



Postgraduate Freshers' Guide 2021

St John's College Samuel Butler Room (SBR)



Everything you need to know about life in Cambridge.

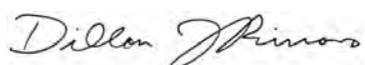
To our *new* Postgraduate Cohort of 2021,

First and foremost, a warm and wholehearted welcome to the postgraduate community of St John's College, University of Cambridge! Whether you are continuing from the JCR, moving across the country, or perhaps from across the globe, I hope that you will be able to truly call Cambridge home for the next year or three.

No two years are alike—COVID, amongst other things, has made sure of this and may continue to do so in more subtle ways. 2020 and 2021, although gloomy and tiresome, have taught us a lot about ourselves; how to live in social (and/or physical) isolation, to listen, be creative and resourceful, to better communicate, and to be kinder to ourselves and our neighbours. In this next year, I hope you will be able to put these new found skills to use, find new friends for life, make outstanding contributions to your academic field, and make the absolute most of the beautiful city that Cambridge is. The SBR Committee and I will work hard to make sure there are plenty of opportunities for to enjoy a true Johnian experience this coming year, from grad talks, to sport, to wine tastings, to garden parties, all we ask for is your time and patience. At St John's, you'll find that one of the (many) things we are good at is putting together a proper celebration when the time is right; I cannot wait for this day to come.

Once again, I congratulate you on your acceptance, induction, and matriculation into the *best* college of Cambridge and I look forward to hearing your stories throughout this next year!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dillon Rinauro". The ink is dark and the signature is written in a fluid, personal style.

Dillon Rinauro

SBR President

This guide has been produced by the **SBR Committee** to help you, new postgraduate students, during your arrival and first few weeks in Cambridge and at St John's College. We advise you skim over it at least once, and then you can refer to each section in more detail as and when you need to.

This document has been made to be as easy to use as possible. There is a lot of information, but don't let that put you off! Anything written **in this colour** is a useful link that will either direct you elsewhere in the guide, or to a relevant website. Please use the links to find information more easily.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, college life (in particular Freshers' week) will closely adhere to Government, College, and University guidelines at the time. In summary, and to ensure that our people and community continue to thrive, each one of us has a responsibility to:

- Behave in a way that minimises the risk of infection
- Treat each other with dignity and respect
- Keep up to date with public health guidance and follow it at all times

If you suspect you may have symptoms of Coronavirus you must follow the Government guidance and self-isolate. 24/7 NHS help is available by telephoning 111, a free service for advice and appointments on physical (option 1) and mental health (option 2). Further details are available **here**.

Please note that this guide has been produced at the beginning of August 2021 and things are changing rapidly in this new age of COVID-19. Please check the **FAQs (which will be updated on a regular basis) and the **Student Handbook** on the College website.**

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Chapter 1 Introduction to the SBR

1.1 SBR Welcome

Welcome to St John's!

This is an informal guide put together by members of the *Samuel Butler Room* Committee – the postgraduate committee at St John's College. The collegiate system is central to Cambridge life, and St John's has one of the liveliest postgraduate communities. We hope you'll take full advantage of everything St John's and the SBR have to offer.

Settling into a postgraduate course, a new city, and perhaps a new country, whilst getting used to the peculiarities of Cambridge and College life, can be a bit confusing. This guide, which has been written from personal perspectives, with tips and advice gathered from many Johnians, has three aims:

1. to explain how to get to St John's College
2. to introduce you to postgraduate life here
3. to help you prioritise the stuff you need to do when you arrive.

1.2 What is the SBR?

The *Samuel Butler Room (SBR)* is in I staircase in First Court (go through the *Great Gate* and turn left). The room, named in honour of the **Victorian polymath**, is the *College's Middle Combination Room* or *MCR* (Cambridge speak for *common room for postgraduate students*).

The SBR has free tea and coffee, books, board games, a TV, cinema system, Wii, stereo, piano and pool table. You are welcome to (attempt to) study in the SBR, but there are also two postgraduate study rooms – the *Fred Sanger Room* opposite the SBR (I staircase, First Court) and Room 4, 1 All Saints Passage (Corfield Court). Your University Card opens both rooms as well as the SBR.



The **SBR Committee** are your postgraduate representatives in College. We organise events and activities throughout the year for St John's postgraduate students, provide welfare support and can advocate on your behalf with any College issues. We run many events throughout the year, in particular in the

first two weeks of Michaelmas term (*Freshers' Fortnight*) to welcome all of you (back) to St John's. We hope you'll get involved as much as possible – it's a great chance to meet other new postgraduates and current students. You will receive further information via email. Check out our [website](#), sign up to our [Facebook group](#), and follow us on [Instagram](#) for the latest updates!

1.3 SBR Events

Besides Freshers' Fortnight, the **SBR Committee** organises major annual social events, including several themed dinners and a garden party in June. We also put on walks to Grantchester village, bar quizzes, a research symposium, film nights, barbecues, pub and theatre visits, and many more activities. Additionally, we organise *swaps* with other Colleges and universities (e.g. Trinity College, Dublin, Balliol College, University of Oxford, and Collegio Ghislieri, Pavia University), where a group of St John's postgraduates go for dinner at another College or a weekend trip to another university, before hosting a group of their students at St John's.





The SBR hosts *Lightning Grad Talks* throughout the year. These brief talks provide an opportunity for you to present your research and hear about the research of other Johnian postgraduates in a relaxed atmosphere.



The **SBR Committee** heartily welcomes new members to help out with academic, social, and welfare events - elections are in October and March each year, so chat to a current member if you're interested!



Chapter 2 Arriving in Cambridge

2.1 Getting to Cambridge

2.1.1 Train

Trains from London: London King's Cross station and London Liverpool Street station have direct services to Cambridge. These trains leave about twice an hour from each station, depending on the day and time. Services from King's Cross make fewer stops on the way and are generally faster (but also slightly more expensive). You can book advance tickets at discounted prices via [National Rail](#) or [Trainline](#).

NB: Check out the **Young Person's Railcard**, which costs around £30 (or £70 for three years) and is annually renewable. It entitles you to one-third off all rail travel in Britain and easily pays for itself in a few return trips to London. You can purchase one online or in a station. If you are over 26 you will need to have your application form stamped by [Student Services](#) to confirm that you are a full-time student.

Trains are often labelled by their final destination (usually Ely or King's Lynn on fast trains from King's Cross), which can be confusing, so make sure you're on the right one - don't be afraid to ask or look for the intermediate stations each train will be *calling at* on the large screens in the station.

Once you arrive at the [train station](#) in Cambridge, you can take a bus to the city centre and follow the map to St John's. Buses 1, 3, and the *Park & Ride* bus stop in the city centre. The *U bus* (£1 with a University Card) will take you within 5 minutes walk of the back of St John's if you disembark at the *Madingley Road* stop. Taxis/Uber will take you directly to College from the station for about £10. Otherwise, the walk through city centre from the station is around 40 minutes.

For future reference, you can get very cheap tickets to London Liverpool St by booking in advance online (often only £12 return). These trains take a bit longer but can save you some cash for London day/weekend trips.

From Heathrow Airport: Take the Underground (Piccadilly Line) to King’s Cross Station in central London, then take the train from King’s Cross Rail Station (KGX) to Cambridge Station (CBG). There is also the Heathrow Express train which, although more expensive and takes you to Paddington Station, is much quicker. From Paddington, take the Circle or Hammersmith & City lines to get to KGX for a train to Cambridge. The total price for the entire journey off-peak is as little as £25 (around £50 if you choose to use the Heathrow Express) and takes around two to three hours.

From London Stansted Airport: Take the Stansted Express train to Cambridge. Price is about £11 (35 mins); tickets can be booked in advance or purchased at the station.

