

# St John's JCR Alternative Prospectus

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# Introduction to the JCR

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

To begin, we'd like to introduce you to the Junior Combination Room (known as the JCR) which is the college's student union. Every student of college is a member of the JCR although graduates also have their own student union known as the SBR here at John's.

**The JCR committee acts with students' well-being in mind.** We organise frequent welfare events (plenty of free food including chocolate fountains, fudge and doughnuts); parties known as 'ents', with cheap drinks (soft drinks are free) and a DJ for just £2 entry; Freshers' Week; and many more events throughout the year. Our aim is to ensure we provide a wide range of activities to ensure we interact with as many students as possible!

With this in mind, **the JCR committee has quite a few roles** (21 to be exact). You can find out more about them on our website (<https://www.sjcjcr.com/yourjcr/committee>). At John's we believe in widening access to the college to ensure everyone feels included, welcome and at home here, regardless of your background and identity.

**Our equal opportunities (equal ops) team** provides for the needs of all students with a special focus on minority groups such as internationals, women, LGBT+, BME (black and minority ethnic), and students with disabilities. Each officer tends to organise specific events to help build a sense of community and ensure everyone feels free to be themselves!

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

The JCR committee is great to join not only to **get involved more closely with student-life but also to make changes when you think change is needed.** Some of our recent projects have been focused on making John's more accessible to students because we believe that to be one of the key areas we should focus on. Our plan to set up a Virtual Open Day but also this Alternative Prospectus are but two examples of what the committee is up to.

**Of course, the JCR committee is not the only opportunity you will have to get involved in student life** and we are lucky at John's because we have an incredible range of societies and groups that you can join. We hope this prospectus will help you get a sense of what our college offers, but remember, if you'd like to see a society we don't already have, you can effortlessly create it yourself!

(By Tim & Candela, 2020 JCR Presidents)

# A day in a humanity student's life

By Paula Espada, a first-year HSPS student.

## Morning

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

## Afternoon

As a humanities student, I don't have many contact hours and lectures are usually over by noon.

I head back to college with my friends and we go straight to **the buttery**, where I take breakfast, lunch and dinner because cooking is not my forte. I love the college buttery because it has a wide range of good options (including vegan!) and gives me a chance to relax and unwind with friends. Despite its size, St John's has a tight-knit community and you can always find someone you know in the buttery.

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

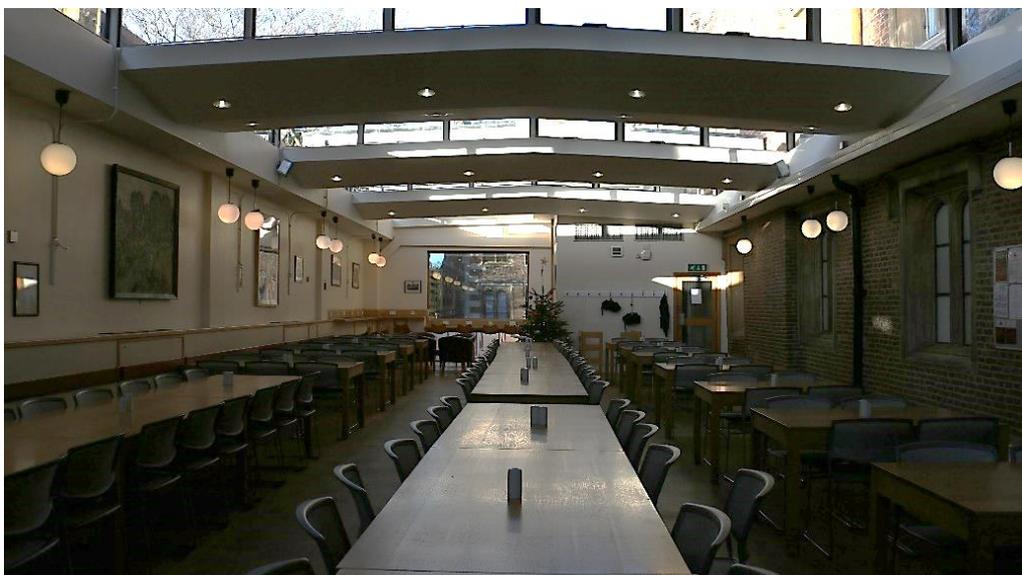
## Evening

I always take the evenings off and go to **Evensong**, sung by the college choir.

At least once a week, I catch up with my best friend in '**Formal Hall**'. This is a three-course dinner in the great dining hall, and a perfect occasion to dress up and wear my gown! Going to hall is the ultimate Cambridge experience, especially at St John's. The atmosphere in hall is magical and the food is excellent - and a lot less expensive than other colleges'!

At night, there's always something fun going on. Cambridge has a vibrant **theatre and music scene**, and I often go to see my friends perform in student plays or concerts.

We sometimes go out clubbing, but on quieter nights, I like to stay in for a 'movie night' in someone's room.



# A week in a STEM student's life

By Mark Pepper, a second-year Maths student.

## **Academics during the day**

I study maths, so every weekday morning begins with a few **lectures**. Once lectures are over, I tend to go back to college to make myself lunch, since all college rooms are close to most lecture venues.

**Supervisions** usually take place in the afternoon, of which I have around three a week. The work we discuss in supervisions are the example sheets set by the maths department. The supervisions usually take place in college as your supervisors are usually fellows at John's, however I occasionally have supervisions at the maths department.

