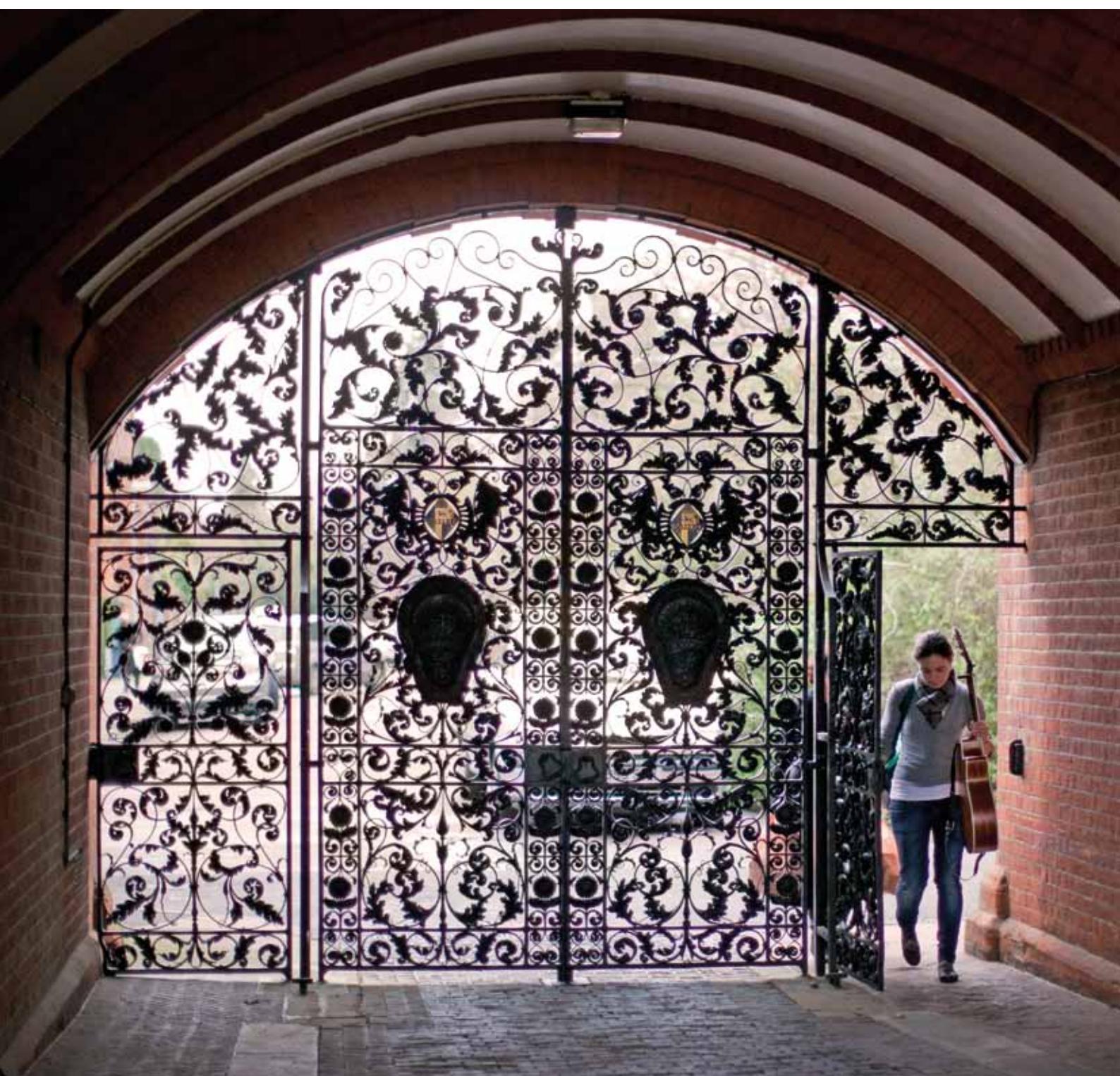


newnham college cambridge

a women's college at the heart of the university





welcome



Newnham College – getting more out of Cambridge

Cambridge is one of the best universities in the world. Being a student here is hard work – and we're not going to pretend otherwise – but it is also unforgettably exhilarating and inspiring.

