University of Kent

theGradPost

Charity walk anniversary

Athens campus update

Rolling with the tide

A newsletter created by postgraduates for postgraduates
Editorial

Hi all!

Welcome to your Summer edition of the GradPost. We hope that you have all thoroughly enjoyed the Easter break and are back, all guns blazing, ready for the Summer term. For this issue, we have invited postgraduate students from across all seven University of Kent campuses to write about those subjects which interest them the most, asking for a focus to be placed upon the importance of interdisciplinary study within their areas of interest.

This issue, we have two new introductory features to keep you up to date with what's going on across the University of Kent. On page 2 you will find a short piece from Kent Union, keeping you up to date with the Union's 2016 Leadership Elections and further, we have a short piece written by Hannah Nickelson, student media officer at our Athens campus, offering a little insight into what MA Heritage Management students have been getting up to there.

On page 3, Vanessa Dias sets the tone for this issue with her Positive Psychology Insights, discussing the importance of cooperation in the context of contemporary academia.

Pages 4 and 5 tell us a couple of stories which highlight the importance of inter-campus relationships for students of the University of Kent. Read about the support and opportunities that our students have offered to each other, solidifying our position as the UK's European University.

Pages 5, 6 and 7 feature articles submitted by a few selected postgraduate students, with two pieces discussing the importance of acknowledging climate change from very different perspectives. Meghan Casey and Francesca Piatto, students of the University of Kent, School of International Studies, Brussels, explore the relationship between climate change and human migration asking whether the development of the concept of a 'climate change refugee' is important in ensuring the safety of individuals who are victims of displacement. Further, Mohammad Farhan Khan and Sohom Chakrabarty from the School of Engineering and Digital Arts offer a discussion which highlights the importance of interdisciplinary research between Biology and Mathematics in the field of Engineering.

If you are interested in writing for any of our future editions, please do not hesitate to contact the editors by emailing Lucy Farndale on lf294@kent.ac.uk and we will be sure to brief you on how you are able to get involved.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

The Editors
Lucy Farndale
MA International Social Policy
Mylène Branco
PhD Comparative Literature

News and updates

Kent Union leadership elections

On 10th March 2016, Kent Union announced the results of the 2016 Leadership Elections. This year 4633 University of Kent students voted on who they would like to represent them. All the candidates fought hard to secure votes and Kent Union wishes them every success in their positions. Next year's officers are:

Rory Murray, Union President
Dave Cocozza, Vice President (Education)
Clara Lee, Vice President (Welfare)
Elliott Shell, Vice President (Sport)
Ruth Wilkinson, Vice President (Activities)

2016 officers are focused on improving the services available to students on campus. They want to improve library provision and study space, grow support for international students and get greater recognition for students' volunteering. They also want to build upon college affiliation, developing stronger college identities through improving events and activities. We would like to extend our sincerest congratulations to all the winners and look forward to working with them throughout the next academic year.

Charlotte Parris
Communications Coordinator, Kent Union

Postgraduate student surveys

The University of Kent Postgraduate Student Surveys are an opportunity for postgraduate students to provide feedback on their academic experiences at Kent.

We are particularly interested in finding out about the things you have enjoyed, what the University has done well and where you consider improvements could be made. Your comments and views really count and they will be used to enhance the quality of the academic experience for postgraduate taught students in the future.

The deadline date for the Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Experience Surveys is 16th June and all participants will receive a £10 Amazon voucher code. You will continue to be emailed directly about completing the survey, so please check your emails.
Positive psychology insights

‘Why co-operation shall be the new trend in academia’

Co-operation means that you and other people come together to discuss and think about new ways of approaching old or new problems. It means that you are willing to be curious and courageous enough to give and receive ideas, to interchange perspectives, to brainstorm and debate. It means you are willing to embrace the finest path of building knowledge and, in my opinion, one of the most exciting ones.

If you have ever thought about pursuing a career in academia, then you should definitely be vigilant about the fact that knowledge is being produced. You should no longer maintain the idea that it is all about you and your project. Of course it is in part, however, to expect that you must only produce your piece of work and that is all – these days that is not enough. In saying this, I do not mean to discourage or frighten you. What I really want is to draw your attention to the importance of co-operation in academia.