Solving these example sheets fill up **my 'studying' time**. Other STEM subjects have a similar format, with perhaps a few more afternoon contact hours, such as practicals to attend and essays to write rather than problems to solve.

## **Welfare and social life during the day**

There are many events going on every day in Cambridge, so I often end up going to an events such as the **JCR welfare events**, which usually involve getting free food. I also usually go on a run around this point in the day, often with the **University running society**.

For **tea**, once again I like to cook, and I usually eat with a few friends in one of our rooms. This will often be followed by a trip to the **college bar** for a bar quiz, or just relaxing in someone's room chatting. Everyone lives so close together that it's really easy to pop round to a friend.

## Weekends

I try to relax more during the weekend. A highlight of the week for a lot of people is Saturday brunch in the **buttery**, which I religiously attend after a morning run.

The weekend is also a great time for **sport**. Because John's is a big college, most sports teams have a 2nd team, which I have really enjoyed since even though I stopped playing football around three years before going to university, I have still been able to play a couple of football games.

The JCR also hosts famous fortnightly events called **Ents** (a personal highlight of life at John's. It's always fun to dress up in questionable costumes and have a good boogie with mates).



# Academia at John's

## **Humanities: a review of HSPS**

Studying HSPS at John's has been the highlight of my life, and I know it's the same for my fellow HSPS students. In many ways, HSPS is the best Cambridge course, and John's is the best college (not that I'm biased). John's is ancient, yet radically progressive, full of the kindest students and staff you'll ever meet - and it's **beautiful**. Old, and new, at the same time, like HSPS.

Encompassing Political Thought, International Relations, Anthropology and Sociology, you'll fuse knowledge from across history and spot the reoccurring ideas: culture, kinship, capital, authority, the state, and beyond. That breadth means you **can specialise easily**, and there's **lots of liberty in building your schedule**. For me, that's doing ridiculous amounts of theatre, but HSPS students get involved in all sorts!

John's is lucky to have two eminent academics in Politics and Anthropology to supervise you, and Cambridge works through small-group supervisions; three for each paper, so **12 supervisions and essays a term**. It's a lot of work, but you'll reconfigure what you thought you could achieve, and quickly feel proud for bashing out 2000 words on some political theory the morning after a night out - not that we'd (officially) recommend it...

If I went back in time and told young me - growing up on benefits in a council flat, Cambridge wholly unknown - that he'd end up studying HSPS at St John's College, he would've laughed witheringly. But I couldn't be happier, and couldn't recommend it enough, **regardless of who you are or where you're coming from**. HSPS has the most diverse and eclectic

cohort of students because all you need is curiosity and creativity to consider who we are, how we got here, and where we're going. With HSPS, you'll never look at the world the same way again.

(By Jasper, a first-year HSPS student)

### **STEM: a review of Biology Natural Sciences**

Studying Science at Cambridge certainly caters for the adrenaline junkies among us. Balancing supervision work, lab reports and a lively social life around **a contact-hour heavy timetable** is quite something. Although we whinge about our Saturday lectures and numerous five-hour labs, all 'Natscis' (natural science students) secretly know that this is in fact boasting.

With each "Wow Natsci is soo hard!" from all other students, we are vindicated in thinking that **NatSci is the best degree**. David Attenborough being indisputable proof too! The supervision-style of teaching is key to Cambridge and in fact the **greater number of weekly supos** made me apply here over 'the other place'.

Supervisions mean that a typical Natsci will have **three to four hourlong meetings** with fellows (experts) each week. These will be with one or two other John's students, aka 'supo partners'. Although daunting at first, supos are fun teaching sessions and discussions to help your understanding of the material and not serious verbal exams to struggle through.

Additionally, formerly unknown supo partners will not only become your comrades at arms but often fast friends too! While there is no 'standard' supervision format for science, they tend to cover **that week's lecture material, practicals and**

**completed supervision work.** Supo work ranges from **essays or SAQs** for Biology, and **problem sheets** for Physics.

At one point during a supo last year, my supo partner, supervisor and I all imitated the various calls of Tungara frogs- all in the name of having some funky extra essay examples of course.

Having now spent two years at John's, supos have become one of the highlights of my week. I really love getting the chance to **form connections within the wider John's scientific community**, as well as the opportunity to ask all sorts of questions. This Easter Term I even signed up for all the available optional revision supos, meaning 13 supervisions in one week. 13 may be unlucky for some, but I really enjoyed it..."

(By Eimear, a second-year BioNatsci (pronounced Nat-skee!))



# Accommodation

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

## **First-year accommodation**

Freshers are all housed in the same blocks. These are arguably the some of the best freshers' rooms in the university and these modern rooms and communal kitchens offer both a homely comfortable place to live and community places for socialising and cooking.

The kitchens are well equipped and functioning and the college's brilliant maintenance and bedding crew is always at hand to ensure your living is more comfortable than you could imagine. The summer before you start, you'll get to answer some preference questions and college will allocate you your room. The range includes smaller singles, to ensembles to penthouses, but quality is a constant.

## **Room selection ballot in second year**

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

## **Cost**

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

## **Accommodation for disabilities**

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

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

## **Review of rooms from a first-year student**

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

parties, pre parties, post parties, birthday surprises and of course, a dutiful observation of sacred shared kitchen rules.

