

↳ There's a map of King's on the last page if you need it.

Welcome to King's! This is the ninth oldest Cambridge College, founded in 1441. We have about 430 undergraduates from a wide range of backgrounds and countries around the world studying for all Cambridge courses except Land Economy, Education and Veterinary Medicine. Students here are both members of King's and of the University of Cambridge: they have small group teaching in College but also go to the relevant faculty for lectures, seminars or practicals with students from other Cambridge colleges studying the same subject. As well as formal teaching, the College provides accommodation, meals, social and sporting facilities and, most importantly, an opportunity to develop rich intellectual and personal relationships amongst the diverse King's community and to have a great time.

We've provided a few explanations to help you out today but request that you do not enter the buildings or go through gates marked 'Private'. If you would like to visit the inside and meet King's students, academics and admissions staff it would be best to come on an Open Day when we can show you around properly.

## 1. FRONT COURT

### a. The Gatehouse and Screen

The Gatehouse and Screen enclose the front of the college. They were designed by William Wilkins (1778-1839) in the neo-Gothic style, and built in the 1820s.

The Gatehouse contains the Porters' Lodge (where you pick up keys, ask for directions etc.) and the mailroom. Students get to know the porters and custodians well as they are always around College. The porters are available to help 24/7 and are first-aid trained. All King's students have pigeon holes in the mailroom where they pick up their mail.

### b. Fountain

Our Fountain was built in 1879. You'll see the founder of the college, Henry VI (1421 - 1471), standing on top and holding out the charter that allowed the college to be built. Beneath him sit Religion and Philosophy. Religion faces south (away from the Chapel!) and holds a replica of the Chapel on top of a Bible, whilst Philosophy faces north and studies an open scroll. You'll notice that the Fountain is framed by the arch of the big white Gibbs' Building, so you can see it from the Back Court too if you stand in the right place.

### c. The Coffee Shop, Bar and 'A' staircase

If you look at where the screen meets the College buildings to the south (left if you're facing the Fountain), you'll be able to glimpse the coffee shop through the first couple of windows. The first doorway leads to 'A' staircase, then you can see the Bar through

the next few windows to the right. The Coffee Shop is a great source of drinks and snacks through the day and has comfy sofas as well as normal tables and chairs - a nice relaxed environment for meeting friends for a break. The large College Bar is the social centre of King's. People use it throughout the day as a more relaxed space for working (there is wi-fi in the Bar and Coffee Shop) or to use the pool table, table football, quiz machine, eat lunch or read newspapers. In the evenings there is often live music with open mic nights and other student-led events and, of course, the bar itself is open at lunch time and in the evenings if you want to buy drinks. Upstairs, the undergraduate accommodation in 'A' staircase has some stunning views over the Front Court. The Art Centre and a TV room are also upstairs. The Art Centre runs free art classes for students, and offers materials, easels and studio space if you want to work on your own projects.

**d. The Hall**

Next to the bar you'll see the exterior of the Hall, with the large stained glass windows. The Hall is part of the Wilkins Building, which was designed by William Wilkins (1778-1839) and completed in 1828. This is where members of the college eat. There's a self-service canteen where you can get breakfast, lunch and dinner and then you go into the Hall to eat and catch up with people. You can also attend more formal dinners, which are popular to celebrate birthdays or hold society social events.

**e. The Gibbs' Building (the big white building)**

When construction of the Chapel was interrupted by the Wars of the Roses, the masons left a large stone in the Front Court. Three hundred years later this stone became the foundation stone for the Gibbs' Building, built between 1724 and 1732. The poet Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) had rooms in this building. Now Gibbs' houses Fellows' (a fellow = an academic) rooms and college offices. Many students go to rooms in this building for their weekly supervisions, which are small teaching sessions where two or three students meet with an academic in their subject. Supervisions are a very important and enjoyable part of the teaching here at Cambridge: students discuss essays or problems they have been working on during the week with an academic in their field. It is a fantastic opportunity to ask any question you want to and because the teaching is intensive and tailored to individual needs and interests, students make a lot of progress very quickly.

**f. King's College Chapel**

King's College Chapel (an example of Late Gothic architecture) is one of the most iconic buildings in the country and the oldest part of College. The foundation stone was laid in 1446 by Henry VI, a few years after King's was founded, and the Chapel was finished in 1515. From its earliest days the Chapel had a choir to sing daily services, and this tradition is still maintained by the current College choirs. Visitors are welcome to attend the choral services which are held daily in term time – you'll see notices in the Chapel entrance if you want to see what is on. The Chapel is also the venue of the famous Christmas Eve service, A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols,

which is broadcast to millions around the world, as well as many student concerts, plays, speaker events and even some breakdancing (the floors are smooth...)!