Newnham is a women's college at the very heart of the University of Cambridge. It's a lively community in its own right, with an intellectual buzz and a social life to suit all tastes. But it's also an ideal launchpad for making the most of everything the university as a whole has to offer: from sport to seminars, plays to politics.

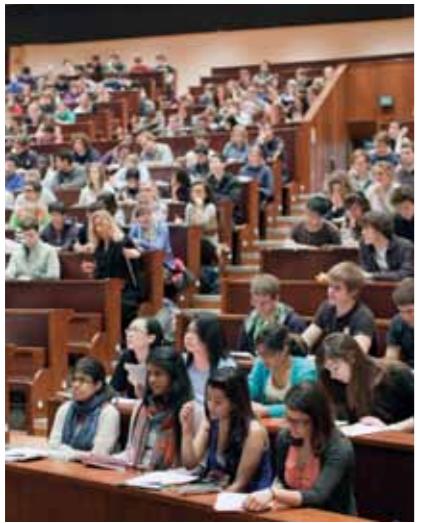
But why are we a college for women? The answer's simple: in order to do the very best for our women students. Don't forget, for most of its history Cambridge was a university for men only. It was only in 1948 that women here were first awarded degrees. Of course, everyone in Cambridge is now committed to equal opportunities and to fostering a community for men and women on equal terms. But history can take a long time to undo.

Even now, only 15% of the University professors are women. You will soon see that life for students at Newnham is emphatically not single-sex. But we do believe that a women's college still has a vital job to do in giving priority to the achievement, needs and potential of women.

Every college in Cambridge has elegant gardens, stunning architecture, supportive senior members (teaching staff) and a friendly atmosphere. The best kept secret about the whole process of 'getting in' is that you are almost certain to be very happy whichever college you choose. What we hope to show you in the pages that follow (and better still when you visit us) is that there are very special reasons for choosing Newnham – if you want to get the most out of Cambridge.

Newnham: the bare essentials

- A college for women
- 120 new undergraduates each year (quite large in Cambridge terms)
- over 100 senior members (fellows and other teaching officers)
- vibrant graduate community
- 18 acre site including sports facilities and extensive gardens (and at Newnham you can walk on the grass)
- central location, directly opposite the main University Arts and Humanities departments, and a short walk or bike ride away from most of the Science departments



What does a college do (and not do)?

Every student at Cambridge is a member of a college. Your college usually provides you with a place to live, meals, welfare services, friends on hand, a library, bar, clubs and societies, and all kinds of leisure facilities and entertainments. But it also offers much more.

Your college plays a crucial role in your academic life. Here you will find your 'Director of Studies', who

will guide your progress throughout your chosen course and arrange your 'supervisions' (those small-group teaching sessions for which Cambridge is famous). You will be taught by many different supervisors during your time in Cambridge, some from your own college and some from others.

Your college is not directly responsible for all your teaching. The University departments arrange lectures, seminars, and (for scientists) practical classes; they also decide on the syllabus and set the exams. This means that every day you will be working side by side with other students from all the Cambridge colleges; at the end of the day, you all follow the same course and take exactly the same exams, whatever your college.

This combination of college and University can seem puzzling at first, particularly as many college senior members are also, at the same time, University Lecturers or Professors; but you will soon get the hang of the system.



learning to learn at newnham

Effective education

At Newnham we think hard how to give you the most effective education we possibly can, and how to help you make the most of the teaching offered by the University. We are well aware that students coming new to Cambridge need to learn how to learn at a higher level and we have our eye on you from the moment we accept you. We will keep in touch with you before you arrive, offer suggestions about how you can best prepare yourself, and we run subject-specific induction courses when you first arrive. Throughout your course at Newnham, your Director of Studies will want to involve you in arranging a programme of supervisions tailored to your individual needs. We see teaching very much as a two-way process, not something we simply impose.

