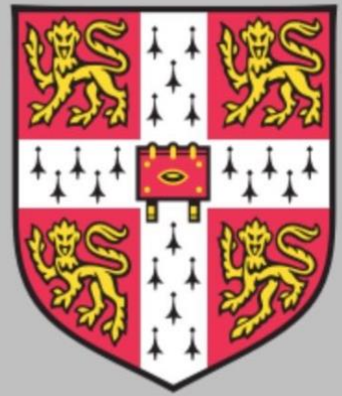


Norfolk Cambridge Society

Autumn 2023 Newsletter



From the Chair: Doing Good by Having Fun

As Christmas looms and the season of goodwill is upon us, it may be timely to reflect on the objectives of the Society and what we achieve. To this effect we have already 'tweaked' our constitution to make even clearer the good purposes for which the Society exists.

Obviously, we constitute a congenial point of social contact for all who support the interests and welfare of the University of Cambridge. To this end, we provide a number of regular events such as the aptly named, and fun, Epicureans. These events are organised voluntarily by members of the Committee. Recently, we have arranged tours of Norwich School which proved particularly popular. All these events are financed by participants but require management.

Of course, the Society is most renowned for its hugely popular lecture courses. The next one, on Thursday 29th February will be delivered by Tom Little KC who will speak on the criminal justice system. Once again, Geoffrey Smart has backed a winner and the topic is clearly of interest to our members: It is already sold out but we do operate a wait list in case of returns.

Given the success of the lectures, designed to be, in the best Cambridge traditions, stimulating and an authoritative pursuit of truth, we use the proceeds to further promote good causes and charities of an educational nature in the county, especially where these are linked to the University. Most notably, of course we award grants to young people in Norfolk applying to Cambridge. This requires considerable administration of an essay competition and interviews and we have been fortunate indeed to be supported since their inception by Dr Annie Grant who has given so tirelessly of her time in this respect. We also have our Vice Chair, Bryan Guttridge who is taking an increasing role alongside Rob Edwards, George Shippam, Kathy Moyse and Tim Chaloner (both teachers).

The Society is successful only because of the efforts of my fellow committee members who devote so much time to making it so. Mu Gurbutt works with colleagues to ensure our varied social activities (**Please see below for upcoming events**), Rob Edwards continues the onerous and vital work of managing our finances, Peter Smith maintains our website and of course the Vice Chair and former Chair Geoffrey Smart assist on so many different fronts.

As Christmas comes in a world so full of grief and woe, whether or not you are a Christian, another religion or none, it is apposite to remember that there is fun and fellowship in our Society and there is intellectual stimulation too. All of this happens through selfless efforts of my colleagues and your loyalty as members. The result is that we are able to give to worthwhile causes and charities.

I thank all my colleagues. And you, our members. Long may we continue to do good by learning and sharing together.

Simon Brickles
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From the Editor

I am pleased to be able to get this edition out to you before Christmas. I hope you will have time to read it!

Two of our members, James Firebrace and Dr Annie Grant have recently been elected as East of England Chair of the Royal Geographical Society and President of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society respectively. They are both keen to build academic and social links with the NCS so please watch this space and see James' item below.

We have also recently held the 2023/24 round of NCS Student awards working to a new schedule. Since we changed the entry qualification to pupils applying to Cambridge from those offered a place we are no longer tied to the University interview schedule. It was clear from their feedback that those who entered very much appreciated a chance both to rehearse their thinking in the essay and (for our finalists) to effectively have a practice interview. More details are given below.

New to this edition is a Cambridge reminiscence from Tim Chaloner. More please!

May I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Kathy Moyse

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NCS Awards 2023/24

Given the change to our qualifying criterion we held the awards competition earlier in the academic year than previously and again attracted some excellent entries. Interviews for our finalists were held at the end of November with subjects ranging through Anglo Saxon, Norse and Celtic to Medicine and awards were made to Katy Burton (£600), Beowulf O'Dwyer (£400) and Bibi Boyce (£400). They and two guests each have been invited to attend our February NCS Lecture so that we can present them with their certificates.

Thanks are due to Bryan Guttridge for putting together the schedule and anonymising all the entries and to George Shippam, Tim Chaloner and Kathy Moyse for marking and shortlisting. Kathy and George also conducted the interviews via Zoom.