## 2. BACK COURT

Follow the path past the Gibbs' Building on your right to the Back Court, where you'll see:

### a. **The Back Lawn**

The Back Lawn was created in the 1770s to complement the Gibbs' Building. Before then, the space contained a brewery, a walled kitchen garden, a bowling green next to the river, a tree-lined path through the lawn, and a wooden bell tower. In dry weather you can still see the outlines of these old buildings in the lawn!

We tend to keep the front and back lawns pretty, so apart from various summer parties, or if you're a fellow or a duck, you can't walk on the grass. There are other lawns and gardens where students are entirely free to use the grass, though, so don't worry – we'll come to those later.

### b. **The columns and Webb's Court**

To your left you'll see a series of columns after the Wilkins Building. The private part of College through the columns is Webb's Court. Unfortunately you can only visit if you are with a member of King's, but Webb's Court contains the college Library and Archive Centre. The Library houses over 130,000 books, periodicals and music scores. You can just see it through the windows if you look up above the columns: it runs along that side of the court in a series of picturesque rooms. King's library is accessible to students 24/7 as a place for quiet study and books can be borrowed. The Archive Centre houses valuable collections of papers, including those of economist John Maynard Keynes, novelist EM Forster, and founding father of computer science Alan Turing.

There is a lot of undergraduate accommodation in Webb's Court. The Keynes Building (1967 with the fourth floor added in 2002) provides en-suite accommodation in the heart of the College as well as seminar rooms, music practice rooms, a small gym and bike storage. The Webb's Building (built in 1909 and extended in 1957) is older so rooms there are not en-suite but they are pleasant and reasonably sized so this remains a very popular choice for undergraduates wanting a cheaper option that is central. Finally, the Provost's Lodge is located in this court. The Provost of the College (a bit like a headmaster) is given accommodation throughout his or her tenure and hosts small occasions such as college music recitals.

### c. **The Old Lodge**

After the columns you get to the Old Lodge. This was part of the large building project in the 1820s that included the Gatehouse, Wilkins' Building and the Screen. The Old Lodge now contains administrative offices and George Rylands' (Dadie Rylands) old rooms where members of the Bloomsbury group (a group of English writers, intellectuals and artists, most famously including Virginia Woolf) used to meet

regularly. King's students today use the Rylands Seminar Room in the Old Lodge which was hand painted in the Bloomsbury era and remains as a very distinctive space steeped in its creative and intellectual history.

#### **d. Cambridge University Library Tower**

If you stand in the back court and look beyond the river at the horizon you will see the tower of the University Library. The current library building was opened in 1934. It was designed by Giles Gilbert Scott (1880-1960), who also designed the red British telephone boxes. The library is one of six legal deposit libraries in the UK and Ireland, which means it acquires almost every book published in the UK or Ireland. It contains over 7 million volumes. If you would like to see the building at closer range, you might like to go out of the Back Gate, up West road (cross at the traffic lights) and take the first road on your right.

#### **e. Clare College**

Finally, on the opposite side of Back Court, by the Chapel, you will see Clare College which is just next door. Clare is the second oldest Cambridge College, founded in 1326.

### **3. KING'S BRIDGE AND THE RIVER CAM**

To see the points in this section it's best to go and stand on King's bridge.

#### **a. The River Cam**

In medieval times Cambridge was a busy inland port. Boats from the Fens offloaded their wares onto barges at Magdalene Bridge, on the edge of Cambridge. Then horses walked down the middle of the river pulling the barges into the town, past quaysides along the backs of the colleges. Some of the riverbed was paved to stop the horses sinking in the mud, and when a punter goes by you can still hear the poles clacking on the stonework on the riverbed.

Leisure punting became popular in Cambridge at the beginning of the twentieth century, and punting on the Cam is still a traditional part of the Cambridge experience. King's owns punts and kayaks that students use and we have a very active outdoors society which organises climbing and kayaking activities in term (have you ever tried kayak polo?!) as well as trips away hiking, climbing, kayaking and camping in more challenging locations during the vacations.

