Introduction
Introduction from the Access Officer

What's what?
A brief guide to where everything is at St Hilda's

The Location
Our favourite bits of the area

Accommodation and food
A guide to accommodation and food at St Hilda's

Academics
What is a Tutorial?
Day in the life of a first year

What's the JCR?
The JCR President's guide to what we mean by the 'JCR'

Liberation Officers
Useful information for:
- Students who identify as women
- LGBTQ students
- Disabled students

Welfare
What does the college do to protect the welfare of its students?
What is Peer support?

Extra-curricular
Sports at St Hilda's
Other Societies at St Hilda's

Entertainment
The Social Life at St Hilda's

Finance
Useful information about finance
Testimonials from students in receipt of a scholarship/bursary at St Hilda's
Trying to decide which Oxford College to apply to can seem like a pointless task: they all look the same. To an extent this is true. The standard of teaching will be the same wherever you go, and if there isn’t someone with a specialism in a module you decide to take, you’ll be sent to a different college to a tutor that does for the duration of that term. It’s also a myth that some colleges are easier to get into than others. Whilst some colleges may be oversubscribed, and others undersubscribed, the pooling system that Oxford uses for its interviews means that an applicant at a popular colleges that the tutors think is a good candidate will be passed on for a second and sometimes third interview, ensuring that everyone’s chances of getting in are equal. Also, before the interviews are even held, all applications are processed centrally. So, in short, don’t apply to a college because you think you’ve got a better chance of getting in.

That being said, there are some differences that you should think about. The size of the college, the location, (particularly in relation to where your faculty building is), how the food works, and whether college accommodation is provided for the entirety of your degree, are all important considerations.

The following is a brief guide to St Hilda’s college, put together by the students. St Hilda’s is in many ways quite different to most Oxford Colleges, so it’s definitely worth considering!

On a final note, no matter what, students always end up in love with, and completely loyal to their college, so don’t worry too much about making the decision!
**THE LODGE**

The Porters Lodge is situated right next to the entrance of the college. It’s often the first point of call if you need help with something like finding a room in college, or signing guests in. Here, each student has a pigeon hole (a ‘pidge’) where their post is sent to them. This is also home to the adopted college cat, Teabag and her kitten, Tealeaf.

![Lodge](image1)

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**HALL BUILDING**

Houses the Library and the JCR

![Hall](image2)
**THE LIBRARY**

We have a relatively big library, with over 70,000 books and 158 seats which is useful during the summer term when most people have their exams. We have a big collection because the college used to be all women, and women weren’t allowed to use the main library. Nowadays, we get all of the books and none of the segregation! (Yay!) It’s open until 1am Sunday-Thursday, 12am Friday, 11pm Saturday, so, not 24/7 but late enough. Lawyers get given a key for 24/7 access because a lot of their key texts can’t be taken out. It also has 9 computers for student use.
The JCR/Bar

The JCR (Junior Common Room) is the focal point of the student community. Events like open mic and comedy nights are here, we have our JCR meetings here, and it’s also where the Bar and Buttery are housed. We also have a pool table, a table football, Skye TV and chest of drawers full of board games.

South Building

Houses the Dining Hall, JCR computer room, and administrative offices.

The Dining Hall

Our dining hall is the only one of the Oxford Colleges that has round tables, which makes for much more sociable meals and means you can have dinner conversations with more than the people opposite and immediately next to you!

The JCR Computer Room

As well as the computers in the library, we also have a JCR computer room with another 7 computers. This room is open 24/7, which is useful when you need to print something and the library is shut.
**GARDEN BUILDING**
This is a First Year accommodation building.

**WOLFSON BUILDING**
This is a First Year accommodation building.

**MILHAM FORD**
Houses the Chapel and more Finalist accommodation.

**CHRISTINA BARRET BUILDING**
This is a Final Year accommodation building.
**THE CHAPEL**

The Chapel provides a quiet place for people of all faiths, and is always open. There is a service on Thursdays, and the Christian union meets here on Wednesdays. The St Hilda’s College choir also practises here.

**THE JDP**

The Jacqueline du Pré building is the first purpose built concert hall in Oxford since the Holywell Music Room in the time of Handel! It has 5 music practice rooms, plus a recording studio, so is fantastic for students who want to keep up practising an instrument at uni. In addition, we have a stage, allowing our drama society to put on termly plays, whilst also providing a venue for a variety of events, including performances by world famous musicians which we can watch for a discounted rate and weekly student performances which are free.
**PUNTS**

Being riverside has its perks! The college owns 6 punts, which can be used for free during the summer term, where it would normally cost £20 an hour! You just have to book one out from the Porters Lodge and it’s yours to use for two hours at a time. You get to punt past Christ Church Meadow and the Botanic Gardens, both of which are really beautiful.

**GARDEN AND GROUNDS**

We have some very pretty gardens here. We are also one of the few colleges where you can actually walk on the grass! This means in the summer we can use the lawns to play croquet, to study in the sun, and to sit outside with our meals. The gardens are also home to the infamous badger king, who you might spot as you stumble to your room late at night.

**NETBALL/TEENIS COURT**

We have our own netball and tennis court on site, which is used by the respective college teams. It can also be booked out for free by students.
On a map, St Hilda's seems ages away from the centre of Oxford, and it is often missed on Open Days because people think it will take too long to get over Magdalen Bridge and back. In reality, it is only a five minute walk to the high street from the college, and is actually one of the closest colleges to the Exam Schools, which is where many lectures are held, and of course, the dreaded exams. But we wouldn’t swap our location for that extra five minutes, because being on the edge of East Oxford means that we get to live close to Cowley Road and the area that surrounds it. Cowley Road has a very unique and different vibe to the rest of the city and has some really great gems hidden away. Below, we’ve put together a list of our top ten favourite things about the area.
**THE FOOD**

Cowley Road is known for its wide array of restaurants and takeaway’s. Some of our favourites are Tebaru\(^1\), Atomic Burger\(^2\), Oli’s Thai\(^3\), Kazbar\(^4\) and Mario’s\(^6\).

