



*St John's JCR*  
**ALTERNATIVE  
PROSPECTUS**



# What's inside?



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## Will - 1st year Medic

Hi, my name is Will, I study medicine at St John's College and am the JCR Equal Opportunities officer for 2020. Before you dive into this alternative prospectus, I'd like to offer some context - I'll keep this brief.



My time at John's so far has been like a movie. But as a prospective student in your shoes I was under barrage from rumours of John's "elitism". Seriously look on any online forum and it's like googling Angelina Jolie and seeing "and Brad Pitt" being suggested - always put together but in actual reality separate (certainly now in 2020). Whilst many may have lamented the separation of the two movie stars, I certainly did not for the separation of John's from its "elitism", especially as a kid who'd grown up like most have in state schools.

I find John's student life progressive and exciting. It's a community that's as open and welcoming as it is close knit. Like Angelina, John's is gorgeous but I hold that this college stands out above others for reasons beyond that. Its special because of the people who live and define it. Modern and dynamic, our student body is large.

With that in mind I pass you, the reader, to the student of St John's. We've come together to give you a taste of our college life - written by students for students. Unlike the many tabloids that refuse to let the Angelina Brad dream die, we're no longer standing with mistruths. This is to set the record straight. We hope you'll decide to come and join us, and maybe see you soon. Souvent me souvient,

# INTRO TO THE JCR

“Welcome to our Alternative Prospectus written by students of St John’s to give you an insight of what it means to live, play and study at our college!

To begin, we’d like to introduce you to the Junior Combination Room (known as the JCR) which is the college’s student union. Every student of college is a member of the JCR although graduates also have their own student union known as the SBR here at John’s. The JCR committee acts with students’ well-being in mind. We organise frequent welfare events (plenty of free food including chocolate fountains, fudge and doughnuts); parties known as ‘ents’, with cheap drinks (soft drinks are free) and a DJ for just £2 entry; Freshers’ Week; and many more events throughout the year. Our aim is to ensure we provide a wide range of activities to ensure we interact with as many students as possible!

With this in mind, the JCR committee has quite a few roles (21 to be exact). You can find out more about them on our website (<https://www.sjcjr.com/yourjcr/committee>). At John’s we believe in widening access to the college to ensure everyone feels included, welcome and at home here, regardless of your background and identity. Our equal opportunities (equal ops) team provides for the needs of all students with a special focus on minority groups such as internationals, women, lgbt+, bme (black and minority ethnic), and students with disabilities. Each officer tends to organise specific events to help build a sense of community and ensure everyone feels free to be themselves!

The JCR committee also represents student interests before college. Issues such as rent, food prices and what’s available in the college bar are all negotiated by the committee. More generally, dealing with anything related to students’ lives is often the JCR committee’s responsibility (though there are many more sources of support that you’ll find out about later)!

The JCR committee is great to join not only to get involved more closely with student-life but also to make changes when you think change is needed. Of course, it is not the only opportunity you will have to get involved in student life and we are lucky at John’s because we have an incredible range of societies and groups that you can join. We hope this prospectus will help you get a sense of what our college offers, but remember, if you’d like to see a society we don’t already have, you can effortlessly create it yourself!”

- Tim & Candela, 2020 JCR Presidents



# DAY IN THE LIFE

Paula - 1st year HSPS

## MORNING

It's hard to pin down what a typical day looks like, because no two days are ever the same at John's. I'm an early riser, and I usually go to the college gym before getting on with the day. I read the news and check my emails over toast and coffee, before speed-walking to lectures. It never takes me more than 10 minutes, because St John's is such a central college!



## AFTERNOON

As a humanities student, I don't have many contact hours and lectures are usually over by noon. I head back to college with my friends and we go straight to the buttery, where I take breakfast, lunch and dinner because cooking is not my forte. I love the college buttery because it has a wide range of good options (including vegan!) and gives me a chance to relax and unwind with friends. Despite its size, St John's has a tight-knit community and you can always find someone you know in the buttery.

I have supervisions about three times a week. Otherwise, my afternoons are spent in the college library. I prefer St John's library to any other in Cambridge - it's well-stacked, has gorgeous views to the chapel and the master's lodge and there's a silent study room!

## EVENING

I always take the evenings off and go to Evensong, sung by the college choir. At least once a week, I catch up with my best friend in 'Formal Hall'. This is a three-course dinner in the great dining hall, and a perfect occasion to dress up and wear my gown! Going to hall is the ultimate Cambridge experience, especially at St John's. The atmosphere in hall is magical and the food is excellent - and a lot less expensive than other colleges! At night, there's always something fun going on. Cambridge has a vibrant theatre and music scene, and I often go to see my friends perform in student plays or concerts. We sometimes go out clubbing, but on quieter nights, I like to stay in for a 'movie night' in a someone's room.



## Mark - 2nd year Maths

I study maths, so every weekday morning begins with a few lectures. Once lectures are over, I tend to go back to college to make myself lunch, since all college rooms are close to most lecture venues. Supervisions usually take place in the afternoon, of which I have around three a week. The work we discuss in supervisions are the example sheets set by the maths department. The supervisions usually take place in college as your supervisors are usually fellows at John's, however I occasionally have supervisions at the maths department. Solving these example sheets fill up my 'studying' time. Other STEM subjects have a similar format, with perhaps a few more afternoon contact hours, such as practicals to attend and essays to write rather than problems to solve.

## WELFARE

There are many events going on every day in Cambridge, so I often end up going to an events such as the JCR welfare events, which usually involve getting free food. I also usually go on a run around this point in the day, often with the University running society. For tea, once again I like to cook, and I usually eat with a few friends in one of our rooms. This will often be followed by a trip to the college bar for a bar quiz, or just relaxing in someone's room chatting. Everyone lives so close together that it's really easy to pop round to a friend.



## WEEKENDS

I try to relax more during the weekend. A highlight of the week for a lot of people is Saturday brunch in the buttery, which I religiously attend after a morning run. The weekend is also a great time for sport. Because John's is a big college, most sports teams have a 2nd team, which I have really enjoyed since even though I stopped playing football around three years before going to university, I have still been able to play a couple of football games. The JCR also hosts famous fortnightly events called Ents (a personal highlight of life at John's. It's always fun to dress up in questionable costumes and have a good boogie with mates).



# ACADEMIA AT JOHN'S

## HUMANITIES

“My experience of studying History and Politics (HisPol) at John’s has, without a doubt, exceeded any expectations I had before I arrived. Although I felt quite intimidated as a French student who had never studied let alone lived in the UK, the academics, staff and students I met early on made me feel welcomed and supported. Needless to say, feeling at home in a 16<sup>th</sup> century college was not something I thought I would ever experience growing up!

Quite close to HSPS, HisPol combines Political Thought, International Relations, Comparative Politics and a vast array of History papers from which you can choose from. What makes the course so unique is the ability for you to specialise and focus on that which interests you the most and not having to wait a year to do so! The vast array of choices means there is definitely something for everyone, and I’m willing to bet that you’ll end up finding it difficult to choose your essay topics out of fear of missing out on those you don’t write about!

The best thing about studying Humanities is the freedom to plan your schedule as you please. I have few contact hours (between 6-10 hours of lectures and 1-2 hours of supervisions per week) which means most of my work is done independently. What’s more, John’s is lucky to have eminent academics in both History and Politics, so most of my supervisions take place in college. This liberty has allowed me to get involved both in competitive university sport and the JCR! Don’t get me wrong, I still have to write between 10 and 12 essays per term which is a lot of work, but the ability to plan both my termly and daily schedules allows me to spread the workload out rather evenly. What’s more, I was quick to reconfigure what I thought I could accomplish and after a few weeks, I found the rhythm that worked best for me.

I mentioned my experience as a Humanities student at John’s had by far exceeded my expectations and I cannot stress this enough. I applied to Cambridge from France having only ever been to the UK once before. I was unsure whether I would fit in but also whether I had the ability to do well here. The reality is, most people feel that way at first. Fast forward to today, I could not be more fulfilled nor happier with my life at John’s both academically and socially. Regardless of who you are or where you’re from, I could not recommend my course and college enough. If you are curious, critical and passionate, you are a good fit for a Humanities degree here; all that’s left for you is to figure out which one suits you best! For me it was HisPol and I’ve never looked back since I began.” – *Tim, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Hispol*





## STEM

“Studying Science at Cambridge certainly caters for the adrenaline junkies among us. Balancing supervision work, lab reports and a lively social life around a contact-hour heavy timetable is quite something. Although we whinge about our Saturday lectures and numerous 5 hour labs, all Natscis secretly know that this is in fact boasting. With each “Wow Natsci is soo hard!” from all other students, we are vindicated in thinking that NatSci is the best degree. David Attenborough being indisputable proof too! The supervision-style of teaching is key to Cambridge and in fact the greater number of weekly supos made me apply here over ‘the other place’.

Supervisions mean that a typical Natsci will have three to four hour long meetings with fellows (experts) each week. These will be with one or two other John’s students, aka ‘supo partners’. Although daunting at first, supos are fun teaching sessions and discussions to help your understanding of the material and not serious verbal exams to struggle through. Additionally, formerly unknown supo partners, will not only become your comrades at arms but often fast friends too! While there is no ‘standard’ supervision format for science, they tend to cover that week’s lecture material, practicals and completed supervision work. Supo work ranges from essays or SAQs for Bio, and problem sheets for Phys. At one point during a supo last year, my supo partner, supervisor and I all imitated the various calls of Tungara frogs- all in the name of having some funky extra essay examples of course.

Having now spent two years at John’s, supos have become one of the highlights of my week. I really love getting the chance to form connections within the wider John’s scientific community, as well as the opportunity to ask all sorts of questions. This Easter Term I even signed up for all the available optional revision supos, meaning 13 supervisions in one week. 13 may be unlucky for some, but I really enjoyed it...” – *Eimear, 2<sup>nd</sup> year BioNatsci (pronounced Nat-skee!)*

# ACCOMMODATION



John's accommodation is the envy of all Cambridge—a fact you quickly learn when you bring friends from other colleges round to visit. Thanks to our size, we are one of the few colleges to guarantee onsite accommodation throughout your degree. Additionally, you won't be kicked out or asked to clear your rooms during the Christmas (except 2 staircases) and Easter holidays which is a major convenience between terms. Your room is your room for the entire academic year.

