Three steps to make more time for self-care

Useful tips and tricks on applying for an internship in publishing

Précisions sur les sciences – one-day conference report

A newsletter created by postgraduates for postgraduates
Hello everyone, and welcome to the Summer edition of The GradPost!

It’s been almost two full years since we accepted the positions of Editors-in-chief of The GradPost, and yet it still amazes us how creative, involved and dedicated the University of Kent’s postgraduate community is. Throughout our time here, students have come to us with ideas for articles, many of which are directly linked to their personal experiences as researchers. We have been to China with Danielle Burford-Day (Winter 2016) and to Costa Rica with Mallika Sardeshpande (Autumn 2016). We walked the Via Francigena with Julia Peters (Summer 2016), and now, with this issue, we get to explore the beauty of Cuba with Katja May. All these contributions have shown us that research and studying at the University of Kent obliterates boundaries and connects students from around the world through the collective effort of adding to their field of expertise, as Lars Harald Maagerø’s article vividly demonstrates.

Your enthusiasm is positively contagious, and will surely inspire other students to organise conferences, as Dominique Carlini Versini has, to become a writer-in-residence, like our own Vanessa Dias, or to share advice on how to shape your career, as Danielle Burford-Day does in her article on applying for an internship in publishing.

There is only one last issue left for us to prepare before we officially ‘retire’ from our positions, and with this in mind, we urge you to get in touch with us via gradpost-submissions@kent.ac.uk, either to discuss article ideas or to follow in our footsteps.

Enjoy your read, and, as always, we are looking forward to hearing from you!

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

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Kent Union update

Education Strategy Year 1: 2016-2017

We have come to the end of the first year of Kent Union’s Education Strategy following its introduction in 2016. Since this work began, there have been numerous achievements made to enhance the academic experience of all students and we’re really excited to start work on our year two goals.

Postgraduate support is a huge part of our Education Strategy, so if you want to get involved or find out more then please e-mail representation@kent.ac.uk

Chris Mattinson
Academic Policy and Representation Manager

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GATHERED FEEDBACK FROM 841 STUDENTS

Conducted an audit of our 48 Academic Societies at Canterbury campus to find out more about their outputs and how they enhance the student experience, as well as to review the support given to them.

Formed an integral part of the Teaching Excellence Framework working group, contributing the student voice to the final submission.

WORKED WITH UELT TO GET THE LECTURE CAPTURE POLICY APPROVED FOR 2017/2018 AFTER 6 YEARS OF STRONG CAMPAIGNING.

LAUNCHED THE NEW ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARDS

LAUNCHED ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARDS!

To replace the Teaching Awards, with over 143 nominations so far and some fantastic staff rewarded.

RAN SPECIFIC MEDWAY EDUCATION FORUMS

To understand the key issues affecting Medway students and their academic experiences.

RAN SPECIFIC POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION FORUMS

To understand the key issues affecting postgraduate students and their academic experiences.

SET UP OUR NEW EDUCATION AND STUDENT REPRESENTATION BOARD

Comprising elected student officers and senior university managers, to discuss key issues affecting the student academic experience, with two meetings held this year.

LAUNCHED DIGITAL REP

Our new online platform for gathering student feedback, with over 1,350 pieces of feedback provided directly to student reps over the academic year.

LAUNCHED THE DIVERSIFY MY CURRICULUM CAMPAIGN

Alongside our continued work in our BME Student Voices project to reduce the BME attainment gap.

ELECTED 315 STUDENT REPS

Across Canterbury and Medway to represent the student voice within Schools and on committees.

DEVELOPED EDUCATION FORUMS

To upskill our reps, with guests from University senior management to discuss key issues with our elected students.

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EDUCATION STRATEGY YEAR 1: 2016-2017
Even though some great philosophers and thinkers claim that human beings are naturally selfish, the truth is that many students, colleagues and staff I know are not selfish enough to make time for themselves and to set aside a part of their daily routine for self-care. Self-care means you tune into yourself and pay attention to the quality of your present human experience. How are you feeling right now? What kind of thoughts are you having? What have you been doing lately about your feelings and thoughts? Where is all that being reflected in your body? Can you notice?

So tuning in is the first step of self-care and at this stage you will know if you have been neglecting your well-being too much. If you have done so, I am sure you are probably even aware of what you should be doing for yourself more often. Thus, the second step is to think about what dimensions of your well-being you have been ignoring the most. Is it your sleep routine? Is it your physical health? Is it your emotional needs? Or, perhaps, even your diet?

