

Welcome to the May edition of the Royal Holloway, University of London, Community newsletter – **Community Matters** – which is published in October and May each year. It keeps you informed of College news and developments, events being held at the College which are open to the public, news of fundraising events and volunteering in the community.

Community Matters May 09



Families marvel at science spectacle

Over 2,000 visitors packed the campus on 28 February for the 'Exploring Science Open Day', making the already hugely popular event more successful than ever. Showcasing the fascinating activities of the university's science departments, there were talks, workshops and hands-on activities for all ages based on the theme 'Our Changing World'.

Seven different academic departments organised exciting activities, allowing visitors the opportunity to explore new scientific games and challenges. The College also hosted a range of new developments in electric car design, while the fun and theatrical 'Fairy Jewels' workshops proved to be a magical experience for all ages.

Two keynote events took place on the day: in his talk, 'Prehistoric Park – could it happen?', Dr Ian Barnes explored the problems that we would face if we tried to resurrect the long-extinct woolly mammoth. The second keynote event saw the return of our very popular Robotics Roadshow, which introduced Vincent and Leo, the robotic dogs, as well as our latest addition, Pleo, the robotic baby dinosaur with his own emotions and moods.

Other highlights included: the chance to make viruses and DNA in the School of Biological Sciences; breaking codes in the Department of Mathematics; and the opportunity to turn rubber into glass in the Department of Physics.

Dean of Science, Professor Philip Beesley commented,

"We are delighted that this was the most successful Science Open Day so far. Our science departments showed that science is fun, exciting and relevant to the world around us and many of the major problems we face."

Pictured above: Fraser, 9, and Connor Briggs, 11, from Egham, experiencing life on Mars in 3D

Youth Befriending Team launched

A partnership has been formed between Community Action at Royal Holloway and the charity organisation East To West, with the aim of creating a new volunteer project team. The Youth Befriending Team (YBT) will work with young people aged 16 to 19 who are deemed 'at risk of offending' or are struggling to make decisions that will impact their future lives.

The YBT student mentors will arrange to meet on a regular basis with the young people to be a listening ear, resolve issues or difficulties that have arisen and help them achieve their personal goals.

Dan West, Police Community Youth Worker from East To West, said,

"The YBT is an opportunity for students from Royal Holloway to impact the local community around them. Not only will they have a positive effect on young people struggling to find their way in life, but the team will also be able to break down perceived barriers between students and local residents."

He adds, "The student volunteers will be working on a one-to-one basis with young people who are not in education, employment or training, being a support in the process of finding work or getting into college and hoping to improve the lives of the young people in Englefield Green."

Phil Simcock, Community Action Volunteer Co-ordinator, commented, "Some of the young people in Englefield Green may have difficulties relating to students, and this project provides a great opportunity to shape the opinions the young people have of students."

For more information about the YBT, visit: www.rhul.ac.uk/Volunteering/YouthBefriendingTeam.html

Pictured above (l-r): Jade Lay, Phil Simcock, Lily O'Hara, Paul Southgate and Dan West

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How the College deals with diversity...

Probably the first thing that strikes anyone looking around Royal Holloway in term-time is the huge diversity of our students. We have students from over 130 countries, speaking dozens of different languages. Many religions are practised and large congregations of different faiths co-exist and communicate harmoniously. We cater for a vast range of special needs, and disability has not prevented students at Royal Holloway from gaining achievements at the highest level, both academically and in sport.

Our students' time here represents a unique chance for them to meet and get to know people very different from themselves, and a fantastic opportunity to learn more about the various cultures, faiths, abilities and lifestyles that make up our world.

Emily DeRuy, a student of ours from the United States, wrote about the effect our diversity had on her as an American in a recent edition of the College's independent newspaper, *The Founder*.

She wrote: "Five months ago I was in the San Francisco Bay area packing to come to Royal Holloway for my Junior Year Abroad. I was thrilled at the prospect of living in a castle and elated at the idea of having mainland Europe as a backyard...At home, almost everyone I meet is from California. I was born and raised there and it's a fantastic place to be, but here, there's a fabulous mix of people from all over the world. I hear people speaking German and Italian in the pantry as they make breakfast. There are discussions in Swedish and Chinese about coursework in the library...I have also experienced, on the whole, a much more cosmopolitan environment here at Royal Holloway. The diversity of the student body breeds diversity



of experiences and ideas, opinions and dreams and I love that. It also breeds compassion and tolerance...Studying and living here has definitely made me more aware and sensitive to the experiences of people from all over the world."

We are deeply proud of our diversity and do all we can to foster, support and to celebrate it. The College was originally founded to encourage greater equality, and has never lost this commitment. We hope you – as our neighbours – feel you gain as much from it as Emily has.

Christopher Butler, Head of Support and Advisory Services

In the next issue: How the College deals with noise...

People



Meet Sarah Johnston, the Wardening Co-ordinator

Q. How would you summarise your role?

I co-ordinate the welfare support for students living in halls of residence. My aim is to provide a happy hall environment, giving support and guidance throughout the year. This includes the start of session weekend, ensuring students are welcomed and settle in well, planning social events, promoting considerate behaviour and being a first contact for welfare issues.

Q. What do you enjoy most about working at Royal Holloway?

It's great! I work in Founder's and live in the New Halls – I love the combination of traditional buildings with all their history and the modern architecture on campus. It's amazing to be surrounded by stunning views and wildlife and good to work with a variety of people and energetic students.

Q. What are your interests outside of work?

I try to go to the gym and fit in some essential shopping and socialising with friends. I love to travel and go on city breaks and holidays. After I graduated, I travelled around the world for three months and had the best time.

Q. Where are your favourite places to go in the local community?

I like to eat out and there are some fab local pubs and restaurants. My favourite place has to be Windsor Great Park - you can't beat a picnic on a sunny day!

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BBC2 celebrity chef programme filmed at Royal Holloway



BBC2's innovative celebrity chef programme 'Put Your Menu Where Your Mouth Is' was filmed in The Hub dining hall on 11 March.

The premise behind the programme was that two celebrity chefs prepare three main courses and a dessert each, which they sold to hungry staff and students. The chef that earned the most for their charity during the course of the evening was declared the winner.

The first chef was Galton Blackiston – owner of Morston Hall Hotel & Restaurant on the north Norfolk coast, which has received three red rosettes and a Michelin Star award. The second chef was Ed Baines – the chef and co-owner of Randall & Aubin, a champagne and oyster bar in Soho.

The programme will be broadcast on BBC2 later this Spring.

College news

Big Spring Clean

On 25 and 27 February, Community Action at Royal Holloway held the 'BIG Spring Clean', which placed student and staff volunteers in the local community in order to spruce up the neighbourhood.

An army of over 100 volunteers descended upon the local and surrounding areas of Egham and Englefield Green. Along with the Community Action volunteering team, many Students' Union clubs and societies also volunteered. Overall, the volunteers spent over 350 hours serving the local community, during which they also collected 23 bags of rubbish, most of which was recycled.

Phil Simcock, Community Action Volunteer Co-ordinator for the College, says, "This aspect of the volunteering programme is great for students who are enthusiastic about serving the local area in which they live. All the projects undertaken were in response to requests from local community organisations which required a team of volunteers to meet a genuine need."

To submit a project request for this year's Volunteering Week (1-4 June), please visit: www.rhul.ac.uk/Volunteering/forms/vw-communityprojectrequests.shtml

Masterplan for the Estate

The College has started exploring the initial ideas concerning the Masterplan for the College Estate for the next 20 years. The objectives of this Masterplan are to secure Royal Holloway's future as a premier higher education institution and a significant asset to the region.

There will be a public consultation, with exhibition dates announced shortly.

Student experience

Support and Advisory Services have been active over recent years on a number of initiatives designed to improve the student experience, and bring students into a closer and more harmonious relationship with the College and wider community. Happy students are fundamental to the success of a university.

For our students living in Egham and Englefield Green, we have a community team and our resident students have a welfare service within Halls, with a central office as a hub for information, support and advice. We prioritise 'student-facing' time and operate an open-door policy for students.

To improve communication with students, understand their expectations and explain how we aim to meet them, we are producing student friendly leaflets on issues such as 'Accommodation in the Private Sector' and 'Healthy Living'. We also put on a range of events to enhance the student experience, including coffee mornings, workshops and seminars on a range of subjects.

Helen Groenendaal, Community Liaison Officer



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Choir performs world premiere

The choir will be performing the world premiere of a new oratorio by young American composer Carson Cooman on 30 May at Cadogan Hall, London. The piece, 'The Revelations of Divine Love (Metaphors from Sea and Sky),' has been commissioned for and is dedicated to our choir, who will perform it alongside the London Mozart Players.

The piece will receive its US premiere in Boston on 26 June as part of the choir's tour of the East Coast of the USA. The oratorio is scored for soprano and baritone soloists, chorus and chamber orchestra sets texts of the early English mystic Julian of Norwich. Cooman's setting transports Julian's visions from Norwich to a Nantucket landscape, an island 30 miles off the coast of Massachusetts.

Saturday 30 May 2009, 7.30pm, Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London, SW1X 9DQ

Tickets (£22, £17, £10) can be booked through the Cadogan Hall box office on 020 7730 4500; visit: www.cadoganhall.com/showpage.php?pid=884

What's on 2009

Community Liaison Forums

- Community Liaison Forums are hosted jointly by the College and the Students' Union. They are an opportunity for residents to raise issues directly.

Main Lecture Theatre, Founder's Building, 7.00pm

26 May 2009

Volunteering

- Volunteering Week**

1 – 4 June 2009

College Events

- Summer Ball**

The Students' Union major social event, the Royal Holloway Summer Ball, occurs each year in the open quadrangles of the main Founder's Building. The SU is very aware that the noise from this event can carry to the surrounding areas and, with this in mind, the sound levels will be checked before the event commences and be constantly monitored for the duration of the event by trained and experienced professionals to ensure that acceptable levels are maintained.

We would like thank the Residents' Associations of both Egham and Englefield Green for their continued support and understanding.

5 June 2009

- Garden Party**

An annual event held in aid of local charities. Craft and local community stalls; children's activities and shows; music; raffle;



talks; and tours of the campus. Cream teas and BBQ.

A Thanksgiving Service will be held in the Chapel at 6pm.

South Quad, Founder's Building, 1 – 5.30pm

Admission £1, children under 10 free

7 June 2009

- Heritage Open Day**

Campus tours and refreshments available.

The Picture Gallery will be open following refurbishment, but please note that the Victorian Collection of paintings will be on tour in the USA until 2011. Paintings by some of the greatest British portrait painters of the 20th century, such as William Orpen and Ames Gunn, will be on view.

North Quad, Founder's Building, 11am-5.30pm

Admission free, no advance booking necessary

13 September 2009

2009 term dates:

27 April 2009 – 12 June 2009

Monday 21 September – Friday 11 December 2009

We value your comments and suggestions.

Please write to:

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