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

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

Futuristic room in an ancient college, surrounded by friends living together, and everything you could want at your doorstep. The only way to believe it is to live it. Just apply to John's already.

(This review was by Will, a first-year medic)



# Formal Hall

It's not every day that you can say you're enjoying a three-course meal under the carved wooden beams and stained-glass windows of a sixteenth-century dining hall, but at John's, food is served in hall **every evening except Saturday**, giving you something to look forward to after a long day of lectures and library sessions.

The food is delicious, with a vast array of mouth-watering dishes on the menu each week, from guineafowl to seafood risotto, and there is also always the option to have wine as well – **all for only £10!** Of course, there are always options for vegans and vegetarians, as well as anyone else with **special dietary requirements**.

All you need to do is **book your place** in hall through the college catering app the day before. Going to hall with your friends is a great way of **catching up, celebrating people's birthdays, or simply enjoying good food** and good company in a spectacular setting. It also gives you the chance to wear your gown, meaning that you get your money's worth for it!

Although the John's dining hall, with its magnificent architecture and rules about wearing gowns and standing for grace at the beginning of each meal, can seem a bit imposing at first, don't be intimidated by it! Hall is without a doubt one of the best things about studying at Cambridge, because it really allows you to live out the full **quintessential 'Cambridge experience'**.

Also, you deserve to treat yourself and indulge in the opulence and otherworldliness of the university's traditions after a long day of studying. At least that's what I tell myself as I book hall for the fifth consecutive evening in one week...

(This review was by Flora Pinne, a first-year History student.)



# The Buttery

For the unassuming visitor, it is quite normal for them to completely miss the buttery, tucked away at the corner of Second Court. However for Johnians, there is a certain ritualistic element that marks a visit to the Buttery.

The buttery is a place of good times with friends above anything else. From casual chat to rants about shifting deadlines, extra essays, and surprise problem sheets, to supportive advice when one is drained, the buttery offers a communal hub for friends to gather. This is also why “buttery gangs” are seldom rivalled in terms of the depth and tenacity of their bonds. Here are the dishes that you ought to try/ ought to avoid when visiting the buttery.

## To go for

- **Breakfast and Saturday Brunch:** Classic example of a great English breakfast complete with black pudding and poached eggs. Would strongly recommend the local sausages which are crisp on the outside and bursting with flavour. Unbeatable price too!
- **Roast of Lamb or Pork:** Sunday roasts, while popular across the country, are extremely difficult to perfect. The buttery, however, rarely fails at serving moist, flavourful roast lamb and pork. The sides offered are also guilt-inducingly decadent, from the melt-in-the-mouth gratin dauphinois, to pleasantly greasy pigs in a blankets, they are the ultimate college comfort food.
- **Lemon Posset with a Shortbread Round:** Divine marriage of sweetness and acidity, with an aroma that rivals that of the best limoncello. The contrast between the silk-smooth posset and the crumbly shortbread provides extra depth and complexity to the dessert. A solid favourite.

## Recurring dishes

- **Oily Fish Option:** Present every day, a predictable rotation between trout, salmon, cod, and sea bream.
- **Supremes:** Not to be confused with the popular and overpriced brand, supreme, or suprême de volaille, is a term the buttery uses to make poultry breast sounds posh. Guinea fowl and duck supremes are generally well executed, while the chicken tends to fall on the dry side.
- **Onion Tarte Tatin:** This dish has acquired legendary status for being the most frequently served dish in the college. Both as a starter in formal hall, and as a main in the buttery. If you're lucky, the pastry might still be crispy!

(By Jovian Hui, a first year HSPS student.)



# Shops

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

Here at John's, we're fortunate to be ideally located equidistant from the conveniently close central **Sainsbury's** (the beating heart of student food shopping), **the market** (a dynamic market with the occasional surprising good deal on fresh produce), and **Aldi** (amazingly economical and seemingly bottomless).

These three establishments are **at closest, a two minutes' walk and longest, five minutes' cycle** from college. So, for all those looking to follow in my culinary adventures – rest assured food is at your doorstep.



# Facilities

## Punts

Punting is to Cambridge what Trippier's semi-final free kick was to the summer of 2018 – iconic, uniquely special and the peak of summer. Whilst many commercial companies work the river, here at John's we're one of the few colleges to boast our very own punt fleet.

**Freshers week** always includes an introduction to the activity where almost everyone takes to the water to fledge their puntling wings. During the rest of the year this fleet is available to all Johns students at a killer **£5 an hour** (the market price is £28 for reference), or if you join the Punting Society there are regular opportunities to punt for free.

**Punting Society is run by students** for the students (hit 'em up on Instagram @sjcpunts), and we look to get everyone involved in this special past time. Additionally we run **subsidised stash, subsidised hall and offer the only night punting** in Cambridge (and yes by default, the world).

Floating down the river through the gorgeous university town with a drink in hand, water rippling all around and seeing the glowing buildings of Johns rise up ahead are quite possibly the single most idyllic moments ever experienced by the human race. In short – we have punts like no other, come get 'em.

(By Will, a first-year medic.)

## Sports fields and Artificial turf

Oh no! Its 9:25 – you've slept through your alarm and your netball game starts at 9:30. You are thinking: "How am I going to get dressed, eat breakfast, get my bike and cycle to the

pitches?” But then you remember. You are at John’s! **Five minutes** is more than enough time to walk to the pitches, which are so close - sleeping through your alarm doesn’t matter.