Getting the hang of supervisions

The schedules for Cambridge students vary across subjects. As a general rule, scientists spend much of their time in the University labs; arts students and social scientists divide their time

between their college, their department and the University Library. But for most students, supervisions are likely to be the academic focus of the week. You will have between one and four of these each week of term, and they will vary in detail from subject to subject – a supervision in Maths will be different from a supervision in English! But their overall format is very similar: an hour's concentrated discussion of a written assignment you have submitted in advance, or of problems you have tried to solve, either one-to-one with your supervisor or (more often) in a group of two or three students. It is an extremely powerful form of teaching, and our alumnae often retain particularly vivid memories of supervisors and supervisions long after they have left Cambridge. We'll help you to get the best out of what is inevitably a challenging and intense experience: how to speak up, how to defend your own point of view and how to give in gracefully. By the end of your course you should be able to hold your own with world experts in your subject. Honestly.



Professor Claire Hughes

Claire Hughes is Professor of Development Psychology in the Centre for Family Research. She was a student at Newnham (both for her first degree and for her PhD), then spent two post-doctoral years in Paris funded by the Fyssen Foundation, before working at the Institute of Psychiatry investigating the cognitive and social difficulties of 'hard to manage' pre-schoolers. In the ten years since her return to Newnham her work has focused on following up a socially diverse sample of children, recruited in toddlerhood but now making the transition to secondary school. Claire is Director of Studies for Psychological and Behavioural Sciences (PBS) at Newnham. She was recently nominated as one of 400 'Women of the Year'.



An academic community

Our library is one of the best undergraduate college libraries in Cambridge (when the College was founded women were not allowed to use the main University Library, so it had to be good!). Along with the original (and beautiful) Victorian library, an award-winning extension houses over 90,000 books and journals, and provides working space for students. Directors of Studies and students can suggest new purchases, helping us keep the collections up to date. The library, along with most of

the College, is WiFi-enabled, meaning that you can access the University online resources wherever you choose to work. We also provide dedicated computer rooms with printers and scanners, and a very helpful IT team.

But most of us find that Newnham's greatest assets are the people. You will get an enormous buzz from simply talking to fellow students about your (and their) work; that's one of the real advantages of living in a residential community. The College is keen to support this kind of interaction. We

hold 'Pudding Seminars' on a Friday lunchtime where, over coffee and cake, a student or senior member gives a short talk on some aspect of their work to anyone who feels like turning up, from the Principal to the newest first year. Highlights last year were 'How to make an invisibility cloak' and 'Remapping India: politics, society and the creation of new states'. Many weeks we hold subject formal halls, where students in a particular subject are invited to join senior members on high table over dinner. Relations between undergraduates, graduates and senior members are very open and much less hierarchical than they can be in some of the more traditional colleges. This is a real advantage for us all.

Our library is one of the best undergraduate college libraries in Cambridge, but most people find that Newnham's greatest assets are the people



living in

Accommodation and catering

- on-site accommodation for all undergraduates who want to live in College
- attractive study bedrooms in various styles – from Victorian to modern
- no rooms are shared
- all rooms with high-speed internet connection
- subsidized meals in the modern buttery (canteen)
- formal dining hall
- well-equipped student kitchens for self-catering
- 3 common rooms with newspapers, TV/DVDs

Offering spacious, secure and comfortable accommodation, we house all our undergraduates on the main site (unlike some other colleges, we won't send you to live across town in your second or third year). We guarantee accommodation for at least the first three years of your course, and

we also have rooms for our graduate students, and our clinical medics and vets.

Most of our rooms are located in our beautiful halls, which are the work of Basil Champneys, a famous Victorian architect. Designed for women, the architecture is light and airy, and many of the rooms have large sash windows and antique furniture. We also have some more modern buildings, so there are rooms to suit all tastes. We are one of the few colleges that charge the same rate for all undergraduate rooms, regardless of size. So if you win a room with a balcony in the ballot, you don't need to worry if you can afford it. Our students value their privacy – guests are welcome, and we don't employ bedmakers, unlike some other colleges (no one comes breezing in with a hoover at eight in the morning).

