



UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

CONNAUGHT HALL

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BULLETIN

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FROM THE WARDEN

*January – February 2013*

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*[www.connaught-hall.org.uk](http://www.connaught-hall.org.uk)*

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## Happy New Year!



Welcome back from your holidays. All the staff in Hall and the University of London join me in hoping you enjoy a happy, healthy new year and wish you every success in your studies and exams this term.



## Open office sessions

I am available to see residents without an appointment at my open office sessions, advertised on posters and at [openoffice.connaught-hall.org.uk](mailto:openoffice.connaught-hall.org.uk). The next few are:

Saturday 26 January, 14.00 – 15.00;

Sunday 3 February, 14.00 – 15.00; &

Thursday 7 February, 17.30 – 18.30.

You can make an appointment to see me at other times by emailing [warden@connaught-hall.org.uk](mailto:warden@connaught-hall.org.uk); I can usually arrange a meeting within 72 hours.

Some of the issues I have helped residents deal with in the past few years include loneliness, social isolation, bullying, difficulties with academic work, conflicts related to religion or sexuality, depression, eating disorders, pregnancy, illness, drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm, noisy neighbours, room-mate conflicts, theft and damage to property. Confidentiality is assured unless it is absolutely necessary to involve other professionals, such as your GP or a counsellor – which I will only do with your full knowledge. My open office sessions are also a good opportunity for you to come and tell me about requests for extended overnight guest stays, ask about how to make suggestions or complaints about Hall facilities and services, find out how to get involved in our events and activities, or simply come and introduce yourself if we haven't met yet!

## Help in an emergency

Remember, there is always a member of staff in Hall to help immediately if you have an emergency: during office opening hours, the Hall Manager or Assistant Manager are available in the Hall Office; in the evening and at weekends there is a Duty Senior Member (DSM) on call from my team. You can contact the DSM via reception.

If required, the Hall Manager or DSM is able to contact me 24/7 for advice and assistance with serious, urgent matters.



## Hall Manager

Harriet Harold returned from maternity leave on 14 January to resume her position as Hall Manager for Connaught and College Halls.

The Hall Manager and Assistant Manager are based in the Hall Office from 08.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday. They look after the building, catering, cleaning, and finances, and can help answer your questions and suggestions about fees, facilities, or accommodation matters.



## Social media

There are numerous profiles, pages, and groups online that claim to be associated with Connaught Hall. Please remember that the only official groups or pages are those that have a link at [contacts.connaught-hall.org.uk](mailto:contacts.connaught-hall.org.uk). The content of any other pages or profiles is neither controlled nor endorsed by Connaught Hall or the University of London. I strongly advise you to be very careful about disclosing any personal details to the moderators or owners of any such groups.

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## Residents' survey

Later this term, you will be invited to fill out a questionnaire about your experience of Connaught Hall. It's completely anonymous so you can tell us what you really think.

Of course we want to know what we can do better, but it is also really important that you tell us what we are already getting right and what you like about the Hall, especially as pressure increases from the University of London to standardise policies & services and save money across the intercollegiate halls of residence. Some of our services – including pastoral care, welfare, and community building & social life – are severely threatened by cuts over the next few months. We need to know what you value most about our Hall so we can fight to keep those things!



## Senior Member vacancies

We are likely to have two vacancies for Senior Members at Connaught Hall to start in the summer. Look out for posters advertising these vacancies in April. Please talk to me early if you are interested in applying for a Senior Member position this year: come to one of my open office sessions.



## Hall fees

Accommodation fees for term 2 are now overdue. If you have not already paid, please do so now or contact the Finance Office urgently to discuss the situation. You can email them at [ahd.finance@london.ac.uk](mailto:ahd.finance@london.ac.uk).

The easiest way to pay is at <https://epay.london.ac.uk>, which includes options for payment in instalments.

## Readmission to Hall next year

In February, the Accommodation Reservations Office will email you to invite applications for readmission to Connaught Hall for next year. Places are strictly limited and must be allocated according to quotas set by the colleges of the University. It is very unusual for anyone to be offered a third year in Hall. Places will not be offered to residents who have not fully paid their Hall fees for term 1; nor will places usually be offered to residents with disciplinary warnings on file.

I will review all applications and can support those from residents with significant medical, mental health, or social reasons for wishing to stay for a second year, and those who have made a major positive contribution to the social and community life of the Hall. Those with genuinely serious financial hardship can also be given preference, but I will need to see official documentary evidence of significant hardship such as a letter from a debt counsellor. Please speak with me at one of my open office sessions if you would like to be considered for any of these categories, or if you intend to apply but will be a third year, have not paid your fees, or have disciplinary issues on file.