John’s is one of the few colleges to have this privilege and for anyone who wants to be involved in sports of any kind, including hockey, football, rugby, ultimate frisbee, netball, lacrosse and tennis, they really are indispensable. As someone who has tried almost every sport available, I cannot stress the benefits of **having your own pitches**.

The pitches themselves are superb and are carefully maintained by our fantastic groundsman. The **artificial turf** allows large crowds of students to come and support every hockey game and has earned John’s the title of having the best supporters. Although this is annoying to away teams, it creates an amazing atmosphere at every red-boy game.

(By Emily, a first-year medic.)

### **Gym and Weights room**

Students at St John’s are incredibly lucky to have access to both a weights room and a fitness centre on site in the Cripps building – **less than a two-minute walk** from door to door for most Freshers!

These facilities are open to all students, following short inductions that will take place in Freshers Week, **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**, and are equipped with anything you could need, whether you are an experienced weightlifter or new to the gym.

**The Weights Room** includes a squat and bench rack, as well as dumbbells ranging up to 35kg, while the **Fitness Centre** contains treadmills, exercises bikes, ergometers and various

other machines for cardio and strength training. They are **constantly being updated** to fit the desires of the student body as well, with a hex bar, more resistance bands and more kettle bells all being added within the last year. If you have any questions about these facilities, don't hesitate to get in touch with me, the JCR Facilities Officer, at [hgl28@cam.ac.uk](mailto:hgl28@cam.ac.uk)!

(By Hugo, a first year History and Politics student.)

## **Library**

The John's library can't be missed. Literally. It's a whopping **five-storey** building in the centre of College, so it's really convenient to pop in for study sessions between contact hours and extracurriculars.

Since it caters for a **particularly large** college you'll find almost any book you need there. In fact in my first year here I've found all the books I need for supervisions in the John's library, saving me from fighting over the copies in my departmental library against students from other (less bountiful) colleges.

The library has individual desks, silent-study rooms, group-work rooms, and computer rooms so there'll always be the right workspace for you. Another bonus: unlike some other colleges our library is **open 24 hours a day, seven days a week**, catering for night-owls and morning birds alike.

It's not all work though. There's also an **AV room** stocked with academic documentaries, cheesy romcoms, and even beanbags for those of us who simply want to sleep through a film. Quite honestly, our library caters for everyone.

(By Jenny, a first-year Geography student.)

## **Music room**

The **music practice rooms** in John's, just a **minute's walk** from accommodation, are a brilliant part of college. Each of the four rooms are easy to reserve via our booking system and are great for both solo and ensemble playing. Unlike other colleges, they are big enough to accommodate up to six people. Anyone in college can book them for use.

The **New Music Room** is another unique feature of Johns. With its beautiful 16<sup>th</sup>-century architecture, this room is not only a stunning venue for weekly lunchtime concerts (which you can apply to take part in), but can also be booked out by members of the college for up to two hours at a time. The Steinway piano is a particular attraction.

**SJCMS** (our music society) organise many other musical events throughout the year that attract hordes of tourists from across the globe (quite literally!). Follow our Instagram @stjohnsmusicsoc. As good as it gets, John's is the ideal place for music making, so don't miss out!

(By Emily, a first-year Music student.)

## **Laundry**

Laundry won't be that chore you put off until you're down to your last clean t-shirt. At John's, it's a weekly social fixture, a chance to catch up in a communal space amidst your hectic schedules. Absurd as it sounds, some of my best conversations with fellow Johnians have been over a bottle of Persil.

Located in Cripps basement, the laundry room is super convenient wherever you live in college - a **maximum three-minute walk** away from your room – so no excuses for smelly socks!

The best thing is that we're lucky enough to have **free laundry**. Head to Sainsbury's for detergent and you're good to go for the

year. As well as washers and dryers, there are also ironing boards and irons available for anyone to use – and you wondered why we're the sharpest looking college around.

Remember – Saint Johns, not Stain Johns!

(By Annabel, a first-year medic.)

### Pictures of the facilities



# Rowing (Lady Margaret Boat Club)

## **Quote from Eliza, a first-year studying veterinary medicine**

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

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

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

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

### **Quote from Sophie, a third-year Law student**

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



## Hockey (Nags)

Hi, I'm Zenga and I'm studying Engineering. I'm lucky enough to be finishing off my second year as captain of the Women's Hockey Team, affectionately known in John's as the Nags.

We are the self-proclaimed GOATs of the college sporting world, and if you ask me we have the side-line support and Instagram page to match. (Go check it out @sjcnags, not that we pretend to be influencers or anything...) As a team, we pride ourselves on being super inclusive. At the start of the year the experience ranges from the "Hockey? Is that the one on ice?" girls who look at me like I'm crazy at the annual college sports fair to the near-professionals who are pretty experienced players and everything in between.

We've even managed to convince a fair few "Ugh, I hated hockey at school" types that they might actually enjoy it when they don't have an annoying school teacher breathing down their neck. The Nags truly is a team for **everyone**. Our male counterparts, the Nogs, provide us with endless entertainment, throughout socials, training, and side-line support for which we

are very grateful. It's so nice to have two teams that work so well together.

