



**St John's College MCR**  
**Freshers' Handbook 2010**

## Welcome to St John's College!

On behalf of the Middle Common Room (the graduate student association) at St John's, I am delighted to welcome you to the College. This guide has been compiled by the MCR Committee in order to help you settle into the College, the University and the city, and we hope that you find it useful. It is structured around three general topics:

- Part I – St John's College
- Part II – St John's College MCR
- Part III – The University of Oxford

I would particularly draw your attention to the glossary of Oxford terms provided in Part IV, which should will hopefully prove very useful as you struggle to learn Basic Oxonian over the next couple of weeks! There may also be useful information under Part II Section 6: 'Attendance at College events' which gives a guide to dress codes for different occasions, and under Part II Section 14: 'College Facilities - Meals' which explains formal dining etiquette, since these are common areas of confusion for new students.

This booklet has been designed with St John's College graduate students specifically in mind. If you need more detailed information about student life in Oxford, the Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) has produced various useful publications: the Freshers' Guide (available at the Freshers' Fair and online at <http://www.ousu.org/resources/freshers-guide/>), the Graduate Guide (which will be distributed to your pigeon hole), and the Oxford International Students' Handbook ([www.handbook.oxfordisc.com](http://www.handbook.oxfordisc.com)).

I hope that you find your experience as a graduate student at St John's College enjoyable and rewarding. One of the distinctive elements of postgraduate study at Oxford is the collegiate environment in which we all work: not only are we members of our respective University Faculties (Law, Engineering, History, etc.), we are also members of Colleges with a bunch of other people who study subjects quite different from our own. Much of the value of Oxford postgraduate study lies in the social (and intellectual) interaction with other graduate students who are part of your MCR, and the St John's College MCR is one of the most diverse and vibrant in Oxford. I have enjoyed my time in the MCR immensely, and have found it to be an excellent way of broadening my Oxford experience by meeting people from intellectual and cultural traditions quite different from my own. Plus, the desserts are awesome. I hope that you will be able to say the same.

If you have any questions about life in the St John's College graduate community or Oxford in general, please feel free to get in contact with me or any other MCR Committee member. I look forward to meeting you all in October at the start of your time in Oxford.

DJT

David J. Townsend  
President, St John's College MCR  
[david.townsend@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:david.townsend@sjc.ox.ac.uk)



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# I. ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

## 1. Brief History of the College

The Front Quadrangle (where the main entrance to College is located) traces its foundations back to 1437 when it was founded by Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, as St Bernard's College and was run by Cistercian monks. (A statue of Archbishop Chichele can be found on the left hand side above the outside of the College gate; the statue directly above the outside of the gate is St Bernard himself.) At some point during or after Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, St Bernard's College became defunct. On 1 May 1555, Sir Thomas White, a former Lord Mayor of the City of London, obtained a Royal Patent of Foundation to establish St John's College on the site lately occupied by St Bernard's College. (A statue of Sir Thomas sits on the right hand side above the outside of the College gate, there is a large painting of him in the Hall, and he is buried in the Chapel; a statue of St John the Baptist can be found on the tower above the inside of the College gate.) During the remainder of his life Sir Thomas continued to guide the growth of the College and counsel brotherly love among its members. Although St John's had not been particularly richly endowed at its foundation, it gradually acquired much of the land in North Oxford, and when this area was redeveloped in the late 19th Century from farmland into the suburb of Jericho the income of the College increased considerably. Female students were first admitted to the College in 1979, the first female Fellow (who later became Senior Dean) was appointed in 1989 and the first female member of Governing Body (whose portrait may be seen in the Hall) was appointed in 1990. Nowadays, more than half of students are women, and there are more than a dozen women on Governing Body.

This year sees the opening of the College's newest quadrangle, and probably the last major quadrangle to be built by any College in the centre of Oxford, Kendrew Quadrangle. It is named after Nobel Prize winner and former President of the College (1981-1987) Sir John Kendrew who left a bequest to the College in his will.

## 2. The Porters

The first place you should go on arrival at College is the Porters' Lodge located in the main entrance to College, just off St Giles'. From here keys are given, post is sorted, guestrooms are booked, messages are taken and the College is monitored. It is staffed 24 hours a day, by any two of St John's ten Porters. Despite the name 'porter', the Porters don't carry things around for you; in reality they are the College's private security guards.

Try to get to know the Porters - they are a great bunch of people who, by the nature of their job, can do quite a bit to help your life at College flow smoothly – especially when you have just locked your keys in your room on the way to the shower. In years to come you might look back on the first Porter you met as your 'Hagrid', introducing you to the quaint and mysterious world of an Oxford College!

## 3. Keys

On arrival you should receive several keys from the Porters. These should include a room key (and a house and kitchen key if needed), a Late Gate key, and an electronic key fob. The **electronic key fob**, which is a black piece of plastic with a silver disc at the end, is your main key for College. It grants you access to most College facilities (all College gates, the College library, the MCR building, gymnasium, squash courts and computer rooms).

The **room key** will be marked with your room number and the **house key** with your house number, and the Porters will give you directions to your room when your pick up these keys.

The **Late Gate key**, is marked with the numbers 231. This is a hangover from before the electronic key system, but still is used in some places, e.g. Some laundry rooms, the law library and the college bike shed. You will rarely have to use this key.

If you lock yourself out of your room, a spare key can be obtained from the Porters Lodge (be aware that a spare house key may not be available). If you lose a key the replacement charge could be £25.

**Signing Keys in and out:** Rent in College accommodation for graduates (other than those in couples' accommodation) is charged on a nightly basis. If you are going to be away from Oxford you should hand your room key in to the Porters, so as not to be charged rent for the period you are away; rebates for absences during term time will eventually find their way on to your 'battels'. If you will be away for more than 4 weeks (during term or vacation) you need to talk to the Domestic Administrator (Jackie Couling) and also with the Senior Dean (Martin Stokes) to discuss whether rent rebates will apply. **The rent rebate does not apply to couples' accommodation, so you might as well not sign in the keys to your couple's accommodation when you go away on holiday (unless you think you might lose them while away).**

## 4. Access to College

The primary access point to College is through the Main Gate from St Giles' into Front Quad. This gate is open 24 hours a day, although you need to use your electronic fob to enter and exit late at night. You can access St John's through many secondary gates by using your electronic fob. At night time the only way to get in and out of College other than using the Main Gate is the turnstile from the Lamb & Flag Passage using your electronic fob. Your fob is only needed to make the turnstile go backwards, to let you *in*; you don't need to use your fob to get *out*, because that would trap anyone without a fob in the College overnight and would constitute unlawful imprisonment. (Besides, we have no need of trapping anyone in College overnight, as our army of zombies is strong enough at the moment anyway and does not require any new recruits.)

Your key will open the gates on St Giles', Lamb and Flag passage, Parks Road, the gymnasium, the Library, the MCR, computer rooms, the gardens and the squash courts.

### Gardens and Lawns:

The Gardens may not be accessible at all times of day, as the gate to the Gardens from Canterbury Quadrangle is shut at dusk (although until 21:00 you can still use your fob to go in through the door opposite the MCR building).

Despite what the signs say **you can walk on the grass anywhere in College except the Main Lawn** (which is the nice lawn in the Gardens that we keep for when company comes over). Other than on the Main Lawn, you can also recline on the grass in the Gardens to study or anything else – but no funny business, you're not undergraduates anymore. The signs telling you not to walk on the lawns are really there for tourists and visitors, so the Keeper of the Groves would appreciate it if you didn't walk on lawns *right in front of tourists* because that will only encourage them to start doing so too. Obviously, try not to walk on the lawns too much in winter or after heavy rains because this just turns them into mud wallows and you will have no need of a mud wallow in winter anyway, since there are no flies to dissuade nor strong sunlight to protect yourself from.

## 5. College Room Locations

Rooms within College walls are referred to in shorthand by quadrangle ('quad'), staircase and room number e.g. Thomas White Quadrangle, staircase 8, room 5 is **TW8/5**.

The Quadrangles are: **Canterbury (C)**, **Dolphin (D)**, **Garden (G)**, **Thomas White (TW)**, **Front (F)**, **North (N)** and **Kendrew (K)**. There are also other staircases: the **Buttery (B)**, the **Beehive (N9-11)**, **Rural Economy (RE)** (at the back of Garden Quadrangle, overlooking Parks Road).

The **College Offices** are situated on the first floor corridor at the north-east corner of North Quadrangle, accessed from **N7**.

Graduates live on the main College site as well as on St John Street, Pusey Street, St Giles', Blackhall Road, Woodstock Road, and Leckford Road. There is couples' accommodation on Pusey Lane, Leckford Road (in a building called Hart-Synnot House) and Observatory Street. (See GoogleMaps for locations.)

## 6. Security

Like any other city, Oxford does suffer from crime. *Always lock your door when you leave your room* and, if you are in a basement or ground floor room, *close your windows*; make sure that doors which can only be accessed with a College key are securely closed behind you. You should be alert and careful when walking around Oxford at night or in the early hours of the morning. You can obtain a personal alarm from the MCR Welfare Officers ([tarun.gupta@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tarun.gupta@sjc.ox.ac.uk) and [anisha.ramessur@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:anisha.ramessur@sjc.ox.ac.uk)). If you notice any suspicious activity or suspicious people on College grounds, please contact a Porter.

## 7. Welfare

At College Level:

St John's College provides a number of resources for graduates' general welfare. The **MCR Welfare Officers** are Tarun Gupta ([tarun.gupta@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:tarun.gupta@sjc.ox.ac.uk)) and Anisha Ramessur ([anisha.ramessur@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:anisha.ramessur@sjc.ox.ac.uk)). They can assist you in finding welfare resources in College, the University or the city, in complete confidentiality.

Also available to give welfare advice are the **Senior Dean** (a College academic) and the two **Junior Deans** (graduate students like you, but employed by the College for this purpose). The Senior Dean is Dr Martin Stokes ([martin.stokes@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:martin.stokes@sjc.ox.ac.uk)); the Junior Deans are Joanna Howe ([joanna.howe@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:joanna.howe@sjc.ox.ac.uk)) and Luke Pike ([luke.pike@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:luke.pike@sjc.ox.ac.uk)). In addition, the Senior Dean chairs the College's Hardship Committee (see Section 16: 'Finances: Grants: Hardship Funds' in Section 16 below).

You will be allocated a **College Advisor**, whom you should contact if you have any problems relating to your course of study which you are unable to resolve within your Department/Faculty or with your Academic Supervisor. When you receive the name and details of your College Advisor (from the Secretary to the Tutor for Graduates at the start of term) it is usually a good idea to get in contact with him or her to introduce yourself. Some College Advisors are more active than others and may suggest meeting up occasionally for a chat/coffee, but they should all arrange to meet with you at least once when you first start here. As part of their welfare rôle, your College Advisor is given a sum of money every year to entertain you, and they are supposed to invite you to High Table at dinner with them at

least once a year. It would be a good idea to try to organise this dinner with your College Advisor when you first meet them in person at the start of the year, or this may slip their minds later on and your entertainment allowance could go to waste.

The **College Nurse**, Mrs Vivienne Davies, located in **N5/2**, is usually available without an appointment between 08:30 and 10:30 on weekday mornings during term-time. She will be able to give advice on minor illnesses and the possible need for further treatment. She will also make an appointment for you with the **19 Beaumont Street Medical Practice**, the medical practice with which all students at the College are automatically registered before they arrive in Oxford. This medical practice holds a number of specialised clinics including Stress Management, Travel, Diabetes, and Asthma, and can also help with the treatment of allergies. The College Nurse can also refer you to dental and ophthalmic services and to the College counsellor.

The College's **dental service** is Studental, located in the Helena Kennedy Student Centre on Headington Road, within the Oxford Brookes University campus (about 30-40 minutes' walk from College). Their hours of operation are 08:15-17:00 Monday to Thursday and 08:00-16:00 on Friday. If you wish to make an appointment telephone 01865 484 608 or e-mail [studental@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:studental@brookes.ac.uk).

The 'Guide for Newcomers to St John's College, Oxford' contains statements of College policy on sexual harassment and AIDS/HIV.