Please be sure to complete the "personal statement" section of the readmission application form. It amazes me every year how many people complain about not getting a place having left this section of the form completely blank.

If you do not intend to return to the Hall next year, now is a good time to start looking at your other options for housing: don't leave it till term 3!

We have published some top tips on finding private housing here: [bit.ly/OLBYoc](https://bit.ly/OLBYoc). More advice can be found at University of London Housing Services at [housing.london.ac.uk](https://housing.london.ac.uk) and in the London Student Housing Guide at [studenthousing.london.ac.uk](https://studenthousing.london.ac.uk).



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## What's new in Hall?

You can quickly get an update on what's new in Hall here: [news.connaught-hall.org.uk](http://news.connaught-hall.org.uk).



## Residents' Club Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Residents' Club, open to all residents, will be held in the dining hall at 6.30 pm on **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February**.

The elected Officers will present a report on the financial state of the Club, their activities so far this academic year, and their plans for the rest of the year.

Residents will be given an opportunity to ask questions and a vote will be held to approve the Committee's plans for terms 2 and 3, so this is a good opportunity to make sure your £10/term subscription is being well spent!

You can email the Committee any time with your views and ideas: [committee@connaught-hall.org.uk](mailto:committee@connaught-hall.org.uk).



## Email suggestion box

Towards the end of last term, we received lots of helpful, constructive comments in the email suggestion box at [suggestions@connaught-hall.org.uk](mailto:suggestions@connaught-hall.org.uk). I hope those who sent suggestions would all agree that their comments were taken seriously. We strive to reply to all suggestions within three working days, and whilst we cannot always do exactly as residents suggest, we will always carefully consider your ideas and comments. Please, if you are dissatisfied with something, take the time to let us know about it!

## Facilities Committee

There will be a Facilities Committee meeting in the week commencing **28<sup>th</sup> January**. If you have any comments, complaints, or suggestions about any facilities matters (catering, maintenance, security, safety, cleaning, or housekeeping) that you would like the Committee to discuss, email [facilities.committee@connaught-hall.org.uk](mailto:facilities.committee@connaught-hall.org.uk) or speak with one of the student facilities representatives so they can raise it on your behalf.

Minutes of the Committee's previous meetings are available online at [facilities.connaught-hall.org.uk](http://facilities.connaught-hall.org.uk).



## Smoke detectors & smoking in Hall

Please remember that smoking anywhere inside the Hall is prohibited by law in England. You could be fined if caught. **Rooms that are dirty, damaged, or malodorous because of smoking will be subject to an extra cleaning charge, deducted from the resident's deposit at the end of the year.**

**Under no circumstances must you ever cover your smoke detector.** We have one small fire at Connaught Hall almost every year, and a more damaging fire occurs about every eight-to-ten years. If a fire were to start in your room while you were out – from faulty electrical equipment, for example – a covered smoke detector would not raise the alarm until the fire had become quite serious, and certainly too big for us to put out with a fire extinguisher. By delaying the detection of a fire and activation of the evacuation signal, covering smoke detectors jeopardises the lives of everyone in the Hall: fire and smoke can kill very quickly.

**No further warnings will be issued on this matter: if your smoke detector is found to be covered, the penalty will be expulsion from the Hall.**

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## *Please collect your mail*

Several residents have mentioned that the mail pigeonholes are getting clogged up with post that people are not picking up. Please take a few moments this week to clear all of your own mail out of your pigeonhole. We soon have to dispose of mail that has been left for more than a few weeks.



## *Mobile phone theft*

A mobile phone is stolen every 4.8 minutes in London. In Bloomsbury, many phones are stolen by people riding past on a cycle and snatching the phone from the victim's hand. We at the University of London are working with the Metropolitan Police and Camden Council to reduce theft in the area. You can help by following this advice:

Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings, especially when using a cash point machine or mobile phone.

- Try not to openly show off your valuables. In particular, avoid using maps on your smartphone, as using these not only draws attention to the fact that you are unfamiliar with your surroundings, but advertises your expensive iPhone or smartphone.
- When possible, avoid taking shortcuts. Stick to main roads which are well lit and relatively busy.
- Don't keep your wallet / purse / phone in a back trouser pocket where it is easily accessible; keep them in a zipped pocket and frequently check you still have them with you.
- If you are travelling alone on a bus, sit near to the driver rather than sitting on the top deck.
- Check if there is an app which can help locate your phone if it is lost or stolen.

## *Noise complaints & subwoofer speakers*

Most of the noise complaints we have received recently have been about residents being drunk in the early hours of the morning and making a lot of noise in the corridor. Please try to be extra aware of your volume when you are in the corridor late at night. It only takes one loud shriek to wake up your whole corridor – and it doesn't make you very popular with your neighbours!