**THE COFFEE**

There are loads of really nice independent cafés in the area. These are great for catching up with friends, a late hung-over brunch, or hiding yourself away to study for a bit. Top of our list are Rick’s\(^6\) and Quaterhorse\(^7\).

**THE PUBS**

There are absolutely loads of pubs around the Cowley Road – definitely enough for pub-crawl or two, which will almost definitely end at the Half Moon\(^8\), close to college and open till 2am. If you wanted a bit more of a chilled pub experience, we recommend The Angel and Greyhound\(^9\), especially in the winter when it has an open fire, mulled cider, and a shelf full of board games.

**THE BARS**

There are lots of cocktail bars in the area. Our favourite is Be at One\(^10\), for its ice-cream cocktails! (We 100% recommend the Brazilian Monk). Other good ones are the Mad Hatter\(^11\), Café Terifa\(^12\), and Jo Perks\(^13\).

**HOUSING**

The area around Cowley Road comprises one of two of the major areas for student housing (the other being Jericho), and is the cheapest of the two. So, alot of students from other colleges chose to live in the area. This means that we end up being the closest college to a lot of the student housing, making up for that extra five minutes it takes us to get into the centre of town in our first and final year.

**IFFLEY GYM**

Instead of having a small on-site gym, our proximity to the Iffley Gym\(^14\) (two minutes walk away) means that instead we use this one. We get annual membership for only £10! This includes unlimited use of the gym and swimming pool.
THE ALTERNATIVE NIGHT-LIFE
If you fancy a night off from clubbing, there are quite a few alternative venues in the area. The Catweazle club for instance puts on open mic nights every Thursday, whilst the Bullingdon hosts weekly jazz nights and monthly comedy nights.

MAGDALEN ROAD
Magdalen Road is really interesting with lots of new things to try. It has a meditation centre, hosts life drawing classes, and has an exhibition space where local artists sometimes display their work.

THE ULTIMATE PICTURE PALACE
This is an independent cinema on Cowley Road. It often screens films a while after they’ve been shown in other cinemas, which is useful if you miss them when they first come out. It will also show a few gems from the past – like Mean Girls! You can also buy tea or wine, along with other snacks from the bar.

SOUTH PARKS
South Parks is a really nice park to go running (or walking) in. It’s a nice place to escape from the city for a while. It also hosts fireworks on Bonfire night, with live music and food stalls.
FIRST YEAR

First years usually live in one of two on-site blocks of accommodation: Garden Building or Wolfson Building. Both contain between twelve to fourteen single study bedrooms on each floor, which have shared showers and toilet facilities (with at least three toilets and two showers per floor) and a shared kitchen. The kitchens vary slightly – all contain fridges, kettles, microwaves and toasters. The Garden kitchens also have freezers, whereas all Wolfson kitchens have stoves and half of them have ovens. However, all the facilities are so close to each other that everybody tends to share! A kitchen per floor, means that there is an option to be self-catered, whereas a lot of other colleges only have one kitchen per building, and there is a lot more competition for space. On the whole though, most students will eat in the canteen for dinner most

Living in halls this year has made my experience at St Hilda’s this term that much more enjoyable as I’ve been so close to my friends. I have bonded with a huge variety of people and made firm friendships, despite only having lived here for 8 weeks! Everyone has been incredibly friendly and if you ever fancy a chat, a hug or just some procrastination there’s always someone around. The room is really big, with a huge noticeboard and I’ve been able to personalise it with things from home and university. The kitchens mean you can prepare your own food which even if you normally eat in halls is a definite bonus. But the best thing about living in Wolfson has been how quickly I’ve made friends and felt I can rely on the people around me. Often students spend a lot of their time in their rooms whether it be working or hanging out with friends and having such a nice environment makes everything so much nicer.

Corinne, History Student
days, as it’s a good time to catch up with people you wouldn’t otherwise see in a day. Laundry facilities are on-site and are easily accessible from all on-site rooms. The cost of Laundry is separate from bills, but only costs £1.40 for a wash and £1.40 for a dry – so no excuse for not washing your clothes! In Wolfson, there is also a room for international students to store their things over the holiday.

We are very fortunate to have cleaners, known as ‘Scouts.’ Scouts will clean the bathroom and kitchen, and vacuum the corridor every weekday and clean our rooms once a week. They Scouts are all very friendly and will happily chat away to you if you bump into them in the corridor.

All incoming students will be automatically allocated a room once they have met the conditions of their offer, so don’t worry about applying for first-year accommodation! You just have to turn up on move-in day and collect your key from the lodge. All of the rooms cost the same, and are randomly allocated, so that it is fair. You can also request to have non-shared bathrooms: the college is very accommodating and happy to make alternative arrangements.
**SECOND YEAR**

The majority of second year students live out. However, if you do not want to, you can request to stay in college accommodation, although freshers and finalists will be given priority. That said, if it is for welfare reasons that you do not want to live out, you will be found a room. Most second year students live along St Clements, Iffley or Cowley Road, and the smaller roads that interconnect them, and so are within walking distance to both St Hilda’s and the houses of their friends. Living out is an opportunity that many other colleges do not offer. Although it can seem daunting, it is a great opportunity to gain valuable life skills, to create life-long bonds with the people you share a house with, and to throw the house party of the year!

**FINAL YEAR**

In your final year (third or fourth) the majority of students choose to move back into college. Rooms are allocated using a secret ballot system which is conducted during the previous academic year. Normally, the ballot system also gives you the option of balloting for rooms in groups, so you can live on a corridor with your friends. Final year students live in rooms in Hall, South, Milham Ford, Christina Barratt or Fulford House. At the moment, College does not have quite enough rooms for its finalists, as Fulford House is being renovated, and so some finalists are having to live out for their last year. Once the renovations are done though, we will have a new accommodation block that will be able to accommodate everyone.

