



THE GARDEN FRONT

THE PRESIDENT'S LODGE

Queens' College, Cambridge

ANYONE who has punted the Cam along the Backs at Cambridge will have been struck by the contrast between the two colleges first founded by Royalty at the University. The spacious formality of King's, with lawns sweeping to the riverside, accentuates the friendly intimacy of the President's Lodge at Queens' and its English walled garden.

The Lodge is the only extant half-timbered building in all the colleges of the University. As we shall see later, no house could have been constructed in a more haphazard way.

But the unexpected charm of the Cloister

Court, like a piece of rural England grown up of its own accord in an academic setting, lingers in the memory of thousands of visitors and of Cambridge men and women when some of the less distinctive courtyards of other colleges tend to blur into one another.

It is the President's Lodge which makes the Cloister Court. Its famous Gallery extends over the full length of the North Cloister, and connects other rooms in the Lodge which lie over the East and West Cloisters. Practically the whole house is thus on the first and second floors. Only a hall and



THE DINING-ROOM, OR OLD AUDIT-ROOM

staircase in the north-west corner of the Court are on the ground floor. It has been the home of Dr. and Mrs. Venn throughout his Presidency, which has now lasted for seventeen years.

King's College was founded in 1441 and Queens' College in 1448. The first President (and true founder) of Queens' was a Friar named Andrew Dokett, who obtained a charter for a college from King Henry VI in 1446. Dokett was a remarkable man, who was quick to see the benefit of securing royal patronage for his foundation. In 1448 he persuaded the young Queen Margaret of Anjou, then only eighteen, to petition the King to allow her to found and name the college—up to then known as the College of

St. Bernard. The Queen was not the first woman to found a college in Cambridge. Her petition is preserved among the college treasures, and part of its wording runs :

“ . . . to the magnificence of denomination of such a Quenes collage and to laud and honneure of sexe feminine, like as two noble and devoute contesses of Pembroke and of Clare founded two collages in the same universite called Pembroke hall and Clare hall . . . ”

At first, the President had two rooms in the north-west corner of the first or principal Court of the college, between the Library and the Hall. Later, in 1461, he was also provided with several more rooms in

The Antique Collector

a separate building along the river front. During the first half of the 16th century it was decided to connect the two isolated portions of the President's accommodation. This was the period when no larger manor house in England was considered complete without a Long Gallery ; and so the connecting passage became a Gallery over the Cloister.

There is a somewhat confusing reference to *le galere* in the College accounts. In 1510 and subsequent years payments are made "for cleaning the President's chamber, the gallery (*le galere*) and the queen's room." The latter room is now a sitting-room lying between the Dining-room and the Gallery, i.e., it was one of the river front rooms given to the President in the early 16th century. But the gallery mentioned in 1510 is clearly not the present

Gallery, because in 1515-6 a payment is made for repairs to the lead roof on the north side of the Cloister, a roof which the Gallery completely covers.

The extant Gallery, very much as now seen, dates between 1516—the date of the roof repairs—and 1560, when entries occur of sums paid for "constructing the Master's upper chambers." The entries are for beams, planks and bundles of reeds, but there are no entries for payments to tilers. This suggests half-timber construction and internal replanning rather than completely new construction. Thus the best approximation to the date of the Gallery would seem to be about 1538, when a number of payments were made for a *deambulatorium*, including "casting of ledde" ; though it seems probable



THE GALLERY



The Erasmus Chair, *circa* 1490

that the oriels and bay windows were inserted during the 1560 alterations.

The Gallery is a most beautiful room, measuring 12 feet wide and 80 feet long. The windows on each side are not opposite one another. Originally the Cloister oriels were higher than as now seen. They continued

above the roof with octagonal turrets, cupolas and richly decorated vanes. The effect must have been picturesque in the extreme, but they were removed sometime during the 18th century. It will be seen from our illustration that, while the Gallery overhangs the Cloisters by $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, the cross timbers as shown by brackets do not correspond to the Cloister arches. The effect, though clumsy, is not very noticeable, however. Happily the quite inappropriate sash windows, which were inserted in the Gallery in the 18th century, were replaced by the present casement lights in 1911 under the Presidency of Dr. Fitzpatrick.

Another important change in the external appearance of the Gallery made at this time was the removal of the covering of plaster which for many years had concealed the original half-timbering. The revealing of the vertical timbers was certainly the correct decision, as the finish given to the wooden studs indicates that they were intended to show.

The general appearance

has been lightened by the change.

The panelling of the Gallery, like that in the Dining-room, was inserted by Dr. Humphrey Tindall, President from 1579 to 1614. It dates to 1604, and is of a simple design in low relief, with fluted columns at intervals. Tindall's will makes the following reference :

The Antique Collector

"Item. I give to the President and Fellows of Queens College in Cambridge, to my successors' use, all the seeling and wainscoting of my chambers and lodging I have which (I take) amounteth to two hundred and fifty pounds or thereabouts more than I have received from the college or any other benefactors towards the same."

The glass of the half-octagonal bay in the centre of the Gallery contains heraldic shields which were also provided by Humphrey Tindall, namely, the arms of the College (1589) and Tindall's own arms (1597).

There is a selection of old English chairs, mainly in oak and walnut, and other early pieces, generally of unpretentious styles, but including, for example, a finely carved tripod table of about 1750. But the outstanding piece is the Erasmus chair here illustrated. Of good proportions, this very early example of an English turned chair dates to about 1490, that is, shortly before the date of the arrival of Erasmus to study and lecture at Queens'. Tradition associates the chair with his name,

and if it was not actually his, it was undoubtedly made at the period and has always been in the possession of the College. The colour of its woodwork has toned to a pleasing chestnut brown.

