

Dear New Student,

Congratulations on making your offer, and welcome to Somerville College and to the College Chapel!

Somerville Chapel is a unique space. Donated to the College by a former student in the 1930s it is a nondenominational “house of prayer for all peoples.” It belongs to all members of College, and is not affiliated to any church or external religious organisation.

We use the Chapel for religious services led by members of all faiths, as well as for secular events including talks on philosophy and ethics, musical recitals, dramatic performances and even fashion shows and comedy nights. The Chapel is not a consecrated space, but it is open every day for you to visit, whether for personal prayer and reflection or just to take some time out to sit peacefully with your thoughts.

Every Sunday at 6pm during term there is a talk in Chapel accompanied by music from the College Choir. These events, which we call **Choral Contemplations**, are followed by dinner in the Dining Hall, which provides an opportunity to meet the week's guest speaker. Everyone is welcome, and we encourage you to take a look at the termcard, which you will find in your pigeonhole during Freshers' Week. We invite diverse speakers – some religious, some not – to speak on a wide range of subjects, so do take a look to see what interests you and make a note in your diaries. During term we also hold prayer meetings, public speaking workshops and evening meditation classes.

The first Choral Contemplation of the academic year is an introduction to Oxford life through music and literature. We hope you'll be able to come along and enjoy some beautiful music and readings in this peaceful and welcoming Chapel. **It is at 6pm on Sunday 7th October in the Chapel.**

The Chapel Choir is one of the leading mixed choirs in the University, and is directed by Will Dawes, a professional conductor and singer and graduate of the Royal Academy of Music. If you would like to sing with us, auditions will be held throughout Thursday and Friday of Freshers week (4th and 5th October), and there's also an open rehearsal on the Thursday evening from 4.45-6.30pm. Please let Will know if you'd like to audition and/or attend the open rehearsal (william.dawes@some.ox.ac.uk). The choir is heavily involved in college life, and as well as singing in the Chapel on Sunday evenings, the choir sings for dinners and seminars, in addition to concerts both in the UK and abroad. The choir recently completed a hugely successful tour of the USA, and they will be touring to India in December of this year. This promises to be a highly prestigious tour, and will be the first visit to India by any Oxford college choir. You can watch some of the choir's performances on their YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/somervillechoir>

So you can get to know us and meet some current students who regularly attend Chapel events, **you are invited to drop in for tea and cakes at 5:15pm on Sunday 7th October (in the Mary Somerville Room) – immediately before the first choral contemplation of term.** We do hope you will find time to pop in, say hello, and take advantage of some fine confectionery!

May we also take this opportunity to wish you a happy and fulfilling time here at Somerville. We look forward to meeting you soon.

With our very best wishes,

Brian McMahon (Chapel Director)
William Dawes (Director of Chapel Music)

Useful contact information:

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