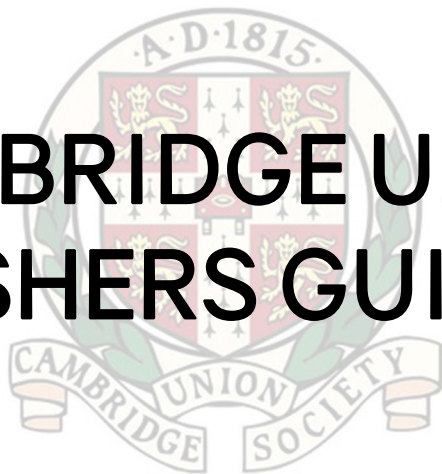


CAMBRIDGE UNION FRESHERS GUIDE



What will the
Cambridge Union
mean to you?



President Ronald Reagan at the Union (1990)

WELCOME

Welcome to Cambridge – and welcome to the Cambridge Union! Whether you're here as an undergraduate or a postgraduate I can promise you that the next few years will be some of the most incredible, rewarding, and exciting in your life.

The Union has the capacity to be transformative to these years. Briefly, we are the largest student organisation in Cambridge and the oldest free speech and debate society in the world. Since our founding in 1815, we have been a hub for students to meet, socialise, exchange ideas, and discuss issues that matter to them with the world's most influential figures. In this time, we have welcomed Presidents Roosevelt and Reagan, Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, the Dalai Lama, Senator Bernie Sanders and Rev. Desmond Tutu to speak here. Previous presidents of the Union include John Maynard Keynes, Arianna Huffington, Clare Balding and Vince Cable.

If you are thinking of joining, do come along to the building (9A Bridge Street) at any point – I'd be more than happy to show you around and answer any questions. Alternatively, drop me an email at president@cus.org or phone the Union on 01223 566 421.

Love,



Rachel Tustin
Michaelmas President 2019





ALEC BALDWIN



ELLIE GOULDING



JAMES BLUNT



SIGOURNEY WEAVER



BARONESS HALE

SPEAKERS THAT SHAPE OUR WORLD

Every year we host an array of speakers from all different walks of life. Being a member not only gives you the chance to hear from some of the biggest names in public life, but there are also many opportunities to attend drinks receptions and dinners with these speakers, offering unique one-on-one encounter with the biggest names.

Nowhere else has it been possible to interrogate Marine Le Pen directly after the French general election, listen to Julian Assange following the Wikileaks scandal, or question David Moyes days after his unveiling as manager of Manchester United. Ronald Reagan came to discuss the legacy of his presidency within a year of departing office, while Enoch Powell faced fierce criticism from students for his views on immigration. South African President Frederick de Klerk addressed members at the height of apartheid and informed them about how he planned to end segregation. Shortly after India had gained independence in 1947, the first Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, came to Cambridge to address the Union.

We have been proud to welcome successive generations of former and future prime ministers: Margaret Thatcher, Boris Johnson, Alec Douglas-Home, Ted Heath, Harold MacMillan and John Major have all delivered speeches from our historic chamber floor. Our members have also heard from figures from the left such as Jeremy Corbyn, Emily Thornberry, and Ken Livingstone, denizens of the right including Nigel Farage and Michael Howard, as well as the Liberal Democrat leaders Paddy Ashdown and Vince Cable and Speaker of the House of Commons John Bercow.



LOYALE CARNER



YANIS VAROUFAKIS



OMAROSA MANIGAULT



REV JESSE JACKSON



MARK HAMILL



GINA MILLER

Foreign heads of state are regular fixtures of our term cards. US presidents Roosevelt and Reagan, president of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf, the first prime minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, Bangladeshi prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad and German chancellor Helmut Kohl have all spoken here. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi addressed the chamber via video link from Libya, while the Prime Minister of Iraq Jalal Talabani gave us his insights at the height of the Second Gulf War. Senator Bernie Sanders addressed the chamber just months after Donald Trump's inauguration, and the current state of American politics has been explored by both Anthony Scaramucci (Trump's former Communications Director) and Andrew Wheeler (Trump's current head of the Environmental Protection Agency).

Though originally founded as a political society, the Union has diversified to include the world's leading sportspeople, scientists, media personalities, writers and performers.