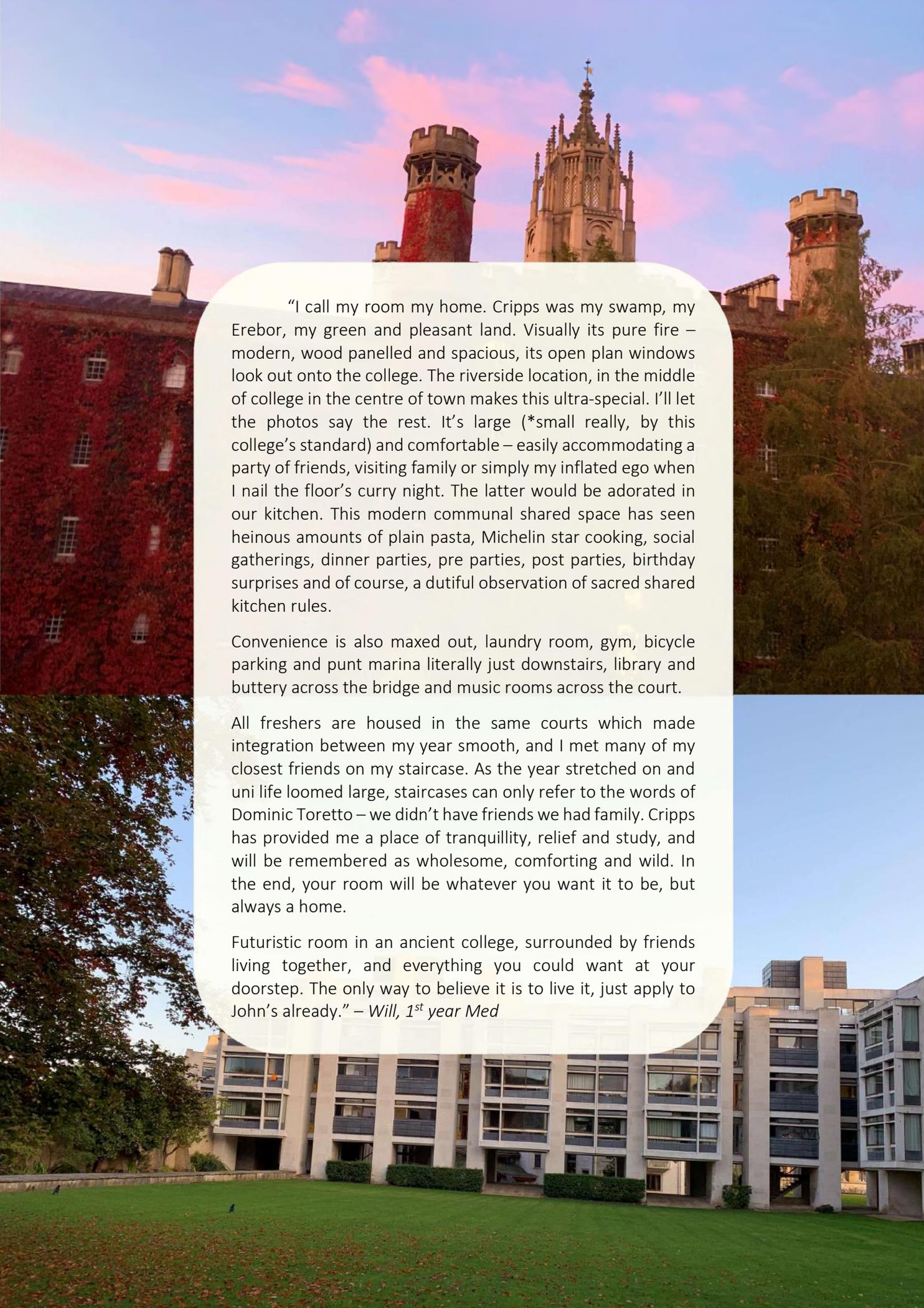
Freshers are all housed in the same blocks. These are arguably some of the best freshers' rooms in the university - these modern rooms and communal kitchens offer both a homely, comfortable place to live and community places for socialising and cooking. The kitchens are well equipped and functioning, and the college's brilliant maintenance and bedding crew is always at hand to ensure your living is more comfortable than you could imagine. The summer before you start, you'll get to answer some preference questions and college will allocate you your room. The range includes smaller singles, to ensuites to penthouses, but quality is a constant.

In subsequent years, you're entered into a randomly ordered ballot, and you can select your exact room in accordance to your ballot position. You'll either move into "sets" - older but modern refurbished rooms set within the old structure of the college itself, or houses located just outside the college in town. The grand New Court and historical First, Second and Third Courts all cater for accommodation.

With all that has been described, a natural worry would be the cost of the accommodation. However, John's always uses their resources to drive down and subsidise the living costs as much as possible, such that you end up with reasonable prices and incredible value for money. Furthermore, for those struggling there are numerous funds and grants that John's offers to alleviate these sorts of pressures.

If you have any sort of special requirements for accommodation, such as a disability, you will be removed from the ordinary ballot and be placed in a 'disability ballot', where college will talk to you to help choose a room that best fits your needs, regardless of your position in the ballot.

Some examples of this could be needing a level-access room, in which case you might choose one of the ground-floor rooms. We also have wheelchair accessible rooms. Other accessibility requirements will be considered too. For example, if a student has ADHD, a SpLD or other mental health difficulties, they may benefit from having a room 'large enough to separate work and rest', which would be factored in.



"I call my room my home. Cripps was my swamp, my Erebor, my green and pleasant land. Visually its pure fire – modern, wood panelled and spacious, its open plan windows look out onto the college. The riverside location, in the middle of college in the centre of town makes this ultra-special. I'll let the photos say the rest. It's large (\*small really, by this college's standard) and comfortable – easily accommodating a party of friends, visiting family or simply my inflated ego when I nail the floor's curry night. The latter would be adored in our kitchen. This modern communal shared space has seen heinous amounts of plain pasta, Michelin star cooking, social gatherings, dinner parties, pre parties, post parties, birthday surprises and of course, a dutiful observation of sacred shared kitchen rules.

Convenience is also maxed out, laundry room, gym, bicycle parking and punt marina literally just downstairs, library and buttery across the bridge and music rooms across the court.

All freshers are housed in the same courts which made integration between my year smooth, and I met many of my closest friends on my staircase. As the year stretched on and uni life loomed large, staircases can only refer to the words of Dominic Toretto – we didn't have friends we had family. Cripps has provided me a place of tranquillity, relief and study, and will be remembered as wholesome, comforting and wild. In the end, your room will be whatever you want it to be, but always a home.

Futuristic room in an ancient college, surrounded by friends living together, and everything you could want at your doorstep. The only way to believe it is to live it, just apply to John's already." – Will, 1<sup>st</sup> year Med

# THE BUTTERY



## Jovian - 1st year HSPS

For the unassuming visitor, it is quite normal for them to completely miss the buttery, tucked away at the corner of Second Court. However for Johnians, there is a certain ritualistic element that marks a visit to the Buttery. The buttery is a place of good times with friends above anything else. From casual chat to rants about shifting deadlines, extra essays, and surprise problem sheets, to supportive advice when one is drained, the buttery offers a communal hub for friends to gather. This is also why "buttery gangs" are seldom rivalled in terms of the depth and tenacity of their bonds. Here are the dishes that you ought to try/ ought to avoid when visiting the buttery.

## TO GO FOR

### **Breakfast/ Saturday Brunch:**

Classic example of a great English breakfast complete with black pudding and poached eggs. Would strongly recommend the local sausages which are crisp on the outside and bursting with flavour. Unbeatable price too!

### **Roast of Lamb/ Pork:**

Sunday roasts, while popular across the country, are extremely difficult to perfect. The buttery however, rarely fails at serving moist, flavourful roast lamb and pork. The sides offered are also guilt-inducingly decadent, from the melt-in-the-mouth gratin dauphinois, to pleasantly greasy pigs in a blankets, they are the ultimate college comfort food.

### **Lemon Posset with a Shortbread Round:**

Divine marriage of sweetness and acidity, with an aroma that rivals that of the best limoncello. The contrast between the silk-smooth posset and the crumbly shortbread provides extra depth and complexity to the dessert. A solid favourite.



## RECURRING DISHES:

### **Oily Fish Option:**

Present everyday, a predictable rotation between trout, salmon, cod, and sea bream.

### **Supremes:**

Not to be confused with the popular and overpriced brand, supreme, or suprême de volaille, is a term the buttery uses to make poultry breast sounds posh. Guinea fowl and duck supremes are generally well executed, while the chicken tends to fall on the dry side.

### **Onion Tarte Tatin:**

This dish has acquired legendary status for being the most frequently served dish in the college. Both as a starter in formal hall, and as a main in the buttery. If you're lucky, the pastry might still be crispy!

# SHOPS

## Will - 1st year Medic

Cooking homemade meals are the most economic, fulfilling and for me, admittedly dangerous ways to feed yourself. Beyond academic rigour, fast education has come via my personal development into a flourishing up and coming cook. My hip new kitchen only sources its raw material from the finest establishments – Sainsbury's, Aldi and the market.



Here at Johns we're fortunate to be ideally located equidistant from the conveniently close central Sainsbury's (the beating heart of student food shopping), the market (a dynamic market with the occasional surprising good deal on fresh produce), and Aldi (amazingly economical and seemingly bottomless). These three establishments are at closest, 2 minutes' walk and longest, five minutes' cycle from college. So, for all those looking to follow in my culinary adventures – rest assured food is at your doorstep.



# FORMAL HALL

It's not every day that you can say that you're able to enjoy a three-course meal under the carved wooden beams and stained-glass windows of a sixteenth-century dining hall, but at John's, food is served in hall every evening except Saturday, giving you something to look forward to after a long day of lectures and library sessions. The food is delicious, with a vast array of mouth-watering dishes on the menu each week, from guinea-fowl to seafood risotto, and there is also always the option to have wine as well- all for only £10! Of course, there are always options for vegans and vegetarians, as well as anyone else with special dietary requirements. All you need to do is book your place in hall through the college catering app the day before. Going to hall with your friends is a great way of catching up, celebrating people's birthdays, or simply enjoying good food and good company in a spectacular setting. It also gives you the chance to wear your gown, meaning that you get your money's worth for it! Although the John's dining hall, with its magnificent architecture and rules about wearing gowns and standing for grace at the beginning of each meal, can seem a bit imposing at first, don't be intimidated by it! Hall is without a doubt one of the best things about studying at Cambridge, because it really allows you to live out the full quintessential 'Cambridge experience'. Also, you deserve to treat yourself and indulge in the opulence and otherworldliness of the university's traditions after a long day of studying. At least that's what I tell myself as I book hall for the fifth consecutive evening in one week...

Flora - 1st year History





## Ben - 1st year Geography

'John's Bar, alongside the JCR, is one of the social hubs of the college. Students can be found in the bar at any time during the week whether it be for casual work, bar quizzes or some drinks before going out. Alongside this, the bar hosts special one-off events. These can include anything from music performances from John's own student bands or social events for John's societies to screenings of the Rugby World Cup final and alike. The bar has a huge variety on offer, both for those who drink or not. Most notably, it serves John's own bottle of port, a student favourite for evenings after Formal Hall. The bar itself is decorated with pictures of some of John's most successful sports teams, stretching back decades. Some current and prospective students may even be lucky enough to find themselves up alongside these teams given John's continued sporting success. Although 'John's' bar may not be as modern as some of those in other colleges, it more than makes up for this with its genuine 'pub' feel and atmosphere.

