Whether you are a school student thinking of applying to study here or a visitor to Oxford – welcome to Wadham!

Wadham College, founded in 1610, is now home to some 430 undergraduate and 200 graduate students. Wadham is one of the 38 colleges which form the University of Oxford. Here we celebrate academic excellence, diversity and independence within a progressive and liberal environment.

Wadham is proud to have been one of the first men’s colleges in Oxford to admit women, and is now well known for attracting the brightest students from the greatest variety of backgrounds to study here. As well as teaching most academic subjects, we’re a lively community with a busy programme of events for students, staff, alumni and guests – do check out our website www.wadham.ox.ac.uk to see what’s happening here this week.

Among our many notable alumni are Robert Blake, Christopher Wren, C. Day-Lewis, Michael Foot, Melvyn Bragg, Monica Ali and Rosamund Pike. The current Warden (Head of College) is former Director of Public Prosecutions, Ken Macdonald QC.

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Find out more about Wadham at www.wadham.ox.ac.uk
A short walk around Wadham

Front Quad

Entering by the Lodge, the statues facing you from the far side of Front Quad are the College founders, Nicholas and Dorothy Wadham. Above them is King James who granted Dorothy the Royal Charter to establish the College, not long after her husband’s death in 1609. Nicholas Wadham, a member of an ancient Somerset family, had died childless and left his fortune to endow a college at Oxford. It was his 75 year old widow Dorothy who translated his intentions into reality. The original College community was small and all male, with an average student intake of about 30 a year housed in the Front Quad, the door to which was locked at 9pm each evening. Gothic in style, Front Quad comprises the Lodge, Warden’s Lodgings, Hall, Chapel, Senior Common Room, function rooms and student accommodation – the oldest parts of Wadham College. These buildings were designed by master mason, William Arnold. Notable is the clock face, sited to the left of the statues, designed by Wadham alumnus Sir Christopher Wren.

It was Nicholas Wadham’s 75 year old widow Dorothy who translated his intentions into reality.

As you return through the archway towards Front Quad, enter the Chapel via a door to your left.

Chapel

In the Ante-chapel, the elegant young man reclining on his monument is Sir John Portman, baronet, an undergraduate who died aged 19 in 1624. The monument in the form of a pile of books commemorates Thomas Harris a Fellow who died in 1614, aged 20. The organ dates from 1877 and is one of the few instruments by Henry Willis, the doyen of Victorian English organ builders, to survive without substantial modification of its tonal design. Wadham Chapel boasts an original pulpit. Its Chapel screen, like that in the dining Hall, was carved by John Bolton who was paid £82 for both. The stone altarpiece was inserted in the east end of the Chapel in 1832. The magnificent east window was made by Dutchman, Bernard van Linge, for £113 in 1621.

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The stone altarpiece was inserted in the east end of the Chapel in 1832. The magnificent east window was made by Dutchman, Bernard van Linge, for £113 in 1621, showing scenes of Christ from the Old Testament. Note especially Jonah and his whale (top right). On hearing bad reports of the depiction of the Old Testament prophets in windows on the North (left) of the chapel, Dorothy Wadham terminated the contract with glazier, Robert Rudland. He was replaced by a superior artist (name unknown) for Jesus and the apostles on the facing side.

During term time, choral evensong takes place at 6pm and visitors, any faith or none, are welcome.

The Wadham Gardens

Originally a series of orchards and market-gardens carved out from the property of the Augustinian priory, Wadham’s gardens have been significantly modified over the last four hundred years. Gardens were first created under Warden Wilkins (1648–59) as a series of formal rectangles laid out around a mound surmounted by a figure of Atlas. These gardens were notable for their series of formal rectangles laid out around a mound surmounted by a figure of Atlas.

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Turn left as you enter College and follow the path towards the clock. The archway on your left leads into the Fellows’ Garden where you are welcome to stroll.

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Back Quad

Buildings of varying ages and origins surround the informal Back Quad including the large Donald Locke Staircase (staircase 9), built as College rooms in 1693. Other buildings are adapted for College purposes from other uses; they include a former warehouse which the Oxford University Press used for storing Bibles (stairscases 10 and 11), the upper floors of the King’s Arms pub and several domestic buildings. Opened in October 2012, the McCall MacBain Graduate Centre was designed by Lee/Fitzgerald Architects. It is located on the site of the former Blackwell’s music shop. The Centre has its own terraced garden with access to adjoining student rooms and provides a dedicated work and social space for Wadham’s graduate students. The long building in Cotswold stone, used mainly for student rooms, was designed by H G Goddard and built in 1951. The steps between this building and the old College lead to a glass and concrete building with lead roof, designed by Gillespie, Kidd and Coia. Opened in 1978 it includes a large library and further student rooms. Situated to the rear of the College site, the Bowra Building, designed by MacCormac, Jamieson & Pritchard, opened in 1992. It includes student rooms, a cafeteria, bar, seminar rooms, squash court and the Moser Theatre. Wadham’s Holywell Music Room is said to be the oldest, purpose-built music room in Europe, and hence England’s first concert hall. It was designed by Thomas Camplin and opened in July 1748. The interior has been restored to a near replica of the original and contains the only surviving Donaldson organ, built in 1790 by John Donaldson of Newcastle. It is regularly used for music recitals and concerts.

Exit the dining Hall and continue through the next archway into the Back Quad. Please note that entrance to this area is restricted to students, prospective students, staff and College guests.