Please also remember that the Supplementary Regulations specifically prohibit the use of subwoofer speakers in Hall. The low frequency sounds outputted by subwoofers are particularly apt to transmit through our walls, floors, and ceilings and can be a real nuisance to your neighbours.

If someone is disturbing you, it is often best to politely approach them yourself at first and ask them to be quieter. Most people will be helpful and quieten down; they will be grateful that you did not involve staff and make a formal complaint.

Sometimes you may feel that you cannot approach your neighbour directly, or they may not respond to your request. If this happens, call reception (ext. 8200) and tell them where the noise is coming from. The security officer will usually phone the person making noise and ask them to be quiet. If the noise persists 10 minutes after your initial complaint, phone reception again and ask them to contact the Duty Senior Member (evenings, nights, and weekends) or the Hall Office (during office hours). The staff member will visit the room making noise and deal with the problem. Then send an email to [noise@connaught-hall.org.uk](mailto:noise@connaught-hall.org.uk) to make sure your complaint is logged; for if the security officer deals with a noise complaint successfully, they may not always report it to me, so a pattern of recurrent noise may go unnoticed. But please do not only send an email without also reporting the problem by telephone.

If you are being persistently disturbed, make an appointment to discuss the problem with me.

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## Updates from the Residents' Club

The latest meeting minutes and financial statements from the Residents' Club Committee are now available online here: [committee.connaught-hall.org.uk](http://committee.connaught-hall.org.uk).



## Connaught Hall hoodies

Daisy, the Residents' Club Sports Officer, is organising a delivery of branded hoodies as a memento of your time at Connaught. Email her at [sports@connaught-hall.org.uk](mailto:sports@connaught-hall.org.uk) for more information or to pre-order yours.



## Hall bar

Drinks prices have been reduced at the bar:

- £1.50 singles
- £2.00 doubles
- £2.50 fugitives
- £1.50 Carling
- £2.50 other beers

We hope you will agree these prices are really competitive and that you will continue to **support your bar!**

Opening times have also changed to allow us to offer a better service while keeping prices low, and staying open every night. Your bar is now open from 21.00 to 23.00 Monday to Saturday, and 20.30 to 22.30 on Sunday.

We have lots of **special events** coming up in the bar this term: see notices posted later in this Bulletin.



## Drinking your own alcoholic drinks

To help uphold the legal requirements of our alcohol licence, the following is a condition of your residence in Hall:

Only alcoholic beverages that have been purchased from the bar may be consumed in the bar, courtyard garden, and Bell Room between the hours of 19.00 and 23.00.

Please do not bring your own alcoholic drinks into these areas at the times given. We will ask you to leave if caught, and frequent offenders may be subject to disciplinary action.



## Welcome back tea – Sun 20<sup>th</sup> January

The Warden and Senior Members warmly invite you to our "welcome back" tea party in reception on Sunday 20 January from 14.30 to 17.00 in the reception lobby.

We'll provide all the tea, chocolate, coffee, and biscuits you need – but please BYOM (bring your own mug!)

This is a great chance to meet me and the team if you have moved in recently, or even if you've been here all year and somehow escaped meeting us! You can use this time for a general "hello" social chat with me or a Senior Member, or we can delve into something more serious: just ask if you want us to adjourn to my office in private.

Plus it's also a free hot drink and biscuits., when the weather outside is frightful... We hope you'll have the time of your life!

More than anything, it's our way of recognising that you've all been gone lately, we missed you and we want to welcome you back.

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## Upcoming events after this weekend

### Scottish Burns' night

Fri 25/01, 21.00 in the dining hall: Traditional speeches and a celidh dance.

### Barbecue dinner for Australia Day

Sat 26/01, dinner time. A simple barbecue menu to mark Australia Day.

### Bingo

Tue 19/01, 20.30 in the bar. With a prize for the winner(s)!

### Pub quiz

Tue 29/01, 20.30 in the bar. With a prize for the winner(s)!

### Pool tournament

Thu 31/01, 20.30 in the bar. With a prize for the winner(s)!

### Zumba class

Wed 06/02, 20.00 in the bar.

### Valentine's party

Fri 08/02, 20.00 - 01.00 in the bar.

### Chinese New Year

Sat-Sun 09-10/02 (see posters later).

### Table tennis tournament

Tue 26/02, 20.30 in the Bell Room. With a prize for the winner(s)!

### Celtic night – to coincide with St Patrick's Day

March (see posters later)

### Trip to Thorpe Park

mid-March (see posters later).