Numerous portraits are to be seen in the Gallery, showing notable people such as Queen Elizabeth Widville, the second Patroness, Erasmus himself, the Duke of Albemarle, and some former members of the College admitted in the 17th and 18th centuries. There are also portraits of Charles II and Oliver Cromwell. Mrs. Venn, in arranging the portraits, has decided that the safest position for Charles is between portraits of his aunt and his grandmother, namely, Elizabeth, daughter of James I, and Anne of Denmark, Queen of James I.

The ceiling of the Gallery, admirably carried out in a 17th century style, was inserted in 1923.

The old Audit-room of the College, where



THE ESSEX ROOM



A CORNER OF THE PRESIDENT'S STUDY

Audit-dinners were held as recently as 1875, is now the President's Dining-room. The panelling here was also provided by Humphrey Tindall during his Presidency and is, if anything, finer in quality than that in the Gallery. The chimney-piece is a good example of a fairly restrained Jacobean design, with geometrical panels. The old fireplaces in both Dining-room

and in the Gallery were uncovered and restored during the Presidency of Dr. Ryle, who was installed in 1896. Immediately over the Dining-room fireplace hangs an 18th century silver toaster, with handle in *lignum vitæ* so as to stand the heat of the fire. A simple twist of the handle reverses the toast.

Outstanding among the furniture is part of a magnificent set of late 17th century chairs made in this country by a Dutch craftsman working at Harwich. The set consists of eighteen single chairs and two armchairs, with their original cut velvet covers in deep red. The material is carried over the whole surface of the seats and fitted over the undershaping of the fronts. The backs of the chairs are splendidly carved, the front legs are turned with large knobs, and the graceful X-stretchers between the legs are finished at the central points by turned finials. This must certainly be one of the most important sets of its kind extant. Its two armchairs were

selected for the use of King George V and Queen Mary when they visited Cambridge to open the University Library.

An early 18th century gilt gesso mirror of attractive lines hangs between portraits of women painted by Lely and Kneller. The other pictures in the Dining-room, formerly much more numerous than at present, are in the main of former Presidents of the College. The silver tankard shown on the dining-table dates to the reign of William and Mary and is one of a number of splendid early tankards owned by Queens'. It has a fully modelled lion thumb-piece, and is known as the Sparke tankard, being the gift of John Sparke. It bears the London date letter for 1688.

In one corner of the Dining-room stands a long-case clock of exceptional interest, as its brass dial bears a plate with the inscription : " To Queenes Colledg Cambridg The Guift of Edward East Clockmaker to King Charles the Second 1664." This is a very early example of a weight-driven pendulum clock, dating before the full scientific development of English clockmaking in the 1670's. The engraved dial and hands are of exquisite simplicity and admirable proportions, but it would appear that the movement was originally supported on a bracket and that the oak casing is of later period.

Next to the Dining-room is a small Drawing-room, also panelled, which has a powder closet with a window overlooking the river. In the early days of the College a suite of rooms opened off the Drawing-room—the division of the rooms being different from the present arrangement—one of the rooms known as the " large room " or " queen's room " being that prepared for the reception of Henry VIII in 1506, of Catharine of Aragon in 1521, and Cardinal Wolsey in 1520.

The oldest room in the Lodge is the President's Study, situated to the north of the College Hall, and with its own peep-hole into the Hall, from which it is possible to see and hear all that is taking place below without being observed. The principal treasure here is undoubtedly the superb linenfold panelling. This was the old panelling of the Hall put up in 1531-2, which had been relegated to the Servants' Hall of the Lodge and has now been placed in a position more appropriate to its



Clock presented by Edward East, 1664

dignity. Before being panelled, the walls of the Hall had simply been covered by canvas hangings.

The making of the panelling took from September 30, 1531, to September 10, 1532, i.e., eleven months. The upper decoration

THE PRESIDENT'S LODGE

consists of a frieze of benefactors of the College, alternating with "antyk" heads, the carving being done by Giles Fambeler and Dyrik Harrison, as recorded in the accounts. The painted coats of arms, or "skochyns" as they are called, were by John Ward. It was when new woodwork was fitted in the Hall in 1732-4 that this wonderful linenfold panelling was discarded.

The President's Study contains an example of an early gate-leg table with oval top remarkable for its size. It measures 7 feet $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches by 6 feet 11 inches, and its turned underframing and four gates are correspondingly massive. This table had also been discarded to an out-house, from which it was rescued by Dr. Ryle during his Presidency.

We illustrate finally the Essex panelled Sitting-room with bay window. This is situated at the east end of the Gallery and forms the upper part of the Lodge which projects into the garden. The Jacobean chimney-piece is of an

arcaded design, and there are numerous small antiques and works of art, including Chinese snuff-boxes and netsukes, and Japanese prints.

And so we take our leave of a home with a character unmatched in any other college. Bound up in its history with the life of an ancient seat of learning, its Study was being erected at the time when Erasmus was working in his rooms on the other side of the Cloister Court. The Long Gallery of the Lodge dates to the time of the Reformation, and its panelling and that of the old Audit-room are of the age of Elizabeth and Shakespeare. Yet the Lodge, despite the undoubted domestic problems it presents to any President's wife, remains a true example of English domestic architecture unique in either Cambridge or Oxford. We have confined ourselves in this article to the Lodge, and have not attempted description of the many other historical rooms and treasures possessed by the College.



THE LODGE, FROM THE CLOISTER COURT