St Edmund Hall
Visitor Guide

Welcome to Teddy Hall

The history of St Edmund Hall dates back to the thirteenth century, although it has only been a college of the University of Oxford in the strict sense since 1957 when it received a Royal Charter. Medieval halls were established to house and educate undergraduates and many of them predated Oxford's colleges. St Edmund Hall was the last of these to survive.

Early in the thirteenth century the site of the Front Quadrangle was owned by John de Bermingham, rector of Iffley, whose relatives sold part of it to Thomas of Malmesbury, vicar of Cowley in 1262. The Berminghams and Malmesburys are likely to have kept a student hall. Although it has no exact date of foundation, St Edmund Hall has a claim to be the oldest surviving academic society to house and educate undergraduates in any university - and it continues to provide an inspiring home for our students today.

St Edmund Hall is therefore one of the oldest institutions but one of the newest colleges of the University of Oxford. This unique combination means that we have the traditions of an ancient academic institution, while also benefiting from the informality of a modern college environment. Today, St Edmund Hall, affectionately known as 'Teddy Hall', is home to a dynamic and diverse community of around 400 undergraduates, 300 postgraduates, 75 Fellows (academics) and over 90 staff (non-academic).

St Edmund of Abingdon

St Edmund, after whom the College is named, was born Edmund Rich in Abingdon, a town just south of Oxford, in about 1175. The son of a merchant, Edmund gained his early schooling in Oxford. Legend has it that, at this time, he had an encounter with an apparition of the Christ Child in the meadows outside the town. As a teenager, Edmund moved to Paris to continue his studies, before returning in c.1196 to Oxford, where he is supposed to have been the first to teach the philosophy of Aristotle. After another residence in Paris, Edmund returned to Oxford before assuming a role in charge of the finances for the great cathedral of Salisbury in 1222, which was in the process of being built. An outstanding priest, administrator, teacher, and man of peace and prayer, Edmund was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in 1234. He died in Pontigny, France, on 16 November 1240, whilst journeying to Rome and he was canonised in 1247.
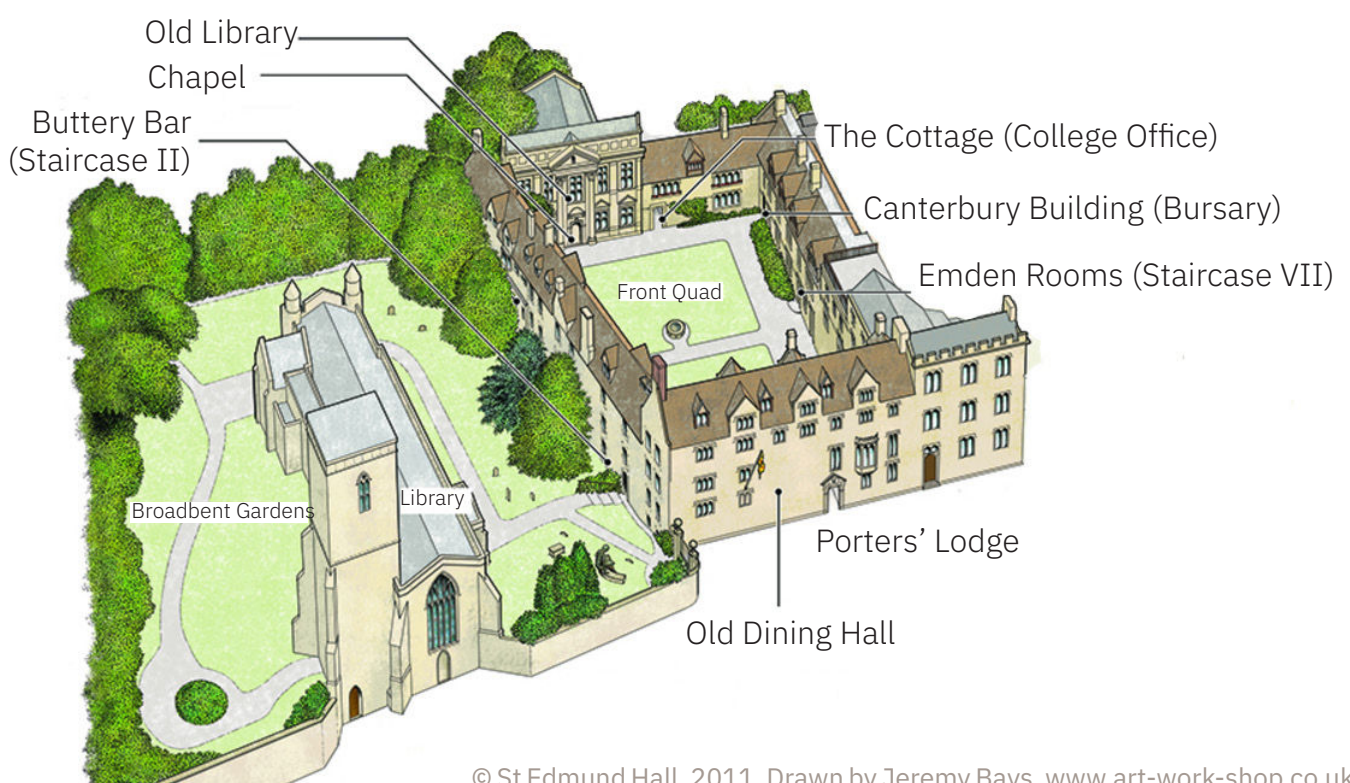

Sculpture of St Edmund by Rodney Munday, in the College churchyard

The St Edmund Hall Site

St Edmund Hall is a working college and, as a result, the rooms and buildings described below are not necessarily open to the public. Please check with the porters at the Lodge for further information.

