# Balliol College

## Alternative Prospectus



Artwork by Mali Jongman-Rios, Balliol Undergradute







# Contents

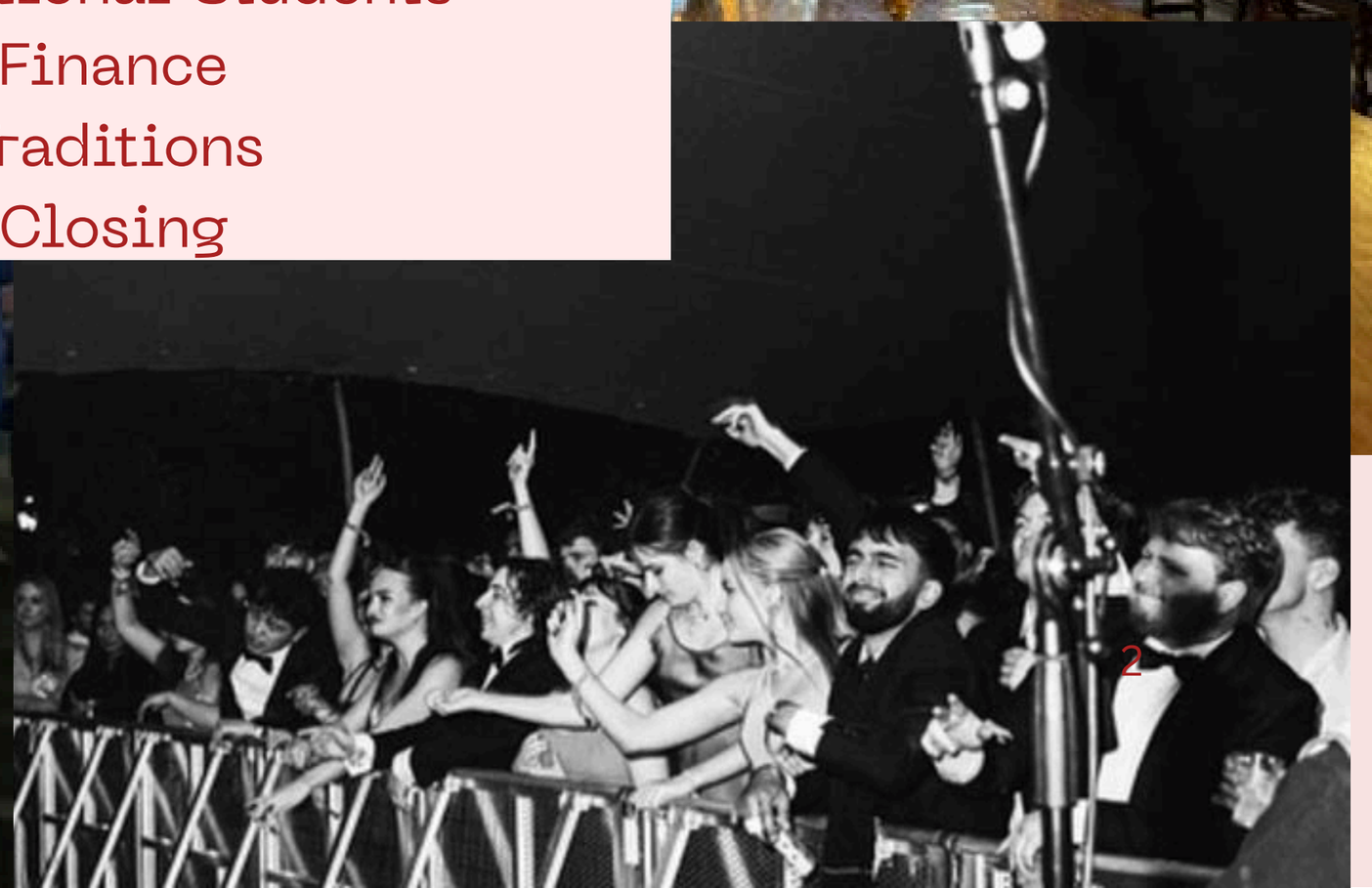

Map
Welcome
Glossary
Day in the life
JCR
Accommodation
Gym
Welfare
Freshers Week
BOPs
Food
Pantry
A&B
Football
Rugby
Rounders
Netball
Other Balliol Sports
John de Balliol
The Lindsay Bar
Balliol Societies
The Ball and Garden Party
International Students
Finance
Traditions
Closing