#### At University Level:

The Oxford University Student Union ('**OUSU**') provides a full-time vice-president for Welfare Issues ([welfare@ousu.org](mailto:welfare@ousu.org)) and a full-time vice-president for Women's Issues ([women@ousu.org](mailto:women@ousu.org)). They are available weekdays from 09:00-17:00. There are also OUSU committees which focus on Health & Welfare, Women, Disabilities, etc. If you want to know what is happening on the University level or have some input to make, contact graduate student liaison officers from the OUSU Graduate Committee. They may be contacted by e-mail (addresses available on [www.ousu.org](http://www.ousu.org)) or by ringing 01865 288450, or by visiting the OUSU offices at Thomas Hull House, New Inn Hall Street. OUSU produce many useful welfare booklets such as The Women's Handbook.

The **University Counselling Service**, located at 11 Wellington Square (telephone (01865) (2)70300 or e-mail [reception@counserv.ox.ac.uk](mailto:reception@counserv.ox.ac.uk)) is a valuable source of help for many students.

The University also has an anonymous student-run listening service called **Nightline** which runs from 20:00-08:00 in term time: telephone (01865)(2)70270

'The Graduate Guide' and 'The Oxford Handbook', both available from OUSU, contain more information on these and other resources.

## **8. Religion (and Other Perspectives on Divinity)**

Although in the past religion was a cause of much strife at the University of Oxford, largely due to successive English monarchs changing back and forth between Protestant Christianity and Roman Catholic Christianity and persecuting anyone who didn't change with them, such irrational and inhumane nonsense thankfully ceased centuries ago. Nowadays, intellectual and spiritual openness to the deep meaning of human life and existence is a matter for each individual's own conscience, and all religious faiths are freely and proudly celebrated throughout the University. If you would like to get involved, explore, or deepen your knowledge and experience, whether as a practicing believer or simply as an interested party, here are some places to look. The Chaplain, the Rev Dr Liz Carmichael (liz.carmichael@sjc.ox.ac.uk), has compiled this information and will be happy to help with any questions.

Also, if you're of humanist, secularist or atheist persuasion, you don't need to fear getting sent down for your beliefs like old Percy B. Shelley! Non-theistic worldviews are also heavily represented within the University community.

### ***CHRISTIANITY***

Oxford's College Chapels and churches offer a rich variety of Christian life, thought, and prayer. Your Chapel card will detail events in College, and gives names of College reps including the University Church, Methodist, URC, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and O.U. Intercollegiate Christian Union (evangelical). The Chaplain can provide information about the various churches and organisations.

### ***JUDAISM***

Oxford Jewish Congregation at the Synagogue, Oxford Jewish Centre, 21 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2JL Tel: 01865 514356. Oxford Jewish Society: info@oxfordjsoc.co.uk. Chaplains: Rev. Malcolm Weisman, chaplainsclerkwb@btconnect.com, 0207 414 3229; Yeroham and Hadas: hadas@jchaplaincy.org; yeroham@jchaplaincy.org

### ***ISLAM***

The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies has a prayer room near College at 1-3 George Street (01865 278730). Friday prayer is organised at a central venue by the OU Islamic Society, www.ouisoc.com. Central Oxford Mosque (Urdu & English; Brelwi), Manzil Way, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 1AY (01865 245547).

### ***SIKHISM***

OU Sikh Society: oxford.sikhsoc@gmail.com. The Oxford Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, 69 Cherwell Drive, Marston, Oxford, OX3 0ND, www.oxfordsikhs.com.

### ***BUDDHISM***

OU Buddhist Society: users.ox.ac.uk/~budsoc/. Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, Wolfson College: www.ocbs.org. Oxford Buddhist Centre: 18 Bhandari Close, Cricket Road, OX4 3DT, 01865 777297 (Western). Longchen Foundation: 30 Beechey Avenue, Marston, OX3 0JU www.longchenfoundation.com, 01865 725569. Tibetan: Thrangu House, 42 Magdalen Road, OX4 1RB, 01865 241555. Theravada: 33 Cherwell Drive, Marston, OX3 0NB. 01865 791591, Abbot: Ven. Dr Khammai Dhammasami, oxford\_buddhavihara@yahoo.co.uk, www.oxfordbuddhavihara.org.uk.

### ***HINDUISM***

OU Hindu Society: [users.ox.ac.uk/~ouhs/](http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ouhs/). Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (Vaishnava), 15 Magdalen Street, OX1 3AE, 01865 304300, [www.ochs.org.uk](http://www.ochs.org.uk), or contact Mr Chandra Vadivale, The Old Rectory, Middleton Stoney, OX6 8RZ; 01869 343317 (01865 553128 weekdays), [saivale@aol.com](mailto:saivale@aol.com)

### ***BAHA'I***

Oxford University Baha'i Society: <http://groupspaces.com/OUBahaiSociety/>. Contact Mahsa Khadem (Secretary of the Oxford University Baha'i Society) at [mahsa.khadem@bnc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mahsa.khadem@bnc.ox.ac.uk). For information about local Baha'i community: [www.oxfordbahais.com](http://www.oxfordbahais.com). For information about the Local Spiritual Assembly, contact the Secretary of the Assembly at [Isa.oxford@gmail.com](mailto:Isa.oxford@gmail.com). Online Baha'i library available at [www.oxfordbahais.com/obs/](http://www.oxfordbahais.com/obs/)

### ***HUMANISM & SECULARISM***

Oxford Humanists: [www.humanism.org.uk/meet-up/groups/midlands/oxford](http://www.humanism.org.uk/meet-up/groups/midlands/oxford) . Contact John D. White 01865 891876, [jdwhite@talk21.com](mailto:jdwhite@talk21.com)

### ***ATHEISM***

Oxford Atheist Society: [www.oxfordatheists.org.uk](http://www.oxfordatheists.org.uk). Contact Benjamin Krishna (Secretary of the Oxford Atheist Society) at [benjamin.krishna@ccc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:benjamin.krishna@ccc.ox.ac.uk)

## **9. Registration**

### **Police Registration for Overseas Students**

Students from the relevant foreign countries are usually instructed on their visa or by a stamp in their passport from the Immigration Office to register within 7 days of arrival. These are citizens from the following countries:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, North Korea, Oman, Palestine, Peru, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Yemen

You do not have to register if you come from the EU, EEA, a Commonwealth country or any other country not listed above. If you are required to register with the police then, you should take your passport/travel document, two passport-size photographs and the registration fee. The main police station in Oxford is in St Aldate's. You do not have to make an appointment although you may have to queue.

#### Telephone numbers

Oxford police station: 01865-266000

Thames Valley Headquarters: 01865-846000

## 10. Setting up a Bank Account

### Choosing a Bank

The process of setting up a bank account in Oxford can be difficult for international students, but can be made a lot easier if you know what you need to do in advance. Individual banks provide different facilities for international students. You should bear in mind that it may be necessary to have an account which allows you to issue cheques, since many small sums in Oxford (such as payment for tickets for events in other colleges) are still conveyed by cheque, although major payments (such as University and College fees) can nowadays be effected using electronic funds transfer. The major banks in Oxford are Barclays Bank, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, Nationwide, NatWest, Abbey National (all on or near Cornmarket Street) and Royal Bank of Scotland (on St Giles').

### Setting up the Account

Whatever bank you choose will require at least two pieces of information from you. Firstly, you will need to provide your passport as proof of identity (and your visa if applicable). Secondly, you will need to provide proof of your student status and residence by producing either the original offer letter from St John's College sent to your home address or your Enrolment Certificate (which you can print out after your College registration process is complete). All major banks accept your offer letter as proof of student status and residence, and many also accept your Enrolment Certificate, so **remember not to leave your original offer letter from St John's College at home when you come to Oxford**. If you do not intend to lodge a large amount of money initially you may also need to provide proof of your funding whilst at Oxford (for example in the form of a letter from your funding body confirming that you hold a scholarship).

Finally, you should be aware that the process of setting up your bank account may take several weeks and so you should ensure that you will have enough money to cover this period.

A guide to setting up a bank account can be found at [www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/yourfirstfewweeks](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/new/yourfirstfewweeks) (at point 4).

## 11. Couples' Accommodation and Childcare

St John's College can provide couples' accommodation and accommodation for families on Leckford Road (Hart-Synnot House), Pusey Lane and on Observatory Street. All couples, regardless of marital status or gender, are welcome to apply for this accommodation. Enquiries should be directed to the College's Domestic Office. There does tend to be a waiting list, and priority is given to freshers new to Oxford and then to those couples who apply earlier (over those who apply later), so if you are interested in couples' or families' accommodation, apply to the Domestic Office as soon as possible.

The University is able to offer some couples' housing and you can enquire about details at the University Accommodation Office by telephone (01865 278287), or visit the office at Oxenford House, Magdalen Street. The University Newcomers' Club at The University Club, 11 Mansfield Road runs events for spouses of married students each term, see <http://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/clubs/newcomers>.

The newcomer's guide can be found at [http://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/clubs/newcomers/newcomers\\_guide.pdf](http://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/clubs/newcomers/newcomers_guide.pdf).

Childcare information from the university is available online at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/child/> . The College also has a committee looking into the issue of the provision of childcare services for students, academics and staff at the College. If you would like to be on this committee, just contact the President's Secretary ([ruth.toureau@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ruth.toureau@sjc.ox.ac.uk)).

## 12. Communications

### Post

Your postal address while at College is:

**[Your Name]**  
**St John's College**  
**St Giles'**  
**Oxford OX1 3JP**  
**UNITED KINGDOM**  
**EUROPEAN UNION**

The porters will put all your post in your individual pigeonhole in the Post Room (Front Quadrangle, next to the Porters' Lodge). The Post Room is usually open between 09:00 and 23:00.

If you are living in College-owned accommodation off the main College site **do not use this address as your postal address** as it just means that letters for you will still be sent there years after you've left. As long as you use your College address (above), it will be possible to organise mail-forwarding to a UK address when you leave College. (Mail-forwarding to an international address is not possible.)

The University also operates an **internal post system** (called 'pigeon post', although in fact it is carried by humans on bicycles). Using the internal post system you can send letters to anywhere within the University (including OUSU) free of charge. To use the internal post system, put your letter in the pigeon post box in the lodge. The address needs nothing more than the addressee's name and College or department, i.e. **no stamp is required**. Allow two days for delivery.

In addition to the box for pigeon-post, the Lodge also houses a box for stamped Royal Mail post. Deliveries and collections are made twice each weekday, once on Saturday and not at all on Sunday.

### Telephones

#### Payphones:

There are card-phones in TW1, N10, GQ2, GQ5 and next to the post room, and there also exist payphones in some College accommodation off the main College site. The Post Room telephone is the only one which currently accepts incoming calls.

#### Landlines:

If you wish to install a landline (fixed) telephone in your room, contact Jackie Couling ([domestic.administrator@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:domestic.administrator@sjc.ox.ac.uk)). On the whole, it will be far easier for you to use mobile telephones or Skype rather than landline telephones to make calls.

## Mobile Telephones:

If you already have a mobile telephone with a SIM card from the UK, then you don't need to worry. If, like most students, you are coming from outside the UK, it will be much cheaper if you obtain a UK SIM card than if you continue to use your non-UK SIM card. You can obtain a UK SIM card from one of the telephone shops on Cornmarket Street, such as Mobile World, either on a top-up basis or on a contractual basis, to use with your mobile telephone handset from back home. If your home handset is not compatible with the UK mobile network or you do not have a mobile telephone handset with you, the shops on Cornmarket Street sell these too. Apparently, you should avoid the O2 mobile telephone network, as it is overcrowded and gives poor service.

## Skype:

Since the College provides free broadband internet access to all College accommodation both on and off the main site (with the exception of a few couples' flats), one of the best ways to keep in contact with friends and family is through the internet voice-calling/video conferencing service Skype. You can call mobile telephones and landlines from Skype for a certain fee, but the most valuable element of Skype is that it is free to call from one Skype user to another. This is particularly useful for keeping in contact with family overseas without having to pay for international telephone calls.

Skype can be downloaded onto your computer from [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). Tell your mum back home to download it too and then you can talk to your family as frequently (or infrequently) as you wish, for free.

## Facsimile

The College facsimile (fax) number is **01865 277435**.