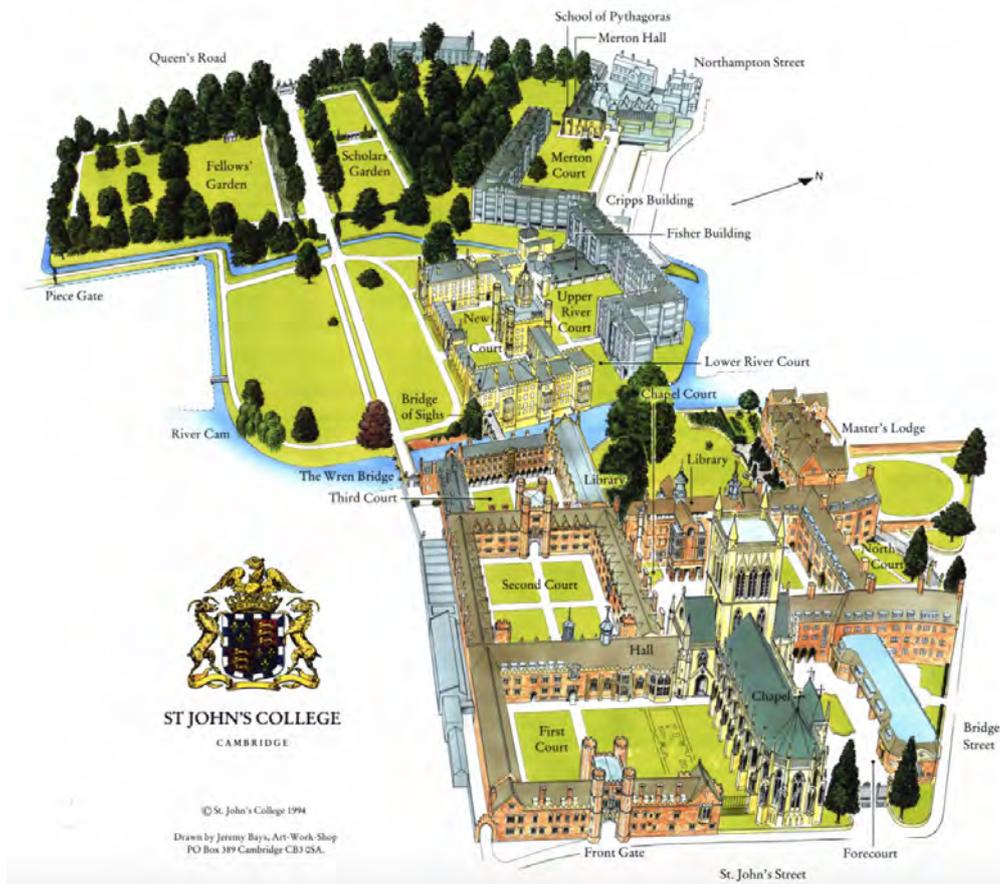
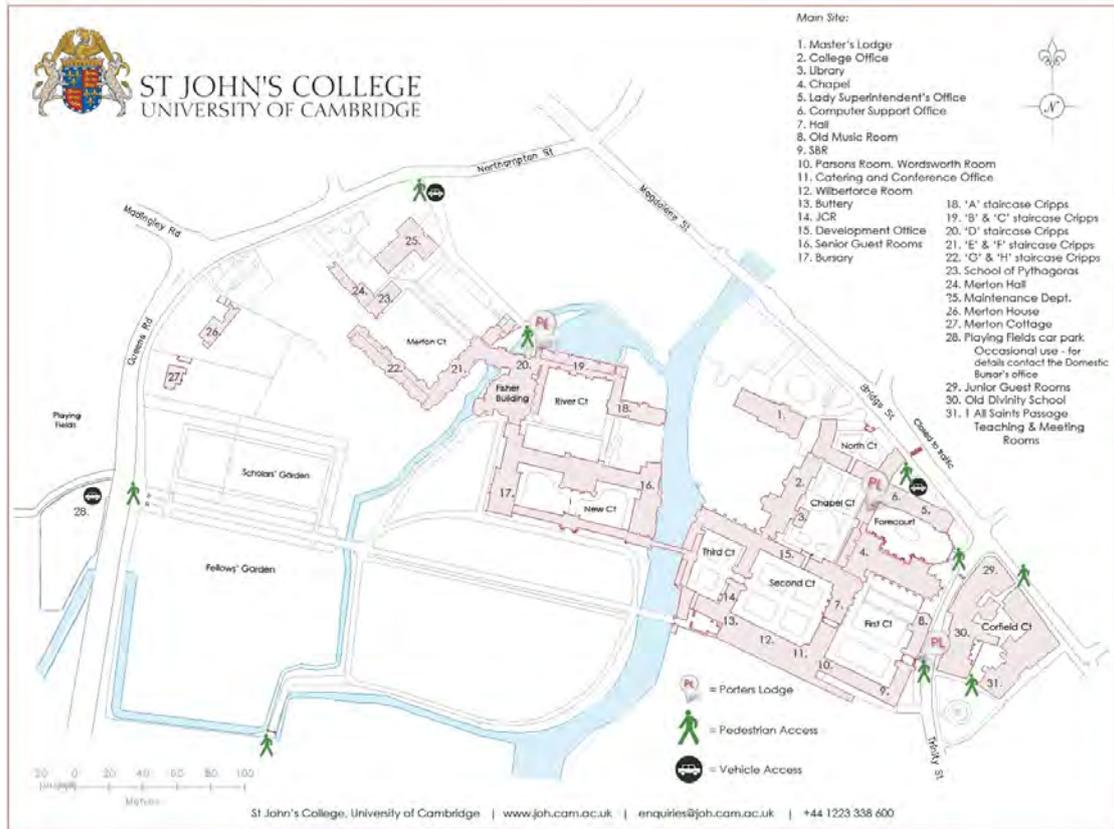
From London Gatwick Airport: There is a direct train from Gatwick Airport to Cambridge, that leaves every half an hour. Price is about £30 and takes about two hours.

From London Luton Airport: There are no direct trains to Cambridge but some direct coach services are available – see next section.

2.1.2 Coach

Direct **National Express** coaches (buses) go to Cambridge from all airports. Thus, coach is normally the easiest – although not the quickest – way to get to Cambridge. The local bus station (Parkside, **Parker’s Piece**) where you’ll disembark is located in central Cambridge. Taxis are available if you have lots of stuff, but the walk from the coach stop to College is only 15 minutes. Like the Rail, there’s also a Young Persons Coachcard that can get you great discounts, especially if you book online in advance!





2.2 First Weeks

Your first weeks at St John’s will likely be a manic whirl of activity, strange faces, and paperwork. If you need any help or advice, don’t hesitate to contact the **SBR Committee** or your **orientation ‘buddy’** (see [this](#) section). And be sure to join in with the **Freshers’ Fortnight** programme of events: it’s meant to entertain and, above all, provide opportunities to meet new and returning Johnian postgraduates from a huge range of backgrounds, nationalities, and research areas.



2.2.1 Collecting Your Keys

When you arrive to college, you can collect your keys from the Forecourt Porters’ Lodge (located on the corner of Bridge Street and St John’s Street, see map). Please follow the instructions provided by the Postgraduate Office Administrator, **Angela Mansfield**. We hope to also have your Welcome Packs available to collect by your arrival, but these will be available to collect on October 2nd from 9:30am to 3:00pm at the Registration Centre if not. Your welcome packs contain everything you’ll need to settle in, including your University Card and information on how to access the University WiFi–eduroam. All important documents can also be found [here](#).

2.2.2 Freshers' Fortnight

In addition to the events put on by the SBR throughout the year, we have a special programme of activities called Freshers' Fortnight, which will closely follow Government advice. These events will be for all members of the SBR, so we hope that nobody feels like a fresher for too long. A programme of events will be made available on our [website](#) shortly!

Traditionally, events including a wine reception, pizza and movie nights, a punting trip, pub crawls, and much more. Whilst the impact of COVID may affect the way we socialise this Michaelmas, events have been designed by the committee to be safe and inclusive for everyone. There will also be some official College events for freshers, to which you will be invited or at which your attendance is obligatory; we'll cover these later!

2.2.2.1 Registration Centre

This has already been mentioned, and the college will send out more information about this. The registration centre is most students' first interaction within college, and takes place within the [Fisher Building](#) on **October 2nd** from **9:30am to 3:00pm**. You can drop-in at any time convenient for you but don't forget to bring your passport and ID! Here you will receive your welcome pack, your University Card as well as lots of other useful information. Some of you may also be able to collect your BRP card here as well.

At the Registration Centre, you will have the opportunity to meet some of the SBR Committee, so please come and see us if you have any questions. If you have not already done so, please get in touch with [Angela Mansfield](#) about your arrival date.

2.2.2.2 College Induction

The College hosts a mandatory **Postgraduate Induction** on **October 3rd** in the [Old Divinity School](#) from **11:00am to 12:45pm**. Here, you will receive important information and meet the Master, College tutors, the [SBR Committee](#) and College staff. Those who cannot attend or who are vulnerable to COVID-19 will be able to watch a live streaming and everyone will be able to watch the recording later, if desired. There will be more information to come on this from the Postgraduate Office.



This year, we have also introduced two workshops as part of your induction: **Beyond Equality** and Anti-Racism. Beyond Equality will be facilitated by SBR committee members in smaller breakout groups on **October 3rd** after induction, whereas the Anti-Racism workshop will be facilitated by **JMB Consulting** the following **Sunday, October 10th**. You will receive more information about these workshops from the SBR committee and the Dean's Office in due course.

2.2.2.3 Matriculation

The Matriculation Ceremony marks your official joining of the college, and you will receive further information via email. Often times, your **Tutor** will send you a separate email and invite you for a drink beforehand. More information about the Matriculation Ceremony will be sent out by the Postgraduate Office in due course, pending COVID restrictions.

The matriculation photo will take place on **October 5th, 4:00pm** at the **New Court Cloisters**. An individual photo will be taken, followed by a group photo of the entire year of matriculating students. There will be an information sheet about this in your Welcome Pack which you will collect from the Registration Centre, but please note there is a dress code requiring students to wear white shirts or blouses with black or dark navy suits, or black trousers or skirts. You **must** also wear your gowns (you can find more information on gowns [here](#)). If you are unsure about anything, or have an issue with the dress code then contact any of the **SBR Committee** or your orientation buddy, who will be happy to help.

The Welcome Dinner occurs after the Matriculation Ceremony this year on **October 15th**, and is a *free* dinner for the newly matriculated students. You will receive an email invite to the dinner, which you **must** respond to, otherwise you will not be able to attend.

2.3 SBR Buddy Scheme

The *buddy scheme* offers some informal support and contact with a continuing postgraduate student at John's as you get used to Cambridge life and study. They'll be a friendly face for your first few weeks here, and have agreed to answer your informal questions about research, the city, and College life. The Postgraduate Office will send out details of who your buddy is before the end of September. Although the scheme is casual and



up to you and your buddy to structure, the SBR expects that you'll:

- contact your buddy once you've heard from our committee secretary, Elizabeth
- meet your buddy (in person or virtually) during freshers' fortnight and attend the Buddy BA Table
- ask your buddy any queries during term
- see your buddy again towards the end of term (perhaps over a coffee)



Chapter 3 College Life

3.1 Important College Contacts

3.1.1 SBR Committee

As mentioned earlier, a committee exists for postgraduates within the college called the Samuel Butler Room (SBR). The primary role of the SBR committee, aside from hosting fun events throughout the year, is to represent you, our beloved postgraduates, on the college level! Whether you're keen to host a social event of your own, trying to promote sustainability, or looking for resources on welfare or identity, the committee is here for you, always. There are specific roles for the various facets of college life, so if you ever have a question about a certain issue, you can find the contact info of the respective officer on our [website](#). If you ever see us around college, be sure to say hello!

