



# Merton College MCR

## Alternative Prospectus 2011-12

### WELCOME TO MERTON!

If you are reading this text, you most likely have received an admittance letter from Merton College and have accepted the offer. Congratulations, you can now consider yourself a lifetime member of the oldest and probably most amazing of the Oxford Colleges! This prospectus, alternative in both production costs and content, attempts to give you an idea of what to expect as a postgraduate student at Merton. It hopes to be a practical guide to life in Oxford, and specifically at Merton. Some things may appear too obvious or irrelevant, but this aims for those who may be unfamiliar with the British, let alone Oxford, system. At the back of this prospectus is a glossary of terms that are commonly used in Oxford, which might go some way towards avoiding confusion. As we know you will have received several 100 pages of documents, to do lists and other information attached to this letter that might confuse you...

### DON'T PANIC!

Sit down; take your time to read through all the information. A good deal of it will be self-explanatory or may not apply to you. For instance, if you read thoroughly enough, you will find instructions to bring paracetamol. However, we promise we will not send you home if you forget! There are many incredibly friendly and caring people around college that are more than willing to help you find your way through all of the bureaucracy. So don't go mad over the countless pages of college and university contracts.

There is one thing to note regarding mail communication here in Oxford: all mail is handled by carrier pigeons. The messages are then written down in e-mail form by little monkeys. This process can obviously take a bit of time and upon occasion a letter is lost during feeding time (Just kidding – though you will soon learn about the infamous “pidge”, our version of a mailbox!). To be serious, at the beginning of each academic year everybody is busy preparing to give you best possible welcome in Oxford. So, some responses might be slightly delayed.

Basically all you have to do is to relax, send back the required forms, and book a flight to Oxford. Most of your questions can be sorted out here in town after your arrival. Below you will find a few things that might be helpful to know before you arrive. If you have any questions ahead of time, do not hesitate to ask but know that all will become clear once you get here! We hope that you find this prospectus useful and we look forward to welcoming you in person!

All the best and safe travels,

The Merton MCR Committee

PS.: If you cannot wait to get a first impression of Merton, here is a nice virtual tour around Merton accessible: <http://www.chem.ox.ac.uk/oxfordtour/merton/#>



## THE MERTON MCR

The Middle Common Room, more commonly known as the ‘MCR’, is both a physical room in College and a section of the student body here at Merton. It includes the over 300 graduate students, some fourth year undergraduates (so called ‘graduated undergraduates’) as well as a few honorary members from the Junior Common Room committee. Merton has a truly international MCR, diverse in age and interests. Furthermore, it last year the number of Merton graduates outnumbered the undergraduates for the first time.

The MCR has an elected committee, which coordinates social events, administration, and represents its interests to College. Each year a new Committee is elected towards the end of Hilary Term. Anyone returning for the following year is highly encouraged to get involved and run for a position. Committee members are dedicated to making your transition into Oxford life as painless as possible. If you have any questions, they will be able to answer them or direct you to someone who can – before you come to Oxford or after, please feel free to contact us via e-mail. The Committee’s e-mail addresses are available on the MCR website: <http://mertonmcr.org/committee>

The two welfare representatives aim to help graduate students with their welfare-related needs. They play an active role alongside the College welfare hierarchy: the Chaplain, Welfare Dean, and peer supporters. Their details can be found on the MCR website. Please feel free to contact them if you have any problems. <http://mertonmcr.org/welfare/>

It is important to remember that all MCR members are also members of the Junior Common Room (JCR). As with the MCR, this is both a physical room and a student body, which is composed of all junior members of the College. Outside of participation on the College’s sports teams, there typically isn’t a great deal of contact at most Oxford colleges between JCRs and MCRs, but at Merton in recent years there has been a concerted effort by both sides to build closer relations. Many events are organised by the JCR throughout the year (including bops at the College pavilion every fortnight during term). Information about the JCR, including their Committee and term card, can be found on their website: <http://mertonjcr.org/>

The current MCR Committee is outlined below. As you might notice one of the Social Sec positions is currently vacant. If you like to throw parties this is your chance to get involved in the MCR Committee early on. Elections will happen early in next term. Do not hesitate to ask anyone of the below if you have any questions.