Since we're the only college lucky enough to have our very own hockey turf right outside college, it's minimal effort to drag yourself away from Netflix for a couple of training sessions and matches a week. Uni life can be a bit stressful so it's nice to have something to take a break from all the deadlines, essays, and assignments but that's not too serious. We totally get that some weeks you are just too busy to worry about committing to playing hockey.

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



## Netball

“Hi everyone, I’m Thea and I’m the current college netball captain. Some of you are probably thinking ‘Ugh not netball’ but keep reading because St John’s College Netball Club is the best sports club in college! (Not that I’m biased lol).

SJCNC is all about getting involved and meeting new people. It doesn’t matter if you’ve never played netball before or if you live for it. The club has a super relaxed atmosphere – we end up spending as much time making Tiktoks and chatting about what went down at the “ent” the night before as we do actually playing netball! We’re also a low commitment team so there’s

no compulsory training or matches. We totally understand that Cambridge life gets stressful and hectic so if you just want to play once to let off some steam or if you want to play every week we're here for you! We also have a great social side and like to celebrate our victories with socials and swaps with the other college sports teams.

Having said all of that, we still pride ourselves on being great at netball. We have ladies teams to suit all abilities and one of the best mixed teams at uni! So, whether you'd like to play some college sport or are just here for the socials you should definitely join SJCNC."

### **Quotes from the community**

"It doesn't matter if you've never played netball before or if you live for it." "Super relaxed atmosphere."



## **Redboys**

"Hi, I'm Matt. I'm from Yorkshire and I'm studying medicine at St John's. However, more importantly, I have the honour of being a member of the St John's College Rugby Union Football club- more famously known as the Redboys (S.J.C.R.U.F.C.M.F.K.A.T.R).

The Redboys represent the pinnacle of college sport, winning 14 out of the 19 possible Cuppers trophies in the modern era. Moreover, we are proud to be the only college to enter two

teams into Cuppers, meaning all members, irrespective of rugby experience, get the opportunity to represent the Redboys.

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

The Redboys welcome players from all backgrounds and take pride in our diversity as a club. Although you may find us frequenting the college bar on Sunday nights as part of our social enrichment and friendship-development sessions, there is no requirement to drink alcohol as a part of this.

There is no better way to meet new people in college across all years- my best memories of an albeit shortened first year have been made as a part of the Redboys.

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

Ad Gladium."

### **Quotes from the community**

"The Redboys represent the pinnacle of college sport."

"Welcome players from all backgrounds and take pride in our diversity as a club."

"No better way to meet new people in college across all years."

## Blackboys (Men's Football)

Hi, I'm Alex, a second-year geographer and the vice-captain for the men's football team, known as the Blackboys. We are proud to combine the elite level of Division 1 college football with by far the greatest social calendar of any John's sports team.

Football at John's is **very accessible** for those of all abilities; there are three football teams for undergrads and one for postgrads, so whether you want to play 90 minutes every week or have some tinnies with the injured clique on the touchline,

there's room for anyone! Also, **if you want to play for the uni**, you can still be a big part of college sport – our captain plays in the uni set up regularly, so there's no reason not to join.

At John's we are very lucky to have **pitches connected to the college**, so it's easy to roll out of bed to training, some five-a-side, or a big Cuppers match (the second oldest football tournament in the world after the FA Cup).

We're strong believers that for there to be excellence on the pitch there has to be excellence off the pitch too. We pride ourselves on our **weekly socials** (unless there's an Ent), hosting the touring side 'The Ramblers' from Liverpool, and celebrate Bridgemas in quite some style, amongst many other events (did someone say tour?).

In **general college life** the Blackboys are one big family. There's always going to be someone to watch a Champions League game with, give you advice about anything, or dominate with in Verdansk (we've got more wins than the Redboys – if that doesn't sell you then I don't know what will).

Stay tuned for some player profiles on our Instagram and we look forward to seeing you all in October!



# Music

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

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

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

Residents of The Maypole include the university's **Musos** (music students), **Thesps** (students involved in drama). And, of course, The Gentlemen of St John's (whose annual Michaelmas gig, 'Gents at the Maypole', draws huge crowds and is not one to miss!)



# Saint John's Voices Choir

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

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

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

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

## **Touring**

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

## Recording

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



# St John's College Music Society

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

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

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



# Medical Society

Hi, we're Anna and Emma, the 2020-21 MedSoc Co-Presidents. Every medic and vet at John's is an automatic member of MedSoc when they arrive and can benefit from the events we run throughout the year, both social and academic.

In Freshers' Week we give the new medics a chance to meet each other, and medics in older years. It's an opportunity to start forming friendships, exchange study tips and profit from the immense wisdom of those who've studied Medicine before you. We also challenge you to meet as many members of your extended college family as possible!

MedSoc runs lots of great talks and events throughout the year, including the challenges of working for MSF, the history and future of surgery and MecC MRSA. These talks offer a chance to hear from leading doctors and academics, without the need to travel too far (you should be able to manage the walk to the Old Divinity School...).

We also hold a summer internship evening, where second and third years give presentations about the clinical and research placements they undertook during the summer vacation. Last year, medics from John's travelled to every corner of the globe, including the United States, France, and China.

We also host social events each term. There are regular swaps with other colleges, where we visit and host other MedSocs at formals. There's a famous challenge to attend hall at every college, so you'll want to take advantage of every swap you can! Our Welfare Officers also organise events within college, where medics from every year can relax together and enjoy some free food.

However, the highlight of the year has to be our Annual Dinner. Held in the Senior Combination Room, a magnificent (and very long) room lit solely by candlelight, where the D-Day landings

were allegedly planned, the dinner is a truly spectacular occasion. Typically, most pre-clinical students and supervisors attend, so there's a lovely community atmosphere, as well as delicious food and an abundance of port.

Like every dedicated academic society in college, MedSoc caters to the needs of our students. We hope the academic resources, social events and general support we provide will enhance your time as a medical student at John's.

(By Anna and Emma, second-year medics.)



# The Winfield Society (Law)

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

The Winfield Society runs a number of social events throughout the year to help give our members a break from their weekly readings. Every Michaelmas we have the Winfield Hall (a formal dinner to welcome you to the society).

And on a more casual basis we arrange to see concerts and plays, hold brunches, and generally try and ensure there is a good level of communication between members. If you're interested in learning how to moot (a kind of mock-trial, much beloved by law students), the Winfield Moot takes place every year to familiarise our first years with the basics.

In Lent term, Winfield members and past alumni of St. John's come together for the Winfield Dinner. This is a black-tie event attended by a guest speaker who gives insight into life as a lawyer, whether they be practicing or an academic.

In 2020 we were honoured to hear from Lord Justice Leggatt, whose speech on legal developments and his wider experience as a judge was truly inspiring and thought-provoking. This really is the event of the year.

If you have any more questions, please don't be afraid to approach one of your fellow lawyers in college (we can usually be found in the library). We look forward to meeting you and helping you in this exciting period of your life in any way we can!

(By Cie Jen and Ross, second-year lawyers.)



# Lady Margaret Players (Theatre)

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

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

For those looking for more low-key one-off theatrical opportunities, our **Scratch Nights at the Maypole** are a sensation! These fun, informal nights at the most Johnian pub in Cambridge allow any student or small group of students to sign up and perform stand-up, spoken word, sketches, a bit of a new play script and more, providing the audience with a relaxed, free night of student-written entertainment. From Chicken-Little-based comedy to a PowerPoint about Justin Timberlake, we've seen it all!

**Anyone can get involved in our society** – our current committee contains an English student, an HSPS student, a Natural Science student, a Music student, and a Theologian! – and John's has so many beautiful spaces, from the gardens to the Chapel, which we want to continue to transform into performance venues.

We aim to open up the wonderful world of Cambridge theatre to everyone: it can seem a little daunting and jargon-filled at first, so know that you can always come to us with any queries – and, of course, project ideas!

(By Beatrix, a second-year Music student.)



# Art Society

At St John's, we're incredibly fortunate to have an Art Society based in the art room by the back of college where students can experiment with various media and take a break from the hectic nature of term time at Cambridge.

This year, we've held **weekly art sessions** focused on experimentation and the use of mixed media, as well as **themed events**, such as a session inspired by the work of Norman Rockwell or a still life evening where we used autumn-themed vegetables and props.

In the past, ArtSoc have also collaborated with groups such as the St John's Feminist Society to work on posters and creative projects. Although Art Society can't physically meet under the present circumstances, we still aim to connect Johnians and share our love of art through the St John's Quaranzine, an online **creative and literary magazine** designed to showcase the work of Johnians everywhere.

(By Adi, a second year MML student.)



# Financial Support

Financial difficulty should never be a reason to stopping you achieving your dream of applying to Cambridge. Grants, awards, prizes and means tested bursaries can help you reach your full potential without money worries! Note: this information was correct as of July 2020. Please check the St John's College website for the most up to date information'

## What financial support can I get at John's?

- Cambridge Bursary
- St John's Studentship
- Scholarships and prizes
- Learning and Research Fund
- Travel grants
- Hardship funds
- Medical funds
- Sports Awards

For more information visit: [www.joh.cam.ac.uk/grants-awards-and-prizes](http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/grants-awards-and-prizes)

## The Cambridge Bursary

The Cambridge Bursary offers a means tested bursary of up to £3,500 a year, for the duration of your course, paid termly. This is in addition to your repayable maintenance loan from *Student Finance England*. Before you enrol, you will be contacted if you are eligible for the Cambridge Bursary based on your student finance data.

## The St John's Studentship

St John's has a generous studentship scheme which supplements the Cambridge bursary for each year of your course, paid termly. These are non-repayable grants for home/EU students with a household income of less than £42,000, from £360 to £7,380, for students with a household income under £25,000 p.a.

Combined with the Cambridge Bursary of £3,500, the total amount a student can be eligible for per year is £10,880.

Quote from Becca, a second-year English student:

- “The St John’s studentship took a big weight off my shoulders when I got to Cambridge. I’d considered not applying to Uni because I was worried it wasn’t for people from my background and was worried I wouldn’t be able to afford it. Thankfully I was proved so wrong! I’m able to do the same things my friends are, like buy books, go for meals and nights out, and attended the May Ball, which was absolutely incredible! You aren’t treated differently, and don’t need to tell anyone, besides the Scholarship Administrator that you get a bursary if you don’t want to.”

### **Scholarships and Prizes**

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

### **Learning and Research Fund**

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

### **Travel Grants & Academic Research Projects**

Every year, students of St John’s are invited to apply for a **Travel Grant**. The non-means tested grant funds a portion of

the cost of travel. These are often awarded for trips related to academic study or interpret travel to remote parts of the world.

