A Taste of Balliol





Food and Dining in the Historic Collections of Balliol College

An exhibition held at

Balliol College

Historic Collections Centre

St Cross Church, Oxford

Hilary Term 2023

BALLIOL COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

A Taste of Balliol

Introduction

This exhibition explores food and dining through Balliol College's historic collections. From the earliest surviving Statutes of the College we can determine some aspect of the daily life of the Scholars. We know, for instance, that they were to attend feast days, and that two meals a day were to be provided at the common table. John Jones in *Balliol College: A History* says that although 'Nothing is said in the Statutes about the College buildings', what is clear is 'that the dining-hall was the focus of social life.'

We explore the buildings of the Hall and the kitchens, as well as the staff, the celebrations and traditions relating to them, the detail of the food itself and the supply chains that brought it to the table. Finally, we look to the future – what impact the climate crisis will have on our food systems, and what our food at Balliol might look like.

But to begin, let's look back to the past: from around 1575 to about 1650 England was the most active publisher of cookery books in Europe, promoting recipes early and eagerly. We might be tempted today to think of recipes as rather dull, technical writing, but they can provide a window to the creative thinking and social exchanges of communities and households. Early modern England was a place where people were figuring a lot of things out, and they often figured things out in pots and pans in the kitchen and on the dining table in experimentation. Recipes (or receipts as they were known), or shopping lists, invoices, dinner menus and foody anecdotes, can tell us a great deal about life throughout Balliol's history, both within and beyond the College walls.

Through this exhibition you'll see the changes to buildings, you'll meet some of the people, and you'll get a taste for the food consumed and the important part it has played and continues to play in the life of the College.

Cover photos

Food photos:

Clockwise from top left: 1. Peter M. Bayley's 21st birthday lunch in Balliol by Ken Wheeler 2. Commemoration Ball for the 750th anniversary by Peter Batty 3. Snell Dinner, 23 February 2013 4. Balliol College meal by Nicola Trott

Dining photos:

Clockwise from top left: 1. Balliol Hall by Stuart Bebb 2. BUMS Dinner 3. Gaudy 2001 4. Balliol Hall, October 2020 by Kate Bailey

Exhibition and Catalogue by

Nigel Buckley
Assistant Librarian, Balliol College

Bethany Hamblen
Archivist, Balliol College

Ewa Gudemajer-Wodecka
Library Housekeeper and Rare Books Cleaner, Balliol College

Aishah Olubaji
Early Career Librarian, Balliol College

Naomi Tiley
Librarian, Balliol College

Stewart Tiley
Librarian, Balliol College

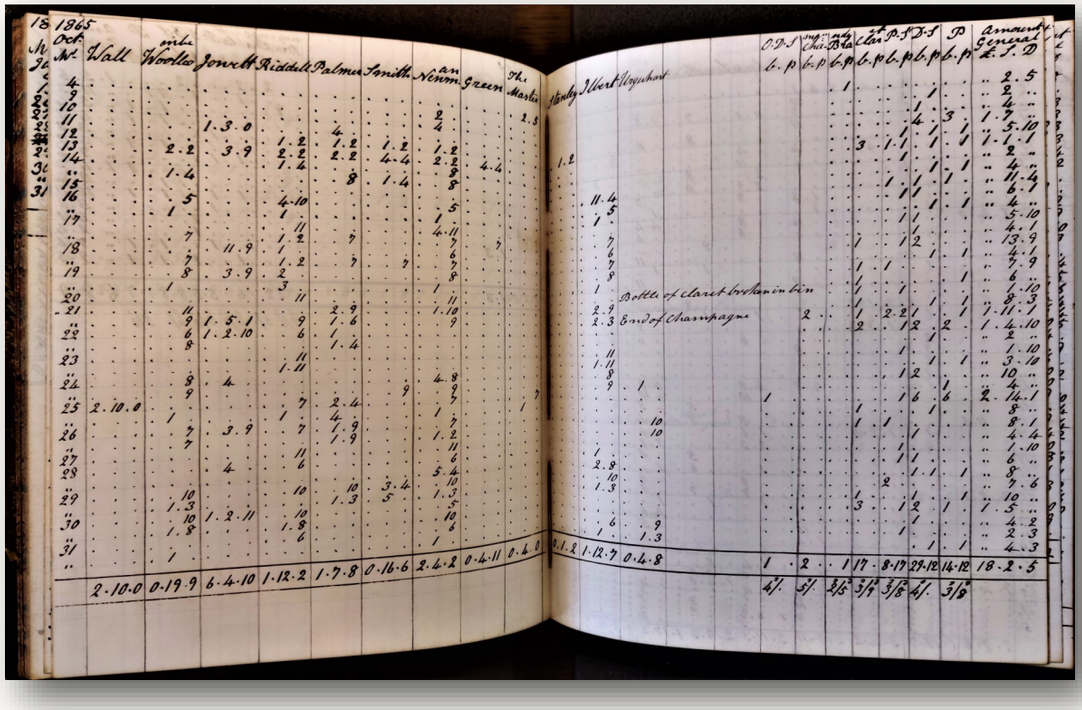
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Foreword

By Dr Christopher Kissane (Balliol MPhil 2008, DPhil 2010)

From their very beginning, Oxford colleges have been intrinsically tied to food: the Scottish students studying at the new College endowed by Dervorguilla of Galloway in the late 1200s received eight pence a week towards their 'commons'. In one way or another, Balliol has continued feeding students, scholars, and visitors, for the nearly 800 years since, and eating together has always remained at the heart of College life and community. In the changing foods cooked and served in College, we also find not just the full breadth of the College's history, but also a wider history of trade, culture, class, and gender.

Colleges have long been vital sources of material for food historians, with their archives often preserving centuries of account books, stock lists, and recipes providing a window onto the kitchens and tables of the past. Even though today's students could certainly empathise with the struggles the earliest Balliol students had with money and meals, their eyebrows might raise at some of the items of wild game that made it onto medieval and early modern Balliol bills of fare, especially at college feasts. They might be less surprised that beer and wine have long been held in copious supply.



Monthly tables of wine consumption by Fellows, 1858 - 1871 *[Balliol College Archives, MISC 174]*

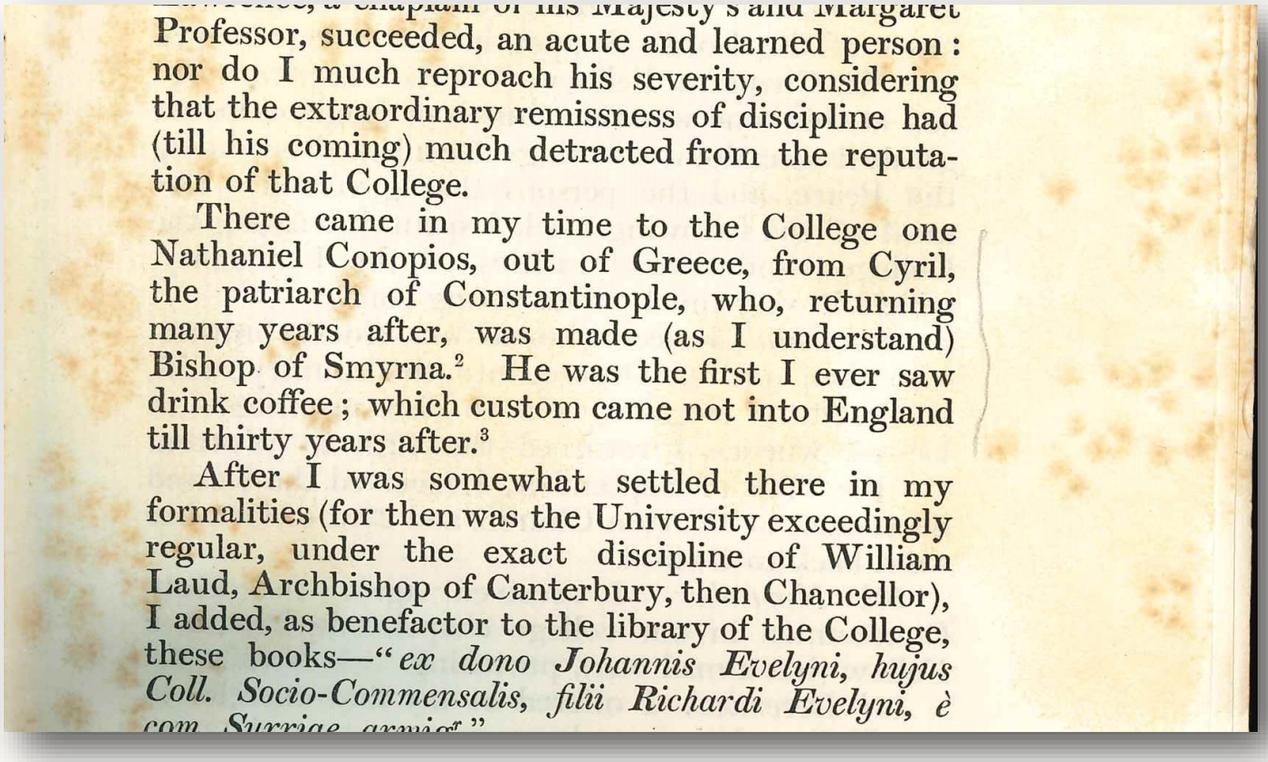
Religion lay at the heart of the medieval college, and has long influenced its choices of food. Like many colleges, Balliol had to adjust to the Reformation's abolition of Catholic fasting and dietary rules, and the Tudor and Stuart state's creation of a 'political Lent' to promote England's new maritime orientation. Such political and trading influences have changed the drinks served too: continental entanglements long coloured the makeup of the college cellars, from the decline of the Canary 'sack' popular in Elizabethan England to the rise of port after England allied with Portugal in the 1700s.

The arrival of foods from the 'New World' – potatoes, tomatoes, and so on – in the college kitchens was a result of European colonialism in the new world, while the prevalence of sugar in particular was intimately tied to Atlantic slavery. Those ubiquitous hot drinks too tell a wider historical story, and indeed the Balliol diarist John Evelyn provides perhaps the first example of someone drinking coffee in England, recording that he saw the Cretan Nicholas Coponius doing so in college in the 1640s.

By the late 1800s, when Balliol was educating hundreds of imperial officials, the origins of the college stores sound like a tour of the British Empire's greatest reach: Egyptian cigarettes, East India Solera sherry, Congou and Songchou tea from China. And in the twentieth century, we see the deep influence of class, both through the type of food served in an elite institution, and in the strike action of staff demanding fair treatment. Gender runs underneath it all, with centuries of the college's food history involving female labour, despite women not being admitted to the college until 1979.

Today, Balliol is a diverse college community with staff and students from all over the world, all with their own food cultures and traditions. The Hall, pantry, and kitchens remain vital centres of college life, and remind us of the power of food in bringing people together, both on the ordinary weeknights of term and the college's long history of celebration dinners.

Food has also become a subject of study and research for Balliol students and staff in every discipline from chemistry to economics, anthropology to history, and remains a prism for developments in wider society. Capitalist complexity, labour exploitation, and environmental disaster lie behind much of the food in our supermarkets, while much of Oxford and the wider UK continues to suffer from high levels of food poverty. We must remember to continue to think with our food.



Professor, succeeded, an acute and learned person: nor do I much reproach his severity, considering that the extraordinary remissness of discipline had (till his coming) much detracted from the reputation of that College.

There came in my time to the College one Nathaniel Conopios, out of Greece, from Cyril, the patriarch of Constantinople, who, returning many years after, was made (as I understand) Bishop of Smyrna.[2] He was the first I ever saw drink coffee; which custom came not into England till thirty years after.[3]

After I was somewhat settled there in my formalities (for then was the University exceedingly regular, under the exact discipline of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, then Chancellor), I added, as benefactor to the library of the College, these books—"*ex dono Johannis Evelyni, hujus Coll. Socio-Commensalis, filii Richardi Evelyni, è*

John Evelyn recalls his fellow student, Nathaniel Conopios, drinking coffee at Balliol in 1637. From a later printed edition of his diary *[Balliol College Library 59 a 16 - 18]*

Recipes

Writing on food preparation and cooking has a long pedigree, back to the 4th or 5th century in European traditions. In the late Roman Empire, a man named Apicius compiled *De Re Coquinaria* which contained, amongst other things, instructions on cooking exotic items such as flamingo. In the later Middle Ages, several cookbooks appeared in manuscript form, including one put together at the instigation of Richard II, and yet more appeared with the emergence of print. It might be apparent from the above that most of these focused on luxury dishes for noble patrons, perhaps more to broadcast those patrons' refinement rather than to offer practical tips for cooking.

Even so, very few, if any, made their way into a scholar's library such as Balliol, where minds were supposed to be focussed on the brain rather than the belly. Food preparation only really appeared on the 17th- and 18th-century shelves by stealth. A scientific treatise on new methods for pressure cooking or salting fish might be acquired. A book on medicine might contain recipes for making jams and syrups, alongside tinctures and pills. Occasionally a neo-classical poem in imitation of Apicius, or a breathless pamphlet about a new ingredient or spice, say chocolate or coffee, coming from the New World would be bound in a volume of geographical or literary tracts.

There were books, however, that did list items that were used as ingredients in cooking; the natural history books of the time were often encyclopaedic listings of plants and animals, whether these were herbals or a book on fish. These not only gave a physical description, the geographical distribution, and classical and traditional lore on each plant or animal, but also a meditation on their uses, which, if they were culinary, might lead to some tips for preparing them or some evaluation of their merits as food.



Practical cookbooks giving insight and instruction on culinary practices of the past (or indeed the present) are still a relative rarity in the Library, although some collections of recipes have found their ways into the special collections through more recent gifts. Of the two examples in the exhibition, one came in the papers of the Morier family given through the latter half of the 20th century, and the printed book was presented by Anselm Kuhn (1956) in 2017.

'Our favourite fish'

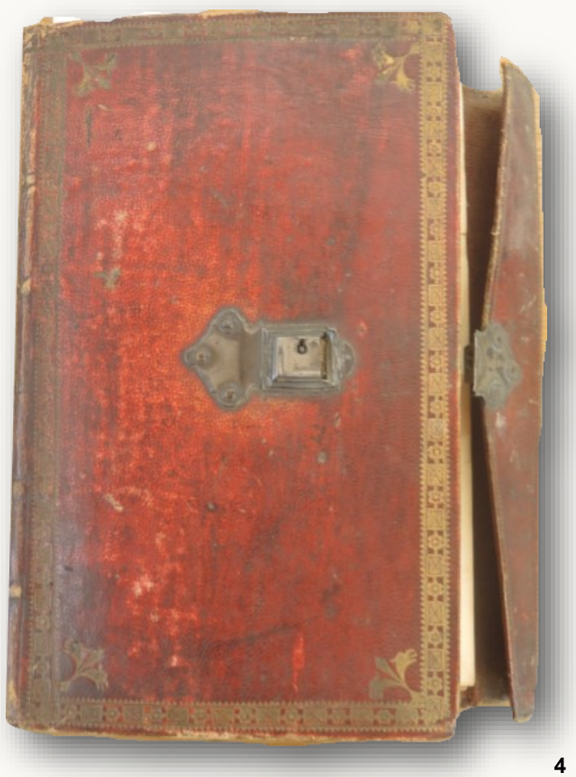
In his spare time, Hippolito Salviani (1514 - 1672, right), the chief physician to three successive popes and the Farnese family, liked to hang around seafood markets. While there he examined the recent catches with the eventual result that he produced this, one of the earliest, and most beautiful, books dedicated to fish. The illustrations are mainly taken from observation, Salviani chiefly writing of those creatures he had actually handled,[1] and then rendered into

engravings, a printing technique which allowed much finer production of lines and details than the cheaper woodcuts. The result gives the impression of increased scientific veracity although there are errors in the depictions. The text doesn't just limit itself to description, but also offers advice on the palatability of each fish and occasional suggestions for seasoning and preparation. In the section describing tuna (below), Salviani seems to have got carried away – the heading two-thirds of the way down the page, 'Hunc piscem nostrum amiam esse', translates as 'This is our favourite fish', and in the section on its flavour just above, he notes that 'The delicacy of the flesh is pre-eminent and it is of the sweetest taste'. Compare this to the angler fish whose flesh is 'slimy, excremental, tasteless,' not fit even for the poor.



