May 2017
Wed 17 Lunch with Prof. Adrian Mouritz

Lunch with Prof. Adrian Mouritz, Wednesday 17 May

What will flying to Cambridge be like when the University turns 850?
This talk will give an overview of the amazing technological developments for future aircraft over the next 40-50 years. The development of environmentally friendly aircraft that no longer burn fuel, but instead are powered using renewable energies such as solar, biofuels, electricity and even hydrogen will be explained. Silent aircraft, with Cambridge being a world-leader in the field, will also be explained. Other technologies including the ability of aircraft to check their own health and fix their own illnesses during flight are explored. This presentation looks into the future, and explains the reasons why it is so essential for aerospace technologies to be continually reinvented to satisfy the needs of the flying public for cheaper, faster, quieter, greener and safer passenger aircraft.

Adrian Mouritz is Executive Dean of Engineering and Professor of Aerospace Materials at RMIT University. Professor Mouritz has worked in industry, defence and academia, and during his career has worked with major aerospace companies, including Boeing and Airbus, on engineering technologies for next-generation aircraft. He has degrees from several universities; include a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctor of Science (ScD) from the University of Cambridge (Jesus College).

This lunch will take place at the Savage Club in Bank Place at 12 noon for 12.30pm. The Club is at 12 Bank Place (off Collins Street) in the City. Cost is $55 including drinks. All guests are most welcome; the more the better. Would you please advise Peter Baines at lunches@cambridgesociety.org.au or on 9820 2334 by latest Monday noon, 15 May, if you will be coming (and dietary requirements). Those emailing their intention to attend should ring Peter to confirm if they receive no email confirmation from him within 24 hours of booking.

Later in the year

Global Cambridge in Melbourne, Tuesday 25 July
For the Global Cambridge series, CUDAR are visiting a selection of cities from around the world to bring together alumni to connect, engage and inspire. The series will showcase how Cambridge research is trail-blazing the path to new discoveries, ideas and inventions. In 2017, there will be alumni events in Bristol, Edinburgh, Dusseldorf, Hong Kong, Leeds, Melbourne, Paris and Sydney.

Registration will open in May 2017. This event will be free of charge. Details will follow, but book this date into your diaries now. Expected timing is 5.30–7.30pm.

Annual Dinner, Friday 15 September
We are pleased to announce that the Rev Dr Jeremy Morris, Master of Trinity Hall, will be our guest of honour at this year’s annual dinner, to be held in the usual venue. A reception for Trinity Hall alumni with the Master will precede the dinner. We are indebted to His Honour Justice Tony Pagone and Mr Patrick Moore for offering to host these two events.

Diary dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 Jun</td>
<td>Lunch with Jonathan Reeve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Jul</td>
<td>Global Cambridge in Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Aug</td>
<td>Lunch with Sir Andrew Davis (MSO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Sep</td>
<td>Annual dinner</td>
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The Cambridge Society of Australia (Victoria) Inc.
A0030667D. ABN 82 869 550 988
secretary@cambridgesociety.org.au
Phone: 03 9596 1811
www.cambridgesociety.org.au

President: Mr Chris Briggs
Secretary: Mr David Rees
Treasurer: Mr Jeremy Platt
10 Village Close
MOUNT MARTHA VIC 3934
**Last month**

**Boat Race dinner, Friday 21 April**

A large crowd enjoyed a splendid occasion at the Savage Club. There were 57 in the audience, including 19 Oxonians. Proceedings were started by Alice Fraser, who was in town for the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Alice studied English Literature at Cambridge, performed with The Footlights and even used to row. The ladies race was won comfortably by Cambridge after an unfortunate start by Oxford, from which they never recovered. The men’s race was very close with only 3 seconds separating the crews at the finish after 17 minutes (1 1/2 lengths, or 0.294% for the mathematically inclined), but here the Dark Blues prevailed. Commentary on the race was provided by Kris Coventry, who rowed in the Cambridge boats in 2003 and 2004. A splendid meal was enjoyed and the hardier, younger, souls partied on after the formal proceedings were closed.

**Commercials**

If you have an offer, message or request of a personal or not-for-profit nature that you would like us to include in this section, please contact the editor at newsletter@cambridgesociety.org.au.

**Oxbridge Fiji Forum August 5–10, 2017**

*Five days of discussion, conviviality and fun*

Come and join Oxbridge alumni from all around the world – USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Fiji – for our fourth long weekend Fiji forum. It’s a hugely enjoyable and wildly stimulating long weekend of talks, discussion – and lots of Fijian food, kava and kayaking, swimming and singing.

The weekend is being hosted by Oxbridge alumni John and Delia Rothnie-Jones, who own Daku Resort and are joint Presidents of the Fiji Oxbridge Society.

