

# Mentions of Oxford and Oxbridge in Parliament

## Date July 2014

Commons: 16<sup>th</sup> July, debate and reference to alumnus  
Commons: 9<sup>th</sup> July, debate and reference to successful constituency schools  
Commons: 3<sup>rd</sup> July, debate and continual reference to access to Oxford and Cambridge  
Commons: 2<sup>nd</sup> July, debate and reference to disability policy  
Commons: 8<sup>th</sup> July, select committee, reference to impact accelerator grant  
Commons: 2<sup>nd</sup> July, select committee, reference to early childhood register

### Debate - Adjournment and General

#### MPs pay tribute to Sir Robert Rogers, Clerk of the House of Commons

Wed, 16 July 2014

#### Mentions

Ms Angela Eagle (Wallasey) (Lab):

While at **Oxford** Sir Robert captained Lincoln college's team on "University Challenge", when it was presented by Bamber Gascoigne—I say that for hon. Members who remember as far back as I do. Having got in touch with the producers, I can reveal that, unfortunately, no TV footage survived, but with his typical flair Sir Robert led his team to the semi-finals. Over the past 10 years Sir Robert has managed to write three books—"Order! Order!", "Who Goes Home?" and "How Parliament Works", which is now in its sixth edition. I should tell the House that a parliamentary question from last year revealed that "How Parliament Works" is the most requested book in the Library— apparently, just ahead of Tony Blair's autobiography.

Many Members will be aware that Sir Robert read old Norse, mediaeval Welsh and Anglo-Saxon at **Oxford**. So accomplished was he at his studies that he was offered a scholarship to study "Anglo-Saxon colour words", but he clearly decided that he would pursue a study of modern rowdy behaviour in the Commons Chamber rather than waste his talents studying ancient swear words and their uses—Mr Speaker, we have reason to be very grateful that he did.

### Debate - Adjournment and General

#### MPs debate technical and vocational education

Wed, 9 July 2014

Stephen Twigg:

I am working with schools in Liverpool to encourage more of the most academic young people to consider applying to top universities, including **Oxford and Cambridge**. I want to put on the record a tribute to Calderstones school, which I have already mentioned, because

that comprehensive school in the heart of Liverpool gets a lot of its young people to go to Oxford or Cambridge. I want to mention Elle Shea, the head girl of St John Bosco school in my constituency, who has an offer of a place at Cambridge university. There are still not enough young people from low-income families getting into our top universities, but we should not have to choose between saying that and saying that we are passionate about the forgotten 50% and want to improve technical and vocational education; we need to do both.

**Debate - Adjournment and General**

**MPs debate social mobility and child poverty strategy**

Thu, 3 July 2014

Hazel Blears (Salford and Eccles) (Lab):

I beg to move,

That this House has considered social mobility and the child poverty strategy.

.....

However, as we get better at tackling each of those issues, the problem seems to settle in different areas. An example of that arose from a case in my constituency involving post-graduate education. At first I wondered why post-graduate education was a social mobility issue: surely, I thought, by the time people reached that stage, they would have gone through the system, obtained their degrees and so forth. However, when a young man in my constituency, Damien Shannon, applied to Oxford for a place on a post-graduate course, he was required to meet certain conditions. Not only did he have to find £11,000 for tuition fees; he also had to find just over £10,000 to cover living expenses, and he had to prove that the necessary liquid cash was available to him. The “living expenses” included entertaining, dining in hall, and being able to sustain an “Oxford lifestyle”.

Damien comes from Salford, and he is a very bright young man. He decided that, one, the requirement was not fair, and two, he could not possibly meet it. He could get a career development loan for the tuition fees, but there was no way in which he could get a loan to enable him to have an “Oxford lifestyle” in the form of dining and entertaining. He therefore decided to bring a legal challenge, and we have worked on that together for the last 18 months. I initiated a very good debate about the matter in the House, to which the Minister for Universities and Science, the right hon. Member for Havant (Mr Willetts), responded. We had endless conversations with **Oxford university**, which, I am delighted to say, has now changed its admission requirements for post-graduate education, and has abandoned the requirement for applicants to show that they have sufficient living expenses.

Damien has taken up his place at Oxford. He is absolutely delighted, and he is doing really well. I want to place on record my admiration for a brave, clever, determined young man who was not going to let the system beat him. I have no doubt that he will have an absolutely brilliant career in the future. However, we really cannot have that in this day and age, in our top universities. We cannot allow them to hark back to another age when people may have spent slightly more time punting than they spent attending lectures and gaining academic achievements. There is still a wide range of barriers, and I think that we still have a long way to go.