Our new architect-designed buttery has café-style seating and sofas, and the seating area is always open.



Professor Mary Beard

Mary Beard is Professor of Classics. She works not only on Roman art and history (her books include those on Pompeii and the Roman Triumph), but also on how we use and misuse the ancient world today: from TV Romans to the origins of democracy. She often sounds off about this on the radio, in newspapers and in her 'wickedly subversive' blog (http://timesonline.typepad.com/dons_life/). Her TV programmes on Pompeii and life in Rome have also been critically acclaimed. She was a student at Newnham, then taught at the University of London, before returning to a job in Cambridge. For several years she was the only female lecturer in the Cambridge Classics Faculty. This made her appreciate Newnham even more.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served seven days a week (brunch on Sundays); there is always a vegetarian option, and our friendly catering team will always try to meet special dietary requirements. During term-time, there is usually Formal Hall once a week – a three-course waiter-served meal to which you are welcome to bring guests. Students decide from day to day whether to use the buttery, or the well-equipped self-catering kitchens; many of these have large tables, which can also be used to have friends over for food.

Life at Newnham

Make the most of our...

- performing arts centre ('The Old Labs')
- soundproofed music practice rooms
- function rooms
- gym
- darkroom
- sports pitches on-site
- tennis courts
- art room
- student-run bar
- stunning gardens for everyone to use and enjoy

What can Newnham offer for your non-working hours?

At Newnham there is plenty to do in your spare time. Our student-run bar hosts a range of events, from jazz nights to stand-up comedy and live band nights. Our performing arts centre hosts student drama, music and comedy, including weekly lunchtime recitals during term-time. It also houses two grand pianos that can be used for practice. Our sports pitches and tennis



courts are all on-site (unlike at most colleges), and there are weekly Pilates, yoga and exercise classes. Naturally, all our sports funding is directed towards our sportswomen (rather than the men's first fifteen...) Every Newnham student is active within College – whether in sporting teams, the boat club, one of the many 'action groups' (political, environment, gender), or music and drama. Many also participate in the local democracy; students are represented on all the committees that govern the College and their views are taken seriously. Student views are normally co-ordinated by the JCR (the 'Junior Combination Room'), who elect a President and committee each year, and hold regular consultation meetings. The graduates are represented by the MCR (the 'Middle Combination Room'). The JCR and MCR organize all manner of events and activities, from Freshers' Week in

October (where everyone works hard to help all the new students find their feet) to post-exam celebrations in June. The JCR and MCR also provide funding for college clubs and societies, and there is always scope to found new ones.

Just as important, we are pleased to see our students getting involved in the activities on offer in the University as a whole. College is a wonderful place to live and work, but you'll want to set your sights beyond even a relatively large community such as Newnham. Recently our undergraduates have held elected posts in CUSU (the Cambridge University Students' Union, which represents the interests of all Cambridge students), headlined theatrical productions at the University Theatre (the ADC), edited student newspapers, rowed in the University boats, captained University sports teams and run countless University societies.





What kind of support can I count on?

All kinds of things can interfere with life and work, especially if you are living away from home independently for the first time. Newnham has a very strong support network. Every student is assigned a personal tutor, who is on hand with confidential advice on all kinds of academic and non-academic concerns, from time-management to future careers. The College nurse and chaplain are also available for all our students, and we are committed to providing appropriate support for students with disabilities. The Porters' Lodge is staffed around the clock, so there is always someone on hand if there is an emergency. Every new student is adopted by two 'College Parents', second- or third-year students who are there to offer help and support.