Through adopting a co-operative mind-set you will in turn adopt a position in which you are willing to share not only your mind, but also your heart. Both need to come together; your brain leads you to new, creative ideas, and your heart moves you throughout networking and the ability to establish connections with people who share very similar interests to yours. Whether this be in the same field of work or even more excitingly, in a completely different area of study.

Another important ingredient for sustainable academic co-operation is your ability to nurture within yourself a pure love for knowledge. Such a love allows you to put your ego aside and really build something with other people for the sake of knowledge at society’s service.

It is not that you cannot be an academic per se. You can. But the future can be so much more promising for yourself and society if you bring along your brain, your heart and your spirit, because this will ensure that you are giving your work out there. You will, of course, face challenges in the process of getting you and your team’s work out there; co-operation requires patience and an open mind. But you will not lack the magic needed to get through it, because you love the process and are not solely focusing on the prospect of having your work published.

You will find that the connections you make and experiences you share are lessons that you can add to your academic profile. These are the most valuable experiences and the ones that will guide you to your fullest potential as an academic.

In a co-operative mind-set, you literally add life to your career, not simply papers or citations to your CV. You add a whole new human dimension to academia that is all about sharing, co-creation and active contribution to the building of knowledge. In the end this gives you plenty of scope for publishing.

Believe me, through establishing connections with colleagues from your own area, and further, with individuals from very different, yet interrelated, fields we can experience something unique. When people come together, uniting their brains, their hearts and their spirits in one effort… innovation happens! And it is in this innovative process that the art of publishing resides.

Vanessa Dias
PhD in Psychology

The Eastern ARC

Co-operation at a super-duper level

The Eastern ARC (Academic Research Consortium) brings together three different universities: the University of Kent, University of Essex, and University of East Anglia. This partnership was created in order to promote co-operation and provide creative, as well as effective, answers to the contemporary changes in the research field and research training in UK higher education.

Each university leads one of the three specific areas that have been part of the Eastern ARC focus: Digital Humanities (led by the University of Kent), Synthetic Biology (led by the University of East Anglia) and Quantitative Social Sciences (led by the University of Essex). Across these areas, the Eastern ARC has funded 9 Research Fellows and 18 PhD students, distributed among the three universities.

The Eastern ARC also provides great opportunities for students who are not part of the Eastern ARC team: you are able to apply for the Eastern ARC mobility fund as a University of Kent student and you can also attend many training sessions at the other two universities for free*. Additionally, the Eastern ARC has already funded a number of student and staff events throughout this past academic year. If you are interested in the Eastern ARC scheme and what it could do for you, please visit the University of Kent’s website for information or, alternatively, go directly to easternarc.ac.uk

*It is important to double check this condition when applying, some exceptions may exist.

Postgraduate Festival 2016

The PG Festival took place in Woolf College on Friday 20 May and was a fantastic showcase of postgraduate research at Kent. Over 22 Research Centres and Schools were represented with a mixture of posters and interactive displays including a political timeline, comic performance films and an unforgettable ‘sperm-tossing’ game from the Centre of Interdisciplinary Studies of Reproduction.

One of the day’s highlights was the BBC style ‘Question Time’ featuring a panel of guest academics who were put on the spot for their views on a variety of topical and academic issues.

This was followed by the final of the University’s first ever 3MT® competition which was won by Rebecca Kinsley, with second place going to Chloe Tyler and the ‘People’s Choice’ going to Philip Ulrich.

Other winners were: Courtney Allen and Jo Stoner (best posters) and Emma Barrowcliffe and Colin Elder (best and runner up research presentations). The prize for the best overall Research Centre display went to the Centre of Interdisciplinary Studies of Reproduction.

The afternoon sessions included a Keynote presentation by Professor Ulinka Holopp who gave an interesting and topical talk about the role of science in government policy.

The day finished with a drinks reception where the competition winners were presented with their prizes by the Dean of the Graduate School.
On 14 June 2015 our 2014 alumna Julia Peters (University of Kent, Rome), current PhD student in Classics and Archaeology, Joanna Maskens and Martina Gannon (University of Kent, Paris, 2015), walked into Rome on the historic Via Francigena.