All rooms are single study bedrooms with shared toilet, shower and kitchen facilities – the exception is Christina Barratt which has ensuites, and has larger kitchens. Fulford House is the only accommodation block not within college grounds – it is located a five minute walk away down Iffley Road, opposite the University gym and sports ground. All rooms cost the same, except for CBB which costs 10% more.
**HALL**

The set-up for food at St Hilda’s is fairly relaxed compared to a lot of other Oxford colleges. It is the only college with round tables which makes for much more sociable meals (we’ve found that with some persistence, you can cram about ten people around one table). Canteen-style breakfast, lunch, and dinner is served Monday to Friday, whilst brunch is available on Saturday and roast dinner on Sunday. This means that you don’t have to sign yourself or any guests in for meals, (you just turn up), and you can pay for exactly what you eat rather than a set price for a three-course meal that you might not want. You pay for your food by uploading money onto your bod card which then acts as meal credits. Then, you just scan your card when it’s time to pay. If you want to get the traditional Oxford experience, *Formal Hall* is on every Wednesday. Although, it is entirely optional and, if it’s not your thing, you can always grab a takeaway from the hall earlier that evening! Every meal will always have a vegetarian option.

**WHAT IS FORMAL HALL?**

Formal Hall is the term used to describe a certain type of dinner common in Oxford colleges. It is typically a three course meal, served to you by college staff. Often, there is a champagne reception, members of the SCR are present (fellows of the college), and students are expected to wear an academic gown. Essentially, it is one of those Oxford stereotypes that turns out to be real when you get here. For many colleges, this is a nightly affair. However, at St Hilda’s it’s once a week, and there is certainly no expectation that you attend. Normally, students will go for special occasions. We often have ones with special themes, like charity formal, and advent dinner. This way, it still stays a novelty, and it isn't taken too seriously. We think this is the best of both worlds.
The Butterly

St Hilda’s JCR Butterly is where students can go to get drinks and snacks such as toasties, bagels, crisps, chocolate and fizzy drinks when the Dining Hall is closed. Just behind the Bar, we’re the only college in all of Oxford to have a snack bar completely independently run by the students – which means we can keep prices really low. Students can work for the Butterly during term time and get paid – which can be pretty handy if you’re looking for a little extra spending money. If you’re a regular, we may even let your create your own toastie and name it after you! Each year, a different set of buttery managers take over and bring new things to the Butterly. For instance, this year we’ve brought in Cake Monday, where one of our managers brings in some freshly made cakes, for 50p a slice!

The Bar

As well as an independently run Butterly, St Hilda’s Bar is one of the very few remaining college bars to be run by students. This again means that our prices are very low. As if that wasn’t enough, we often run special discount nights like pound-a-pint Thursdays! Each term, we’ll also work with the Charity Officers to think up a charity cocktail, with all proceeds from the sales of that cocktail going towards the charities that we have decided to support that term. Like in the Butterly, students also have the opportunity to work behind the bar. Staffing is very relaxed, and you can sign up for as many or as few shifts as you like. If you work behind the bar, you also get the perk of free drinks whenever you come down. We also host our infamous end of term parties where prices progressively drop as the night goes on!

Our bar is a really friendly and inclusive space. We have a wide range of non-alcoholic drinks, and jugs of tap water are always made available. There is never any pressure put on students to drink, and we as a JCR aim to promote responsible drinking amongst our members. We are currently working towards introducing alcohol awareness workshops into our fresher’s week programme.
WHAT IS A TUTORIAL?

The main difference in terms of teaching at Oxford. Instead of large classes (though we sometimes have that too) most students have tutorials. This will be in small groups, sometimes even one on one with the leading academic of your field. In it you normally discuss a piece of work that you have handed in, or some of the reading you have been set. The experience varies greatly depending on the subject.

HISTORY

Normally for history, you have 1-2 tutorials a week, depending on how many modules you do a term. You can sometimes also have a seminar with a larger group of people if the paper you are taking is popular, or compulsory. Because you have very few lectures for history (can be as few as two a week), the tutorial is the most important contact time you will have. You will have been set an essay a week before your tutorial (at the end of the previous one), along with a reading list. You then have the week to take the essay away and hand it in before the tutorial, for your tutor to mark so that they can give you feedback in there. Different tutors have different styles of teaching.
Normally, the tutor will ease you into a tutorial by asking how you found the reading: if there were any bits you struggled with; which arguments you found most interesting etc. The next fifteen minutes or so will be spent re-capping your essay for the benefit of your tutorial partners. Sometimes one of you will be asked to read yours aloud. The bulk of the tutorial is spent examining the strength and weaknesses of the arguments that you have made, as well as looking more broadly at some of the reading that you were set. Sometimes you will be asked to give a presentation on that week’s topic. Sometimes, the tutorial can end with a look through of some past exam questions and having go at planning them. The tutorial normally ends with the opportunity for you to ask the tutor any questions, before you are set your next essay.

**PHYSICS**

A normal week for physics in your first year will consist of 10-12 lectures, one full day of labs, and one/two tutorials a week. So, the tutorial is only one of quite a few contact hours. Normally, your tutorial will be with one or two other students. You will be set a problem sheet a few days before the tutorial to work on, which is a paper with different questions that you will work through with the help of your lecture material. You’ll take the problem sheet to the tutorial with you where you will work through the questions with your tutorial partners and your tutor. You’ll have a chance to go through any queries/problems you encountered in the tutorial. In your first year you cover a range of topics like electromagnetism, optics, mathematical methods, special relativity and classical mechanics, so tutorial work can be very varied.
7.30 Normally I wake up around 7:30am, so I shower, dress, check all social media, BBC News and the Guardian websites and my University and Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) email accounts: sending emails when necessary. I normally have breakfast in my room as it’s cheaper than the dining hall.