Self-care is any action you take with the outcome of a greater sense of personal well-being. Each one of us has preferred self-care practices. For instance, I choose yoga and meditation as my preferred self-care practices, but for some of my friends those practices are playing sports, preparing healthier meals, taking the time to read the books they actually like, or doing any sort of crafting. Only you know what makes you feel good and that is what you need to do more often, ideally every day, because that is how we renew ourselves, our minds and our bodies. This is how we can release toxins and negative emotions that get trapped in our bodies without our noticing, on a daily basis.

The third step to make more time for self-care is to acknowledge the importance of our human, natural need to unwind and restore ourselves, mentally and physically. The reason why most of the time we stop being so productive and focused at work is merely because we have not been through any of the self-care steps I mentioned above. In addition, there is a shared, wrong idea that taking time for self-care is a luxury or something selfish, when actually it is a way to reconnect with ourselves and our human nature, to rest and renew our energy, so that we can perform at our best and connect with others in a more conscious way.

Vanessa Dias
PhD Psychology

Three steps to make more time for self-care

PG Minds

Feeling frazzled? Run down? Anxious?
Research and life stresses can take their toll on mind and body. That’s why the Graduate School, in conjunction with Student Support and Wellbeing, has launched its PGMinds initiative: an ongoing commitment to support postgraduate well-being, including a series of workshops for postgraduates to help maintain and promote a healthy outlook amidst work and life pressures.

Running from 22 June to 1 August, these workshops will explore giving and receiving feedback, meaning and purpose, self-awareness, stress, relaxation, and motivation.
To book, visit Bloom at https://bloom.kent.ac.uk

For more information on forthcoming events with the KGSA and Postgraduate Research café, see www.kent.ac.uk/graduateschool/pgminds.html

We would welcome your suggestions for other events or support (please email j.p.collins@kent.ac.uk).

Postgraduate Festival 2017

Thank you to everyone who came along to the Postgraduate Festival, which took place on 16 May in the Sibson Building. The Festival was a fantastic showcase of the range and diversity of the research currently being undertaken at Kent.

Students and staff experienced fascinating research talks, an alumni panel discussing life after studying at Kent, a discussion on research impact and the final of the Three Minute Thesis® (3MT) competition. There were also sessions on meditation and yoga, to highlight the importance of well-being and the non-academic support that is available to you at Kent. The day finished with a social run by the Kent Graduate Student Association (KGSA).

Congratulations to the winners of our prizes, which ranged from £500 for the winner of the 3MT competition to a box of chocolates for the public poster vote. Full details of the winners can be found on our website: www.kent.ac.uk/graduateschool/news/pgfestival.html
The University of Kent’s Cuba Scholarship Scheme

The University of Kent’s Cuba Scholarship Scheme offered four postgraduate students a unique opportunity to visit and explore Cuba for three weeks over the Easter break this year. The four of us were all from very different disciplines: Computer Science, English Literature, Hispanic Studies, and Politics. Naturally, we all arrived with different plans for pursuing our individual research interests. But besides those, we were, of course, keen to get to know the country and its people.

We started the trip in Viñales, a town about two hours west of Havana, and spent a few days with the scholarship’s donor and his family friends at their residence. Across Cuba, it is typical to stay in so-called casas particulares, a kind of bed and breakfast in people’s private houses – a great way of connecting with locals. The Valley of Viñales is a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its dramatic landscape and traditional way of tobacco farming, and we explored on horseback for several hours.

From Viñales we continued our trip to the central Cuban town of Trinidad with a short stop at the iconic Bay of Pigs in between. Trinidad, besides its colonial architecture and cobbledstone streets, is famous for its textile markets. Since my research focuses on textiles, it was a wonderful opportunity to admire the large displays of needlecraft and to speak to some of the makers.

Our stay there was crowned with a visit to the nearby tropical forest, where we ran into a Kent alumna from the United States who graduated with an MA in Conservation in 2008.

The university town of Santa Clara, where Che Guevara famously defeated Batista’s troops, was next. Cuba is generally full of murals, road and garden signs commemorating the successful revolution and its heroes. Nonetheless, there was a rather strangely pensive atmosphere at the massive Che Guevara memorial and mausoleum in Santa Clara; very different from the happy and celebratory spirit we experienced at the May Day Parade in Havana towards the end of our stay.

A visit to one of Cuba’s most beautiful beaches at the peninsula of Varadero was also not to be missed. Cubans are generally quick to tell you that Varadero is ‘not Cuba’ because of its numerous hotel complexes and large amounts of tourists. And while it is certainly very different from other parts of the country, I am still grateful for the opportunity to have seen this side of Cuba as well. It is a shame to think that many tourists probably do not get to see any other part of the island, with its amazing landscapes, delicious local cuisine, and friendly and outgoing citizens.