Members have met the likes of Sir Ian McKellen, Robert Downey Jr. Bill Nighy, Sigourney Weaver, Dame Diana Rigg, Dame Judi Dench, and Baz Luhrman. Lisa Kudrow shared her happiest memories from 'Friends', Caitlin Jenner spoke about transgender activism, and Bryan Cranston recently gave his thoughts on the #MeToo movement and finding new fame through 'Breaking Bad'. Mary Berry, Heston Blumenthal and Marco Pierre White have given our members their best cookery tips, while Dame Vivienne Westwood and Calvin Klein reflected upon their careers in fashion.

DEBATES & ENTS

VOTE WITH YOUR FEET!

Every Thursday, the Union hosts one of its world-famous debates, pitting experts against one another on a range of issues. These debates are at the core of what we do at the Union, and regularly attract international media due to the figures that speak, the arguments they pose and the topics that are discussed

Members have recently seen Vince Cable team up with Yanis Varoufakis to attack austerity, Nicky Morgan clash with Jacob Rees-Mogg over Brexit, Richard Dawkins going head to head with former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams to question the place of religion in the world, and Emily Thornberry speak against Bernard Cazeneuve on the special relationship. Moreover, our debates have impact beyond the four walls of our chamber, in 1965 we hosted the historic Baldwin vs. Buckley debate, wherein prolific African-American author James Baldwin spoke against conservative commentator William F. Buckley Jr. on the motion 'THB the American Dream is at the Expense of the American Negro'. This event sent ripples through contemporary politics and still remains applicable to the debates about race in America today.

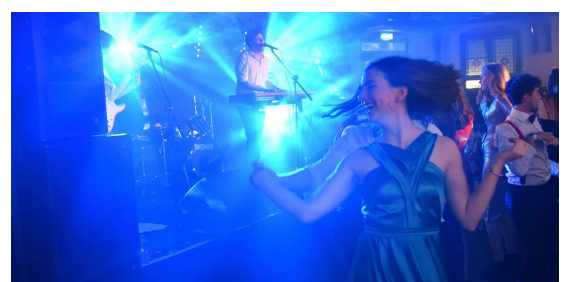
Moreover, our debates also offer our members a chance to speak alongside and debate with these figures themselves. Every Saturday we host open auditions for one or two of the six spaces in the following week's debate. Additionally, once the debate is over, members leave through one of three doors, Aye, No or Abstention, denoting their vote. The results are announced in the bar shortly afterwards, where members have the opportunity to question speakers over post-debate drinks. Lastly, before each debate, we have an all-student 'emergency debate' on a topical issue that week. Members who are interested in public speaking are encouraged to audition either for a main debate or an emergency!

Our debates this term will kick-off with the yearly fixture: "This House Has No Confidence in Her Majesty's Government". Seldom has this motion been as pressing as it will be when we hold it on the 10th October; it is likely to directly reflect events unfolding in parliament, and will present a unique opportunity to hear politicians from across the political divide confront each other about the ongoing Westminster turmoil.

BE ENTERTAINED

The Union is far more than a debating society – hosting the most popular events across the university; the Union has one of the cheapest bars and is a buzzing central venue right in the heart of Cambridge.

Throughout the year, the Union hosts numerous social events, ranging from cocktail workshops to pub quizzes, jazz evenings to LGBT+ nights. Members also have access to the weekly events held at the Union, which in the past have included Zumba, Yoga, Meditation and Krav Maga. The highlights of term are undoubtedly the Union's blockbuster ents, in the past including Election All-Nighters, and Halloween Parties. The Annual fresher's ball, spring ball and summer garden party are also popular fixtures in the University's calendar.



COMPETITIVE DEBATING & MEMBER BENEFITS

COMPETE ON THE WORLD STAGE

From weekly evening workshops, to representing the Union at competitions in America, Malaysia and Croatia (just to name a few), to organising international debating competitions, competitive debating offers great opportunities for experienced debaters and complete novices alike. We offer three training streams for beginner, intermediate and advanced debaters, with personalised feedback from our experienced coaches. With our training, even beginners have ranked amongst the best debaters in the world. From the Yale IV in America to the Paris Open in France, Cambridge Debaters have won it all, and you can be our next big winner.

Additionally, you can also put your debating skills to good use. The Cambridge Schools Competition is a well-established fixture in the calendar. It is open to 700 teams of 16- to 18-year-olds in the UK, Ireland as well as several international locations. Around 75% of these teams are from state schools, and we provide financial support for 150 teams. We have also recently founded a debating access program, wherein debaters have the opportunity to run debating workshops for pupils at underprivileged schools.