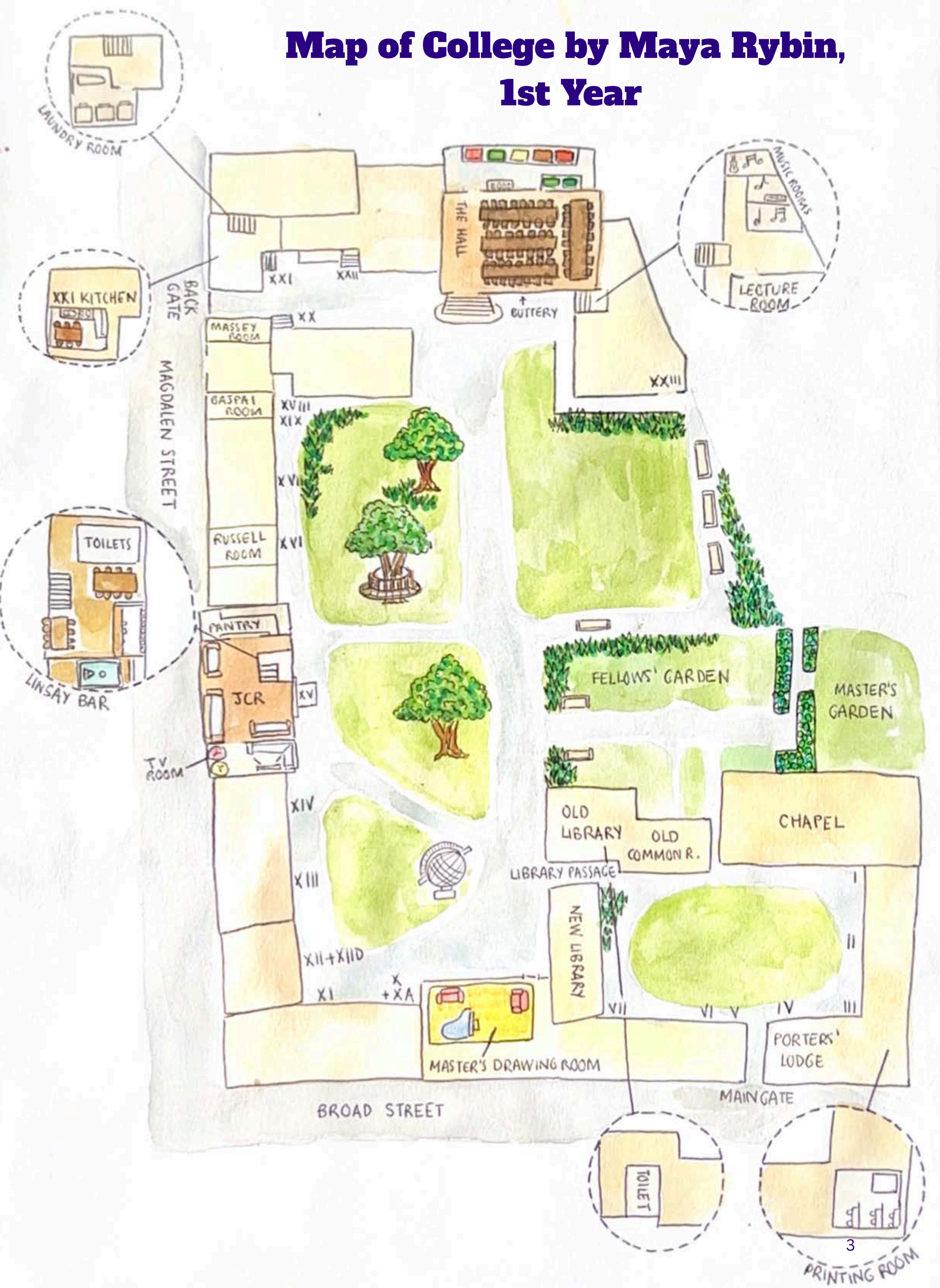






# Map of College by Maya Rybin, 1st Year



# WELCOME

Welcome to Balliol's student written prospectus! Everything in this booklet was written and curated by students who love and want to share information ahout our college. We hope it will give a realistic insight into what studying at Balliol is actually like and dispel some of the myths about Oxford colleges! We want to be honest and show that Balliol can truly be a place for everyone and inform you when making your decision about where to go. We hope you enjoy it as much as we enjoyed making it!

When asked what students like most about Balliol, the majority replied the 'community feel' which really sums up the feeling of the college. With a year group of around 120 living and studying together it is very easy to become close to everyone very quickly and to get to know the whole college. People here come from all walks of life and from all different places, making it a great and interesting place to live.

Balliol is the oldest educational institution in the English speaking world to be partly founded by a woman– Dervorguilla of Galloway who completed the establishment of the college after her husband John de Balliol's death in 1268. Balliol was also the first Oxford college to elect a female tutor in 1973 and female students have been fully admitted since 1979. Since then we have ensured that women are an equal and integral part of the college with the majority of offers going to women in 2019. Our dining hall is decorated with portraits of past alumni and there is a special emphasis on celebrating past women in the college. We hope that this history is indicative of our open minded and welcoming mentality.

Hopefully this prospectus accurately reflects the feelings of the student body here at Balliol and shows that there can be a place for everyone. Also, remember that your time at any university is what you choose it to be. Whether you enjoy sports, music, cooking, acting or a chill night in Balliol Bar– there is something for you.

Maddy Evans
Access and Admissions Officer



# GLOSSARY

- Matriculation– the ceremony where students become part of the university
- JCR– the undergraduate student body, the common room
- Angels– Sober students on a night out who are there for welfare and safety
- BNOC– Big name on campus
- Bodcard– University ID which gives you access to college and university wide spaces.
- Tutes– Short for tutorials which is a form of teaching whereby a student is 1:1 or 1:2 with a tutor
- Plodge– Short for Porters Lodge, the porters act as many things such as keeping the college saf acring as reception to visistors of the college, and being a friendly face!
- Blues– People who play sport for Oxford University
- John de Balliol– An elected pupil who is the eyes and ears of Balliol, it is their job to report th most outrageous gossip to the year (consensually)
- Handshaking– When you meet with tutors and often the Master of the College at the end of eve term to discuss progress.
- Michaelmas/Hilary/Trinity– The name of the three terms, winter/spring/summer
- Pidge– Found in the Plodge where your mail gets delivered to
- Prelims– The name of the exams you take at the end of first year
- Rustication – When you take a year out for welfare reasons and rejoin the next year.
- Scout–Lovey people who clean our rooms and empty your bin
  Bridge–an Oxford Nightclub
- Sub Fusc– The name for the academic dress you wear on matriculation and to sit exams.

# Day in the life of a 2nd Year

## This is Elsa!

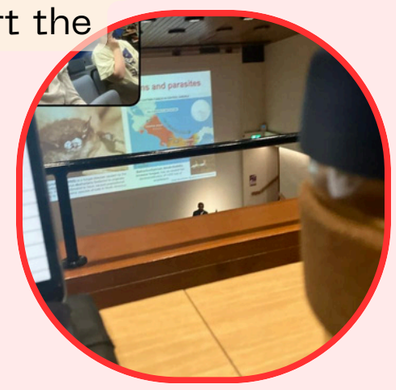


Hi! I'm Elsa and I study Biology and this is a  day in my life!

I woke up at 6 and went rowing!



I went to BCBCBC (Balliol College Boat Club Breakfast Club) - a great way to start the day!



From 10-12 I had double lectures in the Oxford Natural History Museum!

At 12 I cooked up some lunch in my Jowett flat

From 14:00 until 16:00 had a cheeky Computer Lab

From 17:30- 18:30 I had Choir rehearsal in Chapel. This happens every week and we sing in a weekly service on Sundays. This is a multifaith and none-audition choir which is open to all- then we had drinks in the Buţtery Cafe



Had dinner with my flat at around seven, you can still eat in hall in second year but we prefer to cook ourselves



20:00 I'd usually go on a walk with my friends or head down to Balliol Bar for a few games of table football.

# Day in the Life of a 1st Year



## This is Maya!

Hi, I'm a first year studying Physics and Philosophy and this is a typical day in my life!



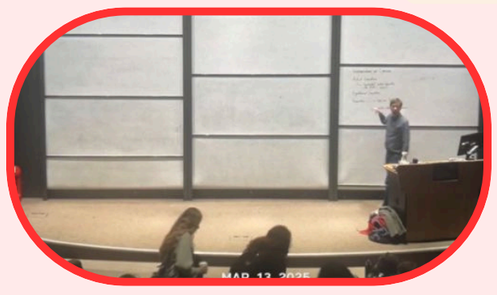
I woke up at 8:30ish (after having snoozed my alarm a couple times) for my 9am physics lectures I'm lucky the physics building isn't too far and it gives me some structure to my day.



After a cheeky tesco trip to pick up some much needed coffee, I had lunch on the quad with some friends. Today it was a tesco meal deal but some people get the meal plan for hall for lunch and dinner



I had an afternoon lecture for philosophy in the maths institute only for the STEM and philosoohy joint honor students



I then went to Balliol library for a bit to work on a problem sheet for a tutorial tomorrow. Some of my friends joined after a bit and we worked together on some of the trickier questions.

After the library sesh I waited outside Balliol to walk with some friends to Iffley sports centre. I do MMA there and it's a really exciting way to learn something new and meet a lovely group of people outside college.



After a shower I set up for cake night which is a little thing I host every week where people come to mine for some tea, cake and a yap and its really wholesome and I always feel it brings a new group of people together every time. Full of cake and good conversation, I tucked into bed at around 1am for some much needed sleep!