3.1.2 Tutors

Before you even arrive to College, you have already been appointed a tutor—a Fellow of the College who is responsible for your welfare and academic progress. If you ever encounter financial hardship, require an extension, or simply need a confidential and sympathetic ear, your tutor is your first line of contact and there to help you for just



about anything. Your tutor can also help resolve issues with your research supervisor should they arise. They are in a completely different academic field to you purposefully so you don't have to worry about any conflicts of interest! Professor Eric Miska (left photo), for example, is a molecular geneticist and is the tutor for students in Classics, Philosophy, and Theology, whilst Dr. Georgina Evans (right photo) is the tutor for Engineering but is an expert on contemporary French film!

Most tutors like to meet new students in the first week, and will send you details of when they are available. We recommend meeting with your tutor once or twice a term (whether through a pre-arranged time or through their tutorial times) just to keep them up to date on your well being and academic progress. Often, your tutor's signature is required for any special requests you make of the College, so it really does help to develop a good relationship with them!

Within each College of the University, there is a Senior Tutor that is responsible for the academic arrangements and welfare of its students as well as overseeing the Education Department. The Senior Tutor's Office is also responsible for the development of the College's strategies and policies for the teaching, learning, and support of our students. At John's, the office is committed to offering students an educational environment that allows every one of them to perform at their full potential. They are located in F7-F9 Chapel Court and can be contacted via [email](#).

St John's College has recently appointed Richard Partington, previously Senior Tutor at Churchill College, to fill this role. Richard Partington grew up in Liverpool and studied History at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge in the late 1980s as the first member of his family to go to university. Richard passionately believes in facilitating social mobility through access to university, and is equally committed to maintaining the highest academic standards. He chaired policy committees in the University on student finance and welfare, and on the research underpinning student selection. In his spare time, Richard likes music, film, literature and art, sport and the outdoors, fixing things and chatting to people.



In addition to the Senior Tutor, postgraduates also have a tutor to oversee and advocate for their well being. The Postgraduate Office, run by [Angela Mansfield](#), is located in Chapel Court, deals with day-to-day administration of postgraduate affairs and can be contacted via email [here](#). The Tutor for Postgraduates is normally **Mark Nicholls**,



the College Librarian for more than twenty years. He also oversees the IT Department and Communications Office and served as President of the College from 2007-2011. This year, however, Mark is on leave, but we are lucky to have **Miss Sylvana Tomaselli** as our Tutor for Postgraduates! Miss Tomaselli is also the tutor for Physical Sciences and her research interests include Eighteenth-Century Political Theorists, Conjectural History, Punishment and Mercy and other topics in Moral and Political Philosophy. If you ever have any questions or concerns about the general welfare of postgraduates at St John's this year, do get in touch with her and Angela!

3.1.3 College Nurses

The Health & Wellbeing Centre, open from Mon-Fri 9:00am to 4:00pm, is located in B2 North Court and staffed by two nurses - **Ruth Dean** (top photo), College Nurse and Disability Liaison Officer, and **Karen Miles** (bottom photo), Health & Wellbeing Nurse. They both want the absolute best for your physical, emotional, and mental health; you can discuss almost anything with them. Due to COVID-19 safety measures, remote consultations by phone or zoom are encouraged; however, face-to-face consultations are possible in an emergency or after initial assessment of need. Appointments can be made via Moodle or by emailing (Health&WellbeingCentre@joh.cam.ac.uk) from early September onward. **REMEMBER: If you need urgent medical help, please contact 111 or telephone a Porters' Lodge for assistance.**



When you arrive, the Centre will check in to make sure you've registered with a GP and are up-to-date on your vaccine records; particularly COVID jabs! Be on the look out for important messages from the Centre in early Michaelmas.



3.1.4 Chapel and the Chaplain

The College Chapel is a place of Christian prayer and worship and has a world-famous choral tradition. Services are held at least once a day (the Chapel term-card, in your pigeonhole, has details, or check the [Chapel Choir Website](#)). Everyone is always welcome, and our watchwords are Faith/Beauty/Justice. The Chapel is open throughout the day, for you to find some quiet, reflective space.

Holy Communion happens on Sundays at 8:30am (for students), traditionally followed by cooked breakfast in Hall. We are developing a series of late-evening services on Wednesdays, which include Compline (a short, sung night-time service in monastic style) and an alternative, experimental service. The Chaplain offers hospitality after these. Students of every faith and none usually come to the Matriculation and Graduation Services as they are part of the College experience; and often like to bring guests to other services, not least to listen to one of our great choirs!

The College clergy are the Dean and the Chaplain. The Dean is **Mark Oakley**. He has overall responsibility for the running of the Chapel. The Chaplain is **Andrew Hammond** (see photo). As well as his role in the spiritual life of the College, he is also part of the welfare team for students: you can go and talk to him about anything which is causing you anxiety or distress. You absolutely don't have to be Christian, let alone religious, to speak with him; pastoral care transcends such boundaries. He offers advice if sought, a confidential and non-judgemental ear if not. No subject is off-limits. Whilst he isn't a mental health professional, but has long experience in talking to people about their inner lives. You can either try his study (C2 North Court) or email ahead (a.hammond@joh.cam.ac.uk).





3.2 Accommodation

If you have been allocated accommodation by College, it's divided into hostels and traditional *court* accommodation. Most hostels are within a ten-minute walk of College. You will be sent details of your accommodation and rent before your arrival. Brief hostel and room descriptions can be found [here](#).

Corfield Court consists of about 40 rooms arranged in traditional Cambridge staircases. It is located immediately adjacent to the College, right in the town centre. The kitchens have hotplates, fridges and microwaves only (no ovens) and there is a shared laundry for all residents.



There are two areas of hostels: small terraced houses in the **Park Parade/St John's Road area**, which are slightly cheaper and more conveniently located, but older and with fewer facilities; and large, better-equipped houses in **Madingley Road**, which are newer, more spacious, and have better facilities, but are a bit further from the city centre.



Your rent includes a block insurance policy (details of which can be found on the [College website](#)) and a cleaning service for the communal areas. Most hostels house between four and fifteen postgraduate students. Ask [SBR Committee members](#) if you have general questions about accommodation. Specific questions can be addressed to accommodation@joh.cam.ac.uk.

3.2.1 Housekeeping and Maintenance

If you find there to be any issue with your room or your hostel/staircase upon your arrival, such as damage to room or furnishings, spaces not being adequately clean, missing furniture, or unwanted items left behind by previous residents, please immediately contact housekeeping@joh.cam.ac.uk.

The same goes for any furnishing or cleaning issues throughout the year. All the furniture you'll need should be provided: bed, bedside table, a desk and chair, lamp, wardrobe, shelves, cupboards, coffee tables, and, if you're very lucky, some comfortable

chairs or sofas. However, it's also possible to ask for extra furniture (e.g., more shelves or a new mattress) or to remove/replace worn or unsuitable items.



If you bring any electrical appliances, make sure they are suitable for the supply in the UK (230V 50Hz single-phase with 3-pin plugs). Some electronic devices are restricted or otherwise must first be safety-checked and cleared for use. Details can be found in the [Student Handbook](#).

If whilst living at your hostel you need something repaired, such as a broken lock or washing machine, you can submit a maintenance request using [this request form](#). For gas, water leaks and overflows, structural movements, live electrics or any other emergencies please call the Maintenance Department on 01223 338705 on weekdays or the Porters on weekends 01223 338671.

3.2.2 Internet & TV

Most postgraduate rooms and hostels are now connected to the University Wi-Fi, *eduroam*. Details and information on how to connect to the Wi-Fi can be found on the [University Information Services webpage](#).

If, however, your room is not yet connected to *eduroam* Wi-Fi, all postgraduate rooms have wired internet connections, which provide high-speed internet access. You're allowed to connect your own router or wireless access point to the College network. However, this point must be configured by College **IT staff** to ensure it will not compromise the security or efficiency of the network.

The first time you connect you will need to enter a username and password, which you can find in your welcome pack. If you lose this information, please contact the IT support via ITSupport@joh.cam.ac.uk.



If you plan to bring/buy a TV or watch TV (live or catch-up) on your computer, you're obliged to acquire a **UK TV licence**, which costs around £150 per year. Licences must be paid separately for College bedrooms and communal rooms.

3.2.3 Cooking Facilities

The kitchens in the hostels are communal. Most kitchens are fairly small but adequate for most purposes. There are individual cupboards in all the kitchens, and a reasonable amount of fridge and freezer space. The College doesn't provide cooking equipment or utensils, although most hostels have a selection of pots, pans, crockery and cutlery left behind by former residents. Most kitchens have microwaves, kettles, toasters and the like.

Please be considerate when cooking in the kitchens and make life easier for everyone sharing with you. Dirty dishes left in the sink make for unhappy hostel-mates and will not be cleaned by bedders (see description of their duties [below](#)).

3.2.4 Laundry, Bedding and Bedders

Most hostels have a laundry room with free washing machines, dryers and an ironing board. You will need to bring/buy your own bed linen: sheets, pillowcases and duvet covers - Marks & Spencer or John Lewis are quick options for this located in the city centre. A cheaper selection can usually be found at Argos, TKMaxx, Primark and Wilko. The College provides pillows and duvets, though the duvet is thin, so you might want to buy/bring your own or add a blanket. Towels are not provided.

Hostel living rooms, kitchens, and bathrooms are cleaned every day from Monday to Friday by College cleaners (known as *bedders*). Bedders do not do dishes and are not provided for family/couples housing.