<b>President:</b>	Stephanie M Jones	<b>Vice-President:</b>	Wolf Rittershofer
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Patrik Flammer		
<b>Social Secretaries:</b>	Pauline Souleau Christophe Snoeck <i>Vacant (we need you!!)</i>	<b>Welfare Reps:</b>	Amber Hood Kitty Dann
<b>Environmental Rep:</b>	Claire Higgins		
<i>Non-executive Committee Officers:</i>			
<b>Arts &amp; Culture Rep:</b>	Anne Miles	<b>OUSU Rep:</b>	Christopher Gray
<b>Webmaster:</b>	Robert Machinek	<b>Admiral of the Fleet:</b>	Paul Fineran



## GETTING STARTED

### *Before leaving for Oxford*

There are a few things you might consider before you get into Oxford. If you are living in college accommodation, please consider that College does not provide bedding and desk/bed lamps. Thus, make sure to arrive early enough to be able to go shopping on the first day (Argos, Debenhams or Boswells might be the places to go to). Or just bring a sleeping bag or your blankets with you. Furthermore, please consider that you might not have internet on the first day. Oxford University and Merton are slightly concerned about their computer network. Thus, you will need to register your computer. In order to speed the process up you might want to bring the filled in internet registration form with you and hand it to the porters right upon arrival. Also consider bringing an internet cable with you, as these are quite expensive to buy downtown and Merton accommodation is mostly lacking WiFi. For a more detailed overview on what you should consider before coming to Oxford please see the First-Years' First Days Guide that should be part of this email or available on the Freshers' homepage.

### *Getting to Oxford*

When you arrive the coach station at Gloucester Green may be your first stop in Oxford. The service from either Heathrow or Gatwick to Oxford is relatively efficient. Coaches leave from Heathrow every half hour and from Gatwick every hour. Single adult fares are £20 from Heathrow and £25 from Gatwick. You purchase your ticket from the driver, *by cash only*, as you board the coach. [http://www.oxfordbus.co.uk/main.php?page\\_id=23](http://www.oxfordbus.co.uk/main.php?page_id=23).



You are likely to be travelling with a lot of luggage, so the easiest way is to take a taxi from Gloucester Green to Merton. The taxi rank is a short walk from the coach stop. The taxi should take you to the Porters' Lodge at Merton College (Merton Street). On arrival, **keep the taxi waiting for you while you go inside**, and then introduce yourself to the porter as a new graduate student, and he will let you sign for the key to your room (if you are living in College accommodation). While it is only a 5/10 minute walk to the rooms at Holywell Annexe (also known as Jowett Walk!) and the houses on Manor Road/Place, it will feel a lot longer with luggage. More information about what to do when you arrive is provided in the "First-Years' First Days Guide."

*For those living in the Holywell annexe:* When directing a cab driver to the College accommodation, be sure to be clear in specifying "Holywell Street" (specifically "to the Merton Graduate Accommodation, on Holywell Street, opposite the entrance to "New College"), as another college, Balliol, has graduate accommodation called "Holywell Manor" several blocks away, and cabbies are known to accidentally drive new students to the wrong place.

If you are brave enough to try to find the way to college accommodation for yourself (well, it is really not that much of a hassle), you will find it easier to get off at the High Street/Queen's Lane bus stop. This stop is right outside of the Examination Schools and the closest to the college precinct itself (about 3 min from the main site of the college). Just walk back the way the bus came to Logic Lane. Walk down Logic Lane until you reach Merton Street (at the very end) and you will find yourself across from the entrance to the college. But I guess a Google maps picture might speak more than 1000 words (even though it is an ugly long link):