Students can also apply for grants towards **holiday academic research projects** and **summer schools**.

Quote from Amy, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year English Student:

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

### **Hardship Funds**

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

### **Medical & Disability Awards**

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

### **Sports Awards**

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

### **How can I manage my money in Cambridge?**

You may have heard that Cambridge is an expensive city to live in, but you can make your money go far when living in College!

Your main outgoing will be your termly college bill, which pays for your accommodation and any other College owings. The College also has different bands of accommodation for different budgets.

### **Budget friendly facilities**

- **The Buttery** (College canteen) does pretty nice food and is much cheaper than eating out (roughly £3.50 a meal)
- **Drinks** at College Ents (JCR run parties) are usually capped at £1.50, and the College bar is cheaper than going out!
- The College also has **free laundry, gym and sports facilities**.
- **Formal Hall dinners** (meals eaten by candlelight in the old “Hall” – as close as you can get to Harry Potter!) are £10 for a meal with wine and £6 without wine. They are an atmospheric and conveniently cheap way to spend an evening and to celebrate occasions like birthdays!

### **The John’s Student’s Top 10 Money Saving Tips:**

1. **Stay on top of banking.** Set up a saving account and a student current account, which has an arranged overdraft, that you drip feed money into, so you’re less tempted to splash out! Apps such as **Yolt** and **Monzo** let you track your spending!  
Top tip: “Set up text alerts for when you’re nearing your account limit & take cash on a night out so you can’t overspend on your card!” – Becca, 2<sup>nd</sup> year English
2. **Batch make meals.** A big pan of pasta or curry is dirt cheap to make and can last you a few days. Food shop further out at Aldi or ASDA to save money.  
Top tip: “Learn a few basic recipes to rotate and buy some spices to jazz up meals!” – Frances, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year HSPS
3. **Shop further afield.** Shops further out are often cheaper than in central Cambridge, it’s only a 15-minute cycle to Primark & Wilko’s!  
Top tip: “Get those hot deals at Aldi, or share a taxi with

friends and go for a big group shop at ASDA!” – Meg, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year English

4. **Go charity shopping.** It’s cheap, and good for the planet -what’s not to love? There’s an Oxfam right next to John’s, and further afield there are some great charity shops. Some bargain steals have been known to appear in Cam charity shops!
5. **Stay in.** To save, instead of going out for dinner or drinks, go for dinner in Hall with friends. Drink at home, or the College bar before going out. Seeing a movie? The St John’s Picturehouse movie society charges £4 for a screening, half the price of a cinema ticket!
6. **Cycle.** It’s a very “Cambridge” mode of transport & is cheaper than an Uber!
7. **Take a packed lunch** when you go to classes! Eating out in Cambridge is expensive, and faculty lunches are usually pricey, so this is one of the best money saving tips! Take a flask to the library so you don’t have excuses for a coffee break!
8. Get those **student deals** with an **NUS card**, and apps like **Unidays & Student Beanz!**
9. **Decorate on a budget.** Your room comes fully furnished so you only need to buy a few bits to make it homely. Fairy lights, a throw & some printed pictures go a long way!
10. **Travel cheap.** If you’re travelling to uni in the UK by train, get discounted tickets from **The Trainline** or **National Express** & make sure to use a **16-25 railcard!**

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

# Applications

## UCAS

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

You will also have to either choose the code for the specific college you want to apply to or make an open application (where you'll be allocated to a college with the fewest number of applicants per spaces).

You're equally likely to get an offer regardless of which college you apply to or if you submit an open application, so there's no need to stress about trying to 'game the system'. Most people love the college they go to, but we'd love you to come to John's! For more information about our college and its academia go and scour the St John's official website!

## Short-Answer Questions (SAQ)

After this you'll be sent the SAQ to fill out online. This involves filling in the modules you've already taken at A-level, IB, Highers or any other qualification and a bit more information about yourself including a photo. (Heads up: if your application to Cambridge is successful this photo will be used for **everything** during your time here – too many innocent applicants turned freshers have fallen into this trap).

This also allows you to explain if there are any **extenuating circumstances** that may have affected your grades. For example, if there were staffing issues at your school. You can also fill in an additional personal statement. This is particularly useful if the course you're applying to is unique to Cambridge, but you don't feel like you have to do this. At least 25% of applicants each year do not include one and it really is optional

– not including one will not decrease your chances of getting an offer. There's a document on the Cambridge website with more information.

### **Admissions Test**

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

[\(<https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/admissions-assessments/pre-interview>\)](https://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/admissions-assessments/pre-interview).

### **Top Tips for Admissions Tests**

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

### **Written work submissions**

Some subjects, especially humanities, require written work to be submitted before the interviews. These are often essays you've already written for class and can be useful in providing an insight into the way you think and the feedback from your teachers. They may also form the starting basis for a discussion in your interview.

It's a nice way to be able to challenge and push your thinking, whilst sticking to a topic they know you are familiar with and

have thought a bit about before to see how you'd respond to supervisions.

You may also need to fill in a couple of other forms which can be found on the link at the bottom of the page.

### **Top tips for written work submissions**

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

### **Interview**

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

At John's you will often have two interviews which are generally 20-30 minutes with one or two interviewers, who might be related to your subject or other academics from the University.