3.2.5 Waste

St John's has set a target of 75% correct waste separation which requires everyone to make an effort to recycle. Hostels must empty their own rubbish and may have to take bins to the street (you can find your bin collection day [here](#)). If you live in Corfield, the cleaners will only empty the communal recycling bin. The communal landfill will be your responsibility to arrange with others in your corridor (we recommend making a rotating duty chart to make things easy). Please ensure you put the correct items in



the right bin. Many of our postgraduate hostels are eligible for the compost program; however, like the landfill, you are responsible for emptying the compost bin with others in your accommodation. Don't forget to empty them at least a couple times a week, otherwise you'll attract flies and vermin!

3.2.6 Sustainability

St John's College is committed to reduce its carbon footprint and improve sustainability practises. Such efforts have recently paid off, crowning the College with the Platinum Green Impact Award in 2021. Here are some of the projects college has committed to:

- 80% of hostels and furnished lets are fitted with Smart Meters
- Reduction of plastic packaging in the Buttery
- Food sourced locally and sustainably
- Garden waste chipped and used as mulch
- Cleaning products predominantly plant-based
- Food waste bins installed in student kitchens
- Allotment gardens at 1 Madingley with rain water collection for watering
- Several initiatives and plans in place to improve biodiversity on College grounds

The SBR committee is always looking for ways to advise college on how to reduce its carbon footprint. If you ever have any ideas on how you think would improve sustainability within College, be sure to contact your SBR Environmental Officers, **Margherita** and **Sophia**! If you would like to learn more about what St John's and the University are doing for the environment, check out [the Cambridge Green Challenge](#), [Cambridge Zero Society](#), and the [College Environment webpage](#).

3.2.7 Parking

The larger College hostels and St Johns Road have space for car parking, but you'll need to register with the College and are not guaranteed a spot near your hostel. Email the Domestic Bursar's Office (dbursar@joh.cam.ac.uk) to register for a parking permit. Most postgraduates end up with a bicycle, as Cambridge is flat, and cars are largely banned from the city centre (see [Getting Around](#) for further information on cycling in Cambridge). Please note that bikes need to be registered with the Porters. Many hostels have covered cycle sheds but you should still make sure to lock your bike properly



and securely! Bike theft is the no. 1 crime in Cambridge and is even more common particularly at the beginning of the academic year.

3.2.8 Family/Couples' Accommodation

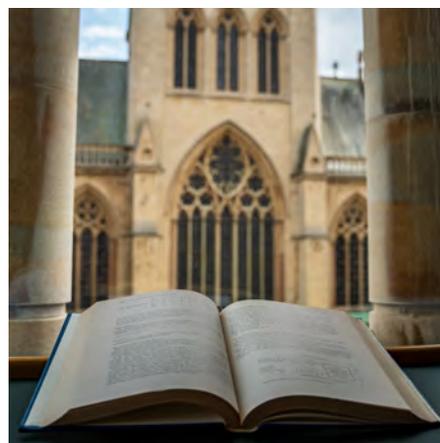
If you're moving into a furnished let, there are some things that will likely be different. The furnished lets are located mostly in Northampton Street, Benians Court, and the White House (Madingley Road). You might not be on the College network for internet. Even if you have or plan to get a mobile, you may need to arrange a landline for the sake of your internet connection. Major internet providers in the UK include: BT, Sky, Vodafone. You can check if you have internet with the [Accommodation Office](#) before you arrive.

If your partner, or any other adult formally living with you, is not a student, you will need to pay partial [council tax](#). In order to get your student reduction (100% if every adult in the house is a student, 25% if not), you will need to send the City Council a letter from the College proving your student status, which can be requested from [Student Services](#).

Note that duvets are not usually provided (as they are for rooms in the hostels). Kitchen supplies/cooking utensils will depend on what has been left behind by previous residents. Non-students, including domestic partners sharing College accommodation, are not insured under the College's standard insurance plan.

3.3 Library

The College Library is divided into two sections. The Old Library dates from 1624 and houses historic manuscripts, rare books and personal papers. The modern Working Library in Chapel Court houses borrowable books and current periodicals, as well as computer and work facilities. It has over 120 reader places and capacity for 120,000 books on open access. The Working Library is open to all members of the College but opening hours may vary due to COVID-19. Further information can be found [here](#).



3.4 College Welfare

Starting a new part of your life can be exciting, but it can also be stressful and intimidating. Finding the right person to talk to can make life much, much easier. The [College website](#) provides more information on College Welfare in general.

Your [College tutor](#) is available for non-academic matters, including financial support, personal difficulties, problems with your supervisor, etc. The welfare team ([Ruth](#), [Karen](#), and [Andrew](#)) are also available to provide a listening ear and guidance/advice for any concerns you may have about your mental or physical health. [Student Services](#) (F staircase Chapel Court) can help with College issues, such as bills, student cards etc. You are also always more than welcome to reach out to anyone on the SBR committee; although not trained, we respect confidentiality. If after your Tutor, the Health Centre, Chaplain, or Committee, you still don't feel comfortable discussing something, you can also submit an anonymous report on our website [here](#). This form can be used for anything including, but not limited to, racial bias, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or even bringing to our attention someone who you think might need a little extra support.

For more informal queries, your [College buddy](#) will share personal experiences of College and University life. They'll meet up with you at least twice during the first term, and be a friendly face as you get used to Cambridge postgraduate life. The [SBR Committee](#) welcomes questions, and [Welfare Officers](#) are especially available to direct you to the appropriate people/places.

Outside of College, the [University Counselling Service](#) has a professional team of counsellors, psychotherapists, and cognitive behavioural therapists. You can drop by, call, or email for an appointment (usually available within a few weeks; sooner if urgent). [Nightline](#) (01223 744 444) is a student-run listening support and information service, available from 7pm to 7am during [term](#).

NB: Students get unlimited access to [Headspace](#) (meditation app) with *Spotify Premium*!



3.4.1 LGBTQIA+

Cambridge is liberal and accepting, and we want everyone to feel welcome, however you feel about your sexuality or gender identity. There is a strong LGBT+ presence at College and University level. At St John's, the Welfare Officers are your contacts if you're seeking information and/or support, and they will do their best to advise you or direct you towards someone who can help. Our current College Chaplain, **Andrew**, is openly LGBT+ and is a great welfare resource.

The **Cambridge SU LGBT+ liberation campaign** is the autonomous student-run group dedicated to representing and supporting all LGBT+ students in Cambridge. They organise nights out and postgraduate socials, as well as talks, pub crawls, seminars, film viewings and exhibitions. In previous years they have run parenting schemes, which establish contacts for freshers and other students who haven't been in touch with the Cambridge LGBT+ community, for advice, emotional support or just for a fun night out. SU LGBT+ also publishes a termly magazine and runs campaigns and projects. Check out their mailing list and social media channels [here!](#)



3.4.2 Consent

Under no circumstance is sexual misconduct tolerated in our community. The SBR Committee affirms this statement, believes that consent is active and willing participation in sexual activity, and supports you and your right to report sexual misconduct of any kind (NB: Ask the Welfare Officers for **free menstrual cups and contraception supplies**). Consent means that all parties have the freedom and capacity to make a choice. The brilliant "**consent as tea**" video provides a light reminder about the key characteristics of consent.

If you've been affected by sexual harassment or assault, please do not hesitate to approach the SBR President or Welfare Officers who are trained to help you access the resources you need. The **incident report form** can also be used to in these instances, whether for



yourself, a friend, or someone else in college. Details about the university reporting procedure can be found here: [Breaking the Silence](#).

3.5 Food & Drink

There are two main options for eating in College, both are subsidised.

3.5.1 Buttery Dining Room

This year, The Buttery Dining Room (normally just called the *Buttery*) is located in the semi-permanent structure found on the south lawn of First Court whilst construction on *new* Community Hub takes place (in normal times, it can be found under K staircase Second Court). The Buttery is an informal cafeteria open for



three meals a day (except for Sunday breakfast). The atmosphere is casual and friendly, and the value is great: approx. £4.00 for a cooked breakfast and £5.00 for a full cooked lunch or dinner. You pay with your University Card, which contains pay-as-you-go credit once *UPay* is set up. Details about *UPay* can be found in your information packs given on arrival.

Along with hot meals, you will also find separate counters for cold meats, salads, desserts, patisserie items, drinks, and sandwiches. Menus for hot meals, including vegetarian and vegan options, are available on the College website. You can find the Buttery's opening hours [here](#).

3.5.2 Dining in Hall

In normal times, three-course dinners with optional wine are served in the College's beautiful Great Hall every evening except Saturday during term.

You will receive further information about dining in Hall via email. Tickets must be purchased in advance online at [UPay](#) – before 2pm

three days before the dinner (and 2pm on Friday for dinner on Sunday) – and cost around £10 including wine and £6.50 without wine (both include water). Those with wine tickets are served three glasses of wine, either red or white for each glass. A full range of dietary requirements are available when booking your ticket on Upay. Apart from requiring your gown, there is no dress code, although most people dress fairly formally (dress or lounge suit). Dinner begins at 7.30pm sharp (**you won't be admitted if you're late – seriously!**) and is over by 9pm at the latest.



There are two graces (one before dinner and one before the Fellows leave hall, usually around 8.30pm); whilst the Fellows are seated everyone else must remain seated. See Appendix E to the College's [Student Handbook](#). for further details on conduct when dining.

Taking family and friends to dinner in Hall is a great way to entertain. Normally, you can take up to four guests on BA Table nights, or with permission from the Dean of Discipline by filling in a form (download from your [student page](#) on the College website - login required) a few days in advance. On non-BA nights, you can take three guests. This year, however, hall is only available to members of college until COVID restrictions have eased.