#### **b. The Bridge**

The current bridge was built in 1819, but before then the bridge was further north. The path to the back of the college ran through the middle of the Back Lawn into the central arch of the Gibb's Building. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the evangelical preacher Charles Simeon lived in Gibbs' Building and it is said he felt the bridge spoiled his view. He paid to have the old bridge removed and the new one built!

**c. Bodley's Court (you can see it on the right if you look back from the bridge)**

Bodley's was originally built in 1893. When the economist John Maynard Keynes was Bursar of the college he sold valuable books from the Library to pay for an extension, which was built in 1927. Alan Turing (1912-1954) had rooms in this building and more buildings were added in 1955.

Today Bodley's houses undergraduates. Often the rooms are sets, which means that students get two rooms each (a bedroom and a living room/study). Most of these rooms have great views over Bodley's Court, or over the Provost's garden on the other side. Bodley's lawn is popular with students as a place to relax by the river (yes, students can go on the grass here!).

**d. The river bank**

Standing on the bridge and looking the other way, you will see the riverbank which is another great place to relax with friends or a book, a place to write or draw as well. The view over the Back Lawn from the bridge and the riverbank is probably one of the most famous sights in Cambridge and you have the river there to enjoy as well. This part of College is only open to King's members.

#### 4. KING'S AVENUE (leading to the Back Gate)

**a. Xu Zhimo's stone**

The Chinese poet Xu Zhimo (1897-1931) was a research student at King's in 1921-2. He discovered the English romantic poets like Keats and Shelley and took their influence to China. There he helped develop modern Chinese poetry. Xu Zhimo revisited Cambridge in 1928 and wrote one of the most famous poems in China - 'Saying Good-bye to Cambridge Again'. A stone of Beijing marble lies near the bridge with the first and last two lines of the poem carved on it.

**b. Scholar's Piece**

This is an area of The Backs that is just behind King's. The lumps in the ground probably mark the remains of the medieval buildings that Henry VI flattened in order to make the College. Today Scholar's Piece is a haven for wildlife, and is used to graze rare breed cattle. You may be able to see cows and calves if it is the right time of year.

**c. The avenue**

The avenue leads to the Back Gate and Queens' Road. The gardeners grow daffodils, aconites (in the buttercup family) and scillias next to the avenue so you see some very pretty colours here in spring. This is also a favourite spot for a number of ducks, moorhens and squirrels. The grassy area to the left that you see as you walk towards the gate is Queens' Green. It's a public area but students sometimes use it for frisbee and volleyball etc. The modern part of Queens' College can be seen behind.

## 5. THE BACK GATE

### a. The Backs

The Backs is an area of land running behind the colleges that are next to the River Cam. In Tudor times it was the edge of Cambridge. The land was covered with orchards and pastureland, and beyond that lay fields. Eventually the land was cleared and made into the lawns and avenues of trees that are popular with tourists and strollers today.

### b. The Fellows' Garden

King's continues over the road. Unfortunately it is not possible to visit the Fellows' Garden without a member of College, but this large picturesque garden is enjoyed by students, staff and Fellows of King's alike. There is also further accommodation situated there: New Garden Hostel (2001) and old Garden Hostel (1950). Students who live in these rooms are right by the Sidgwick Site (where most Arts faculties are) and the University Library. And there are squash courts and more music rooms nearby. New Garden Hostel has a popular communal roof balcony overlooking the Fellows' Garden as well as individual balconies with each room. If you want to see the Old Garden Hostel Building, you might like to walk up West Road (cross at the traffic lights) and you will see it on your right not far up. The entrance to the Sidgwick Site will be on your left.

## 6. AFTER YOUR VISIT

### Finding out more

If you'd like to know more about studying and living at King's the first thing to do is to have a good read of our website where you'll find a lot of information about the courses we offer, life as a King's student, the requirements and the application process.

As well as the official information, do read our students' accounts (downloadable from the same pages). These can be very helpful to find out about day-to-day life in different subjects, the transition from sixth form to undergraduate level study and what the work/social balance is really like. Try to find out as much as you can both about academic study here and the wider college environment. King's may or may not be the right college for you but we hope that whatever your decision is, it will be an informed one.

↳ <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/>

If there's anything we've missed, do feel free to send us an email with your question:

↳ [undergraduate.admissions@kings.cam.ac.uk](mailto:undergraduate.admissions@kings.cam.ac.uk)

And if you'd like a more detailed visit it would be great to meet you at one of our Open Days:

↳ <http://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/study/open-days.html>

# KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