The book was given to the College in 1677 by Sir Thomas Wendy's heirs, but was obviously a fixture in the Library as the front board still bears a mark from where it was chained to the shelves.

***Tuna from Hippolito Salviani*, Aquatilium animalium historiæ, liber primus. *Rome, 1553*.** [*Balliol College Library, 30 f 96]*

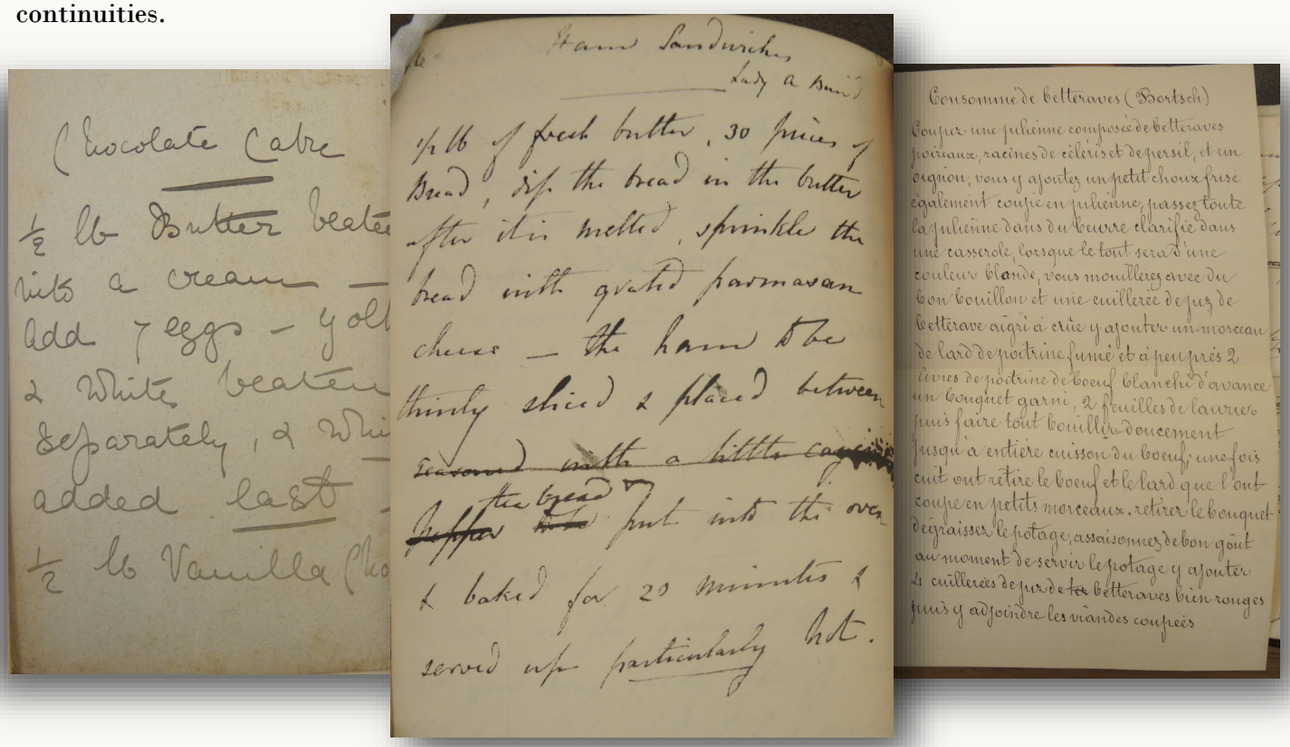


Ham Sandwiches, Stewed Cheese & More

Encased in a sturdy red morocco binding with a silver clasp (right), recipes spill out in profusion on opening. Almost every page of this 240-page notebook has handwritten instructions for everything from fish soup to chocolate cake to two recipes for 'Hotch Podge' to salads to 'Stewed Cheese'; and between the pages, slips of notepaper bearing recipes copied down and sent to the owner in several different hands, and at least three languages (English, French and German), are safely stowed. This is cookery as a means of sharing wisdom and practice, rather than to demonstrate style or taste, a means of building relationships amongst a family of Swiss émigrés, many of whose members were to become prominent diplomats and merchants, and whose networks were pan-European. The recipes collected here

span the entire 19th century, forming an emotional core around which family traditions were based and added to.

Alongside an ongoing sewing project to produce a waistcoat, there are meals which draw on the newly expanding culinary horizons of Europe, such as curry and pilau rice. But there are also recipes for the basic things in life, such as the one for 'Ham Sandwiches' (below centre), although these are ham sandwiches which have been dipped in molten butter, sprinkled with parmesan and baked for 20 minutes, a reminder perhaps that words sometimes disguise discontinuities as much as reveal continuities.



Book of Recipes from the papers of the Morier Family, c 1828 - 1893, Balliol College.
[Morier Papers N.12.12]

The much-loved and used nature of the practical cookbook is also demonstrated by a copy of a celebrated work on cookery from the 18th century – both the covers of the book have disappeared as have the title and rear pages (below). There is even a loosely inserted cutting from a newspaper with a recipe for cheese dumplings dating to the 20th century, which would indicate that this book might have been in use for over 200 years.



The book was originally published by an enterprising Yorkshire woman, Elizabeth Raffald, who had been housekeeper for several distinguished families, and ran both a confectionary shop in Manchester and an agency for placing domestic servants. Raffald avoided plagiarising others, using only recipes she'd tried out. It contains perhaps the first recipe for 'Bride' or wedding cake.[2]

Elizabeth Raffald, The* Experienced English Housekeeper, *4th edition. London, 1775.
[Balliol College Library, 30 c 358]

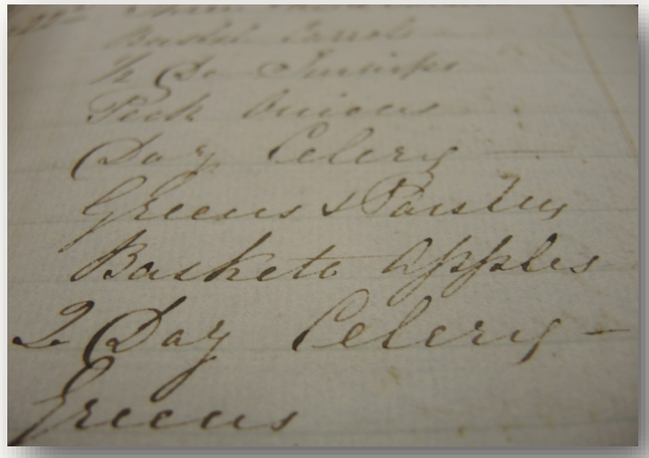
Supply Chains

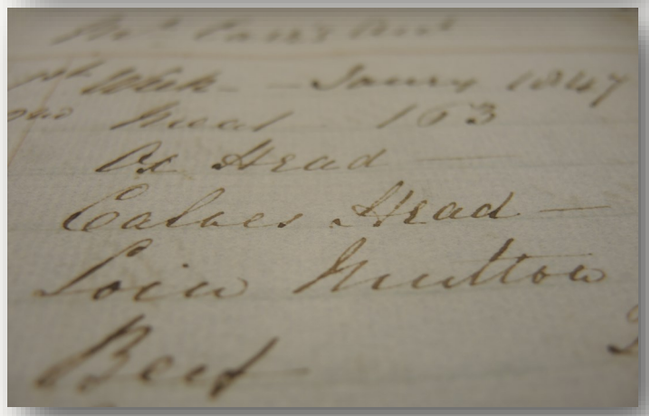
Mr Carr, Butcher; Mr Day, Green Grocer; Mr Gibbs, Grocer; Mr Nevell, Baker; Mr Turrill, Poulterer; Mr Lester, Fishmonger; Mr Parrot, Milkman. The account book below documents the food supplies bought by Balliol in 1847 from these tradespeople.

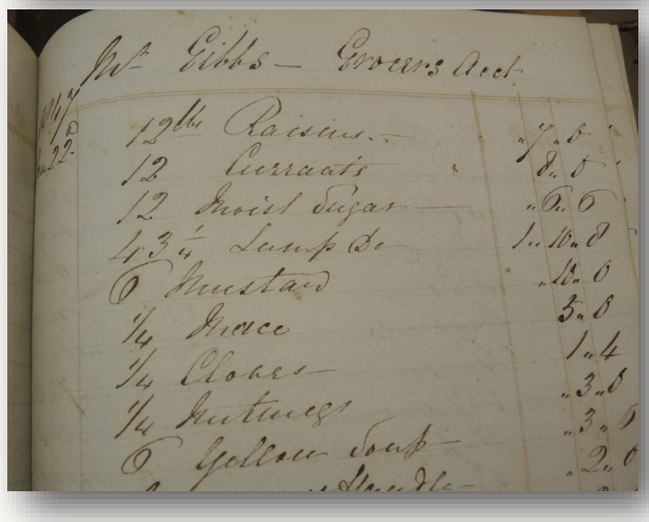
It paints a picture of a more local and seasonal diet than we might eat today. Mr Day, who was perhaps one of 'several Green Grocers from the Country [who] have stalls in the market,'[3] supplies potatoes, carrots, turnips, onions, celery, greens, parsley, apples, horseradish and cress in the winter months with rhubarb arriving in March and mint, radishes and broccoli adding to the mix in April. Mr Lester delivers fish on an almost daily basis and in May he brings ice to keep it fresh.

More game and offal were involved than in an average Oxford College meal today. From James Turrill, the College buys rabbits, larks and pheasants as well as turkey, duck, chicken, butter and eggs. Henry Carr, a 'well-known and highly respected' Oxford butcher and the 'oldest attendant' of Oxford's covered market at the time,[4] sells hearts, kidneys, livers and ox heads as well as beef and lamb.

A more international offering comes from Henry Gibbs shop at number 110 High Street. Through his connections in London, the grocer supplies the College with spices, dried fruit, sugar, rice, and tapioca. Some of these products were almost certainly manufactured in European colonies like British Jamaica by enslaved people or indentured labour. How aware were 19th-century members of Balliol of how their food was produced? In 2022, Balliol became a Fairtrade college; does this signal that we are any more aware in today's global economy?







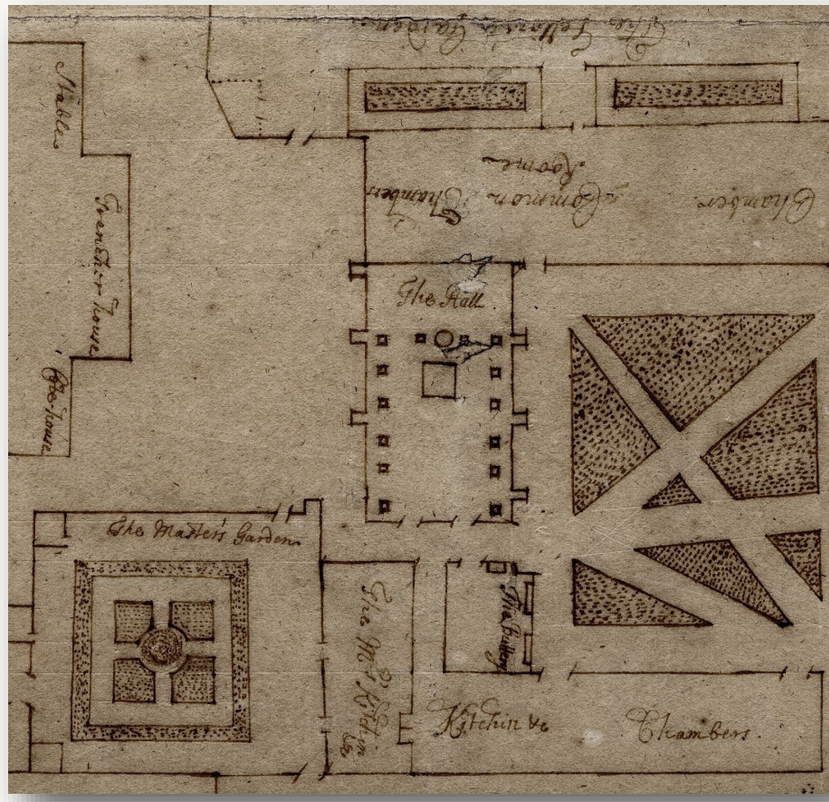
Bursar's Ledger of Tradesmen's Accounts 1847
[Balliol College Archives, Bursar's Books Series I, R.]

Buildings

From Balliol's foundation in the 13th century, the dining hall was central to College life. Communal dining was important enough to be mentioned in the 1282 Statutes of our foundress, Lady Dervorguilla of Galloway: students who misbehaved were excluded from the common table and served separately.

Whilst we do not know anything about this earliest building, we are on firmer ground once we reach the 15th and 16th centuries. Many students and staff today would be surprised to learn that until about 150 years ago the Library stacks housed potatoes, flour and kitchen equipment. This is because the building that we now know as the New Library used to be Balliol's dining hall and kitchen. This 15th-century building, sometimes called the Old Hall after its original purpose, was partly panelled and partly whitewashed in the early modern period, and furnished with tables and benches, a fireplace and a lectern for reading from the Bible.[5]

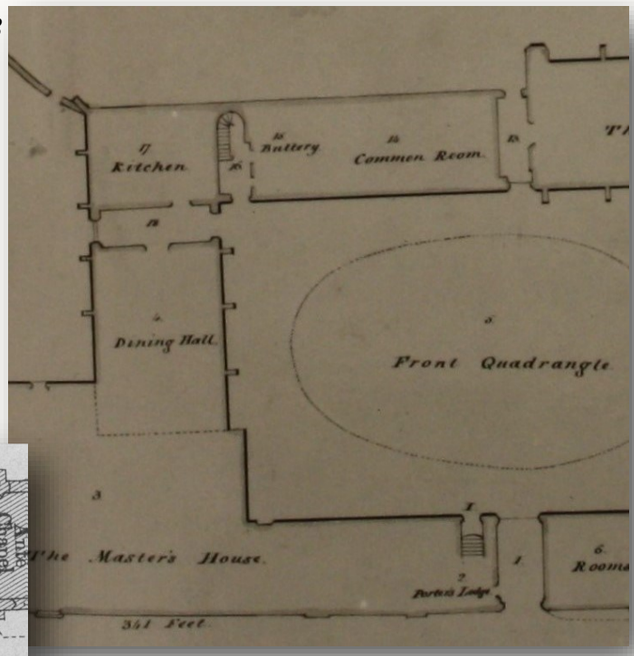
The kitchens and ***buttery*** were located near the entrance to the hall, where the Butler sat to record charges in his account book. These rooms moved around over the centuries, however. Before the late 18th century, the ***screens passage*** between the Front Quad and Garden Quad used to run right through the south end of the hall. In the 1790s, the architect James Wyatt moved this passage to the north end of the hall, as well as moving the kitchens to the ground now occupied by the Salvin Tower, or Library Tower.



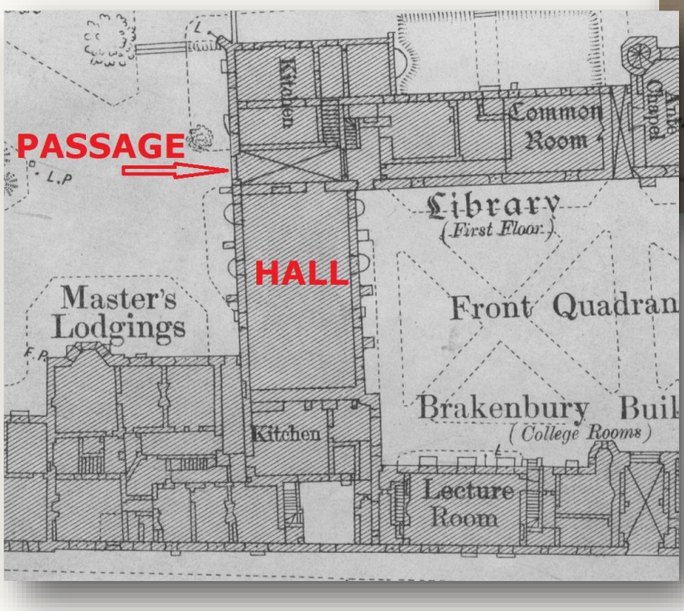
'Ichnographia', a ground plan of Balliol College from 1695 showing the screens passage at the south end of the 15th-century Hall, before it was moved by James Wyatt in the 18th century. *[Balliol College Archives, Plans of the College i]*

The early 19th century saw a few schemes that were ultimately abandoned or postponed. In 1826 the architect, George Basevi, was asked to convert the room above the kitchens into an addition for the Library. Basevi was approached again in 1842, this time to extend the dining hall, and to build new kitchens projecting into the ***Fellows***' Garden. Neither project was carried out, so a plan of 1848 still shows the passage through the north end of the hall and door into the kitchen.

Plan of Balliol College, 1848
[Balliol College Archives, Plans of the College i]



The College's kitchen and dining hall schemes were finally completed in the early 1850s by architect Anthony Salvin. Salvin was engaged to 'enlarge the Hall by taking in the adjoining passage, & to construct a new kitchen & offices connected therewith, partly under the Hall [i.e. at basement level], and partly on ground taken out of the Fellows' Garden'. The Hall and kitchen were ready by October 1853.



About 1860. The layout is as it is now. The Old Hall became the main Library building when the present Hall was built in 1877. *[Balliol College Archives, Plans of the College i, Labels by John Jones]*

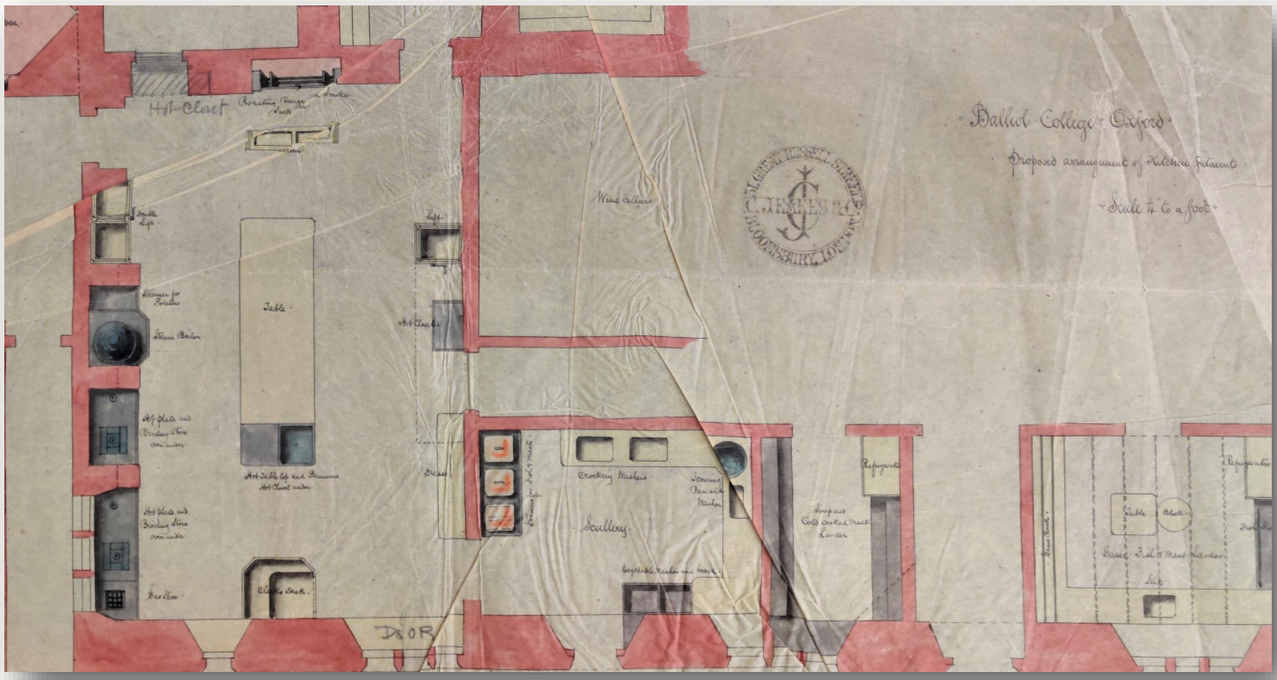


The Old Hall about 1870, when still used for dining before conversion into a Reading Room for undergraduates in 1877.
[Balliol College Archives, PHOT 10.57r]

Twenty years later, more change was afoot. The College was growing, and students who could not fit in the hall found themselves dining in a lecture room.[6] In the early 1870s, the buttery and ground-floor kitchens were converted into more accommodation, before being completely reconfigured when Alfred Waterhouse was commissioned to build Balliol's magnificent new, larger dining hall at the north end of Garden Quad. Since the Old Hall would no longer be needed for dining, and Balliol needed Library expansion space, the College converted the Old Hall into a Reading Room for undergraduates.

Much thought went into the development of the dining area of the New Hall as well as the kitchens underneath, from ventilation and equipment to the workflows of the staff. The Butler, consulted on the best layout for tables, noted that they must have 'two large tables near the lifts, one for plates, the other for glass and pots'.[7] One proposed layout for the new basement kitchen boasted the following

advantages: a better bakery with good light, a larger pastry larder, and privacy for the WCs - although it was felt that the proposed jelly storeroom was on the large side.[8]



This plan by C. Jeakes & Co, a firm of mechanical engineers based in Bloomsbury, shows the 'Proposed Arrangement of Kitchen fitments' in the basement kitchens of the New Hall, 1870s. The space, designed for maximum efficiency, features modern technology including multiple lifts up to the Hall; specific steamers for potatoes, fish and meat; hot plates and even a hot table. *[Balliol College Archives, APD iii]*

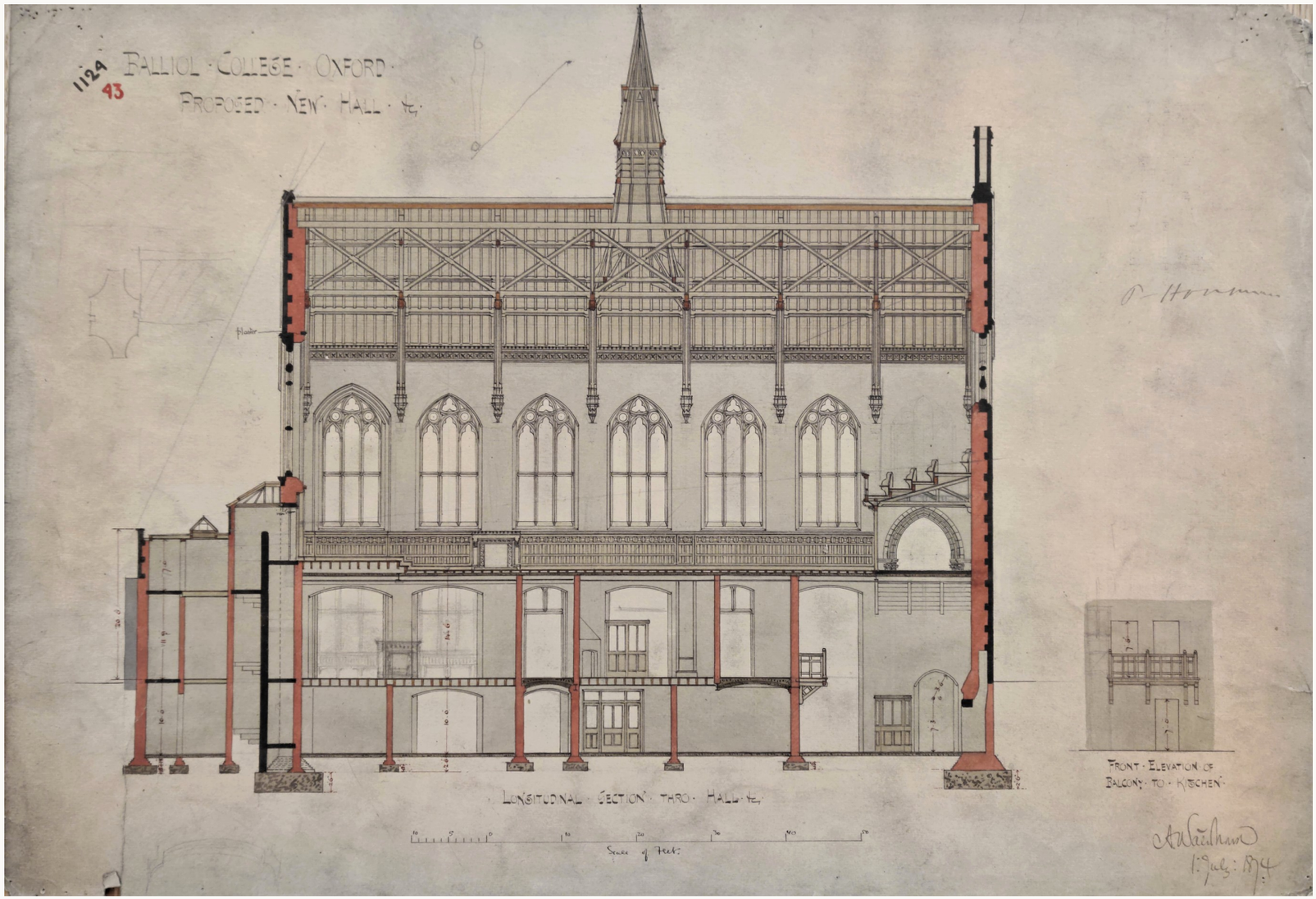
The Waterhouse Hall was opened with great fanfare in January 1877, by Balliol's famous ***Master***, Benjamin Jowett, who had been responsible for most of the fundraising for the building. It incorporated a buttery, shop, kitchen and common room. Apart from the addition of an organ in the 1880s and alterations including extensive wooden panelling added by Alfred Waterhouse's son, Paul, in 1910, the hall looks much the same as it did when it was opened.



New Hall, from the entrance, about 1880
[Balliol College Archives, PHOT 10.24r]



New Hall, from the High Table, about 1910, showing organ and panelling added by Paul Waterhouse
[Balliol College Archives, PHOT 10.59]



Longitudinal section through proposed New Hall, showing front elevation of balcony to kitchen. Alfred Waterhouse, 1874 *[Balliol College Archives, APD iii]*

Below stairs, the now-ageing kitchen facilities badly needed refurbishment and updating by the mid-20th century. The walls suffered from extensive damp, and the new tiling and other required changes including brand new equipment, mechanical ventilation, lifts, electric power and gas mains totalled more than £17,000 (over £500,000 today). The kitchens did not, however, gain a dishwashing machine until 1954, and then only on the condition that it would not 'cause undue noise in Hall'.[9]



Kitchens before structural changes, about late 1940s including views of the old Fish and Meat Larder with chopping block; bakery and main kitchen with balcony. *[Balliol College Archives, PHOT 10.46-48]*



Example of kitchen equipment after 1949 *[Balliol College Archives, PHOT 10.50r]*

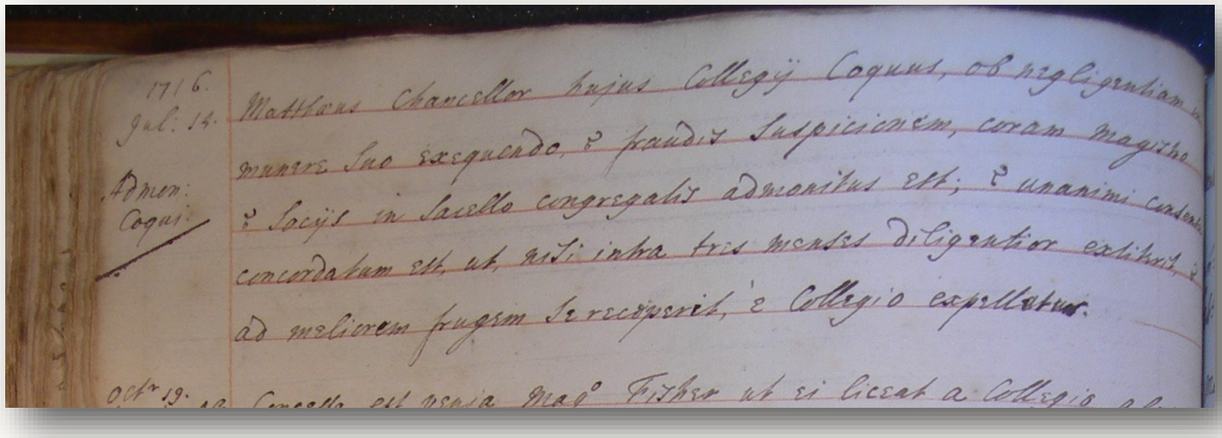
Staff

During the earlier centuries for which Balliol's administrative records survive, the College officials responsible for the provision of food and drink wielded a significant amount of influence and authority.

By the 17th century, the ***Bursars*** had responsibility for most of the practical aspects of College life. They were assisted by a small permanent staff comprising the ***Manciple***, the Butler (who presented accounts to the Bursar), a Cook, and an Under-Cook (similar to an apprentice). These four were full members of the College family, being entitled to ***commons*** and other privileges, and they sometimes lived in College (indeed the Cook was still entitled to accommodation in the 20th century).

The Manciple and the Butler were paid through their commons and allowances. They probably also collected income through ***battels*** payments and profits arising from their control over supplies. On the flip side, they were liable for any losses. Because they handled large amounts of College money, and were on the front line for many kinds of business, the College depended on them. As insurance against default they provided bonds on appointment, and in the case of the Butler, agree to 'behave himeselfe Diligentlye faithfully and trulye'.[10] These issues came to a head in the early modern period, when Butlers and Manciples were sued by the College for debts and vice versa as Balliol found itself in debt to its suppliers, bakers, butchers and brewers.

More scandalously, two Cooks, William Smith in the 1670s, and Matthew Chancellor in the early 18th century, were admonished for fraud and negligence, respectively. It could be argued that the network of close personal relationships operating in College influenced this state of affairs: William Smith had been appointed corruptly by the wife of the Master, Henry Savage. This was evidently part of a wider problem of officers and servants being appointed in violation of the College Statutes.[11]


1716.
Jul: 14.
Matthæus Chancellor hujus Collegij Coquus, ob negligentiam in
munere Suo exequendo, & fraudis Suspicionem, coram magistro
& Socijs in Sacello congregatis admonitus est; & unanimi consensu
concordatum est ut, nisi intra tres menses diligentior exhibeat se
ad meliorem frugem se recipiendo, e Collegio expellatur.
Admon: Coqui
Oct. 19. 16 Concessa est vacua Mag. Fisher ut si liceat a Collegio

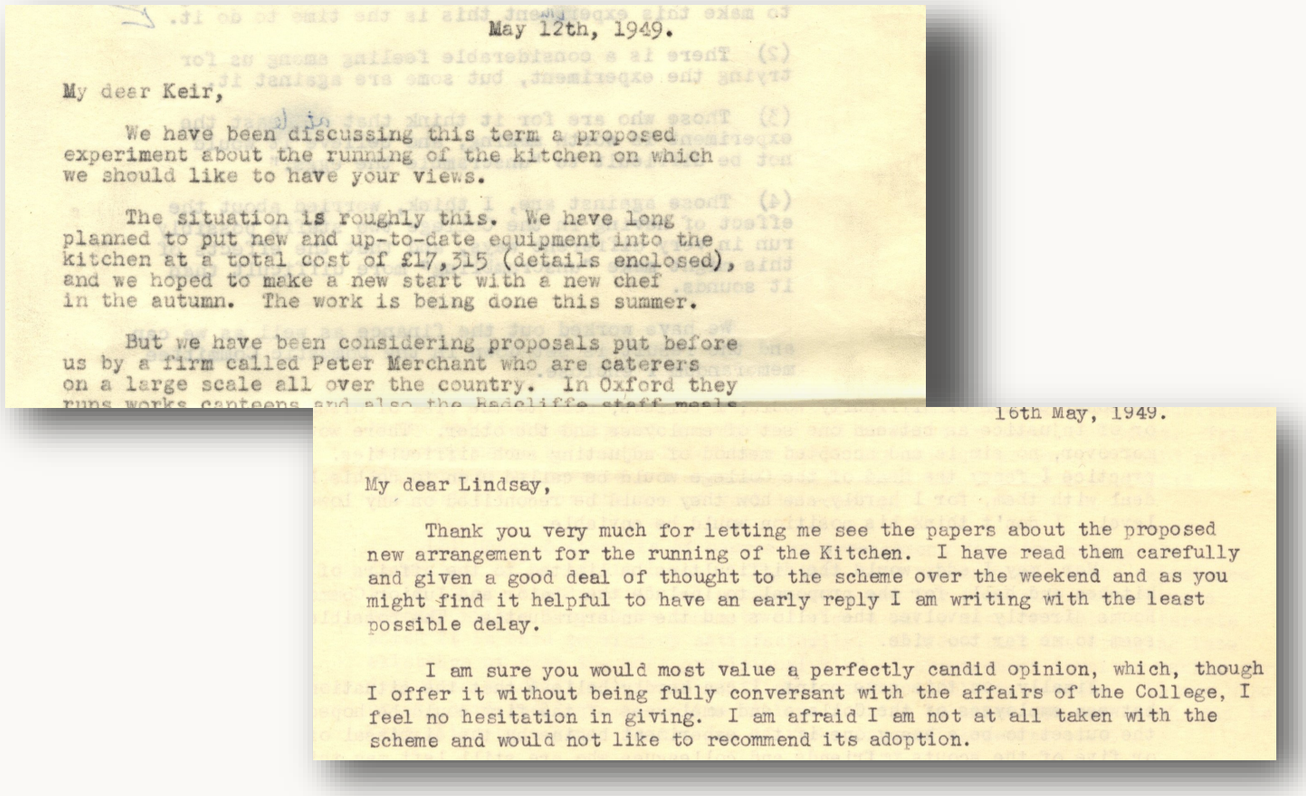
Register of College Meeting minutes, displaying the entry for 16 July 1716 when the Cook, Matthew Chancellor, was formally admonished before the Master and Fellows for his negligence and suspected fraud. He was given three months to improve.
[Balliol College Archives, 2nd Latin Register, fo 37v]

Relationships and personality still played a role in the 19th century. Benjamin Jowett, responsible for the College's impressive new Hall, was 'very desirous that we should have a good reputation for eating and drinking' and did not get along with the Bursar at the time, Henry Wall. Wall was relieved of responsibility for the buttery, kitchen and stores, which Jowett oversaw personally thenceforward, inaugurating an era of reform and efficiency in these domestic matters.[12]

By the late 19th and 20th centuries, a professional kitchen and catering workforce had emerged, efficiently serving the growing population of students, academics and staff. Retiring and deceased members of staff featured in tributes in alumni publications such as the Balliol College *Annual Record* and received glowing references.

Unlike William Smith and Matthew Chancellor, one Mr John Scarrott seems to have embodied the ideal characteristics that College sought in a cook. He had worked his way up 'by his own merits' to Head Cook over 29 years of service. As Head Cook 'he did better than anyone we have had in that capacity since so far back as the year 1870'. The Master of Balliol particularly praised his service during the First World War, when 'some 3000 officers and cadets passed through the College'. The military authorities even thanked him for his 'efficiency throughout' the time troops were billeted at Balliol, during which he navigated complicated and short-notice arrangements 'without ever getting flurried'. He was also an 'excellent business man and economist' known for his honesty.[13]

In the late 1920s, Balliol, along with a number of other Oxford colleges, hired a consultant to assess the efficiency of their catering accounts and administration. They noted the close involvement of the ***Home Bursar*** in all processes, focussed on the need for trustworthy officers and concluded that recordkeeping could be streamlined.[14]



May 12th, 1949.

My dear Keir,

We have been discussing this term a proposed experiment about the running of the kitchen on which we should like to have your views.

The situation is roughly this. We have long planned to put new and up-to-date equipment into the kitchen at a total cost of £17,315 (details enclosed), and we hoped to make a new start with a new chef in the autumn. The work is being done this summer.

But we have been considering proposals put before us by a firm called Peter Merchant who are caterers on a large scale all over the country. In Oxford they

16th May, 1949.

My dear Lindsay,

Thank you very much for letting me see the papers about the proposed new arrangement for the running of the Kitchen. I have read them carefully and given a good deal of thought to the scheme over the weekend and as you might find it helpful to have an early reply I am writing with the least possible delay.

I am sure you would most value a perfectly candid opinion, which, though I offer it without being fully conversant with the affairs of the College, I feel no hesitation in giving. I am afraid I am not at all taken with the scheme and would not like to recommend its adoption.

Correspondence of Lord Lindsay and Sir David Lindsay Keir (Master elect) re proposals to reorganise College catering 1949. DLK was opposed to the changes being mooted: his letter extends to five close-typed pages *[Balliol College Archives, MBP 217]*

At the same time as the Hall kitchens were undergoing significant structural changes in the late 1940s, Balliol was considering drastic changes to the workforce in order to save money, including contracting catering work out to a third-party firm, Peter Merchant Ltd. The Master Elect, Sir David Lindsay Keir, was opposed to the changes being proposed. He was sceptical that the savings would be as extensive as projected, and pointed out that it 'departs from the principle … that the College is a self-contained household', which he believed fostered a sense of belonging. Lindsay Keir also feared that having two sets of staff (employed by the College and the firm) being run in very different ways, each

with their own 'particular and perfectly natural loyalties' would create a divisive atmosphere, not only amongst kitchen staff but also involving the Fellows and undergraduates.

The catering firm proposal did not go ahead, but the brand-new kitchens opened with a brand-new Chef in 1950, the previous Chef and Baker having been let go.[15]



Kitchen staff in the refurbished kitchen, about late 1940s - early 1950s
[Balliol College Archives, PHOT 2012]

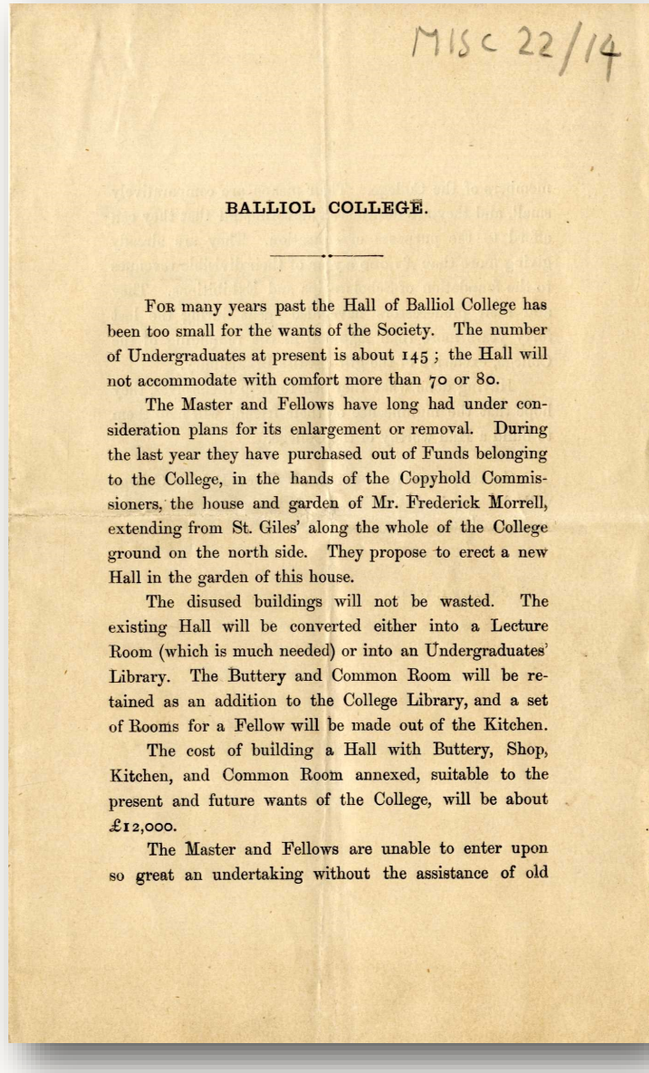


A member of Kitchen staff serving a meal in the Hall, mid-20th century
[Balliol College Archives, PHOT 62.04]

Community

Since the College's foundational years, the dining hall has been central to College social life. Main meals were taken together at the common table and community dining was core to the student experience, to such an extent that the 13th-century ***Principal*** punished misbehaviour by making offenders eat separately, after everyone else had finished.[16] Over time, sets (or cliques) emerged in the College population, with divisions formed around grades or categories of member, which were themselves informed by students' socioeconomic backgrounds. These divisions carried through to the seating structure in Hall. The 15th century-Hall was furnished with separate tables and benches for the different categories (Fellows, Scholars and Commoners).[17] The divided seating structure continued into the 18th century, reflecting and ratifying the staunchly stratified social structure of the College.

In 1870, Benjamin Jowett became Master of Balliol and oversaw a wave of changes to almost every aspect of the College, from finances, to buildings, religious practices, and student intake. Jowett's dynamic vision, alongside wider University reform, sought to attract students from a wider range of backgrounds and consequently saw an increase in student numbers.[18] This included intake of Jewish students after an 1871 change to University rules which had previously prevented them from taking degrees, and a number of Indian students emerging from the College's enthusiastic involvement in the Indian Civil Service; there was also a scheme that financially supported poorer students and a growing cohort of students in the sciences, as the College expanded its teaching beyond the Humanities. As the community grew, so too did Hall. This pamphlet from 1874 was distributed to old members, seeking sponsorship to fund the building of a new Hall that could accommodate the expanding College membership. The new Waterhouse-designed Hall opened in 1877, an occasion marked by a celebratory dinner attended by members new and old.



MISC 22/14

BALLIOL COLLEGE.

For many years past the Hall of Balliol College has been too small for the wants of the Society. The number of Undergraduates at present is about 145; the Hall will not accommodate with comfort more than 70 or 80.

The Master and Fellows have long had under consideration plans for its enlargement or removal. During the last year they have purchased out of Funds belonging to the College, in the hands of the Copyhold Commissioners, the house and garden of Mr. Frederick Morrell, extending from St. Giles' along the whole of the College ground on the north side. They propose to erect a new Hall in the garden of this house.

The disused buildings will not be wasted. The existing Hall will be converted either into a Lecture Room (which is much needed) or into an Undergraduates' Library. The Buttery and Common Room will be retained as an addition to the College Library, and a set of Rooms for a Fellow will be made out of the Kitchen.

The cost of building a Hall with Buttery, Shop, Kitchen, and Common Room annexed, suitable to the present and future wants of the College, will be about £12,000.

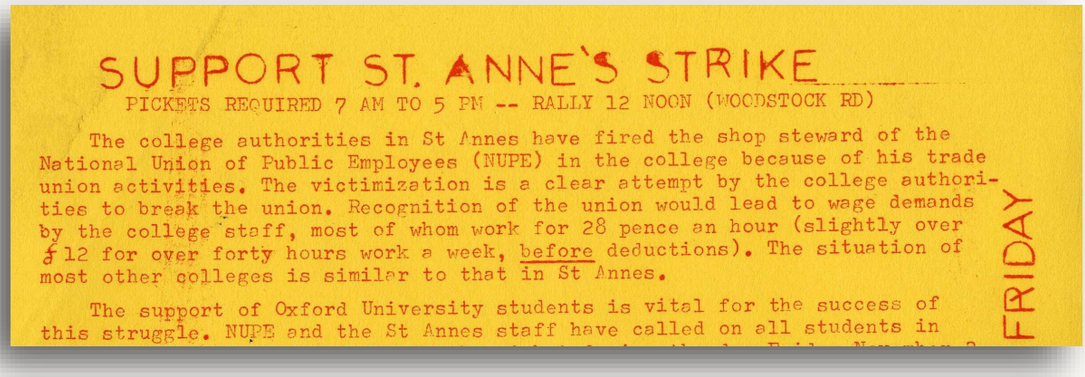
The Master and Fellows are unable to enter upon so great an undertaking without the assistance of old

Printed circular appealing for subscriptions for the Hall, 1874. Presented by the Warden of All Souls 1966. *[Balliol College Archives, MISC 22/14]*



Cutting from a 19th century illustrated journal: engraving showing the Inauguration Dinner for the new Dining Hall, 1877. Presented by Nicholas Dewey c 1975.
[Balliol College Archives, MISC 22/6]

It was not only the Principal who had the power to disrupt student dining, as evidenced by strike action in the kitchens of Balliol in November 1972. Balliol's kitchen staff were striking in support of erstwhile sister College, St Anne's, who initiated the 'first ever strike by domestic staff at an Oxford College',[19] in response to the forced redundancy of handyman Frank Keen in an apparent economising effort. The bulletins note that the strike was supported by 'trade unionists from all over Oxford', which alongside other public sector workers in NUPE, most likely included some of the thousands of automotive workers employed in Cowley, East Oxford, who were in constant battle with British Leyland, an example of dire 1970's industrial relations. The documents also demonstrate support from students, who were similarly affected by College's economising and facing increasing fees and showed their solidarity through a boycott of Hall. These records depict a community navigating the deeply stratified lines inside, and going beyond the walls of College.