The Cambridge Union changed the course of my life. Joining in 1964, I listened to great speakers, learned to speak in public myself, made lifelong friends across the political divide all of which led me to a future at the Bar, the media and in politics.

I also, most importantly, had great fun!

Baroness Ann Mallalieu QC

FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT OF THE UNION, MICHAELMAS 1967

MEMBER BENEFITS

Union members have access to discounts at about twenty different Cambridge retailers. From Strada to Bill's, bike shops to hair salons, your membership card is the gateway to stacks of top-notch offers.

The Union is about to embark on an ambitious 5.4 million redevelopment of its facilities. In just over a year, you will have access to the revamped 1815 bar and restaurant, as well as being able to watch top-class comedy in the restored Footlights basement, where the likes of Emma Thompson and Stephen Fry learnt their trade.



DAME JUDI DENCH



STEPHEN FRY



THE DALAI LAMA



DESMOND
TUTU



SIR PATRICK
STEWART



GEORGIA
TUFFOLO

HOW TO JOIN?

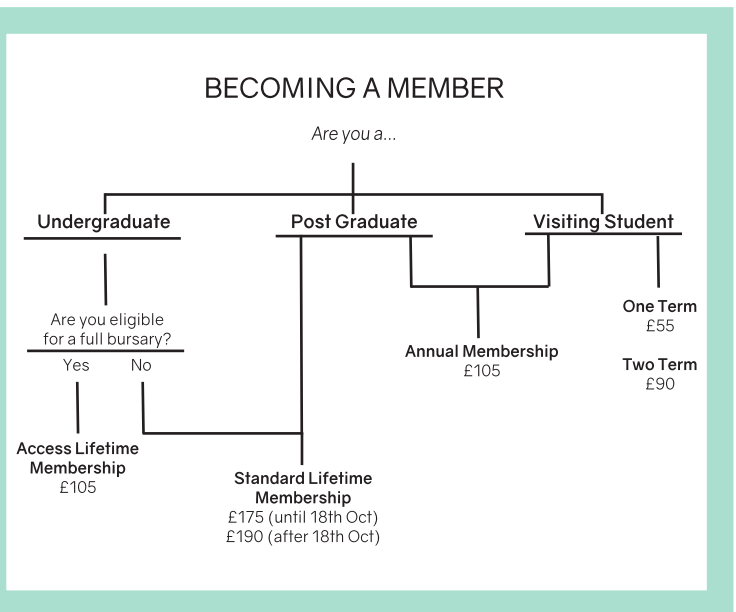
If you're interested in what the Union has to offer, but you're unsure whether you want to join, then Open Period is perfect for you. From the beginning of term until the 18th of October, every Union event is open to all, free of charge, excluding our mystery speaker on the 7th October. This means you can see at least two incredible debates and several fantastic speakers, absolutely free.

Additionally, the majority of freshers join before the 18th of October as then you are entitled to our discounted membership fee of £175. This works out as only £19.45 per term over the course of a three-year degree, or about £2.43 a week! In addition the first 200 people to sign up for membership will receive a guaranteed free ticket to the Union Freshers ball, the first ball in the Cambridge calendar and one of the highlights of Michaelmas term. The Union also offers a significant discount for those eligible for a full maintenance loan as well as membership options for visiting students.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Officers of Standing Committee - excluding the Vice President and the Debating Officers, who are appointed at the end of Lent Term - are all elected. Being on this committee gives members the chance to organise debates and social events, invite speakers and actively participate in the running of the society. Elections for these members occur on the 8th Friday of full term.



Cambridge was a transformative experience for me. When I arrived, I was a classic fish out of water - and one who spoke a different language, to boot... My time at the Cambridge Union helped me overcome my fear of public speaking - and of my thick Greek accent. Becoming President of the Union was the start of many things - including my first book.

Arianna Huffington

FOUNDER OF THE HUFFINGTON POST & PRESIDENT,
MICHAELMAS 1971

Applications for appointed positions open in Week 6. Roles in the appointed 'Chamber Committee' include on the ground logistical organisation for debates and speakers, running the Union's publicity, liaising with national and student press and helping improve access and representation. During the term, you can get involved by stewarding (join the 'Cambridge Union Society Stewards' group on Facebook for opportunities to do so), applying for speakers committee to write invitations for speakers of interest to you, speaking in Emergency Debates or auditioning to speak in our main debate.



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