# THE BAR

## Chloe - 1st year BioNatsci

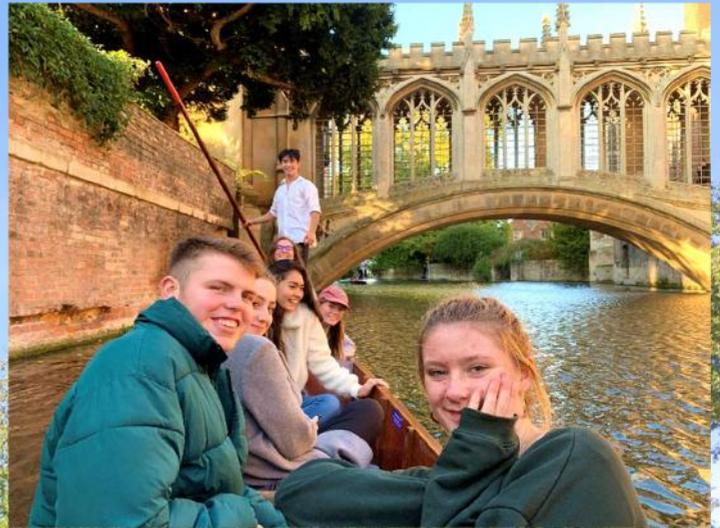
It is a fact that university students like to drink - a lot. Or is it? Personally, I know that when I'm having midweek blues, drowning in supervision work and lab reports, nothing cheers me up more than a trip to the local nightclub Cindies - and what better place to have pre-drinks than in our very own college bar? Having a relaxed, pub-like feel, John's bar is always a hit after formal and one of the main social hubs of the college. Here, you'll find everything from cheap drinks (well, relatively cheap compared to Cambridge standards that is), snacks, live music and quiz nights. Don't worry if drinking isn't really for you, that doesn't mean the bar isn't! I have spent many a night sat in J bar chatting with friends and playing card games - use it how you please. Whether you're a fan of drinking or not, there is one quality of J bar far superior to its ability to accommodate both types of student; J bar is the only place in Cambridge I have found so far which sells Yorkshire pudding wraps, and if this isn't a reason to apply to John's, what is?

# FACILITIES

## PUNTING

“Punting is to Cambridge what Trippier’s semi-final free kick was to the summer of 2018 – iconic, uniquely special and the peak of summer. Whilst many commercial companies work the river, here at John’s we’re one of the few colleges to boast our very own punt fleet. Freshers week always includes an introduction to the activity where almost everyone takes to the water to fledge their puntling wings. During the rest of the year this fleet is available to all John’s students at a killer £5 an hour (Market price = £28 for reference), or if you join the Punting Society there are regular opportunities to punt for free.

Punting Society is run by students for the students (hit em up on Instagram @sjcpunts), and we look to get everyone involved in this special past time – additionally we run subsidised stash, subsidised hall and offer the only night punting in Cambridge (and yes by default, the world). Floating down the river through the gorgeous university town with a drink in hand, water rippling all around and seeing the glowing buildings of John’s rise up ahead are quite possibly the single most idyllic moments ever experienced by the human race. In short – we have punts like no other, come get em. “– Will 1<sup>st</sup> year Med



## SPORTS FIELDS & ASTRO

“Oh no! Its 9:25 – you’ve slept through your alarm and your netball game starts at 9:30. You are thinking: “how am I going to get dressed, eat breakfast, get my bike and cycle to the pitches?” But then you remember. You are at John’s! 5 minutes is more than enough time to walk to the pitches, which are so close - sleeping through your alarm doesn’t matter. John’s is one of the few colleges to have this privilege and for anyone who wants to be involved in sports of any kind, including hockey, football, rugby, ultimate frisbee, netball, lacrosse and tennis, they really are indispensable. As someone who has tried almost every sport available, I cannot stress the benefits of having your own pitches. The pitches themselves are superb and are carefully maintained by our fantastic groundsman. The Astro allows large crowds of students to come and support every hockey game and has earned John’s the title of having the best supporters, although annoying to away teams, and creates an amazing atmosphere at every Redboy game.” – Emily 1<sup>st</sup> Year Med



## GYM & WEIGHTS ROOM

“Students at St John’s are incredibly lucky to have access to both a weights room and a fitness centre on site in the Cripps building – less than a 2-minute walk from door to door for most Freshers! These facilities are open to all students, following short inductions that take place in Freshers Week, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are equipped with anything you could need, whether you are an experienced weightlifter or new to the gym.

The Weights Room includes a squat and bench rack, as well as dumbbells ranging up to 35kg, while the Fitness Centre contains treadmills, exercise bikes, ergometers and various other machines for cardio and strength training. They are constantly being updated to fit the desires of the student body as well, with a hex bar, more resistance bands and more kettle bells all being added within the last year. If you have any questions about these facilities, don’t hesitate to get in touch with me, the JCR Facilities Officer, at [hgl28@cam.ac.uk](mailto:hgl28@cam.ac.uk)!” – Hugo, 1<sup>st</sup> year Hispol



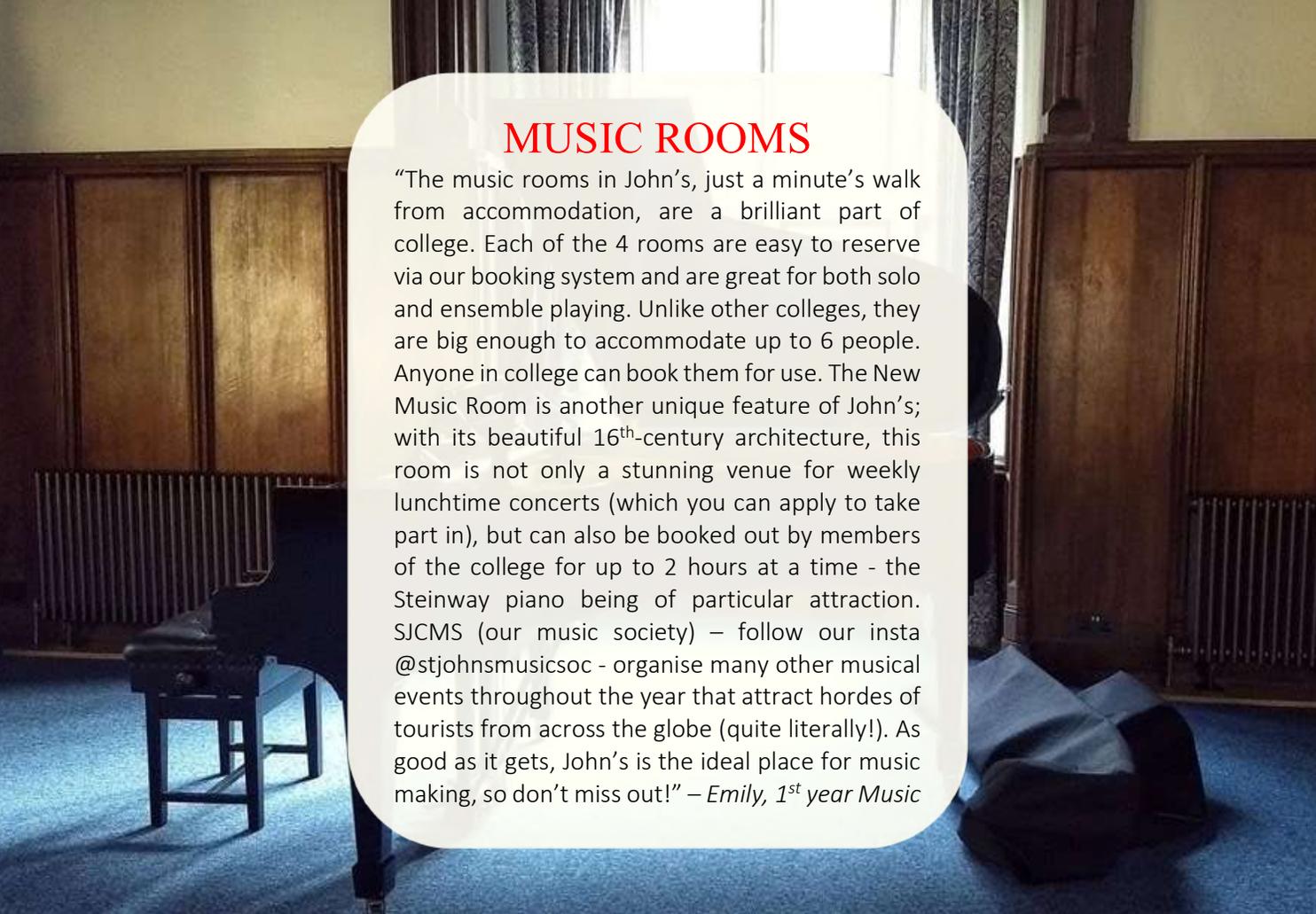


## LIBRARY

"The John's library can't be missed. Literally. It's a whopping five-storey building in the centre of College, so it's really convenient to pop in for study sessions between contact hours and extracurriculars. Since it caters for a particularly large college, you'll find almost any book you need there. In fact in my first year here I've found *all* the books I need for supervisions in the John's library, saving me from fighting over the copies in my departmental library against students from other (less bountiful :( ) colleges.

The library has individual desks, silent-study rooms, group-work rooms, and computer rooms so there'll always be the right workspace for you. Another bonus: unlike some other colleges our library is open 24/7, catering for night-owls and morning birds alike. It's not all work though; there's also an AV room stocked with academic documentaries, cheesy romcoms, and even beanbags for those of us who simply want to sleep through a film. Quite honestly, our library caters for everyone." – *Jenny, 1<sup>st</sup> year geography*





## MUSIC ROOMS

“The music rooms in John’s, just a minute’s walk from accommodation, are a brilliant part of college. Each of the 4 rooms are easy to reserve via our booking system and are great for both solo and ensemble playing. Unlike other colleges, they are big enough to accommodate up to 6 people. Anyone in college can book them for use. The New Music Room is another unique feature of John’s; with its beautiful 16<sup>th</sup>-century architecture, this room is not only a stunning venue for weekly lunchtime concerts (which you can apply to take part in), but can also be booked out by members of the college for up to 2 hours at a time - the Steinway piano being of particular attraction. SJCMS (our music society) – follow our insta @stjohnsmusicsoc - organise many other musical events throughout the year that attract hordes of tourists from across the globe (quite literally!). As good as it gets, John’s is the ideal place for music making, so don’t miss out!” – *Emily, 1<sup>st</sup> year Music*



## LAUNDRY

“Laundry won’t be that chore you put off until you’re down to your last clean t-shirt. At John’s, it’s a weekly social fixture, a chance to catch up in a communal space amidst your hectic schedules. Absurd as it sounds, some of my best conversations with fellow Johnians have been over a bottle of Persil. Located in Cripps basement, the laundry room is super convenient wherever you live in college - a max. 3-minute walk away from your room – so no excuses for smelly socks! The best thing is that we’re lucky enough to have FREE laundry. Head to Sainsbury’s for detergent and you’re good to go for the year. As well as washers and dryers, there are also ironing boards and irons available for anyone to use – and you wondered why we’re the sharpest looking college around.

