



Welcome to Christ's College which originally began as 'God's House', founded in the mid-15th century by William Byngnam, a London parish priest. In 1446, soon after receiving Royal licences, God's House moved from its original site close to present day King's College Chapel to the current location. God's House was re-founded as Christ's College in 1505 by Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII and grandmother of Henry VIII.

You have just walked through the College's Great Gate with its original oak doors. The gate features emblems associated with the family of our founder, Lady Margaret, including the red Lancastrian Rose, the Beaufort portcullis, and the marguerite flower. The two mythical creatures on Great Gate, similar to antelopes but with horns that turn, are called Yales. You will notice these emblems repeated on buildings as you walk through the College.

We suggest that you follow the route marked 1 to 7 on the map on page 5.



Chapel

The Chapel, which is located in the oldest part of the College, has been a place of worship for over 500 years. It is open to the public, who are welcome at choral services which take place during term. The College choir, made up of current students, is internationally renowned and tours regularly.

Enter the main Chapel through the antechapel and you will see an oriel window (upwards to the right) which looks down from the Master's Lodge. This is the window from the private oratory of Lady Margaret Beaufort where she would pray and hear Mass.

The windows on the north side of the Chapel contain the oldest stained glass in the College, dating from the 1500s and depicting royal saints and donors.

The large window above the altar was made by Burlison & Grylls in the 19th century but depicts the College as it was three centuries earlier. To the left of this window is a double monument to alumni Sir John Finch and Sir Thomas Baines, who are buried together in the Chapel. After Baines' death in 1681, Finch described their relationship as 'a sweet and unbroken marriage of souls'.

The brass eagle lectern with four greyhound supporters (another Beaufort family symbol) at the base is a rare survival of its type. One of fewer than 50 pre-Reformation lecterns in England, it is still used at every service.



Darwin's Room

Charles Darwin lived on the first floor of the south side of First Court when he was an undergraduate at Christ's from 1828. You can see his name listed on the board at the bottom of Staircase G. Darwin's Room was restored in 2008–9 to celebrate the bicentenary of his birth.



The room was conserved, decorated and furnished as it may have looked in the early 19th century. Because no contemporary descriptions of the room survive, the restoration is based on documents including Darwin's letters and papers, descriptions and illustrations of Cambridge life in the 1820s and 30s, and old photographs, as well as techniques including paint analysis.

Darwin's Room is used for study and teaching and is not open to the public, but there are occasional opportunities to visit which are publicised on the College website and social media.



The Bodley Library and Exhibition Space

The original College Library was extended by GF Bodley in 1895–97. It houses books from our special collections ranging from our medieval herbals and psalters to 20th-century letters. Part of the space has been recently redesigned to create a new exhibition room which is open by appointment to the public. There are sometimes opportunities to drop in so you may find that it is open during your visit.

In 2023, builders working on the renovations rediscovered an early 16th-century wall painting with royal symbols including a crown above the Beaufort portcullis.



The six-metre-wide design, which is partially obscured by a wooden joist, is located in the roof space of what probably formed the north-west wall of the original Library. It has been carefully preserved but remains hidden from public view.

6 New Court and Yusuf Hamied Court

The newer building next to the Darwin Garden is an example of Brutalist architecture designed by Sir Denys Lasdun in 1969–70. It is known as **New Court**, but its popular name is the 'Typewriter'.

The modern building ahead of you is **Yusuf Hamied Court**. It provides accommodation for students, as well as offices and meeting spaces. It was funded by alumnus Dr Yusuf Hamied, a scientist and philanthropist who pioneered offering affordable HIV medications.

These buildings are not usually open to the public.



5 Darwin Garden

This garden was created to celebrate the bicentenary of alumnus Charles Darwin's birth in 1809. Darwin is best known for his evolutionary theories as the author of *On the Origin of Species* published in 1859.

The garden features a bench with a statue by alumnus Anthony Smith which depicts Darwin as he may have looked at the time that he was a student at Christ's, before his departure on the voyage of HMS Beagle in 1831.

The Beagle voyage laid the foundations for many of Darwin's scientific theories and the garden is planted with species that he would have encountered on those travels including *Berberis darwinii* (Darwin's Barberry) which is native to Chile and first described by Darwin in 1835, and *Azara microphylla* (Chinchin) which has a distinct vanilla smell when it is in flower.



4 Fellows' Garden

Pass through the gate directly in front of you to enter the Fellows' Garden (open Monday to Friday). The garden was developed in the 16th century and the present layout established around 1825. One of the highlights of the garden is **Milton's Mulberry Tree** which has a traditional association with alumnus John Milton, the 17th-century poet and radical who wrote *Paradise Lost*.



The **bathing pool** and summerhouse at the far end of the garden were first recorded in the mid 1700s. The pool is probably the oldest private bathing pool in the country. It was historically fed with water from Hobson's Conduit, which is a watercourse that was created in 1609 to bring fresh water into Cambridge from springs at Nine Wells (now a nature reserve).

