



Lady Margaret House
12 Grange Road
CAMBRIDGE
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Students

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HISTORICAL OUTLINE

No 12 Grange Road was built in 1890 and for many years was a family house known as Berrycroft.

In 1937 it was bought by a religious congregation, the Canonesses of Saint Augustine, Congregation of Our Lady, founded in Lorraine in 1597 for educational work. The name Berrycroft was then changed to Lady Margaret House, after Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII and friend of St John Fisher, a lady closely associated with the foundation of Christ's and St John's Colleges.

At first and for many years the sisters took in students who were preparing for college entrance examinations, but during the second world war a number of London colleges including Bedford and LSE were evacuated to Cambridge and Lady Margaret House helped to provide accommodation for them.

In Oxford both men and women were members of the Catholic Chaplaincy at this time, but this was not so in Cambridge: the Fisher Society was reserved exclusively for men. In 1939, thanks to the efforts of Mr H.O. Evenett, Father (later Bishop) Petit, Mr and Mrs Laffan, Miss Toynbee, Miss Garrod and others, the Oxford & Cambridge Catholic Education Board asked the sisters to "look after the spiritual needs of the women at Cambridge University in co-operation with Father Adrian English". An official association of the Catholic women of Newnham and Girton (the only colleges for women at that time) was set up and known as the Margaret Beaufort Society. For seventeen years a room in the house (now the Warden's room) served as a chapel, until the sisters, in 1954, through the generosity of benefactors, were able to build a separate chapel to the south of the main house. As well as serving the community, this is still open to local Catholic worshippers and students of all denominations, and Mass is celebrated there daily in term time.

In 1965, on the retirement of Mgr Alfred Gilbey as Chaplain of the men, a mixed Chaplaincy was created and still flourishes at Fisher House in the centre of Cambridge. The Margaret Beaufort Society ceased to exist.

In the nineties Lady Margaret House is a residential hostel for postgraduate and undergraduate students of the University, mainly Roman Catholic, but it also welcomes practising Christians from other denominations. Students, both men and women, are selected from all colleges, with preference given to postgraduates. During the summer vacation a certain number of rooms may be let

to visitors, and at times during the academic year non-resident students of English have classes in the Library and reading-room.

Lady Margaret House is still run privately and is the property of the Canonesses who occupy an adjacent wing and staff the hostel with lay helpers. The Roman Catholic diocese of East Anglia continues to encourage their charism of educational work with men and women of the University.