Designated a Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in 1994, the Via Francigena was once a super highway of Europe, connecting Canterbury to Rome, and was used, in particular, by pilgrims travelling to the Holy City to pray at the tomb of St. Peter. Tens of thousands of people walk or cycle along thirty-three Cultural Routes each year, including the exceptionally popular Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Spain. As part of a current movement of Slow Travel, where principles of sustainability and authenticity are emphasised, these pilgrimage routes offer modern ‘pilgrims’ the opportunity to open their minds to new experiences and cultures, while experiencing a physical challenge surrounded by outstanding scenery.

After walking 550 miles on the Camino de Santiago in 2013, the incredible experience inspired PhD student Julia Peters to walk the less developed, and more challenging route, over 1200 miles from Canterbury to Rome. She was accompanied along the way by University of Kent alumni and students, many of whom had never experienced long-distance walking before. The experience proved a positive one for all who participated, despite the obligatory blisters and muscle aches.

To mark the one-year anniversary of Julia’s departure from Canterbury, a charity walk on the 20-mile UK section of the Via Francigena from Canterbury to Dover, was held on 16 April. The event raised £2,100 for the charity ‘Save the Children’ and forty-four individuals participated, including many current students and staff from the University. The event was principally organized by Julia Peters and Martina Gannon, with support from the Department of Classics and Archaeology, the Centre for Early Christianity and its Reception, Enrolment Management Services, the Canterbury Cathedral and the parishes of Patrixbourne, Womenswold and Coldred. Julia and Martina attempted to create an authentic pilgrim experience for the participants, where the spirit of generosity, gratitude and comradery was ever-present.

The day began at the Canterbury Cathedral where pilgrim credentials, provided and stamped by the Cathedral, were distributed to the walkers. A blessing was then given by Canon Irvine at the stone marking the zero kilometer of the Via Francigena, before the group began their journey. Along the 20 miles, pilgrims stopped at the churches of Patrixbourne, Womenswold and Coldred, where volunteers were there to offer tea, coffee, homemade cakes and a brief talk on the history and architecture of the churches. At the finish line of the Red Lion pub in Dover, participants exchanged opinions on their experiences. Despite some wind and rain, spirits had remained high throughout the day.

The success of the event has encouraged Julia to make the charity walk an annual event for the further two years whilst she will be doing her research at the University of Kent. Look out for notices of next year’s walk, tentatively scheduled for 6 May, 2017 on her website: kentontheviafrancigena.com.

Julia Peters
PhD in Classical and Archaeological Studies
Kent researchers abroad

Atmosphere in a fishbowl

Medway PhD researchers travel to France for the British Council ‘Science in Schools’ programme

The increased burning of fossil fuels since the Industrial Revolution has led to rapid economic and technological developments, but it has come at a price: global warming and a change in our climate.

Climate change is the most pressing issue facing humanity, and there is no doubt that mankind has been responsible for its acceleration. Earth’s future is now on a knife edge and we are entrusted with rectifying the mess we have created. While scientists and engineers must endeavour to develop more efficient alternative energy sources to fossil fuels, the attitude of the public also needs to change. The repercussions of climate change will be felt by the next generations, and it is therefore crucial to educate those that will inherit Earth: the young.

With this challenge in mind, Colin Moore and Filip Kunc, PhD students of the University of Kent, Medway travelled to Lyon, France from 7-11 December 2015 to deliver hands-on scientific workshops to secondary school students focussing on the theme of climate change.

The team conceptualised and delivered their interactive Atmosphere in a Fishbowl workshop aiming to provide a fun, fresh perspective on manmade atmospheric phenomena as a result of pollution. For example, the students made their own artificial acid rain and explored how pollution can drastically alter local weather conditions. These experiments may sound farfetched, but they were all performed in the most unlikely of settings, a fishbowl. The fishbowl gave the team the small scale platform to demonstrate that specific physical, chemical and biological phenomena are controlled by our atmosphere, and how they are, in fact, becoming unbalanced as a consequence of climate change and pollution.

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The week was organised as part of the British Council’s competitively funded ‘Science in Schools’ programme, and, importantly, coincided with the historic COP21 climate change meeting in Paris. In total, the team travelled to 9 different schools to deliver 2-3 hour workshops in English.