8.00 On a normal day, I almost always aim to be in a library by this time. I mainly work in the Rad Cam because it’s so beautiful and central, or the St Hilda’s College library, as more often than not, it has all the Law textbooks I need.

10.00 Sometimes I’ll have lectures, normally no more than around 4/5 a week (which aren’t mandatory for lawyers), around this time, and whether I go or not depends on how difficult I find that particular topic. At the moment I have a tutorial at Jesus College at this time, so I have to take the short walk down High Street which is always pretty nice.

12.00 I try and eat lunch around this time. On Wednesdays I normally eat lunch in the canteen as we can’t eat in hall during the evening on Wednesdays because of the formal dinner that requires booking in advance and is often more expensive.

1.00 Back to the library. As a lawyer there is loads of reading to do and so the vast majority of my time working is spent reading. I like to change where I work, trying most often to leave my room to read. I often go to the Rad Cam, the College library, the Law Faculty library and the Union library. I class the walk to and from, as my daily exercise.

2.00 Normally on essay deadline days, this is when I start to write. This doesn’t take too long, even including planning time. How busy the week was and how much reading I’ve had will influence whether I start writing now or anytime between now and midnight.

5.00 By this point any tutorials will have been finished and dinner will usually be held in hall. Eating in hall is great for catching up with friends and is always a great way to relax. Sometimes I’ll have formal dinners with friends at other colleges.

6.00 On a normal day, I’d carry on reading for a while. On a busy day, I may go to a debate or talk at the Union, an OUSU event or OUSU Council which is every fortnight, or sometimes Law Soc drinks events. Often there are speaker events with the political clubs and societies I’m a member of, so there’s always something to do. So far this term I’ve seen quite a few impressive political speakers.

8.00 I normally stop work around this time, instead focusing on OUSU emails and getting all my extra-curricular affairs in order. If I’m all done I might go down to the JCR bar or rally some friends together for drinks or food.

10.00 It’s unusual for me to get to bed before 11:30pm as the days are quite intense, but usually when I get back to my room, that means I’m pretty much done and go to sleep.
8.00 After putting my alarm on snooze a million times, I drag myself out of bed. I then immediately make myself a cup of tea and sit watching the news, checking my emails and facebook, whilst having breakfast. I cycle with varying ferocity to make my 9am.

10.00 After my lecture, once a week I’ll head to dissection room, aka the DR. We then spend the next hour and a half learning about the surface anatomy on ourselves, and then looking at the different anatomical structures in prosections. The demonstrators are all absolute anatomy-nerds and seriously know their stuff, so it’s particularly useful picking their brains for pneumonics and other ways to help us remember the huge amount of information we’re being given.

11.30 At 11:30 we’ll then head to the CAL lab, where we consolidate what we have just gone through, working on computers and answering questions in practical books. Or for some, a chance to nap.

1.00 At lunchtime I will often head to biochem café with other medics. The food there is incredible and the staff are definitely beginning to notice us as regulars.

2.00 Last lecture of the day, which I desperately try and stay awake in, before heading back to college in time for my tutorial.

3.00 We normally have tutorials in groups of two or three and these can have a varying format. One tutor will show us pictures of cells and tissues, while pointing out the different structures. Other tutors prefer to draw diagrams and graphs on white boards and ask us questions about what we think is going on.

4.00 After my tutorial I’ll try and get some of my next essay done, but all too often I’ll get distracted and chat to my friends before heading down to dinner.

6.00 Constantly obsessed with food, my friends and I have normally organised what time we’re going down to dinner during the day. The time tends to vary depending on just how hungry we are.

7.00 Once a week I go to a class at Iffley gym called ‘boxercise’. It’s a mixture of aerobic exercises and circuits with a good amount of punching thrown in. It’s a lot of fun, although if we do a lot of legwork, it can make my furious cycling to lectures the next morning interesting.

8.00 How I spend the rest of my evening depends on how much work I have to do. So often it’s a choice between the library, pub or park and Wednesdays’ bridge Thursdays. Which choice I make probably determines how many times I put my alarm on snooze the following morning.
6.30 Alarm goes off. Have a strong desire to stay in bed as it’s so early but I have cheerleading practice this morning so I rush to get ready and head off to Iffley gym for the 7am start. We spend the time drilling our stunts ready for the upcoming university nationals.

9.00 Head back to college feeling energized after practice to have breakfast and get ready for the day.

10.00 Walk over to the lodge in college to greet visiting sixth form students who are visiting Hilda’s for the day. The other student ambassadors and I take turns in showing the students where to go and telling them about all the fantastic things Hilda’s has to offer.

10.30 Walk to the Radcliffe Camera library in central Oxford. I need to finish some reading about whether Malthusian theory can be used to explain Chinese demographic history for an essay for my module on an economic approach to history.

12.00 Rush to my lecture on ‘Republicanism, Resistance and Rebellions’ in early modern Europe. First year history students have up to 5 lectures a week, each lasting one hour.

1.30 Arrive back in college and have lunch in hall with friends.

2.30 Time for my tutorial. My tute partner and I are asked questions by our tutor on our essays on witchcraft and if looking at new pieces of evidence changes our argument. The tutorial is meant to last an hour but we overrun slightly discussing why the timing and scale of witch trials in early modern Russia was different to those in Germany.

4.00 Have a post-tutorial coffee with my tute partner and then we both head to the college library. I start to plan my economics essay but spend a lot of time procrastinating of Facebook. As the deadline is tomorrow evening, I decide to postpone writing until tomorrow morning.

