

HALIFAX HOUSE

INTRODUCTION

Halifax House was initially designed as a 'hostel, club and social centre', according to its rules, for postgraduates and senior members of the University without college affiliations. The Oxford University Graduate Centre was established at the Old Convent (formerly the Society of the Holy and Undivided Trinity) at 62 Woodstock Road in 1946, becoming Halifax House when it was officially opened by Lord Halifax, the Chancellor, in January 1947. In 1950 a formal constitution and an executive committee were established after Congregation passed a statute recognising Halifax House. In the same year, the move to new premises at 6 and 7 South Parks Road meant that accommodation could no longer be provided.

Halifax House housed the Oxford University Graduate Club (OUGC), which was, according to its rules, 'a social club for men and women and its objects comprise the provision of facilities for social intercourse and other amenities including reading and writing on the premises'. A confusing management structure evolved of dual control between Halifax House and the OUGC as a result of the need to satisfy legal requirements for holding a club licence for a bar. Halifax House *per se* was run by the Halifax House Committee, which was responsible for admission, 'direction and control', and the appointment of the Warden. The Halifax House Committee delegated powers and duties to the Members' Committee, among them the 'power to make regulations for the conduct of its business'. Sub-committees for social activities, sport and art were in turn loosely accountable to the Members' Committee. The OUGC was run by its own Management Committee, which had the 'power to make regulations for the conduct of its business and the control and management of the Club generally'. A wine committee was accountable to this body.

In practice the personnel on the committees was largely identical. By 1958 it was felt that there was a need for reorganisation, since the Halifax House Committee, via the Members' and subordinate Committees, was actually organising and controlling all the social activities other than the bar, rather than the OUGC Management Committee. In August 1958 a new management structure was implemented at Halifax House. Halifax House was still run by the Halifax House Committee and the Members' Committee. The OUGC was to be run by the Management Committee, as before, but now with a General Purposes Committee which had its powers delegated by the Management Committee and controlled the Club funds. All the subordinate committees were then accountable to the General Purposes Committee. The new system was designed to ensure that, on paper at least, the legal requirements were still met. The memberships of the Halifax House Committee and the OUGC Management Committee, and likewise the Members' Committee and the OUGC General Purposes Committee, were therefore still virtually identical, although the bodies were technically separate.

8 South Parks Road was acquired by Halifax House in 1961, and in 1970 Cherwell Edge, a former convent at the end of the road, came into the possession of the University. Its management was entrusted to Halifax House, on the University's behalf, providing postgraduate accommodation and an extension of the guest accommodation available at Halifax House. From 1977, Linacre College occupied the property.

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The size of the membership of the club grew rapidly, from 203 in 1947 to 715, plus 369 Country members (ie members who had moved away from Oxford) in 1971. There have been changes since 1971, notably the abolition of the subscription fee, but the renamed University Club still exists, providing social and sporting facilities for University employees, senior members of the University, graduate students engaged in advanced study or research, and temporary visitors resident in Oxford for the purposes of advanced study.

These records were transferred to the University Archives from Halifax House in 1972, and comprise chiefly minutes and agenda papers of the various committees concerned with its administration.

Bibliography

Encyclopaedia of Oxford, ed. C Hibbert (OUP 1988)

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- HH 1/1-2 Minutes of the Committee on the Use of the Convent, 1945; Committee on Accommodation for Postgraduate Students, 1945-6; Postgraduate Hostel Committee, 1946; Graduate Hostel Committee, 1946; Graduate Centre Committee, 1946; Graduate Centre Executive Committee, 1946; Halifax House Executive Committee, 1947-62. Also includes minutes of AGMs of Oxford University Graduate Club, 1948-57; and OUGC Management Committee, 1950-1. 1945-62.
1. 1945-57
 2. 1957-62
- HH 2 Minutes and agenda papers of the Halifax House Committee. 1963-6
- HH 3/1-2 Agenda papers of the Halifax House Executive Committee. 1946-61
1. 1946-55
 2. 1956-61
- HH 4/1-2 Minutes of the Oxford University Graduate Club Management Committee. 1958-64
1. 1958-64
 2. 1964
- HH 5/1-2 Minutes and agenda papers of the Halifax House Committee and the OUGC Management Committee; includes AGM agenda papers 1949-66. 1949-71
1. 1949-67
 2. 1965-71
- HH 6 Circulated papers comprising chiefly the minutes and agenda papers of the Halifax House Committee, the OUGC Management Committee and the Halifax House Members' Committee. 1966-70
- HH 7 Minutes of the OUGC General Purposes Committee and the Halifax House Members' Committee. 1958-61

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- HH 8 Lists of members, rejected applications, resignations and residents.
1946-59
- HH 9 Income journal. 1968-71
- HH 10 Suggestions book. 1957-65