We are also keen to help our students get on after their time with us. We have a very engaged body of alumnae (former students) who offer support in a number of ways. The Newnham



Associates are a group of sixty high-flying women who offer their help to our current students. They run termly workshops (on topics such as presentation skills, CV preparation, interview practice and getting the most out of work placements), help arrange work placements and also offer individual advice to any student who gets in touch. We regularly organize 'networking lunches', where current students have the opportunity to meet former students of their subject to discuss career options. Much of our funding for access work and student support and bursaries comes from past Newnhamites (as a college, we have the highest donation rates within Cambridge).

Because we realize that money is often central to students' worries, we have a dedicated Financial Tutor who can offer advice on all kinds of bursaries and grants. Studying at Cambridge is no more expensive than studying at other top universities in England, and we have one of the best bursary



systems in the country. Our students can get support from both University and Newnham sources, ranging from book and travel grants, scholarships and prizes to hardship funds. We have never yet had a home student withdraw from Newnham because of money problems, and we are committed to keeping things that way.



what makes newnham special?

Aside from the architecture, the gardens, the teaching, the pastoral support, the food, the facilities, the financial resources and the friendliness of the College, there are other things that make Newnham special. Unlike the other Cambridge colleges, we have no chapel, because Newnham was a non-denominational foundation, 'for all faiths and none', although our students are welcome to make use of Selwyn Chapel, just over the road. This inclusiveness is something that we pride ourselves in. The College is imbued with a belief in respect for others and equality of opportunity. This is reflected in our flat charge for rooms (which are instead allocated by random ballot), our strong student representation on College committees and governance structures, and in the relations between senior members, students and staff. We take great care over our admissions procedures, and do our best to make them as fair and transparent as possible.



Newnham students are helped to fulfill their (very considerable) potential in every possible way. And fulfill their potential they do: Newnham alumnae include the writers AS Byatt, Claire Tomalin, Iris Murdoch, Katherine Whitehorn, Margaret Drabble, Sarah Dunant, Sylvia Plath, Penelope Leach, Ali Smith and Caroline Lawrence; the actors Eleanor Bron, Emma Thompson, Miriam Margolyes and Olivia Williams; the broadcasters Joan Bakewell, Clare Balding, Sian Kevill, Sara Mohr-Pietsch and Julie Etchingham; the public figures Anne Campbell, Diane Abbott, Helene Hayman, Julia Neuberger, Margaret Anstee, Pat Arrowsmith, Patricia Hewitt and Fiona Reynolds; the scientists Alison Richard, Dorothy Hodgkin, Jane Goodall, Philippa Fawcett and Rosalind Franklin; and the academics Germaine Greer, Mary Beard, Lisa Jardine, Janet Nelson and Jane Harrison. All are inspirational women, who have forged their own paths.



Professor Susan Owens OBE

Susan Owens is Professor of Environment and Policy, Head of the University's Department of Geography, and a Professorial Fellow at Newnham. She has researched and published widely in the field of environmental governance, with particular interests in the role of knowledge, ideas and expertise in policy formation and change. Susan is a Fellow of the British Academy, a member of the Royal Society's Science Policy Advisory Group and a Council member of the Royal Geographical Society. She was a member of the standing Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution 1998-2008, has advised a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations, and was appointed OBE in 1998 for services to sustainable development.

*Opposite left:
Old Hall
Opposite right:
Old Hall today*

*Opposite bottom:
Ladies enjoying the gardens by the Old Labs*

A short history of Newnham College

Gillian Sutherland

Newnham began as a house for five students in Regent Street in Cambridge in 1871. Lectures for Ladies had been started in Cambridge in 1870. These built on the reputation of the University; but Cambridge itself was a small market town with a thinly-populated hinterland and for many who wanted to attend, it was too far away to travel in and out on a daily basis. Urged on by Millicent Garrett Fawcett, later to become a celebrated campaigner for women's suffrage, the philosopher Henry Sidgwick, another of the organizers of the lectures, risked his own credit in renting a house in which young women attending the lectures could reside. He persuaded Anne Jemima Clough, who had previously run her own school in the Lake District, to take charge of this house.