6.00 Return to the hall for dinner. Tonight is Chinese night so the hall is decorated in an oriental theme and we get free fortune cookies! Dinner is a really good opportunity to catch up with friends doing different subjects and talk about each other’s days.

8.00 This evening, the college history society is going on a pub crawl. These are organised once a term by our tutor who is a specialist in the cultural, social and political history of drinking in early modern England. We meet in the college bar before heading off into Cowley and then into Oxford, visiting some of the oldest pubs in the country.

Lauren, Medicine Student
I’m up early (for an English student) to get to a lecture about Victorian society and literature at the St Cross Building. It sounds interesting, and since there is only one mandatory lecture a week, I’m able to pick and choose what appeals, and what sounds useful.

The lecture finishes at 11am, which allows me to get a couple hours work in at the English Faculty Library with the reference-only books there. I’m writing an essay on Thomas Hardy in for midday tomorrow, and hoping that I’ll be able to glean some last-minute info from this secondary reading!

I meet up with my friends for lunch back at college. I talk with my subject friends Meg and Emma about the essay due in tomorrow, and we recommend some secondary reading to each other.

Lunch over, I head to the Radcliffe Camera to get a start on the essay. Busy and quiet, it’s a great place to get work done – if I’m lucky enough to get a seat! The intro takes an age to complete but, having written two essays a week throughout the term, I am confident that I’ll be able to produce a cogent argument in my essay.

A few hours later I receive a message on the group chat – “dinner??” and so I head back to college to eat and chill with some friends before the evening ahead. I retire to my room to finish the ‘draft’ of my essay.

By 10pm, I’m done – tomorrow morning will be devoted to proofreading, checking the footnotes and bibliography, and prepping for the tutorial later in the afternoon – in which myself, another student and our amazing tutor Adam will go through our essays and the topic in general for an hour and a half, in a relaxed but stimulating atmosphere. For the rest of my evening however, I chill in my neighbour’s room to unwind and chat.

Jay, English Student
6.00 Wake up for rowing (as late as I can possibly get away with).

6.20 I have a Rowing outing a couple of times a week at the Hilda’s boathouse on the river Isis, about a 15 minute cycle away.

8.30 Having got back from rowing, showered and had breakfast, I prepare for my French class later in the day. My French essays are due in 24 hours before the tutorial, which for me means 9am today, so I will have hopefully done it by now!

12.00 Lecture at the Taylorian on the use of music and sound in the Italian film I Cento Passi.

1.00 An hour off - I usually stay in town to get lunch if I have to be up there again soon. It’s not far to get back to Hilda’s, but by the time you’ve got there and back I could get so much more done! It also gives me an excuse to go and buy the things I need in town, meaning I usually turn up to class with all sorts of random stuff falling out of my bag.

2.00 Italian reading/essay class at 47 Wellington Square, just behind the Taylorian. This is where all the Italian language classes take place and I have a class there every day for a different discipline (listening, translation etc)

3.15 I then speed cycle across town back to college for French class, trying to get my brain out of Italian mode and into French mode. We have a grammar class for an hour every week where we go over very specific grammar rules and practise translation into French.

4.15 Every other week I also have a French speaking class in college, with two other students. Usually we each give a short presentation on a specific topic we have prepared, often based around French culture or issues in French society, and we then discuss it in the language.

5.30 I’m usually pretty hungry by this point so go straight to dinner when it opens at 5.30 (This I also excellent procrastination...) Unsurprisingly as a modern languages student, Italian night is my favourite - you can never have enough tiramisu accompanied by dramatic Italian pop music. The Hall staff are really friendly and always decorate the dining hall to match the theme!

6.00 I usually try and get my Italian translation due for the next day done now, or else do some preparatory reading for my French literature tutorial tomorrow on George Sand’s novel Indiana.

8.30 There is a debate tonight at the Oxford Union on how to get young people more involved in politics, hosted by Rick Edwards, which I go to with some friends. Afterwards we go to the Union bar for a drink before walking back to Hilda’s. I try to get the last few things sorted out for today, then fall straight to sleep!
When you hear people talking about the JCR, or Junior Common Room, they can be referring to one of two things: the undergraduate community of the college, or the physical common room. Also in the college is the MCR (Middle Common Room), which is made of grad students, and the SCR (Senior Common Room) which is the tutors, and senior administrators of the college.

The common room includes our bar, and the Old Law Library (now a TV room/lounge). The JCR is the social hub of college where you can meet people across all years. People often hang out there in the day working, procrastinating from the library, playing board games and eating toasties from our glorious buttery! We have table football, table tennis, pool and Sky TV so there are all sorts of excuses to spend time with friends there. The JCR is also our Bar so no matter when you drop in you are likely to see a friendly and familiar face there.

The JCR is much more than just a room, it is the undergraduate community of college as a whole. St Hilda’s is famous for having a very active and engaged JCR community. We have open JCR meetings once a fortnight where we decide as a student body what do with our termly budget, vote on what we would like the JCR committee to work on, and what causes or campaigns we would like to support collectively. For example, working towards the College’s divestment from fossil fuels or choosing which charities to support for a term. Whether it’s supporting teams at sports matches, or watching our budding thespians in the college tutorial society performing in plays, we take serious JCR pride in the achievements of our fellow hildabeasts!

The JCR committee is elected once a year by all members of the JCR after hustings in the bar. Each role revolves around various aspects of college and university life. The overarching goal of the JCR committee is to represent the JCR and to work towards improving college life for its members. It’s there to help support students though everything, from welfare and academic needs, to organising entertainment, and making sure your rooms and food are on point.
For Students Who Identify as Women

St Hilda’s is one of Oxford’s most friendly and inclusive colleges, and part of this is its recognition of the extra challenges faced by women in Oxford and beyond. The progressive ethos of a college that was originally founded for women’s education continues to be felt. One of the ways in which the JCR puts this into practice is in the role of Women’s Officer, which is elected every year – I am Women’s Officer for 2015-16.