[http://maps.google.com/maps?saddr=queenslane+high+street&daddr=Merton+College,+Merton+Street,+Oxford,+Gro%C3%9Fbritannien+to:Holywell+Street,+Oxford,+United+Kingdom+to:Manor+Place,+Oxford,+United+Kingdom&hl=de&ie=UTF8&ll=51.754014,-1.249287&spn=0.007093,0.013797&sll=51.754426,-1.248815&sspn=0.007093,0.013797&geocode=Ff6uFQMd9eZs\\_yG4mnJ\\_NGNbYSnv5liwrcZ2SDEmRRM-sl4vTw%3BFsSnFQMdaubs\\_yFZgFXAZXs83A%3BFby3FQMdQ- js\\_yHAVfaazxzXsA%3BFZO8FQMdS\\_zs\\_ykXW1esVMF2SDHFSn60NFamxg&vpsrc=6&dirflg=w&mra=ls&z=16](http://maps.google.com/maps?saddr=queenslane+high+street&daddr=Merton+College,+Merton+Street,+Oxford,+Gro%C3%9Fbritannien+to:Holywell+Street,+Oxford,+United+Kingdom+to:Manor+Place,+Oxford,+United+Kingdom&hl=de&ie=UTF8&ll=51.754014,-1.249287&spn=0.007093,0.013797&sll=51.754426,-1.248815&sspn=0.007093,0.013797&geocode=Ff6uFQMd9eZs_yG4mnJ_NGNbYSnv5liwrcZ2SDEmRRM-sl4vTw%3BFsSnFQMdaubs_yFZgFXAZXs83A%3BFby3FQMdQ- js_yHAVfaazxzXsA%3BFZO8FQMdS_zs_ykXW1esVMF2SDHFSn60NFamxg&vpsrc=6&dirflg=w&mra=ls&z=16)

Remember to check in with Vicky Lill in the Tutorial Office for some essential documentation and registration needs. Also check your pigeonhole when you arrive (this is marked with your name in the lodge) so you can pick up your term card and other post. The term card will tell you about all the administrative and social events for the term. Feel free to ask questions if you need to – everyone in College expects this during the first few weeks. For the next week or so there will be a packed timetable of events including tours, dinners, parties...

Once you have found your room, left your luggage, settled in and met your neighbours, please watch out for one of our early arrival events in the Summerhouse (or in case of rain, the Music Room) at the Holywell Annexe. There will be refreshments, other graduates, and members of the MCR Committee to greet you.

On the Friday evening before 0<sup>th</sup> week (1st October), there will be an informal buffet followed by a drinks party in the MCR. You will have the opportunity to meet the Committee members and of course your fellow freshers. Later in the evening you will be joined by other members of the MCR who can regale you with stories and offer their wisdom. Throughout freshers' week there will be tours of Merton and Oxford (historical and practical). We urge you to come to as many of these events as possible. Postgraduate study can be lonely at times, and the MCR is a great place to meet people.

## THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF LIVING IN COLLEGE ACCOMMODATION

The majority of Merton's graduate population lives in the College annexe on Holywell Street. This is usually referred to as "Jowett Walk" as well as "Holywell" because it is on land between the two streets. The Holywell buildings, constructed in 1994, form part of a quadrangle consisting of several dormitory-style blocks for the graduates and the front of a row of houses full of second year Merton undergraduates. All rooms are fully furnished with *en suite* bathrooms, affording a considerable amount of comfort and privacy. The rooms vary in size and layout.

Some freshers are accommodated in houses on the nearby Manor Road and Manor Place. Most of the higher years live here as well. Houses are usually shared by four or five people with newly refurbished kitchens, shared bathrooms, and a garden.

Couples can request to be provided accommodation in a separate annexe on Iffley Road.

### *Soaking up the Oxford Experience*

The rooms are quite nice compared to the standard offered in



graduate accommodation at many other Oxford colleges, but there is one important thing to come to terms with very early – you’ll most likely be spending a good chunk of the year soaking in a bath! The vast majority of the rooms in Holywell have baths, not showers. You are not allowed to hook up a hose to the taps, so be sure to buy a bucket once you arrive. And why not make the best of it – purchase some bubble bath and a rubber duck as well!