You may exit the Fellows' Garden via the **Green Gate** in the wall and find your way to the **Darwin Garden**.

7 Third Court

The three buildings which form this court date from the 19th and 20th centuries. The Court is planted with cloud-trimmed yew, salvias and an historic collection of irises.

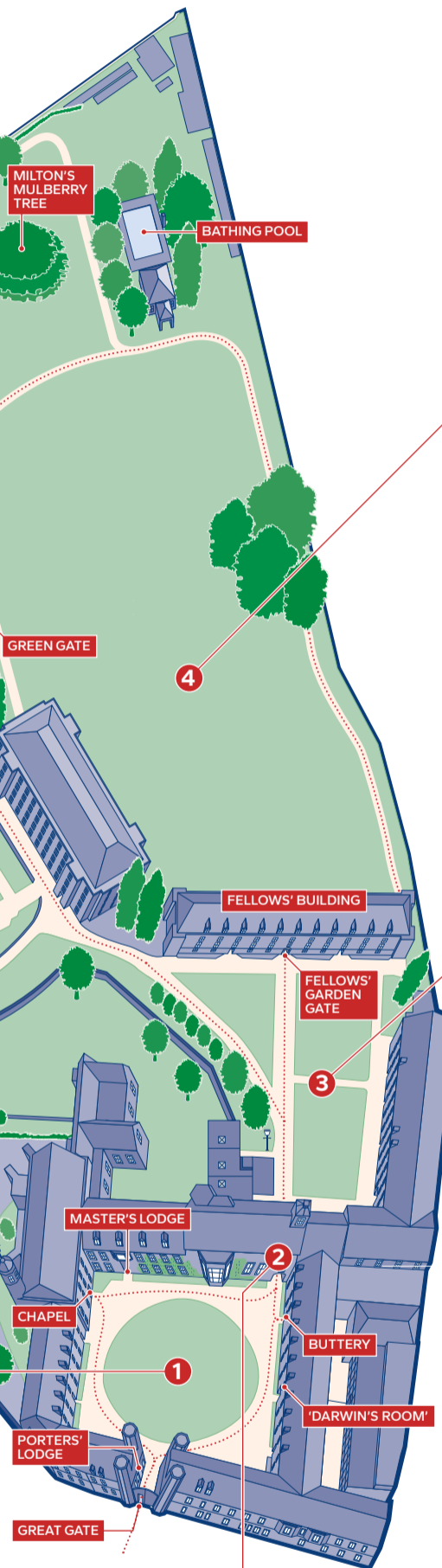


Continue back across Second Court pausing at the entrance to the Screens to see the red dragon which refers to the Welsh ancestry of the House of Tudor and the greyhound which featured on the Royal Arms in the reign of Henry VII.

As you exit the Screens, you may stop for refreshments at the **Buttery** which you will find on your left.

1 First Court

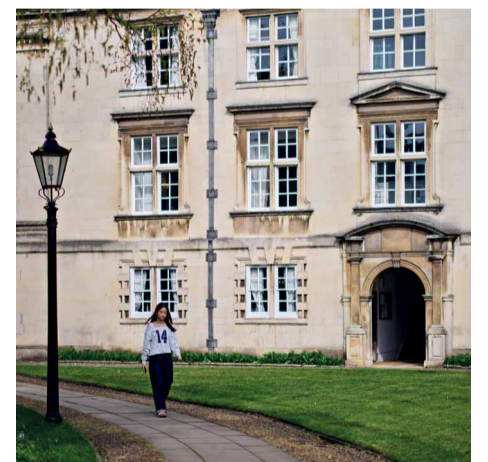
This is the oldest part of the College, dating from 1505. It has a distinctive circular lawn and, if you are visiting in the spring, a fabulous wisteria on the **Master's Lodge**. The range of buildings between the **Great Gate** and the **Chapel** formed part of God's House, built between 1448 and 1452. The other ranges were built in the early 16th century. If you stand with your back to the Great Gate looking across the Court you can see the Chapel to the left, which is open to the public, the Master's Lodge directly in front of you – note the heraldic symbols under the oriel window – and the Hall to the right of the Lodge. Now pass through the doorway in the northeast corner of the Court.



3 Second Court

As you exit the Screens, you will see the **Fellows' Building** in front of you, which was constructed in 1640–43. It is eleven bays wide and two bays deep and is an important example of a mid-17th-century Cambridge building.

The lamp posts in this court date from the 19th century and were collected by the former Librarian and Vice-Master, Arthur Leslie Peck who carefully documented every gas lamp in Cambridge during his lifetime.



2 Screens and Hall

You have entered a passageway known as the Screens. The Hall (closed to the public) is to your left. It was first constructed in the early 16th century, but was rebuilt in 1875–79, retaining the original roof. At this time the walls were raised in height and the oriel window, which includes stained glass panels depicting significant historical figures related to Christ's, was added.

To your right you will see the door belonging to the original **buttery**. The buttery was a storehouse for the College ale and wine which was stored in large casks called butts. Our College café and bar in First Court is still called 'The Buttery'.