# The JCR





The JCR has two meanings. First it is the physical Junior Common Room, which is open 24/7 to all members. It is used for many things, whether just as a space to socialise during the day, a place to hold meetings or, most famously, a place to hold 'BOPs' every few weeks. Quite often you'll see Maths students working and committee members holding 'teas'.  There is also a hatch at the back where Pantry Cafe is run. There is also a TV room where anyone can go to have a movie night with their friends.

The other meaning of the JCR the student body that all undergraduates are a part of at Balliol, which is run by a committee. This committee is elected every Michaelmas and host teas, parties and also talk to college about student issues, whether it be food or accommodation. There are also several roles which are to deal with matters of equality and support such as the Ethnic Minorities Officers and the LGBTQ+ Officers.  Whether you run the bar as Lord Lindsay or look after the bikes as Bike Rep, the committee is a great way to get involved with college life. – Callum Turnbull, JCR President



# Accomodation







Students at Balliol will almost always start their first year off living on main site – the college itself, where all the fun is! Next to the library, dining hall, JCR, gym and bar.  Most of the rooms do not have an en suite – the bathrooms are shared, including showers yet these are kept clean by Scouts. There is also only one full-size kitchen for the entirety of main site. Many people opt to eat in hall because of this, especially for their evening meal. Cooking for yourself is still possible, just made more difficult by a lack of facilities. Generally accommodation on main site does have kitchenettes that include a kettle, toaster, microwave, and mini-fridge,

In second year, students move out to either Jowett Walk or Master's Field. These are about a seven-minute walk from college. The rent is higher, but there is almost always an en suite and a kitchen between every six people on a floor. Master's Field is a fair bit more expensive and has elevators, and is only a minute's walk further from Balliol. In third year, people generally are given the choice to move back to main site, stay in Masters Field or Jowett or live outside of college in private accommodation.

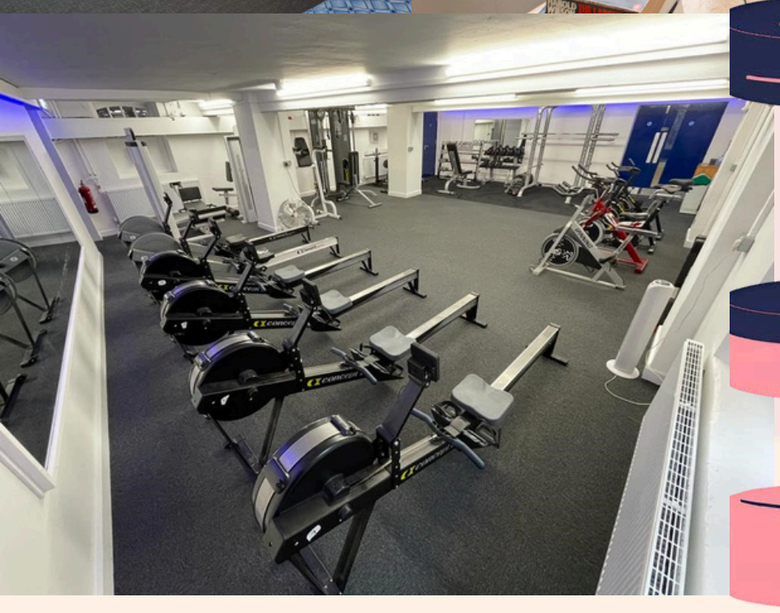
For all types of college accommodation, there are options to pay extra to stay over the vacations, although everyone does have to move out in the summer. There is also storage available for bicycles and the personal belongings of many international students. It's also standard practice for the Scouts  to come by and clean each room once a week.













# Gym

In the Garden Quad of Balliol, under the JCR, hidden from view, opposite the bar, lies one of Balliol's most spectacular attractions. A medium-sized, grey, and almost windowless room – the gym. While perhaps not the prettiest or accessible part of college, once you are inducted in first year, the gym is a valuable asset. At only £10 a term, it is significantly more affordable than the commercial gyms in the city, which can exceed thrice that amount in a single month.

Austere as it is, the contents are entirely sufficient for a good workout – there are a half dozen exercise bikes and slightly more rowing machines. There are bluetooth speakers which can be used to play music for large groups. There are also several bars for weights, as well kettlebells, barbells, and a squat stand. Once you get a key from the porter's lodge, the gym is yours to use – as long as you are considerate, and put your weights away.

–Nicholas Haque, Balliol 2nd Year

# Welfare

## A word from our Welfaeries!

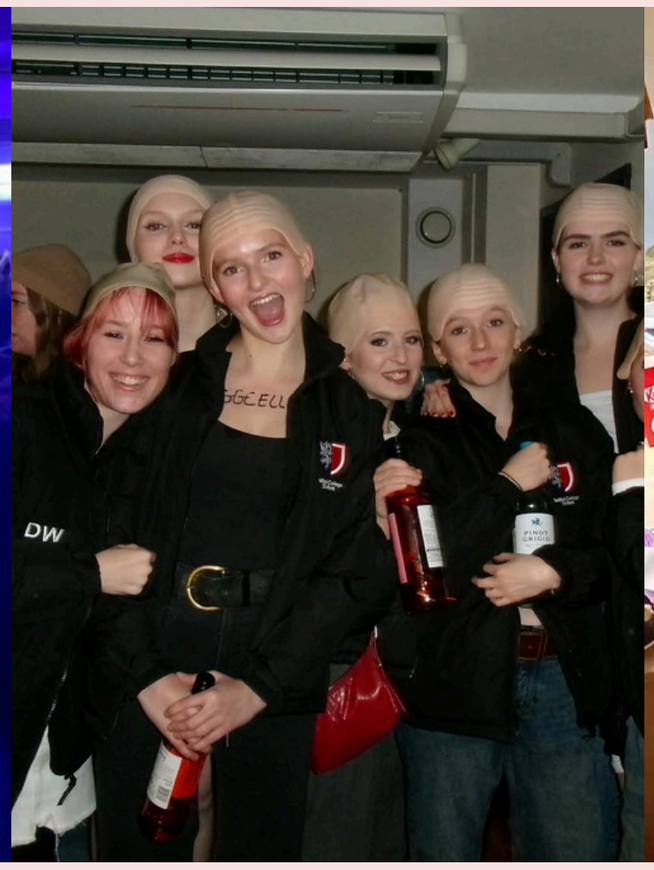
There are loads of different kinds of welfare support at college but it's kind of an all roads lead to Rome situation so please don't worry about who's who and what exactly they are there for. The idea is that having lots of people makes it more likely that there will be someone you feel really comfortable talking to. In terms of student body, there's the welfaries (currently yours truly with my wife Bella). Welfaries are JCR reps that anyone can come and talk to with question or concerns and they will listen and point you in the right direction. They organise various events throughout term but the cornerstone is the weekly welfare tea on Fridays which is just a feast of free snacks and often a little craft activity. There is also a whole welfare week in week 5 each term with some classic events such as beads and booze (wine and bracelet making) and pizza movie night. Then there is the holy trinity: Hannah, Chris and Stef. Hannah is the head of welfare and you'll find her office always open at the bottom of staircase 22. Then we have a lovely nurse called Chris just a few rooms away from Hannah and Stef is the college councillor. But I won't overload you, with any more names just know that whatever you need throughout your degree from birth control reimbursement to gender expression support to freshers flu we have you covered.