## Notice Boards

Notice boards can be a useful source of College information, although the reality is that almost all information is distributed by e-mail these days. There are many notice boards throughout College, but perhaps the most important for graduate students are outside the Porters' Lodge and inside the MCR.

## E-mail

The most important method of communication in the University is e-mail. All students are entitled to a College e-mail address, in the form `firstname.lastname@sjc.ox.ac.uk` (e.g. `thomas.white@sjc.ox.ac.uk`). You will also receive a Faculty e-mail address, in the form `firstname.lastname@facultyabbreviation.ox.ac.uk` (e.g. `thomas.white@law.ox.ac.uk` or `thomas.white@psy.ox.ac.uk`). Your College and Faculty e-mail addresses can be obtained (after you have your Bod Card) through registration on the Oxford University Computing Services (OUCS) website [www.oucs.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk). Also on these pages are instructions for using the University's web-based e-mail service.

Your '@sjc.ox.ac.uk' address is the address that the College will use to contact you, so please ensure you check this account regularly. If it is more convenient for you, you can set up an e-mail forwarding service from your College and Faculty e-mail addresses to your personal e-mail account.

You can look up the College and Faculty e-mail addresses of people in the University at [www.ox.ac.uk/applications/contact\\_search/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/applications/contact_search/)

Before you arrive, I will subscribe you to the MCR e-mail distribution list so that you can receive information about MCR events and issues of importance to graduates at the College (and throughout the University). E-mail is the principal means of communication which the MCR uses. **If for some reason you find that you have not received any MCR-related e-mail from me by 17 October, this will mean that you are not subscribed to the MCR e-mail distribution list and you will need to subscribe yourself by e-mailing [sjc-mcr-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sjc-mcr-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk) from your College e-mail address.** Problems in subscription sometimes occur when your e-mail address does not use the official form of your name (e.g. if you choose to use an adopted Western first name in place of your official name, or you choose to use a nickname rather than your full first name); in any case, it's all pretty easy to sort out once you let me know about it. If you have any questions, please e-mail me at [david.townsend@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:david.townsend@sjc.ox.ac.uk). (The College will send its own e-mails about other things without using this MCR e-mail list.)

## 13. Transport

### Car Parking

Parking space is very much at a premium in Oxford. Residents of St John Street, Pusey Street, and Pusey Lane can apply for 'Residents' Parking Permits'. Collect a form from the Oxfordshire County Council Office at Speedwell House on Speedwell Street (or download the form by following the link from <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/transport/residents-parking.cfm>). The Academic Administrator ([eileen.marston@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:eileen.marston@sjc.ox.ac.uk)) must complete the landlord section of this form and it must then be returned to the County Council. Only two permits are available per house, on a first-come, first-served basis. You may also apply for 25 nights' worth of visitors' permits per six months, which have to be shared with the other residents of the house. For details of the car-parking scheme, check the Oxfordshire County Council website ([www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)).

### Bicycles

Bicycles are an excellent way to get around Oxford and get a little fresh air and exercise at the same time. However, each year there are many cycling accidents in Oxford. You should never cycle without a helmet, as an intact brain is necessary for successful study at this University. By law, **you must use bicycle lights (one at the front, one at the back) when cycling after dusk**. The police do conduct random checks (especially at Magdalen Bridge) and will impose on-the-spot fines if the lighting requirements for your bike are not met. Helmets can be bought fairly cheaply from Domestic Stores, and the Police Auction at the beginning of Michaelmas Term or second-hand shops can be a source of cheap bikes. You should also consider wearing high-visibility reflective leg band when cycling, since you'll need something to keep your trousers out of the bike chain anyway and if you use the old 'tuck 'em into the socks' method you may be mistaken for a don.

Theft and vandalism of bikes in Oxford is widespread. Get a good D-shaped lock (not a chain lock, which is easily cut), and store your bike in the bike sheds wherever possible. Students can use bike sheds by the TW Lodge, in Garden Quadrangle, and behind the gymnasium. You can also park your bike in front of the College on St Giles'. If your bike is valuable it's a good idea to get it insured. Keep a record of the frame number in case it does get stolen. The Porters have a bike registration

scheme for St John's. They will allocate you a number which the hearty fellows at the Estates Office can then stamp on to your bike frame by way of a branding.

The MCR has a **Bicycle Representative** (norman.metzner@sjc.ox.ac.uk) who can provide minor repair services for free and can give you advice about bicycle maintenance and other related issues.

## OUSU Safety 'Bus

A student safety 'bus is provided by OUSU (together with Oxford Brookes Student Union). To use the service simply ring 07714 445050 between 21:00 and 03:00 Monday to Saturdays, and between 21:00 and 01:00 on Sundays. The 'bus will pick you up and deliver you to any destination within the giant ring road around Oxford all for only £1 per trip. The scheme is available to OBSU and OUSU members (which includes you). Priority will always be given to vulnerable people and individuals as the emphasis for the scheme is on safety.

## 14. College Facilities

### Meals

Meals are served in Hall every day in term; payment is made using your Bod Card as a debit card, and you can pay in cash if your card hasn't arrived. The card must have a positive balance. Top it up in the College Bar (open 11:00-14:00 and 18:00-23:00 Monday to Saturday and 19:00-20:30 on Sundays), or in the Bursary (through the door in the passage between North Quadrangle and Thomas White Quadrangle and then up the stairs).

Meal times in the week are:

<b>Breakfast</b>	08:20-09:00
<b>Lunch</b>	12:45-13:30
<b>Dinner</b>	18:15-18:45 (first sitting, or 'Informal Hall')
	19:15 sharp (second sitting, or 'Formal Hall')

While you can just turn up to breakfast and lunch, you must sign up online for dinner (either first or second sitting) beforehand using your Bod Card at <https://hall.sjc.ox.ac.uk/mealbooking/login.php>. (Since this is an https address, you can only use it with a computer connected to the College/University network or one using the Virtual Private Network which assimilates an external computer to the College/University network, but this will only ever be an issue if you are living in an Observatory Street flat in non-College owned property.) **You must sign up before 13:30 on the day in question** and you can book dinners **up to seven days in advance**. Also, for Formal Hall you must turn up *before* 19:15 as the Kitchen ladies will not let you in once the academics ('High Table') have entered and Grace has been said; you must also wear your gown to Formal Hall (for more on gowns, see Part III Section 4: 'Matriculation' below). If you forget to sign up for dinner then the College Bar does food during term time too. Outside of full term, meal times are subject to change; watch for e-mail from the Catering Manager and keep an eye on the notice board outside Hall.

It is traditional to have tea/coffee in the MCR or College Bar after lunch. The MCR coffee machine can do more different types of coffee than the one in the College Bar and it's free.

## Formal Dining Etiquette:

While regular Formal Hall isn't really all that formal in terms of dining etiquette (since you'll just be sitting with your friends), at some point during your time at College, you will be invited to a dinner with the SCR, for instance a Subject Dinner. When dining with the SCR (at so-called 'High Table') there are a few formal dining practices that apply. Here is a guide to a few things that can be a bit baffling if you're not familiar with English dining etiquette:

- When eating a multiple course meal, you may have a lot of different knives and forks laid out next to your plate. The rule is pretty easy to remember: the order of the cutlery follows the order of the courses, going from the cutlery furthest from the plate to that nearest to the plate. My mum always said that it was like a house: you go from the outside, in. The spoon and fork laid crosswise across the top of your plate are for the dessert course.
- If there are little plates with knives and bread rolls on them, *yours is the one on your left*. (This is a bit counter-intuitive, since knives are usually all to your right.)
- The water glass is the one furthest from your plate, often turned upside down.
- If there are multiple wine glasses, the slightly bigger one is for red wine and the slightly smaller one is for white wine – but most of the time on formal occasions there will be waiters to pour your wine anyway.
- While you are seated, your napkin should be placed on your lap. If you need to rise from the table to go to the bathroom or something, leave your napkin on your chair to show the waiters that you will be coming back.
- After the non-sweet courses of the meal (i.e. appetiser, fish and main courses), you will rise from the table and go into another room for a little while so that the waiters can re-lay the table for dessert. *You are supposed to take your napkin with you when you leave the room* because when you return you are expected to sit in a different place so that you can talk to different people during dessert (and you don't want to end up with someone else's napkin).
- During dessert, decanters of fortified wines (port and madeira) and dessert wines (sweet white wines) will be placed on the table. You should pour yourself a glass (if you want one) and then *pass them on to your left*. You can remember which way to pass decanters by remembering that 'port' is the *left* side of the ship. The decanters should remain in continuous circulation around the table throughout the rest of the evening (or until the wine runs out). If you forget to pass on the decanters and you are causing in a blockage in decanter circulation, you may be asked whether you know the Bishop of Norwich (see 'Do you know the Bishop of Norwich?' in Part IV – Glossary below).
- The same principle of passing to the left applies to plates of fruit and cheese passed around at dessert. If a little bowl of water is provided on your dessert plate, you take it off the plate and put it on the table to the left of your plate: you use this to wash soft fruit (in a similar manner to macaques and capuchin monkeys) or, if you've eaten something sticky, to wash your fingers.
- When rising from the table at the very end of the meal, leave your napkin on the table, folded and placed on the left side of your plate.

## Entertainment

Below the bar there is a games room, containing a pool table, table football, a dartboard, video games, and jukebox.

## Laundries

Washing machines and dryers are located within College at N3 basement, TW3, GQ, Middleton Hall, St John Street, Leckford Road and 111 Woodstock Road. The cost is £1 for each load of washing and £1 for each load of drying. All machines require a laundry card, which is available at the Porters' Lodge. Students are issued one card (a £5 deposit is required), and money may be placed on the card via the top-up machine also in the Porters' Lodge (which accepts £5 and £10 notes).

## Sports

Make sure you go to the *College* Freshers' Fair (not the same thing as the University-wide Freshers' Fair) if you want to find out about College sports clubs: there is a wide range of active societies, such as music, bridge, chess, rowing, tennis and cricket, and plenty of others. These teams mostly compete in inter-collegiate competitions, 'Cuppers' and 'League' (see Part IV – Glossary below).

The College has good sports facilities on site. There are two **squash courts** under the MCR that can be booked by any member free of charge (booking sheets at the court). You can also use the table-tennis table in 14 St Giles' (keys and equipment are available from the porters). There is a **small gymnasium** in the courtyard behind the Lamb & Flag pub and a **large gymnasium** in the basement of Kendrew Quadrangle. Entrance to this courtyard is through the black gate in Lamb and Flag Passage (use your electronic key fob). Eight rowing machines are underneath TW3. The St Giles House garden lawn can be used for croquet; entrance is through the gate on the far side of the gymnasium and then the door at the back of lawn – again using your key fob. There is a table tennis (ping pong) table in 15 St Giles' (accessed from the courtyard behind the Lamb & Flag pub, as for the gymnasium) for which equipment is available from the Porters.

The **College sports ground** is shared with St Anne's College. There is a football, hockey and cricket pitch. There are also nine tennis courts, hard and grass surfaces, and a netball court. The pavilion has changing rooms, showers, toilets and bar. You get fit just walking there often, since it's at 211 Woodstock Road, about 20 minutes on foot up Woodstock Road, just past Frenchay Road, opposite Lathbury Road. For more information on use of the grounds you will need to contact the College Groundsman; the Porters will have his number.

The members of St John's MCR take part in a wide range of sports, from those playing at University level to people taking up a sport for the first time. The MCR has its own men's football team, but for most College sports, undergraduates, graduates, and occasionally Fellows compete together.

There is an MCR Sports Cupboard outside the upstairs TV room in the MCR that contains footballs, rugby balls, squash rackets and more. The porters have a key, just make sure to return everything promptly after use.

Visits to international football and cricket matches are sometimes organised. For any further information please contact the **MCR Sports Officer** ([samuel.stranks@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:samuel.stranks@sjc.ox.ac.uk)).

## Recycling

The College has some central recycling points which are detailed on one of the notices stuck on the back of the door in your room. In general, recyclable material (e.g. aluminium cans, glass bottles, plastics, cardboard) can be brought to the black door in North Quadrangle marked 'Recycling Facilities' and put in the appropriate bins. Computer rooms in College are also provided with paper recycling bins.