Remember – Saint John’s, not Stain John’s ;))!” – *Annabel, 1<sup>st</sup> year Med*

# SOCIAL EVENTS

## BAR QUIZ!

One of my favourite events in John's is the weekly bar quiz, hosted by the JCR in the college bar. It's a great way to unwind and relax with friends, with subsidised drinks and the possibility of winning a bar tab! I never miss it, even if my friends are busy - there's always a team you can join and it's the perfect opportunity to meet new people. There's always a very welcoming atmosphere and I absolutely love bar staff, they're really friendly!

- Paula, 1st year HSPSer.

## GIANT BAR QUIZ

The first non-entert of the new year took on the form of a giant bar quiz - a spin on your typical bar quiz. Along with your classic pub quiz rounds and mediocre chat from the quiz master, each question round was interspersed with a bonus challenge, providing teams a chance to pick up extra points! Paper aeroplanes were constructed behind backs, gummy bears tossed into mouths, balloons inflated against the clock, and a hard fought lip sync battle brought an end to proceedings. As host and chief game maker, I would sum the event up as a resounding success, and I personally thoroughly enjoyed being in the spotlight. I wait impatiently for the sequel.

- Zac, 2nd year Engineering



## LIVE MUSIC

When I applied, I wasn't expecting John's to be such a musical college... and now it's one of my favourite things! I really look forward to live music events in college. I love watching my friends and fellow Johnians perform - and there are so many opportunities to get involved regardless of your music taste.

I'm a big fan of the college choir (hands down the best in the world) and St John's Voices, the mixed-voice choir. Going to Evensong to hear them sing is a the best way to unwind and take my mind off things. It's genuinely one of the most beautiful experiences you can have in college.

We also have a fantastic all-female a cappella singing group called Aquila and a thriving jazz band. Live music is always fun when they perform, and they can lighten up any event. I have very good memories of a specific jazz evening in the bar, which took place in December. We were going to a Bridgemas Ent right after, so everyone was in good spirits, dressed up in Santa costumes and fairy lights. We were all enjoying the excellent music, chatting and having drinks together. Take me back!  
-Paula, 1st year HSPS

## ST JOHN'S PICTUREHOUSE

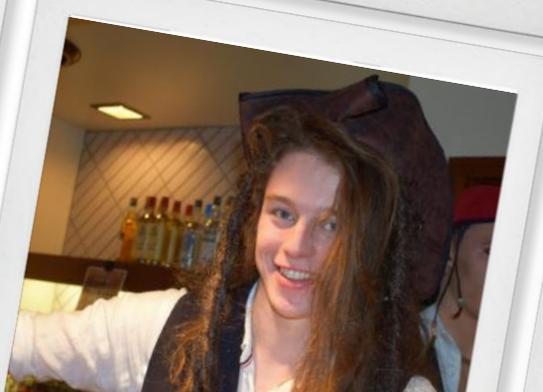
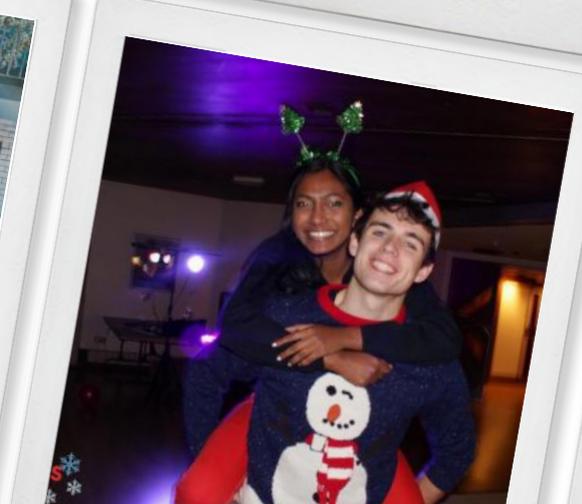
The weekly films put on by the picturehouse are amazing. The tickets are much cheaper than in town, there is a cinema-grade projector, and the films are a mixture of the latest blockbusters and independent films. It's a great facility to have in the middle of college, and a really nice opportunity to chill out with friends - Felix, 1st Year HSPSer.



# ENTS

Hey! I'm Parth and I'm the 2020 Ents officer. My job is to organise the college Ents (parties held within college), live music evenings, and other social events within St John's, upholding John's pole position as one of the most fun and social colleges in Cambridge!

A St John's Ent is a spectacle. The Vatican has Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, we have our Ent – raising the roof reaching holy heights, iconic and loved by all. Ents are made by everyone for anyone, the entire college empties their hearts (and voices) in them. We usually hold at least three per term, plus the ultra-special June Event as part of our post-exams celebrations in our final term. Revellers gather in costume for a strictly wholesome night of cheesy music, cheap drinks (including non-alcoholic options), and an escape from the stresses of Tripos.



# THE JUNE EVENT

Although it was re-launched just two years ago in 2018, the June event has become one of the JCR's most successful events. Hosted on the Sunday before the May Ball, when all students have finished their exams and the weather is (meant to be) nice, the event brings together both Johnians and non Johnians in river court (between Cripps and Newcourt buildings) for a night to remember...

The evening starts with a BBQ and drinks, all included in the price of the ticket and is followed by live music outside and a clubber option indoors. There are all sorts of activities and inflatables to enjoy with your friends making it one of the most memorable evenings of May Week! What's better, the JCR makes this event as affordable as possible with tickets ranging between £10-£15!

-Candela, 2nd year Engineering



# THE MAY BALL

"At the end of every academic year, something special happens in Cambridge. Around the third week of June, 'May Week' begins. It is a week of celebration, with lots of colleges hosting balls and different societies putting on garden parties and other events. St John's runs the best May Ball in Cambridge (rumoured to be the 7th best party in the world!). It's a black-tie event that goes from 9pm to 7am and is attended by current and former Johnians, who are met with unlimited food, drinks and entertainment.

For such a spectacle to occur, it requires an incredible amount of teamwork and commitment from a team of dedicated individuals. There are numerous roles available on the May Ball Committee which cover very different, but equally important, areas of the event. The roles are food, drink, ents, scene, creative, technology, ticketing, logistics, employment, security and treasurer. There is also the Executive Committee, which consists of experienced committee members.

By being on the Committee, you play a significant role in facilitating a tremendous event that will be the highlight of many students Cambridge experience. There are also several perks gained from being on the Committee, such as free tickets for the year you're on the Committee, and the following year too. You also are met with the opportunity to taste test the food and drink, to ensure they meet the high standards expected at such a prestigious event. I really enjoyed being responsible for all of the drinks at last year's ball, and also the step up to Executive Committee this year!" - Joseph, May Ball VP 2020



# SOCIETIES

A college is a community, and here at John's we're composed of a wide diverse range of micro-communities in the form of societies. Societies at John's are an important part of college life, providing essential channels to destress and refresh from your academic work, as well as a brilliant chance to cultivate your interests and hobbies. Most importantly however, societies are great opportunities to find friends for life, sharing in similar passions – every society tends to take their social sides with an earnest seriousness (which are, contrary to decades of Daily Mail reports, strongly wholesome and a certain source of uncontroversial entertainment).

You'll find societies for almost everything, reflective of the diversity of personalities and interests at John's, and due to our large size, we are fortunate to be able to accommodate these comfortably. Having said that, even if you can't find the society you want you can easily set one up yourself! ("Founder of St John's College ... Society", always sounds pretty cool). Joining a society at John's couldn't be easier, and you'll find them welcoming of anyone from absolute beginners looking to try something new, to more experienced people looking to hone whatever skills they have. Ultimately, it's a big wide arms open to all experience.

Every subject also has its own society at John's, which you'll automatically become a member of when you join. These merge the history of the academia with the fresh new students every year, and often are a source of comradeship, connections, and a wealth of experienced knowledge from elders who have walked the path before you. (And yes, these ALSO have very important social aspects to them).

It's difficult to express how great our societies are so we've featured examples of them on the following pages to give you, dear reader, a taste - although **they are only the tip of the iceberg.**



# LMBC

"Hi, I'm Eliza and I'm a 1<sup>st</sup> year vetmed. I row for John's with their Lady Margaret Boat Club (LMBC) – also known on the river as Maggie. I only started rowing as a fresher, despite little competitive sporting experience pre uni. Around 60 novices, all new to rowing, start in first term. The commitment you put in is totally up to you, some boats only go out 1-2x week whereas others go out much more, so don't worry if you're busy or simply aren't for getting up at 6:30am for training.

We're the oldest boathouse on the river – and with age comes beauty and wins. Our facilities are incredible with world class coaches, all for free. The only payment John's demands of its rowers are trophies and the Head of the River – which are delivered in steady state over the years as Maggie defends its reputation as the elite crews on the Cam. Annual highlights are the Bumps - 4-day race campaigns where boats chase each other down the river. These are easily the most rousing collegiate sporting events.

Beyond growing close with your crew (singing high school musical at 7am is strong bonding), socials with the whole boathouse and other boat clubs add to the fun. We're a big boathouse, and we've got the big hearts, and bigger quads, to fill it - there's room for anyone here. " – Eliza, 1<sup>st</sup> year VetMed

"I'm Sophie, a 3<sup>rd</sup>-year law student, and I row in the 1<sup>st</sup> boat with Eliza. In summer, we usually race at Women's Henley. I joined having never rowed before but have never found myself at a disadvantage. It's even possible to join the uni rowing club's development programme, where you get a feel for the famous university rowing. You could represent Cambridge at races in the summer! Some then go on to trial for the university team, to compete against Oxf\*rd in the infamous Boat Race." – Sophie, 3<sup>rd</sup> year Law

"The LMBC is a great club to join, whether it's for the socials, the stash to flex, a distraction from uni work or a fast way to double the size of your quads. Being part of a dedicated team whom you see so often creates a sense of belonging and the boat club quickly becomes your second family." – Eliza, 1<sup>st</sup> year Vetmed





# NAGS

“The self-proclaimed GOATs of the college sporting world”

“The Nags truly is a team for EVERYONE”

“You will always be entertained”

“Hi, I’m Zenga and I’m studying Engineering. I’m honoured to be finishing off my second year as captain of the Women’s Hockey Team, affectionately known in John’s as the Nags. We are the self-proclaimed GOATs of the college sporting world, and if you ask me we have the sideline support and insta page to match (check out @sjcnags, not that we pretend to be influencers or anything...). As a team, we pride ourselves on being super inclusive; at the start of the year the experience ranges from the “Hockey? Is that the one on ice?” girls who look at me like I’m crazing at the college sports fair to the practically professional experienced players and everything in between; we’ve even managed to convince many “Ugh, I hated hockey at school” types that they might actually enjoy it without an annoying school teacher breathing down their neck.