### ***Laundry***

To clean away the sweat and grime from a hard day’s work in the library or lab (or more likely, the stench of booze and cigarettes from a night out on the town), there is a laundry room across the quad from the graduate accommodation, in the basement of one of the houses on Holywell Street. The machines use a card, which are available from a machine in the post room, with a £5 deposit. You will need to top up your card using a £10 or £5 note in the machine in the post room. There is also a brand new online top up system installed using Pay Pal. Thus, you’ll save a walk over to college in case you run out of money. A wash is £1.25 and so is drying. The laundry machines are shared with the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Merton undergrads living along Holywell Street, so it is advisable to do your laundry at bizarre times of the day (or night) to avoid waiting. Students living in the houses on Manor Road and Manor place Holywell usually tend to buy private washing machines.

### ***The Sound of Music (and Movies)***

There is a music room in the basement of A Block, equipped with a grand piano, sofas, a TV and DVD player. The room can be booked for private functions and music practice via a book kept in the Holywell Annexe lodge (for music practice you can simply sign up the book, for private functions you will also need a room booking form available from the lodge). There is also another music room on the College main site, which can be booked for music practice via a book kept in the main lodge.

### ***Cooking in Holywell***

Every staircase has at least one kitchen, varying from compact galley kitchens with a microwave, to large basement kitchens with microwave, new induction stoves, fridges, and freezers. College does not provide pots, pans, dishes, or utensils, but there are many places in Oxford where they can be purchased (e.g. Argos, Boswells or Debenhams). Be aware when you are buying cooking equipment. The kitchens are fitted with induction hobs and that you will need to ensure you have compatible pots and pans! Student rooms are not equipped with refrigerators but you are more than welcome to purchase your own.



### ***Scouts & Porters***

Merton employs scouts for its accommodation. They do not do advanced reconnaissance, but empty your bin, typically every weekday morning, and clean your bedroom and bathroom once a week. If you do not want to be disturbed by your scout in the morning, put a post-it note on your door. Porters inhabit the goldfish bowl at the entrance to the annexe. They are there to help with enquiries and to ensure security, not to carry your bags.

### ***Getting In & Out***

The Holywell front gate is locked at 11pm. Residents can gain access after this time by the use of their electronic key, or “fob”. There are intercoms between each room and the base of its staircase. The College lodge shuts at midnight in term time (the gate shuts at 11pm) and there is a key fob operated gate (the “late gate”), which leads from Merton Street into Fellows’ Garden.



### **Computing**

Almost every room has Ethernet (free of charge). However, your reaction to computing at Merton and Oxford will depend on your expectations. The University and College systems sometimes have their problems, but those living in Holywell get a pretty good deal with internet access. There are limitations with bandwidth allowance – you should be warned that downloading large files (music, films, etc.) is prohibited and will incur a sizeable fine. File-share software is also not allowed. It is important that you register your computer with College before you plug it in to the network. You will also have to run the specified antivirus software. It would be best if you downloaded the appropriate forms from the Merton IT website (below) and fill them out before you arrive in Oxford. This will be the most convenient for you and reduce waiting time!



There is a computer room in the basement of A block, which has printing facilities. Printing there is free (unlike in most institutions). There is only one ream of paper provided per day, so it doesn't hurt to bring some of your own just in case. Toner can be collected, when required, from the domestic bursary (you must take the old cartridge back, too). There are computer rooms in College as well: in the basement of OWL library and at the back of MOB library. For further information, please see Merton's IT homepage <http://mcit.merton.ox.ac.uk/>

E-mail addresses are pretty straightforward: [firstname.lastname@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:firstname.lastname@merton.ox.ac.uk). You should have been automatically added to the MCR mailing list. Please check if you get messages from your committee, as all notices and information are disseminated using this mailing list.



### **Telephones**

Every room is equipped with telephone connections. Telephone handsets are not provided, and you will have to purchase a telephone charge card to make external calls (calls within the University network are free). The telephone rates offered through College are only competitive compared to payphones, so we suggest that for calling overseas you take advantage of Skype or one of the many 0800 number services.

### **After your First Year**

In the spring, all graduates planning to return apply for the "returnees' room ballot," which is organised by the MCR Vice-President. Names will be drawn out of a hat to determine the ballot order – but the years are drawn separately, with first years preceding second years, and second years preceding third years, etc. Usually, all graduates going into their second year and many going into their third year of study and who want to remain in College accommodation are able to get a room. Some fourth years may also manage to get accommodation, but this can vary from year to year, depending on demand. Please note that couple's accommodation is handled separately by the College's Accommodation Manager.



