

A College in Cambridge University

Queen's College Cambridge

First founded in 1448 by Margaret of Anjou and then, unusually, again in 1465 by Elizabeth Woodville, Queens' is fiercely proud of its royal patronesses, including our most recent, Her Majesty The Queen. The history of the College, much like its architecture, is rich, complex and varied. The main College site sits astride the River Cam, the two halves joined across the river by the famous Mathematical Bridge - more correctly called The Wooden Bridge. This watery division can give visitors the impression of stepping across the bridge from the twentieth century to the fifteenth (or vice versa).

Regardless of age of the buildings, the available space in College has been used to increase and improve facilities for the benefit of all members of the College. Even the famous medieval Old Hall is used for student concerts, functions, rehearsals and dinners.

For over 550 years, the history of Queens' College has been rich, complex and varied -- much like the thriving academic community it supports. Today we enjoy one of the most modern, welcoming and comfortable working colleges in Cambridge without having lost any of our historical charm, beauty or tradition. The College is committed to academic excellence and diversity.

Queens' sits astride the River Cam with its two halves joined across the river by the famous Mathematical Bridge. The College is open to the public and visitors are welcome.

Teaching & the tutorial system

Whilst the University organises lectures and exams, the College has responsibility for the individual teaching of its undergraduates. Lectures, practicals and classes are held in University lecture theatres and within Departments (or Faculties) and these are attended by students from all Colleges studying that subject. The College arranges individual tuition for its own undergraduate students. This usually takes the form of a Supervision, a small group, typically two or three students, and their Supervisor. Supervisors can be Fellows or Research Students of Queens' or from other Colleges depending on the subject and the expertise required. A Director of Studies is appointed to oversee the students' academic work, to advise on lectures, to appoint Supervisors and monitor the students' progress. The Senior Tutor has overall responsibility for the academic and educational activities of the College.

The Senior Tutor is also responsible for the Tutorial function of the College. This is a welfare system, probably second to none. Every student has a personal Tutor who is available for advice with problems be they pastoral, financial or academic. These Tutors, together with the College Dean, the College Nurse, the Senior Tutor himself, and the various JCR and MCR (the student body) officers, ensure that all students have lots of help available - should they need it. The JCR and the MCR also organise a contact scheme where current students assist new students during the first few weeks of University and College life. This has proved very popular and worthwhile.

Libraries & Archive

Queens' College has two libraries which, together, offer a wealth of learning and historical resources that

are located in some of the oldest parts of the College. The War Memorial Library is the working library that supports the studies of current members of College. The Old Library houses Queens' special collections of manuscripts and early printed books.

The War Memorial Library

This is housed in our original medieval chapel that has been refurbished to provide modern facilities in beautifully preserved surroundings. It is located in Old Court and all current members have an entrance key and 24 hour access throughout the year. There is no public access but old members and visiting scholars can visit by arrangement with the College Librarian.

The Old Library and Special Collections

The Old Library is open on a number of formal occasions throughout the year, when members of College can bring guests. There will usually be an exhibition with a printed catalogue and dates will be advertised. The College Librarian arranges less formal visits for current members on Wednesday afternoons during full term. Private visits and talks about the collection can also be organised. Specific items within the collection can be consulted by written appointment with the Librarian.

Old Library History

The Old Library was founded in 1448 and, although none of its original collection remains, it contains many important manuscripts and early printed books, and some beautiful bindings. It has benefited from generous bequests, notably the Isaac Milner bequest of eighteenth century French mathematical works and the Renaissance humanist library of Thomas Smith. It also contains a representative collection of the works of Erasmus. A fuller history is available for reference or purchase from the Library Office.

The Cohen Collection

The Cohen Collection includes books, pamphlets and other material that were bequeathed to Queens' by J.M. Cohen, translator and literary reviewer. The books had been acquired as gifts from the authors or as purchases during visits to Spain and Argentina in the 1950s and to Mexico and Cuba in the 1960s and early 1970s. They include signed copies of works by writers of the first Cuban revolutionary generation, limited editions and many works by women, most of which were previously unrecorded in the West. There is an extensive supporting collection of Soviet Russian literature, and studies on literary criticism and poetry, the pre-Columbian American past and Nahuatl literature. Ephemera such as typescripts of poetry, newspaper cuttings and letters are included.

The Kennett Library

This is a collection of Old Testament and Semitic texts bequeathed by Robert Hatch Kennett in 1932. It is now housed and administered in the Oriental Faculty Library, to which all enquiries should be addressed.

The Local Collections

These contain books concerning the history and customs of the town and University of Cambridge, and archive material relating to Queens'. Many items are available in the War Memorial Library and can be borrowed. Older, rarer items are housed in the Old Library and can be viewed on request.