Bella and Frieda, this years Welfaries!

# FRESHERS WEEK







Freshers' week! This short time is a plunge into university life and will be busy, but very rewarding. You will have talks about college, academic and social life here and get the basics down of living here at Balliol! During the day there will be ample opportunities to meet new people and then in the evening a whole host of activities to cater for all interests, whether that be clubbing or something more low-key, like a movie night or ice-skating. Do not put too much pressure on yourself to be social every minute of everyday as that can be exhausting and prioritise settling in and feeling comfortable, as starting uni is inevitably a big adjustment. Freshers here at Balliol will involve a formal dinner with your peers and tutors (it is super chill though, do not stress about this) and then the week will finish with a dinner hosted by your college parents, which is a really nice opportunity to meet people in the year above and in your cohort.



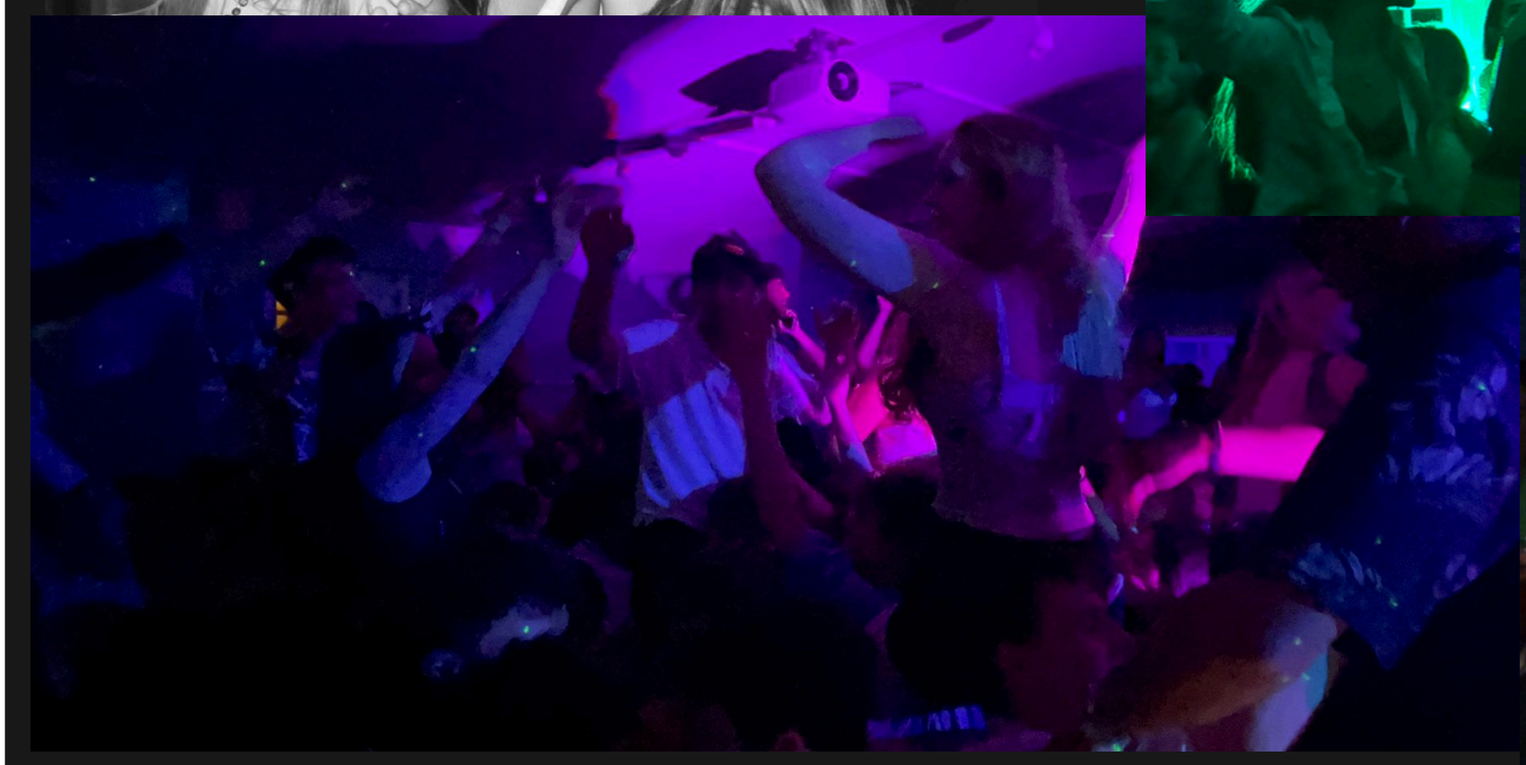
| DAY | DAY | DAY | DAY |
|---|---|---|---|
| HALL BREAKFAST (OPTIONAL) | HALL BREAKFAST (OPTIONAL) | HALL BREAKFAST (OPTIONAL) | HALL BREAKFAST (OPTIONAL) |
| PANTRY CAFE | DISABUBBLETEA | MEER YOUR COLLEGE AND SUBJECT FAMILY | MEET YOUR TUTORS |
| WELFARE TALK | FRESHERS FAIR | WELFARE TALK | BEADS AND BOOZE |
| WOMENS DRINKS | WELFARE TALK | BAME SOCIAL | ROWING CLUB BBQ |
| LGBTQ+ SOCIAL | COLLEGE PARENTS DINNER | WELFARE TEA | FRESHERS FORMAL |
| CLUB NIGHT | BOP | ICE SKATING OR BAR SOCIAL | CLUB NIGHT |

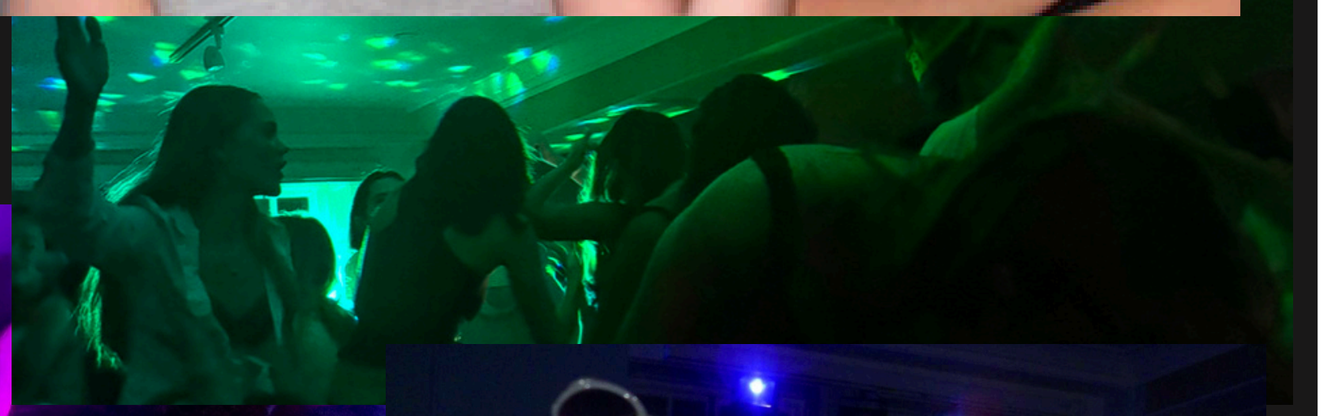
A few pieces of advice for freshers' week: get involved! There will be things to do all the time which will be a great way to meet like-minded people. That being said, take some time for yourself and look after your social battery. Decorate your room, make it yours, make it feel like home as much as possible. Do not stress about making your best friends during this week. Maybe you will meet your people on the first day, or maybe it will take a couple of weeks. However, you are almost guaranteed to find someone you gel with, so do not panic! Freshers' week will fly by so just enjoy the ride. - Jess Tait, 1st Year

