch* firewood processing machines.

- **Sport (Outdoor Education)**

The Outdoor Education Department has expanded again this year with the highest number of students enrolling on outdoor education related courses since the department was formed. All have been welcomed into the department and have completed their induction programmes which include overnight camps in the woods on the College estate.

There are a number of very highly experienced outdoor enthusiasts amongst the student body and we look forward to seeing all students develop their skills during their studies. The staff team very much enjoy working with such a highly motivated group. During the coming year, students will take part in a number of expeditions which will include open canoeing and climbing in South Wales, winter mountaineering and water skills in Scotland and ski skills training.

Hopefully next year students will be able to visit our new Centre in North Wales once development has been completed. This is an exciting addition to the College's facilities and is situated in the heart of Snowdonia.



The climbing club will be running again this year on Tuesday evenings in the sports hall from 5:30pm.

Finally, outdoor education staff and students would like to welcome Tim Davis to the teaching team.

- **Engineering and Metalsmithing**

A big welcome to all of our Machinery and Metalsmithing students! We have a large group of Level 2 Blacksmithing students and they range in experience from degree students to school leavers.

The Machinery Department has now moved fully into the Qualifications and Credit Framework for all courses. This means that students have a lot more flexibility in terms of the units we are able to offer. We now have bridging courses; the Introduction to Agricultural Machinery and the Introduction to Metalsmithing both have elements of Level 1 and Level 2 coursework. We also have the Plumpton College Diploma in Agricultural Machinery, this combines Level 2 and 3 courses. We hope more students will be taking advantage of the flexibility and progression these offer.

The department now has 15 apprentices doing Service Engineering at Level 2 and 3. The apprentices are doing very well with their work and enjoy the new workshops.

We are very lucky in that we continue to be supported with up to date equipment and training aids for land-based technology and metalsmithing. We now have state of the art diagnostics, electronics and hydraulics training, including a bore scope. We expect delivery of a new dynamometer in December. The metalsmithing team now has a new gas forge supplied by *Swan Forges*. The company were very supportive and gave us a free upgrade to the larger size furnace. The Level 2 Land-based students have finished their first intensive three week session with some excellent results in the

workshop. The Level 3, second year Metalsmiths are getting into their stride and Ricky Delaney is very complimentary – we hope to see a clean sweep of prizes at the South of England Show this year.

Level 3, first year Land-based Technology students start their intensive engines course, with Allan Pitt. We should see some amazing work on the Land Rover engines as this year they have to connect them to the new test rig and run them up. The Level 3, second year students are already deep into their coursework. They have started several projects, one of which was to strip a scrap Land Rover and build up a test rig for year 1 and 2 students. The work continues on our tractor puller project and several other rebuilds.

- **Agriculture, Countryside, Game Keeping**

This academic year has started very well with some of the highest numbers of students we have seen enrolling in agriculture and game management programmes. All students seem to have settled in well and are already making names for themselves by their contributions to College and the wider industry. Students from the game management programmes are already into the shoot season organising their commercial shoot. Agriculture and countryside students have been represented at the Autumn Show helping with the College stand and also winning prizes in the South of England Agricultural Society's project competition.

Students are developing their machinery skills and have been part of the autumn cultivations, ploughing and drilling next year's crops. This year's agriculture students are benefiting from the new dairy complex which is enabling students to be trained to look after and milk cows in modern, hi-tech facilities which will prepare them well for their future careers. The second year HE countryside students are running *New Leaf* - a voluntary countryside organisation which undertakes practical conservation activities. One notable success from last year is a countryside work-based diploma student who completed her studies whilst working as a ranger in St Helena (a small island in the South Atlantic Ocean). She was so successful that she is now based there and trains new rangers! There are lots of

interesting student projects underway this year including HE research on the effect of light on coppice woodland, and FE research looking at the effect of mineral supplements on lambing percentages in sheep.

- **Farm**

The farm is always busy but the summer and autumn is always an even busier time. We are slowly working through our long-term rebuild of the dairy area of the farm and at the end of last term started using our new parlour. Current work includes finishing the silage pits, constructing dirty water storage, building and equipping the dry cow building along with teaching and processing facilities. Hopefully all will be finished in the spring - it seems a long time now that we have been working on a building site with all the hassles involved. The dry spring affected the cereal yields on the downs but yields on the lower ground were very pleasing. All of the maize is now stored and autumn drilling is almost complete. The rams are in with the ewes and another farming year begins!