3.5.3 BA Table Dinner

One of the major aspects of postgraduate life at St John's is BA Table. This is when a whole table in the Great Hall is set aside for postgraduate students every **Tuesday** and **Friday** during term. Make sure you purchase your BA Table ticket (not a regular Hall



ticket!) online well in advance, since it often sells out (Fridays are always packed and are great fun). Drinks (port & sherry) are often offered in the SBR before and after hall. Tickets for BA Table are available only to postgraduate students, and can be purchased in the same manner as regular hall tickets. BA Table also is available most Tuesdays and Fridays out of term in the Parsons Room.



3.5.4 Graduates Dine with Fellows

Twice a term, postgraduates can book tickets (via UPay) to dine with the College fellows at the so-called **High Table**. This is a great chance to meet College academics and to see the Senior Combination Room, where drinks are served before and after dinner. If you manage to get a ticket (it sells out very quickly!) then enter B staircase Second Court from 7pm, where you'll be directed upstairs for the pre-dinner reception. We look forward to dining with the fellows again once restrictions have eased!

3.5.5 The Bar

The Bar is another key centre of social life for the whole College. It is decorated like a traditional British pub, and is a great place to grab a drink and catch up with friends. This year, the bar can is in the semi-permanent structure where it serves a range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, snacks and pub food whilst the new Community Hub is being developed. They also have games and most newspapers.

Like in the Buttery, pay using your University Card (top-up online at **UPay**). The



Bar also takes debit cards for purchases above £5 and cash. The bar's opening hours can be found [here](#).

3.6 Dress codes

College events generally have associated dress codes of some description. You'll quickly get to know what is required and/or permissible. Some of the common dress codes with loose examples include:

Casual	informal, normal, every-day clothes
Smart casual	open shirt, slacks; blazer; dress; skirt/pants and top
Lounge suit	suit, shirt and tie; cocktail dress; skirt/pants and dressy top
Black Tie	dinner jacket, trousers and bow tie (tux); formal gown/dress; dressy cocktail dress

Many college events also require you to wear a gown (such as for dining in Hall, or dining at other colleges). This will always be specified beforehand. See the next section for more information about gowns.

3.7 Gowns

Gowns are worn for dinner in the Great Hall and special College events. You should endeavour to purchase a gown as soon as possible. This year, gowns can be purchased from the Registration Centre on October 2nd for £34; we are delighted that this year they will be supplied by Churchill



Gowns *and* are eco-friendly (made using recycled plastics). Even better, one of the co-founders is a Johnian! Gowns can be hired or bought from the [Cambridge SU gown shop](#) (cheapest option), or from a number of shops in and around Cambridge (e.g.,

Ryder & Amies, Ede & Ravenscroft, A.E. Clothier). Ryder & Amies is also offering a 20% discount (valid until September 30th) for St John's students against all college merchandise with them (including the College scarf, tie, mug, and teddy bear). This can be redeemed online at ryderamies.co.uk using the code: FreshJohns21.

Anyone who holds a degree from Cambridge should wear the gown of the highest degree held. If that is the BA, you should wear the BA gown. If that's a Cambridge Master's degree (MPhil etc), you should wear the gown of that degree. **You'll need a gown for the matriculation photo!** Anyone who does not hold a Cambridge degree should wear gowns as follows:

- If you are 23 years old or younger, wear a BA gown.
- If you are 24 years old or older, wear an MA gown.
- Affiliated Students (students with an undergraduate degree from another university who are reading for the BA in Cambridge), wear the undergraduate gown of St John's College.

3.8 Post/Mail

Whilst at St John's, post can reach you at:

<Your name>

St John's College

(The Great Gate Lodge)

Cambridge

CB2 1TP

Post and parcels will be placed in your pigeonhole. You can use your hostel address as well, but the advantage of having things delivered to the College is that the Porters will be there to receive them. If a large parcel is delivered to your house and nobody is there, it is taken back to the main post office, around 30 minutes away, and you will have to retrieve it yourself. If it is delivered to college however, the Porters will email you to inform you that a parcel is waiting at the **Great Gate Porters' Lodge**. The other advantage of having your post delivered to College is that it will (if you ask the Porters) be forwarded to other addresses if you go on holiday, and if you move hostels at some point you won't need to change your correspondence address.



3.9 Clubs & Societies

Most students end up being involved in College and university societies, and it's certainly worth attending the **University Freshers' Fair**, which will be at Parker's Piece on the **5th & 6th October** with some COVID restrictions in place. There will also be a virtual fair available for anyone isolating or unable to attend! They are the best way to get involved in some of the hundreds of societies, for pastimes as diverse as hang-gliding, bridge, computer graphics and chocolate-eating. And there are plenty more mainstream clubs too. [The Registered Clubs and Societies site](#) has a full listing of societies.

University societies usually comprise students from different Colleges. College societies tend to take their membership from their own College, though some, especially music or drama societies, are more wide reaching. Sports teams tend to be run at the College level (except for the very best) and whatever your standard there should be something suitable. At the **Societies Fair**, you will probably be asked to put your name down on a contact list for anything you're interested in. The clubs will then tell you when their *squash* is. A squash, other than being a racquet game, a fruit drink, and a type of gourd, is a free reception to convince prospective members to join. Don't worry about paying to join early - go to the squash, eat and drink as much as you can, and then decide. You may find that although you'd really like to be involved with a dozen different societies, you only have time for two or three. Having said this, some societies require a serious commitment early on (for example, higher-level sports teams and choirs) - you may need to arrange try-outs or auditions in the first week of term. Yes, it can get very busy!



3.10 Sports

There are many sports clubs within the University and College. A complete list of university sports clubs and societies can be found at this [directory](#).

University-level sports teams will represent themselves at the Freshers' Fair, whilst College sports clubs will make an appearance at the College Freshers' Fair. If you're interested in sport, make sure you attend these fairs and sign up for their mailing lists - that's the best way to get started (although there will be opportunities to join clubs later, if you can't make the fair). The city of Cambridge also has many sports clubs.

Within College, there are facilities for almost every major sport except swimming— Not all of them are easy to locate though! There are two squash courts (also housing a croquet set) near the [School of Pythagoras](#); a snooker table in the basement of Cripps; a badminton court in the [Fisher Building](#); and volleyball, football and cricket grounds along with multi-purpose courts (tennis/netball/basketball) on the [playing fields](#) – further information can be found on [here](#).

3.10.1 Fitness Centre

The College has basic gym facilities, which are free for college members to use, once you have had a gym induction. The College has a fitness centre and a free weights area underneath the [Cripps Building](#). Induction sessions are available for the fitness centre on [moodle](#). We are working with Student Services to secure a



date & time for in person training for the free weights area! Remember to [book](#) one of the four slots of available in advance and follow *all* College COVID guidelines.

3.10.2 College Teams

If you're looking to play competitive sport at College level, you can either join a **College team** – which may be a mix of undergraduate and postgraduate students – or sign up for a grads-only team. Whilst there are College teams for virtually every sport, teams exclusively for postgrads are limited to football and cricket. Each year, the SBR enters a football and cricket team into the postgraduate league within the university. Sport funding for grad teams is available for the necessary replacement of sports items such as balls, clubs and other small expenses, and can be requested by application. More information on **college teams** and **sport facilities** can be found on the linked websites. Also, there will be tournaments and fun sporting activities organised by the SBR throughout the year. These events are more casual and everyone is welcome! Matches are usually played on Saturdays, with occasional training – normally taking the form of a kick-around on the College fields. If you have any additional questions about sport in Cambridge, get in touch with the SBR or JCR sports officers!

NB: Whilst there are only two postgraduate-only teams available at the moment, with enough interest, the SBR sports officer can work with you and other college sports clubs to make more grads-only teams available!

3.10.3 Punting

Punting (pushing a flat-bottomed boat with a pole) just about counts as sport too! The College punts are available from the beginning of Easter Term until the end of October, from the Cripps Porters' Lodge (£7/hour, in cash upon return). The Punt Society is always looking for volunteers to help take care of the punts, in return for



which all your punting is free and you will be invited to *PuntSoc* events. Further information is available from the **PuntSoc website**.

3.11 Department

Eventually, you'll need to visit your department, to meet your supervisor, etc. Some students need to attend safety courses or other workshops soon after arriving in Cambridge; information will be sent to you if this applies. If all this sounds a bit daunting, that's okay. One of the effects of the College system is an increase in the level of bureaucracy. It's not at all unusual to find yourself spending the first few weeks running around between College, department and university trying to sort things out. This is where your SBR buddy, flatmates, or co-workers will be really helpful!



Chapter 4 Cambridge

4.1 Money

4.1.1 Banks

When you arrive in Cambridge, you may wish to set up an account with a bank here. There are several different banks near the College, many boasting special offers for student accounts and extended opening hours in the first week of term. However, arranging access to your money may take some time.

Opening a bank account typically requires a passport, an official letter from the university confirming your student status, and College confirmation that you are in residence. There will be a general bank letter in your welcome pack; however, should this prove to be insufficient, contact [Student Services](#) and they will be able to help you further. When choosing a bank, you should make sure that it offers free checking with no minimum balance, a chequebook, and an ATM/debit card. Barclays, Lloyd's, HSBC and NatWest are the most popular among students.

4.1.2 Payments and College Bills

Many grants and scholarships can be paid directly into a British account by arrangement. However, your first cheque may not arrive for some time (especially if you do not yet have a British bank account!), so you will need to bring or arrange access to enough money to survive. Cash machines/ATMs are dotted throughout the city centre (the closest is an RBS branch on Trinity Street, about a minute's walk from the main gate), and can usually be used to draw money from foreign accounts (although this can incur fees). Again, if you are coming from abroad, it is strongly advised that you make a reliable plan to have funds available during the first few weeks.