(References to Oxford and Cambridge throughout; but can be accessed here:  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmhansrd/cm140703/debtext/140703-0003.htm#14070370000002>

#### Debate-Adjournment and General

#### **MPs debate proposed changes to disabled students allowances**

Wed, 2<sup>nd</sup> July

Mr Andrew Smith (Oxford East) (Lab):

I was particularly keen to take part in the debate because in our area we are lucky to have not only **two great universities** but ACE centre south—ACE stands for aids to communication and education—which has achieved great things working with students with severe communication disabilities and giving them a voice. Twenty years ago, many of them would have been locked in a world without communication and unable to go to school, let alone university. Now, however, some of the young people whom the centre has helped have got PhDs. Quite rightly, there was cross-party support to save the ACE centre when it had financial difficulties in 2012. We need a big cross-party effort to stave off the cuts to DSA. It is heartening to see so many Members present and to hear the arguments from both sides of the Chamber.

Mr Smith:

My hon. Friend makes a very good point. As has been said, there is a real danger that the proposals will provide universities and other institutions with a perverse disincentive, with the best will in the world, to accommodate all the students that they would like, especially those who have the most severe disabilities. Like other hon. Members, I have been contacted by many students, academic support staff and lecturers who are appalled, as I am, by the proposed cuts. I recently had the pleasure of speaking to the disability officers of **the two university student unions** in my constituency. They brought powerful testimony of how students at **both Oxford's universities** have benefited from DSA and are well on their way to building fulfilling careers. Their determination to help ensure that young people with disabilities have the same opportunities in future is inspiring. One of them told me:

“I pretty much failed the first year of my law degree due to my disability and not being fit to study. I couldn't afford to buy any of the accessibility items I needed. DSA gave me a lifeline. With the specialist equipment including a specialist mouse bar, laptop, dictaphone, extra-large screen, specialist software, printing and book allowance and various other provisions, I was able to retake everything the following year and actually cope with the work load. Without DSA I wouldn't be where I am now.”

Even under the current system, it is not easy to get support. One student in my constituency is having to get an unnecessary diagnosis of dyslexia because his diagnosis undertaken the previous year in the sixth form was not accepted by the DSA authorities. Since there is no clinical need for a new diagnosis, he is having to apply to the university hardship fund to pay for it privately.

For all its difficulties, DSA provides an essential lifeline for people with disabilities who without it would have to give up on their education and ambitions, or would not have been able to apply in the first place. Cutting it will make many disabled students' lives much more difficult, but, worst of all, it will result in a country where people with disabilities begin to

think that they cannot even aspire to higher education and must limit their ambitions. It will do incalculable damage to equality. I urge that the proposed cuts be abandoned.

## **Select Committee**

**De Havilland Report: Parliamentary Committee**

**Business, Innovation and Skills Committee - TSB, RCUK and HEFCE - Business-university collaboration**

Tue, 8 July 2014

During a meeting of the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee on business-university collaboration, MPs heard from:

- Iain Gray, Chief Executive Officer, Technology Strategy Board (TSB)
- Professor Jackie Hunter, Champion for Research and Information Management, Research Councils UK (RCUK)
- Dr David Sweeney, Director (Research, Innovation and Skills), Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

Dr Sweeney: I would say that we are trying to cover two different kinds of activity. Through our Higher Education Innovation Fund—HEIF funding—for universities, we are attempting to support exactly the kind of thing that you describe, or to provide some contribution to support that, whereas I think the research councils are indeed about harvesting the best impact on the research that they have funded. I think the two complement each other really rather well.

Professor Hunter: Also, an individual university does not just have to use that impact acceleration account within its university. So, for example, **Oxford** has actually used its impact acceleration account to bring together a number of universities, such as Oxford Brookes and Reading, and work with the Local Enterprise Partnership and the community to try to build a regionally—based network of academics and research. Although in that particular case it was awarded to Oxford specifically, they have used it much more broadly to create an ecosystem around that particular university.

**DeHavilland Report - Parliamentary Committee**

**Health Committee - HSCIC, NHS England - Handling of NHS patient data**

Wed, 2 July 2014

During a meeting of the Health Select Committee on the handling of NHS patient data, MPs heard from:

- Sir Nick Partridge, Non-Executive Director of Health and Social Care Information Centre NHS England
- Kingsley Manning, Chair of the Health and Social Care Information Centre NHS England
- Tim Kelsey, National Director for Patients and Information NHS England

Sir Nick Partridge

I thought it might be helpful for us to remind ourselves that these are nine cases where, sadly, the ONS gateway was not properly in place. They were suspended because they were all historical studies that were originally fully covered by section 60 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, but their approvals were not updated following a legislative shift in 2006. They include the Institute of Child Health, with a study to track and report on patients who have received or who are currently receiving growth hormone therapy. There is the University of Cambridge, with the European prospective investigation into cancer, a study that investigates the link between food consumption and cancer. There is the **University of Oxford, and the Oxford** register of early childhood impairments, a study that uses information for planning services and support for children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, deafness and blindness. There is the Imperial college healthcare trust, and its longitudinal mortality study tracking patients undergoing cardiothoracic surgical procedures at Hammersmith hospital. **The University of Oxford—**

Q404 Chair: May I stop you there? You are satisfied that all of these were for bona fide research purposes.

Sir Nick Partridge: Yes.

Q405 Chair: Perhaps you would supply us with a list.

Sir Nick Partridge: Okay. I shall provide a list.