The Nags truly is a team for EVERYONE. Our male counterparts, the Nogs, provide us with endless entertainment, through socials, training and sideline support for which we are very grateful; it’s great to have two teams that work so well together. We’re the only college lucky enough to have our very own astro next to college, so it’s minimal effort to drag yourself away from Netflix for a couple of training sessions/matches a week. Uni life can be a bit stressful so it’s nice to have something to take a break from all the deadlines and assignments but that’s not too serious; we totally get that some weeks you are just too busy to worry about playing hockey.

Although we are legitimately a great hockey team, especially teaming up with the Nogs for a mixed match, the making of a Nag is really in the off-the-pitch rigorous training routine that we are treated to by our mighty social secs. There is rarely a week that goes by that I haven’t been amused by their ridiculousness and fabulous ideas for socials; whether its spending the evening dressed up as characters from Club Penguin bouncing on space hoppers, having Christmas cocktails/mocktails with Keith the college head groundsman or enjoying the frivolities of our annual hockey club dinner with the Nogs, one thing I can promise you if you join the Nags, you will always be entertained.” – Zenga, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Engineering





“Hi everyone, I’m Thea and I’m the current college netball captain. Some of you are probably thinking ‘Ugh not netball’ but keep reading because St John’s College Netball Club is the best sports club in college! (not that I’m biased) SJCNC is all about getting involved and meeting new people, it doesn’t matter if you’ve never played netball before or if you live for it. The club has a super relaxed atmosphere – we end up spending as much time making tiktoks and chatting about what went down at the ent the night before as we do actually playing netball! We’re also a low commitment team so there’s no compulsory training or matches. We totally understand that Cambridge life gets stressful and hectic so if you just want to play once to let off some steam or if you want to play every week, we’re here for you! We also have a great social side and like to celebrate our victories with socials and swaps with the other college sports teams.

Having said all of that, we still pride ourselves on being great at netball, we have ladies; teams to suit all abilities and one of the best mixed teams at uni! So, whether you’d like to play some college sport or are just here for the socials you should definitely join SJCNC.” – *Thea, 2<sup>nd</sup> year engineering*



“The best sports club in college”

“It doesn’t matter if you’ve never played netball before or if you live for it”

“Super relaxed atmosphere”



# REDBOYS

“Hi, I’m Matt. I’m from Yorkshire and I’m studying medicine at St John’s. However, more importantly, I have the honour of being a member of the St John’s College Rugby Union Football club- more famously known as the Redboys (S.J.C.R.U.F.C.M.F.K.A.T.R). The Redboys represent the pinnacle of college sport, winning 14 out of the 19 possible Cuppers trophies in the modern era. Moreover, we are proud to be the only college to enter two teams into Cuppers, meaning all members, irrespective of rugby experience, get the opportunity to represent the Redboys.

With the green and pleasant pastures of John’s pitches (more appropriately referred to as St Legends) being immediately adjacent to the college, Wednesday morning training and weekend games are but a stroll away and provide a welcome break from the stresses of academia without eating into your busy weekly schedule.

The Redboys welcome players from all backgrounds and take pride in our diversity as a club. Although you may find us frequenting the college bar on Sunday nights as part of our social enrichment and friendship-development sessions, there is no requirement to drink alcohol as a part of this. There is no better way to meet new people in college across all years- my best memories of an albeit shortened first year have been made as a part of the Redboys.

Hopefully, we will see many recruits in the new term, ready to put your social distancing skills to practice as a part of our 3-metre defensive spacing policies.

*Ad Gladium” – Matt, 1<sup>st</sup> year Med*

“The Redboys represent the pinnacle of college sport”

“Welcome players from all backgrounds and take pride in our diversity as a club”

“No better way to meet new people in college across all years”



# BLACKBOYS

“Hi, I’m Alex, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year geographer and the vice-captain for the men’s football team, known as the Blackboys (named after the black jumpers we wear). We are proud to combine the elite level of division 1 college football with by far the greatest social calendar of any John’s sports team. Football at John’s is very accessible for those of all abilities; there are 3 football teams for undergrads and 1 for postgrads, so whether you want to play 90 minutes every week or have some tinnies with the injured clique on the touchline, there’s room for anyone! Also, if you want to play for the uni, you can still be a big part of college sport – our captain plays in the uni set up regularly, so there’s no reason not to join. At John’s we are very lucky to have pitches connected to the college, so it’s easy to roll out of bed to training, some 5-a-side, or a big Cuppers match (the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest football tournament in the world after the FA Cup).

We’re strong believers that for there to be excellence on the pitch there has to be excellence off the pitch too. We pride ourselves on our weekly socials (unless there’s an Ent), hosting the touring side ‘The Ramblers’ from Liverpool, and celebrate Bridgemas in quite some style, amongst many other events (*did someone say tour?*). In general college life the Blackboys are one big family, there’s always going to be someone to watch a Champions League game with, give you advice about anything, or dominate with in Verdansk - we’ve got more wins than the Redboys, if that doesn’t sell you then I don’t know what will.

Stay tuned for some player profiles on our insta and we look forward to seeing you all in October!” – Alex, 2<sup>nd</sup> year Geography



“The Blackboys are one big family”

**ST JOHN'S  
FOOTBALL**

“Football at John’s is very accessible for those of all abilities”

“Proud to combine the elite level of division 1 college football with by far the greatest social calendar of any John’s sports team”



# MUSIC

St John's is packed full of music. This means that, even if you're not a 'Muso' (our term for Music undergrads) you can become deeply involved in a whole host of musical activities – whether that be listening to music or playing music yourself! John's itself has exceptional college music facilities, including a Steinway piano and a music recording studio.

It also offers an incredible variety of music-making opportunities, ranging from classical orchestras, to college jazz bands and informal rock sessions. And if you can't find what you're looking for, just start a band yourself (John's will be more than happy to help support you with whatever equipment you may require)! The astonishing standard of music can be intimidating at first, but there is a niche for all of us. The best advice is simple: be confident in your abilities and dive in!



A popular music hub near College is the Maypole, a fantastic pub located on Portugal Place, just 2 minute's walk from Forecourt. As well as being a cosy setting for a quiet drink with mates, the Maypole can be the ideal place to begin a big night out, with the ADC bar just down the road (open until 3am).

Residents of the Maypole including the university's Musos, Thesps, and of course, the Gentlemen of St John's (whose annual Michaelmas gig, "Gents at the Maypole", draws huge crowds and is not one to miss!)

# ST JOHN'S VOICES

The college is also home to mixed-voice choir St John's Voices. Formed in 2013 to complement the work of our sister choir, SJV has quickly developed a remarkable reputation for its emotionally charged, musically committed performances. Weekly Evensongs in the beautiful setting of the College Chapel complement concerts, tours and recordings to offer an inspiring and immersive experience for choir and listener alike.

The choir takes part in the University's Choral Awards Scheme; alternatively, incoming students to the College may audition at the beginning of their time at Cambridge. With rehearsals twice a week, the choir is regarded by its members as a perfect balance of time, commitment, and quality.

The choir comprises around 30 members from all walks of university life, offering a friendly social atmosphere as well as a high musical standard. Our diverse repertoire includes major works by Bach, Handel and Monteverdi, as well as more contemporary composers such as Langlais and Mathias. Our partnership with the Cambridge Baroque Camerata creates an exciting concert setting for works including Handel's Messiah.



St John's Voices has showcased a number of works composed by members of the choir and wider college community. Most recently, we performed works by three female composers from within the choir as part of the celebrations for International Women's Day and the Minerva Festival of Female & Non-Binary Composers in March 2020.

Since our first tour in 2015 to Austria, the choir has visited Switzerland, Ireland and Hong Kong and Singapore. Plans are developing for trips to Colombia, the USA and Canada, as well as a number of European destinations.

Our first professional recording, described by Gramophone as "a highly impressive debut disc which captures the essence of Mathias's joyous musical personality ... bright, invigorating performances from Graham Walker and St John's Voices ... a matchless and hugely entertaining display of dazzling choral singing", was recorded in the gorgeous acoustics of the College Chapel and released to great acclaim in January 2020 on Naxos Records. The album, Choral Music of William Mathias, reached number 7 in the Specialist Classical Charts and was widely played and reviewed on radio stations, including BBC Radio 3.



# ST JOHN'S COLLEGE MUSIC SOCIETY

St John's College Music Society offers a diverse programme of musical events throughout the year. Lunchtime recitals take place weekly, inviting members of the college community at all levels to perform to a regular audience, and have included programmes of violin concerto movements, traditional bagpipe music and jazz standards. In addition to this, a variety of concerts are arranged throughout each term, including large-scale orchestral concerts, smaller concerts of late-evening chamber music in the antechapel, and concerts of new music by student composers.

For those interested in non-classical music, there is a college jazz band, which has termly concerts in a more laidback setting, often in conjunction with the college's all-female acapella group. The college bar also hosts popular open mic nights and evenings with live music which are very well-attended.

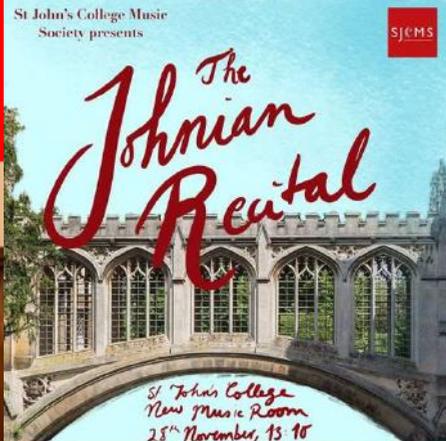
In addition to these performance opportunities, Music Society members have access to a number of practice rooms, including the coveted New Music Room, which boasts Steinway and Boston pianos, as well as views of the chapel.



**SJCMS  
ORGAN RECITALS**  
Wednesdays, 1.15 PM, St John's College Chapel, Free Admission

Wednesday 17th October - Benjamin	(Jesus College)
Wednesday 24th October - Nicholas	(Queen's College)
Wednesday 31st October - Douglas	(King's College)
Wednesday 7th November - Simon	(St. John's College School)
Wednesday 14th November - NO RECITAL	
Wednesday 21st November - Peter	(Clare College)

St John's College Music Society presents



**The Johnian Recital**

St John's College  
New Music Room  
25<sup>th</sup> November, 15.10

Want to get involved with John's music and perform a piece in a relaxed lunchtime recital?  
Get in touch with Aida

# ART SOCIETY



"At St John's, we're incredibly fortunate to have an Art Society based in the art room by the back of college where students can experiment with various media and take a break from the hectic nature of term time at Cambridge. This year, we've held weekly art sessions focused on experimentation and the use of mixed media, as well as themed events, such as a session inspired by the work of Norman Rockwell or a still life evening where we used autumn-themed vegetables and props. In the past, ArtSoc have also collaborated with groups such as the St John's Feminist Society to work on posters and creative projects. Although ArtSoc can't physically meet under the present circumstances, we still aim to connect Johnians and share our love of art through the St John's Quaranzine, an online creative and literary magazine designed to showcase the work of ohnians everywhere" –  
Adi 2nd year MML

VEN  
DOUBT.