### Australia & New Zealand (ANZAC) night

Thu 25/04 (see posters later).

## Multicultural Students' Forum (MCSF)

Our new MCSF met for the first time last term. The minutes of that first meeting are available to view here: [www.connaught-hall.org.uk/documents/McSFMinutes/Minutes%202012.12.11%20McSF.pdf](http://www.connaught-hall.org.uk/documents/McSFMinutes/Minutes%202012.12.11%20McSF.pdf). The mission statement of the MCSF is:

Encourage participation in Hall community life by international, overseas, and ethnic minority students (IOEMS).

Promote and facilitate the experience of British life and customs by IOEMS – helping them to make the most of their time here and maximise their experience of London/British life.

Broaden the range of social and cultural events in Hall so that IOEMS can share their home cultures with other residents – with the intention of making IOEMS feel more at home, and broadening the horizons and experiences of all other residents.

Review and improve the way the Hall communicates with IOEMS, with particular focus on: (1) Welcome / induction events and procedures; (2) Social media & networks; (3) the Hall website; (4) the Residents' Handbook.

At its first meeting, the MCSF formally recommended to the Residents' Club Committee that an Australia Day celebration should be held on 26<sup>th</sup> January and a Burns' night supper on 25<sup>th</sup> January. These suggestions were largely supported by the Residents' Club Committee, with some modifications. Proposals for Chinese New Year celebrations are being drawn up and will be forward to the elected Residents' Club Committee to consider and implement if agreed.

You can still join our multicultural mailing list: simply sign up here - [www.connaught-hall.org.uk/pages/community/mcsf.html](http://www.connaught-hall.org.uk/pages/community/mcsf.html). Email your ideas to the MCSF at [multicultural@connaught-hall.org.uk](mailto:multicultural@connaught-hall.org.uk).

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## Warden's team survey

Last term, we asked "How would you rate the usefulness, relevance, and overall benefit to life in Hall of the Warden and Senior Members?" We explained:

We are looking at how the Warden's team operates and options for changing the way welfare & pastoral care, discipline, and community & social life are delivered in the intercollegiate halls of residence. Your answers to our quick survey will help us to understand how well the current service meets your needs and expectations, and whether alternative providers could deliver the same or a better service.

The mission statement for the Warden's team is -"Enhancing opportunities for personal, social, academic and cultural development through: welfare and pastoral care; discipline and conflict resolution; community and social life; Residents' Club and Hall bar; out-of-hours emergencies; and re-admissions. Supporting you all the way."

"Welfare & pastoral care" includes availability to help with medical, emotional, and other problems as required. Is this service needed in Hall, or are the counselling services provided by your college sufficient?

"Discipline" includes a sense of order and safety, noise control, fairness & justice in dealing with allegations of misconduct, and the right balance between achieving this and giving residents the space to live as adults within the Hall community. Do we still need a separate Warden's team in Hall to deliver this? Could the management team meet these needs?

"Community & social life" includes welcome receptions, parties, cultural events, social cohesion, community leadership, sense of belonging, respect for diversity, and striking the right balance between fun, sleep, and study. Can the Residents' Club Committee / JCR / Student Club deliver these aspects of Hall life without involvement of the Warden and/or Senior Members?

Forty-eight residents answered our survey. The "mean score" from 0 to 10, where 0 is very poor and 10 is very good, was 8.44. Many of your responses were supportive of the role we play in Hall, and there were some useful suggestions for how we can improve. So thank you to everyone who took part.

A few comments, however, revealed that not everyone is quite clear about what we do – talking about provision of cleaning and security, for example. I hope some of the following comments from the survey will help to highlight what the Senior Members and I are here for:

"The Warden seems always to be genuinely interested in us and our welfare, supportive, fair, even-handed, and helpful in a way that I can't say is true of anyone else I have met here or anywhere at UCL. He always seems to know what to say and what to do, whatever the problem."

"From the moment I moved into Connaught, I felt at home due to the remarkable homely atmosphere present here. The credit for this goes to the Warden and all the Senior Members who have done a great job in making me feel comfortable and find a home away from home. I hope to stay here again next year as well."

"The hall would not be the same without the Warden and Senior Members. They put so much time and effort into making sure everyone is happy and coping well, not to mention all the social events put on, some of which they even fund with their own money. They are a friendly face around the hall, and it makes living away from home so much easier when you know that you always have someone to go talk to if you need help or guidance, and it's much easier and nicer than the long process of trying to arrange to meet a counsellor at university."

"The Warden and his team are very approachable, they seem to have a solution for most problems and know what to do/ who to contact if they can't fix it."



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# KEEP IN TOUCH

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