If you live in College accommodation away from the main site, there will be recycling facilities somewhere in your house, probably dark green and dark blue recycling tubs out the back of the house.

Many student rooms, both on the main site and away from it, have an individual light green recycling tub for you to store your day-to-day recyclable material which you can then take to the appropriate recycling collection point (mentioned in the previous paragraphs) when it gets full. Scouts don't empty these recycling tubs for you, only the general rubbish bin.

## Safe Disposal of Needles and Sharp Items

Needles and other sharp items must not be disposed of in general rubbish bins as this exposes scouts and other rubbish collectors to the risk of injury and infection. If you use needles, for example in diabetic injections, you must dispose of them (and other such sharp items) in little yellow plastic boxes which can be obtained free of charge from the College physicians at the 19 Beaumont Street Practice. When the little bin is full, you just take it back to 19 Beaumont Street and exchange it for an empty one.

## 15. College Officials

As explained at the beginning of the guide, the **Porters** are a versatile bunch: they issue keys, sell laundry cards, but they don't carry bags. They are in charge of security and general order in College. Be nice to them because they can make your life difficult if they want to!

**Scouts** (cleaners) come into most rooms in College every weekday morning, and are responsible for day-to-day cleaning of rooms and staircases. Needless to say, if you make a big mess by party or accident it's your responsibility to clean up. If you don't want your scout to come in, put the 'Please Do Not Disturb' sign on the outside of your door.

Irrespective of who your Academic Supervisor is in your Department, you will also have a College Advisor in your subject who keeps track of your Oxford career informally on behalf of the College. He or she may or may not invite you in for a short meeting every term; there are no defined guidelines for this job. You should meet your advisor at the New Graduates' Dinner at the start of Michaelmas Term and ask them to invite you to High Table at Dinner some time, for which they are given an annual allowance.

**College Offices** accessed from **N7** along the first floor corridor. Some important people are:

**Caroline Lordan** is the Secretary to the Tutor for Graduates ([graduate.office@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:graduate.office@sjc.ox.ac.uk)), and she will be able to help with many questions relating to graduate affairs. She is also involved in organizing lecture suppers, dinners, and drinks parties with the Tutor for Graduates. General Hours are 09:30-12:30 and 14:00-16:30.

The **Tutor for Graduates** at St John's College is **Prof. Simon Whittaker**. He is responsible for representing and advancing graduates' interests in College. He may be contacted via his Secretary (Caroline Lordan, above).

**Nadine Hainge** and **Mags Robertson** (domestic.secretary@sjc.ox.ac.uk) and **Jackie Couling** (domestic.administrator@sjc.ox.ac.uk) run the Domestic Office, who will be sympathetic to *genuine* problems with your room. If there are no official guest rooms available at the Porters' Lodge, they might be able to offer you a spare student room.

**Eileen Marston** is the Academic Administrator (academic.administrator@sjc.ox.ac.uk), who will be very helpful in sorting out general academic queries. Her office is open 09:00-13:00 and 14:00-17:00 on weekdays.

**Sue Godfrey** (sue.godfrey@sjc.ox.ac.uk) is the person to whom you pay your 'battels', and from whom you collect your grant cheques. Her office is open 09:00-14:00 on weekdays.

**Sally Layburn** (finance.bursar@sjc.ox.ac.uk) is the Finance Bursar. See her if you have US Federal Loan Forms, or other grant/scholarship forms not normally dealt with (i.e. those from inside the UK or EU).

**Ian Stokes** is the Estates Manager, and the person to see if you need help with major problems such as the security or heating in your room, although many of these issues can be handled directly by **Louise Anderson-Clemence**, the Establishment Secretary. Both Ian and Louise may be contacted through the general Estates Office e-mail address works@sjc.ox.ac.uk. The College electrician lives at the bottom of N3. Domestic Stores in the passage between North Quadrangle and Thomas Quadrangle can supply you with essentials such as light bulbs or toilet rolls.

**Paul Ashman** (paul.ashman@sjc.ox.ac.uk) is the wine steward and Buttery Manager for St John's College. The College has a number of particularly large and well-regarded wine cellars.

**Nicholas Purcell** (nicholas.purcell@sjc.ox.ac.uk) is the Keeper of the Groves. He is the one who can give permission for any special use of the gardens or grounds in College.

**Dr Martin Stokes** (senior.dean@sjc.ox.ac.uk), the Senior Dean, is responsible for student welfare and discipline. He is a key person to know and is quite affable and sympathetic to students' needs. See him if you need advice or help.

**Joanna Howe** and **Luke Pike** (junior.dean@sjc.ox.ac.uk) are the Junior Deans. In addition to room bookings, the Junior Deans are involved in maintaining discipline in College as well as providing pastoral (welfare) support. They are available during office hours and by appointment.

**Ruth Ogden** (ruth.ogden@sjc.ox.ac.uk) is the Library Administrator at St John's. She'll give you the details about the Library.

**President Dr Sir Michael Scholar** (president@sjc.ox.ac.uk) is the head of St John's College. The President holds regular lecture suppers and other gatherings for graduate students and also holds occasional concerts and other artistic events. These events are a great chance to check out the President's Lodgings and some of the St John's College art collection.

## 16. Finances

### Tuition

Both the College and the University charge fees. For some students this is all dealt with directly by a grant-funding body, but for most of us we need to pay these fees ourselves (whether or not we receive a scholarship to cover the sum).

### ‘Battels’

‘Battels’ are the means by which all fees are collected from you each term, and they essentially mean your ‘College bill’. Battels cover the University tuition fee, the College fee, accommodation charges (room rent) and various other charges that you have put on your battels (such as photocopying and MCR Guest Dinners.) These can be paid either by electronic funds transfer directly to the College’s bank account (details of which are available from [sue.godfrey@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sue.godfrey@sjc.ox.ac.uk)) or, if you prefer, by cheque in Room 10 of the Bursary (accessed from the passage between North Quadrangle and Thomas White Quadrangle). Whatever payment method you choose, you should effect payment by the date specified in your battels. Interest might be added to unpaid battles, but **if you are having problems speak to the Finance Bursar** ([finance.bursar@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:finance.bursar@sjc.ox.ac.uk)).

A couple of common questions about battels are ‘What is the General Facilities charge for?’ and ‘What is this JCR Overseas Scholar Levy?’. The General Facilities charge is an equal sum paid by all students in College accommodation to provide for general services that can’t be charged individually, such as the provision of the College’s private security (Porters, CCTV, etc.) and the running of the College gymnasias. The JCR Overseas Scholar Levy is an equal sum paid by all students in the JCR (undergraduates) and MCR (graduates), half of which is passed on to the JCR and MCR for distribution as charitable grants (see ‘MCR Meetings’ below) and the other half of which is used to support graduate scholarships.

### Grants

The College makes four types of grant to graduate students.

#### Academic Grants:

St John’s makes an academic grant for graduates that can be used to help meet the cost of academic materials. Of qualifying academic expenditure by graduate students, the College will give you a rebate on of up to **£313 each year**. The Academic Grant Form is available from the College website. The rebate works by you buying the things you need, presenting the receipts and the Academic Grant Form to your College Advisor, then returning the approved receipts and Academic Grant Form to the Bursary by a specified date, and then the College giving you a credit on your next battels. Things which can qualify for the academic grant are books, computer software (but not a computer itself!), external hard drives and other equipment needed as part of your studies (such as stethoscopes for medical students). The important thing is that **you need to have receipts** as evidence that you bought these things within the current academic year (technically, since the last academic grant date) or in contemplation of coming to study at Oxford. At the moment, there is only one grant date per year and this means that you must submit all your receipts to your College Advisor so that he or she can approve them in time for you to **return these approved receipts to the Bursary during 8th Week of Hilary Term**. This

will, it is hoped, change in the near future so that there will be one academic grant opportunity in each term. Nevertheless, **start collecting your receipts now.**

### Special Grants:

The College also makes special grants and is willing to consider making a grant in each year for which a graduate is paying fees to the College. The total amount payable does not normally exceed £500. These grants are normally for study abroad and for attendance at conferences. You must be presenting a poster or paper at a conference, or doing some other academic-related work in order to qualify for a special grant. Special grants have deadlines corresponding to the term-time meetings of the Educational Policy Committee. College accepts that, particularly over the summer vacation, opportunities may arise which mean that you cannot make the deadline – so applications can be made to the Special Grants Committee at any point during the summer vacation *if you could not have made the pre-summer deadline*. Keep in mind that this support is not granted automatically, though reasonable applications will normally be approved by the Committee. Retrospective applications will not be considered. For further information, please see the Academic Administrator, Eileen Marston. Application forms can be downloaded from the College website.

### Hardship Funds:

Both the College and the University have hardship funds which are available under very strict conditions, namely unforeseeable hardship. This means that circumstances which obtained at the beginning of your course of study or which could reasonably have been foreseen at that time will not be covered by the Hardship Grant, but genuinely unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. a significant change in the currency exchange rate) may be covered by this grant. The College Hardship Grant is administered by the Senior Dean, Dr Martin Stokes. Please contact him or look at the College website for details. Applications are handled with total confidentiality.

### Blues Expenses:

Grants are available to help cover the costs of competing in a sport for the **University** (i.e. being a University Blue or Half-Blue). For each qualifying student, the College pays 100% of £0-£250 and 50% £250-£450 (giving a maximum grant of £350) to cover the costs incurred by students through membership of University representative team squads. Claims are made on 'blues squad' forms available in the College Office, which should be accompanied by receipts, countersigned by an official of the relevant University sports club, and submitted to the College Sports Officer, Prof. Zoltán Molnár (zoltan.molnar@sjc.ox.ac.uk).

## **17. Decisions and Policy Making**

### **Governing Body**

The supreme authority in College is the Governing Body, which comprises the most senior Fellows of the College. The Governing Body is effectively the Board of Trustees of the College, administering the College as an educational (and religious) charity. Meetings of Governing Body occur at least twice each term. The decisions of Governing Body are guided by the recommendations made by various committees. The MCR is represented at Governing Body by the MCR President and the MCR Secretary (see Section II).

### **Joint Council**

Joint Council is often the first step in presenting the College with an issue. Members of the MCR and JCR Committees and individual students who have a particular case which they wish to make are welcome to attend and a nice lunch is provided by the College. The President, Senior Dean, Domestic Bursar, Tutor for Graduates and other senior members of College often attend. Topics discussed range from day-to-day issues, such as opening times of the gardens and bop guidelines, to more serious questions. If you do wish to come so that you can raise an issue, please e-mail me ([david.townsend@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:david.townsend@sjc.ox.ac.uk)) so that I can let the catering staff know how many people will be there.

### **College Committees**

St John's College has an endowment of over £300 million and the total number of students, academic staff and support staff is in excess of 1000 people. With all this to organise, there is a committee for just about everything, and most of them meet once or twice a term. The MCR is usually represented on these committees by the MCR President and the MCR Secretary, although sometimes the MCR President may depute another officer of the MCR to attend in his or her place where the matters to be discussed come within that MCR officer's remit. The committees at which the MCR is represented are:

- Educational Policy Committee
- Domestic Committee
- Rents & Charges Committee
- Garden Committee
- Equality Committee
- Web Committee
- Decanal Committee
- Music & Visual Arts Committee
- Library Committee

## II. THE MCR

### 1. What is the MCR?

The MCR (Middle Common Room) is the graduate student association at St John's College. It includes students reading for various postgraduate degrees (BCL, M.St, M.Phil, D.Phil etc.) and also those doing second undergraduate degrees (BA). MCR members are still 'junior members' of the College and University, and are therefore also members of the JCR (Junior Common Room, which includes the College's undergraduates). Every MCR member's electronic key should be programmed to give access to the MCR building. If yours does not work for some reason, the Estates Manager will be able to fix this for you. You are welcome to invite up to three non-MCR members as your guests to the MCR. Further details on the MCR may be found online in the official SJC MCR website ([mcr.sjc.ox.ac.uk](http://mcr.sjc.ox.ac.uk)).

### 2. MCR Building/Facilities

The MCR building is located between Thomas White Quadrangle and Garden Quadrangle. Come to the building for the latest information about events taking place, or to meet people. Job and conference information is also posted on the noticeboards.