Old Library
Chapel
Buttery Bar (Staircase II)
The Cottage (College Office)
Canterbury Building (Bursary)
Emden Rooms (Staircase VII)
Front Quad
Library
Broadbent Gardens
Porters' Lodge
Old Dining Hall

© St Edmund Hall, 2011. Drawn by Jeremy Bays, www.art-work-shop.co.uk

The Front Quad

The Sundial
The sundial features the chough. A native of Cornwall (the county associated with the College's early Principals), this black bird is distinguished by its red beak and legs.

Choughs appear on the coats of arms of Canterbury (where St Edmund was archbishop) and Abingdon (Edmund's birthplace); and in each of the four quarters of the St Edmund Hall crest.

Medieval Well
The centrepiece of the Front Quad, the medieval well was uncovered in 1926 during the construction of a new lecture room and accommodation.

The Chapel
The College Chapel, which was dedicated in 1682, shares a building with the Old Library.

Burne-Jones & Morris Window
The Chapel's east windows were reconstructed in 1865 by famous artists Sir Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris.

The Altarpiece: 'The Supper at Emmaus' by Ceri Richards
Commissioned by the Junior Common Room (the undergraduate student body) and presented to the College in 1957 to celebrate it becoming a full college of the University.

The Ante-Chapel
This is the resting place of the ashes of Principals Emden and Kelly, two of the most influential men in the history of the Hall.

The Old Library
The books stacked horizontally at the top of the columns that flank the door of the Chapel indicate that there is a library in the building (on the first floor). The Old Library was built in 1680 under Principal Penton and its collection comprises approximately 4,300 books dating from as early as the 15th century. The particular prominence of theological works reflects the nature of intellectual life at the College in the late 17th and 18th centuries.

The Cottage
Today the College Office occupies this 16th-century building, previously used as a house for the Vice-Principal. Until the 19th century, Principals, who were often vicars, were frequently called away from the Hall and Vice-Principals were left to run the college.

The Canterbury Building
Now used as the Bursary, this building was constructed by Principal Emden in 1934 to celebrate the 700th anniversary of Edmund of Abingdon's consecration as Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Old Dining Hall
The Old Dining Hall and rooms above it were built in 1659 under Principal Tuillie and it was the only building constructed in Oxford in the interregnum between Charles I and ll. The building was used as a dining hall until the College outgrew the space in 1968. On its walls are portraits of former Principals.

When it was operational, food was prepared in two kitchens located beneath the Old Dining

Hall's main floor and dinner was served every night at two sittings. The 6:15 pm meal was an informal one. The 7:15 pm meal required that students wear gowns and stand as the Fellows processed and remain standing until after grace had been said. The student diners were not allowed to leave until the Principal, from his seat at the high table, indicated to the President of the Junior Common Room, or his deputy, that the students were dismissed. Today the Old Dining Hall is used for formal dinners, lectures, weddings and other special events.

The Churchyard

Statue of St Edmund
Dedicated in 2007 to mark the 50th anniversary of the College's Royal Charter, the statue was created by sculptor and alumnus Rodney Munday.

St Peter-in-the-East
A church has existed on this site since the late 10th century. The current buildings date from around 1130, as seen in the Norman features of the nave, chancel and crypt. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the church of St Peter-in-the-East had the largest living or endowment in Oxford. The porch and the small area above it were added in the 15th century. Having peaked in the 1850s, the church's congregation significantly declined after the First World War. The church closed in 1965 and three years later, the church commissioners agreed to entrust its care and maintenance to the College for educational use. The building was restored

and reopened as the St Edmund Hall Library in 1970. Today, the Library holds over 45,000 titles and is well used by our students.
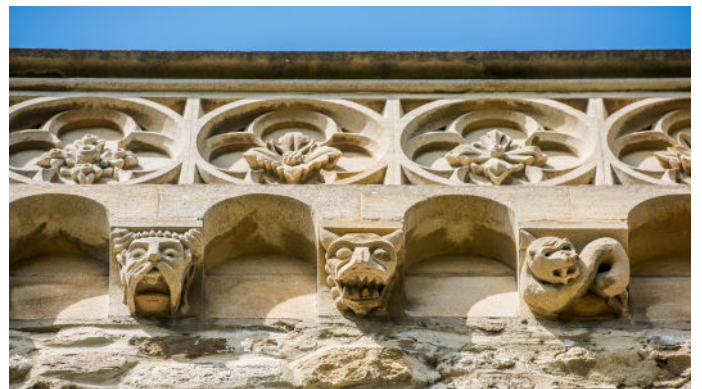
Tower Grotesques
Along the balustrade of the church tower are the sculpted heads of those who were involved in the 1970 restoration project including Principal Kelly, with his squash racquet, and Rev. Midgley, the Dean, with his dog Fred.

The Crypt
The oldest surviving part of the structure is the crypt, which was part of the original Norman church and dates from the 1130s. The crypt is one of the oldest buildings in Oxford and the oldest associated with any academic institution.

The Broadbent Garden
Described by one member of the Diocese of Oxford as a "typical north-facing bog" before its renovation, the garden behind the Library was redesigned and rededicated in May 2008 thanks to the support of the Broadbent family. It is now a quiet contemplative corner of College, popular with Fellows and students alike.

Find Out More

E: lodge@seh.ox.ac.uk

T: +44 (0)1865 279000

WWW.SEH.OX.AC.UK

@stedmundhall

FSC MIX Paper FSC® C007881

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD