



**Kingston Maurward College  
Winter Newsletter 2020**



# STUDENTS' UNION LAUNCH!

Kingston Maurward is delighted to announce the launch of its brand new Students' Union (SU). With the appointment of a new Sabbatical President, Hanna Baxter and Staff/Student Liaison Officer, Jacqui Dawson, the College has a new system of student representation through SU Officers and Course Reps.

The SU Officers and Course Reps will work together to ensure all students have an input and a voice into the decision-making process to enhance their educational and social experience at the College.

This is a very exciting opportunity for students to get involved in and the SU, are hoping that this will give those budding future leaders within the student community a great chance to represent and support their courses and their peers.

There are many benefits for students to join the SU. These include:

- real-life work experience enhancing their personal development
- provide them with practical work-based skills to help in their future careers
- the experience and knowledge gained will help students when writing Personal Statements for UCAS

Students will receive training in understanding their role in an team, effective listening, advocacy, supporting their peers, signposting, setting up and running campaigns, representation within the College and much more.

Student Union members will also have the opportunity to work with other departments within the College to help promote it to prospective students and their families. This could be with Marketing to volunteer on a variety of events in Open Days, campus tours or school visits.

Course Reps and SU Officers will be trailblazers for future students at the College and help suggest changes and ideas to continue developing activities and student representation for years to come.

Our new webpages, located under Student Information, provides information about how students can apply for roles within the Union, information on upcoming elections and the processes, and our current SU team.

Our SU webpages will continue to highlight the issues students face by featuring articles from NUS, the National Union of Students, allowing students to be more aware of all issues affecting students in Further Education and Higher Education.

If you would like more information please visit: [kmc.ac.uk/college/](http://kmc.ac.uk/college/) or email [su.rep@kmc.ac.uk](mailto:su.rep@kmc.ac.uk)

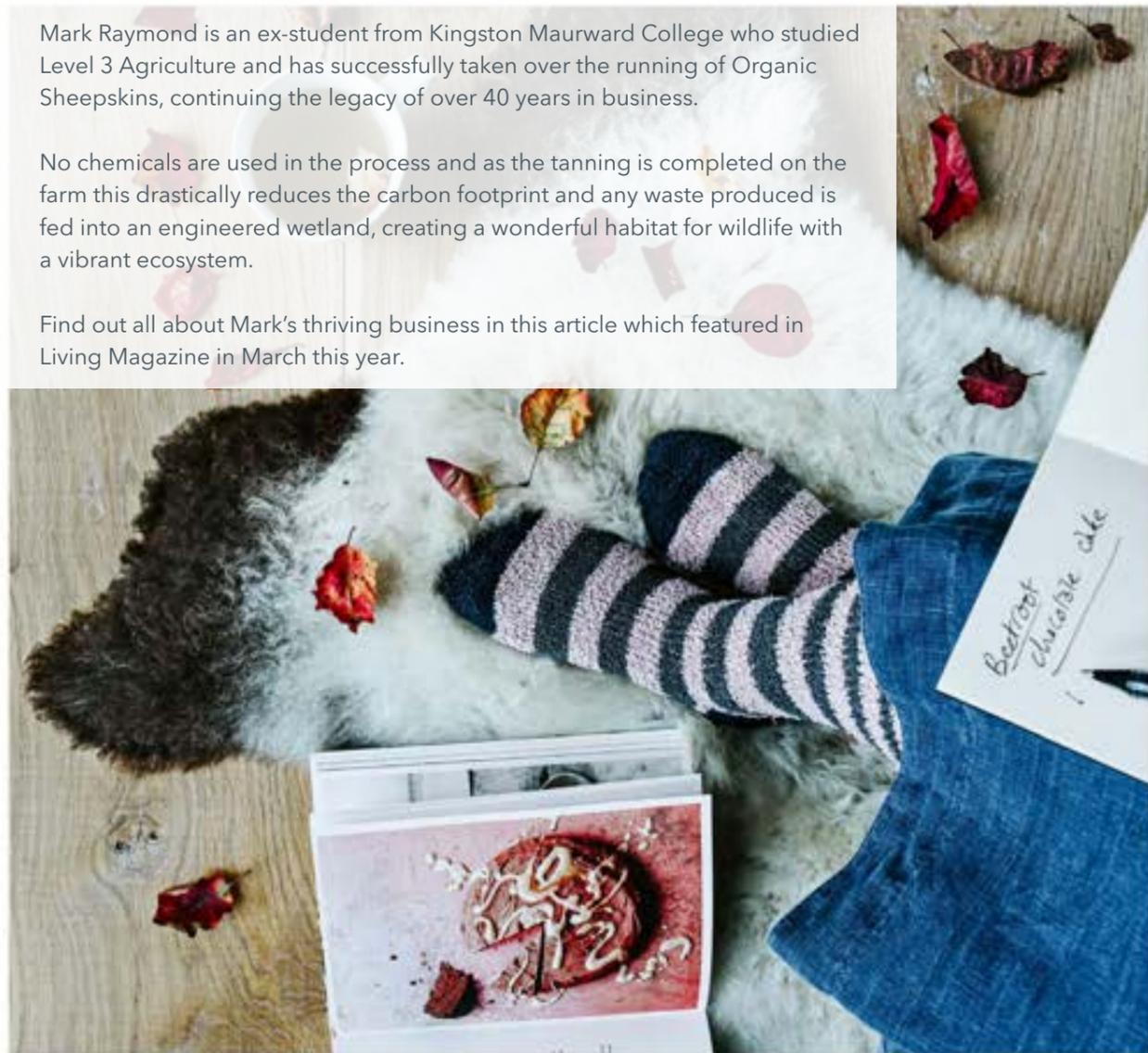


**SU PRESIDENT,  
HANNA BAXTER**

Mark Raymond is an ex-student from Kingston Maurward College who studied Level 3 Agriculture and has successfully taken over the running of Organic Sheepskins, continuing the legacy of over 40 years in business.

No chemicals are used in the process and as the tanning is completed on the farm this drastically reduces the carbon footprint and any waste produced is fed into an engineered wetland, creating a wonderful habitat for wildlife with a vibrant ecosystem.

Find out all about Mark's thriving business in this article which featured in Living Magazine in March this year.



# POWER OF SHEEPSKIN

Mark Raymond bought an organic sheepskin tanning business but didn't quite realise how popular it would become

**O**rganic Sheepskins was a company set up around 40 years ago in Hereford.

The lady who began the company - Nicky - had a son who developed an allergic reaction to cow's milk, so she decided to buy some goat's purely for the milk and eventually sold the billy kids for meat.

She wanted to do something with the skins, so she decided to start tanning them. Using a standard method that involved a lot of toxic chemicals worked and the results were good. So Nicky started tanning other

smallholders' skins. This worked well until Nicki had an allergic reaction to the tanning agent and ended up in intensive care for three months.

Instead of giving it up, she decided to start tanning the skins naturally and spent 20 years developing a process using natural tannins. The company was registered as organic 10 years later and started offered training courses for those wishing to tan skins organically.

Eventually, Mark Raymond, 40, decided to take on the company. He had known Nicky for a long time after meeting her through his sales job at Owen Barry and his other

business interests. He explained: "In the year that I realised the company was up for sale, my wife had a fairly serious riding accident (she is fine now). At the same time her father was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Owen Barry were amazing at giving me the time off I needed but something had to give.

"I was away a lot and really needed to be at home for both my family and to take on more of the daily running of the farm, so we decided to buy the tannery and move it to the family farm."

Mark decided that setting up the tannery could be the perfect opportunity to have



more time at home. The farm was organic anyway and Mark would produce lamb and sell them direct from his website and tan the skins to sell through the Organic Sheepskin tannery.

Traditionally, animal skins are either sent to landfill or shipped to China, tanned in chemicals, and then sent back to the UK. Mark felt this was wrong and so now, with the tannery up and running, everything is done on the farm. This drastically reduces the carbon footprint and does not create toxic waste.

He said: "We offer a contract tanning service. Farmers and smallholders send us their sheep, goat or deer skins and we turn them into beautiful rugs that they can use or sell, it adds value and provides another income stream for them.

"If you're producing a tanned rug in a conventional way, using a lot of chemicals, the disposal of this waste product is a big problem. We don't have any chemical waste and we re-use our natural tannin.

"Any waste we have goes into an engineered wetland at the back of the farm that has reeds and willow trees growing in it which absorb the tannins and creates a wonderful habitat for wildlife. It's a vibrant ecosystem, with lots of wildlife thriving.

"It is very rewarding when you see what comes in at the start and the finished product at the end.

"We are very lucky really. We brought an established business with an existing customer base. I guess we are doing something right because we haven't lost them yet and we've gained a lot more."

Not only do sheepskin rugs look great if you are going for a Scandi look in your home, but they have many other intriguing qualities too. They are hypo-allergenic. They are



**'We believe you should buy our rugs because they are the world's finest sheepskins, and it is a bonus they are organic, and we don't use any chemicals'**

incredible for regulating temperature, so in the winter they will keep you warm and in the summer they help to keep you cool.

