



Newnham in America

Welcome from Margaret Campbell (NC 1966), Chair of the US Committee

In January 2017 we were pleased to welcome the Principal to New York where she gave a talk at the offices of Cambridge in America on the policies being developed by the University on sexual harassment. Her talk provoked a lively discussion amongst the audience. It was followed by a meeting with alumnae for an update on developments at Newnham. In March, Jennifer Delaney (NC 2000), US Committee member, hosted the annual Spring Brunch for alumnae in the New York area. At the end of March, Valery Rees (NC 1965), a Newnham Associate, visited Chicago to attend the Annual Renaissance Society conference in America. Rebecca Norris (NC 2008), US Committee member, hosted a tea with Cambridge alumni in Chicago for her to talk about her work and to meet Newnham alumnae in the Mid-West. Rebecca is also Convener for Cambridge in America in the Mid-West and we welcome her efforts to build up connections with our alumnae in that region.

Our US Travel Bursary, which is funded by the Committee, is now in its 11th year and continues to attract a very strong list of applicants. We are delighted to follow their subsequent achievements and are particularly encouraged that many continue to stay connected with the research contacts they have made in the US during their visit, and continue to cooperate on the exchange of research. The Bursary not only enables students to have the opportunity to travel and get to know the US but is bringing the added benefit of stimulating ongoing international research cooperation. We are now starting the application process for 2018 and, as usual, will be voting for the winner from three shortlisted candidates in March 2018. I would again encourage alumnae in the US to read their detailed submissions and cast a vote. Any US alumnae interested in contributing to the Bursary should contact Penny Hubbard at penny.hubbard@newn.cam.ac.uk.

Our 2017 US Travel Bursary winner, Méire Lawlor (NC 2013), a PhD student in the Transmissible Cancer Group in the Department of Veterinary Medicines, attended the Annual Conference of Canine and Feline Genetics in Minneapolis and spent time in August and September with the Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito, California and the Wildlife Health Center in Hawaii. She had the opportunity to meet Newnham alumnae in San Francisco during her visit. Her travel report is overleaf. Sakthy Selvakumaran (NC 2015), our 2016 Bursary winner, made a brief visit to New York in July on her way to a Forbes Under-30 conference in Boston. During her visit she caught up with some of the research contacts she made here. She has also been awarded the prestigious 2017 Leslie Paddle Scholarship by the Institute of Engineering Technology. Our 2014 Bursary winner, Clare Donaldson (NC 2011), has recently published a paper in Science Advances based on the research project on the Kilauea volcano in Hawaii which she undertook during her time in the US.

We were sad to learn in May of the death of Sophie Consagra (NC 1950) who was for many years a member of the US Committee and deeply involved in the fundraising for the library. Audrey Richards (NC 1959), who has been a Committee member for many years in San Francisco, and a generous hostess to many visiting Principals is stepping down. However we are pleased that she will remain involved as a Member Emerita. We thank her for all her support and advice over the years.

We have had other contacts during the year from alumnae and Senior Members visiting the USA. If you wish to get in touch with us you can do so either directly at margaret.campbell1@verizon.net or through the Newnham Roll office at roll@newn.cam.ac.uk. Please note that the Newnham in America website will close in February 2018. News and information will be available on the alumnae pages of the Newnham College website at www.newn.cam.ac.uk.

Newnham US Bursary 2017 – Report to the Newnham US Committee by Máire Lawlor (NC 2013)

This summer I had the incredible privilege of visiting academic collaborators based in California and the Hawaiian Islands as well as attending an international genetics conference in Minnesota. I am deeply grateful to the Newnham US Committee for their overwhelming generosity and kindness in funding this trip. Thank you!

To provide some background, I am currently a final year PhD student in the Transmissible Cancer group based at the Department of Veterinary Medicine. My research focuses on the biological phenomenon whereby cancer cells can become infectious agents. Clonally transmissible cancers can be transmitted between individuals by the physical transfer of living cancer cells. One such cancer, called Canine Transmissible Venereal Tumour, or CTVT, occurs in dogs and is endemic in dog populations around the world. I'm interested in using genomics to unravel the evolutionary processes driving the emergence of transmissible cancers. I have also become increasingly interested in cancers in wildlife, particularly in California sea lions and green turtles, and the potential that such epidemics could be as a result of undetected transmissible cancers.

St Paul, Minnesota

I began my travels in the 'Land of 10,000 Lakes' otherwise known as Minnesota. In St Paul, I attended the 9th International Conference on Canine and Feline Genetics and Genomics, a major conference in the field of animal genetics and only held once every two years. The conference was a wonderful opportunity to meet with leading researchers and veterinarians in the field of canine genetics as well as a chance for discussion and striking up new collaborations.

San Francisco, California

My next stop was San Francisco where I had arranged to visit Dr Frances Gulland, an expert in marine mammal diseases, at the Marine Mammal Center. The Center itself is nestled in the scrubby hills of Sausalito and surrounded by a fantastic diversity of marine life. The facility resounds with the distinctive barks, grunts and splashes of its sea lion and seal inpatients, though the Center also takes in whales, dolphins, sea otters, and sea turtles. I had the chance to sit in on the weekly (and sometimes very gory) pathology round-ups as well as observing the dramatic release of a young bull sea lion that had recently been rehabilitated at the Center.

Oahu and Maui, Hawaii

The last stop on my travels was Oahu. There I met Dr Thierry Work, a wildlife disease specialist working at the U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center. We had some very fruitful discussions about cancer biology, the native Hawaiian wildlife and the plight of the green sea turtle. Since returning to Cambridge, with the support of my supervisor, we have initiated a collaboration with the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration looking into the aetiology of this highly prevalent disease.

During my final days in the US, I travelled from Oahu to Maui and volunteered with members of the Hawai'i Wildlife Fund (HWF) watching over green turtles (honu) basking on Ho'okipa, a popular tourist beach. Honu Watch is just one of many important conservation related projects run by HWF. Basking turtles are extremely vulnerable and easily disturbed by tourists and bathers. We even had to intervene when one beach-goer attempted to sit his toddler atop one of the larger turtles for a photo in Kailua.

It is difficult to avoid sounding clichéd when describing just how meaningful this trip was for me. It was the definition of "once-in-a-lifetime" and I am extraordinarily lucky to have had this opportunity. I am enormously grateful to the committee, and in particular to Margaret Campbell, for their support.



An adult green sea turtle coming ashore to bask at Ho'okipa Beach, Maui