## COLLEGE LIFE

### **Food**

Merton food is generally of good quality and thought to be very reasonably priced. All hall menus can be viewed on the online booking system prior to booking.

Hall is a great place to meet people, and get away from the library or lab. The Hall staff is very friendly and quick to learn your name. Meal times and prices are published in the 'Decrees and Regulations for Junior Members – from Michaelmas 2011, Breakfast is £1.58, Lunch is £2.85, and Early Supper or Formal Hall is £3.56. These numbers might slightly go up in the next academic year.



Early Supper and Formal Hall are booked and paid for in advance (before 10am on the day of the meal) using an online booking system. Any special dietary requirements (vegetarian, lactose free, etc.) can be indicated when you book online. You add money to your account by going across the street from the main lodge to the domestic bursary.

There is formal hall every day during term, except on Saturdays. At Formal – a three-course meal – men are required to wear jacket and tie and women should dress smartly. Dinner starts promptly at 7.15pm, gowns are worn and the meal is served to you. Merton is one of the few colleges that still has a dressed-up Formal Hall most nights of the week (many colleges have Formal Hall once a week or once a month). Time flies in Oxford, so make as much use of it as you can. It also tends to impress visiting relatives. Early Supper is only two courses for the same price and is cafeteria-style. Guests are welcome at meals, and can again be signed on using your online account.

MCR members have dining rights at High Table: they can dine there with the Fellows for free (excl. wine and second desserts) up to twice a term. Places are limited, however, and there is an electronic sign on system on the MCR website.

There is also a series of special dinners throughout the year: MCR/SCR dinners, several exchange dinners with the MCRs of other colleges, and a termly MCR President's Black Tie Dinner. You usually sign up for these through the MCR website or by email.

Having just mentioned the MCR President's Black Tie Dinner, it is probably a good idea for men to buy black tie formal wear – a dinner jacket, white (dress) shirt, and black bow tie – because in Oxford there are occasionally events to attend which require it. At these events, women often wear a cocktail dress. At other smart occasions and at Formal Hall, men wear a normal (lounge) suit, shirt, and tie, and women wear equivalently smart attire.

### **The MCR**

It is undeniably one of the best rooms in College. With its roof dating back to 1299 one can easily agree it to be the most impressive MCR in all Oxford. Many MCR activities, including parties, wine tastings, and general meetings occur in this room. You will receive a term card of events when you arrive. The MCR also provides newspapers and magazines, tea and coffee (from a deluxe coffee machine!), a TV and DVD player as well as basic kitchen facilities. It is possible to book the MCR for private functions, so long as it is not already being used for an event.





### ***Academics***

Last year we welcomed Sir Martin J Taylor as our new warden. You will have a number of chances to meet him in his role as the Head of College, either at High Table or at graduate progress meetings. The current Dean of Graduates (who is the Fellow responsible for representing graduate interests) is Prof. David Paterson. The Senior Tutor is Ms Grace Garland. The head of discipline (the 'Principal of Postmasters') for 2010-11 will be Prof. Alan Morrison and his deputy (the 'DPoP') is Travers McLeod.

Every graduate at Merton is appointed a College advisor who keeps an eye on your academic progress and welfare. It is likely that you will meet with this advisor about once a term, quite often over a cup of tea or a lunch. If you are lucky they will wine and dine you at High Table too.

### ***The College Chapel***

Merton Chapel is open to all members of the College community as a place of prayer and quiet reflection. If you have any questions, please contact the graduate representative or the Chaplain.

The chapel's T-shape (the land where the nave would be was rented out to Bishop Fox of Winchester who founded Corpus Christi on it) provided the model for many other Oxford and Cambridge chapels. Its acoustics are outstanding and professional groups such as the Tallis Scholars and the Sixteen often use it for their recordings. It hosts a number of concerts each year. Morning and evening prayers are said every day of the week during term, except Sunday night, when there is full choral Evensong (sung by the chapel choir). If you are interested in joining the choir, contact the Directors of Music, Peter Phillips or Benjamin Nicholas. You will receive a chapel term card from the Chaplain in your pigeonhole.