Any student can approach me with gender-related concerns, although I specifically represent students who identify as women, or have a complex gender identity that includes woman. This is the welfare side of my role; the Women’s Officer will always be there to help with issues concerning gender, or to point students in the direction of someone who can help. I also have First Response training, which means I am equipped with the information needed to signpost a survivor of sexual assault if they disclose this to me. Another way our JCR has made Hilda’s a safe and inclusive place is by making Sexual Consent Workshops a mandatory part of Freshers’ Week every year.

Lastly, a big part of the Women’s Officer’s job is to organise St Hilda’s Gender Equality Festival. The festival takes place over the course of one week in second term, and is filled with speakers, debates, workshops, and a comedy night called Hildalarity! Previous speakers have included Peter Tatchell and Victoria Hislop, and Ruth Hunt, CEO of Stonewall, is lined up to speak this year. Importantly, I am working with the LGBTQIA+, Disability, BME Officers to make the festival as intersectional as possible. It should be a really fun, interesting and diverse week.
FOR STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

Here at St Hilda’s we have a really active and open JCR and we try to do all that we can to support our members who have a disability. I am the Disability Officer, and it’s my job to make sure this continues! Nearly all of the important buildings on site are wheel-chair accessible, including our JCR. Unfortunately, some of our administrative offices, like our IT and academic office are currently inaccessible, but I am working hard with college to try and change this. We have two fully adapted bedrooms. We also make sure that all of our JCR events are accessible to all. Every student that wants to hold a JCR event must fill a minimum requirement form, which is a check list of things that they must ensure have been done to the best of their ability. This includes things like, ensuring that the venue has step-free access, and that non-fire doors are pegged open, having a hearing loop available, and making sure that where events require notes to be taken, a note taker is present, or if an attendee is required to read text, a text reader is made available. When JCR events are advertised on our Facebook page, image description are provided so that students who use screen readers don’t miss out on any important information. In our Library we have ‘privileged reader status’ for disabled readers, whereby they can have extended loans and can take more books out at a time. We have also bought Ace spelling books for the library which are behind the issue desk. We are looking into introducing a small charge onto members of the JCR’s battels, which will go towards subsidising the cost of prescriptions for those that need it. There is also a welfare aspect to my role, and I hold disability tea once a term where students can come to me with anything.
FOR LGBTQIA+ STUDENTS

St Hilda’s is a really friendly space. This, combined with our history of confronting restrictive gender norms, makes St Hilda’s an open and accepting safe space for all things queer. We have recently adopted full University guidelines on the management of administrative changes for gender-transitioning students, and any concerns can be discussed with the JCR LGBTQ officer or welfare officers. I am also always here to listen to and help with any concerns LGBTQ students might have.

As LGBTQ officer, I organise socials such as termly crewdates with other colleges as well as alternative (non-alcoholic). We also tend to go to LGBTQ Soc’s weekly drinks night as a group. Hilda’s is also the only college in the University apart from Wadham to have an annual party in celebration of all things queer- our very own Queer Bop in Hilary Term.

Coming out is a personal choice and should never be mandated or policed. Whether St Hilda’s is the first or last stop on your journey of exploring your sexuality, body or gender identity, we are always ready to listen and be there.

FOR BME STUDENTS

The role of the Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Officer is to represent and support all BME students at St. Hilda’s college. The BME officer provides an initial point of contact for any students wishing to discuss race related issues, report discrimination or harassment. The BME Officer also organises a number of social events that take place in college each term and throughout the year. The BME officer works along side all other welfare officers to ensure the well-being of every student at St Hilda’s College.
WELFARE

There are two Welfare Officers on the JCR Committee. It’s our job to do all that we can to ensure the welfare of the JCR. Each year, our first job as Welfare Officers is to organise the College Families, and to have a postcard sent from each set of parents to their children after results day. Throughout the year, each set of Welfare Officers will do something different, so it changes yearly. A constant, however, is welfare teas. We try to organise around three ‘Welfare Tea’ events per term. These are genuinely amazing – we get to spend over £100 on finger food and drinks, and it’s all gone within an hour!

We are also in charge of organising the provision of free contraception and other sexual health products for the college – these can be requested anonymously on our Hilda’s JCR website. In addition to condoms, we provide a variety of products, from pregnancy tests to panic alarms, for the JCR.

Our busiest week is fifth week, notoriously known as the ‘Fifth Week Blues’ across Oxford: events we put on include a Welfare Tea, Krispy Kreme Tuesday and (Cup)cakes and Condoms. We also introduced ‘Hildatreats for Hildabeasts’ – where students can arrange for a small chocolate gift to be delivered to their friends as a pick me up! So far we have delivered over 200 of these! We understand that university life can be incredibly stressful at times, and we will always try our best to make St Hilda’s as friendly, and stress-free an environment as possible!
**PEER SUPPORT**

We are the St. Hilda’s Peer Supporters. Oxford can sometimes be a stressful environment, and it takes its toll on everyone. The Peer Supporters are here to listen - no problem is too big or too small, whether you’re worried about an essay or are dealing with a mental health condition. We have been trained by the Oxford Counselling service and are a good source to turn to if you feel like you can’t discuss an issue with your tutor. We have drop in sessions, and students can contact us anytime!