Speaking about the week, Filip and Colin said: ‘Organising, describing and demonstrating experiments to children that do not speak English as a first language was a big challenge and made us focus on different styles of communication. However, their English levels were actually very good and made our workshops very interactive and fun. The week was thoroughly enjoyable and we feel like we have learned so much. It was so rewarding to see the enjoyment on the faces of the children as they were learning. Teaching in an enjoyable way is so important and I strongly believe the hands-on nature of our workshop has been the key to the students learning. We are extremely grateful to the support provided by Carole Hemard and Irene Damour from the British Council. Without their help and organisation this week would not have been a success.’

Colin Moore
PhD student, Medway School of Pharmacy

An update from our University of Kent Athens campus

The city of Elefsina, twenty minutes outside of Athens, is home to the Kent MA in Heritage Management. Here, students from all over the world meet to learn how to work with all forms of heritage in the public and private sectors. It is fitting that the programme meets here, as the city itself celebrates its history and heritage in ways that students can use as examples for projects of their own. As a prime example, the Aeschylean Festival is held in the summer months, and celebrates the arts in many forms.

Aeschylus, after whom the festival is named, is one of the earliest playwrights of Ancient Greece still read today. Born in Eleusis, now Elefsina, Aeschylus formed his plays with the dramatics of the city in mind – the city holds the site where the Cult of Demeter was formed and where its mysteries were practised for centuries, including by Aescllylus himself. Ruins at the archaeological site still show where temples, fountains, silos, and arches were placed for these secret religious practices.

Today, the city celebrates his fame and cultural importance with a statue just outside of the city square, and the festival in his name.

The Aeschylia celebrates culture and heritage through many forms: there are plays, concerts, visual art, and a large arts exhibition. The festival uses a repurposed soap factory right beside the archaeological site as its main physical space, although there are often sponsored exhibitions in various places around the city too. For heritage managers, the Aeschylean Festival is a fantastic opportunity to see how the tradition of the arts has evolved and are being celebrated today. Intangible heritage that is celebrated in the form of music and plays, reuse of architecture celebrating the city’s industrial heritage, and the constantly evolving space shows interest of both the city and the residents in heritage to come.

Hannah Nickelson
Student Media Officer
University of Kent, Athens
Rolling with the tide

Establishing a ‘climate refugee’ convention, or not

Climate change sits high on the global agenda as international actors continue to debate issues related to our ever-warming globe. One such issue affects a human component of climate change: migration.

Climate change migration is a multifaceted phenomenon that requires great attention. Droughts, desertification, hurricanes, landslides and sea level rise, in some way or another, can all force people to seek refuge elsewhere, often within their own country. These people are referred to as ‘environmental migrants’, ‘climate refugees’ or ‘environmental displaced persons’. Kiribati and Tuvalu, for example, are two such islands predicted to become submerged in the next 50 years. This means their inhabitants could become stateless and very much in need of international protection. One challenge policy makers face in ensuring this protection is how to establish a legal definition of ‘climate refugee’. This article highlights the current debate around creating a multilateral instrument to address the challenges of climate change related displacement. It explains some conceptual and pragmatic difficulties in attempting to construct such refugee-like instrument for people experiencing the effects of climate change. Likewise, it posits that a treaty will not necessarily solve the humanitarian issues that arise from climate change, but perhaps awareness raising can lead to alternative solutions.

Despite being victims of forcible displacement, climate change refugees are not protected under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention), which defines a ‘refugee’ as an individual who demonstrates a ‘well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group or political opinion’. Environmental migrants do not fear persecution based on these terms, and therefore cannot be recognised as refugees under this definition. Consequently, some scholars posit that the international arena should develop a specific convention regarding the protection of environmental migrants.

A convention of this type has the potential to further the ‘green’ agenda. It would recognise environmental degradation as human rights degradation, requiring state parties to actively address the root causes of climate change. Major environmental distresses, such as pollution and toxic material contamination, could potentially be regulated, and good practices could be established. Oversight bodies mandated to monitor the implementation of certain regulations and guidelines would also be responsible for regulating sanctioning mechanisms, which would hold violators accountable. Essentially, pollution could be deemed ‘illegal’ under such a convention.