[http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/chapel\\_and\\_choir/](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/chapel_and_choir/)



### ***A Social Life at Merton?***

Postgraduates at Merton have lots of opportunities to socialise both inside and outside College. There are three MCR social secretaries, who organise a dense term card of social activities including exchange dinners with other colleges, fortnightly parties (usually before JCR bops, at which we end up at towards the end of the evening), trips, games nights, wine and port tastings, pub-crawls...

Downstairs from the MCR is the College Bar, which is a convenient place to get a very affordably priced drink during term time. Some students make it a habit to swing down to the College from JW



after an evening of studying or rather procrastination for a quick pint just before last orders at 11pm (11:30 on weekends), or go there before a night out on the town.

Other colleges will also throw events and parties, many of which are open to other Oxford students for a small entry fee. Linacre and Balliol are just some of the colleges famous for throwing good parties.

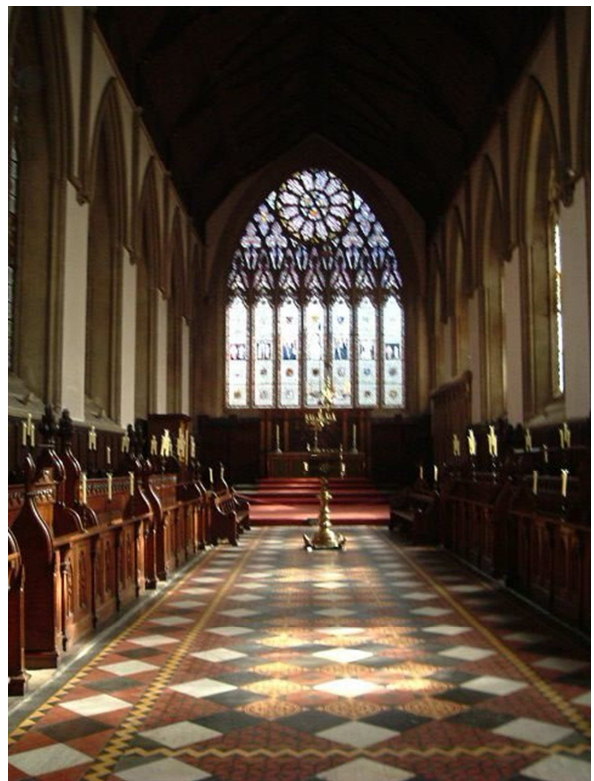
Outside of College, Oxford offers even more opportunities to socialise. While it is a fairly small sized city, you're bound to find your niche pretty soon. There are lots of good pubs in and around the city: the Royal Oak, Lamb and Flag, Turf, Bear, Head of the River to name a few. The Trout in Wolvercote (North Oxford) is a very famous pub, ideal for a summer's day. For those more inclined to dancing the night away, there are numerous venues around the city all desperate for your patronage. Live music fans are also catered for – but if you need the hustle and bustle of the big city to get you going, London is only an hour-and-a-half bus ride away, with coaches running 24 hours a day for very cheap prices.

### ***Recycling***

The MCR is committed to recycling and reducing waste. It operates its own scheme to recycle glass, paper, cardboard, aluminium cans, batteries, and mobile phones. The College recycles printer cartridges. Each room is equipped with its own recycling bin. Those wishing to recycle mobile phones should contact the Environmental Representative.