The last week of our trip was spent in the capital city, Havana, where we reunited with the donor for a couple of days. The city is full of hustle and bustle and its streets are, of course, crowded with old classic American cars. However, it also has a surprisingly large number of green spaces and many sidewalks are lined with big, old trees. One member of our group even had the fantastic opportunity to meet and interview a local poet for his research.

In the end, in a group as mixed as ours, everyone has a different kind of highlight to treasure. Yet we are all sure to cherish this exceptional adventure and its brilliant memories, and we are very grateful to the donor and the University of Kent for making this possible.

Katja May
PhD Researcher, School of English
Calling all publishing enthusiasts

The academic year is speeding past and dissertation deadlines are beginning to loom. If you are one of the organised ones who have an exciting internship, graduate scheme or job waiting for you in September, congratulations! If not, do not fear, there is still time.

I will be doing a one-month unpaid internship with Oldcastle Books in October – and I cannot wait! Publishing is a hugely competitive area, as I am sure any budding editorial assistant is well aware, and if you are looking to find a placement, chances are you will need to apply for some unpaid work experience to get your foot in the door.

The two most important websites you need to know are:

- Diary of a Publishing Professional (diaryofapublishingintern.blogspot.co.uk)
  Steff Lever’s blog gives regular updates on publishing opportunities, and has a brilliant page on ‘Intern Opportunities’ with several publishing houses (this is where I found the link for Oldcastle Books).

- The Book Trade Charity (www.btbs.org/fundraising/642)
  The Book Trade Charity is a fantastic company that offers support for those in low paid (and occasionally unpaid) internships within the book trade. This means that those who feel they could not possibly take up an unpaid position due to living costs, travel expenses and/or the price of accommodation should reconsider. The Charity can award individuals with grants to help, should they meet certain criteria. Give it a go!

Once you have looked around, applied and been invited to an interview, there are still a few things to consider.

The University of Kent’s Careers and Employability Service (CES) is great. I would recommend booking a mock interview before the real deal, and doing it at Kent means the CES team will research the company you will be interviewed by, in order to make the experience as real as possible.

In all honesty, the questions asked in my mock interview did not come up during the actual interview. It was more of a chat about what the company does and where my experience fits in. There was no test on how well I knew the company. However, experiencing the interview ordeal before going to Oldcastle Books took a lot of the pressure off. I might have been nervous, but without my mock interview I would have been terrified.

You can find a lot of books on interview techniques and the application process for all sorts of jobs at the Careers and Employability Service Building (located between Keynes College and Keynes bus stop). I found the one on publishing a great help with the do’s and don’ts of the interview process, and even if it is not telling you anything new, it does not hurt to feel over-prepared. For more information on the CES, visit: www.kent.ac.uk/ces/advice.html

Most importantly, do not be discouraged by rejection. Hardly anyone gets the first internship they apply for. And what might seem like a terrible failure to you is not necessarily as bad as you think. I left Oldcastle Books hanging my head in shame after doing pretty poorly on the proofreading test (yes, there will probably be one of those!). I left it a few days and then sent an email letting them know how grateful I was for the interview, but, honestly, did not hold out much hope of being offered a place. The next day, I received the good news: I would be working with the company in October!

In conclusion, if you are still hoping to get an internship in publishing (or anything else!), remember:

- It is not too late – have a look at Steff Lever’s blog for inspiration.
- Money worries need not necessarily get in the way of unpaid work.
- Our University’s Careers and Employability Service is great – use it!
- Do not be disheartened by rejection, or what feels like an unsuccessful interview: it is all experience after all.

Good luck!

Danielle Burford-Day
MA in English and American Literature

Useful tips and tricks on applying for an internship in publishing
A weekend of European theatre

Münchner Kammerspiele Showcase Weekend

Over the weekend of 10–12 March, around 40 students of theatre and performing arts from all over Europe – and even from other continents – gathered in Munich, Germany, for the Münchner Kammerspiele Showcase Weekend. The students were selected from around 200 applicants and were invited to Munich by Münchner Kammerspiele to see productions and attend post-show talks and artist meetings at the theatre. The University of Kent was represented by two PhD students from the School of Arts – Benjamin Monk and myself, Lars Harald Maagerø.