SUPPORT ST. ANNE'S STRIKE

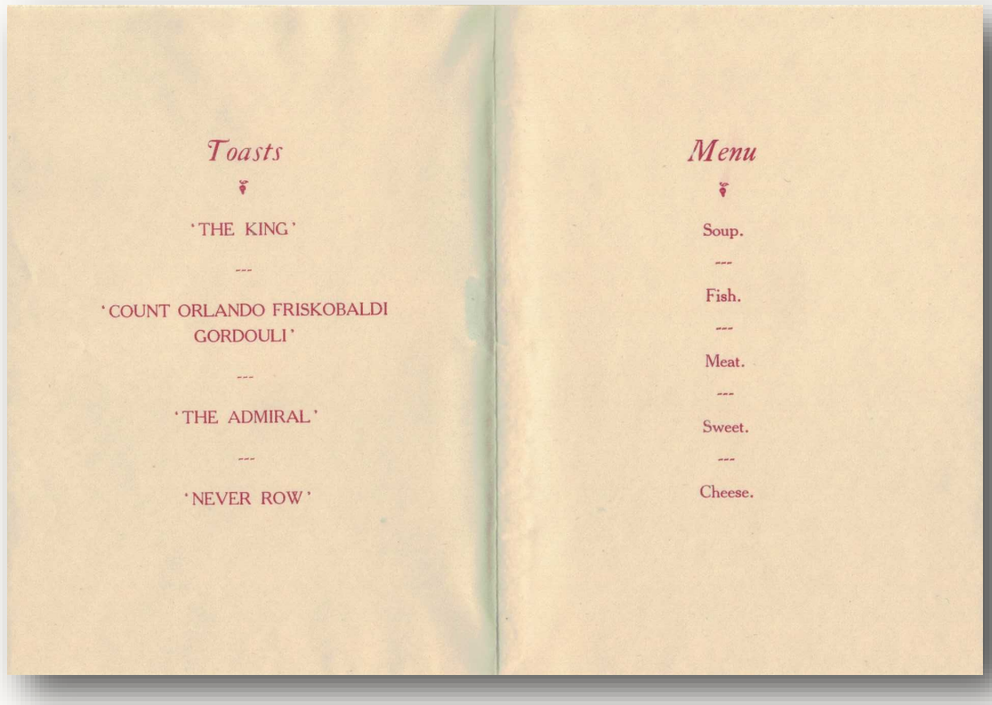
PICKETS REQUIRED 7 AM TO 5 PM -- RALLY 12 NOON (WOODSTOCK RD)

The college authorities in St Annes have fired the shop steward of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) in the college because of his trade union activities. The victimization is a clear attempt by the college authorities to break the union. Recognition of the union would lead to wage demands by the college staff, most of whom work for 28 pence an hour (slightly over £12 for over forty hours work a week, before deductions). The situation of most other colleges is similar to that in St Annes.

The support of Oxford University students is vital for the success of this struggle. NUPE and the St Annes staff have called on all students in

FRIDAY

Papers re St Anne's kitchen strike 1972
[Balliol College Archives, JCR 20.C.2.]



Toasts

'THE KING'

'COUNT ORLANDO FRISKOBALDI GORDOULI'

'THE ADMIRAL'

'NEVER ROW'

Menu

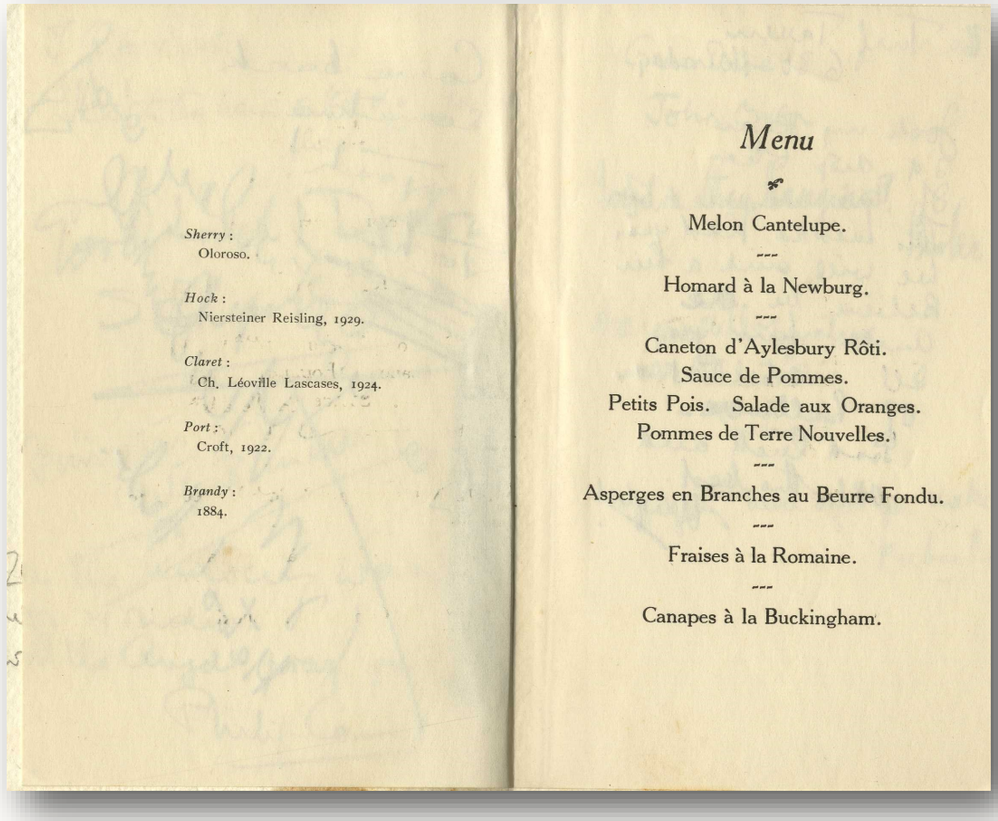
Soup.

Fish.

Meat.

Sweet.

Cheese.



Sherry :
Oloroso.

Hock :
Niersteiner Reisling, 1929.

Claret :
Ch. Léoville Lascases, 1924.

Port :
Croft, 1922.

Brandy :
1884.

Menu

Melon Cantelupe.

Homard à la Newburg.

Caneton d'Aylesbury Rôti.
Sauce de Pommes.
Petits Pois. Salade aux Oranges.
Pommes de Terre Nouvelles.

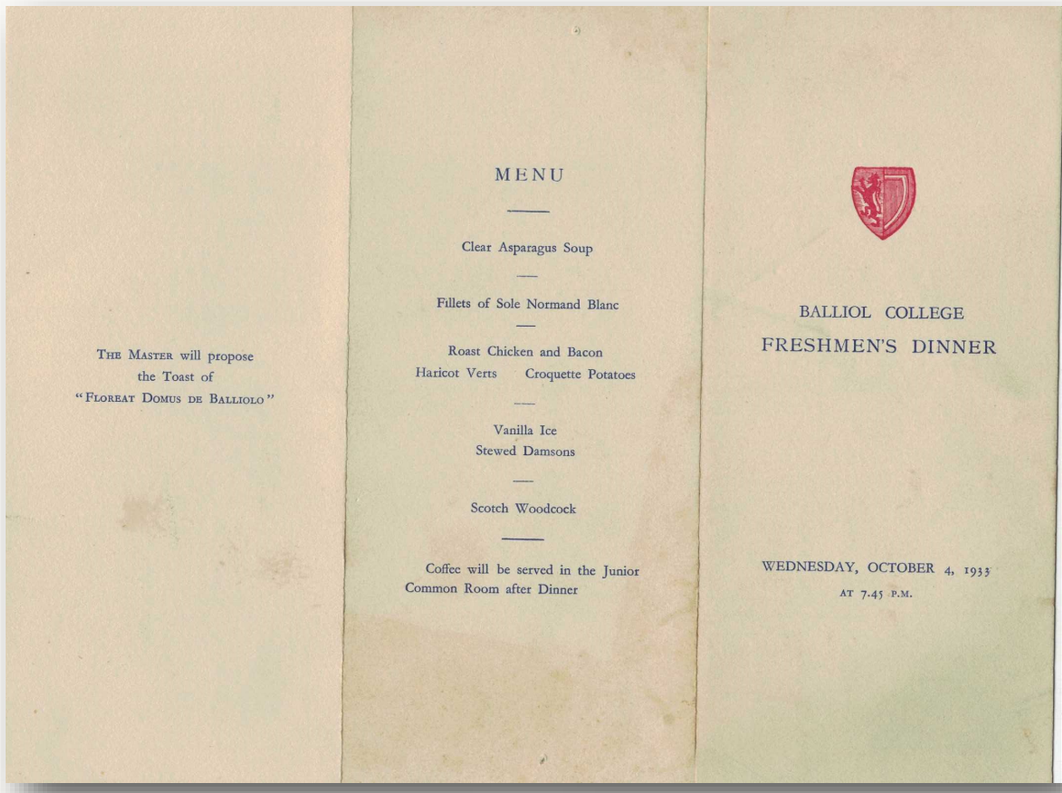
Asperges en Branches au Beurre Fondu.

Fraises à la Romaine.

Canapes à la Buckingham.

Top: ***Gordouli Boat Club, Annual dinner, Thursday, 18 June 1936***
[Balliol College Archives, MISC 69]

Bottom: ***Dervorguilla Society, Tuesday, 16 June 1936***
[Balliol College Archives, MISC 285!]



THE MASTER will propose
the Toast of
"FLOREAT DOMUS DE BALLIOLO"

MENU

Clear Asparagus Soup

Fillets of Sole Normand Blanc

Roast Chicken and Bacon
Haricot Verts Croquette Potatoes

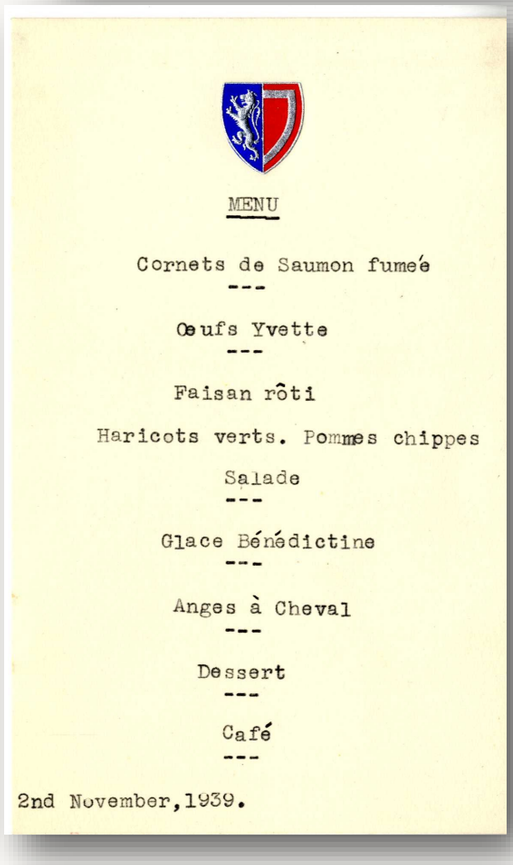
Vanilla Ice
Stewed Damsons

Scotch Woodcock

Coffee will be served in the Junior
Common Room after Dinner

BALLIOL COLLEGE
FRESHMEN'S DINNER

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1933
AT 7.45 P.M.



MENU

Cornets de Saumon fumé

Œufs Yvette

Faisan rôti
Haricots verts. Pommes chippes
Salade

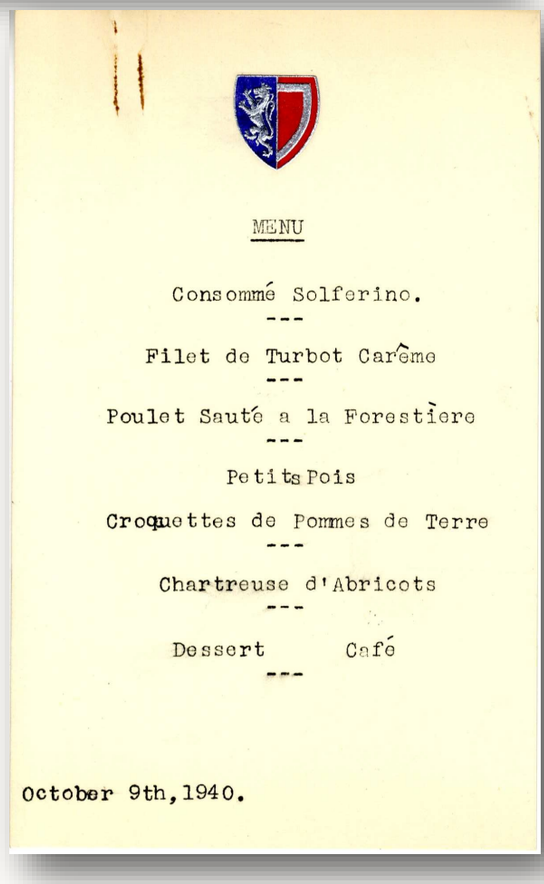
Glace Bénédictine

Anges à Cheval

Dessert

Café

2nd November, 1939.



MENU

Consommé Solferino.

Filet de Turbot Carême

Poulet Sauté a la Forestière

Petits Pois
Croquettes de Pommes de Terre

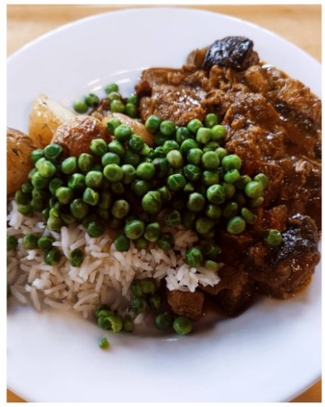
Chartreuse d'Abricots

Dessert Café

October 9th, 1940.

Top: ***Balliol College Freshmen's Dinner, Wednesday, 4 October 1933***
[Balliol College Archives, MISC 285!]

Bottom : ***Two College Hall menus, 2 November 1939, and 9 October 1940***
[Balliol College Archives, MISC 8]









Clockwise from top left:

1. Food at Balliol by- Yixuan He

2. 2010 Lunch at Balliol - Day Nursery outing by Anat Marom

3. "Formal" Pantry Rainbow Menu—Green/ Michaelmas 2011 / JCR common room by Susannah Deedigan

4. Food at Balliol by Yixuan He

Clockwise from top left:

1. A Balliol College Meal by Nicola Trott

2. Food at Balliol by Yixuan He

3. Hummus for a whole household in isolation (MT20, fresher, Big Tescos) by Matilda Gettins

4. Photo of eating in Hall By Jonathan Repp









Clockwise from top left:

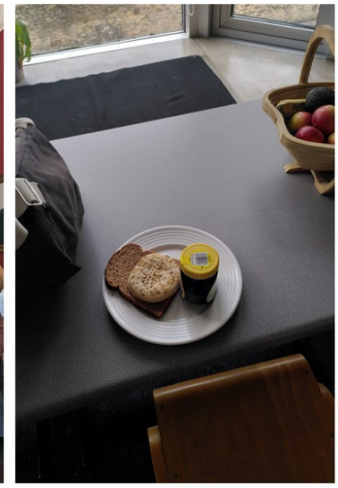
1. "Formal" Pantry Rainbow Menu—Orange / Michaelmas 2011 / JCR common room by Susannah Deedigan

2. Balliol Dessert by Nicola Trott

3. International student meets English food (TT 22, Jowett, second year) by Matilda Gettins

4. *Lunch in the Master's Dining Room* by Nicola Trott








Clockwise from top left:

1. Chef's Challenge 2008

2. Women's Lunch May 2010

3. Snell Dinner 23 February 2013

4. Kitchen staff

Celebration & Tradition

Food connects people. It is so much more than just fuel; it builds community. The United Nations recognises the importance of food and food preparation as 'intangible culture' that should be celebrated and protected. The processes involved in preparing and serving some foods contain important social and cultural significance. Eating is an incredibly evocative force that connects us with our food systems, our heritage, and our cultural traditions, and we use food to mark special occasions, such as birthdays, anniversaries, and weddings. Eating together at the dining table elevates the food that we eat into something special, and aids social bonding, wellbeing, and helps us feel part of a community. Some recent research by the University of Oxford, using data from the national survey by The Big Lunch, found that the more often we share food with others, the more likely we are to feel content and satisfied with our lives.[20] The kitchen is known as 'the heart of the home,' but the table is the setting for the sharing of food.



