

University of Cambridge Mature Student Society

The Mature Student Society (MSS) was created last year for older students. Stating that "mature" was self-defining for the society's purposes, it was open to anyone: students at any level (at any college) as well as researchers and members of staff. The view was that Cambridge University is brilliant at attracting people from all over the world (as well as people locally) but needed a Society capable of bringing together those who may be (or feel) a bit older than their course/faculty/college cohort. Whether returning to academia after a gap (maybe after pursuing a career/care responsibilities) or coming to Cambridge to pursue university-related career opportunities, the aim was to encourage sociability, inclusivity, well-being and, frankly, fun.

One year later, I can report the following:

- Over 700 people have signed up for our weekly newsletter and nearly 800 are involved in our forums (see below). Literally, 100s have participated in our events.
- We were nominated "Society of the Year 2025" by the Student Union and **WON** the award for **"Outstanding Contribution to Student Life 2025"**.
- Since September 2024 (meeting first in the Granta pub), we have executed over 100 events, from pub-nights, to supper clubs, college lunches, art tours, evensongs, outings, formals (and formal swaps). There have been research "flash-talks", networking events and well-being coffee/cake meets.
- We have active and lively MSS sub-groups/forums including groups for writing/working, walking, running, film/theatre, music, networking, lawyers (and other disciplines) and even dog-lovers (currently voting on whether to admit cat lovers!).
- There are specific groups for well-being (with more planned in this regard), women, parents, partners, LGBT+, African-Caribbean, those living in London and more. There's even a Book Club, a marketplace for selling and giveaways and a group for Cambridge United fans.

In short, MSS has become a vibrant community for Cambridge's growing band of older students. Much of its early success came from a post on this forum in August 2024. As we approach, once again, the start of Michaelmas Term I would again ask for those interested in joining to email me at:

maturesoc@cambridgesu.co.uk,

or me personally at: rjk62@cam.ac.uk.

Please also spread the word. We will be at the Freshers' Fair. And we are in the process of developing a website.

Thanks to everyone who, from this time last year, helped make MSS an award-winning success!

Rob Kelsey, President, Mature Student Society