**No smoking** is permitted inside the MCR building nor on the balconies; you can only smoke outside the MCR on the ground level. Please clear up your butts safely after you.

Here is a rundown of the plan of the MCR building:

The Entry Way: hang up your coat, buy something from the vending machine, recycle aluminium cans, the possibilities are inexhaustible. When you've exhausted these possibilities, ascend the stairs to the First Floor. **Please use the lift only if you are unable to use the stairs.**

First Floor: The large central room is the **Main Room**. (There have been attempts in the past to call it 'The Tawny Room', after the tawny owl which held up construction of the building in the 1990s by roosting here and is now commemorated by a statue on the spot, but the name never passed into common use.) The Main Room is where we chillax, hold MCR General Meetings, put on Desserts Nights, host bops and do many other things. The **TV Room** is off to the left side of the Main Room and is equipped with video and DVD players, Sky Digital satellite television and a large widescreen TV. If you cross from the TV Room to the right side of the Main Room, you're going straight to the **Pool Room**. Through the passage past the **bathrooms** (one with disabled access) there is a small **kitchen** to make tea or coffee (there are mugs provided). Please keep it tidy and clean the mugs that you use. The **Balconies** are accessible from the Main Room and TV room.

Second Floor: On the left hand side of the second floor is a **Video Game Room** with a TV and a PlayStation 3 and Wii which are stored in the cupboard (key for the 'Wii Cupboard' available from the Porters' Lodge; if they say they don't know what it is, tell them it has a pink tag). On the right hand side of the second floor is the **MCR Computer Room**, with a Mac, PCs, a printer, a scanner, full internet, and substantial software ranging from word-processing to databases; you will need your electronic key fob to gain entry. Supplies of paper and toner are currently free (but please use them moderately) and are kept in the small cupboard outside the Computer Room. Spent toner cartridges should be deposited outside Domestic Stores in the passage between Thomas White Quadrangle and North Quadrangle for recycling. Between the Video Game Room and the Computer Room is a small sitting area lit by skylights (which can be opened using the 'Open-Close' button near the photocopier). When using the photocopier, please follow the instructions with regard to logging your use.

## Computing Services:

Floppy disks and other accessories can be bought from Domestic Stores, OUSU and OUCS (Universities Computing Service) at 13 Banbury Road. To get an Oxford e-mail account go to the OUCS offices or fill in an on-line application by going to [webmail.ox.ac.uk](mailto:webmail.ox.ac.uk).

The **MCR Computing Officer** is Ian Cutress ([ian.cutress@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ian.cutress@sjc.ox.ac.uk)), and he can provide information about updating computers in the MCR Computing Room and about the MCR website. He also runs some video gaming events!

Other sources of information on computing matters are St John's College's Computing Officers - **Matt Jennings** ([matt.jennings@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:matt.jennings@sjc.ox.ac.uk)) and **Neil McIntosh** ([neil.mcintosh@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:neil.mcintosh@sjc.ox.ac.uk)). Their office is located in N8. Network connections are available in most rooms in College and in College-owned accommodation off the main College site (but not Observatory Street); contact Matt or Neil for more details on how to hook up your own computer to the network. All students will need a cable to connect their computer to the plug in the wall, and if you don't have one these can be loaned to you by Matt and Neil for free. Currently, students living in 5 Pusey Street will need an Ethernet over power adapter to connect to the College network, and these can be obtained from Matt and Neil for a deposit of £20 which is returned to you when you return the device to Matt and Neil (in working order, of course).

Furthermore, **three other computer rooms** (in addition to the MCR Computer Room) can be used; the JCR computer room in N11; the Rural Economy computer room (near the Parks Road exit) and the basement of 15 St Giles, access through the courtyard out the back of the Lamb & Flag pub.

To connect to the College/University internet network, you must use Anti-virus software; if you don't already have it, you can download it free from OUCS (see the St John's website for further information under Current Students→Computing). You must not eat, drink or smoke in any of the computer rooms. Please also be considerate of others and refrain from talking too much while others are working.

### **3. Accommodation**

With the opening of Kendrew Quadrangle, St John's College is now in a position to offer to graduate students College-provided accommodation for effectively the whole of their degrees. Your accommodation in your first year (i.e. 2010-2011) is decided by College, but in all subsequent years single rooms are allotted by the MCR in a room ballot operating under rules which aim to even out the quality of rooms which students have in throughout their time at the College. A copy of the MCR Room Ballot Rules can be found on the MCR website ([mcr.sjc.ox.ac.uk](http://mcr.sjc.ox.ac.uk)), and it is worth understanding how this will apply to you in future years. The most important thing, if you require College accommodation in the next year, is to check your e-mail regularly towards the end of Hilary Term and the beginning of Trinity Term and reply to any e-mails regarding the ballot **promptly**. This assists the MCR Secretary whose duty it is to organise the MCR room ballot. Information on living outside College can be obtained from the University Housing Office on Friar's Entry (just off Magdalen Street beside the Odeon cinema).

As indicated in Part I Section 11: 'Couples' Accommodation and Childcare' above, couples' and families' accommodation is administered by the College's Domestic Office, not by the MCR, and you should **register your interest with them as soon as possible**.

## 4. MCR Committee

The MCR Committee is elected midway through Hilary term in February. Anyone interested in assuming office in the MCR, or with any queries or suggestions, should feel free to contact any member of the MCR Committee. E-mail them using the format **firstname.lastname@sjc.ox.ac.uk**.

Office	Occupant	Responsibilities
President	David J. Townsend	Chairs MCR meetings, represents the MCR to the College and the University
Secretary	Matthew McCormick	Organises MCR meetings and the room ballot; assists the President
Treasurer	Ian Ashpole	Manages the MCR budget and authorises MCR expenditure
Social Secretaries	Michael Klaput, Jonah Rosenberg & Namrata Turaga	Organise exchange dinners, bops and other social events
Victuallers	Maeve Eason-Hubbard, Micha Lazarus & Julia Tejblum	Organise MCR Guest Dinners
Epicure	Anatole Oudaille- Diethardt	Organises Desserts Night
Academic Affairs Officer	Kai Nie	Manages relations with College about scholarships, etc.
Welfare Officers	Tarun Gupta & Anisha Ramessur	Provide health and welfare advice
Women's Officer	<i>Vacant – please apply</i>	Promotes women's interests in College; organises social events for women
OUSU/NUS Officer	Stuart Broadfoot	Manages relations with OUSU and related bodies
Computing & Web Officer	Ian Cutress	Manages MCR computers and website
Returning Officer	Adam Povey	Runs MCR elections
Culture & Media Officers	Maria Friedmannova & Barbara Sladek	Conduct cultural excursions, organise film nights, manage magazine subscriptions, etc.
Environment & Ethics Officer	<i>Vacant – please apply</i>	Promotes sustainability initiatives in College
Charities Officer	Ornella Cominetti- Allende	Organises MCR charitable donations
Sports Officer	Samuel Stranks	Organises MCR sports events
Electronic Equipment Representative	Rahul Prabhakar	Manages the MCR's TV, video game systems and sound system
Bicycle Representative	Norman Metzner	Provides bicycle tune-up and advice

Freshers' Week Representative	Jonah Rosenberg	Chairs the Freshers' Week Sub-Committee which organises events for fresher graduate students from early October
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## 5. Social Life

You will receive an **MCR Term Card** listing each term's events. However, other events will be organised nearer the time. Please watch out for posters on the notice boards in the MCR and in the weekly MCR e-mails.

Bop: The Oxford word for 'a party held in a college'. Apart from the obvious dancing, they usually have some theme for the decorations and people often come dressed according to the theme. The MCR holds two or three bops each term, and at least one bop every year is run to donate all profits to a charity selected by the MCR. If you're interested in being a DJ or helping behind the bar then contact the MCR Social Secretaries.

Desserts Night: Chocolate, biscuits, cheese, fruit, and port or juice in plentiful amount are served free of charge in the MCR building. MCR members can bring up to two guests each.

Cultural Excursion: Day trips out walking, cycling or visiting interesting sights; evenings out to the cinema, theatre, opera, and concerts. Please talk to an MCR Committee member if you are interested in organizing an excursion.

Exchange Dinner: A swap of Formal Hall dinners with another college. They host us one week and then we host them another week. Places are usually limited so sign-up quickly when they are announced by the Social Secretaries

Garden Parties: A (hopefully) sunny afternoon in Trinity Term spent drinking Pimm's with your friends in the St John's College gardens.

Guest Dinner: Black-tie, formal dinners held twice a term, usually on Fridays of 4th and 8th week. You can invite a guest or guests if you like, but even if you don't have a guest you should come along anyway for a fun dinner with your College friends. Pre-dinner drinks start the evening, and post-dinner entertainment finishes it. The cost usually varies from about £20 to £25 per person.

Graduate Lecture Supper: A 45 minute lecture on the research you've been doing. There is a free dinner with wine afterwards. Contact Caroline Lordan (graduate.office@sjc.ox.ac.uk) for more information.

International Lecture Supper: The same as the Graduate Lecture Supper, but instead of the presentation being on someone's research, it's on their home country. Free dinner follows. **The first one this academic year is on Australia, presented by me!**

Graduate Table: Held every Tuesday at Formal Hall, there is reserved seating for graduates so we can all sit together. Also, wine is provided at the MCR's expense.

Subject Dinners: Twice a year, the Tutor for Graduates will host a dinner for those in their 2nd and 3rd year at SJC. Dinner parties are grouped by subject of study.

Wine Tastings: At least once a term the MCR and the SCR have a joint wine tasting, with very nice wines (directly from the wine cellar of St John's) and a selection of cheeses chosen by the MCR

Epicure. These are very popular, so sign up as soon as you see the advertisement come around by e-mail from the Culture & Media Officers.

## 6. Attendance at College Events

Some of the following will seem a little odd to those who come from more relaxed cultures than that of Oxford, but you will find that things run a lot more smoothly if you obey a few rules of etiquette that apply in polite Oxonian society.

You will see on many invitations you receive for College events the letters ‘RSVP’. This stands for ‘répondez, s’il vous plaît,’ which is French for ‘reply, if you please.’ Despite this courteous language, however, it is expected that you will reply, whether you wish to attend the event or not, so **in practice RSVP means ‘a reply is obligatory’**.

If you receive an invitation to a College event that has either RSVP or ‘please reply’ on it, then **you should reply in good time, even if you are unable to attend**. Organisers of events cannot always accommodate those who have not replied in time or at all. If you reply to say you can attend an event, but find nearer to the time you are no longer able attend, please also notify the organiser as soon as possible they know. The one thing that College event organisers *hate* is people saying that they will be attending an event and then just not turning up: they don’t mind it if you can’t attend, as long as you *tell them that*. To put it in practical terms, unexplained no-shows at College events last year caused the wastage of hundreds of poured but unconsumed glasses of champagne: that would have been enough to supply a working Briton for decades, or his Parliamentary representative for days.

It is also important to tell the organiser when you reply whether you have any special dietary requirements. The College Kitchen staff can cater for just about any dietary restrictions, but you have to tell them in advance of the meal what these dietary restrictions are. Quite understandably, they get a bit annoyed if you’re sitting down to dinner and only then say, ‘Oh, by the way, I’m vegan’.

Lastly, it is quite important to match your dress to the occasion. While Oxford isn’t as quaint as television shows would have you believe, the concentration of quaintness per square kilometre in Oxford is significantly higher than in most other areas on the Earth’s crust, and this is evident in the relative formality of dress codes at social occasions. The following is a simple guide to help you, but your best bet is to double-check with the Porters, College, Department, or, easiest of all, fellow students who have been here a while. (For more advice on funny formal clothes that no one wears anymore, contact your grandma.)