# BALLIOL BOPS











## EVERY TWO-THREE WEEKS IN THE JCR

My name is Daisy, and I am one half of your Entz reps.
As if university wasn't confusing enough, we had to be add more to the mix with this. However, it really isn't all that confusing and becomes a lot clearer what we do when you come here.
Our main job as Entz are the college BOPs. These are in-college 'Big Organised Parties' that we throw three times a term - we are constantly on the campaign for four but have yet to be successful. In these we have themes to plan outfits around, as well as dead cheap 'boptails' and DJs to finish it off.
In my first term these were often some of my favourite nights as it was essentially like going to a smaller club, but without the hassle of having to 'go out' for it.





Traditionally, Balliol BOPs have quite a good reputation (you don't just have to ask us), and so we attract quite a lot of people from other colleges, it is often a good crowd. This will probably still sound quite foreign but will all become perfectly clear at the end of Fresher's week when we typically have our first one of Michaelmas.
Other things we do are organising club tickets (which we've done for Freshers week) as well as organising 'megabops' that tend to be out of college at a local club with other colleges. - Daisy White, Entz Rep

# FOOD AT BALLIOL

We are very lucky with our Hall in Balliol. It is not only a beautiful space but a social one. It serves all three meals thrughout the week, and if you choose to get a meal plan, it works out at below £3.00 per dinner! The hall food caters to every dietary requirement and it is an inclusive environment. It is very informal and a great place to catch up with your friends, the meals are also nutritious which was a great help to me getting started in first year- it was one less thing to worry about! Of course, not everyone chooses to eat in hall and it is not mandatory, you are very welcome to make your own food in Balliol's kitchen facilities, however, in first year hall is very popular and also a great way to get talking to people over dinner! We also have formal dinners once a week at Balliol. These are formal occasions where people can get dressed up, buy some wine from the Buttery and enjoy a three course meal with their friends or family!



Arina Makarina
1st Year
Foodie Rep



While hall is a great place to get cheap lunches, dinners, and even breakfasts (if you are up early enough, which is a challenge for some...), there are plenty alternatives close to Balliol if you want to spice things up.

The closest spots for a quick lunch are Italiamo and Najar's. Najar's is a food stand, offering a variety of large falafel and hummus wraps with ample vegetarian and vegan options for around £4-5. My personal favourites are spicy chicken or haloumi with salad. Italiamo offers amazing coffee, calzone, sandwiches and cannoli. They also have a cute outside area, where you can enjoy your food and people-watch.

If you are looking for a place to get brunch with your friends, then Oxford Brunch Bar is a great option. It has a nice vibe, perfect for debriefing with your mates.

Another place to go is Gloucester Green, a small square about 5 minutes away from college. There are ample different places and stands with delicious food and diverse cuisines. Nearby, there are also stands with clothes and accessories.

There are probably as many (or more) coffee shops in Oxford as there are libraries, so I highly recommend exploring them! My favourites are Gulp Fiction and New Ground. Gulp Fiction doubles as a book shop, and you get a free drink if you buy a book. New Ground has really good coffee (I'm not a connoisseur, but trust me), and there is a mysterious basement room if you want an intimate vibe or a space for locking in.

# PANTRY

**OPEN EVERY WEEK**

**JCR STUDENT CAFE**
STUDENT RUN







The Pantry is part of the heart and soul of Balliol! The Pantry is the kitchen located in the JCR and is open most weekdays and weekends to provide freshly baked goods to students. Whether it is Tuesday's toasties, or post-bop pancakes on a Sunday, Balliol students can rely on the Pantry to be run daily and to provide sustenance to get us through our studies. The Pantry is student-run and student-led, meaning it provides an opportunity to have a job and earn money while at Oxford, and we can humbly say it is a fantastic job to have, as you serve and work alongside your peers while also developing cooking and service skills. While much of our service is day-to-day snack foods, we occasionally provide formals as an alternative to hall food. This year we have had a Halloween-themed formal and a Valentine's-themed formal ,both huge successes and an opportunity to celebrate special occasions with your friends. The Pantry is represented in the JCR by our designated Foodies, who ensure the health and safety of both the food we produce and the working staff, and are incredibly friendly and approachable should you apply to work here next year!- Elizabeth Bourn, 1st Year

# A&B

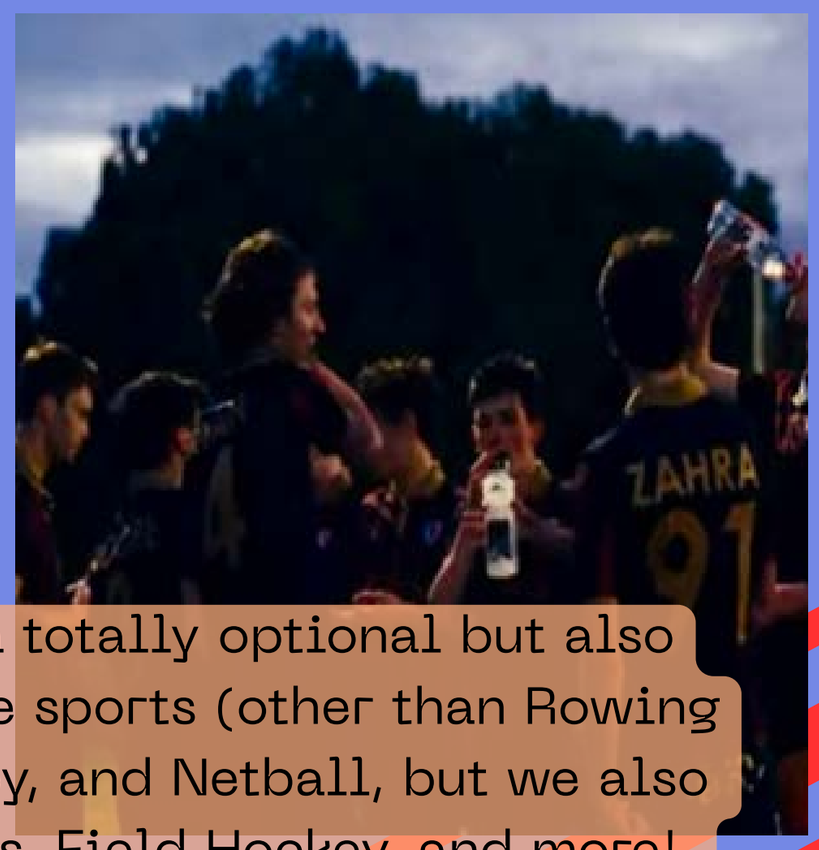
A&B (the Arnold & Brackenbury Society) is a drinking club with a debating problem – or maybe I'm getting that the wrong way round, oops! The Society typically holds a few meetings each term in the JCR, debating motions such as: 'This House would add insult to injury', 'This House believes in vino veritas', and 'This House saw mommy kissing Santa Claus'. Four speakers (two supporting the motion, two opposing it) are selected in advance by the Presidents and Secretary of the Society. For the sake of inclusion, these speakers are often of varying degrees of debating talent. Once this dialectical exercise is over and the room is well and truly sloshed, it's the audience's turn and the Presidents and Secretary will invite any impromptu floor speeches from keen members of the audience who feel they have something to add. Based on the merit of these floor speeches, members from the audience can even be admitted into the Arnold & Brackenbury Society; they can be invited back to support or oppose a future motion. A&B's Presidents and members have included many famous alumni whom I won't name here, but interestingly the minute book containing the speeches and interventions of a recent Prime Minster of the United Kingdom has gone missing from the archives... A&B's main annual event, known as the 'Nepotists', takes place at the end of each Michaelmas: it's an evening of carols, mulled wine, and mince pies followed by the traditional singing of a good old Gordouli (a sweary song) at Trinity. Traditionally, it is those members of A&B who go on to organise other aspects of College life such as the Balliol Charity Musical.