John (Cantab) was the founder of the Sydney debating forum, Intelligence Squared; Delia (Oxon) is the former President of the OUSNSW. Between them, they have an excellent understanding of the interests of our membership, and will be delivering another stimulating and rewarding gathering. Find out more at [http://paradisecourses.com/oxbridge-forum-in-fiji](http://paradisecourses.com/oxbridge-forum-in-fiji).

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**Snippets**

We acknowledge our particular debt to Varsity and to the University News Release Service.

**For a real Oxbridge education, you now have to go to Durham**

‘Should I just have done with it and tell them they’re a bunch of tossers?’

I was on my way to speak at the Durham Union. The motion was ‘This House believes the NHS is out of date’. And, as usual, I was on the ‘wrong’ side of the debate – so why should I even bother? You know beforehand which way the vote is going to go at any university debate these days: the one which enables the snowflakes most easily to signal their virtue.

But, on the spur of the moment, I decided to give Durham the benefit of the doubt. ‘I was going to be incredibly rude to you,’ I began. ‘Which you totally deserve for being a bunch of snowflakes who are going to vote against the motion because hashtag “I heart the NHS”. But instead I’m going to make a case by appealing to your intellects…’

I could scarcely believe what happened next.

The audience listened. They laughed at my jokes. When I made eye contact, they didn’t look away nervously like I was some snarling right-wing pariah with whom they wanted nothing to do. Then, perhaps most amazingly of all, they voted by 75 to 50 in favour of the motion.

Now I accept that this was partly thanks to the brilliance of my co-speaker, Kate Andrews of the Institute of Economic Affairs, who was eloquent, reasonable and fearlessly well briefed. Our opponents, with their ‘envy of the world’ pabulum, just didn’t have a prayer.

Except at both the Oxford and Cambridge Unions, I know, the other side would still definitely have won. I’ve said this before but it’s worth repeating, just to annoy him: the last time I debated at Oxford, the ex-Guardian editor Alan Rusbridger gave a boilerplate speech of such unutterably predictable, dreary, fatuous lefty tosh that I honestly thought the undergraduates would feel insulted by its glib platitudinousness. Instead, they just couldn’t get enough of it. Bizarre, I thought at the time.

No, worse, I realise after my Durham experience: tragic. I know some of you think I bang on about Oxford so infatuatedly I sound like Withnail’s Uncle Monty recalling his first love
If you’re someone like the radical-left politician Michael ‘soak the rich’ Gove, who recently argued for public schools to be stung for VAT so that they can be punished even more than they are already, you’ll no doubt consider this anti-elitism a healthy thing. But after my own – admittedly brief – recent trips I’d say that in its eagerness to purge itself of students from a certain kind of background, Oxbridge is in danger of throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

Take, for example, the right-on enthusiasm for recruiting Greats candidates from schools that don’t do Latin or Greek. The theory goes that by the fourth year, these eager state-school kids will have attained the same proficiency as private-school ones who have been hothoused on classics since they were eight or nine. But I gather that only the Oxbridge classics tutors who have drunk the social justice Kool-Aid actually believe this has worked in practice. The rest are worried about declining long-term standards and are also a bit frustrated: if you’re an Oxbridge classics don, you want to teach Oxbridge-level classics – not catch-up for beginners.

Then there’s the money thing. At dinner the other night I sat next to the wife of a Cambridge-educated billionaire whose privately educated son wasn’t even going to consider applying to Oxford or Cambridge because of their anti-public-school prejudice. She spelled out what this meant: no lavish bequests; no more donations – not even to her husband’s old college, because who wants to donate to a college that won’t take your son? Apparently – and she knows: these are the circles she moves in – a lot of her friends feel the same way and Oxbridge is increasingly feeling the pinch. How – if it continues to discriminate against such people – does Oxbridge hope to compete with US rivals like the University of Southern California, where a campaign has raised $6 billion in alumnus donations?

You could argue that none of this matters: that it is only right that Oxbridge should discriminate against posh kids who have been taught well and know stuff and seek out state-educated ones who may work harder and who may turn out to be brighter.

My counterargument would be that, in its well-meaning attempt to broaden its social mix, Oxbridge has accidentally achieved the opposite: creating a sterile, conformist, PC monoculture of earnest state-indoctrinated Stakhanovites from which the children of the sun have been all but expunged, exiled to more simpatico institutions like Durham, Bristol and Edinburgh, whose standards have been raised greatly by this influx of talent. Hardly anyone will publicly admit this stuff because it sounds snobbish. But lots of you reading this will know it to be true.