In practice, however, this can be exceptionally difficult. Challenges that arise when determining a ‘climate refugee’ include: data on migration, establishing the correlation between climate change and migration, and political hurdles. Firstly, those affected by climate change tend to move within their own country. Doing so means these migrants are not privy to international protection, such as that provided by the proposed international legal instrument. This results in the struggle to keep track of the number of climate migrants. Secondly, the issue of determining a ‘climate change refugee’ remains problematic. Jane McAdam, an expert in the field, begs the question: How is it possible ‘to differentiate between those displaced people who deserve protection on account of climate change, and those who are victims of “mere” economic or environmental hardship? In this sense, establishing a specific definition of ‘climate refugee’ might very well exclude entire groups of people who are just as deserving of international protection. It is exceptionally difficult to claim that climate change causes migration.

Thirdly, it is important to highlight the current unwillingness of the international community to recognise existing refugees. Though some suggest that current conventions could be amended to include environmental refugees, the reality of such is bleak. States act in their own interest and interpret refugee law at their own discretion, which is often done so while neglecting the rights of the asylum seeker. Despite these challenges, it is vital that we continue to attempt to surmount them by debating the issue.

Steadfast lobbying and advocating for a ‘climate refugee’ treaty demands the attention of various stakeholders. In other words, climate-induced migration will continue to become an issue that states cannot ignore. The next question, then, asks if the international community is willing to take the necessary steps to ensure the protection of these people. Increasing the dialogue will ensure that it does.

Francesca Piatto and Meghan Casey
Brussels School of International Studies
University of Kent
### Scientific insight

#### Integrating control engineering, biology and mathematics: Is synergy useful?

*‘Why and when does any drug fail to work for the disease?’*

It is widely known that in living cells, numerous biosynthetic processes take place. It is these processes which act as a key determinant of normal developmental processes and disease. Although much is understood about most of the molecular mechanisms that make developmental process happen, our understanding of some other aspects is incomplete. Examples include the unusual synthesis of protein in an unhealthy body environment, the distinct behaviour of sarcomas (lower body cancer) under the same conditions, and so forth. It is very well observed that some biological pathways (or reactions) respond sensitively and appropriately to changes in the cell’s environment, while being robust and unresponsive to other types of change.

Consider the case of psoriasis which is an auto-immune skin disease causing red and silvery scaly patches in the affected area. Though the exact factor triggering this auto-immune response remains unknown, there is an evidence of abnormal behaviour in the pathways leading to an increase in immune cells in the affected region. Several biological drug treatments are available which inhibit these expressions, thus, causing the disease condition to disappear. However, it has been found that these drugs do not always work for everyone.

Another example includes the distinct behaviour of different sarcomas under similar body conditions. Although biologists are aware of the apparent behaviour of sarcomas, understanding of what makes this behaviour distinct is still unknown. Hence, it becomes important to understand the dynamics of the biological pathways and numerically analyse these dynamics to predict the behaviour in the case of drug administration.

The aforementioned examples show the clear scope of engineering in biology. Currently, it is almost impossible to predict who is at risk for what disease. However, in the coming years there is scope for making these impossible predictions possible.

The main challenge here is to turn the statement ‘This drug works for only 2-5% of the population’ into ‘This drug works for only 2-5% of the population – but I can tell you which 2-5% that is!’

> Dr M Vidyasagar, *IEEE Circuit System Magazine* 12, p. 12, 3rd quarter 2012

#### Organising the science strand of the 2016 Canterbury Festival

This year’s students on MA Science, Communication and Society at the University of Kent have collaborated with the organisers of the Canterbury Festival to extend and strengthen the science strand of the event. Science is a driving force in our rapidly changing world and it has become increasingly important to introduce the public to scientific knowledge. Therefore, the key focus of the festival’s science strand is to bring science closer to the audience in an interesting and fun way.

The Canterbury Festival is an annual event that takes place during the autumn at several locations around Canterbury. With an audience of over 60,000 people it is also known as Kent’s International Arts Festival. Over 200 free and ticketed events present the visitor with a great opportunity to encounter a variety of artistic and cultural activities, including concerts, plays, walks, presentations, talks and exhibitions.

The Canterbury Festival originated in the late 1920s, when the Dean of Canterbury Cathedral, George Bell, first established an event based on theatre performances. It was interrupted during the Second World War, but after restarting and with the opening of the Marlowe Theatre in the 1980s, it has grown to become the festival we know today.

Over the following decades, its structure has developed and it now collaborates with performers from all over Europe, who come from different disciplines and professions, such as art, drama, history, and science.

To organise the festival’s science strand, the science communication students met with Dr. Dan Lloyd of the University’s School of Biosciences and Niamh Lynam-Cotter, the Programme and Participation Manager of the Canterbury Festival. In several workshop sessions the students pitched and discussed ideas on science-related activities. In its current form the festival’s science strand is not very prominent, and the team worked on making it more accessible to the public.

Niamh Lynam-Cotter valued the experience of working with the team and praised the student’s contribution:

> ‘Working with this year’s students has been invaluable in generating new and exciting ideas about how to engage the local community and our audiences with science events. Their programming contributions have enabled the Festival to push the boundaries of what is possible through their commitment to seeking out unique and interesting ideas and shows, which will be launched and on sale from mid-July.’

The Festival is delighted with their input, and looks forward to developing the cohort’s work for both this year’s and future Festivals.’

During the workshops, a number of ideas took shape. Amongst other things, one idea was a cocktail-mixing event in which each cocktail is named after a famous scientist and the menu informs the visitor of the scientists’ achievements. Furthermore, the Café Scientifique held a science-themed poetry slam and science comedy. Another idea was an evening of science fiction short movies accompanied by a live orchestra or band playing the soundtracks.

All in all, the project offered a great opportunity for the students to apply their acquired knowledge, to learn more about public engagement, and to further develop their communication skills.

> Larissa Warneck
> MSc Science, Communication and Society
What’s on?

Got spare time or need a break? The GradPost team recommends these events...

**Musical Theatre Society Show Choir**
Fri 3 Jun, 19.30
Marlowe Theatre
A big fan of musicals? Come along and see the University of Kent’s Show Choir’s debut concert in the Coyler-Fergusson hall.

**The Marlowe Comedy Club**
Sat 4 Jun, 20.00
Marlowe Theatre
Laughter is the best medicine! Stand-up at its best with Ray Peacock, Tony Jameson, Lloyd Griffith and Hayley Ellis.

**Kent Gung Ho Seriously Fun 5k**
Sat 4 Jun, 09.00-14.00
Brands Hatch Circuit, Fawkham
Think bouncy castle, but extreme! Kent Gung Ho mimics your favourite TV obstacle courses. It offers 5k of fun, all tied up with one of Europe’s largest inflatable slides. You would be crazy not to give it a go.

**Pride Canterbury**
Sat 11 Jun, 11.00
A procession leading from The Marlowe Theatre into the Dane John Gardens
Rainbow flags at the ready! Support, celebrate and have a fantastic day at Canterbury’s very own Pride event. See their Facebook for more details.

**Whitstable Biennale 2016**
Sat 4 – Sun 12 Jun
Whitstable

**The Big Canterbury Debate – Kent in Europe**
Thu 16 Jun, 18.00-19.00
University of Kent, Canterbury (room tbc)
A referendum debate – you know it’s important!

**Thriller Live**
Mon 6 – Thu 9 Jun, 19.30
Fri 10 – Sat 11 Jun, 17.00 and 20.30
Marlowe Theatre
In memory of the king of pop, this concert is a celebration of Michael Jackson’s greatest hits.

**Sona Jobarteh**
Fri 24 Jun, 20.00
Marlowe Theatre
Come and enjoy the rhythms of kora music!

**Race for Life**
Sun 26 Jun, 11.00
Seaford Hampton Pier, Herne Bay
To all the women out there: Take part in a race for life 10k event! Interested? Don't forget to sign up at raceforlife.org

**The Refugee Tales 2016**
Sat 2 – Fri 8 Jul
Tyler Hill
5 days walk from Canterbury to London to raise awareness of the dangerous journey refugees face when fleeing their war-torn homes.
For more information visit: http://refugeetales.org/the-walk-2016

**Summer Food Festival at Whitstable Castle and Gardens**
Sun 17 Jul, 11.00-16.00
Whitstable Castle
For more information visit: whitstablecastle.co.uk

**Whitstable Beer and Oyster Festival**
Thu 21 – Sun 24 Jul
Whitstable’s annual Beer and Oyster Festival

**Pride Canterbury**
Sat 11 Jun, 11.00
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