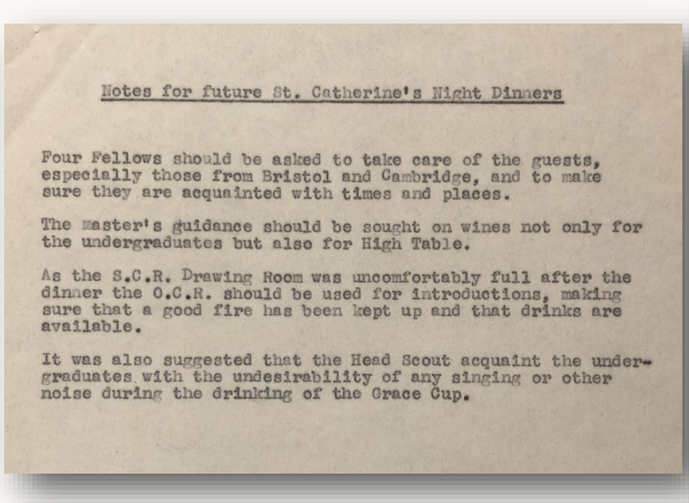
Newspaper clipping showing a model of Balliol College made from cake
[Balliol College Archives, Balliol College 700th Celebrations, Box 5]

Balliol has many traditions involving food and dining. In the 19th century, Benjamin Jowett came to appreciate the value of maintaining links with Old Members and involving them with the College beyond their studies. He wrote to many in his very successful fundraising efforts to build a new hall. In 1877, '***Gaudies***' were begun, possibly following on from the success of the inauguration dinner held upon the opening of the New Hall. Following the inaugural dinner of 1877, regular Gaudies have been held, with all old members invited back around every 10 years, to dinner in hall and staying over, sometimes in the very rooms they once occupied.

St Catherine's Dinners are another firm fixture. Catherine of Alexandria was a popular saint throughout the Middle Ages and has long been the patron saint of scholars. According to legend, Catherine, a young noblewoman of the early Christian centuries, confounded the scholars of Emperor Maximinus with her learning and eloquence in defence of Christianity. St Catherine has been associated with Balliol since its beginnings in the 13th century, and her iconography can be seen in the Hall as well as Library, Chapel and Old Common Room.

The St Catherine's Day Dinner, which takes place on the patronal feast of 25 November, is a long-standing Balliol tradition; it was certainly well-established by 1549. It used to be restricted to Senior Members but has included undergraduates for at least the last hundred years. Invitations are restricted by the size of the Hall; normally undergraduate and graduate finalists attend, so that every Junior Member has the opportunity to celebrate the feast once in their time at Balliol. A Classicist still recites the College Grace in Latin at the beginning of the meal, but the Grace Cup no longer makes the rounds

of the Hall. Accounts from the 1920s give the ingredients of the Grace Cup as claret, cloves (the alcoholic spiced cordial, rather than the spice itself), curaçao, cherry brandy and sherry. The dinner menu no longer includes peacock.[21]



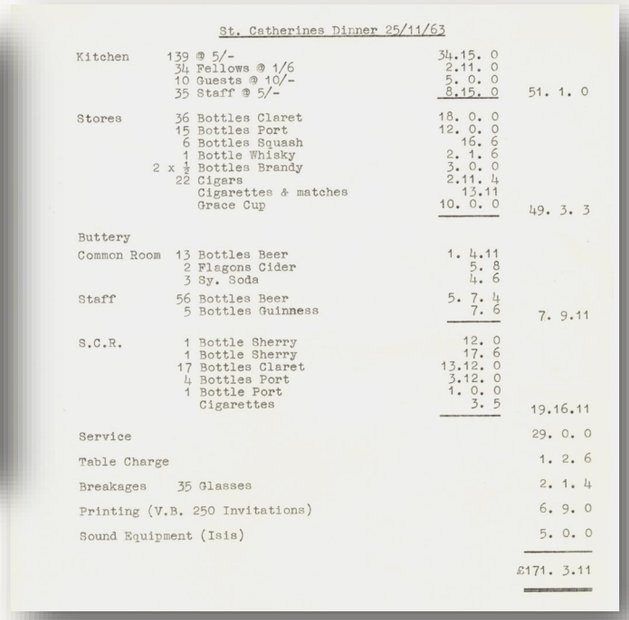
Notes for future St. Catherine's Night Dinners

Four Fellows should be asked to take care of the guests, especially those from Bristol and Cambridge, and to make sure they are acquainted with times and places.

The master's guidance should be sought on wines not only for the undergraduates but also for High Table.

As the S.C.R. Drawing Room was uncomfortably full after the dinner the O.C.R. should be used for introductions, making sure that a good fire has been kept up and that drinks are available.

It was also suggested that the Head Scout acquaint the undergraduates with the undesirability of any singing or other noise during the drinking of the Grace Cup.

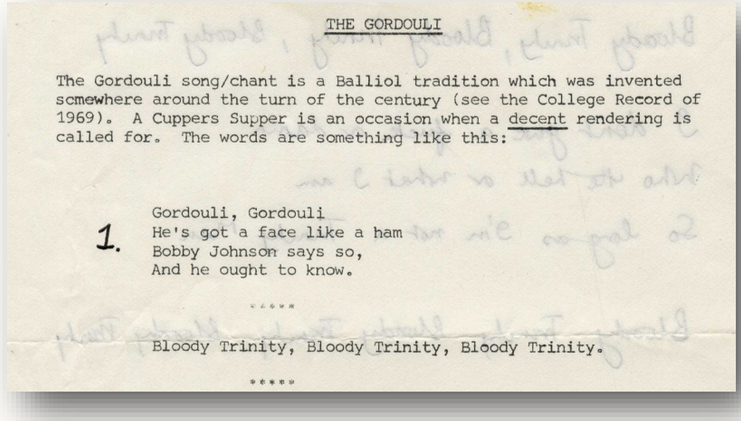


St. Catherines Dinner 25/11/63

Kitchen	139 @ 5/-		34.15. 0	
	34 Fellows @ 1/6		2.11. 0	
	10 Guests @ 10/-		5. 0. 0	
	35 Staff @ 5/-		8.15. 0	51. 1. 0
Stores	36 Bottles Claret		18. 0. 0	
	15 Bottles Port		12. 0. 0	
	6 Bottles Squash		16. 6	
	1 Bottle Whisky		2. 1. 6	
	2 x ½ Bottles Brandy		3. 0. 0	
	22 Cigars		2.11. 4	
	Cigarettes & matches		13.11	
	Grace Cup		10. 0. 0	49. 3. 3
Buttery				
Common Room	13 Bottles Beer		1. 4.11	
	2 Flagons Cider		5. 8	
	3 Sy. Soda		4. 6	
Staff	56 Bottles Beer		5. 7. 4	
	5 Bottles Guinness		7. 6	7. 9.11
S.C.R.	1 Bottle Sherry		12. 0	
	1 Bottle Sherry		17. 6	
	17 Bottles Claret		13.12. 0	
	4 Bottles Port		3.12. 0	
	1 Bottle Port		1. 0. 0	
	Cigarettes		3. 5	19.16.11
Service				29. 0. 0
Table Charge				1. 2. 6
Breakages	35 Glasses			2. 1. 4
Printing (V.B. 250 Invitations)				6. 9. 0
Sound Equipment (Isis)				5. 0. 0
				£171. 3.11

St Catherine's Day Dinners 1939 - 1969.
[Balliol College Archives, MBP 70 b.]

Before World War I, undergraduates at Balliol were expected to dine in Hall most days, with breakfast and lunch normally taken in private rooms and the servants ran a delivery service from the kitchen. The exception was Saturday, when breakfast was served in Hall, which was introduced in 1894 in order to discourage extravagant private breakfast parties.[22] In addition to the dining in Hall, social and sports clubs held many private dinners and parties, and the Archive is home to some records of these clubs. One such tradition, unique to Balliol, is the 'Gordouli', from which sprang the humorous Gordouli Boat Club. The Gordouli belongs to the late 19th century when Balliol's demographic was quite different, being made up of one quarter Etonian, and probably specifically belongs to one evening after a dinner in College in 1896. In this time one of the most mischievous students was Aubrey Herbert who was a member of the Annandale Club, which was 'ostensibly a debating, but in fact a dining, club.'[23] When one of their dinners was held 'large quantities of College crockery' were probably going to be destroyed 'in ritual 'waterfalls' down the Hall steps, they would at least pay up without complaint the next morning.'[24] The other members of College tolerated this, 'none more so than 'Moonface' Norman Campbell [...] it was part of the traditional high spirits after dinner, before the 'waterfalls' began, for the diners to climb the stairs to Moonface's room, where he would be at his books, and there to kneel in mock worship before him 'O Moonface...'[25] It is from this sort of



THE GORDOULI

The Gordouli song/chant is a Balliol tradition which was invented somewhere around the turn of the century (see the College Record of 1969). A Cuppers Supper is an occasion when a decent rendering is called for. The words are something like this:

1. Gordouli, Gordouli
He's got a face like a ham
Bobby Johnson says so,
And he ought to know.

*****

Bloody Trinity, Bloody Trinity, Bloody Trinity.

*****

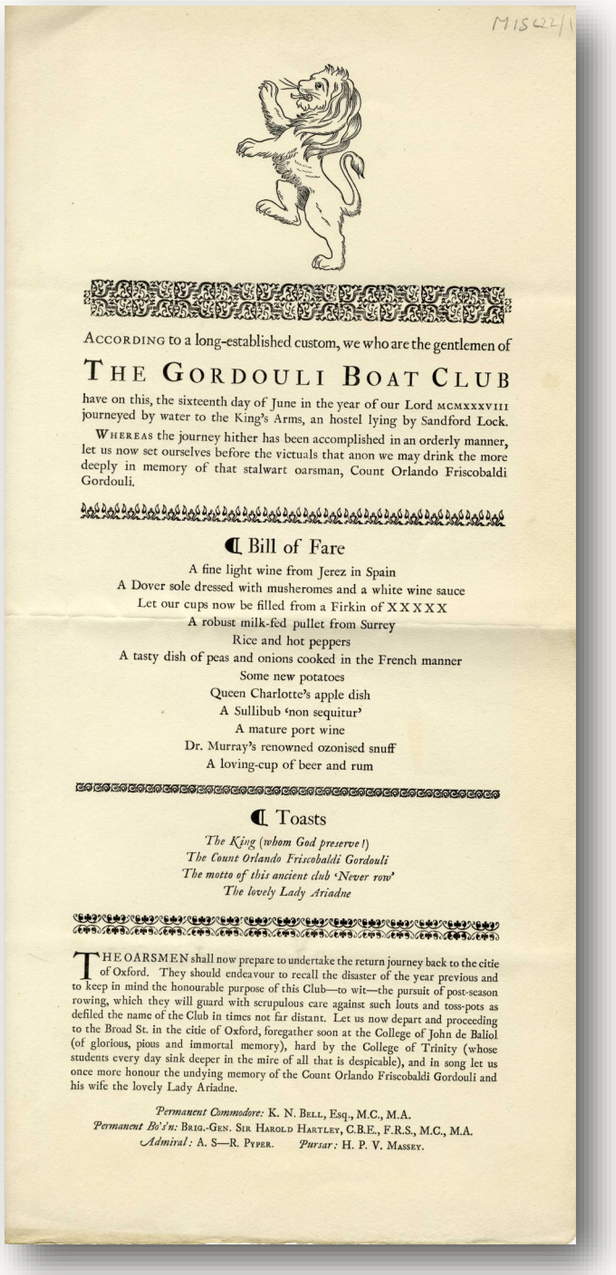
A typescript on the Dean's notepaper of The Gordouli, prepared for the Cricket Cuppers Dinner, 1973. *[Balliol College Archives, MISC 313]*

atmosphere that the 'Gordouli' emerged. It's said that Bobby Johnson of New College, who was a guest at a dinner, remarked that a Trinity man, Arthur Mario Agricola Collier Galletti di Cadilhac (nicknamed Gordouli, after a popular brand of Egyptian cigarettes) had a face like a ham. John Jones adds, in his *Balliol College: A History*, that 'it must have been a good dinner, because the party was so amused by this pinnacle of wit that they rushed out into the quad to chant at Trinity.' This chant across the wall quickly became a regular activity and before long it was set to music. In response Trinity composed replies:

> Balliol, Balliol
>
> They can't r-o-w, Joe Legge says so,
>
> And he ought to know.

The Gordouli is still sung on appropriate occasions.[26]

Sometimes the food in Hall takes a backseat and the goal is simply having a good time. In 1944 the Hall held a war-time dance that sold 240 tickets, had a band and attendees danced from 7.15 to 11.15pm eating small rolls, cheese savouries, sardine cream sandwiches, and egg and cress sandwiches. The Hall man was responsible for closing the curtains at blackout time.



MISC 22/1

According to a long-established custom, we who are the gentlemen of

THE GORDOULI BOAT CLUB

have on this, the sixteenth day of June in the year of our Lord MCMXXXVIII journeyed by water to the King's Arms, an hostel lying by Sandford Lock.

Whereas the journey hither has been accomplished in an orderly manner, let us now set ourselves before the victuals that anon we may drink the more deeply in memory of that stalwart oarsman, Count Orlando Friscobaldi Gordouli.

¶ Bill of Fare

A fine light wine from Jerez in Spain
A Dover sole dressed with musherornes and a white wine sauce
Let our cups now be filled from a Firkin of XXXXX
A robust milk-fed pullet from Surrey
Rice and hot peppers
A tasty dish of peas and onions cooked in the French manner
Some new potatoes
Queen Charlotte's apple dish
A Sullibub 'non sequitur'
A mature port wine
Dr. Murray's renowned ozonised snuff
A loving-cup of beer and rum

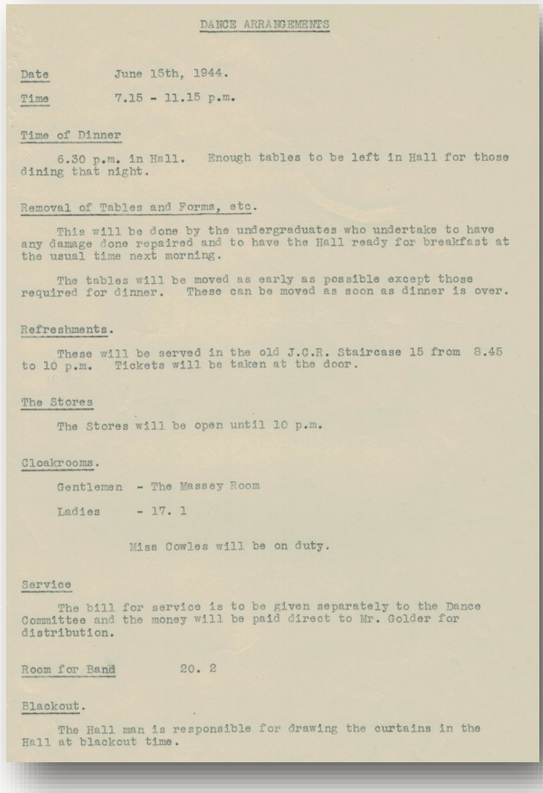
¶ Toasts

The King (whom God preserve!)
The Count Orlando Friscobaldi Gordouli
The motto of this ancient club 'Never row'
The lovely Lady Ariadne

The oarsmen shall now prepare to undertake the return journey back to the citie of Oxford. They should endeavour to recall the disaster of the year previous and to keep in mind the honourable purpose of this Club—to wit—the pursuit of post-season rowing, which they will guard with scrupulous care against such louts and toss-pots as defiled the name of the Club in times not far distant. Let us now depart and proceeding to the Broad St. in the citie of Oxford, foregather soon at the College of John de Baliol (of glorious, pious and immortal memory), hard by the College of Trinity (whose students every day sink deeper in the mire of all that is despicable), and in song let us once more honour the undying memory of the Count Orlando Friscobaldi Gordouli and his wife the lovely Lady Ariadne.

Permanent Commodore: K. N. Bell, Esq., M.C., M.A.
Permanent Bo's'n: Brig.-Gen. Sir Harold Hartley, C.B.E., F.R.S., M.C., M.A.
Admiral: A. S—R. Pyper. *Pursar:* H. P. V. Massey.