The sheepskins also absorb moisture and release it into the air, so they can be used under a horse's saddle to stop sores or used for babies and adults alike to sleep on. They are particularly useful for the elderly.

A lady recently ordered some sheepskins from Mark for her elderly mother who had bed sores and ended up in a hospice because they were so bad.

After she ordered the sheepskin rug, she rang to tell him that her mother could now die peacefully at home thanks to the sheepskin that managed to stop her bedsores.

The wool is also fire retardant because wool will smoulder and extinguish itself so they really are perfect for any home.

Mark added: "We believe you should buy our rugs because they are the world's finest sheepskins, and it is a bonus they are organic, and we don't use any chemicals.

"Everything we do is completely unique and keeps the natural charm of the animal.

"We have a huge positive impact on the environment - turning waste skins that would otherwise go to landfill into a beautiful product, any waste from the process is absorbed by the reed bed on the farm."

[organicsheepskins.co.uk](http://organicsheepskins.co.uk)

# ALUMNI

Kingston Maurward is excited to announce that we will be launching our alumni in the new year. We look forward to featuring lots of our ex-students in our future newsletters, so ahead of the launch please read about two of our previous Horticulture students and what they have gone on to do.

Andrew Turvey is a past Kingston Maurward College student who studied Level 3 Horticulture and is now Head of Park & Gardens at Hatfield House. This picture was taken just before his tour of the private gardens.



**Andrew Turvey**

Andrew Darragh is an ex-student who studied at the College and is now the Gardener in charge of the National Trust property Fenton House. He has over 18 years of experience in horticulture including 11 years in his previous role at the Royal Botanic Garden Kew.

Throughout his time at Fenton House, Andrew has worked on many new developments of the garden, including the property's Conservation Management Plan and a large redesign including the newly re-landscaped front garden. He also leads on several annual events which are very popular with the residents of Hampstead and visitors.

Previously, Andrew's time at Kew Gardens as Team Leader was spent leading, training and inspiring a large team of people with various backgrounds and experience. Andrew was responsible for providing on the job training for staff, students, trainees, volunteers and interns, ensuring required standards and key skills were met. His main passion in horticulture is creating romantic yet dramatic places for people to dwell and enjoy.



**Andrew Darragh**

# THE LEARNING RESOURCES CENTRE (LRC)

Autumn term has been a busy one in the library. We are pleased to see lots of students keen on researching for their courses.

We are still running our Click & Collect service which can be done by reserving items via the library catalogue on Moodle, sending us an email or giving us a call. These resources will then be selected by our staff and left at the library desk to be collected. We also provide a pop-up library for each academic area or to showcase certain topics in displays and on Moodle at the tutor's request.

We'd like to remind students that even when working from home, we are still available to help with their coursework.

The UCAS application deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> January, so please ensure you apply before then. We have produced a display in the LRC, with a flow chart explaining how to write a personal statement, but if students would like any more help, please remember to contact the Careers Team and Michelle Treccani-Chinelli who are on-hand to help you with this process.



REMEMBRANCE SERVICE



## REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

The Floristry department, were only too happy to be involved in the recent Remembrance Service at the College, to support and honour those who fought and served for us. The service was a collaboration between many departments including Equine and Military Preparation.

Students Mia Scott, Becky McDaid and Clari Taylor created traditional military wreaths to be laid at the service, together with garlands for the horses to wear when leading the procession.

These traditional sympathy designs use special construction techniques to ensure they are in keeping with tradition. Learning these skills demonstrates to the students the importance of workmanship, and the diverse range of projects florists cover.

Floristry tutor, Tracey Nadin, said: "It's a great opportunity to work together on such a worthwhile and significant event. A brilliant experience for all students to be a part of."





Our Foundation Learning students were available to help our Outdoor students with their assessment tasks this term which included organising a sports event and leading water-based activities. The first of these events saw three activities: archery, orienteering and rafted canoes with each student participating in each of the activities.

Led by the Level 2 Year 2 Outdoor Adventure students, these sessions were an opportunity for our Foundation Learning students to meet others from different courses and to try out activities they wouldn't usually do.

The second of these activities was for the water-based leadership unit, where Foundation Learning students had the opportunity to try kayaking with the support and guidance from the same outdoor students who supported them throughout.



## A NEW HOME

Wildlife, Ecology & Conservation tutor, Neil Willson, has worked closely with the local rangers at Thorncombe Wood in Dorchester over recent years and has enjoyed working and forging relationships with the rangers, students and staff to benefit the landscape and community.

Neil said: "Rather strangely, we were approached by the rangers, and asked if we could rehome a few goldfish. We have several ponds on the estate at College which are perfect for the species".