**WHAT IS A COLLEGE FAMILY?**

The Oxford College family is like a buddy system. When you start your first term, you have a parent who does the same subject as you. They are your first port of call if you need help with work and don’t want to ask a tutor, or just need some advice in general. Your subject parent will have also married someone in their year, so you will also have another parent and a sibling. How seriously different colleges take the family system varies. At St Hilda’s, we embrace it wholeheartedly. Instead of opting for a marriage ballot like many other colleges, St Hilda’s students will propose to each other, and the more elaborate the proposal, the better! The first thing you do as parents is write a postcard to each of your children after results day, introducing yourselves. At the end of Freshers’ week, parents will also take their children back to their houses to (attempt) to cook them dinner. Throughout the year, we have also family formals. Closer to exams, parents are in charge of finding their children carnations to wear and supplying them copious amounts of revision chocolate!
AN INSIGHT INTO SPORT AT COLLEGIATE LEVEL

As one of Oxford’s most popular sports, rowing is a fantastic way to try something new, be part of a close team, and take part in a long Oxford tradition. You can either row or, for those with an inclination toward unquestionable power, cox, directing and encouraging your boat during training and racing.

Rowing as part of St Hilda’s College Boat Club involves a couple of river outings a week, where you really get to know how rowing in a racing boat feels, and where team work is of the utmost importance. On land you will have the opportunity to come along to erg (rowing machine) sessions where we work on endurance and technique, and our fun gym sessions. This year these have involved doing wheelbarrows and leapfrogs up and down the college lawns. Rowing is a good way to get fit and have fun! Our coaches are ex-blues members who have rowed in the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race, and rowers who have rowed in inter-collegiate competitions at the national level. Everything is organised by a committee of dedicated rowers including the president, treasurer, secretary, captains and vice captains, as well as various other officers—we welcome anyone who wants to have a go at any of these positions.

Alice and James, Rowing Captains
Each year there are three regattas. The first, Christ Church Regatta is reserved entirely for people who haven’t rowed before they come to Oxford and is run as a knock-out competition between all the colleges. The next two, Torpids and Summer VIIIs, are known as “bumps” races. This involves 14 boats—set off by the firing of a canon (seriously!)—chasing each other down the river in order to collide (hence bump) with each other and, consequentially, move up the league. The thrill of chasing down a boat or, if you’re unluckily, being chased down, is the highlight of many rowers’ time at Oxford. For spectators too the crashes, evasive tactics, and occasional “ejector crab” make it great to watch—on the final day of Summer VIIIs several thousand students, parents, and townspeople come down to the Isis river to cheer the teams on. Those teams that bump four days in a row, and are not bumped themselves, are awarded blades (oars) painted with their names and the names of the colleges they bumped. These are then hung around college for everyone to see!

Throughout the year we put on many social events including: “crewdates”, where teams go for meal and often night out with crews from other colleges; squad socials where we all head for a meal including many often stupid (but fun!) games; formal dinners such as the annual Sirens dinner which is a celebration of rowing together with members of the club past and present; and the Summer VIIIs party on the last day of racing of the year where you will be supplied with much champagne and cake! You will also have the opportunity to get “stash” (team kit) to show off how keen you are at rowing and, as anyone who has rowed for a while will tell you, to stay warm on your morning outings.
**FOOTBALL**

As Hilda’s has only recently started admitting men, it has taken several years for the men’s team to make an impact on the OUAFC League; the archetypal ‘yo-yo club’. For a number of years the club did not achieve stability and languished in the bottom league. In the past few years, however, the team has increased their competitiveness, been promoted and has shown the potential to climb the league system. The First XI plays weekly starting in Michaelmas term, as does the more casual Second XI. The turnover of incoming freshers and outgoing finalists greatly dictates the quality of the team on a year-by-year basis, but generally the team is able to remain competitive each year. The Club also has a social aspect, with crew dates during term time and an AGM (Annual General Meeting) in off-season, in conjunction with the women’s team, where the next season’s captains and social secretaries are decided.

**RUNNING CLUB**

St Hilda’s running club is a social group of people who meet for short runs once a week of about 4km. All abilities welcome, no experience required. We’ll hopefully be working towards the 10k Town and Gown race that takes place during Trinity Term, although there is no expectation that you go for these longer distances.

**HILDABEATS**

The Hildabeats are St Hilda’s very own jazz and blues band! We play all sorts of funky music, and do a concert each term, including a tinsel and mince pie fuelled Xmas concert. Anyone in Hilda’s is welcome to join, from all years and all abilities, from Louis Armstrong to Louis Walsh!
**DDR**

St Hilda’s DDR (Dance Dance Revolution) is the only one of its kind in Oxford. If you like video games, dancing, or fun, then this is for you. We meet once a week, no commitment required, just drop in when you like.

**CU**

Hilda’s CU are a group of Christians who together meet for a weekly Bible study and for a prayer breakfast every Sunday. During the term we put on a number of events that try to tell folk in college about Jesus. We have a lot of fun and are a friendly and welcoming group. Regardless of whether you would call yourself a Christian or not; regardless of what church background you come from it is great seeing people get involved.

Come and visit
St Hilda’s College during our
Open Days. There is no need to book
and the undergraduate Ambassadors will be here to show you around the place:

🌟 2016 29th & 30th June and the 16th September - Breakfast tours with Q&A from 08:30!

🌟 2017 28th & 29th June and the 15th September

🌟 2018 27th & 28th June and the 14th September
WHAT IS THE SOCIAL LIFE LIKE AT ST HILDA’S.

There is a thriving social scene at St Hilda’s. We have three ‘Entz’ Officers on the JCR committee who are in charge of organising social events for the JCR. The biggest of these are the Bops. They also play quite a large role in organising social events during Oxmas.

WHAT IS A BOP?

A bop, which is an acronym for Big Open Party (though most students don’t know that), is an event organised by the Entz Officers. Essentially, it is like a disco held in the JCR, with a fancy dress theme. At other colleges, Bops normally carry on into the night at the JCR. At Hilda’s we tend to have one of the smaller night clubs booked out as an after party venue instead. Normally there are around two bops a term. Previous themes have included Disney bop, Jungle Bop, and Thrift shop bop, where students partnered up and bought each other’s outfits from the local charity shops. They’re always good fun, and a social highlight of the term.
WHAT IS OXMAS?