Demand continued to increase and after moving houses twice, the supporters of the enterprise formed a limited company to raise funds, lease land and put a purpose-built building on it. Newnham Hall opened its doors in 1875, the first building on the site where Newnham still remains (this building is now known as Old Hall). In an address to a meeting of sympathizers and potential donors in Yorkshire that same year, Anne Jemima Clough explained the rationale for the institution:

how much more effectually, & with how much less mental strain, a woman can study, where all the arrangements of the house are made to suit the

hours of study, – where she can have undisturbed possession of one room, – and where she can have access to any books that she may need. How very rarely, – if ever, – these advantages can be secured in any home we all know, and it is surely worth some sacrifice on the part of parents to obtain them for their daughters at the age when they are best fitted to profit by them to the utmost.

Demand from would-be students continued to grow and the Newnham Hall Company built steadily, providing three more Halls for students, a building to house their teachers, an administrative block, a Laboratory and a library, in the years up to the first world war. The same architect, Basil Champneys, was employed throughout these years and his involvement has given the main college buildings an extraordinary aesthetic unity. He was a pioneer of the so-called 'Queen Anne' movement, with its dominant themes of sweetness and light; and his buildings for Newnham represent his most extended statement in this style. The early senior members of Newnham also included some passionate gardeners and the buildings are grouped round a beautiful garden which many visitors to Cambridge never discover.

Many young women in mid-nineteenth century England had no access to the kind of formal secondary schooling which would have enabled them to go straight into the same university courses as the young men – like Anne Jemima Clough, some of them had never been to a school at all. So

Newnham's founders allowed the young women to work at and to a level which matched their attainments and abilities. Some of the students, with extra time and preparation, did indeed go on to degree-level work. And as girls' secondary schools were founded across the country in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, staffed often by those who had been to the women's colleges of Cambridge, Oxford and London, the situation began to change.

In 1890 the Newnham student Philippa Fawcett, daughter of Millicent, was ranked above the Senior Wrangler i.e. top in the Mathematical Tripos, seen by many as the blue riband in Cambridge examinations and hitherto entirely a male preserve. By the first world war the majority of Newnham students were going into degree level courses.

In tailoring the early curriculum to its students Newnham found itself at odds with the other Cambridge college for women, Girton, founded at about the same time. Emily Davies, Girton's founder, believed passionately that equality could only be expressed by women doing the same courses as the men, on the same time-table. This meant that Girton attracted a much smaller population in its early years and some of them found the strain on their health too great. But the members of the Newnham Council stood their ground, in general preferring a pragmatic, gradualist approach, leaving open the question of whether an equality of difference could be achieved. And some of its members, committed to educational reform more broadly, saw no point in offering to



Opposite top:
The gates, badly damaged in 1921

Opposite bottom:
Cambridge Market Square on the day of the 1897 debate;
the hanging of the effigy of the woman on a bicycle
was in protest at the proposal to allow women degrees

women the courses they wished to change for Cambridge men.

The University as an institution had at first taken no notice of these women and arrangements to sit examinations had to be negotiated with each examiner individually. In 1881, however, a general permission was negotiated. The next step was to try to secure for the women the titles of their degrees, not just certificates from their colleges, recording what they had done. A first attempt was rebuffed in 1887 and a second try in 1897 went down to even more spectacular defeat. Men undergraduates celebrating the defeat did thousands of pounds' worth of damage in the market square.

During the first world war British women were in general kept out of the front line. But many Cambridge women went into war work on graduating, often substituting for men on the home front. In 1922 Newnham recorded the war work of over 600 of its alumnae. Girton and Newnham undergraduates combined forces in their charitable activities to fund an entire unit of the Scottish Women's Hospitals and on graduating many went to work for that heroic organization as doctors, nurses, orderlies, couriers and interpreters – these last key roles since SWH's main work was done on the Eastern Front.