NB: Note that college bills (including rent) are sent out termly. Further, your UPay account will have £100 credit loaded on automatically, so you can eat in the Buttery without worrying during your first week or so. This will be charged to your College bill later in the term. College is also usually willing to postpone your first

bill if you are unable to access your grant money.

4.1.3 How much money do I need?

The first few weeks here tend to be quite expensive, with a number of one-off purchases in addition to regular expenses; which can add up to upwards of a couple hundred pounds! Here are some prices for a rough guide. Membership fees for University clubs and societies generally range from free to £20, although attractive discounts are often available during Freshers' Fortnight. Additionally, you will want to buy things for your room - posters, crockery, plants, a kettle, etc. If you're not used to British weather, you may need to buy warm clothes or rain gear (see [checklist](#) at the end of this guide). You will also want to stock up on basic food and cooking supplies, toiletries, etc.

Additionally, you may need stationery and textbooks for your course within a short time, although you may be able to open an account with the bookshop (make sure you keep all receipts to claim against your [Learning and Research Fund](#), described below). Depending on the location of your department and your other activities, you may need a bike at some stage, although it is perfectly possible to survive without. For more information on cycling and related costs, see the [section](#) in this guide. You could also try online classifieds such as [Gumtree](#) and various Facebook groups. It's often possible to pick up a wide range of bargains from departing students. Here's a rough guide of the pricing of various things in Cambridge:

Pint of beer	£4.50
Cinema ticket	£11.50
Small kettle	£15.00
Sandwich & cake in town	£6.50
3 course meal in Hall	£10.00
Meal in College buttery	£4.40
1 pint of milk	£0.59
Tube of toothpaste	£2.00
Loaf of bread	£1.20
Box of cereal (400g)	£3.00



4.1.4 Financial Difficulties

Students are urged to take full advantage of College research and travel grants, full details of which can be found [here](#). **All postgraduate Johnnians are automatically entitled to £500 per annum from the Learning and Research Fund.** This fund pays for half the cost of approved books, periodicals, software, hardware, or equipment, and the full costs of course or research-related activities such as conferences, workshops, summer schools, summer research programmes, and language courses. The form for reimbursement is on the student page of the College website. Please note, the fund only covers purchases made after the commencement of your first term.

In cases of severe financial difficulties, you are strongly advised to see your [College tutor](#) at the earliest available opportunity. Discretionary funds are available for such cases, applications for which are considered on an individual basis. If for any reason you should find it undesirable to broach the matter with your tutor, you should contact Tutor for Postgraduates (Miss Tomaselli via st240@cam.ac.uk) for the 2021-2022 academic year. You can also speak to the [SBR Committee](#) for advice.

Tutors are very approachable and experienced in dealing with all kinds of issues. Don't be shy about money problems. It is not unusual for postgraduate students to encounter financial difficulties, despite having fulfilled the financial requirements for entry to the university. You are advised to take the time to examine the range of awards/funds that are available to postgraduate students (login required)

- [Hardship Awards for postgraduates](#)
- [The Isaac Newton Trust](#)
- [Travelling Expenses Fund](#)
- Grants Register: this reference lists all public grants in the UK. Ask at the College library main desk.

4.1.5 Insurance

All students living in College accommodation, including postgraduate hostels and furnished lets, are covered under a Block Possessions Insurance Policy from *Endsleigh*, which is incorporated into your rent. Coverage is quite extensive, and now also includes pedal cycles and accessories. Non-students, including domestic partners sharing College accommodation, cannot be insured under the plan: the policy is only available to



students of the College residing in College-owned accommodation. You don't need to do anything to activate this cover, but it is important for you to check and ensure that you fully understand the protection provided and whether it is sufficient for your needs. St John's College, Cambridge shares your details with Endsleigh for the purpose of providing you with contents insurance. Visit <https://my.endsleigh.co.uk/signup> to:

- Check your level of cover
- Review key exclusions and limitations
- Check your policy excess - the amount you pay when you make a claim
- Extend and personalise your cover to protect laptops, phones, and other valuables
- Learn how to make a claim

If you plan to live in private accommodation, the cost of individual insurance is typically between £30 and £100 per year, depending on the type of cover and value of insured items. For those with parental homes in Britain, the cheapest way to cover personal belongings is often to extend their home contents insurance policy. Although Cambridge is mostly a safe city, security in College hostels is still important. A bit of common-sense will help to safeguard your possessions, including: always locking your room, front **and** back hostel doors and shutting the windows; telling your neighbours if you are going away; making sure you know how to cancel stolen bankcards and chequebooks; never trying to tackle a burglar yourself (in an emergency call the police on 999 or 1-999 from a landline in your hostel); and always locking your bike securely. If you do have something stolen you will need to call the police - *Finding that your bike has been stolen is not an emergency*. Call 111 for matters that are NOT an emergency.

4.2 Getting Around

4.2.1 Cycling in Cambridge

Most students end up with a bicycle, as Cambridge is flat, cars are largely banned from the city centre, parking is a nightmare, and it is possible to get virtually everywhere conveniently by bicycle. For postgraduates working at Addenbrooke's or the West Cambridge site, or those living in one of the more distant hostels, a bicycle is particularly useful. The provision of cycle lanes in Cambridge is improving, with Madingley Road and Grange Road now quite convenient for cycling. Moreover, an increasing number of hostels have covered cycle sheds, either fully enclosed or fitted with racks to which



bikes can be securely locked. If you're looking to escape the bustle of town, a number of well-maintained cycle paths put the beautiful Cambridgeshire countryside within easy reach.

NB: There are several one-way streets in Cambridge (e.g. Sidney Street), so do not cycle the wrong direction! You may otherwise end up being fined. You can find a Cambridge cycle map [here](#).

We strongly advise you buy a good bike lock, as bike theft is extremely high in Cambridge. You can also buy a decent helmet inexpensively from shops such as *Decathlon*; with so many bikes and cars, and if you are unfamiliar with the roads, it is possible to have an accident. **Please be safe and protect yourself!** More information on these points can be found [below](#).

4.2.2 Buying a Bicycle

Bikes and anything related to them can be quite expensive in Cambridge. Although it is possible to buy a new bike for as little as £70 or a used one for less than £50, the quality of either will typically be low. Expect to pay £100 or more for a high-quality used bike, or upwards of £200 – £300 for a new one. Cheaper new bikes of good quality can be found in stores further from the city centre (e.g., Mill Road). If you're willing to shop via classifieds or the internet, prices can be much lower, although delivery and assembly may be something of a hassle. Some of the more reputable used bicycle vendors in town (see the [Shopping Guide](#)) offer three or six months of free repairs, a definite advantage if you plan to do most of your riding in Cambridge. Full details on where to buy bicycles and accessories, both in town and online are provided in the [Shopping Guide](#).

4.2.3 Bicycle Theft

Bicycle theft is one of Cambridge's biggest industries. Nevertheless, there are some simple things you can do to protect your property. The first thing you should do after getting your bike is **register it with the Porters**. This will allow you to store your bike in the secure bike shed in Forecourt, and will help you recover it should it be stolen.

Always lock your bike: Secure the frame of your bicycle to a solid object, such as a metal railing or cycle rack, with a well-made lock (U-locks are a particularly good choice). Free-locking - locking the wheel to the frame without securing either to a solid



object - is fine for a quick dash into Sainsbury's, but a bad idea for any longer period of time. Whilst your bike can't be ridden away when free-locked, it can be carried away!

Many cycles these days have quick-releases: a small lever mechanism that allows the wheels, and often the saddle, to be removed without any tools. In Cambridge, these are an invitation to theft or vandalism. Replace them with a simple nut and bolt, available from any hardware store. If you choose to keep your quick-releases, use an auxiliary lock to secure your wheels to the frame of the bike.

4.2.4 Cycling Safety and the Law

Cycling laws are much more rigorously enforced in Cambridge than in other parts of Britain. For your own safety, and to avoid getting a ticket, it's important to be acquainted with a few basic points:

- When riding after sunset or in inclement weather, **your bicycle must be fitted with lights**: white in the front and red in the rear. A set of lights costs around £10-£20. Being caught at night without them incurs a £50 fine, although a first time offense can be waived if you show proof of purchase afterwards. Sometimes bike shops will including them in a package deal!
- Whilst it's legal to cycle without a **helmet**, it's a bad idea. A helmet may cost upwards of £25, but it's certainly a good investment!
- Cycling on the pavement (sidewalk) is both illegal and discourteous. Cycle only on the road or in designated cycle lanes (these are marked in red).
- Cyclists must obey all traffic regulations, just the same as automobiles. This means stopping at marked pedestrian crossings and stoplights, and not cycling across zebra crossings or pedestrian crossings at traffic lights.
- Before turning, signal your intention to pedestrians and other vehicles by extending your arm in the direction you intend to turn.
- A bell is extremely useful in Cambridge. Use it to signal when coming around blind corners and to (politely) ask pedestrians to move out of your way if they're walking on the road or on a shared pedestrian/cycling path.
- Look out for and obey signs marked *Cyclists Dismount*. These typically indicate a dangerous confluence of pedestrians ahead, such as a bridge.



4.2.5 Driving in Britain

If you wish to drive a car in the UK you must hold a valid driving licence. International students who are in the UK for more than twelve months are obliged to obtain a UK licence by taking a driving test. However, licences issued in EU member states and a few other countries (NZ, Australia, etc) can be exchanged for a full UK licence without having to take the test. The vehicle you drive must be registered, insured, taxed and if it is over three years old it must have an MOT certificate. The application forms for tax and vehicle registration can be obtained from a post office.

There are strict alcohol limits for drivers in the UK, which are rigorously enforced, so don't do it.