Gordouli Boat Club; ornate humorous menu 16 June 1938. Endorsed by R.A.B. Mynors: 'Found on the grass of the Front Quad in the small hours of next morning'. *[Balliol College Archives, MISC 22]*



DANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Date June 15th, 1944.

Time 7.15 - 11.15 p.m.

Time of Dinner

6.30 p.m. in Hall. Enough tables to be left in Hall for those dining that night.

Removal of Tables and Forms, etc.

This will be done by the undergraduates who undertake to have any damage done repaired and to have the Hall ready for breakfast at the usual time next morning.

The tables will be moved as early as possible except those required for dinner. These can be moved as soon as dinner is over.

Refreshments.

These will be served in the old J.C.R. Staircase 15 from 8.45 to 10 p.m. Tickets will be taken at the door.

The Stores

The Stores will be open until 10 p.m.

Cloakrooms.

Gentlemen - The Massey Room

Ladies - 17. 1

Miss Cowles will be on duty.

Service

The bill for service is to be given separately to the Dance Committee and the money will be paid direct to Mr. Golder for distribution.

Room for Band 20. 2

Blackout.

The Hall man is responsible for drawing the curtains in the Hall at blackout time.

Dance arrangements for 1944.
[Balliol College Archives, MBP 67]

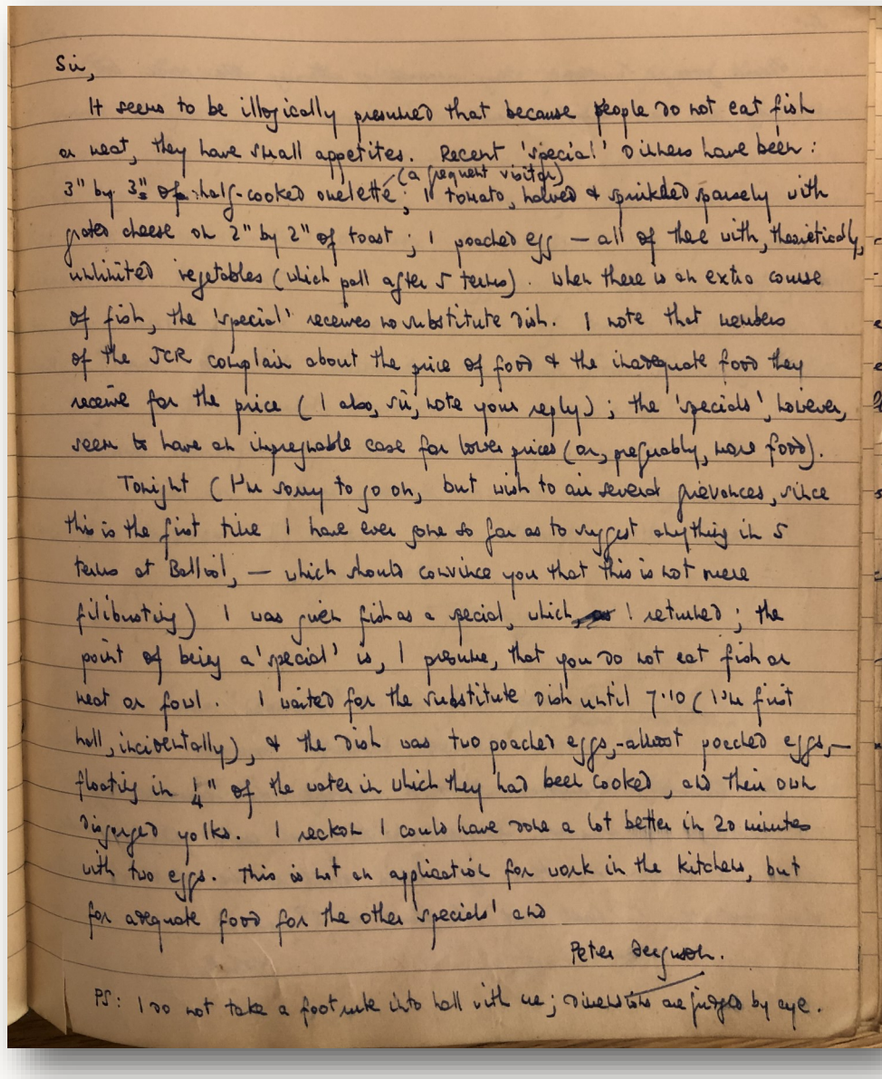
Changing Fashions

Over time fashions, tastes and priorities change. We now have a different food culture to that of 20 or 30 years ago: one that must tackle climate change, a growing population and a loss of biodiversity. This has developed alongside people recognising the importance of slowing down and enjoying seasonal ingredients. It is very much looking forwards, but drawing on past expertise and experience, recognising that at one time our cultural food preferences were for those available in our locality.

Over the centuries of Balliol's existence, many things have changed, as attitudes and tastes have changed in society. Benjamin Jowett took immediate advantage of his position as Master to reshape College life in several ways. The elaborate Latin Versicles and responses, which had been recited alternately by one of the Scholars and the Fellows as a grace following dinner, were abolished. The custom had often meant that the Scholar on duty was kept hanging about long after the undergraduates had gone. The time of dinner has gone through many changes: from 11.00am to noon about 1722 . In 1767 it was fixed at 2.00pm (except on Sundays, when it was to be at 1.00pm; at the same time supper was fixed at 8.00pm. In 1869 dinner was moved from 5.30pm to 6pm. In 1874 it was shifted to 7.00pm., at first during Trinity Term only.[27]

The ***Junior Common Room*** has achieved many changes through organisation and campaigns. In the 1950s and 60s they enacted change through their suggestions books. In the example here students complain about the vegetarian food on offer, in particular the size of portions, arguing that a vegetarian diet isn't a preference for less food.

'It seems to be illogically presumed that because people do not eat fish or meat, they have small appetites.' *[Balliol College Archives, JCR Food Book, January 1956, JCR Food 1]*



Sir,

It seems to be illogically presumed that because people do not eat fish or meat, they have small appetites. Recent 'specials' dishes have been: 3" by 3" of half-cooked omelette; (a frequent visitor) 1½ tomato, halved & sprinkled sparsely with grated cheese or 2" by 2" of toast; 1 poached egg — all of these with theoretically unlimited vegetables (which pall after 5 terms). When there is an extra course of fish, the 'special' receives no substitute dish. I note that members of the JCR complain about the price of food & the inadequate food they receive for the price (I also, sir, note your reply); the 'specials', however, seem to have an irrefutable case for lower prices (or, preferably, more food).

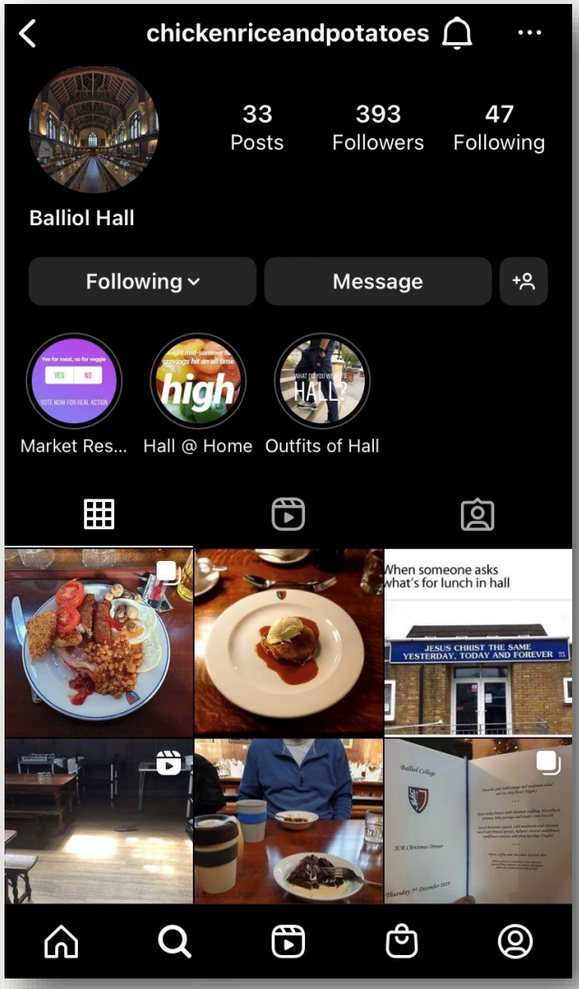
Tonight (I'm sorry to go on, but wish to air several grievances, since this is the first time I have ever gone so far as to suggest anything in 5 terms at Balliol, — which should convince you that this is not mere filibustering) I was given fish as a special, which ~~or~~ I returned; the point of being a 'special' is, I presume, that you do not eat fish or meat or fowl. I waited for the substitute dish until 7.10 (1'm first hall, incidentally), & the dish was two poached eggs, almost poached eggs, floating in ¼" of the water in which they had been cooked, and their own congealed yolks. I reckon I could have done a lot better in 20 minutes with two eggs. This is not an application for work in the kitchens, but for adequate food for the other 'specials' and

Peter Ferguson.

PS: I do not take a footrule into hall with me; quantities are judged by eye.

Today this sort of community can be built online or on social media, but also still in person, something that has been recognised as being very important after the isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In his *Balliol College: A History*, John Jones summarises the basic commons provided during the Elizabethan era as a plain offering, with the College making regular purchases of butter, eggs, spices, bread and cheese, with references to other food stuffs uncommon. However, this was partly because the College met some of the needs itself. The cook had their own kitchen garden and a run for fattening capons. There were two dozen apple trees planted in 1562-3, ten plum trees in 1583 - 4. In 1559 a pasture was sublet on condition that the College retained grazing rights for half a dozen sheep, which would be slaughtered as needed. Fish was bought from time to time, but red meat appears rarely in the accounts.[28] Recently the College has invested time in investigating the impact it has on the planet by considering the way we use our space, such as creating green roofs, scrutinising the carbon footprint of the food in Hall, as well as the use of our garden space. It's interesting to think that the future might resemble, in some ways, our past.



The Instagram account @chickenriceandpotatoes, which celebrated the food found in the Hall at Balliol.



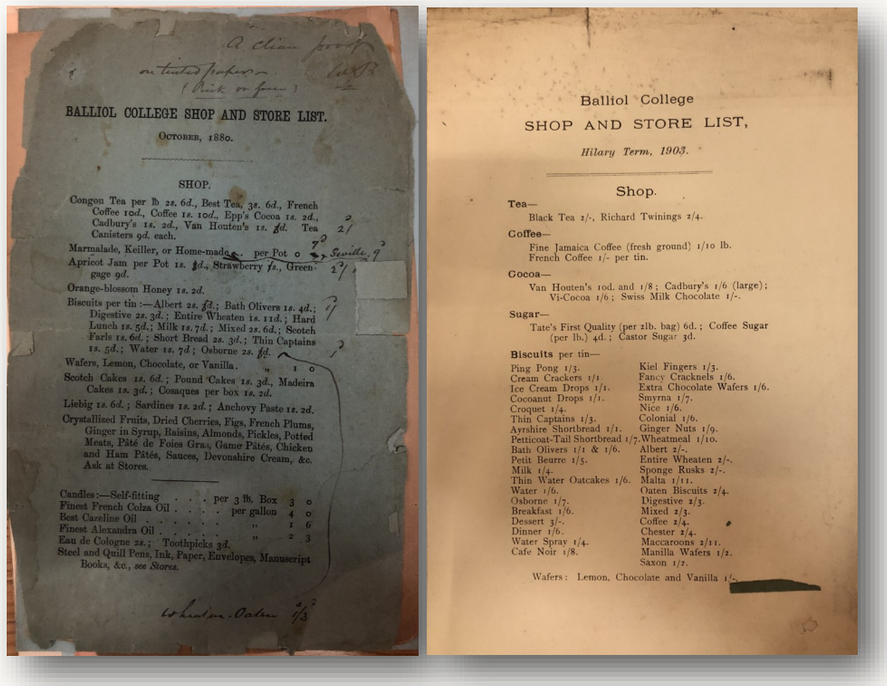
An example illustration from a pop-up library at Balliol, where students drew their ideas for building improvements on to copies of the College's architectural plans.

Consulting with History to Provide a New Food Future

By Dr Hannah Forde, Holywell Manor Research Associate

If we are to protect the planet from irreparable damage, the food we eat must change. Even if fossil fuel emissions were immediately halted, reducing greenhouse gas emissions to keep global temperature increases within a critical threshold (1.5°C) will be impossible without altering the production and consumption of food.[29] While the earth feeds more people than it has ever done before,[30] it does not do so equitably. In the UK – and indeed in many other countries – having a low income or living in a deprived neighbourhood means an individual is less able to afford or access healthy food. Globally, one in nine people are hungry or undernourished, yet one in three are overweight or obese.[31] The strain placed on food production by the Covid-19 pandemic and current geopolitics means that without significant intervention, existing disparities in access to nutritious and climate-friendly foods will widen.

Researchers working in this area often refer to the changes necessary to better support human and planetary health as 'food system transformation'. Food is conceived as a product of a 'system', to acknowledge the complexity and interconnectivity of the individuals and organisations working to grow, manufacture, market, cook, sell and eat food. Framing food as the product of a system also implicitly recognises that each action made within the food system has consequences elsewhere, good or bad. The food system must 'transform' because the scale of changes required to protect both human and planetary health is vast. Thanks to a growing body of research, it is now clear what a healthier and more sustainable diet should consist of: more fruit and vegetables, and producing and consuming less meat.[32] However, it is less clear where and how to intervene in the food system to ensure everyone can enjoy this diet, regardless of their income or postcode.



BALLIOL COLLEGE SHOP AND STORE LIST.

OCTOBER, 1880.

SHOP.

Congou Tea per lb 2s. 6d., Best Tea, 3s. 6d., French Coffee 10d., Coffee 1s. 10d., Epp's Cocoa 1s. 2d., Cadbury's 1s. 2d., Van Houten's 1s. 8d. Tea Canisters 9d. each.

Marmalade, Keiller, or Home-made per Pot 0

Apricot Jam per Pot 1s. 8d., Strawberry 1s., Greengage 9d.

Orange-blossom Honey 1s. 2d.

Biscuits per tin:—Albert 2s. 6d.; Bath Olivers 1s. 4d.; Digestive 2s. 3d.; Entire Wheaten 1s. 11d.; Hard Lunch 1s. 5d.; Milk 1s. 7d.; Mixed 2s. 6d.; Scotch Farls 1s. 6d.; Short Bread 2s. 3d.; Thin Captains 1s. 5d.; Water 1s. 7d; Osborne 2s. 6d.

Wafers, Lemon, Chocolate, or Vanilla.

Scotch Cakes 1s. 6d.; Pound Cakes 1s. 3d., Madeira Cakes 1s. 3d.; Cosaques per box 1s. 2d.

Liebig 1s. 6d.; Sardines 1s. 2d.; Anchovy Paste 1s. 2d.

Crystallized Fruits, Dried Cherries, Figs, French Plums, Ginger in Syrup, Raisins, Almonds, Pickles, Potted Meats, Pâté de Foies Gras, Game Pâtés, Chicken and Ham Pâtés, Sauces, Devonshire Cream, &c. Ask at Stores.

Candles:—Self-fitting . . . per 3 lb. Box 3 0
Finest French Colza Oil . . . per gallon 4 0
Best Cazeline Oil . . . " 1 6
Finest Alexandra Oil . . . " 2 3
Eau de Cologne 2s.; Toothpicks 3d.
Steel and Quill Pens, Ink, Paper, Envelopes, Manuscript Books, &c., *see Stores.*

Balliol College

SHOP AND STORE LIST,

Hilary Term, 1903.