Matriculation – ‘Subfusc’ (see Part III Section 4: ‘Matriculation’ below)

New Graduates’ Dinner – ‘Smart dress’, which means:

Men – Trousers, long-sleeved collared shirt and tie, or  
Suit and tie

Women – Skirt and blouse, or  
Dress, or  
Cocktail dress

Subject Dinner – ‘Smart but informal dress’, which means:

Men – Trousers, long-sleeved collared shirt and tie, or  
Suit and tie  
Ladies – Trousers and smart top, or  
Skirt and smart top, or  
Dress

MCR Guest Dinner – ‘Formal’, which means:

Men – Black Tie, which is a dinner suit (a.k.a. tuxedo), white shirt, black bow tie  
Women – Evening dress, or  
Cocktail dress

Lecture Supper – ‘Informal’, which means there is no special dress code so you can just wear anything

Drinks Party hosted by Tutor for Graduates – ‘Casual/Smart’ which means:

Men – Trousers and collared shirt, but no need for a tie  
Women – Trousers and top, or  
Skirt and top

Collections – Gown (what you wear underneath doesn’t matter)

Viva Voce Examination – Dress code varies, so check with your Academic Supervisor and Departmental Office

All Other Examinations – ‘Subfusc’ (see Part III Section 4: ‘Matriculation’ below)

MCR Events – the majority are totally informal and casual, so there is no dress code at all. Bops may have themes and fancy dress is encouraged (this is not a joke, many Oxford students actually do go to a lot of effort to look like mermaids for an ‘Enchantment Under the Sea’ bop). Some occasions do warrant ‘smart’ attire, such as Exchange Dinners when we are attending other colleges or having guests at our own College, as this is seen as a mark of respect to the college we are visiting or to the guests we invite to our College. Again, check with your peers and the MCR Committee if you have any questions.

## **7. MCR Meetings**

MCR General Meetings are held at least twice each term. These meetings are an excellent way to find out what has been happening in College and what will be happening in the future, since the MCR Officers report on committee meetings attended and policy initiatives pursued. Also, there’s free pizza and sundry other foodstuffs.

If you have any suggestions for things that the MCR should do (cultural trips, etc.) or have a problem with something in College or the University, then this is an ideal opportunity to have your say, although you can of course raise things directly with MCR Officers at any time by e-mailing them. At certain times of the year, serious financial issues are discussed, such as the allocation of funds under the next year’s MCR budget and the progress on Rents & Charges negotiations with College, both in Trinity Term. Financial motions may be submitted to suggest the spending of some of the MCR's

budget, e.g. the purchase of a large widescreen TV (which was a successful motion, since we now have such a TV).

All graduate students at the College are encouraged to come along, as the meetings are a great opportunity to get involved and understand how College works and how your MCR works for you. You may submit a motion at such an MCR General Meeting for the expenditure of MCR funds, the support of a particular charity, or the alteration of the MCR's Constitution. Rules and examples of motions may be found online ([mcr.sjc.ox.ac.uk/committee/motions/](http://mcr.sjc.ox.ac.uk/committee/motions/)) and if you need help drafting a motion you can e-mail the MCR Secretary ([matthew.mccormick@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.mccormick@sjc.ox.ac.uk)).

## **8. Rents and Charges**

Historically, rents in College were low but diminishing financial support from the British government for Oxford colleges has increased pressure on the College to raise rents so as to balance its budget. With the deflation in the property market in the last couple of year, College rents may indeed be higher than apply in the private sector in places such as Headington or Cowley. The MCR (with our brethren in the JCR) have Rents & Charges discussions with the College every year in Trinity Term; these meetings are a good opportunity to air our opinions on the affordability of College life, as College always endeavours to adopt a Rents & Charges plan for the coming year that has the support of the student body.

## **9. JCR**

The Junior Common Room (JCR) represents all undergraduates in St John's. All graduates are also members of the JCR and may attend JCR events, JCR General Meetings and use the JCR facilities (computer rooms, bar extension, reading room, TV room, etc.). However, out of courtesy, graduates tend not to use such facilities when they can just as easily use similar facilities reserved exclusively for graduates' use (e.g. the MCR Computer Room), since JCR facilities do have to serve about 400 undergraduates.

### III. THE UNIVERSITY

The University Offices are in Wellington Square which is located at the north end of St John Street (also accessible from Little Clarendon Street).

#### 1. What is it? Where is it?

A favourite tourist-question is 'Where is the University?' A favourite response from students reading Greats is 'Si universitatem requiris, circumspice'. To put it in English, *the University is all around you*. Unlike almost all other universities in the world, the University of Oxford doesn't have a defined campus, since University buildings are scattered throughout the city. Colleges are also part of the University in the broader sense of 'the Collegiate University'. The University of Oxford has what is known as a 'federal structure', meaning that, like Switzerland, the USA, Canada, Australia, Pakistan, India, Micronesia, Ethiopia and St Kitts and Nevis (among others), it is made up of a number of different units (colleges) which retain their own distinct identity and areas of authority, but which make certain decisions as a combined body (the University). It is the University (as opposed to the colleges) which owns and runs Departments and Faculties.

#### The 'United Colleges of Oxford'

Since I'm sure we all watched the 2008 US election campaign with fascination, I shall take the liberty of describing the Collegiate University of Oxford in terms of the federal system of the United States of America. Imagine that the colleges are like the individual States: Christ Church is Massachusetts, Brasenose is Texas, St Anne's is Wyoming, Keble is New Mexico, St John's is California, and so on. Each State regulates most of what goes on in its own State. However, some matters are of common interest to all the States, so these are regulated by the Federal government. The University is like the Federal government, and Wellington Square is like the District of Columbia. Like the Federal government, the University has Departments (and Faculties) which it runs for itself, but the people who staff them are, of course, also residents of one State or another, and the actions of State governments have an impact on the way that the Federal government functions. Thus, just as there is an interconnexion between the Federal government and the State governments in the USA, so is there an interconnexion between the University and the Colleges within the Collegiate University of Oxford.

If you want to know what a 'Permanent Private Hall' is, think of it as the US Virgin Islands.

#### Free Movement of Students:

One thing to remember is that members of the University (such as you) are allowed access to all colleges *for free*. This means that if you want to go into Christ Church or Magdalen you can waltz up, bold as brass, and go in without paying a penny. Also, at Christ Church, you don't have to use the tourist gate. The Botanical Gardens (opposite Magdalen on High Street) are also free. If a Porter or guard challenges you, politely state that you are a member of the University and show your Bod Card. (They don't mean to be inhospitable to students, it's just that they have to deal with hundreds of tourists every day, many of whom might be trying to sneak in without paying.)

## 2. Term Dates

Michaelmas Term 2010	10 October to 4 December
Hilary Term 2011	16 January to 12 March
Trinity Term 2011	1 May to 25 June

Visit [http://www.ox.ac.uk/about\\_the\\_university/university\\_year/dates\\_of\\_term.html](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/university_year/dates_of_term.html) to see Term dates until 2015. Note: this is not necessary if you interpret the Meso-American Long Form calendar as indicating that the world will end in 2012.

## 3. Your Bod Card (i.e. University Card)

### Bod Card

The College will issue you a University Card, known as a ‘Bod Card’ as it grants you access to the University’s Bodleian Library. Your Bod Card is your principal means of identifying yourself within the University. It is also proof of your status as a member of the University of Oxford and of your College (in this instance St John’s College). Without your Bod Card, you cannot gain access to the Bodleian Library, and it must be produced whenever you enter any library building. You also need it to book dinners in the College Hall online (<https://hall.sjc.ox.ac.uk/mealbooking/login.php>) and to pay for lunch in Hall. Your Department may use it to give you access to certain buildings. OUCS needs it to register you for anything.

If you lose your card it can be replaced (contact [college.office@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:college.office@sjc.ox.ac.uk)). It will cost you £10 for a replacement, unless it was stolen, in which case the replacement fee will be waived on production of a police report which proves that you reported the theft to the police.

### The Bodleian Library

You will get an extensive information package about the Bodleian Library (‘the Bod’) and the University libraries. In brief, the whole Bodleian Library is a collection of buildings and sites, housing over 5 million books. This is not surprising, since under UK law the Bodleian is a legal deposit library and can request a free copy every single book published in the UK. Due to its status as a legal deposit library **the Bodleian is not a lending library**: books can’t be taken from the reading rooms because if that were so, someone could abscond with a book and then the Bodleian’s collection would be incomplete. The main buildings (including the Central Building) are located at the corner of Parks Road and Broad Street, next to the Sheldonian Theatre. The idiosyncrasies of finding and ordering a book in the Bodleian are about as numerous as the books themselves, so it is perhaps best to take an introductory tour as soon as you can. Each library building has different tour dates; places are limited, so sign up at the front desk in the Central Building. Also, each library building has different hours (usually in term 09:00-22:00 during the week and 09:00-13:00 on Saturday). A good guide, titled ‘How to Use the Bodleian Library’, can be picked up free of charge at the University Admissions Office in Wellington Square. Alternatively, get advice from somebody here who’s already mastered the system.

## 4. Matriculation

Matriculation is the formal induction ceremony to the University. When you matriculate, you are formally put on the roll of students of the University (the Latin name for which is a *matricula*). You are not a member of the University until you have matriculated, so attendance is mandatory, unless you are a visiting student or you have already matriculated into the University of Oxford (or the University of Cambridge or Trinity College, Dublin). This year's ceremony will be on Saturday, 16 October 2010. You will need to wear full academic dress (i.e. subfusc). If you cannot attend, you must inform the Academic Administrator, Eileen Martson ([academic.administrator@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:academic.administrator@sjc.ox.ac.uk)), who will arrange for you to attend another ceremony later in term. If in doubt, consult the Academic Administrator. A photograph of all the College freshers is taken after matriculation in Front Quadrangle. **All freshers, even those who did not matriculate that morning, may attend this photography session** provided that they appear in subfusc.

### Academic Dress ('Subfusc')

Academic Dress is usually called 'subfusc', from the Latin *subfuscus*, meaning 'darkish', which is how this outfit looks. It is worn for examinations and formal academic occasions such as matriculation and graduation. As for gowns, you have two options: you can either wear the gown from your previous degree *regardless of which University you attended*, or you can wear the Oxford Graduate Student's Gown, which has streamers on the side.

#### Academic Dress for Men:

Dark suit, and  
White shirt, and  
White bow tie, and  
Black socks, and  
Black shoes, and  
Square cap (mortarboard), and  
Gown

#### Academic Dress for Women:

White blouse, and  
Black ribbon, and  
Dark skirt with black tights, or dark trousers, and  
Black shoes, and  
Square cap (mortarboard) or soft cap, and  
Gown  
*Dark coat optional*

For Formal Hall and Collections you should just wear a gown and your normal (tidy) clothes. Additionally, for Collections you should carry your mortarboard.

You can get fitted out in subfusc at **Castell's on Broad Street, Shepherd & Woodward on High Street, Ede & Ravenscroft on High Street** or **Walters on Turl Street**. Ask for student concessions. You might also borrow a white bow tie/black ribbon and a mortarboard from another student if you don't think you'll use them much, but it is almost certain that you will use the gown quite a lot, so you should buy that. It's a good idea to look round the second hand shops to save some money.

## 5. Degree Ceremonies

They occur on certain Saturdays throughout the year, usually in the Sheldonian Theatre. St John's College has certain graduation days allotted to it, and you must graduate on one of these days – that is, **you graduate in College groups, not in subject groups with the other people from your course.** Unlike the matriculation ceremony, you do not have to attend graduation, as you may graduate *in absentia*, but of course most students choose to attend their graduation ceremony. When organising your graduation ceremony, you should remember that the College only has limited places in each ceremony allotted to it, and so you should **book early** through the College Office. The dates are available on the College website. **For one year courses it is a good idea to book immediately.** Degree certificates are available after the ceremony by contacting the Degree Conferrals Team at the University Offices.

## 6. Examinations

If your course involves examinations, the College Office will send examination entry forms to your pigeon hole, and it is your responsibility to check that the details are correct and return them by the date specified. After you have returned your completed form, the Examination Schools will inform you that your subjects have been entered into their system and it is your responsibility to check that these details are correct (using Student Self Service online). Make sure you note the deadlines given in the Examination Regulations (available online at [www.admin.ox.ac.uk](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk)).

## 7. Oxford University Student Union ('OUSU')

Not to be confused with the Oxford Union Society (see below), OUSU represents the views of Oxford students on various University committees, at the National Union of Students and to local and national government. OUSU also campaigns on behalf of students on issues of local and national importance, such as organising protests against gender discrimination in Oxford, lobbying Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council for better lighting on dark streets and better policing, lobbying the University to divest itself of ethically unsound investments and to commit to quantifiable cuts in its carbon emissions, and securing promises from Oxford MPs not to vote for increased university tuition fees in Parliament. OUSU also provides direct advice to students, produces various information publications on problems which students may face during their time at Oxford and operates a very successful charitable fundraising programme. For more on the activities of OUSU and information on how you can get involved in the very many spheres of activity in which it works, see [www.ousu.org](http://www.ousu.org) or contact the **MCR OUSU Officer**, Stuart Broadfoot ([stuart.broadfoot@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:stuart.broadfoot@sjc.ox.ac.uk))

## 8. The University Club

Located on Mansfield Road, the University Club offers a variety of services to graduates and other discerning members of the University (i.e. not undergraduates). These services include decent cheap(ish) meals, a cheap bar, a reading room with newspapers and magazines, a games room and guest rooms with bed and breakfast (very useful when the College guest rooms are full). Membership is free and applications can be made at any time, see: [www.club.ox.ac.uk](http://www.club.ox.ac.uk).

## 9. Language Centre

On 12 Woodstock Road you have the chance to learn another language, either because it is necessary for your coursework or research (in which case you can claim priority booking) or just because you want to expand your linguistic and cultural horizons. In the latter case, the remaining places are dealt with on a first-come first-served basis. The following courses are provided for Michaelmas Term, all starting in 0th week: **French, German, Spanish, Italian, Modern Greek, Portuguese and Russian.**

It is necessary to contact the Language Centre for registration beforehand. You must bring your University Card. See [www.lang.ox.ac.uk](http://www.lang.ox.ac.uk)

## **10. The Oxford Union ('the Union')**

This is essentially, and gloriously, the Debating Society of Oxford, but they also host prominent British and international speakers. Also, if an important person (head of government, leader of a major international organisation, CEO of a giant corporation, etc.) comes to Oxford, they will probably come to speak here. In Casablanca, everybody comes to Rick's; in Oxford, everybody comes to the Union. When considering whether to join the Union (so as to take part in debates and be able to come along to speeches), make sure that you avail yourself of the period during the first few weeks of Michaelmas Term when it's open *to everyone for free* and check it out a bit during this time, as membership is a significant expense. Life members of the Cambridge Union, and of the debating societies of Trinity College, Dublin and US Ivy League Universities are automatically members of the Oxford Union. See [www.oxford-union.org](http://www.oxford-union.org).

## **11. University Parks**

The University boasts some very fine parks located opposite Keble College, on Parks Road. They are open from dawn to dusk all year round. Cricket, croquet and tennis (you must be a member of the University Club and wear whites) can be played there in the summer; soccer is always played there in the autumn. See [www.parks.ox.ac.uk](http://www.parks.ox.ac.uk).

## IV. GLOSSARY

**Alumna:** A female former student of the College (from Latin *alumna*, meaning ‘foster child’). Plural ‘alumnae’

**Alumnus:** A male former student of the College. Plural ‘alumni’

**Battels:** Your financial account with College for fees, rent, MCR Guest Dinners, etc. Issued at the beginning of each term. To be paid by electronic funds transfer to the College bank account (details from [sue.godfrey@sjc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sue.godfrey@sjc.ox.ac.uk)) or, if preferred, by cheque payable to ‘St John’s College, Oxford’ handed to Sue Godfrey in Room 10 in the Bursary (accessed from the passage between North Quadrangle and Thomas White Quadrangle). The etymological origin of the word ‘battels’ is the subject of some dispute, but the *Oxford English Dictionary* seems to come down on the side of it being a diminutive of the Old French *batte*, and thus meaning ‘tallying sticks’ (which were used to keep accounts). ‘Battels’, as a noun only appears in the plural; the verb ‘to battel’ means the College entering something on your account.

**Benediction:** Spoken at the end of Formal Hall by whichever member of the SCR is presiding over High Table (q.v.), after the banging of a gavel indicating that all present in the Hall should stand. The Latin text is ‘Benedictus benedicat’, meaning ‘Let the blessed one bless’ (i.e. ‘we’ve been blessed at dinner, so let’s share the blessing around’).

**Black Tie:** Dinner suit (tuxedo) and black bow tie for men. Cocktail dresses or other smart outfits for women.

**Blue:** A reward for competing in certain intervarsity sports matches for the University. In respect of some sports, only a ‘half blue’ is awarded. Despite jocular suggestions to the contrary, there is no ‘quarter blue’ for the sport of tiddlywinks.

**Boat House:** A rowing shed on the river where boats are kept. Also has bathrooms and a warm-up area with rowing machines. There is a bar which is open (serving the obligatory but genuinely tasty Pimm’s) for Eights Week.

**Bod Card:** The common name for your University Card, so called because of it allows you access to the University’s Bodleian Library

**Bop:** The Oxford word for a party held in College. A bop usually has a theme, and many people come dressed according to that theme.

**Bulldogs:** The name for the now defunct Proctors’ Police, the University’s private disciplinary police force. They wore bowler hats. Although they have not existed as a police force since 2003, people outside Oxford for the most part still think that they do, so they’re part of the enduring Oxford legend. (They have now been reorganised as the Proctors’ Officers, and although not a police force they can impose fines on students for breaches of the Proctors’ rules relating to student discipline in celebrations after examinations and so forth.)

**Bumps Race:** A rowing event in which the aim is to catch up with the boat ahead of you and physically bump into it (or overlap with it enough to count as a hit). This style of racing is used in

Oxford because the river Isis is too narrow to allow more than a couple of boats to race against each other side by side. The boats start in an order set according to how they finished last year, and each time you bump a boat you swap places with it for the next day. If a team bumps the preceding boat on each of the four days of rowing, that team is awarded 'blades' (ornate painted rowing oars) and their results are chalked up on one of the walls in Thomas White Quadrangle. At the end of the four days of rowing, whichever boat is at the very front of the top division is labelled 'Head of the River'.

**Bursary:** The College accounts and administrative offices.

**B:** In describing the location of a room in College, 'B' refers to the Buttery Staircase in North Quadrangle

**Beehive:** The name for the grey concrete building in North Quadrangle with hexagonal rooms. Built in the late 1950s, it was the first major Modernist building in Oxford. It's Grade II Heritage protected, so the College probably couldn't knock it down even if it wanted to. Not that bad on the inside, though.

**Buttery:** The area in Hall that can sell you drinks, stationery, chocolate, etc., although not butter. Open during meal times.

**C:** In describing the location of a room in College, 'C' refers to Canterbury Quadrangle

**'Church and Queen!':** A toast always proposed when dining in the SCR, you may come across this at Subject Dinner. If you are not an adherent of the Anglican Church and/or you are of republican political sympathies, you can do what I do and interpret this as a toast to two of England & Wales's most remarkable singing sensations, soprano Charlotte Church and 1980s rock band Queen. In fact, maybe that's what the toast is actually about...

**Collections:** Your chance to let the College know how you are doing in academic and other matters. You will be asked to attend a meeting in Michaelmas or Hilary Term with the President, Tutor for Graduates, and your College Advisor. Gowns are worn. You will need to provide a short report to the Secretary to the Tutor for Graduates prior to the meeting.

**Come up:** To come to Oxford to attend University. Originally sons of wealthy families 'came up' to the city of Oxford from their country estates. See also 'go down' and 'sent down'

**Composition Fee:** Tuition fees charged by the University

**Cuppers:** Annual intercollegiate sports competitions, usually on a knockout basis, so named because the winning team is awarded a trophy cup

**D:** In describing the location of a room in College, 'D' refers to Dolphin Quadrangle

**Decanal:** Relating to the Deans, both Junior and Senior (from the Latin *decanus*, meaning 'dean').

**'Do you know the Bishop of Norwich?':** This is a formula for gently reminding someone that they are holding up the circulation of port (and other drinks) after dinner. You may encounter this at in the Subject Dinner or in the dessert room after High Table. When port, madeira and dessert wines are put out after dinner, they should always be passed to the left (i.e. port to 'port', in nautical terms) so that the next person can take the decanter with his or her right hand, which is statistically likely to be the stronger hand for gripping the decanter and pouring a glass of the liquor in question. Decanters should

continue to circulate, and if you don't want to pour a glass for yourself you should pass the decanter on to the next person (on your left). The problem inevitably comes when someone is engrossed in conversation (or drink) and doesn't notice that there's been a three-decanter pile up on his right hand side. Rather than asking him directly to do the duty that England expects every man will do and risk embarrassing him, it is considered polite to ask him 'Do you know the Bishop of Norwich?', at which point he will either realise his mistake and get the decanters circulating again or unknowingly continue the ritual by saying 'No', in response to which you should say words to the effect of 'Well he's a very nice fellow, but he always forgets to *pass the port*'. This should be quite sufficient to get things moving again. Anyway, the upshot is, remember that *drinks are always passed to the left* and you should *never let them stop circulating* unless you want to be asked about The Rt Rev Graham James.

**Eights or VIIIs:** A major bumps (q.v.) race held in Trinity Term

**Erg:** An ergometer, or rowing machine

**F:** In describing the location of a room in College, 'F' refers to Front Quadrangle

**Fellow:** College academic who has been elected to a College Fellowship. The name comes from the fact that all such persons are fellows (i.e. equals and companions) of one another. The most senior Fellows are members of Governing Body.

**Formal Hall:** The second sitting of dinner, for which you have to arrive before 19:15. You must book online (<https://hall.sjc.ox.ac.uk/mealbooking/login.php>) for Formal Hall, as for Informal Hall, by at least 13:30 on the day in question.

**Fresher:** A first year student, whether undergraduate or graduate

**Full Term:** The eight weeks of the academic term

**G:** In describing the location of a room in College, 'G' refers to Garden Quadrangle

**Gaudy:** Reunion of former members of College. The dinner is preceded by a report in Latin.

**Go down:** Leave Oxford (usually due to graduating)

**Governing Body:** The supreme authority within College which decides College policy, the Governing Body is the Board of Trustees which administers the College as an educational (and religious) charity. It comprises the College's most senior Fellows, and representatives from the MCR and JCR are also present at some of its discussions.

**Grace:** A recitation, in Latin (and Hebrew), of an invocation of the Christian god encouraging him to extend his 'grace' over those dining. It is pronounced only at Formal Hall, and marks the cut-off point for entry for the second sitting of dinner; when High Table (q.v.) has arrived, one of the SCR members will whack a gavel on the table signalling that all present in the Hall should rise for the saying of Grace. On every night but Sunday, an undergraduate Classics scholar will speak the Grace; on Sunday the College choir will sing it (no applause is expected afterwards). The text of Grace is 'Benedic, Domine, nos et haec tua dona, quae de tua bonitate sumus sumpturi. Per Iesum Christum, Dominum nostrum. Amen', meaning 'Bless, Lord, us and these your gifts, which from your goodness we are going to take up. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Verily.' When Grace is spoken – *but not when it is sung* – those who, at the time of its conclusion, find themselves to be, on balance, in general agreement

with the sentiment expressed therein may choose to repeat ‘Amen’. At the end of the meal, when High Table recedes, there is a Benediction (q.v.).

**Greats:** The term used for ‘Classics’ in the University of Oxford (i.e. ‘the great works of Latin and Ancient Greek literature’)

**Hall:** Dining hall for main meals in College

**High Table:** The table on the slightly raised platform at the eastern end of the Hall on which SCR members dine during Formal Hall (although there may be so many of them that they spill out onto other lower tables too). They have pre-drinks in the SCR building beforehand and special desserts in there afterwards. You have to arrive at Formal Hall before High Table progresses in at 19:15 because that’s when Grace is recited, but you are allowed to leave before they rise (since they have more courses to eat so will take longer than you). If you do leave before High Table has risen, it is polite to make a slight bow (really just an inclination of the head) in the direction of whoever is sitting in the big chair at the middle of High Table (usually the President) as you leave the Hall.

**Hilary Term:** The second (middle) term in the Oxford academic year, running from mid-January to mid-March. Named for the feast of St Hilary of Poitiers in the Christian calendar which occurs just before the start of this term. (In fact, the dates of all the academic terms at Oxford are calculated by reference to St Hilary’s feast day).