4.3 City Guide

4.3.1 Student Discount Cards

A variety of discount cards offering special deals of different kinds are available to you as a student. The **UNiDAYS**, **Student Beans** and **TOTUM** cards will get you discounts at various stationers, eateries, coach companies, cinemas etc. **IRIS** cards may be purchased from STA Travel on Sidney Street. Note that almost all shops, cinemas and restaurants in Cambridge will accept your blue **University Card** as proof of student status.

4.3.2 Shops

4.3.2.1 Supermarkets

- **Sainsbury's** (Sidney Street) is the most convenient supermarket and open from 7:30am until 10:00pm weekdays and Saturday; Sunday from 11am to 5pm. The branch by Emmanuel College on St Andrew's Street is open daily until 11pm, even Sundays.
- **Marks and Spencer** (Market Square) is slightly more pricey than Sainsbury's, selling its own brand products, but the quality is good. A smaller, *Simply Food* store is located in the train station and at the Beehive Centre found on Newmarket Road. Closes by 7 pm most days, though earlier Sun-Tue.
- **Tesco** and **ASDA** (Newmarket Road & Bar Hill) are much larger and cheaper but you will need a car or a very sturdy rucksack and a spirit for adventure as it is



further.

- **Waitrose** (the Grafton Centre and Trumpington Street) is further and more expensive than Sainsbury's, but better quality.
- **Revital** on Bridge Street and **Arjuna Wholefoods** on Mill Road are good, if often pricey, options for vegan/special diets. Tesco also has some staples.
- **The market** (Market Square) has several fruit and vegetable stalls with a wide range of produce as well as non-food stalls. Prices and quality vary.
- **Mill Road** is where you'll find very well-stocked Chinese, Korean, South Asian, and Middle-Eastern supermarkets (amongst others). **Al-Amin supermarket** is usually a good bet if you're missing a specific ingredient (especially South Asian). There is also a Portuguese/Polish market on **Chesterton Road**.

4.3.2.2 Chemists (Pharmacy)

- **Boots** (Sidney Street) is a large chemist that dispenses prescriptions and also sells small electrical appliances.
- **Superdrug** (Sidney Street) is slightly cheaper and closer and also dispenses prescriptions.

4.3.2.3 General

There are two main **shopping centres** in Cambridge: the **Grand Arcade** and the **Grafton Centre**. Other useful shops include:

- **Argos** is a catalogue store, which sells a vast range of products at cheap prices. A good default choice for houseware. A larger store is located off of Newmarket Road in the Cambridge Retail Park.
- **John Lewis** (St. Andrew's Street/Grand Arcade) is a large upscale department store which sells just about everything you might want.
- **Lakeland** (Sidney Street) sells expensive upmarket cooking equipment.
- **Ryman** (Sidney Street) is a smaller stationery shop with a different range and offers a 10% student discount with their student loyalty card.
- **Staples** (Chesterton Road) good value and large selection for office supplies and simple computing needs.
- **Wilko** (Grafton Centre) has great offers on homewares and household goods.



4.3.2.4 Bicycles

- **The Bikeman** (Cambridge Market Square, www.thebikeman.co.uk) Cycle parts, repairs, and used cycles with a 6-month guarantee.
- **Bridge Cycles** (22a Bridge Street, across from Magdalene College.) Quick and reasonably priced repairs and a small selection of used cycles.
- **SportsDirect** (Lion Yard Shopping Centre, near Christ's College) Unbeatable prices on Karrimore cycling apparel, but don't buy a cycle here.
- **Rutland Cycling** (Corn Exchange Street) popular store for purchasing bikes, parts, repairs and rentals.
- **Townsend's Light Blue Cycle Centre** (72 Chesterton Road, opposite the Cooperative) New cycles, parts and accessories. Carries a wide range of hand-made Pashley cycles, and an own-brand Cambridge alternative: *The Light Blue*.
- **University Cycles** (9 Victoria Avenue, near the College boathouse). A wide selection of traditional Dutch Bikes and excellent prices for accessories. Go here for a pump, a new saddle, a rear rack, or panniers.
- **Wiggle** (**Online only**) Great prices on a wide range of cycle parts and accessories.
- **Cycle King** (195-197 Mill Rd) Quite far away from the city centre but brand new bikes are sold for around £130 at a reasonable quality.
- **Bicycle Ambulance** (61 Ditton Walk) and **Primo Cycles** (5-7 Jesus Lane just past Patisserie Valerie) are the closest cycle shops to College and have friendly, competent staff.
- Slightly further from College, there is **Lensfield Road Cycles** (Lensfield Road), and the **Bike Shed** and **Cam Cycles** (Mill Road) for parts and buying bikes.

4.4 Going Out Guide

4.4.1 Pubs

The UK is well known for its pubs. And apart from getting a pint, you can also get food at most pubs (there is usually no table service though, order at the bar). All pubs, clubs, restaurants and bars are non-smoking.

- **The Punter** (Northampton Street) is a gastro-pub close to the back of College by the squash courts and does very nice food - during the week you can get a £5 lunch deal! It also has a nice outdoor area.
- **The Maypole** (Park Street) serves an excellent range of drinks and has a late



licence on Friday and Saturday (you can buy drinks past 12am). The traditional Johnian option!

- **The Mitre** (Bridge Street) is directly opposite the side of College. In addition to a large selection of ales, the wine list is extensive and they offer good food (look out for their main course + drink offer at lunch/dinner).
- **The Baron of Beef** (Bridge Street) is next door to the Mitre and is more intimate.
- **The Pickerel Inn** (Magdalene Street) is a low-ceilinged traditional pub that can get very busy, but is definitely good for a winter's night. Good selection of real ales, including the favourite *Old Peculier*.
- **The Castle** (Castle Hill) serves a great selection of beers from the Adnams brewery.
- **The BrewDog** (Bene't Street) just opened last year and serves Scottish craft beer.
- **The Eagle** (Bene't Street) is a large central pub that is beautiful, but usually too choked with tourists to be useable. This is where Watson and Crick famously announced the discovery of the double helix.
- **The Bath House** (Bene't Street) is near the Eagle and has the longest row of beer pumps in Cambridge. Can get very crowded.
- **The Pint Shop** (Peas Hill – off the Market Square): sleek and London-y; a pub for people who don't like pubs. In addition to wine & beer, they have a menu of gins. The Sloe Gin & Ginger is excellent. Serve bar snacks and have a separate restaurant at the back/upstairs.
- **The Anchor** (Silver Street) is a sprawling pub overlooking the river that serves good lunches and is an ideal pit stop on a punting trip.
- **Cambridge Brewhouse** (King Street) does in fact brew its own beer and serves food. Has a contrived sort of quirkiness (pots of herbs on the tables, mismatched china, lots of old books stacked in the windows). A good bet for watching big football (soccer) matches.
- **Cambridge Blue** (Gwydir Street) - excellent ales and food, usually quite busy. Has a nice garden at the rear. Excellent for watching football, has multiple screens.

4.4.2 Bars

- **Novi** (Regent Street) serves decent food during the day and more of a bar later in the evenings with various cocktails and open until late.
- **Cambridge Wine Merchants** (Bridge Street) their College-adjacent location includes a wine bar.
- **Six** (inside the Varsity Hotel, St. John's Rd) also does decent drinks. It's pricey



but has a great view from the rooftop bar.

- **ADC Bar** (Park Street), same entrance as the ADC Theatre, is very close to College and serves good-value drinks in a relaxed atmosphere. It often stays open late in term-time.
- **All Bar One** (Regent Street) is part of a national chain; large and trendy and particularly busy at the weekends.
- **La Raza** (Rose Crescent) is a café and lunch venue during the day, which becomes more of a bar in the evenings: open till 2am, often with live jazz. The postgraduate Union hosts club nights here every Tuesday.
- **Brown's** (Trumpington Street) is a renowned Oxbridge venue that has a wide range of British food, and is great for long lunches. They also mix a delicious cocktail, and have happy hour every Sunday-Wednesday after 4pm.

4.4.3 Clubs

- **The Regal** (Wetherspoons) (Regent Street) is part of a national pub chain renowned for its cheap prices, but the Cambridge branch also includes a large-ish dancefloor. Though it acts like a club, there is no cover charge. Open until 3am on Fridays and Saturdays. The classy way to end an evening. . .
- **Revolution** (Downing Street) Buying their student card for £4 gets you various deals throughout the week. Restaurant & bar on ground floor with three club floors and roof terrace.
- **Lola Lo** (Corn Exchange) is a faux-Tiki themed club with two dancefloors (one of which lights up) and a roof terrace. It hosts several student nights and is usually a fun place to end a night.
- **Vinyl (formerly known as Life)** (Sidney Street) is another club that goes by a name that it no longer actually has (its most recent iteration (as of September 2018) is *Vinyl*). It's an extensive underground club in the city centre, busy with students on Thursdays and Sundays. It has a fun atmosphere and runs an LGBTQIA+ friendly night on Tuesdays.
- **MASH (formerly known as Fez)** (Market Passage) is set up with a Moroccan atmosphere. Open every night of the week, Monday and Wednesday are student nights, and Sundays are indie nights run by fellow students. Often bring in well-known DJs.