– The Spectator

**A virtual threat: how hackers work**

The figure of the ‘genius hacker’ has become a ubiquitous plot cliché of TV and films. However, in recent times hacking has been gracing our screens for a more sinister reason. Allegations that Russian hackers may have interfered in the 2016 US presidential election rocked the political landscape and cast doubt over the integrity of our political system. Just this month, Lloyds Banking Group suffered a massive breach of its online security, three men were jailed after stealing over £2 million through ATM hacking, and the perpetrator of 2014’s hacks on the personal phones of celebrities, including Jennifer Lawrence and Taylor Swift, was jailed for nine months.

Very few of us, however, understand how these attacks actually take place. We entrust all of our personal information to myriad devices, websites, and businesses, and have to rely on faith that our personal information – photos, videos, bank details, text messages, emails – will be secure. As technology and the internet become omnipresent in our day-to-day lives, cybersecurity is going to (or has already) become as important to us as the physical locks on our homes, vehicles, and safes.

But while it is relatively easy to make a spare or replacement key for a physical lock, doing so for a...
laptop or mobile phone, as the FBI found out in the case of the 2015 San Bernardino shooter’s iPhone, carries much more risk. Apple’s refusal to create a ‘back-door’ to access data on a locked iPhone was lambasted by many, including FBI Director James Comey and The Donald himself, advocating a boycott of all Apple products.

The truth was much more complex. Building a ‘back-door’ into Apple’s stringent, encrypted security would not only have been potentially irreversible, but it would also have jeopardised the security of millions of users’ personal data. As Apple CEO Tim Cook explained to ABC News, ‘No-one, I don’t believe, would want a master key built that would turn hundreds of millions of locks. Even if that key were in the possession of the person that you trust the most, that key can be stolen.’ He went on to describe the requisite software as ‘the software equivalent of cancer.’

Cook’s analogy is apt. For all its allure for budding TV writers, the term ‘hacking’ betrays the far cruder truth – that often, the process of accessing personal data involves bashing it from all sides until the protections surrounding it break. This type of attack, called a Distributed Denial of Services attack, is by far the most common form of cyber-attack, usually perpetrated against large websites or corporations. It is typically achieved by bombarding the target with superfluous requests in an attempt to overload it. This can prevent access to bank accounts, credit cards, or online gaming accounts – and provide a sufficient smokescreen to steal personal information.

The term ‘computer virus’ was coined by Michel Crichton in his 1973 film, Westworld – a film with a degree of eerie prescience. Four decades later, computer viruses are still one of the means by which a cyber-criminal can gain access to ‘secure’ data. Particularly popular are ‘keyloggers’, which covertly record the keystrokes of a computer user, including passwords, PINs, and security question responses. All it takes is for the victim to unintentionally click one wrong link, either in a fraudulent email or online.

At the heart of this issue is an ongoing battle between hackers, who are constantly finding new exploits and bugs in software, and companies like Apple, Samsung, and Microsoft, who are constantly updating their software to guard against them. Regular software updates can seem like a pain, but delay them at your own peril: the hacker is only a few steps behind.

**Does Cambridge need an art school?**

As an Art Historian and Art foundation course graduate, it’s unsurprising that I love art. I love looking at art. I love analysing art. I love looking at pretty things that aren’t always considered art: beautiful buildings on the street, well-shot music videos or films, photography, set design, ball decoration, and fashion. I also love to make art. When I get stuck into drawing or painting a portrait, I become absorbed for hours on end, demanding of myself that the picture be the very best ever created. It’s wonderful.

Artistic education and academic education are considered two very different kettles of fish. You can study Art at a university, and sometimes study History of Art at an art school, but institutions offering both together, or assimilated into each other, are rare indeed.

In my experience, creativity and academicism are mutually beneficial. Academic study tends to inspire more interesting and creative artwork: from the Bible inspiring early religious art, to humanism motivating the changes of the Renaissance, to an interest in new scientific technology partially prompting impressionism, art history is rife with examples which back this up.

In turn, relativity is essential for many kinds of academic learning. Any humanities student will tell you they’ve had a breakthrough for an essay at some point by trying something new, or attempting to look at something in a new way, or even taking a break from their books. What’s more, in a high-pressure environment like Cambridge, practising art can be a wonderful stress-reliever.

There’s an idea that, to be good at academic work, one must be clever and knowledgeable, whereas to be good at anything creative, one must have innate talent. But no successful artist conformed to the idea of the artistic genius who can pitch up, dab some paint, and create a masterpiece; they all worked hard, practised to achieve the necessary skill, and often had thorough educations, too. Academic and artistic study both require hard work, motivation and an interest in constantly expanding one’s knowledge.

Colleges spend thousands of pounds on boat clubs, dramatics societies and choirs. Yet very few have art studios. There is Arc-Soc, and various Life Classes, but if colleges can make space for music practice rooms and theatres, why not art studios?