



ST EDMUND HALL

Senior Common Room

Information for Members 2024-25
Updated March 2025

Introduction

The Senior Common Room (SCR) is both a collection of rooms (the Coffee and Lunch Rooms, the Chough Room, and the Old Library), as well as the body of Senior Members (mostly Fellows and Lecturers) of the College. One of the Fellows acts as the Steward of the Common Room. The current Steward is Professor Robert Wilkins, and members are welcome to consult him in all matters of doubt. The Head Butler is Molly McCarthy.

The main entrance to the SCR is to be found opposite the entrance to the Wolfson Hall. Access can also be gained from the Chough Room adjacent to the Doctorow Hall. Members can arrange Salto key access for these entrances at the Lodge.

Members of the SCR pay a termly Common Room fee, which in the academic year 2024-2025 will be £14-£21, depending upon the category of membership held. This fee covers the cost of newspapers and magazines (subscriptions are reviewed regularly, but suggestions are always welcome). Smoking is not permitted anywhere in the SCR or the College and calls on mobile phones are also strongly discouraged and should not occur in the Lunch and Coffee Rooms.

All SCR charges are collected through Battels, a monthly invoice that is settled through the payroll. Non-payroll members may pay by cheque, bank transfer or direct debit as outlined on the invoice.

Membership of the SCR

There are five categories of membership:

- Fellows and College Lecturers
- Official Members
- Associate Members
- Temporary Members
- Honorary Members

Honorary membership may be extended to (i) all members of the College who become Fellows of other Oxford colleges for so long as they hold their Fellowship; (ii) former Fellows of the College who, having completed three years as a Fellow, cease to hold their Fellowship otherwise than through deprivation of it.

Refreshments

Coffee and tea-making facilities, along with biscuits, are available in the Coffee Room at all times. Bottled water is kept in the fridge in the Lunch Room.

Red wine is often placed in the Coffee Room; white wine can be found in the fridge in the Lunch Room. Members should record consumption of these items in the diary in the Coffee Room.

Dining

Breakfast is available through the servery in the Wolfson Hall between 8.15am and 9.30am from Monday to Friday in term and between 8am and 9am in vacations. Breakfast is charged to Battels.

Lunch is a buffet meal available in the Lunch Room between 12.30pm and 1.45pm from Monday to Friday, with members free to arrive at any time during which it is served. The dress code for lunch is casual, although sportswear is discouraged. In vacations, lunch continues to be served, although the timing and location may be varied.

Dinner

- dinner is available through the servery in the Wolfson Hall between 6pm and 7.15pm on evenings on which a Formal Hall or Guest Night does not take place;
- Formal Hall takes place at 7.30pm in the Wolfson Hall on Sunday and Thursday of full term. Dress code on Sunday is black tie or equivalent;
- SCR Guest Nights take place in the Old Dining Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday in weeks 3 and 7 of term provided there are more than 20 attendees, otherwise it will be held in the Old Library. Those attending are expected to bring a guest. Dress code is not black tie; gowns. On guest nights, dinner is followed by a seated dessert in the Senior Common Room Lunch Room for all attendees (or in the Old Library if there are fewer than 20 attendees).

(Dessert is a separate part of the meal, taken in a different room and consisting of fruit, nuts and chocolate, and a variety of after-dinner wines: in our case Port, Madeira, the same red wine offered at dinner, and a white dessert wine. Dessert is only available for four or more people, one of whom must be a Fellow. The costs of food and drinks for SCR members and their guests is charged to Battels.)

Consult the 'Dining arrangements' grid, circulated termly, for further information and variations to this pattern arising from special dinners.

In vacations, dinner continues to be served through the servery in the Wolfson Hall.

Gowns reflecting the qualifications held by the member are worn at Formal Hall and Guest Nights. Gowns may be left on the hooks at the bottom of the SCR staircase. Seating plans are prepared for both dinner and dessert on SCR Guest Nights. Diners gather in advance of dinner in the Coffee Room.

Special Dinners also take place each year. Four are college events: **St Edmund Dinner** (16 November each year: black tie; gowns; no guests); the **Geddes Dinner** (MT or HT: not black tie; gowns; guests allowed); the **Charter Dinner** (TT: black tie, gowns; one guest – in particular, notable

figures from hosts’ professional lives); and the **Emden Dinner** (MT: not black tie; gowns; guests allowed). The other two dinners are organised by the SCR: the **Fellows’ Christmas Dinner** (black tie; no gowns, one guest); and the **SCR Summer Dinner** (not black tie; no gowns; guests encouraged). Seating plans are prepared for special dinners.

There is a termly **Domus Dinner** (not black tie; gowns; *Fellows only*; no guests), which takes place on Tuesday of week 1 in Michaelmas Term and Thursday of week 0 in Hilary and Trinity Terms.

At all College dinners, the cost of food for Fellows is met through the Common Table allowance. With the exception of the Domus Dinner, wine consumption is charged to Fellows. Charges for guests' meals and wine are also the responsibility of the hosting Fellow, unless the guest is entertained on behalf of the College ('Domus'). There is only one dinner in the academic year - the Charter Dinner (in essence, the College Feast) - when Fellows' guests are automatically charged to Domus.

Two dinners are held at the start of Michaelmas Term to welcome and admit new students: the **Undergraduate Freshers’ Dinner** takes place on Monday of 0th week, and the **Graduate Freshers’ Dinner** on Wednesday of 0th week (not black tie; gowns). An **Undergraduate Leaving Dinner** ('Schools Dinner') takes place on Tuesday of week 9 of Trinity Term (black tie; gowns).