The theatre had planned an extremely busy schedule for the students. In Germany, most theatres are still structured as repertory theatres, which means that productions stay in the repertoire for quite a long time. During the weekend, we saw eight productions from the theatre’s repertoire, including an exciting new production of Hamlet by the young director Christopher Rüping and a four-hour-long production of a new play, Wut, by Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek, directed by Nicolas Stemmann. Rüping’s Hamlet is a disturbing new interpretation of the play, where the title character is no hero, but rather a political activist with violent extremist views. Wut is a meditation on today’s society, with the terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015 as a starting point. In its most memorable scene several religious and mythical figures, including Buddha, Krishna and Santa Claus, meet in a talk show led by Jesus Christ to attempt to solve the problems of our times.

Every night after the performances, we gathered in one of the theatre’s bars for post-show talks with directors, dramaturgs and actors. Here, we discussed the productions we had seen and got to ask questions and discuss issues directly with the artists. It was, however, not us students who had the busiest weekend. One actor at the theatre, Jelena Kuljić, performed in four of the eight productions, and we were completely amazed by the stamina she showed when she even turned up for interviews at one of the post-show talks. Because of this, Kuljić became almost a sort of cult figure for us students. After the post-show talks, we went to the local club for drinks and theatrical conversations into the night.

The weekend at the Kammerspiele was a great experience for me, and I think also for the other students who participated. We saw eight productions of new, inventive, cutting-edge theatre, and were really brought up to date with what is going on in the German theatrical world. Even more importantly, however, we met like-minded students and practitioners from all over the world. I now have a broad network of contacts from countries such as Bulgaria, Belgium, Finland and Ukraine. We were also able to get to know people at the theatre in Munich, both those directly involved with organising our stay, and members of the artistic staff. Thus, the weekend became more than just a theatre festival. It became a melting pot for sharing ideas, thoughts and knowledge about theatre and performing arts across Europe. In times like ours, where ideas of cross-continental collaboration are questioned at times and looked upon with scepticism, I found this a very important and uplifting experience. In the future, it would be great to explore the possibilities we have at the University of Kent to create similar opportunities for meeting and sharing thoughts and knowledge. It would be amazing if something similar to what Ben and I experienced in Munich could happen in Canterbury.

Lars Harald Maagerø
PhD in Drama

KGSA Update

The Kent Graduate Student Association (KGSA), led by Rowena Bicknell (President) and Tom Ritchie (Vice-President), has worked over the last year to create and run a number of events for over Europe – and even from other continents – vibrant community on campus. This began with gather in Munich, Germany, for the Münchner Freshers’ Week, in which the KGSA-led events Kammer Spiele Showcase Weekend. The students had over 1,500 attendees. They included a Casino where invited to Munich by Münchner Night, a British Pub Tour, an afternoon tea party Kammer Spiele to see productions and attend post-show talks and artist meetings at the theatre. The University of Kent was represented by two PhD students from the School of Arts – Benjamin Monk and myself, Lars Harald Maagerø.

Throughout the rest of term one, the KGSA worked with students to celebrate Thanksgiving, as well as the build-up to the Christmas vacation period, with the creation of the Gandalf charity calendar, a Salvation Army food drive and a Gifting Tree to collect gifts for children in Canterbury. These fundraising initiatives helped to raise over £2,000 for charity through gifts and food packages. As well as this, the KGSA organised Christmas Day and New Year’s Eve celebrations for students who stayed behind on campus, including catering for over 40 students from a single kitchen in Woolf College.

In term two, the KGSA focused on empowering more students to help lead on events, ranging from Lunar New Year to Super Bowl, Valentine’s Day and Novruz celebrations. For the rest of the year, the KGSA is holding a number of summer events, based around dissertation and exam de-stress, social events and fun, all of which can be found on the Woolf College Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/Woolf16

Make sure to get involved and attend!

Postgraduate Student Surveys 2017

Thank you to everyone who completed this year’s surveys. Your comments and views really do count, and will be used to enhance the academic experience for future postgraduate students.

Congratulations Kent Students of the Year!

Congratulations to the joint winners of the Student of the Year Award, Rowena Bicknell and Tom Ritchie, who were chosen for the exceptional contribution they have made to the postgraduate student experience in their roles as President and Vice-President of the Kent Graduate Student Association (KGSA).
One-day conference report

Conference organisers: Dominique Carlini Versini (PhD candidate in French, University of Kent) and Dr Carine Fréville (Assistant Lecturer in French, University of Kent in Paris)

The one-day conference entitled ‘Précisions sur les sciences’ (Precisions on sciences) sought to explore the importance of science in the creative process of French author Marie Darrieussecq. The conference took place at the University of Kent in Paris (Paris School of Arts and Culture) on 4 May 2017. In the context of this conference, science was understood in a broad sense to refer to social sciences but also to hard sciences and their links with literature. The first panel was devoted to the study of sciences and animality in the work of Darrieussecq. Colette Trout (Ursinus College, USA) and Simon Kemp (Somerville College, University of Oxford, UK) looked at the importance of animals in the novels and short stories of Marie Darrieussecq and the various ways in which the writer seeks to inscribe non-human consciousness in her texts. Benjamin Dalton (King’s College London, UK) applied Catherine Malabou’s concept of plasticity to his analysis of the human to pig metamorphosis in Truismes/Pig Tales (1996).

