

A celebration of the life and achievements of Dr Dorothy Needham (FRS)

Cambridge University Press & Assessment University Collaboration Budget Funding Initiative 2022: Report from the Needham Research Institute (NRI)

Activities and outputs

On Friday 16th September, a **workshop** was held at the NRI with the title *Reflections on the life and career of Dr Dorothy Moyle Needham, FRS*, involving members of the NRI and scholars from the University of Cambridge and elsewhere. Those from Cambridge included the Chair, Mary Augusta Brazelton (Department of History and Philosophy of Science), and speakers Patricia Fara (Clare College), Robin Hesketh (Department of Biochemistry) and Rosalind Grooms (Archivist, CUP&A and NRI). Other speakers included Evan Ward (Department of History, Brigham Young University, USA), Gordon Barrett (Faculty of History, University of Oxford) and Gregory Blue (Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria, Canada). A schedule of the workshop with titles of the talks is available from the workshop [website](#).

The workshop was attended by about 75 people: 35 in person and 40 by Zoom. They included, among scholars from the University of Cambridge community, the Newnham College archivist, and Lucy Rymer of CUP&A as well as a former CUP&A employee, Sally Forwood (née Gerrard), who was copy editor for Dorothy Moyle Needham's major work *Machina Carnis*. Scholars also Zoomed in from across the UK, including an archivist from the Royal Society, as well as from Europe, the USA and the People's Republic of China.

On Saturday 17th September, an **Open Cambridge** event was held (morning and afternoon sessions) with talks by Gordon Barrett (University of Oxford) and John Moffett (NRI Librarian), followed by a tour of the building and an exhibition. Both sessions were almost fully booked (30 places each session).

For both events, NRI staff displayed for the first time 6 stand-alone **banners** celebrating Dorothy Moyle Needham's biochemistry work, visits to China and roles supporting women within the University of Cambridge, and an **exhibition** of photographs and objects relating to her life, as well as a selection of her paintings. A [webpage](#) about her life, with suggested further reading was created. Newly-printed mugs and postcards showing a photograph of Dorothy Moyle Needham were given as gifts to the speakers and sold to visitors.

Collaboration between Cambridge University and Cambridge University Press & Assessment

As mentioned above, the workshop involved collaboration with scholars and archivists from the University of Cambridge. Further collaborations included:

- CUP publications, including Dorothy Moyle Needham's *Machina Carnis* and the hot-off-the-press book by Gordon Barrett, *China's Cold War Science Diplomacy*, were on display for the workshop and Open Cambridge. The display included 20% discount flyers so that the books could be ordered online, as well as CUP bookmarks.
- CUP&A colleagues created a specially curated [online collection on Cambridge Core](#) organised around the theme of 'Women in Science' drawing from their books and journals list, with some content made freely available as appropriate.

- A window display in the CUP Bookshop of *Machina Carnis* and ‘Women in Science’ was set up by Alastair Lynn. This included two colour A4 flyers about Dorothy Moyle Needham promoting the workshop and Open Cambridge, created on *Adobe Indesign* by Johanna Ward (Cambridge University Library Digital Content Unit).
- News about the UCB 2022 awards and the events were advertised via CUP&A social media channels, though these activities were muted in line with the University of Cambridge policy following the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.
- A mannequin was borrowed from Rachel Sawicki (Conservation Studio, Cambridge University Library). This was used to hang Dorothy Moyle Needham’s scarlet PhD gown, which was exhibited at both events alongside the banners.

Initiative Successes

This was the first time that academic and public-facing events had been held to reflect on the life of Dorothy Moyle Needham, first-class scientist, social activist, among the first ten women to gain a PhD at the University of Cambridge (1926) and to be admitted as a Fellow of the Royal Society (1948), and the first woman to be admitted into Gonville and Caius College, as Honorary Fellow (1979). She also worked tirelessly throughout her life to forge networks both within and beyond Cambridge to support women wishing to build careers in the sciences. The ground-breaking **workshop** succeeded in reaching both a Cambridge and a global audience, both in terms of contributors and in-person and Zoom attendees. We are currently in discussion with the speakers to plan a publication bringing together their contributions, as well as archival and bibliographic information and photographs, to serve as a springboard for future generations of researchers from which to dive deeper into her life and work.

There was very favourable feedback about the workshop, the display in the window of the CUP Bookshop, and the Open Cambridge event. A common refrain from those attending the events was “Why had I not heard of her before!” We were especially delighted that the former CUP&A employee Sally Forwood contributed to the discussion on Zoom. Sally was copy editor for *Machina Carnis*, and she kindly shared her memories of working on the book. Another unexpected contact made at the workshop was with Frances M. Lynch, Artistic Director of the [Electric Voice Theatre](#) in London. We intend to collaborate with Frances in the future on their women in science outreach projects.

Another very positive outcome for the NRI was that we met members of Dorothy Moyle Needham’s family, the Gorrings (descendants of Dorothy Moyle Needham’s brother). Her niece, Rosamond, and great-nephew Tom attended the Open Cambridge event, and we are hoping to arrange a further visit by family members to look at the photographs and objects relating to the life of Dorothy Moyle Needham that we have located and catalogued during the process of organising these events.

Finally, the banners we created about the life and work of Dorothy Moyle Needham will be made available to outside organisations for display. Interest has been expressed by the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Cambridge for their up-coming 100th anniversary, as well as by our sister Trust in Hong Kong – the Joseph Needham Foundation for Science and Civilisation (HK) – for outreach in schools and universities in Hong Kong.

John Moffett, Rosalind Grooms, Sally Church, Lucy Rhymer, September 2022



The display in the window of Cambridge University Press Bookshop on Trinity Street.



Display in the lobby of the NRI for Open Cambridge.



Lucy Rhymer, CUP&A Senior Commissioning Editor and Rosalind Grooms, CUP&A Archivist, looking around the exhibition of Dorothy Moyle Needham photographs, objects and paintings.



Dorothy Moyle Needham's Cambridge doctoral gown on display alongside banners in the K.P. Tin Hall lecture room at the Needham Research Institute.



Gordon Barrett of the University of Oxford speaking at the workshop.



Visitors for Open Cambridge Day looking around the exhibition of Dorothy Moyle Needham photographs, objects and paintings.



Rosamond and Tom Gorrige (2nd and 3rd left), relatives of Dorothy Moyle Needham, with Needham Research Institute Director, Jianjun Mei, with event organisers Rosalind Grooms, Gordon Barrett, and Sally Church.

University Collaboration Budget £3,293	Projected Expenditure	Actual Expenditure
Banners		
Design and creation of 6 banners	1152.00	1152.00
Printing and production of 6 banners (including delivery)	1056.00	1056.00
Gordon Barrett		
Return train fare Oxford-Cambridge (off-peak)	75.00	62.90
College or B&B accommodation for 7 nights @ £70 per night	490.00	450.00
Subsistence for 7 days to carry out research at the NRI @£20 per day	140.00	67.38
Workshop for 30 people		
Coffee, tea, milk, biscuits, fruitjuice	50.00	53.15
Sandwich lunch (£10 per person)	300.00	270.00
Small gifts for speakers	30.00	
Additional items		
4 table-top easels for display of Dorothy Needham's paintings		24.99
Souvenir mugs and postcards [see note below]		156.58
Total Expenditure	3,293	3,293

Note: £30 was originally requested for "small gifts for speakers". We later decided to make a batch of souvenir mugs and postcards, the total cost for which was £254.58, £156.58 of which has come out of this grant, the remainder being covered by the Institute.