



**SHARING KNOWLEDGE:** Dr. Panagakou with the conference organisers, Professor James Connelly and Dr. John Gibbins in the garden of Wolfson College, Cambridge

# Knowledge networks

The University of Cyprus' Dr. Stamatoula Panagakou recently presented her latest research on the feminist philosophy of J. S. Mill at the 'Knowledge Networks, the Grote Club and Cambridge Idealism' international conference at Wolfson College, Cambridge.

The June 26 and 27 conference was organised by Professor James Connelly and Dr. John Gibbins, and was supported by the Centre for Idealism and the New Liberalism (University of Hull) and by the independent charity Education Services 2010.

Regius Professor Sir Richard Evans, President of Wolfson College, gave the opening address. Plenary lectures were delivered by Dr. John Gibbins and by Professor William C. Lubenow.

According to the conference organisers: "Knowledge Networks have emerged in scholarship as vital forces within the generation of new knowledge."

Many authors "have illustrated how knowledge is often situ-

ated in specific local spaces at specific times, such as Athens, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople, Baghdad, Cordoba, Florence, Paris, Berlin and Vienna. Studies of British Idealism have identified Oxford, Glasgow and Edinburgh, while Utilitarianism has been located primarily in the London metropolis." As reflected in its title, the conference examined the connection between "Knowledge Networks, Cambridge University and British Idealist philosophy."

Dr. Panagakou's paper was entitled 'An Idealist Commitment to the Common Good? J. S. Mill on Women's Empowerment and the Improvement of Human-kind.' She argued that Mill's vindication of the rights of women and his critique of patriarchy do not only address issues of individual freedom, equality and justice, but they also refer to the improvement of society as a whole. Empowering women, recognising their contribution to society and politics, and founding marriage on respect, equality, and friendship are conditions for the promotion of the common good, and features of good governance.

Mill challenged conventional views and connected his theory

to a holistic narrative of civic consciousness and the good life. His view of the interrelation between individual good and the common good echoes the idealist principle of institutions as ethical ideas.

Commenting, Professor Connelly and Dr. Gibbins stated that: "Dr. Panagakou presented a powerful case for female emancipation based upon the writings of J. S. Mill and his wife Harriet. Removal of legal impediments plus educational opportunities would give women an equal chance to improve human well-being. This paper provoked energetic debate and useful results."

According to Dr. Panagakou, the enthusiastic reception of her paper demonstrated that there is a huge interest in cutting-edge interpretations of J. S. Mill's political philosophy.

She felt immensely happy that the 'Knowledge Networks' conference provided her with the opportunity to disseminate her research findings at an international gathering of scholars.

She said: "A knowledge network has been created between Cyprus and Cambridge which reflects the recognition and importance of the research done at the University of Cyprus."