· **Anonymous Former Secretary of the Arnold & Brackenbury Society**

# FOOTBALL

## B C F C





Hello! I am a first year member of BCFC. Sports are a totally optional but also incredibly important part of college life! The big three sports (other than Rowing which is big in every college!) here are Football, Rugby, and Netball, but we also have excellent teams in Cricket, Rounders, Table Tennis, Field Hockey, and more! Football is a really big part of college life here, and I would absolutely recommend anyone applying here to get involved. We have two teams, including our very good first team for those looking to properly get involved with the competitive side of the sport, and then our slightly less competitive second team, which is open to all skill levels. For me, arguably the most important part was taking up football in Michaelmas, as it gives a really great opportunity to get to know everyone and foster a sense of community – I think the most surprising part for me was the opportunity to make friends from different years: as all college sports are open to all years it means you really do get to know higher years which really helps to expand the pool of people to make friends with.

Away from the physical side of the sport, probably the most well-known part within college is the famous Sports Socials. These are open to all members of the club – you don't have to play to attend and take place every Thursday. The committee of social secretaries often do themes for these, so there's always something to keep you entertained at these. It is important to mention as well that drinking is absolutely optional at these events: there are plenty of non-drinkers and I can reassure that this makes no difference to the enjoyment of the events.

– Harry Lucas, 1st Year








# RUGBY

HCBCRFC (In collab with Hertford College)

I had never played rugby before university, other than briefly during PE lessons, but keen to try new things I joined HCBCRFC early on in my first term. It flourished into feeling part of a community, including people of different years, degrees and colleges, where I feel like I have made some of my closest friends at university. My little prior experience and knowledge of rugby was not viewed by the club negatively, and instead, the senior boys were happy to show me the ropes during training. Even so, being part of the club doesn't require any strict commitments to the sport. Many members of the club are social members, who attend weekly socials to hang out with their friends and meet new people, and where club nights, pub crawls, events with other colleges and much more is organised. Being part of the club has genuinely been my favourite part of my university social life and I would highly recommend others to join the rugby (and any other) sports club, and not to be intimidated by them, as a lot of us here joined the club on a whim and it ended up being a very rewarding experience.

By Issa Chaudhry, 1st year and budding Social Sec



# Balliol College Boat Club



The Balliol College Boat Club is one of the oldest in oxford. We have been racing on the river in Oxford since 1823 and we like to think we're one of the best boat clubs around. Our first boats are both competitive; according to Strava, we have the fastest women's boat on the river, and our men's first boat is also in the top division. If you're looking to join the blues, you would be in good company, with Balliol blues on both the men's and women's sides.






More importantly though, we pride ourselves on being a friendly boat club and whether you rowed for your school and are a total pro or have never been in a boat before, you are very welcome at the BCBC. We're also a big part of college and around a quarter of Balliol students race with the boat club at some point over their college career. Coxes are also a valuable part of every boat club, and our new cox training program has been developed to help anyone get involved with the boat club. If you have aspirations of being a bus driver/orchestra conductor/motivational speaker all rolled into one, we can help you learn.

Other important considerations, we have great socials! From Christmas karaoke in the Balliol bar and silly pub games to pre-race carb loads, pasta parties and post-race club nights, we have a busy social calendar. Even more importantly, not only do we — on occasion — row well, but we look good doing it.



–Tom Postance, Men's Captain

# Netball

Being part of Netball at Balliol has certainly been one of the highlights of my University experience so far and is a great opportunity to build friendships with students across all years of college. Our weekly socials (including ou et le poulet, hazardous 3-legged college bar crawls, classic crew dates with other college teams and of course our yearly fresher initiation) are either joined with other college teams or our very own Balliol Rugby and Football clubs. They are carefully organised and run by the 2nd year committee, and almost always result in many more drinks at the college bar afterwards and a few too many people in Bridge... BCNC socials are always really popular and accessible to everyone- there is absolutely no pressure to drink (although we're certainly not against it!) and our main priority is ensuring that everyone is having a good time.

Taking part in sports in college is also an amazing way to experience these socials and matches without having to commit fully to a university team! We are very understanding of all the various commitments that people have during their time at Oxford and there is no pressure to attend Netball events every week if they happen to clash with your schedule. However, playing in matches definitely provides a welcome break from the pile of work set by tutors, and allow us to become even closer as a team. BCNC has only gotten stronger as the years go on and came third in the league last term, so we're hoping for a successful day at the yearly Cuppers tournament this Trinity term!








Overall, we aim to create a friendly environment for everyone and are open to players of any experience, offering informal and accessible training sessions at the training ground in Jowett. Our thriving and ever increasing number of social members are also vital to the BCNC community and we always welcome anyone who wishes to join!



-Elizabeth Pass, Netball Captain

# Other Balliol Sports

## TENNIS

(There are a fair few)



Whether you're an experienced tennis player or someone who's curious to give it a go, we're really excited to have you join us.