**In Residence:** Living in Oxford (that is, within 25 miles of Carfax, the crossroads where High Street/Queen Street intersects with Cornmarket Street/St Aldate’s)

**Isis:** The main river in Oxford, known in its lower stretches as the Thames (pronounced ‘temz’). It flows past Christ Church meadow and is the site of rowing competitions.

**JCR:** Junior Common Room. The term can mean either 1) the body of people (undergraduate and graduate members of the College), or 2) the physical place (the bottom of TW 4)

**K:** In describing the location of a room in College, ‘K’ refers to Kendrew Quadrangle

**League:** Annual intercollegiate sports competition, usually ongoing, in divisions (not knock-out)

**Leave to supplicate:** Formal permission to graduate which is given after a student has passed all the necessary written or *viva voce* examinations for the degree in question

**Magdalen:** A College, a bridge, a road and a street. In the name of the College, and the bridge and the road which are named after the College, it’s pronounced 'MAWD-len'. In the name of the street (and things named for it like the branches of Odeon and Sainsbury’s) it’s pronounced the normal way, ‘MAG-da- len’. If people tell you that the street (or the branches of Odeon and Sainsbury’s) is pronounced the weird way, they are mistaken.

**Matriculation:** Formal entry of one’s name onto the roll of students at the University (from the Latin *matricula*, meaning a roll or register). This is necessary in order to ‘enter’ the University as a student (the counterpart of which is ‘exit’ by graduation)

**Michaelmas Term:** The first term in the Oxford academic year, running from early October to early December. Named for the feast of St Michael the Archangel in the Christian calendar which occurs just before the start of this term.

**Mincemeat:** Actually minced *fruit*, sold particularly around Christmas time

**MCR:** Middle Common Room. The term can mean either 1) the body of people (graduate students at the College), or 2) the building (between Thomas White Quadrangle and Garden Quadrangle)

**N:** In describing the location of a room in College, ‘N’ refers to North Quadrangle

**Noughth Week or 0<sup>th</sup> Week:** The week before Full Term begins

**OGM/AGM/EGM:** Ordinary/Annual/Extraordinary General Meeting of the MCR. Usually two per term. Committee reports and motions are debated; pizza and other snacks are often served.

**OUSU:** Oxford University Student Union, of which you are automatically a member. OUSU deals with University-wide student issues and interacts with other British university student unions through the National Union of Students (‘NUS’). It provides advice to students, represents students to the University, the City and the nation and conducts campaigns on issues identified by students as important to their academic, social and financial wellbeing while at Oxford.

**Oxonian:** Relating to Oxford, particularly the University of Oxford. From the Latin name for Oxford, *Oxonia*. From this, the University of Oxford is called in Latin *academia Oxoniensis* or *universitas Oxoniensis*, which gives rise to the abbreviation ‘Oxon’ used in degrees (e.g. ‘The Hon. Bob Hawke AC GCL LLD (USA, *honoris causa*) B.Litt (Oxon) LLB BA (UWA)’)

**Pimm’s:** Short for ‘Pimm’s No 1 Cup’, a gin-based drink mixed with lemonade and served with chopped up bits of fruit, cucumbers and mint leaves during summer. There’s also a ‘Pimm’s Winter Cup’ with spices and orange peel, but I don’t think it’s as good.

**Port:** A fortified wine, traditionally produced from grapes grown in the Douro Valley in Portugal and then shipped through Vila Nova de Gaia, a city near Porto (from which the wine takes its name). The ‘fortification’ of the wine is achieved by adding grape spirit (a clear, tasteless distillate of fermented grapes which has a very high alcohol content) to the crushed up grapes while they are still fermenting, which kills the yeast and arrests fermentation while the crushed grapes still have quite a high sugar content. Hence, port is sweeter and has a higher alcohol content than normal wine. Most port consumed in the UK is red port, but white port, a popular aperitif on the Continent, can sometimes be found. ‘Vintage port’ is port which has been produced from grapes all collected in one harvest, aged briefly in wooden barrels and then bottled; it continues to age in the bottle (hence the value of old vintage ports). ‘Tawny port’ is produced from ports of several different harvests which have been aged for a considerable period of time in wooden barrels and then blended together for bottling; due to the length of exposure which it has already had to wooden barrels, tawny port does not continue to age in the bottle. ‘Late bottled vintage port’ is intermediate between vintage and tawny, as it is produced from the grapes of a single harvest, aged in wooden barrels for longer than vintage port but not as long as tawny port, and then bottled; some types of late bottled vintage port improve with age, but most do not. ‘Ruby port’, the cheapest and most common type of port, is produced from port of various harvests which has been briefly stored in concrete or steel vats before being blended and bottled; it is not regarded as a port which shows any improvement with age. Port is usually consumed after dinner, and is often matched with strongly flavoured cheeses such as stilton. Port has something of a

‘traditional old English gentleman’ air to it, and is consumed openly by Colonel Pickering and clandestinely by Prof. Higgins in *My Fair Lady*.

**Porter:** The first person to contact with general enquiries about College matters. Despite the term ‘porter’, they don’t carry things around for you, and are better understood as the College’s private security guards. Found in ‘the Lodge’.

**Proctors:** Senior members of the University responsible for student discipline, especially during examinations.

**Punting:** Activity for leisure hours in Trinity Term, and perhaps Michaelmas Term too if the weather’s good. One pushes a flat-bottomed wooden boat (the punt) along the narrow, winding river with a long pole. Try not to drop the pole, but if you do, it’s okay: it floats.

**RE:** In describing the location of a room in College, ‘RE’ refers to Rural Economy Quadrangle

**Read:** To ‘study’ a subject (e.g. ‘Hieronymus is reading Law at St John’s’, ‘Siegfried reads Chemistry, but he really wants to be an astronaut’)

**Rustication:** Temporary suspension from the University (and from College), usually for a year. The ‘rustic’ element of it comes from the fact that in times past sending a student away from the University meant returning him to his family estate in the country.

**Scout:** Cleaner of rooms and distributor of fresh manchester (bedsheets) who also keeps an eye on you to make sure that you don’t get too lonely in the first few weeks, and that you’re not having any crazy parties and trashing your College room (hence being a ‘scout’ for the College).

**SCR:** Senior Common Room. The term can mean either 1) the body of people (the academics at the College), or 2) the building (the one with the black door in North Quadrangle, under the lamp)

**Senior member:** Member of the College SCR (i.e. an academic)

**Sent down:** Permanent expulsion from the University. In times past, an expelled student would be sent down from the city of Oxford to his home in the country.

**Sherry:** A fortified wine traditionally produced in Jerez, Spain using the *solera* system. In a manner similar to that used in the fortification of port (q.v.), crushed grapes are fortified by the addition of distilled wine (with a high alcohol content), but the amount added depends on the type of sherry to be produced. To produce *fino* or ‘dry’ sherry, a moderate amount of distilled wine is added so as not to prevent the growth of a scum of yeast known as *flor* on top of the maturing sherry. To produce *oloroso* sherry, a larger amount of distilled wine is added so as to prevent to the growth of *flor*. To produce *amontillado* sherry, the maturing sherry is first allowed to grow a head of *flor*, but is then exposed to oxygen to prevent any further growth (so it takes like a mix of *fino* and *oloroso*). Regardless of which type of sherry is being produced, it is then put into the *solera*, a system of nine barrels in which fully matured sherry is drawn off from the barrel at one end and small amounts of still maturing sherry are carefully transferred from one barrel to the next along the line to top up each barrel, with the newly fortified wine being put into the last barrel. This ensures a continuity of flavour across batches. ‘Sweet’ sherry is produced by adding Pedro Ximénez wine or Moscatel wine to *fino* sherry, and ‘cream’ sherry by adding Pedro Ximénez to *oloroso*. Sherry is traditionally drunk before a meal (it is still served, in no small amount I understand, at Chapel before Formal Hall on Sunday), and drier

sheries like *fino* are thought to appeal to a more refined palette than the sweeter ones. Sherry is also regarded as a less manly drink than port, which is a hangover from the days when gender discrimination was practised at dinner, since men and women could both drink sherry together *before* the meal, but *after* the meal only the men would retire to smoke and consume port – the women would go off to sew or something.

**Snuff:** A pulverised form of tobacco placed on the back of the hand between the distal ends of the metacarpals of the thumb and index finger and then inhaled through the nose. While harmful to the health, snuff is not as harmful as smoking and it is not unlawful to consume it within College. You may come across snuff at Subject Dinner, where it is available in both plain and menthol.

**Subfusc:** Formal academic dress. From the Latin *subfuscus*, meaning ‘darkish’ (describing the colour of the outfit). Apparently this was originally a jocular term, making fun of the way that Oxford used pretentious Latin names for everything. It is now used with neither sneer nor irony.

**Term Card:** List of the term’s events for any society, including the MCR

**Torpids:** Bumps race in rowing, which should happen in Hilary Term, unless it rains

**Trinity Term:** The third and final term in the Oxford academic year, running from late April to late June. Named for Trinity Sunday in the Christian calendar which occurs during this term.

**TW:** In describing the location of a room in College, ‘TW’ refers to Sir Thomas White Quadrangle (often called ‘Tommy White’)

## V. USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Telephone numbers within the University all begin with prefix (2), and if you are calling from one University number to another University number this (2) may be omitted. Thus, if you wish to ring the College Porters' Lodge from within the University network the number is 77300. From outside the University network you must include this (2) when calling a University number, and if you are calling from a mobile telephone anywhere or from a landline outside Oxford you must also add in the local code for Oxford, which is (01865). Thus, to call the Porters' Lodge from your mobile telephone dial 01865 2 77300. The international code for the UK is (+44) and the 0 from the Oxford code is dropped, so to call the Porters' Lodge from a foreign country dial +44 1865 2 77300.

The numbers listed below beginning with (2) are all within the University network.

### College Numbers

Porters' Lodge	(2)77300
College Office	(2)77318
College Nurse	(2)77369
Chaplain's Secretary	(2)77645
Tutor for Graduates' Secretary	(2)77428
MCR Computer Room	(2)77430

### University Numbers

University Offices	(2)70001
OU Computing Services	(2)73200
OUSU	(2)88450

### Libraries

St John's Library	(2)77330
Sackler Library	(2)88190
Bodleian Library	(2)77180
Bodleian Law Library	(2)71463
Taylorian Institution Library	(2)78154

### Museums, Cinema, etc.

Ashmolean Museum	(2)78000
Pitt Rivers Museum	(2)70927
Museum of Modern Art	(01865) 722733
Playhouse Theatre	(01865) 305305
New Theatre	(01865) 320770
Sheldonian Theatre	(2)77299
Odeon Cinema	(01865) 723911
Phoenix Cinema (Walton St)	(01865) 512526

## **Transportation**

National Rail Enquiries Line	08457 484950
National Express	08705 808080
AA (24 hr Breakdown Service)	0800 887766
RAC (24hr Breakdown Service)	0800 828282
Heathrow Airport (General Enquiries)	0870 0000123
Gatwick Airport (BA Flight Info)	0870 0002468
Student Travel Agent	(01865) 792800
ABC Taxi	(01865) 770077 or (01865) 775577
Oxford City Taxis	(01865) 201201 or (01865) 794000

## **Health and Welfare**

Ambulance/Fire brigade/Police	999
John Radcliffe Hospital	(01865) 741166
Studental (College dental service)	(01865) 484608
Health Information Line (09:30-17:00)	0800 665544 (Free)
Oxford Rape Crisis Centre (24hr answer phone)	(01865) 726925
The Samaritans	08457 909090
University Counselling Service	(2)70300
Oxford University Student Union	(2)88450
University Accommodation	(2)80814
University Childcare	(2)89841
Nightline	(2)70270
Oxfordshire Social Services	0845 0506777 (0800 833408 out of hours)

## **Room Telephone**

Your room from outside Oxford	0870 120 0870 then your 5-digit extension number when prompted
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## **Reward for Reading This Right to the End**

Emergency comic relief	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp9Gm-aRe5A">www.youtube.com/watch?v=xp9Gm-aRe5A</a>
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