ST. JOHN'S

THANK YOU  
LIGHT  
THROUGH THE  
WINDOW

My Dear,  
You already  
which pieces  
are about you.

QUARANZINE



# LADY MARGARET PLAYERS

**"Inclusive community of theatre lovers"**

**"Scratch Nights at the Maypole are sensation!"**

**"From Chicken-Little-based comedy to a PowerPoint about Justin Timberlake,  
we've seen it all!"**

"Hi, I'm Beatrix, the current President of the Lady Margaret Players, the St John's theatre society. We fund and promote the dramatic arts within College and beyond, strive to encourage Johnians and non-Johnians alike to take part in the performing arts, run theatrical events and aim to build an inclusive community of theatre-lovers.

Some college theatre societies are mainly funding bodies, but we have branched out. Our yearly College-based projects consist of a freshers' play in Michaelmas and a May Week show in Easter, and we accept applications to fund other theatrical projects in John's and across Cambridge throughout the year. We also run regular writers' meet-ups, film nights and other get-togethers, and collaborate with other college theatre societies.

For those looking for more low-key one-off theatrical opportunities, our Scratch Nights at the Maypole are a sensation! These fun, informal nights at the most Johnian pub in Cambridge allow any student or small group of students to sign up and perform stand-up, spoken word, sketches, a bit of a new play script and more, providing the audience with a relaxed, free night of student-written entertainment.

From Chicken-Little-based comedy to a PowerPoint about Justin Timberlake, we've seen it all!

Anyone can get involved in our society – our current committee contains an Engling, an HSPSer, a NatSci, a Muso and a Theologian! – and John's has so many beautiful spaces, from the gardens to the Chapel, which we want to continue to transform into performance venues. We aim to open up the wonderful world of Cambridge theatre to everyone: it can seem a little daunting and jargon-filled at first, so know that you can always come to us with any queries – and, of course, project ideas!" - Beatrix, 2nd year Music





# FEMSOC



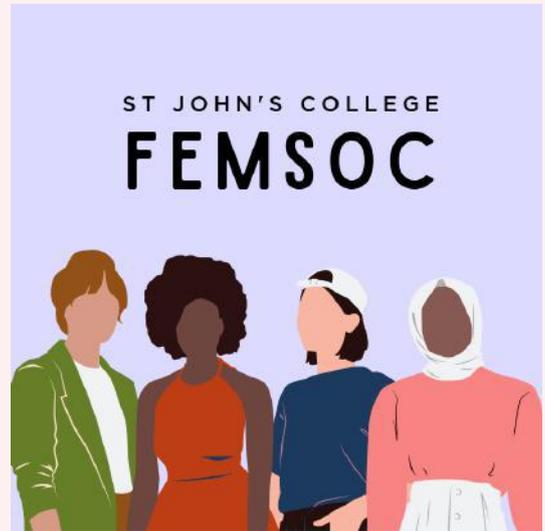
St John's Women's Society (FemSoc) had an impressive year. We increased the frequency of our events, diversified our activities, and debuted a more active online presence. In trying to achieve an optimal balance between formal and informal initiatives, we experimented with different kinds of events, ranging from academic panels to laid back group discussions. Moreover, we hosted numerous collaborations with other St John's societies and colleges' FemSocs.

We hosted an International Women's Day event with over a hundred attendees, which included a drinks reception and Formal Hall with inspiring speeches including one by award-winning Portuguese writer, Hélia Correia, who discussed the history of female activism in Portugal and Britain. St John's Women's Society also liaised with the Larmor Society (Biological Natural sciences society) to create a Women in Science Panel. Furthermore, we organised two open-mic nights for women and non-binary students to perform poetry, songs, and stand-up comedy.

We also arranged a number of other informal events including lively discussions and debates.

This year we also modernised our online presence, revamping our Facebook page, and creating an Instagram. This initiative proved highly successful, and it was a great way to connect directly with our members. We organised take-overs of the College's main social media accounts and interacted with inter university feminist circles. Finally, we produced personalised laptop stickers, and have developed a plan for selling eco-friendly society keepcups and tote bags. We are very proud of what we recently achieved and hope to carry on inspiring Johnian women.

Clara - 2nd year MML



# MedSoc

"Hi, we're Anna and Emma, the 2020-21 MedSoc Co-Presidents. Every medic and vet at John's is an automatic member of MedSoc when they arrive and can benefit from the events we run throughout the year, both social and academic. In Freshers' Week we give the new medics a chance to meet each other, and medics in older years. It's an opportunity to start forming friendships, exchange study tips and profit from the immense wisdom of those who've studied Medicine before you. We also challenge you to meet as many members of your extended college family as possible!

MedSoc runs lots of great talks and events throughout the year, including the challenges of working for MSF, the history and future of surgery and MecC MRSA. These talks offer a chance to hear from leading doctors and academics, without the need to travel too far (you should be able to manage the walk to the Old Divinity School...). We also hold a summer internship evening, where 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years give presentations about the clinical and research placements they undertook during the summer vacation. Last year, medics from John's travelled to every corner of the globe, including the United States, France and China.

We also host social events each term. There are regular swaps with other colleges, where we visit and host other Medsocs at formals. There's a famous challenge to attend hall at every college, so you'll want to take advantage of every swap you can! Our Welfare Officers also organise events within college, where medics from every year can relax together and enjoy some free food. However, the highlight of the year has to be our Annual Dinner. Held in the Senior Combination Room, a magnificent (and very long) room lit solely by candlelight, where the D-Day landings were allegedly planned, the dinner is a truly spectacular occasion. Typically, most pre-clinical students and supervisors attend, so there's a lovely community atmosphere, as well as delicious food and an abundance of port.

Like every dedicated academic society in college, MedSoc caters to the needs of our students. We hope the academic resources, social events and general support we provide will enhance your time as a medical student at John's." – Anna & Emma, 2<sup>nd</sup> year medics



# Winfield Society



“The Winfield Society is for all John’s lawyers. Once you arrive in Cambridge, you’ll be introduced to the society through our Fresher’s Social in the first week of term; this is a chance for you to meet the students from the years above, eat lots of food, and get to grips with life at John’s. We also host a book sale for you to get textbooks from second years.

The Winfield Society runs a number of social events throughout the year to help give our members a break from their weekly readings. Every Michaelmas we have the Winfield Hall (a formal dinner to welcome you to the society), and on a more casual basis we arrange to see concerts and plays, hold brunches, and generally try and ensure there is a good level of communication between members. If you’re interested in learning how to moot (a kind of mock-trial, much beloved by law students), the Winfield Moot takes place every year to familiarise our first years with the basics.

In Lent term, Winfield members and past alumni of St. John’s come together for the Winfield Dinner. This is a black-tie event attended by a guest speaker who gives insight into life as a lawyer, whether they be practicing or an academic. In 2020 we were honoured to hear from Lord Justice Leggatt, whose speech on legal developments and his wider experience as a judge was truly inspiring and thought-provoking. This really is the event of the year.

If you have any more questions, please don’t be afraid to approach one of your fellow lawyers in college (we can usually be found in the library). We look forward to meeting you and helping you in this exciting period of your life in any way we can!” – *Cie Jen and Ross (2<sup>nd</sup> year Lawyers)*

# EQUALITY AT JOHN'S

I'm Jenny, the John's undergraduate Disabilities Officer. I help to improve the College's accessibility, improve access info on College facilities and student events, and raise awareness for disabilities. For example, I've made a large-print, visually accessible version of this Alternative Prospectus so feel free to use that or share with your friends and school. I also work with the Student Union's Disabled Students Campaign. We advocate for students with disabilities (like pushing for compulsory lecture recording) and coordinate social activities like group chats, social events, and talks.

## **Jenny - Disabilities officer**



In the past the Campaign's run a neurodiversity reading group, discussions on how the University should accommodate mental health, disability/LGBT+/class-positive discos, and more. We welcome all self-identifying disabled students, ranging from physical health conditions to learning difficulties – no diagnosis needed! E-mail me at [disabilities@sjcjr.com](mailto:disabilities@sjcjr.com), the College nurse Emma Dellar at [e.dellar@joh.cam.ac.uk](mailto:e.dellar@joh.cam.ac.uk), or the Disabled Students Campaign at [www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk](http://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk) for more information. For expert support such as accommodating your disabilities in your faculty and getting Disabled Students' Allowances, talk to the Disability Resource Centre.

## Eimear - Women's officer



Women have had a monumental influence on St John's. Our two major benefactors are women: Lady Margaret Beaufort, affectionately known as Maggie, and Mary Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury. Maggie's influence in particular is evident throughout the college: we bear her coat of arms, her portrait hangs pride-of-place at the front of Hall, and most acutely her presence is felt yearly among all of our Instagram feeds, for she holds centre stage in every "Birthday Hall" photo...

Although in 1982, John's became the fourth last Cambridge College to admit female undergraduates, we are very much a feminist institution now. Elsewhere in this alternative prospectus you can read about our FemSoc and ConSenT John's. Additionally, we have a role (my role!) on the JCR devoted to championing gender equality. John's is proactive in cultivating an inclusive environment through our "Women, Count!" admissions event encouraging women in stem, and our consent and "Good Lad" workshops. In particularly exciting news too, our incoming Master, Heather Hancock, will be the first woman Master in John's 500 plus year history! In 2020, John's is certainly a place where women like founder of The Everyday Sexism Project Laura Bates, Heather Hancock, and I can thrive.

The ethnic minority community at John's is one that is thriving, with regular meet ups and chills to celebrate and amplify our diverse cultures and voices. Occasionally, joint chills are held with other colleges which are always great fun!

Diversity is something I'm hugely passionate about and I'm always looking for ideas as to how best champion diversity within John's and beyond. One of the projects I'm working on to do just this is the 'BAMEntor' scheme which will pair BAME state-school students applying to John's with a mentor who studies the same subject as the one they wish to apply for. This mentor will guide their mentee through the application process, answering any questions one may have.

I really do hope that you consider applying to St John's, a college that is both a warm and welcoming home away from home for all! Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions: [ja689@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ja689@cam.ac.uk)

## Josh - BAME Officer



## Amy - Access Officer

Class Act can be a confusing term. It refers to the uni-wide Class Act campaign, which is the SU campaign for 'post-admissions access'. Members of the campaign are any students who self identify as having experienced any social, educational, cultural or economic disadvantage including, but not being limited to, being working-class, low income, first generation, care experienced or estranged.

