

Wednesday 29th March, 2017

**Summary: CICASP Seminar 54**  
**Mini-debates: Historical Context (3 of 3)**

In this last seminar in the block, and in the semester, we held a lively debate, re-visiting the 1860 Oxford Evolution debate: a famous argument between Thomas Henry Huxley and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce: the 'Huxley-Wilberforce Debate'.

*Huxley: A.K.A. Darwin's Bulldog*  
'For' Darwin's Theory of Evolution

*Rev. Wilberforce*  
'Against' Darwin's Theory of Evolution

The two teams had some time to come up with their opening statements before making them to the opposing side. We made all arguments and comments in keeping with the time in history at which the real discussion took place.

**Mini-debates: Historical Context**

This block was to encourage you to think about science in a historical context...

- Science does not happen in a vacuum – progress is affected by the time-period in which it is done and the human personalities involved.
- How do scientific ideas come about? Which scientific ideas spread and why?
- Consider that people without the right background knowledge might not recognise the importance/use of new inventions/theories even when presented with them.
- Scientific progress is guided/constrained by the historical context, e.g. current knowledge states, societal trends, values held by the population.

**Please Note:**

The CICASP Seminars in Science Communication will re-commence in the next academic year. You will receive further details by email nearer the start of the first seminar.