- **Wine**

After an early spring, the vineyard experienced poor weather at flowering and a cool summer, but fair weather at harvest is providing us with a good quality vintage, if not the quantity that we might wish. Dave Perrin, the new Vineyard Instructor, is doing a great job getting the vintage in (with his new SUV!), and James D'Arcy from *Vine-Works* will help him maintain the vineyards in the months to come. In the winery, Peter Morgan is trying out the innovative *Kreyer* tank monitoring equipment and we have hired a mobile chilling unit to house the experimental micro-vinifications.

The Wine Business Team is now offering the first year of the *Wine and its Markets* course, combining WSET Diploma and business modules, and is busy submitting an application for a BA (Hons) Wine Business top-up. We're now collaborating with the Institute of Masters of Wine, with some of their students participating in the harvest in exchange for a day's training on their tasting technique at Plumpton in November. Congratulations go to Matthew Hudson, awarded Top Champagne Educator by the *Champagne Bureau* at the Dorchester Hotel in London!

Plumpton wines showed very well at the UKVA Wine of the Year competition, with the Dean NV winning a gold medal (and the President's Cup), the Dean Blush a silver, and our red, white and fumé wines making bronze. Wine sales are progressing very well, spurred on by our presence at both the Glynde and the Hurstpierpoint Festivals of Food and Wine. Plumpton Wine Department was also represented at Fruit Focus and at the Tesco Wine Show.

Wine research at Plumpton is developing strongly, with the arrival of Richard Marchal from Reims University in France, who is leading several projects, including a repeat of last year's press fractionation experiment. Tony Milanowski and Richard are organising the first Plumpton College team to participate in the prestigious Effervescents du Monde competition in Dijon in November, where they will be judging some of the top sparkling wines in the world. Plumpton College is also working with Mark & Spencer on wine research, and with a French/Italian/Bulgarian group on the challenges of climate change to European viticulture. Congratulations go to Belinda Kemp for being invited to deliver a lecture on English Viticulture at Kew Gardens in London!

The WineSkills project team has been particularly busy over the summer, with Masterclasses from Mike Trought (Blenheim Research Centre, New Zealand), Chris Steele (Charles Sturt University, Australia) and Trevor Wicks (Adelaide University, Australia). Jo Cowderoy also organised a very successful series of industry workshops on vine trunk diseases, conducted by Richard Smart, the 'Flying Vine Doctor'.

With the harvest almost over, we are all looking forward to the Montpellier trip at the end of November, and to the establishment of the UK's first Wine Research Centre at Plumpton in September 2012!

- **Plumpton College at Netherfield, Ivyland Farm**

Welcome to all our new learners and welcome back to those of you that are returning to continue your studies. It looks like another busy year for us all here at Ivyland and it is good to see the keen enthusiasm from you all.

This year we have started a new level 1.5 course in Countryside and Environment. This course consists of obtaining credits at level 1 and an extended certificate at level 2. During the year, learners on this course will cover many aspects of working within the countryside including identifying different soil types and investigating habitats. We also have a range of land-based courses available to all learners from age 14 years upwards.

We have been very busy over the summer preparing our new animal shed. The small animals will finally be able to move out of their old accommodation into their nice new shed. This means that learners will have more room to move around and an extra room to carry out examination tasks.

A new Young Farmers' Club has started here on Wednesday evenings from 6pm until 8pm. It is an open club for all between the ages of 12 to 19 years. You do not need to be a farmer to join this club. Activities will include: going to agricultural shows, showing livestock, entering different competitions and lots more. If you would like to know more about this, then come along to one of our evenings and speak to our club leader.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a happy and successful year with us and I look forward to seeing you on your studies.

- **Equality of Opportunity**

We pride ourselves on being a very inclusive College with equal opportunities for all. We would welcome the views of students on how we can promote equality, be more inclusive and help those with all types of disability. Contact either Michelle Garvey at [michelle.garvey@plumpton.ac.uk](mailto:michelle.garvey@plumpton.ac.uk) or the Principal with your thoughts.