Balliol College Tennis Club is a relaxed and friendly club where everyone is welcome. We organise training sessions and matches throughout the year — including Sports Day with St Johns Cambridge in Michaelmas term and Cuppers (Oxford's inter-college competition) in Trinity term! We have a tennis court in Jowett Walk that can be booked by students ! Our members include those who play for the university team, casual players and we even play with students from the MCR. We'll be running taster sessions early in term and would love for you to come along — it's a great way to meet new people and get a feel for the team. Looking forward to meeting you all soon! -Lara Ela Ulkeroglu, BCTC president

## CRICKET

Balliol is lucky enough to have a thriving and inclusive cricket community with members of both the JCR and MCR coming together to play in the beautiful surroundings of our Jowett walk home ground. The team plays in both the fortress t20 league and the t20 cuppers competition with many great successes in recent years, most notably winning the league and cuppers back to back in 2023 and 2024. BCCC is proud to have members of all abilities with some of our players representing the university and many who hadn't picked up a bat until they came to Oxford but who have now fallen in love with the sport. We aim to have training sessions throughout the winter and make use of our 2 free nets at Jowett walk for Balliol students to use. We hope that in the coming years our cricketing community continues to grow and Balliol can set the standard for college cricket in Oxford. Follow @balliolccc on insta for more- Ed Holmes, Captain




## ROUNDERS



Balliol College Best Rounders Club is not only the best rounders club in Oxford, but was also voted the official best sports team in all of Balliol. Famous for its rambunctious socials in Hillary and intense matches in Trinity, BCBRC is for everyone

Founded initially as an excuse for a group of friends to drink Pimm's and have fun outside, the club has grown into a formidable group of Pimm 's-drinking, rounders-playing professionals. The club offers all students the chance to have fun outside without any added commitment—just plenty of rounders and Pimm's.

Our season starts with our social term in Hillary. This year, we hosted a Pimm's party in the bar, Balliol's Ultimate Beer Pong Tournament, and a game of pub golf across Oxford's best college bars. These socials are loads of fun and very chill, we don't make you do any of the shoe and sock drinking games that the other sports societies LOVE.

The glorious summer term of Trinity provides the perfect playing conditions for some rounders. This works perfectly in Balliol since it owns one of Oxford's few central sports grounds. We host regular (and very relaxed) practices and friendly matches against other colleges, all followed by plenty of Pimm's. This is all leading up to highlight the end-of-year Cuppers, where all the College's rounders teams come together in an intense tournament to crown the best rounders team. Last year's match against Trinity College was especially heated after their consistent use of foul play and the deeply unjust umpiring decision to decide the winner based on a coin toss. We are totally unbothered about it.

BCBRC is a place where everyone is welcome to have fun, drink Pimm's, and beat Trinity in Cuppers.

# John de Balliol

*Your weekly dose of secrets since 1263*

## "PEOPLE I MET AT OXFORD"




* THE GLINK : "Gladstone Link" underground library
  - feels like a prison
* BOP : "big organised party" in college
* BRIDGE : a wonderful place, local nightclub
* THE UNION : a dark place where people debate
* BCBC : Balliol college boat club
* rowing terminology ... I have no idea either!

# The Lindsay Bar

The Lindsay is a bustling student bar in the centre of Balliol. Located underneath the JCR, it is the social hub of Balliol and arguably the wider university, with many bar crawls from societies and clubs making their way through the hallowed doors of Staircase 15. The Lindsay differs from most other college bars in that it is entirely student run, creating the dual benefit of a great atmosphere and very low prices. The manager of the bar is the Lord or Lady Lindsay, a position aided by two deputies called Duckworths. These are elected JCR positions, meaning that any member of the undergraduate community can run to attain guaranteed bar work, alongside free drinks for life for the Lindsay and free snacks for life for the Duckworths. Other students can also apply for bar work, which is one of the only ways that you can go about earning money during term time given the university's rules regarding employment. Prices are ridiculously cheap, with a pint of Hobgoblin coming in at a mere £1.80. The college drink, Balliol Blue, is only £3.50 and contains four shots of alcohol — this is the cause of many very hazy nights for Balliolites, so exercise caution. With pool table, darts board and table football, the Lindsay is the site of many intense sporting events alongside barties (bar parties) and pub quizzes. Make your way down from 7:00pm to 11:00pm from Monday to Thursday and 12:00pm on Fridays and Saturdays for fun filled evenings and a chance to unwind from the busy academic schedule of your degree.

Will Gulliford, Duckworth




'Best College Bar'– Cherwell Newspaper 2024







# Balliol Societies

As well as in college sports, we also have some in-college societies! These are student groups based around subjets and interests. For example the Balliol Music Society or the Balliol BUMS.

## Balliol Music Society

This society was founded in 1885 for putting on student and professional concerts in college. These happen every two weeks and are open to any member to play in or to attend. Being a member of this society grants you access to any of Balliol's practice spaces equipped with pianos, amps and drums- a great way to unwind.




Nikita Handel, President of Balliol BUMS -

## The BUMS

Maths at Balliol is unique in hosting one of the closest-knit degree cohorts in the university. We're home to BUMS – the Balliol Undergraduate Mathematics Society – whose name speaks for itself. Every fortnight, we host "Sip and Solves" in the JCR: relaxed, friendly gatherings where Maths and Computer Science students from all year groups come together to chat, snack, and work through problems (or just procrastinate together). We also run special events throughout the year, including BUMS on Ice (ice skating), BUMS on Walls (climbing), and our annual Maths Formal, where students and tutors celebrate the year together over dinner. The Balliol Maths community is genuinely close – supportive, welcoming, and full of inside jokes. It really does feel like a family!

## The Dervorguilla Society

This History society takes its name from its co-founder Dervorguilla of Galloway and aims to encourage extra-curricular engagement in history especially due to Balliol's rich legacy of having such a strong and large cohort of historians. This year there were a variety of talks, about two per terms. Highlights included Dr Ruth Lawlor from Cornell University speaking about her upcoming joint-edited book 'Th Greater Second World War' and Prof. Conrad Leyser from Worcester College speaking about mariology and the history of the family in the medieval period. Conversation ranged from Sudanese giraffes to the reform of Stormont with Dr Conor Kelly. There were also various social activities, including a formal where we had 58 Balliol historians in attendance! - Fódhla Dunne, co-president of Dervorguilla Society