A number of the goldfish were found in Rushy Pond, which is near Thorncombe Wood; and is featured in the famous Thomas Hardy novel, *The Withered Arm*. The pond forms part of the Thomas Hardy Visitor Centre, located in Higher Bockhampton. Neil said: "We work with the local community to support the local landscape, this is an excellent example of working together."



The Floristry team were asked to help create flowers for the annual flower festival held at St Michael's Church, Stinsford, in conjunction with Harvest earlier this year. Our Level 2 Floristry students were delighted to work on this project and were tasked with creating an archway over the Lychgate, a second around the entry way, and two pedestals for both sides of the altar.

Despite the wet weather, the students worked well as a team, and creatively demonstrated their talents and skills. Tracey Nadin, Floristry tutor, said: "This type of project is perfect to show students how to work, plan and communicate effectively for weddings and events. Even with the rain the students enjoyed themselves and learnt so much!"



# WILDLIFE, ECOLOGY & CONSERVATION

Level 1 students were tasked with clearing invasive Himalayan Balsam from the banks of the College's rivers and waterways to improve the wildlife in the area. They also built an Otter Holt from natural resources including timber logs, brash from coppiced willow and alder from the adjoining woodland.

Level 2 students learnt about machinery operations using flail mowers and strimmers, as part of their Practical Habitat Management unit. This involved gaining knowledge and skills in the removal of the vegetation such as, tall grasses, nettles and dominant plants, ready for the spring growth and early flowering spring bulbs. Simon Burnham-Slipper, Wildlife tutor, said: "It's been a great opportunity to really get students involved and stuck in, putting the knowledge learnt so far into practice!"

Level 3, Year 2 students practiced their techniques in making hazel and willow hurdles, constructing mallets and converting ash logs by splitting and making shaving horses. This was to help the National Trust in bringing back nature into the UK.



Level 3 Wildlife, Ecology & Conservation students had a busy start to the academic year, learning valuable skills in practical estate management at College.

Heritage craft skills covered include drystone walling together with safe use of chainsaws and working with brush cutters to maintain the countryside and landscape. Tutor, Neil Willson, said: "It's been such a great start to the term, really getting students involved around campus and learning many skills including team building and communication."



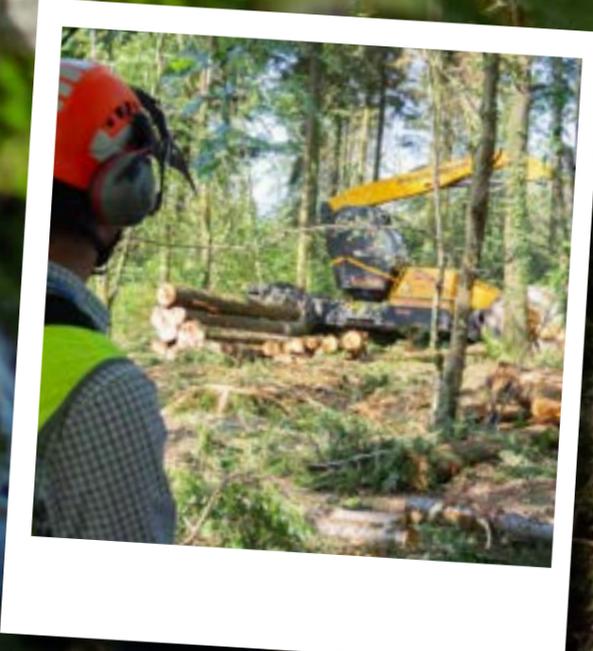
## TRINITY HILL FOREST

Our full-time Arboriculture students and apprentices have been off campus this term learning about the industry. Learning the basics in Health & Safety and First Aid is essential; some learnt how to tree climb safely with experienced instructors, while others have learnt how to assess tree health.

A trip was arranged to Trinity Hill Forest Plantation in Devon, managed by the Forestry Commission for public access and timber production. Manager, Jon Burgess from Forestry England, gave a comprehensive and informative practical class in modern forestry management, covering topics including timber production, ecology, and discussions on the government involvement with forestry plantations.

Working with industry specialists and learning about the machinery which supports the industry, the Konrad Highlander Forwarder harvests wood on partially difficult terrain. The students also learnt about job roles and career progression in this exciting industry.

James Colville and Richard Swift, two of our Arboriculture tutors said: "Being able to show the students examples and experience of working in the industry gives valuable insight to where they could find employment. Jon Burgess was able to give them a perspective into the industry and explain the differences between tree surgery and forestry industries."





  
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