

'Things I wish I knew when I
was in your position...'



Geotechnical and Environmental Research Group
Induction Day 2009

Matthew Kuo

Welcome to Cambridge!

- How do you feel right now?
 - Excited
 - Tired
 - Scared
 - Lonely
 - 'I don't belong here...there must be some mistake!'
- You're going to be here a while so take the time to settle in and get comfortable



The British weather



- Winter
 - usually cold, wet, grey...short, dark days
- Summer
 - warmer, drier (?), less grey and long hours of daylight
- Get a waterproof jacket for winter AND summer
 - especially if you plan to cycle
- Waterproof shoes may be useful



Social activities during your studies

- Getting a PhD is the main goal (for most PhD students)
- Cambridge student life is varied and offers many things
 - Sports: rowing, football (soccer), cricket, etc.
 - Music: CU Music Society or College-run groups
 - College and University societies
 - Middle Combination Rooms (MCRs)
 - Supervising undergrads
- If you get the chance, get involved!!



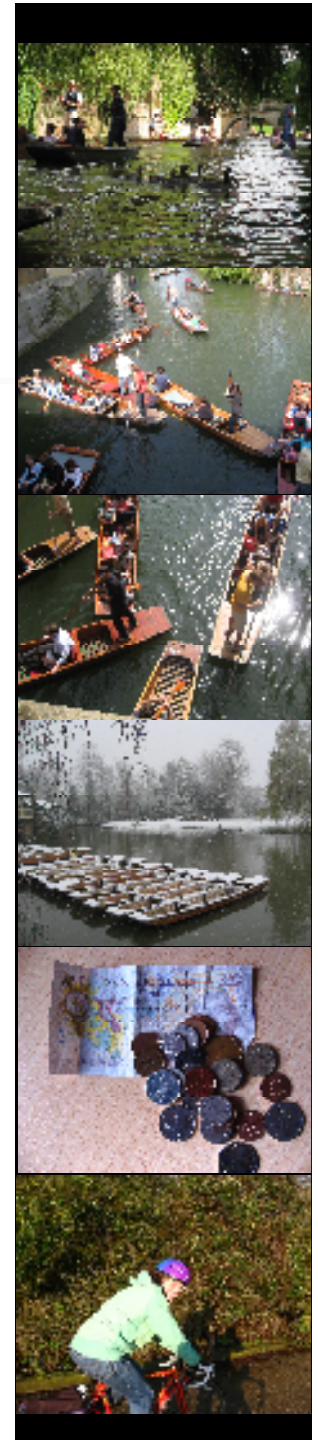


Getting around in Cambridge

- Walking
 - Beware of the cyclists- try to keep off the roads in the centre of town
- Cycling
 - Beware of the pedestrians
 - Get a good lock and lock bike's frame to an 'immovable object'
 - Get a helmet?
 - <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/resources/map/>
- Bus
 - Citi4 or Uni4: 50p/journey with University Card

Misc. information

- Punting
 - CUED has a punt you can book for FREE
 - Talk to reception to check availability
- Banking
 - A difficult and often slow process
 - Look for student accounts – don't pay monthly fees!
 - Get a confirmation letter from your College
- Cycling – warnings – you'll get fined!
 - Lights
 - One-way streets
 - Pedestrian footpaths
- Phoning home
 - Don't purchase 'cheap' phone-cards that first require you to dial a UK number
 - Don't use office phones to make non-work-related phone calls



The PhD – some pointers

- Make steady progress and set clear goals
 - Go to your meetings well organised and prepared
- Things may not always go to plan
 - Things may sometimes go to plan
- Talk to/discuss with other students
 - Very multi-cultural work environment (at least 20 countries represented in research group)
- Experimental work
 - Discuss design with other students, your supervisor and especially the technicians
- Ask questions
 - ...but remember you are the one doing the work





Helpful websites

- Geotechnical Research Group website:
http://www-civ.eng.cam.ac.uk/geotech_new/geotech.htm
 - Grad Guide
 - Your own website
- British standards: <http://uk.ihs.com/>
 - username: cambridgeuni
 - password: learn
- IT training: <http://training.csx.cam.ac.uk/>
 - MS office, Matlab, Linux, web-related etc.



When should I come to the office?

- This is your own decision...but may be determined by:
 - what time you wake up
 - when technicians are around (lab safety)
 - when your supervisor is in
 - when morning tea is served (only for those at the SC)
- Plan what you want to achieve each week & keep track of your own progress
 - No one will chase you so you've got to be disciplined

When and where do students have lunch?



- Schofield Centre
 - Tea area, between 12 and 1:30pm
 - At desk (?)
 - Microwave and fridge
 - No vending machine but close to 'West's' near the Cavendish
- GRO
 - North & South Common Rooms (tea rooms)
 - Canteen (Baker), free tea, vending machines
- College
 - Cheaper
 - Most Colleges allow non-College members to eat at their dining halls
 - Take your student card

Travelling round the UK and Europe

- Cheap flights:
 - easyjet.com/
 - www.ryanair.com/
- Cheap trains:
 - <http://www.atoctravelagents.org/>
 - Click on 'Booking Horizons' quick link
- Cheap bus to Oxford
 - www.megabus.com/
- Car hire:
 - <http://www.enterprise.co.uk/>





Final thoughts

- Enjoy your research
- The privilege of studying at Cambridge
- Take the time to enjoy being here!



People to know

- Schofield Centre:
 - Anama Lowday
 - Technicians: John, Christian, Richard
 - Electronics/computers: Chris/David
- Geotechnical Research Office (GRO):
 - Administration: Amanda Pyatt & Zelda Stuck
 - Computing and desk space: Tim Ablett
 - Technician: Chris Knight (2nd floor Geotech lab)