The first world war brought a catastrophic collapse of fee income for the men's colleges, more so than for the women; and Cambridge and Oxford both sought financial help from the state for the first time. In this context the women tried once more to

secure inclusion, this time asking not only for the titles of degrees but also for the privileges and involvement in university government that possession of degrees proper would bring. In Oxford this was secured in 1920 but in Cambridge the women went down to defeat again in 1921, having to settle for the titles – the much-joked-about BA tit – but not the substance of degrees. This time the male undergraduates celebrating victory over the women used a handcart as a battering ram to destroy the lower half of the bronze gates at Newnham, a memorial to Anne Jemima Clough.

The women spent the inter-war years trapped on the threshold of the University. Their senior members could hold University posts: twelve women were appointed to University lectureships in 1926 and Dorothy Garrod, Fellow of Newnham, was elected Disney Professor of Archaeology in 1938, the first woman to hold a professorial chair in either Cambridge or Oxford. But the women could not speak or vote either in the affairs of their own departments or of the University as a whole.

Dorothy Garrod's election dramatized the whole muddled situation. Action was delayed, however by the second world war – during which Dorothy Garrod used her skills to decode aerial reconnaissance photographs of enemy-held territory. Cambridge women were part of the war effort in all theatres, whether like Lucia Windsor of Newnham employing her exceptional mapping skills in secret work for the RAF even before she graduated, or like

Camilla Wedgwood, also of Newnham, gazetted Lieutenant Colonel in the Australian Army and dropped behind Japanese lines in Papua-New Guinea, to prepare the tribes with whom she had previously done field work, to aid the Australian advance. Finally in 1948 the women were admitted to full membership of Cambridge, the last University in the UK to do so. The University authorities, however, retained powers to limit the numbers of women until 1981.

National university expansion after the second world war brought further change. A shortage of places in Cambridge for well-qualified women had been acknowledged since 1920 but only in 1954 were Newnham and Girton joined by a third women's college, New Hall, now Murray Edwards. In 1965 the first mixed graduate college was founded. At the beginning of the 1970s three men's colleges began to admit women as undergraduates; and in 1978 Girton decided to mix both its fellowship and its student body. Gradually Cambridge was ceasing to be 'a men's university although of a mixed type', as it had been described in the 1920s in a memorably confused phrase. Yet as those looking back at the fiftieth anniversary of the change, in 1998, noted, the women's presence in Cambridge resembled a pyramid which was all base and little top: large numbers of women among the undergraduate population but markedly fewer among the graduate population and even fewer among the academic staff.



Professor Christine Watson

Christine Watson is Professor of Pathology. Her research focuses on pregnancy-related changes in the mammary gland, and the factors that regulate cell-death within it (failure of this regulation may result in breast cancer). Christine is a Tutor at Newnham.

any questions?

How do I find out more?

The best way to find out what Newnham is really like is to come and visit us. Come to one of our Open Days, combine a visit to Newnham with a department Open Day, or contact us to arrange a visit on a day to suit you. If you can't get to Cambridge, take a look at our website or phone for a chat. The website has much more detailed information than we have been able to include here, from guides to courses, freshers' blogs and our award-winning student life video. We can also put you in touch with current students for an insider's view of Cambridge life. And remember, we're talking about your future (not your teachers' or your parents'), so it pays to do your own research.

What if I'm not taking A-levels?

No problem! We are delighted that our applicants come with a wide range of qualifications: Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers, International Baccalaureate, European Baccalaureate, German Abitur, US Advanced Placements, to name but a few.

Can I take a gap year?

We are happy to offer deferred places to applicants who have plans for a year out. Some students take jobs to build up their financial resources, or work abroad to improve their language skills and experience another culture. Others take a Year in Industry placement, or travel.

What are you looking for?

We don't have a blueprint. Newnham students come from every imaginable background and have the widest possible variety of experiences, interests

and skills. The things they share are intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm for their subject, and the desire to get the most out of Cambridge. Our selection process is a very careful one, and we encourage applicants to let us know if their current academic performance has been compromised by unusual circumstances (all such information is treated confidentially).