### ***A Little History***

Merton College, founded by Walter de Merton in 1264, and claims to be the oldest College. In fact Walter de Merton brought the idea of a college as a self-governed institution for learning into England. Rather than just accommodation (such as Balliol and University college back in that days, which also claim to be the oldest colleges) he had the vision of a learning institute which included sufficient endowment, libraries, a hall, a chapel, tutors – basically everything a medieval student needed to study. Considering that most of the Oxford colleges and all of the Cambridge colleges are based on Mertons statutes show that his idea was quite successful. Merton is historically well endowed. This means that there are excellent facilities on a rather large the site. As we only have just about over 300 graduate students it is possible to know everyone in College. This makes Merton a friendly place (although it is also one where gossip thrives. The buildings are beautiful, the grounds well kept (especially the award-winning gardens). The chapel which was initially planned to be Oxford's cathedral is magnificent – the great acoustics was mentioned before already. Outside the College walls you will soon appreciate Merton's historic claim over the city. Almost all of Holywell Street, Bath Place, St Cross, Manor Road, Manor Place, and many other central areas of Oxford are owned by Merton. Merton is offering historic tours all summer and probably there will be an extra tour during freshers week. I can highly recommend joining! The MCR itself currently is 49 years old, while the college is about to have its 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Considering the plenty extra events, it is for sure not the worst time to enter graduate studies at Merton.



Despite Merton's visible wealth, it is important that you take into account the situation of educational funding in England today. The Government has severely restricted funding to Oxford and Cambridge, and the University redistributes wealth from richer to poorer colleges. So, if you ever feel the need to complain about Merton's parsimony, bear this in mind. The most obvious subsidies we receive from College are in food and accommodation. Our meals cost us far less than they cost College. Also, considering its location, our housing costs far less than what you would pay in the free market.

### ***Receiving Mail – The pigeon hole and porters lodge***

Your mail will be delivered to your pigeonhole (or “pidge”) in the post room by the Porters' Lodge. Bigger boxes need to be collected from the porters lodge. The porters in the lodge are key people to know within College as they are up on all the College news, and know everything worth knowing. They are also custodians of some of the booking sheets and keys that you will need along the way. A little friendliness and a smile will get you a long way with them and many other staff within College, who are most often very friendly and helpful.

### ***Merton's Libraries***

Merton has three libraries. Across the road from the College lodge is the Old Warden's Lodgings (OWL) library. Furthermore, there are two libraries in the Mob Quad. The Mob library is downstairs while the Upper or Old Library is – not very surprisingly - upstairs. The latter is unfortunately not accessible for studies being the oldest academic library in the English speaking world, which has been in continuous use since its foundation. However, a tour may be included during freshers' week, and tours throughout the summer are free to Mertonians and their guests. Let me say, they are worth it!

The Fellows' Librarian is Julia Walworth and the Assistant Librarian is Cathy Lewis. Although the library is primarily geared towards undergraduate users, the College is usually willing to buy any books you may request for your studies.

### ***College Sports (and drink!)***

The College has sports facilities at its pavilion beyond Manor Road and St Catz College. It has squash and tennis courts as well as playing fields. Here, Merton also has a small boat house where two punts and kayaks are moored. These can be booked during summer via an online booking form. The recently very successful rowing club has its boathouse on the Isis (Thames). Furthermore, Merton offers a brand new, very well equipped gym in the Rose Lane area of the main college site. Lastly, Merton has one of the country's few 'real tennis' courts. For the different Merton Sports clubs please check : <http://mertonmcr.org/resources/sports/>

As mentioned earlier, the College Bar is open in the evening during term from 6.30pm-11pm (11:30 on the weekends). It is subsidised and therefore cheaper than pubs. Next door is a games room with a free pool table, arcade games, a dartboard, and table football.

## **LIFE OUTSIDE OF MERTON**

You might not need it, considering the active social life in Merton, but there is life beyond Merton! Oxford is a beautiful but crowded city. It is a peculiar mix of industry and University; town and gown. The city centre is crowded with shoppers dodging buses dodging tourists dodging cyclists. Having said that, there are plenty of peaceful spots in the city. It is virtually impossible to drive cars around Oxford. They are pretty much redundant anyway if you are living in College accommodation. There is a College car park by the pavilion, although there is a charge for this and a pass is needed to get past



its barrier. Bicycles are generally the preferred form of transport in Oxford (though many cyclists appear determined to demonstrate their ignorance of general road safety). You are warmly recommended to purchase a bicycle helmet and lights for cycling in the dark. Bicycle prices are not competitive in the city centre, and given the large number of thefts it would be unwise to purchase a bike that is too expensive or flashy (i.e. gone when you come back). Remember to buy a good lock. Plenty of bike shops are located on Cowly Road.