Rob Edwards

NCS Public Lectures

Our eighteenth public lecture was held on Thursday 28th September, when our distinguished speaker was Roger Mosey, Master of Selwyn College Cambridge and former Editorial Director at the BBC. His topic was 'Delivering Truth in a Tribal World'. This was a most entertaining and informative lecture held in a packed Blake Studio at Norwich School. Roger gave the audience many interesting insights into the challenges that news organisations face in the modern world, with so many competing sources of information and such widely varying political opinions.

Our next lecture will be held on **Thursday 29th February** and, with 275 tickets bought, is already sold out. If you have already bought tickets and at any point realise you can no longer come, please do email me and I will let people on the wait list know. The speaker is Tom Little KC, one of the country's leading silks, and his lecture topic is 'Criminal Justice in England - How Good is the System?'

Geoffrey

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Royal Geographical Society: East of England

Rebecca Stephens, first British woman to climb Everest speaking in Norwich on 11th January 2024

The Royal Geographical Society is hosting an event on **11th January 7.30pm to 9.00pm at the Blake Studio, Norwich School**. Rebecca Stephens, who climbed Everest in 1993, will be talking about 100 years of fascination with the world's highest peak and how the challenge has changed over the years. The future events programme is now being planned with topics ranging from the social and environmental challenges of addressing climate change and biodiversity loss to conflict and displaced peoples, to the rights of indigenous peoples.

Registration for Rebecca's talk is £5 at [Mount Everest: a hundred-year fascination - RGS](#)

James Firebrace, RGS East of England Chair.

NCS Epicureans



Our last lunch was held in November at Jorge's Tapas Restaurant. We enjoyed a really excellent meal accompanied by some splendid Portuguese wines suggested by the eponymous owner. It was also good to have some new attendees. I will be in New Zealand when the next lunch is due so Mu will be in charge of that and information will go out under separate cover.

Kathy Moyse ajskcm@btinternet.com and Mu Gurbutt mugurbutt@hotmail.com

Incrementum Lunchtime Investment Group



This is a fun investment club run jointly with the Norfolk Club which requires no-one to put up any money. All investments are notional, although anyone can, of course, take any investment ideas away and use them to modify their own private portfolios. We meet every two months or so and our discussions are usually both entertaining and informative. We are always pleased to welcome new members. Please contact me if you wish to give us a try. We meet at 11.30am followed by lunch. Meeting dates for **2024 are 19th February, 15th March, 10th June, 16th September and 9th December.**

Geoffrey
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Full Circle: A Cambridge Reminiscence

It is near the end of September 2023 and briefcase in hand I step off the Milton park and ride bus at the bus station right behind my old college Emma. On the way to my part time teaching job in Cambridge I pass the digs on Parkside where I lived with my best friend at university, Geoff Kilpin. Crossing Parker's Piece, I become aware of a very organised Freshers Fair. It suddenly strikes me that it is almost exactly 50 years to the day that I arrived in Cambridge to study Economics at Emma.

My time at Cambridge was a mixture. In retrospect I think I learned more Economics in my first years of teaching than in three years of academic study and tutoring. This Oldham Grammar School boy was more interested in playing sport, in particular football, for the college. A fantastic first season saw us promoted to the top division with a significant number of Freshers in the team. Most importantly, Ian Mashiter proved to be an outstanding goalkeeper and Steve Coverdale, fresh from his county cricket debut for Yorkshire, scored lots of goals. Dave Saville, Steve Wookey and Keith Hedges (?) were also high quality. Year 2 we consolidated in the top league. Year 3 I found myself in the second team! Neglecting academic studies, I also played mid-week for the Co-Op team.

Another close friend was a Norwich boy, Oliver Johnson – Economist and hockey player. We drifted apart but caught up with each other in retirement in Norfolk. Oliver sadly passed away earlier this year. A good man with a big heart.

Cricket: The college provided almost the whole of the Blues team and won the cuppers competition. The only non-blue in the winning team was another friend, Jeff Halliwell, also on the College University Challenge team.

Terms came and went. A regular visitor to Emma was, Judith, my girlfriend. Her train journey on a Friday night sometimes involved changes at Sheffield, Retford, Peterborough and Ely. I graduated in the hot, drought summer of 1976 and we married in Oldham in the August. The day the drought broke!