The second panel investigated the various discourses of science in Darrieussecq’s texts. Claude Dédomon (Université Alassane Ouattara, Ivory Coast) analysed the different figures of the scientist and the many forms of scientific discourses interconnected in her novels, while Sandra Daroczi (University of Exeter, UK) reflected upon the links between science and the senses in Darrieussecq’s most recent fictions.

The last panel focused on experimentation and experience. In her paper, Isabelle Galichon (Université Blaise Pascal, France) demonstrated that a scientific methodology is used by the narrator ‘young mother’ in Le Bébé (2002) – Darrieussecq’s only autobiographical work – to answer the question: ‘What is a baby?’ Isabelle Dangy (Université Jean Monnet, France) looked at the exploration of matter in White (2003), on both physical and psychological levels. Enda McCaffrey (Nottingham Trent University, UK) discussed in his paper the elaboration of an ecopoetics of reparation in the narrative of mourning of Tom est mort (2007).

The conference was followed by a public interview with the writer. The interview touched upon many different topics, including her writing process, her engagement with ecocriticism and ecopoetics, and her interest in new technologies. Finally, we had the privilege of enjoying an exclusive reading of an extract from Marie Darrieussecq’s forthcoming novel, to be published in September 2017.

Dominique Carlini Versini
PhD in French
What’s on

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

Make Your Own Roman Cuff, Arts and Crafts Event
1 May – 31 Jul 2017
Canterbury Roman Museum
If you need a break from the office and would like to reconnect with your artistic self, then this might just be it! For more information go to canterburymuseums.co.uk/events/make-your-own-roman-cuff

Drawn to Light: The Hidden Cathedral at Canterbury Cathedral
15 May – 15 Oct 2017
Canterbury Cathedral
Marvel at Grace Ayson’s exhibition of stained glass!

Wonderful Weeds
21 Jun 2017
Beach House, Herne Bay
Learn how to make your own herb tea, crystallise flowers and more.

Sister Act
26 Jun – 1 Jul 2017
The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury
Fancy a musical but can’t be bothered to travel all the way to London? Worry no more, there’s one in Canterbury starring the X Factor winner Alexandra Burke.

Berlin Syndrome (15)
1 Jul – 2 Jul 2017
Gulbenkian Cinema, Canterbury
For all the psychological thriller fans out there!

La Bohème: Live From Taormina
5 Jul 2017
Gulbenkian Cinema, Canterbury
A timeless classic, a tragic love story – live from Sicily.

‘Women Of Kent’ at Whitstable Castle Tea Garden
6 Jul – 8 Jul 2017
Kent Coast Theatre, Whitstable
Come and explore the lives of three famous women of Kent: Anne Boleyn, Ellen Terry and Vita Sackville-West.

Olly Murs
7 Jul 2017
Kent County Cricket Club, Canterbury
Another X Factor candidate in Canterbury.

Sir Tom Jones
8 Jul 2017
Kent County Cricket Club, Canterbury
Who doesn’t know his songs?!

Wild Food Foraging Walk at Westgate Gardens
8 Jul 2017
Westgate Grove, Canterbury
A guided walk around Westgate Gardens.

Night Tours at Wildwood, Wildlife and Nature Event
From 9 Jul 2017
Wildwood Discovery Park, Herne Bay
Feeling adventurous? Then this is your chance to see animals at a time when you normally wouldn’t.

Jack the Ripper: The Musical
11 Jul – 15 Jul 2017
Playhouse Theatre, Whitstable
The curious case of Jack the Ripper in music.

Mamma Mia!
11 Jul – 29 Jul 2017
The Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury
ABBA’s greatest hits compressed and performed in a musical.

Summer Vintage Tea and Fair at Tower House
15 Jul 2017
Westgate Gardens, Canterbury
Cream tea and cakes are waiting for you.

Kent Tribute Festival 2017
27 Aug 2017
Strode Park, Herne Bay
Europe’s top tributes surely know how to entertain a crowd!