Shopping is pretty easy in Oxford, but prices are high. However, London offers more choice at the same the same prices. The bus service to London is pretty much 24hrs a day, and there are two companies that offer services leaving from Gloucester Green and High Street. A student same-day return ticket costs around £10. If you prefer to catch the train (it is certainly a lot quicker) then a cheap-day return with London Underground railcard included is about £19, but cheaper fares might be possible if you book in advance.

If you are looking for chain grocery stores in the centre of Oxford the situation has been rapidly improved recently. Sainsbury's and Tesco are currently having a fight for the dominating position and therefore new branches have been opening on every corner. For better quality and choice, go to the Covered Market in the centre of town. There are a number of bakeries, butchers, fishmongers, fruit sellers, etc. located inside. It is closed on Sundays however.

Obviously Oxford University does not have a campus. It is a disparate entity run from offices in Wellington Square. You will hopefully have little need to interact with its bureaucracy – the vast majority of your administration will be done through College or your faculty.

## GLOSSARY OF OXFORD TERMINOLOGY

**Battels** – Termly bills from College

**Bop** – abbrev for Big Open Party. However it is Oxfords word for every party (see Pavilion)

**High Table** – where Fellows dine in Hall, with much, much better food

**Hilary** – The term from January to March (abbr. to HT)

**JCR** – Junior Common Room – both a room in College, and the junior members of College

**Matriculation** – ceremony in the Sheldonian Theatre at which some Latin is spoken and you are formally accepted into the University

**MCR** – Middle Common Room – both a room in College and the graduate (and fourth year undergraduate) body

**Michaelmas** – The term from October to December (abbr. to MT)

**Pavilion** – Merton's sporting facility (and location of Merton bops) by St Catz

**Pigeonhole** – personal mail box in the porters' lodge to which your post will be delivered

**Principal of Postmasters** – (PoP) College officer responsible for discipline; the Deputy Principal of Postmasters (DPoP) is his/her subordinate.

**Quad** – quadrangle, e.g., Mob Quad

**SCR** – Senior Common Room – both a room in College and the Fellowship of College

**Second Desserts** – fruits, cheese, chocolates, and port after dinner (in another room)

**Scout** – cleaner

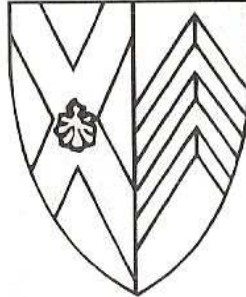
**Sub-fusc** – Academic dress, worn for matriculation, examinations, and graduation. For men this is a dark suit, dark socks, dark footwear, a white shirt, and a white bow tie. For women this is a white blouse, black ribbon, dark skirt or trousers, black stockings, dark footwear, and, if desired, a dark coat. Both men and women should carry a mortarboard and wear the appropriate academic gown.



**Time(-turning) Ceremony** – a peculiar Merton ‘tradition’ in which many Mertonians wear sub-fusc and drink port whilst walking backwards for an hour around Fellows’ Quad, starting at 2am on the morning in October when the clocks are turned back

**Trinity** – The term from April to June (abbr. to TT)

**Warden** – Sir Martin J Taylor, Head of Merton College



## PERSONAL NOTE:

This is a guide from students for students and as such lacking any correctors and reviewers. In fact, you are the reviewer. We are always happy about any input from you. Please let us know if you think something is missing and should be added to this guide. Please send any suggestions to me (being the lucky one who obtained the task to update this guide) to [Wolf.Rittershofer@merton.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Wolf.Rittershofer@merton.ox.ac.uk). This is also the time at which I should thank the prior committees for their work on this guide and thus making the update very easy. Let me say a final Welcome to Merton and safe travels. We are all looking forward to meeting you in person here in Oxford.

2011-2012 version edited by Wolf Rittershofer  
2010-2011 version edited by Wolf Rittershofer and Kristin Merriman

We greatly thank the prior committees for setting up this alternative prospectus and handing it over in a great shape.