What happens next?

All applicants who (as judged by their academic results so far) stand a realistic chance of achieving the standard offer level are invited to Newnham for at least two interviews. Interviews are your chance to demonstrate your knowledge of your subject and your capacity for self-motivation and independent thought. We see them as model teaching sessions, and your interviewers (the senior members in your subject) will be more interested in your potential to learn than in what you already know.

We interview in early December. All your interviews will usually be on one day, but you're welcome to free overnight accommodation at Newnham if that helps with your travel arrangements. We'll write to you with information about the interview procedure. In some subjects we need examples of your written work (we often use these as a basis for discussion in your interviews). In other subjects, we'll ask you to read a short passage, work on a problem, or take a short written test as part of the interview process.

We base our admissions decisions on all the elements of your application: your exam results so far, your predicted grades, your personal statement, school



Dr Sam Lucy, Admissions Tutor

or college reference and performance at interview and in any testing. Everything revolves around trying to assess your future academic potential.

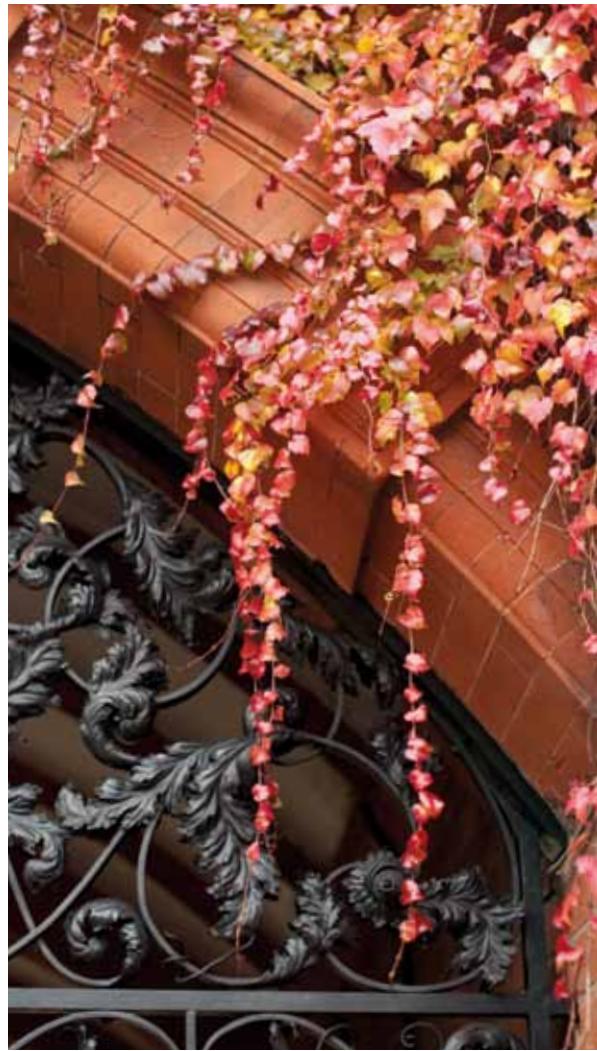
What can I do to prepare?

Think carefully about exactly what it is that's inspired you to spend three or four years studying your chosen subject, but don't memorize set speeches or rehearse endlessly! You'll be fresher and more flexible if you focus on the question at hand, rather than trying to remember reams of facts (though it's particularly important for scientists to be confident in current A-level material – you might be asked to sketch a graph, or differentiate an equation, in interviews for Economics, Natural Sciences, Engineering...). Most important of all, try to relax; we're not trying to catch you out. Your interviewers want you to do well (really!), and will do their very best to help you get the most out of your interviews.

Any other questions?

If you have other questions, large or small, that we haven't answered here, phone the Admissions Office (01223 335783), email adm@newn.cam.ac.uk, see our website at www.newn.cam.ac.uk or write to Admissions, Newnham College, Cambridge CB3 9DF. We're looking forward to hearing from you!





newnham college cambridge

2012

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