4.4.4 Restaurants

- **Bridge Street** houses a lot of restaurants, most of which are chains (Cote, Byron, Wildwood, etc.).
- **Aromi** (Bene't Street) whilst technically a café, as they don't serve dinner, is possibly the most popular place to eat in Cambridge. There's constantly a line out the door. Serve pizzas, panini, arancini, various Sicilian desserts, and coffee. Lives up to the hype but a miserable pain to wait in line for.
- **Bill's** (Green Street) has straightforward, very tasty food, plus a friendly atmosphere and colourful decoration. Excellent breakfast stop.
- **Pizza Express** (Jesus Lane) is the nicest branch of this chain in Cambridge (there's another on Regent Street) with an oak-panelled dining room. **Franco Manca** (Market Square) has excellent pizza for £7–£10.
- **Midsummer House** (Midsummer Common) is the only 2 Michelin star restaurant in East Anglia.
- **Las Iguanas** (Quayside) is a chain serving pan-Latin American food in a cheerful atmosphere and has cocktail happy hours most days. Burritos can be found at **Nana Mexico** (Regent Street; Lion Yard).
- **Gardenia's (Gardie's)** (Rose Crescent) is a favourite post-drinking spot to pick up Greek food and chips. The **Van of Life** (aka *Mister Burger's Van*, aka *Trailer of Life*) is another post-drinking food place, which is parked on the College side of Market Square. *Uncle Frank's* and is colloquially known by another infamous name. Enough said.

4.4.5 Cafes and Coffee Shops

Cambridge has a variety of different cafes and coffee shops which welcome book-laden students looking for an endless supply of caffeine and a little corner in which to work. Coffee in the UK is improving in quality, although it's still be far from what Europeans and Antipodeans are used to.

- **Bould Brothers** (Bridge St, opposite the Round Church and Forecourt Porters' Lodge) excellent coffee (and recently featured in *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair!*).
- **Hot Numbers** (Trumpington Street, Mill Road) is another popular coffee shop.
- **Fitzbillies** (Trumpington Street and Bridge Street) Cambridge institution famous for it's sticky chelsea buns, if you need a serious pick-me-up during exam blues.



- **Michaelhouse Cafe** (Trinity Lane) is located inside a (deconsecrated) church. The high ceilings and stained glass windows offer a beautiful view whilst you study.
- **Harriet's** (Green Street) does afternoon tea and scones. Popular with tourists.



Chapter 5 Checklists

5.1 Things to do before/after you arrive

- Check out our [website](#), sign up to our [Facebook group](#), and follow us on [Instagram](#) for the latest updates!

5.2 Things to bring to Cambridge

- Bring an umbrella and a waterproof jacket.
- Black/dress shoes are a necessity for formal events.
- A winter coat, pair of gloves, scarf and hat, as it can get quite cold during the winter, especially when you're walking or riding your bike everywhere.
- For those wishing to travel to Europe, a large backpack will come in handy for weekend jaunts.
- Bring your College/university/trust papers proving you have been admitted, Cambridge accommodation papers, and your passport, and, for whom it applies, your VISA in your carry-on luggage because they will be demanded in part or full by customs at the airport before you're able to collect your checked baggage. These will also be helpful when applying for a bank account.
- Make several sets of colour copies of your passport, visa, credit cards, and other important documents. Leave one set with someone you trust, keep another in a safe place in your room in Cambridge, and put another in a discreet compartment of your luggage.
- Passport photos for various ID cards, although these increasingly use digital photos. There are plenty of shops around town that have photo booths to take care of this if you need more.
- Consider bringing a power adaptor for British plugs. You also may need a transformer because an adaptor merely enables you to plug in, whilst the transformer changes the voltage to what you need; you may fry your device otherwise.
- If you're attached to particular brands of over-the-counter medication, bring them with you as the brands and formulas may be different in the UK. You may also want to bring a copy of important medical records in case of illness.

5.3 What to do when you get to Cambridge

- Please follow the instructions provided via email about where to go on arrival and how to collect your room keys and University Card.
- Find your pigeonhole. The mailroom is next to the Porter's Lodge past the Great Gate.
- Get hold of a **gown**. Buy sooner rather than later: ex-rental gowns are much cheaper than new gowns.
- Read and follow instructions about the **College Induction** and Matriculation arrangements.
- Meet your **College tutor** and your **buddy**.
- Register with a doctor. You may also want to consider registering with a dentist, especially if you want to get involved in contact sports. For non-EU citizens, remember: as soon as you set foot outside the UK, you are no longer covered by the NHS. So be sure to purchase travel insurance before taking that weekend trip to Paris. (You may be eligible for an exemption from NHS co-payments and charges through the Low Income Scheme – ask your GP.)
- Any payment of bills or picking up of grant cheques can be done at the **Student Services** office (login required) in Chapel Court, next to the library.
- Get your Internet connection set up. As mentioned **above**, you may need a network cable to connect, and the username and password in your welcome pack.
- Set up a **bank** account. You are going to need a letter from **Student Services** stating that you live here and are a student. Make sure the name on your letter is exactly the same as the name on your passport. You should choose a bank quickly because it may take several days to get a letter from College and a few more days before you have access to your money. It is also a good idea to drop by your chosen bank and set up an appointment, as they are often inundated with new students and it may take a few days, or even weeks, to get an appointment to set up an account.
- Get your bike registered by the Porters under the Bike Registration Scheme (watch out for an email about this during Freshers' Fortnight). If you have a car, register it with the motor proctor dbursar@joh.cam.ac.uk.
- Memorise your CRSid (Cambridge's IT systems' unique identifier for you). It is a combination of your initials and some random numbers, and defines your email address.
- Get a British sim card. If you're going to be here for more than one year, it's worth getting a contract, but, pay-as-you-go might be good enough depending on



what you use your phone for. To set up a contract, you'll need a bank account. Vodafone, Virgin, EE, and Three all have stores in Cambridge where you can set up a contract. Phones4You and Carphone Warehouse offer very discounted contracts across the major providers – they're worth looking into. Giffgaff, Tesco, Lebara and a few other companies provide cheap pay-as-you-go options. Service quality can be variable.

- You will also need to set up your Hermes email account (university email service). You should receive necessary instructions and/or passwords when you arrive (in your welcome pack).
- Get a **Railcard, Coachcard** and/or **student discount cards**.
- Go and see the College Chaplain. You don't have to be spiritual: the Chaplain would just like to introduce himself, welcome you to St John's and let you know he's available in case of need.
- Cambridge SU Societies Fair: Held Tuesday 5th and Wednesday 6th October. This gives you a very real chance to see what all the extra-curricular groups are all about and gets you on the mailing lists. Check out **Cambridge SU Events** for further information. St John's will have its very own college societies fair sometime in the first week; stay tuned for more info and keep an eye on the Freshers Fortnight Programme!
- Meet your supervisor – most departments will also have some sort of introductory meeting.

There are loads of things you'll want to do in your first week, but you may struggle to find the time. However, what we've listed above are some of the more important tasks (if you don't know where any of these places are, ask a Porter or student).

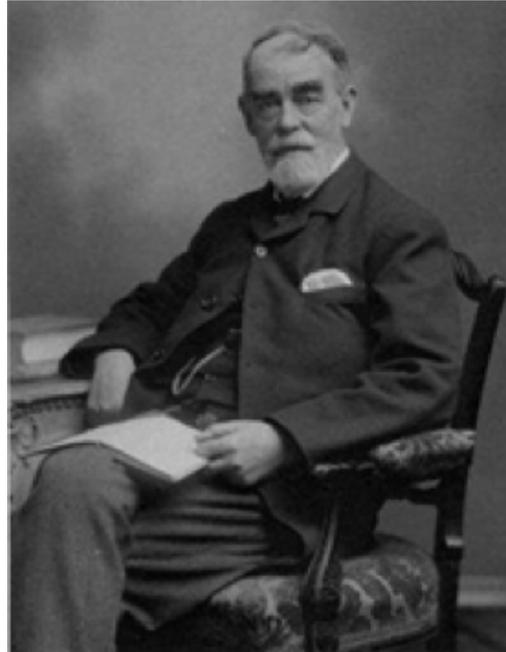
And finally - remember the SBR is here to help you enjoy Cambridge! Please do get in touch with the **SBR Committee** if you need anything at all.



Chapter 6 About Samuel Butler

From Graham Chainey's A Literary History of Cambridge, CUP: 1995 and Julia Powles

Samuel Butler (1835-1902), satirical author of *Erewhon* and *The Way of All Flesh*, came up to St John's from Shrewsbury School in 1854. At Cambridge he pursued his interest in art and music, coxed the College boat (a mishap with the steering rope nearly cost Lady Margaret the Headship of the River) and joined the *Upware Republic*, an undergraduate allegiance of the 1850s for shooting, fishing and drinking. Butler's first appearance in print was an article contributed in 1858 to the very first number of the College magazine, *The Eagle* (itself the first College magazine at either Oxford or Cambridge). After taking his degree in 1859, however, Butler resisted the twin temptations of ordination (which his family expected) and a 'continuance' at St John's (his tripos results promised a fellowship) and disappeared to New Zealand for five years to take up sheep-farming. Butler proved himself handy with the sheep, returning to England at age 30 with his capital doubled and pursuing art studies in London. He was a curious character: somewhat insular but charismatic and fascinated by people.



At 37 Butler published the satirical novel *Erewhon*. Some sci-fi elements on the future of machines led to four slightly more academic books on evolution, championing the (then and now denounced) role of memory. He was an outspoken critic of Charles Darwin. He also wrote *Alps and Sanctuaries*, a travel guide to the mountain ranges of Ticino, Piedmont and Lombardy to which he returned every year. From this stemmed a work of art history, *Ex Voto*, based in Varallo. He wrote on religion, in a way that has been cast as distinctly anti-Victorian, with *The Fair Haven* and his posthumously

published and most-successful work, *The Way of All Flesh*. Returning to his classical training later in life, he learned the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by heart and produced widely-read translations, leading to *The Authoress of the Odyssey*, a controversial work postulating that a Sicilian woman, rather than Homer, wrote this great epic. His final publication during his lifetime was *Erewhon Revisited*. Butler's Notebooks, which he painstakingly edited and re-ordered, offer charming reflections and sharp opinions from a man who was, through and through, a contrarian.





Photography courtesy of Nordin Ćatić and the Communications Department