The campaign does a lot to advocate for its members on both a uni-wide and national level. It also acts as a social network to bring students with similar experiences together to support each other with a mutual understanding of some of the issues of class, educational background and socio-economic privilege that often feel taboo in Cambridge. The community in John's grows each year, but the campaign is a great way to meet people across the uni who understand where you're coming from. We have many group chats for endless memes, and host lots of socials each term. You never need to feel alone or out of place in Cambridge!

You can find Class Act on all decent social media platforms, or our website via a quick Google search. Look out for things such as our uni-wide 'buddy'/mentor system for Class Act freshers!



# Emily- LGBT Officer



St John's is a safe, positive and welcoming environment for you. The vast majority of students at John's are accepting of LGBT+ people, this leads to an environment where everyone we've spoken to feels they can walk through college without fear of any homo/transphobic harassment and live their best life. The large nature of the college helps us set up an LGBT+ community and support network within college through systems such as LGBT+ college marriages and children (in addition to regular marriages, and you can even get a third family through the CUSU LGBT+ family system). The JCR also runs events such as LGBTea and cake afternoons and drinks evenings within college, as well as formal swaps and movie screenings with other colleges. We always have a strong attendance to Glitterbomb (LGBT+ night out at Vinyl), even in week 5 and there is always the chance to be part of or simply support Cambridge's very own drag performance troupe: Dragtime! (which has always had at least a few Johnians involved). The sense of community is very important and makes people feel more visible and confident in being themselves.

Not only that, we are also continuously trying to make St John's a more inclusive and supportive environment. There is a large welfare team in college to provide support on any issues you may have, through students (such as JCR committee reps) or with staff (Tutors, the chaplain, the nurse and the college counselor). CUSU LGBT+ and the University Counselling Service also offers a variety of welfare support and resources. Moreover, we are in the process of pushing through a Gender Expression Fund with College and we are making sure that gender neutral bathrooms will be built along with the new Community Hub redevelopment next year.

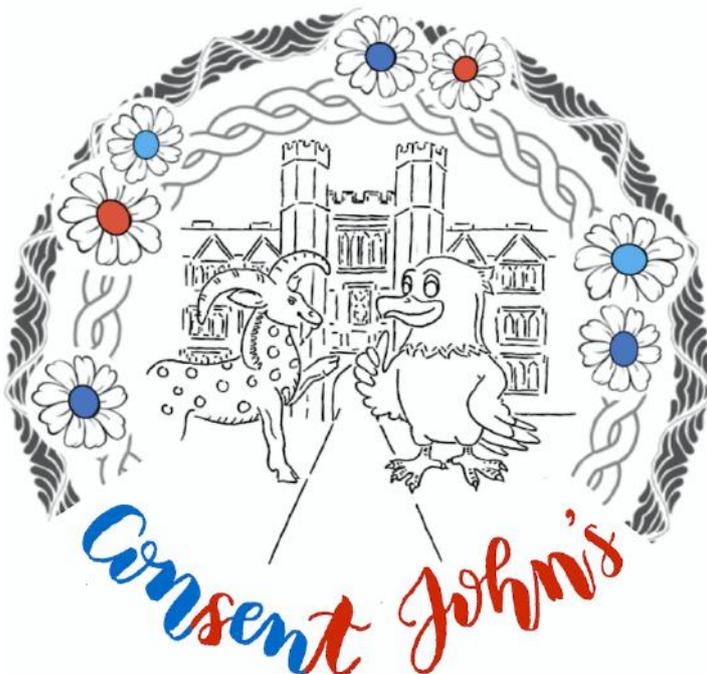
# conSenT John's

## Eimear, 2nd year Natsci

ConSenT John's is a sexual consent campaign for John's students founded in 2019 by the JCR. Each year it is led by the JCR's Women's Officer, which is me for 2020! In my eyes, there are two key aims of this really important campaign. One, the more formal, involves educating John's students about sexual consent and its relevance. The other, involves culturing an environment within college, where there is a zero tolerance attitude towards sexual consent. Despite the hugely serious and important subject matter, it can still be fun and entertaining. Just take a peek at some of our funky posters, or some of our stash as evidence of this!

Freshers' week is a key part of the campaign. This is when we host our compulsory consent workshops, which are an informative and interesting mixture of teaching and discussion, and are led by our trained JCR members. This is also when we bombard everyone with some more of our prized stash, which ranges from mugs, keyrings, t-shirts, and new this year... some face masks! Previously the ConSenT John's campaign has sold stash during the Redboys' matches (John's Rugby) in aid of Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre.

I have a huge number of exciting things in the works for this year. I'm currently writing a new page on the JCR website for ConSenT John's and it is our hope that this can be an easy to access go-to place for assault survivors and their friends, or anyone who wants to get clued up about consent. Additionally, catering to "the new normal" we have some exciting updates for an online relaunch of Consent John's with a new insta account plus videos made by and for the Johnian community. Our hope is to get the whole of the John's community involved from undergrads and grads to porters, fellows and other college staff either on our insta or in our videos. This next year we've also got some more monster collabs in store with St John's FemSoc and Cambridge4Consent with a potential Consent Week (even a ConSENT!), a Consent Formal, some fab speakers and fun events with free food and entertainment.



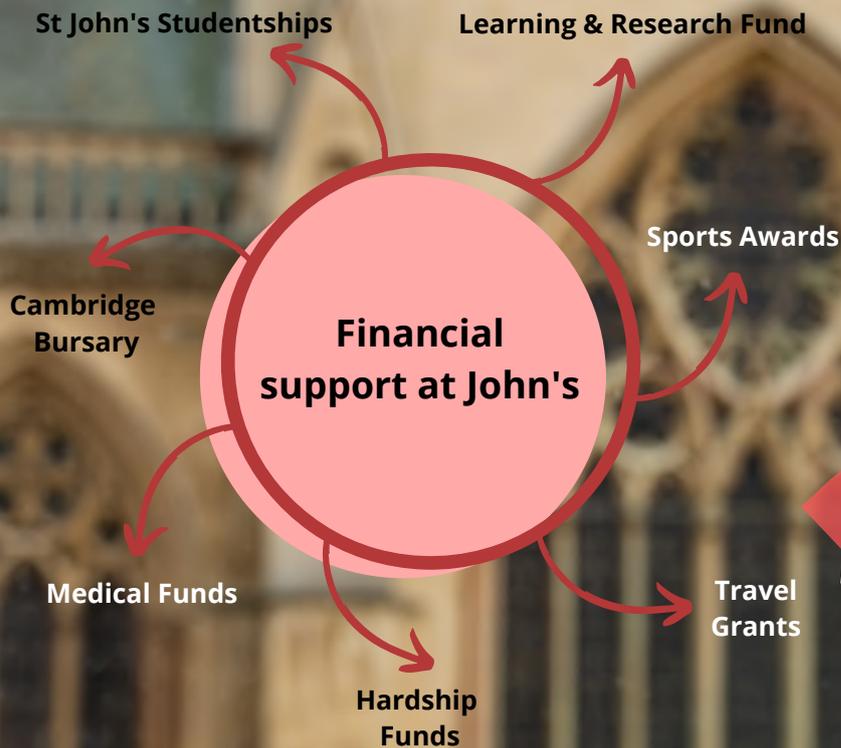
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#CONSENT ME SOUVIENT

# FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial difficulty should never be a reason to stopping you achieving your dream of applying to Cambridge. Grants, awards, prizes and means tested bursaries can help you reach your full potential without money worries



## Cambridge Bursary

The Cambridge Bursary offers a means tested bursary of up to £3,500 a year, for the duration of your course, paid termly. This is in addition to your repayable maintenance loan from Student Finance England.

Before you enrol, you will be contacted if you are eligible for the Cambridge Bursary based on your student finance data.

## St John's Studentships

St John's has a generous studentship scheme which supplements the Cambridge bursary for each year of your course, paid termly. These are non-repayable grants for home/EU students with a household income of less than £42,000, from £360 to £7,380, for students with a household income under £25,000 p.a. Combined with the Cambridge Bursary of £3,500, the total amount a student can be eligible for per year is £10,880.

## Becca - 2nd year English

*The St John's studentship took a big weight off my shoulders when I got to Cambridge. I'd considered not applying to Uni because I was worried it wasn't for people from my background and was worried I wouldn't be able to afford it. Thankfully I was proved so wrong! I'm able to do the same things my friends are, like buy books, go for meals and nights out, and attended the May Ball, which was absolutely incredible!*

*You aren't treated differently, and don't need to tell anyone, besides the Scholarship Administrator that you get a bursary if you don't want to.*

For more information visit:  
<https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/grants-awards-and-prizes>

## Scholarships and Prizes

There are a number of pre-admissions scholarships for both home and international students, along with various prizes awarded throughout the academic year for subjects such as Philosophy, applied science, arts and photography. The Khattar Harrison Scholarship awards a female student with a household income of less than £84,000, £5,000 a year for the duration of her degree. While the Nathoo Bursary awards an outstanding student with an income of under £80,000 £10,000 for the duration of their degree.

## Learning & Research Fund

The LRF Helps students towards half the cost of course materials including: books, hardware, printing & equipment, up to the value of £300 p.a. Certain subjects, such as medicine, cover the costs of textbooks. The university also provides free Microsoft Office for your computer!

## Travel Grants & Academic Research

Every year, students of St John's are invited to apply for a Travel Grant. The non-means tested grant funds a portion of the cost of travel. These are often awarded for trips related to academic study or interpret travel to remote parts of the world. Students can also apply for grants towards holiday academic research projects and summer schools.

## How can I manage my money in Cambridge?

You may have heard that Cambridge is an expensive city to live in, but you can make your money go far when living in College! Your main outgoing will be your termly college bill, which pays for your accommodation and any other College owings.

The College also has different bands of accommodation for different budgets.

## Amy - 3rd Year English

*Over the summer of 2019, I was given £469 towards a 177-mile hike across England and Wales. I travelled to research the 'border country' theory, looking at borders and territory and what that means for identity. That being said, the best part of the hike was the sheer number of pints I drank in the name of 'locating intellectual concepts in their rightful setting': pubs.*

## Hardship Funds

If a student experiences financial hardship during their degree, they can apply through their tutor for an additional Hardship Grant to help them continue their studies.

## Medical & Disability Awards

Students can apply through their tutor for assistance with medical costs, for physical or Mental illness through The Crane's Fund. The International Disabled Student's Fund pays for academic support for International students with disabilities.

## Sports Awards

The Hawks' Club Award is a grant for athletes of up to £50 per year. The Beard Fund also covers membership for members of "blues" University Sports Clubs.

# BUDGET FRIENDLY FACILITIES

- The **Buttery** does pretty nice food and is much cheaper than eating out (roughly £3.50 a meal)
- **Drinks at College Ents** are usually capped at £1.50, and the College bar is cheaper than going out!
- The College also has **free laundry, gym and sports facilities.**
- **Formal Hall dinners** are £10 for a meal with wine and £6 without wine. They are an atmospheric and conveniently cheap way to spend an evening and to celebrate occasions like birthdays!