After Cambridge – a PGCE at Manchester University, two teaching jobs in Blackburn before moving to the soft South and a boarding school in Berkshire. We stayed at Bradfield College for the next 32 years. 'Retired' in 2016 I have come out of retirement twice to continue my passion for classroom teaching.

Fifty years on I have come full circle to Cambridge.

Tim Chaloner

Upcoming Social Events

We are running a joint **Boat Race event** with the Oxford University Society for Norfolk on **Easter Saturday, 30th March 2024 at the Norfolk Club, 17 Upper King St, Norwich NR3 1RB**. The screening will start at 2pm with the women's race scheduled for 2.46pm and the men's for 3.46pm. Tea will be served in the interval.

The cost for this is £20 per head and tickets will be available through Ticket Tailor in the new year.

You can access Ticket Tailor via both the Cambridge Alumni website and the Cambridge Norfolk Society's own website <https://norfolkcambridgesociety.org.uk/> You can also create an online account directly with Ticket Tailor. Please contact me if you have any questions.

After our very successful **Afternoon Tea with Chanter's Jigge** held in May this year we will be having a repeat performance in 2024 at a similar time of year and once again at Wacton Hall. Full details will appear in the next Newsletter but please make a mental note now!

Mu Gurbutt

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NCS Book Group

We have held two meetings since the last Newsletter and although we generally convene online due to the logistics of living in a large, rural county we held our December meeting in person, extremely ably hosted by Simon Brickles.

The text under consideration was *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles. A humorous and wry take on the aftermath of the Russian Revolution of 1917 of it proved to be a popular choice in spite of its chunky size and quite small print!

September's offering which was *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte presented rather more of a challenge and I think it's fair to say that the general verdict was 'I've been avoiding it, I'm not sure I can say I enjoyed it but I'm glad I've read it!'. As it's one of my favourite books which I taught to large numbers of A Level students over the years I begged to differ but one or two members have promised to revisit it following our discussion.

Our next meeting is Thursday 1st February. The book is *For Thy Great Pain Have Mercy on My Little Pain* by Victoria Mackenzie available in hardcover, on Audible and on Kindle. **This will be a Zoom meeting, starting at 6.30pm.**

It's a novel about Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich so is of local interest and was very well received on publication.

If you would like to join us please get in touch with me and I will add you to the list.

Kathy Moyse

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A Plea from Geoffrey: Would anyone like to review a new book before it is submitted to publishers?

I have just finished writing a short book of around 30,000 words, loosely occupying the popular science genre. It is arguably rather an ambitious book, embracing physics, biology, genetics, neuroscience, philosophy and justice. I should be enormously grateful if any scientists, psychologists, philosophers, lawyers or interested others might be prepared to review it and give me some feedback. All I can offer in return is my gratitude and appreciation in the book's Acknowledgements section.

A Few Thoughts on Existence (alternative title *Blame is for God and Small Children*) begins with the premise that human beings, like all other creatures, are comprised solely of atoms obeying the laws of physics. It then takes the reader on a logical journey from these laws, to how our brains must work, to the degree to which free will exists and what this really means. It discusses in particular why we could probably never have made different decisions from those we made in the past and why this does not imply a deterministic future. The implications for notions of responsibility, accountability and justice are then examined. Along the way a brief detour is made into religious belief. Finally, a comparison of social and criminal justice systems in selected countries is made, suggesting which are likely to build a better world.

The book contains a large number of references to academic works supporting the arguments advanced, written by physicists, biologists, neuroscientists, philosophers, criminologists and other leading experts in their fields. It also contains many quotations by great thinkers. Throughout, I have tried to follow Albert Einstein's cautionary advice, set out in the book's opening quotation "*If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.*"

If you would be interested in reviewing and commenting on my final draft, please email me. Many thanks in anticipation.

Geoffrey

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Viewpoints is currently suspended.



Our discussion group on matters philosophical, political and whimsical remains is still seeking someone to lead it. It used to be a source of great food for thought. I no longer have the time to organise these meetings but would be delighted if someone stepped forward to revive them. I would certainly like to come along to future meetings and enjoy participating again. If anyone is interested in running such a group, please do let me know.

Geoffrey

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Contacts

For information about the Society, events and meetings please take a look at our **new website**, ably maintained by Peter Smith He can be contacted at pdgsmith@hotmail.com

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