An optional **dessert** is also available after dinner either in the Old Library (a formal occasion on Thursday), or in the Coffee Room (more informal in nature, on Sunday). On these occasions, dessert is only available for four or more people, one of whom must be a Fellow.

Unless otherwise advised, pre-dinner drinks (chargeable to Battels) are served before formal dinners from 6.45pm in the Senior Common Room. On Guest Nights, pre-dinner drinks are served in the Principal’s Drawing Room. Please sign for pre-dinner drinks.

The capacity of the Old Dining Hall limits the number of diners for SCR Guest Night to 36. The capacity of the Old Library limits the number taking Dessert to 20.

Entitlement and Booking

Fellows of all categories are entitled to lunch and dinner, whenever these meals are served. Breakfast does not form part of the entitlement. The entitlement of other members will vary according to the category of membership and will be advised at the time of their appointment or election to membership of the SCR. Members will be charged for meals in excess of their allowance at the rates specified below. Please note that no meals are served during the College closed period at Christmas, which is indicated on the online booking system.

The present charges (excluding wine) are:

Breakfast	Pay per item
Lunch	£16.95
SCR Buffet Dinner	£25.50
Dinner (3 course)	£32.00
Dinner (4 course)	£38.25
Dessert	£10.50

Bookings for lunch and dinner (none are needed for breakfast) are made using an online system at <http://scr.seh.ox.ac.uk/logon.php> using the college logon credentials provided for intranet and WiFi access.

Deadlines are as follows:

- Formal Hall on Thursday - by 10am on Tuesday;
- Formal Hall on Sunday - by 10am on Wednesday;
- SCR Guest Nights - by 10am on Monday;
- Lunches and servery dinners - by 10am on the day.

Please note that meals booked but not taken, or meals taken without booking, may be charged to the individual's Battels.

Wine

Pre-dinner drinks, wine served during dinner and drinks at Dessert are charged to Battels. Pre-dinner drinks should be recorded on the sheet provided in the Coffee Room and are charged at a flat rate of £3.95. The cost of wine consumed at Formal Hall, Guest Night and Dessert is charged at flat rates of £11.25, £12.80, and £3.95, respectively. Members should indicate whether they intend to take wine when booking for dinner using the online system.

Presiding Fellow

If present, the Principal presides at formal dinners. In her absence, the Vice Principal or most senior Fellow presides. Seniority of Fellows is determined by the date of first appointment. Diners for a given meal are listed in order of seniority by the online meal booking system.

At formal Dessert, the Steward of Common Room takes the chair. In his or her absence, the most senior Governing Body Fellow presides. The presiding Fellow will decide where everyone is placed, attempting to ensure that no-one sits next to those with whom they were placed at dinner. To ensure equitability on Guest Nights, all those signing up for dinner are automatically added for Dessert, which is held in the SCR Lunchroom. A table plan will be prepared, and tables will be dressed with tablecloths, and candlelit. The presiding Fellow circulates the wines, which move in a clockwise direction around the table and are passed on to the left. The bottles stop with the presiding Fellow, who usually circulates them twice. Dessert ends when the presiding Fellow stands to depart. It is the presiding Fellow's responsibility to ensure that candles are extinguished, lights switched off and that the upper door to the Old Library is locked.

Guests

Guests over the age of 21 may be brought as a guest to lunch or dinner. Undergraduates of the University may be invited by the Principal as guests of the College. No more than two guests should normally be entertained to lunch or dinner; if more are desired, then the Steward of Common Room should be consulted. Guests may not be invited to Domus dinners.

Guest charges may be charged to College hospitality if the purpose of entertaining the guest relates directly to the business of the College. An explanation of the reason is required when the booking is made. Members should indicate when charges should be assigned this way on the online system.

When dining with a guest it is customary for the host to introduce the guest to the Principal or presiding Fellow. Guests, unless old members of the College, do not wear gowns.

Fellows' Guest Rooms

Two twin guest rooms are available for Fellows to book. The charge is £30 for a single and £60 for a twin, including breakfast. There is no charge for bookings if the Fellow is representing the College at a specific event. Contact Sunny Pagani in the Bursary (01865 279007) to check availability. Guests can take breakfast in the Wolfson Hall between 8.15am and 9.30am from Monday to Friday.

Private Functions

SCR members may arrange private functions in the SCR. Enquiries about private functions should be made in the first instance to the Conference and Events Manager, Susan McCarthy, in the Bursary (01865 279222).

Other Facilities

A computer with internet access is available on the table at the top of the SCR staircase.

Newspapers and magazines are available in the Coffee Room. They should not be removed. The Steward of Common Room is happy to receive suggestions of possible new subscriptions.

Dining arrangements at a glance

Pre-drinks	from 6.45pm	SCR Coffee Room	<i>except</i> Guest Nights and Fellows' Christmas Dinner (Lodgings)
Dinner	7.30pm	Wolfson Hall	<i>except</i> Guest Nights (Old Dining Hall if > 20, Old Library if 20 or fewer)
Dessert			Formal Hall - Sun: SCR Coffee Room; Thu: Old Library Guest Nights - SCR Lunch Room (Old Library if 20 or fewer)
Gowns	all dinners		<i>except</i> Fellows' Christmas Dinner and SCR Summer Dinner
Black tie			Sunday Formal Hall, St Edmund Dinner, Fellows' Christmas Dinner, Schools Dinner
Guests	two, all dinners		<i>except</i> Domus Dinner (0), Charter Dinner (1)