## THE JOHN'S STUDENT'S TOP 10 MONEY SAVING TIPS:

**Stay on top of banking.** 

Set up a saving account and a student current account, which has an arranged overdraft, so you're less tempted to splash out! Apps such as Yolt and Monzo let you track your spending. Top tip: "set up text alerts for when you're nearing your account limit & take cash on a night out so you can't overspend on your card!" -Becca, 2nd year English

**Batch make meals** 

A big pan of pasta or curry is dirt cheap to make and can last you a few days. Top tip: "learn a few basic recipes to rotate and buy some spices to jazz up meals!" -Frances, 2nd Year HSPS

**Shop further afield** 

Shops further out are often cheaper than in central Cambridge, it's only a 15 minute cycle to Primark & Wilko's! Top tip: "Get those hot deals at Aldi, or share a taxi with friends and go for a big group shop at ASDA!" -Meg, 2nd Year English

**Decorate on a budget** 

Your room comes fully furnished so you only need to buy a few bits to make it homely. Fairy lights, a throw & some printed pictures go a long way!

**Cycle** 

It's a very "Cambridge" mode of transport & is cheaper than an Uber!

**Go charity shopping** 

It's cheap, and good for the planet -what's not to love? There's an Oxfam right next to John's, and further afield there are some great charity shops. Some bargain steals have been known to appear in Cam charity shops!

**Take a packed lunch** 

Eating out in Cambridge is expensive, and faculty lunches are usually pricey, so this is one of the best money saving tips! Take a flask to the library so you don't have excuses for a coffee break!

**Stay In** 

To save, instead of going out for dinner or drinks, go for dinner in Hall with friends. Drink at home, or the College bar before going out. Seeing a movie? The St John's Picturehouse movie society charges £4 for a screening, half the price of a cinema ticket!

**Travel cheap** 

If you're travelling to uni in the UK by train, get discounted tickets from The Trainline or National Express & make sure to use a 16-25 railcard!

**Get student deals** 

With an NUS card, and apps like Unidays & Student Beanz!

Don't let money put you off experiencing what this incredible university has to offer!

# APPLICATIONS

DISCLAIMER – this information is accurate at the time of writing 2020, please check St John's College official website for the most up to date information

## UCAS

To apply to Cambridge, you have to submit an application on UCAS by **6pm on 15<sup>th</sup> October**, this is earlier than most other universities so you may need to start your applications earlier than your friends not applying to Cambridge.

You will also have to either choose the code for the specific college you want to apply to or make an open application (where you'll be allocated to a college with the fewest number of applicants per spaces). You're equally likely to get an offer regardless of which college you apply to or if you submit an open application, so there's no need to stress about trying to 'game the system'. Most people love the college they go to, but we'd love you to come to John's! For more information about our college and its academia go and scour the St John's official website!

## SAQ

After this you'll be sent the SAQ to fill out online. This involves filling in the modules you've already taken at A-level, IB, Highers or any other qualification and a bit more information about yourself including a photo (heads up, if your application to Cambridge is successful this photo will be used for EVERYTHING during your time here – too many innocent applicants turned freshers have fallen into this trap). This also allows you to explain if there are any extenuating circumstances that may have affected your grades. For example, if there were staffing issues at your school. You can also fill in an additional personal statement, this is particularly useful if the course you're applying to is unique to Cambridge, but you don't feel like you have to do this. At least 25% of applicants each year do not include one and it really is optional – not including one will not decrease your chances of getting an offer. There's a document on the Cambridge website with more information.

## ADMISSIONS TESTS

For some subjects you'll be asked to complete a pre-interview test whilst for others it might be done at interview. Many of the tests require you to register for them before the UCAS deadline so make sure to do early. You will also need to check with your school whether you can do it there or if you need to find an external centre to register with. You can find more information on each subject specific test [here](#).

### *Top Tips for Admissions Tests:*

1. Use the practice papers to familiarise yourself with the tests
2. Recap any prior A-level and GCSE knowledge which may be useful
3. If you don't know the answer to a question guess and move on as you might be able to do more of the later questions
4. Practice writing essays, particularly on unseen material and within a time limit

## WRITTEN WORK SUBMISSIONS

Some subjects, especially humanities, require written work to be submitted before the interviews. These are often essays you've already written for class and can be useful in providing an insight into the way you think and the feedback from your teachers. They may also form the starting basis for a discussion in your interview. It's a nice way to be able to challenge and push your thinking, whilst sticking to a topic they know you are familiar with the basics of and have thought a bit about before to see how you'd respond to supervisions. You may also need to fill in a couple of other forms which can be found on the link at the bottom of the page.

### *Top tips for written work submissions*

1. Make sure you follow the guidelines given by the College (ie. Does it have to be typed/handwritten? Does it need to be an existing marked piece of work?)
2. Don't worry about it being your 'best' work, they're looking for people they can teach, not people who know it all already
3. They might want to see what sort of feedback you've received from teachers, so try to include one with realistic marking included
4. Reread and familiarise yourself with all submissions before interview so that you can discuss it in depth if necessary

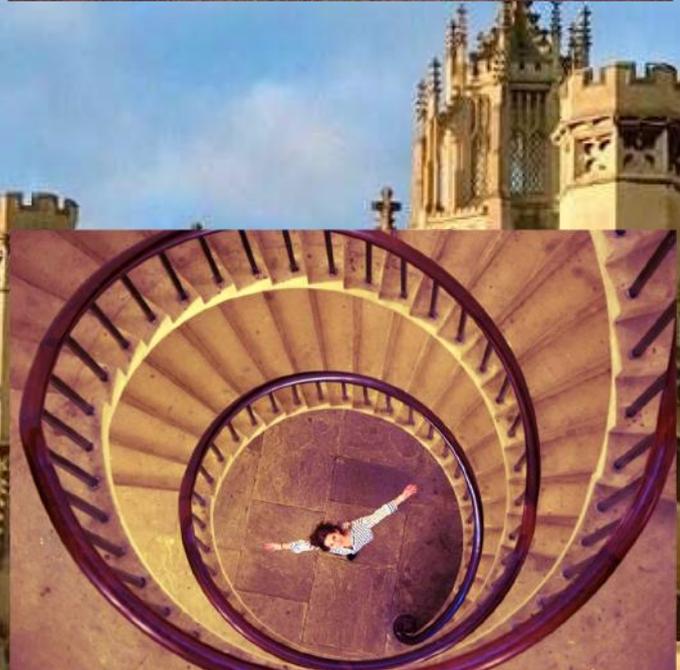
## INTERVIEW

Interview invitations are often sent out by email in November and will take place in December. The uni tries to interview as many people as possible to get to know you as a person. If you live far away, you'll be offered accommodation for this and the college can also reimburse the cost of travel. Don't worry if you don't hear back for a while especially for subjects like medicine as they need to mark all the tests first.

At John's you will often have two interviews which are generally 20-30 minutes with one or two interviewers, who might be related to your subject or other academics from the University. One of them is often a general interview which is focused around your motivation for the subject. This can include points from your personal statement, or written work for humanities subjects. The aim of this interview is to get a more rounded picture of you as an applicant, and some general ideas about your subject. It's often with at least one academic who is not related to your subject.

The other is the subject interview which is more academically focused. In this interview, humanities candidates are often given unseen material to respond to. This might be a poem for an English applicant or a case study for law. You'll be given time to read and then asked your thoughts. For science candidates, you may be a problem which they'll guide you through and help if when you're stuck. The aim of this interview is to see how you respond to teaching and how your thoughts on new material develops throughout the discussion.

Some subjects have additional interviews, exercises, or assessments. For example, Modern and Medieval Languages (MML) applicants are asked to complete a translation exercise, and Architecture applicants are given a drawing exercise. You will be given more information on this when you are invited to interview.



## INTERVIEW TOP TIPS

1. The most important thing is making sure that you think aloud. It's perfectly normal to not have an answer to the questions, but what interviewers really want to see is how you go about working it out.
2. Try to relax and be yourself - show your enthusiasm for your subject
3. Read over your everything you submitted to make sure you're familiar with it and are able to talk about it if asked
4. Don't overthink it afterwards as it's really tricky to know how you did
5. Don't believe all the myths about the interviews you read online as a lot of them are misleading
6. Wear something you feel most comfortable as this will help you perform best
7. Make sure you check in with the student helpers from the Admissions Office: they can show you around and keep you company between interviews. (They often have exciting films to watch, like Shrek or Sherlock Gnomes.)
8. Interviewers rarely plan what they are going to ask beyond the first few questions. That means they generally don't have an expectation of how they'd like you to answer, so just trust your instincts. If what they ask makes no sense, it's absolutely okay to get them to clarify what they mean.

### *Humanities interviews:*

1. Often, the things you say will be challenged by the interviewers. This is to try and push you to extend your thinking. After thinking it through aloud further, if you still agree with your first argument, stick to it and justify why. If, after further discussion, you change your mind, that's fine too!
2. Often, there are no right or wrong answers. Even when you say something that is objectively incorrect, the more important thing is how you think about it. They are not expecting you to know things already, that's what you go to University for, but they are wanting to see the way your brain works.
3. If you need more time to read the material, let them know. It's not a sign of weakness/unintelligence to need more time to read!

### *Science interviews:*

1. The problems are often harder than material you've covered at A-level so don't worry if you get it wrong just try again.
2. If you're not sure about the answer to something give a suggestion and the interviewer can help guide you to the right answer - they're trying to find out how you think and whether the supervision system would suit you
3. Use the paper provided if it's helpful to write it down but make sure you also talk aloud at the same time
4. Don't be afraid to take a little time to think or ask the interviewers questions back

## RESULTS

You'll probably hear in Mid-January on the results which can either be an acceptance to the college you applied to, acceptance from a different college or a rejection.

You may have gone through the "pooling process" if you receive an offer from a different college to the one you applied to. This is how all applicants have a fair chance of receiving an offer regardless of their college choice. If a college has an unusually high number of fantastic applicants, often they do not have enough space to give offers to them all. If that's the case, some of those candidates will be placed in the 'pool', where colleges with fewer fantastic applicants can 'fish' them out. Pooling isn't something to worry about: everyone who is pooled ends up saying that the college they're at is the best one anyway!

Regardless of the outcome you'll have an amazing few years at whatever uni you go to!

For more info take a look at the John's website:

<https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/applying-year>

*We wish you the BEST of luck, and hope to see you very soon!*

PLEASE KEEP OFF  
THE GRASS

# Acknowledgments:

With thanks to all the students of St John's College Cambridge 2019/2020 for their contributions and photographs, special credit to those who wrote features and particular thanks to the team who organised and pulled this together.

**Disclaimer:** the experiences and stories enclosed herein are reflective of the students of 2019/2020, this is prone to change (likely for the better) in the future

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