Oxford terms are short (only 8 weeks) compared to many other universities. Because of this, we go home before many Christmas celebrations begin. So, instead, we celebrate Oxmas on the 25th of November. As well as getting together with friends to decorate your corridor, the college also organises carolling on the stairs where the college choir sing Christmas songs on the stairs in South and everyone else watches with mince pies and mulled wine. We also have a Christmas organised by our charity officers, a best (and worst) Christmas jumper competition, and an advents Formal Hall. Living in a college, means it’s like celebrating Christmas with an extended family.
Worries about finance can be a big hurdle for many students, but they really needn’t be! When you arrive each term, you pay your college **battels**, which covers accommodation and food. Later on in the term, you may have to top-up your meal credits if you go to the Hall regularly. On top of maintenance loans from Student Finance, students from lower income backgrounds can find many other sources of funding at Oxford. Some of these sources, like the Oxford Bursary and the Moritz-Heyman Scholarship are awarded according to the information Oxford acquires from Student Finance, so you don’t need to apply for them, just make sure you tick the option that allows your university to access your information when you fill out your student finance form. This takes away a lot of the stress and hassle of sorting your finances. On top of this, there are numerous other Hilda’s-specific funds that you can apply for. They are listed below, but there is much more information on the St Hilda’s website.

Money absolutely is not a barrier to studying at St Hilda’s, or more generally, at any Oxford college. Living with a single parent who earns less than £16,000 a year meant that right from the start of my degree, I’ve received around £3,500 (this amount will increase for people starting courses in 2016) every year of my degree from the university, on top of government loans and grants, and the money from Oxford is entirely non-repayable! This means I get around £10,000-11,000 a year to live off, which is plenty to get by on without ever having to ask my parents for financial help. Additionally, St Hilda’s has a "hardship fund" for those who do encounter financial difficulties but can’t ask their family for help, which is really useful. Another great thing about studying at St Hilda’s if you’re not from a privileged financial background, is that you’re eligible for reduced fees. For my first year, I’ll only (eventually) pay £3,000, and for my second and third, £6,000. It’s worth pointing out that these fees are not repayable until you start earning money, too - and even then, it’s repaid slowly! Overall, going to Oxford as someone who has low parental income has been made really easy by St Hilda’s. With their bursary and reduced tuition fees for low-income students, I’m financially much better off here than I would have been at any other university!

**Testimonial from an Oxford Bursary recipient**
WHAT ARE BATTELS?

Battels is another Oxford term. Essentially, these are the bills that you pay each term. Below is a rough example of a Battel for Michaelmas of your first year.

The average Battel for a term

Cost of room in College – £1250 (average); Meal credits - £160; Sports subscription (Michaelmas only) - £15;
JCR membership £7.50; JCR Hardship fund - £3; Money towards refugees (opt-out) - £4

Total – 1439.50

THE OXFORD BURSARY

If you are a Home (UK) or EU student from a lower-income household, you will be eligible to receive an annual non-repayable Oxford Bursary to help with living costs. These are the figures for 2016.

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<th>Your non-repayable Oxford Bursary (per Year)</th>
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THE MORITZ-HEYMAN SCHOLARSHIP

The Moritz-Heyman Scholarship was started in 2012 and each year is awarded to 160 new undergraduates. To be eligible, you must have a household income of less than £16,000. Amongst other things, being a Moritz-Heyman Scholar means you get a significant bursary, the opportunity to access tailored internship support from the Oxford Careers Service, attend a range of exclusive events, including a reception hosted by the Vice-Chancellor. Scholars are normally expected to complete 25 hours of ‘outreach’ work to encourage school and college leavers to apply to university, or of community volunteering each year.

Despite coming from a low-income family, I had always been determined to come to Oxford, whatever the financial cost. However, there is no denying that the thought of racking up a load of debt while at uni is a terrifying one. I am sure that the myths surrounding those two scary words - “student loan” - do put people off applying to university because they feel that it excludes them. I was therefore extremely relieved and excited to discover that Oxford was offering me the Moritz-Heyman scholarship, which was assessed automatically when I applied for a student finance. This meant it was a huge surprise (and relief) for me when I received a letter in the post about a month before coming to Oxford! The Moritz-Heyman scholarship means a reduction in tuition fees and a maintenance bursary - so although I’m still taking out a student loan to pay my tuition fees to the university, it’s significantly less than it would have been, and I don’t have to rely on a maintenance loan at all - Oxford’s very generous bursary scheme, along with the maintenance loans which I receive from the government means I can cover all my living costs and more while at university. The scholarship has enabled me to have a normal social life - to go out with my friends and do my shopping without any worry (although I do still have an eye for a bargain!).

Testimonial from a Moritz-Heyman Scholar
OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING

JCR hardship fund
Each member of the JCR gives £3 per term towards the JCR hardship fund. Any JCR member who finds themselves in unexpected economic difficulties can apply to the treasurer for money from this fund. Applications are always encouraged.

Scholarship
Students who get a distinction in their exams get £200 pounds a year for the rest of their degree.

DD White Fund
Students can apply to this fund to help cover the cost of sports equipment/kit.

Book Grant
Students can apply to this to help buy required reading for the year.

Travel Funds
Students needing to travel for part of their degree e.g. Thesis research, can apply for money to go towards the cost of travel and accommodation. Some subjects have their own specific travel fund. For instance, History has the Morgan Fund which students can take advantage of to visit places that would further their historical interests.

Up to date contact details and descriptions of all JCR Committee officer roles can be found on the St Hilda’s College JCR website: www.hildasjcr.org.uk

All enquiries specifically relating to admissions please telephone: 01865 276815 or email admissions@st-hildas.ox.ac.uk

Special thanks to the JCR committee and all other student contributors to this alternative prospectus.

Written and produced by Hannah Judge (Access Officer)