Shop.

Tea—
Black Tea 2/-, Richard Twinings 2/4.

Coffee—
Fine Jamaica Coffee (fresh ground) 1/10 lb.
French Coffee 1/- per tin.

Cocoa—
Van Houten's 10d. and 1/8; Cadbury's 1/6 (large); Vi-Cocoa 1/6; Swiss Milk Chocolate 1/-.

Sugar—
Tate's First Quality (per 2lb. bag) 6d.; Coffee Sugar (per lb.) 4d.; Castor Sugar 3d.

Biscuits per tin—

Ping Pong 1/3.	Kiel Fingers 1/3.
Cream Crackers 1/1	Fancy Cracknels 1/6.
Ice Cream Drops 1/1.	Extra Chocolate Wafers 1/6.
Cocoanut Drops 1/1.	Smyrna 1/7.
Croquet 1/4.	Nice 1/6.
Thin Captains 1/3.	Colonial 1/6.
Ayrshire Shortbread 1/1.	Ginger Nuts 1/9.
Petticoat-Tail Shortbread 1/7.	Wheatmeal 1/10.
Bath Olivers 1/1 & 1/6.	Albert 2/-.
Petit Beurre 1/5.	Entire Wheaten 2/-.
Milk 1/4.	Sponge Rusks 2/-.
Thin Water Oatcakes 1/6.	Malta 1/11.
Water 1/6.	Oaten Biscuits 2/4.
Osborne 1/7.	Digestive 2/3.
Breakfast 1/6.	Mixed 2/3.
Dessert 3/-.	Coffee 2/4.
Dinner 1/6.	Chester 2/4.
Water Spray 1/4.	Maccaroons 2/11.
Cafe Noir 1/8.	Manilla Wafers 1/2.
	Saxon 1/2.

Wafers: Lemon, Chocolate and Vanilla 1/6.

Balliol College shop and stores price lists
[Balliol College Archives, MBP 223]

Talking about change might imply that without intervention, the food system is static. Yet Balliol's *A Taste of Balliol* exhibition is an important reminder that the food we eat is changing all the time, and unavoidably so. Each document, record and artefact tells a story of change within the College's own microcosmic food system. For example,

substantial globalisation at the turn of the twentieth century brought a greater range of food products and multinational brands to people's tables than ever before, and these products also surfaced at Balliol. The College shop and store lists from 1880 to 1903 show that in just over twenty years, the variety of biscuits – including many brands that still exist today – available for students to purchase doubled, and by 1903 a student might purchase any of three different kinds of sugar.

Though more biscuits and sugar are not what we currently seek to achieve with food system transformation, these records serve as a basis for optimism that substantial change can occur rapidly, should we want it.

That Balliol College houses so many records related to food also speaks to the central role that food plays in our lives, individually and collectively. Butteries and ***Formal Halls*** are justifiably synonymous with life at Oxford, providing ample opportunity to enjoy communal eating and the social benefits that come with that.[33] For many students and Fellows, college meals have initiated and nurtured numerous connections and conversations, academic or otherwise. The records of employment for chefs and contractors and a reference letter for a departing Head Chef who played a seminal role in the life of the College that feature in *A Taste of Balliol* also demonstrate that food is as much a reflection of the people who produce and consume it, as the ingredients it contains. More generally, the exhibition reminds us that dietary preferences are shaped by more than access and affordability, as they are inseparably intertwined with food memories, culture, and heritage. Much of the current narrative about changing food systems is concerned with exploration of newness: engineering more efficient crops, developing novel meat substitutes, applying new regulations to unhealthy foods regulation … and so on. While it may be tempting to clutter visions of a food future with novelty, doing so could risk ignoring vital lessons from our food histories. In what ways has the food system evolved already? Who or what has benefited or been disadvantaged by this? How can we use these experiences to inform what we try in future? Considering food histories such as those presented by *A Taste of Balliol* may help us start to answer some of these questions.

Changes to dining experiences through Balliol's history illustrated in *A Taste of Balliol* demonstrate that creating a more diverse and environmentally friendly food environment is not only feasible, but delicious too. The College store cards and menus of 1880 presented in the exhibition might read like admissions statements from the same period: primarily British and privileged. Most meals were orientated around meat (including veal and *foie gras*), and could be supplemented with cigars and champagne from the college shop. Dining experiences in College have changed dramatically and fantastically since then, such that few establishments that provide such a variety of food so regularly and to so many people. In any single week, a College menu might draw inspiration from Mexican, Italian, and Indian cuisines (and likely many more). A survey in 2019 showed that almost as many main meals served were vegetarian (42%) as non-vegetarian, in part thanks to the tremendous and imaginative efforts of the Kitchen team.[34] Importantly, these changes represent part of a broader process of transformation in the College, which is now happily enriched by a more international and diverse community than that of 1880. A greater variety of food offers not only a more interesting dining experience, but also may be one way to welcome and celebrate the food cultures and identities that the College now represents.

A Taste of Balliol offers a window into selected food experiences and the ways these have developed over time. It is also a stark reminder that despite some seismic changes, the food experiences for most of us in Balliol College are still more fortunate than those of many people in the UK. While the food system may – or rather, must – continue transforming in a host of ways, such rich details of food of the past recounted in this exhibition reinforces that the one thing that will not change is human connection to food.

Victorian recipes from the College Kitchen

Poularde à la Chivry (Poached chicken breast with Chivry sauce)

Serves 4

Ingredients

Poached breast of chicken
1 carrot, sliced
1 celery stick, roughly chopped
2 garlic cloves, halved
1 bouquet garni (Parsley, bay leaf and thyme)
4 skinless chicken breasts
1lt chicken stock
Salt

Chivry sauce
20g + 20g butter
20g plain flour
450 ml chicken stock
50ml white wine
2 tbsp chopped chervil, parsley, tarragon and chives
Ground white pepper

Vegetable garnish
100g vegetables of your choice cut into small dice and poached in salted simmering water until just cooked

Method

Prepare a *roux*. Melt 20g butter in a heavy-based saucepan.

Off the heat, add the flour and stir it with a small whisk or a wooden spoon. Cook over a medium heat for 3 minutes, stirring continuously.

Now make the Chivry sauce. Gradually pour 450ml cold chicken stock and the white wine into the cold *roux*. Set over a medium heat and bring to the boil while whisking continuously.

Reduce the heat and gently simmer the sauce for 30 minutes, stirring the sauce and skimming the surface every 10 minutes. Add the white pepper and check the seasoning. Add salt if needed. Pass it through a wire-mesh conical sieve.

To poach the chicken, tip the carrot, celery and garlic into a large saucepan. Tie the herbs together in a bunch with a piece of kitchen string, then add to the pan with the chicken breasts, chicken stock and salt (adding a little more water if it doesn't quite cover the chicken). Bring to the boil, then immediately lower to a simmer and cook over a very low heat for 10 - 15 minutes, or until the juices run clear in the thickest part of the breast.

Remove the pan from the heat and scoop out the chicken breasts from the poaching liquid.

Add the chopped herbs to the sauce and serve with the poached chicken.

Consommé Mosaïque

Serves 4

In Victorian times, Consommé Mosaïque would have been made with a clarified beef broth. This vegetarian onion consommé is much easier to make and just as delicious.

Ingredients

***Onion* consommé**
5 large onions, peeled
1.5l vegetable stock
125ml Madeira

Royale
5g melted butter
125 ml milk
2 eggs (100g)
1 pinch salt
1 pinch grated nutmeg

Vegetable garnish
100g vegetables of your choice cut into small dice and poached in salted simmering water until just cooked

Method

To make the *royale*, preheat the oven to Fan 150°C and grease two ramekins with melted butter (you may want to add a sheet of round greaseproof paper at the bottom of each dish). Put the ramequins in a roasting tin.

Mix the milk and the eggs in a bowl. Season with the salt and nutmeg.

Pour the mix in the ramequins. Transfer the tin carefully to the oven, then pour cold water into it to surround the ramequins up to two-thirds in depth. Bake for 40 minutes until the custard is set in the centre, which means it should feel firm and springy to the touch. Remove them from the roasting tin and leave to cool completely.

When cold and set, loosen the *royales* around the sides with a knife. Put a plate on top, turn it upside down and give it a hefty shake. Once it has come out, cut into dice or diamonds and keep in the refrigerator until needed.

Preheat the oven to Fan 170°C. Start the consommé by cutting the onions into quarters. Place into a deep tray and roast in the oven until a dark golden brown colour, approximately 30 - 40 minutes.

Remove the tray from the oven and pour in the Madeira, scrape the onions that have stuck to the tray with a wooden spoon. Add the stock and place back into the oven at Fan 125°C for 2 hours.

Remove from the oven and strain through a fine strainer and coffee filter, or alternatively a few layers of muslin (cheese cloth). Allow to cool and set aside until required.

When ready to serve, reheat the consommé. Put one tablespoon of cooked diced vegetables in each serving bowl. Add a few pieces of *royale*. Pour the hot onion consommé on top and serve at once.

Mushroom Wellington

Serves 4

Ingredients	*Method*
Mushroom *duxelles* 500g Portobello mushrooms 100ml port/sherry or Madeira 250ml double cream 20ml truffle oil Salt	Briefly blitz the mushrooms in a blender to a coarse texture. Transfer to a large saucepan and place over low heat to slowly dehydrate for about 30 minutes. Once the mushrooms are dry, add the port and reduce until totally evaporated. Add the cream and truffle oil and simmer for 5 minutes or until reduced and thickened. Season with salt to taste. Allow to cool, cover and refrigerate until needed.
King oyster mushrooms 80g unsalted butter 4g truffle oil 4 x King oyster mushrooms (Pleurotus eryngii also known as king trumpet mushroom, not to be confused with oyster mushrooms) 500ml mushroom stock (or vegetable stock if unavailable) Salt	Put all the ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes or until the mushrooms are tender. When cooked, take the mushrooms out of the pan and leave them to drain. Dry them with a paper towel.
Mushroom sausage Mushroom *duxelles* (see above) Poached king oyster mushroom (see above)	Divide the mushroom *duxelles* into 4 portions. Lightly roll out each portion on cling film until it is just large enough to wrap around a poached mushroom. Place each mushroom in the middle of a portion of *duxelles* and wrap the *duxelles* around it to form a thick mushroom sausage then wrap the whole parcel in the cling film. Place in the fridge to firm up for 30 minutes.
Mushroom Wellington Mushroom sausage (see above) Rolled puff pastry (about 500g) Egg wash	Cut a portion of puff pastry large enough to wrap around the sausage. Brush the edge of the pastry with egg wash. Unwrap the sausage, place on the pastry and place the pastry around it, pressing the edges together to seal. Place in the fridge to rest for 1 hour. When ready to cook and serve, preheat the oven to Fan 180°C. Brush the Wellington with egg wash and bake for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to rest for 3 minutes before serving. Serve with vegetarian gravy.

Rhubarb and ginger trifle

Serves 4

Ingredients

Rhubarb jelly
500g rhubarb, chopped
125g caster sugar
25g fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
3g agar

Roast rhubarb
200g rhubarb
75g caster sugar
30g fresh ginger

Crumble
100g plain flour
100g salted butter
100g demerara sugar
50g caster sugar
50g oats
50g flaked almonds

Custard
30g fresh ginger
150g whipping cream
150g semi-skimmed milk
60g caster sugar
5 egg yolks
2 tbsp cornflour

Ginger cream
1 preserved stem ginger, plus 10ml syrup from the jar
250ml double cream

Method

For the rhubarb jelly, combine the rhubarb, sugar, ginger and 200ml water in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes or until the rhubarb is soft.

Pass the mixture through a sieve into another saucepan.

Whisk the agar in the rhubarb liquid and bring it to the boil. Simmer for 1 minute then pour this jelly mixture in a trifle dish. Leave it aside to set and cool down. Keep in the fridge until needed.

To make the crumble, preheat the oven to Fan 150°C/gas mark 2. Combine the caster sugar, demerara sugar, flour, butter, oats and almonds in a food processor and blend until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

Line a baking tray with baking paper and scatter the crumble over it. Bake for 40 minutes, then remove from the oven and leave to cool. Crumble the mixture with your fingers and set aside until ready to serve.

To prepare the roast rhubarb, preheat the oven to 220°C/gas mark 7. Cut the rhubarb into 2cm pieces and lay them on a lipped baking tray. Peel and grate the ginger and sprinkle it over the rhubarb along with the sugar. Splash with a little water and bake until the rhubarb is tender, but still has some bite – about 10-12 minutes.

Remove the rhubarb from the oven and leave to cool on the tray.

To make the custard, roughly chop the ginger and place in a saucepan with the cream and the milk. Bring to the boil and then reduce to a low simmer. Meanwhile, whisk the sugar, egg yolks and cornflour together in a heatproof bowl.

Pour the hot cream, a little at a time, into the egg mixture, whisking constantly. Return the custard to the saucepan and cook over a low heat until it thickens, stirring constantly.

Strain the custard through a fine metal sieve into a clean saucepan. Put a layer of cling film over the surface to prevent a skin forming and leave to cool.

For the ginger cream, whisk the cream in a bowl until soft peaks form. Finely chop the preserved stem ginger and fold into the cream along with the ginger syrup and a little of the crumble mixture.

To finish the trifles, top the jelly with a layer of roast rhubarb pieces then pipe on a layer of cooled custard. Cover with the ginger cream and sprinkle with the remaining crumble mixture. Serve immediately.

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Glossary

Bursar

The chief financial officer of a college.

Battels

The charges made to a member of a college (student or Fellow) for accommodation, meals, etc.

Buttery

Room near kitchen where bottles and barrels (butts) of wine and other drinks were stored and dispensed.

Commons

An allowance of basic food taken in college; the food itself, such as bread, beer, cheese, butter and eggs.

Common Room

Balliol has three common rooms: (1) the junior (**JCR**), which in addition to being the undergraduate student organisation is also the hub of undergraduate social activity, as well as a physical location for recreation. (2) the middle (**MCR**), which is the self-governing body and social centre for graduate students in a College, located at Holywell Manor. (3) the senior (**SCR**) is the organisation to which all Fellows and College lecturers belong, and the name of the room in College which is used by members for a coffee and reading room.

Dean

Fellow responsible for supervising the conduct and discipline of the Junior Members of the College. To be 'deaned' is to be sent to the Dean.

Home Bursar

The college officer (often a Fellow of the College) with overall responsibility for domestic aspects of college life, including accommodation, security, catering and housekeeping, external lettings; now known as the Domestic Bursar at Balliol.

Fellows

The senior members of college who, together with the college head, constitute the governing body of the college.

Formal Hall

A traditional meal held in a college.

Gaudy

College event for old members.

Head of House

The Head of a College, currently known as the **Master** at Balliol and formerly the **Principal**.

High Table

The table in a college dining hall, often on a dais, at which the Head of House and Fellows dine.

Manciple

Chief purchaser of food (except for beer, bread and butter) in a college.

Screens passage

Passage screened off at the service end of a hall separating the dining area from kitchens and storage areas.

Steward

The person in charge of certain domestic matters within a college, including accommodation and the booking of dinners and other events. NB. The Steward of Christ Church is the equivalent of Domestic Bursar.

See more: https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/history/oxford-glossary



750th September Weekend, 2013 by Ian Taylor

We are indebted to Dr Christopher Kissane and Dr Hannah Forde for their time and involvement, as well as the staff, students and Felllows of Balliol College, who shared their photos and memories of food and dining in College. We are also indebted to John Jones, whose book, *Balliol College: A History* (second edition, revised, 2005), was an indispensable source for this exhibition, and from which we have quoted throughout this text, with his kind permission.

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