One of them is often a **general interview** which is focused around your motivation for the subject. This can include points from your personal statement, or written work for humanities subjects. The aim of this interview is to get a more rounded picture of you as an applicant, and some general ideas about

your subject. It's often with at least one academic who is not related to your subject.

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

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

### **Top tips for interviews**

1. The most important thing is making sure that you think aloud. It's perfectly normal to not have an answer to the questions, but what interviewers really want to see is how you go about working it out.
2. Try to relax and be yourself - show your enthusiasm for your subject.
3. Read over your everything you submitted to make sure you're familiar with it and are able to talk about it if asked.
4. Don't overthink it afterwards as it's really tricky to know how you did.
5. Don't believe all the myths about the interviews you read online as a lot of them are misleading.
6. Wear something you feel most comfortable as this will help you perform best.
7. Make sure you check in with the student helpers from the Admissions Office: they can show you around and keep

you company between interviews. (They often have exciting films to watch, like Shrek or Sherlock Gnomes.)

8. Interviewers rarely plan what they are going to ask beyond the first few questions. That means they **generally don't have an expectation of how they'd like you to answer**, so just trust your instincts. If what they ask makes no sense, it's absolutely okay to get them to clarify what they mean.

### **Top tips for humanities interviews**

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

### **Top tips for science interviews**

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

## Results

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

You may have gone through the "pooling process" if you receive an offer from a different college to the one you applied to. This is how all applicants have a fair chance of receiving an offer regardless of their college choice. If a college has an unusually high number of fantastic applicants, often they do not have enough space to give offers to them all.

If that's the case, some of those candidates will be placed in the 'pool', where colleges with fewer fantastic applicants can 'fish' them out. Pooling isn't something to worry about: everyone who is pooled ends up saying that the college they're at is the best one anyway!

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

## More information

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

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

We wish you the **best** of luck, and hope to see you very soon.

# Advocacy at John's

## **Disabilities**

I'm Jenny, the John's undergraduate Disabilities Officer. I help to improve the College's accessibility, improve access info on College facilities and student events, and raise awareness for disabilities. For example, I've made a large-print, visually accessible version of this Alternative Prospectus so feel free to use that or share with your friends and school.

I also work with the Student Union's Disabled Students Campaign. We advocate for students with disabilities (like pushing for compulsory lecture recording) and coordinate social activities like group chats, social events, and talks. In the past the Campaign's run a neurodiversity reading group, discussions on how the University should accommodate mental health, disability/LGBT+/class-positive discos, and more. We welcome all self-identifying disabled students, ranging from physical health conditions to learning difficulties – no diagnosis needed!

E-mail me at [disabilities@sjcjr.com](mailto:disabilities@sjcjr.com), the College nurse Emma Dellar at [e.dellar@joh.cam.ac.uk](mailto:e.dellar@joh.cam.ac.uk), or the Disabled Students Campaign at [www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk](http://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk) for more information. For expert support such as accommodating your disabilities in your faculty and getting Disabled Students' Allowances, talk to the Disability Resource Centre.

## **Women at St John's**

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

Although in 1982, John's became the fourth last Cambridge College to admit female undergraduates, we are very much a feminist institution now. Elsewhere in this alternative prospectus you can read about our FemSoc and ConSenT John's. Additionally, we have a role (my role!) on the JCR devoted to championing gender equality. John's is proactive in cultivating an inclusive environment through our "Women, Count!" admissions event encouraging women in stem, and our consent and "Good Lad" workshops.

In particularly exciting news too, our incoming Master, Heather Hancock, will be the first woman Master in John's 500 plus year history! In 2020, John's is certainly a place where women like founder of The Everyday Sexism Project Laura Bates, Heather Hancock, and I can thrive.

### **Class Act**

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

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

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

(By Amy, the JCR Access Officer and the John's Class Act Rep)

## **LGBTQ+**

St John's is a safe, positive and welcoming environment for you. The vast majority of students at John's are accepting of LGBTQ+ people, this leads to an environment where everyone we've spoken to feels they can walk through college without fear of any homo/transphobic harassment and live their best life. The large nature of the college helps us set up an LGBTQ+ community and support network within college through systems such as LGBTQ+ college marriages and children (in addition to regular marriages, and you can even get a third family through the CUSU LGBTQ+ family system).

The JCR also runs events such as LGBTea and cake afternoons and drinks evenings within college, as well as formal swaps and movie screenings with other colleges. We always have a strong attendance to Glitterbomb (LGBT+ night out at Vinyl), even in week 5 and there is always the chance to be part of or simply support Cambridge's very own drag performance troupe: Dragtime! (which has always had at least a few Johnians involved). The sense of community is very important and makes people feel more visible and confident in being themselves.

Not only that, we are also continuously trying to make St John's a more inclusive and supportive environment. There is a large welfare team in college to provide support on any issues you may have, through students (such as JCR committee reps) or with staff (Tutors, the chaplain, the nurse and the college

counselor). CUSU LGBT+ and the University Counselling Service also offers a variety of welfare support and resources.

Moreover, we are in the process of pushing through a Gender Expression Fund with College and we are making sure that gender neutral bathrooms will be built along with the new Community Hub redevelopment next year.

## **BAME**

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

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

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

(By Josh, Ethnic Minorities Officer)