Dervorguilla of Galloway

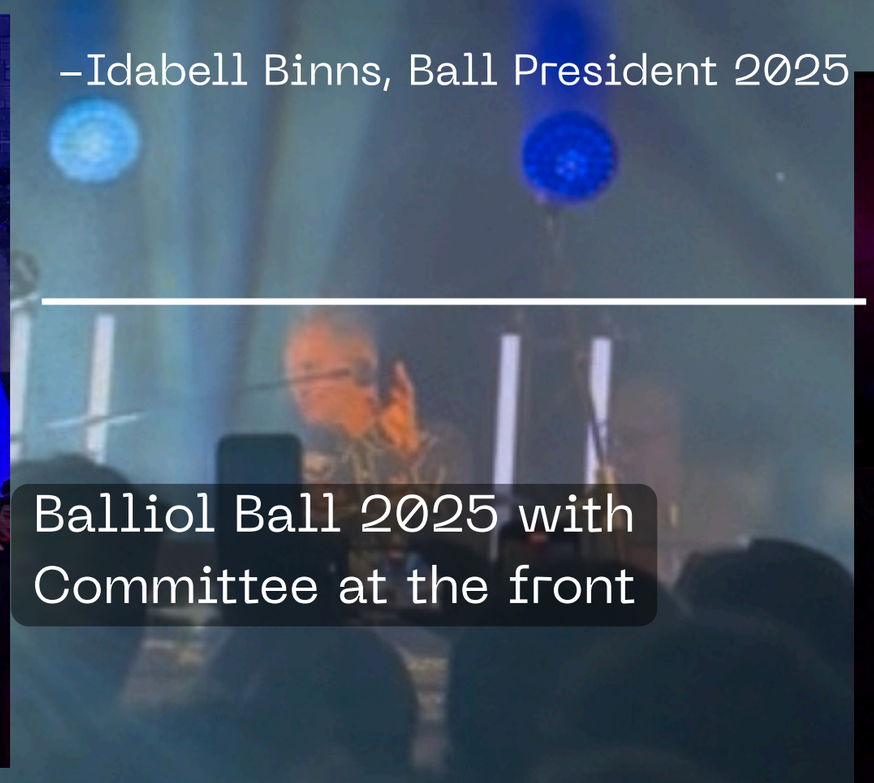


# THE BALL

Like many Oxford Colleges, Balliol hosts garden parties and balls in Trinity Term. These tend to alternate each year, bringing together Balliolites new and old. I was president of our May Ball in 2025, and it has definitely been one of the highlights of my time at Balliol. I spent a year organising and planning with our wonderful committee to ensure the night was full of fun, food and great entertainment. We had ballroom dancing, an Abba tribute, a rave room and great food. The theme voted by the JCR was a Romeo and Juliet Masquerade, which we named 'Star-Crossed Lovers' and encouraged attendees to wear a mask. College balls are a great way to get involved in student life beyond academics and leave a mark on your time at Balliol. Student performances are also heavily encouraged; we had Blue Suede, Double Time, Out of the Blue, the Oxford Gargoyles and Dot Funk Odyssey. This made the night even more memorable as Balliol transformed into Verona.



-Idabell Binns, Ball President 2025



Balliol Ball 2025 with Committee at the front



# THE GARDEN PARTY

The Garden Party happens in Balliol every other year in the place of a ball, it is a lowker key event, has a smaller budget and lasts during the day, it is a fun summery event with drinks, food and events such as a headliner and dancing. It has a theme every year and is a great end of term event with your friends.

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Coming to Oxford from abroad is such a daunting idea- navigating a new country, a new system, a new culture without having your friends and family close by for support. But Balliol and its tight-knit community quickly made Oxford feel like home. From the moment we arrived, there was an overwhelming sense of welcome. International students are supported from day one with clear information and advice about visa (bane of our existence), banking and healthcare. There are sufficient international storage rooms dedicated for international students like us to store our belongings during the vacation. On top of that, vacation residency is always available if we want to stay over during any of the term breaks.

Living alone for the first time here, I personally had to learn to do my laundry from scratch (couldn't even open the washing machine door the first time), had internal debates in my mind about drinking the tap water, had to get better at managing my finances, etc. However, with a significant portion of the Balliol JCR being international, there will always be someone to relate to, even if sometimes everything feels overwhelming.

Having a vibrant international community in the college also means it's super easy to stay connected to your culture while also embracing new ones!

No matter how lonely it feels at first, when you finally leave at the end of the year, the tearful goodbyes you exchange with your Balliol friends and the heavy heart you carry in the plane back home will signify that you now truly have a new family and a new home waiting for you right here in Balliol.

All in all, adjusting to life in the UK in Balliol isn't just about adapting; it's about being embraced, supported and empowered to thrive.

Cora Kerkhoven and Arjjay Meghdoot, this years International Student Representatives






# Balliol student finance

## ACADEMIC

- Grants to support study in the vacation
- Grants for academic projects or internships
- Foreign language study grants (even if you aren't studying languages)
- Reading party opportunities (retreat to the Alps to read with tutors)

## COLLEGE PRIZES

- Subject prizes if you do well in exams
- Achievement in poetry, satire and other work outside of normal academics

## WELFARE & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Annual and rolling support grants available (can supplement central university support)
- Laptop grant (up to £200 support for laptop + equipment)
- JCR funds for financial assistance (gender expression and period products)
- Cheaper meal plans
- Short term loans to help with unexpected costs

## WHO TO CONTACT?

- JCR treasurer
- Check out @balliolJCR on instagram
- In college come talk to Fiona Chippendale - the student finance fairy



## NON-ACADEMIC

- Floreat grant (£150 for extra-curriculars)
- Pathfinders opportunities and awards
- JCR sports/blues funding
- Childcare nursery places and bursary support
- Swimming membership to Iffley pool

Follow the QR code for full details for finance eligibility and how to claim reimbursement

# TRADITIONS

-Rivalry with Trinity College – Balliol and Trinity have a decades (centuries?) long feud with one another, although this is arguably one-sided. This is said to have originally started when Trinity built on some of Balliol's land, but has been recently refuelled by the death of our college tortoise.

Photo from 1963, when Balliol students snuck into Trinity and replaced the carpet in their JCR with grass overnight, including daffodil bulbs. ⟶



This rivalry is still seen in Nepotists, a Balliol-specific event where everyone gathers before breaking up for Christmas for carols, mulled wine, mince pies, and to sing (shout) over the wall at Trinity College



May Day – although celebrated across all Oxford Colleges, Balliol Choir is open to everyone and offers the opportunity to sing madrigals from the tower down to onlookers. The Choir also runs an annual and highly popular Christmas carol service.

A&B – Whilst this will be mentioned in more detail elsewhere in the book, this society is definitely worth mentioning! Up to 3 times a term, students are invited to take part in comedy debates with titles such as 'This House Believes No Good Deed Goes Unpunished' or 'This House Drinks to Forget But Always Remembers'. Speakers share related anecdotes, hopefully funny by themselves, but otherwise there is always plenty of wine and port on offer!

Reading Parties – Balliol shares a Chalet in the Alps with New & University College, stayed in by the likes of Rory Stewart, Rachel Reeves, and Harold Macmillan. Each year students can spend a week over summer in a wooden chalet opposite Mont Blanc, with the full authentic French experience of baguettes, cheese, and wine. Since this is Oxford, students are expected to do some reading during their stay, however, there is a lot of free time to go on hikes or just hang around the chalet and chat. This trip is heavily subsidised at around £7.50 a night, and students can also apply to have this further covered by the Floreat Grant.

Tortoises! Balliol takes great pride in its tortoises, in spite of an arguably chequered past and currently having no tortoise. Despite this, we still have a 'Comrade Tortoise' position on committee, who has adopted a giant tortoise from the WWF. During the annual Oxford-wide tortoise race, the Comrade Tortoise is said to have to eat a full head of lettuce before the race finishes, however, this often does not occur.

Again, the bops and bar will be assigned their own pages but they are worth a mention! Balliol bops are especially popular across the whole uni, as often other colleges do not allow guests. At one point when the Entz team were asked to reduce numbers by capping guests to 7 a person! The Balliol Bar is also notoriously cheap, and is one of the few colleges that allows students to work behind the bar .

College families, people get 'married' in first year (normally an agreement with a haribo ring) and are then assigned kids in their second year. This is so first years have a friendly face and a first point of contact in second years. College families then grow so some people even have grandparents!

-Ruby Leys, 2nd Year



# Goodbye Guys!

## Next Steps

- Follow us on instagram- balliolcollege_oxford126
- 3, ballioljcr
- Visit one of our Open Days held every year
- Look for updates on the Balliol College Website