# Balliol May Ball dazzles amid Cambridge’s shift to affordable celebrations



Bleary-eyed students from Oxford University were seen making their way home in the early hours of Saturday morning after an enchanting night at the Balliol College May Ball, themed "Star Crossed Lovers." The event, which ran from 8pm to 4am, attracted a vibrant crowd dressed in elegant ball gowns and tailored bow ties, all eager to revel in the festivities.

As the sun began to rise, images captured scenes of post-celebration camaraderie. Some groups, including one notable trio munching on sandwiches, were attempting to refuel after an eventful evening. Others showed the signs of fatigue, with weary participants clutching their shoes, while one woman opted for a lift on a friend's shoulders. The atmosphere exuded a festive spirit, with some students cycling home, cheerfully waving to onlookers.

Excitement was palpable earlier in the evening as attendees, adorned with masquerade masks, lined up along Broad Street in anticipation of the night’s festivities. The headlining act, early 2000s band Toploader, known for their hit "Dancing in the Moonlight," provided a nostalgic soundtrack for the evening. The sold-out ticket price of £165 included food, drinks, and various entertainment offerings, blending a sense of luxury with celebratory exuberance.

Drone visuals showcased the Balliol campus transformed into a festival environment, filled with colourful strobes and an array of entertainment options, including a silent disco and a rave room. Such extravagant events highlight both the college's rich history and its ability to organise memorable occasions. Founded in 1263, Balliol College is one of Oxford’s oldest institutions, boasting a heritage that includes renowned alumni like Boris Johnson and Rory Stewart.

In contrast to the merriment at Balliol, recent trends at other universities have cast a shadow on traditional celebratory events. Notably, Robinson College at Cambridge has decided to forgo its May Ball amid growing concerns about financial accessibility. Previous ticket prices had spiralled up to £270, leading to diminished interest and lower sales; the college's committee announced that they would instead host a more inclusive "mega bop" in June. This shift aims to make events more affordable for students, addressing the financial pressures many face due to rising living costs.

The news of Robinson's cancellation mirrors a broader trend, as other colleges within Cambridge had similarly opted to replace their balls with more accessible garden parties or smaller events. Following disappointing ticket sales and a desire to cultivate inclusivity, the May Ball landscape is evolving, bringing forth new formats more suitable for today’s students.

As Oxford and Cambridge universities adapt to changing economic conditions and student needs, the future of traditional May Balls remains uncertain. However, events like the Balliol May Ball illustrate that there is still interest in these grand celebrations, providing an opportunity to enjoy camaraderie and reflection on a successful academic year, even as some institutions adjust their offerings in search of greater accessibility.

The vibrant scenes witnessed at Balliol's event serve as a testament to student resilience and the importance of community, celebrating not just the end of the academic year, but the bonds formed during their university experience.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14699999/Bleary-eyed-students-head-home-Oxford-Universitys-prestigious-165-ticket-Balliol-College-Ball.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/29221> - Robinson College's May Ball is being replaced by a 'mega bop' to make the event more accessible and inclusive. The decision follows financial challenges and low ticket sales in previous years. The 'mega bop' will retain the 'Film Noir' theme and is open to students from all colleges. The committee emphasized the need for a more affordable and inclusive event, leading to the cancellation of the traditional May Ball.
* <https://www.varsity.co.uk/news/17372> - Robinson College's May Ball has been canceled due to low ticket sales. The committee announced that it would not be financially feasible to hold the event at the expected quality. Those who had purchased tickets were promised full refunds. The cancellation follows a trend of other May Balls being canceled or replaced with alternative events due to financial constraints.
* <https://mcr.robinson.cam.ac.uk/may-week> - Robinson College's May Week includes various outdoor events, with the May Ball being a highlight. The first full-size May Ball took place in 1984, five years after the college was founded. The event typically occurs on the first Monday of May Week and features extravagant decorations and entertainment. In 2023, the May Ball was scheduled for June 16th, with exclusive ticket sales for Robinson members available in advance of general release.
* <https://ball.ballioljcr.org/> - Balliol College's Commemoration Ball 2023, themed 'Bienvenue à Paris,' was held on May 6, 2023. The event celebrated 50 years of female tutorship at Balliol and featured a range of culinary delights, entertainment, and interactive amusements. Tickets were available for Balliol affiliates, staff, alumni, and the general public, with options for a formal dinner and queue jump pass.
* <https://www.cherwell.org/2023/05/21/expansionist-balliol-college-invades-trinity-college/> - An article discussing Balliol College's expansion into Trinity College's Kettell Hall, which Balliol intends to convert into an exclusive college bar. The move has sparked controversy and led to tensions between the two colleges. The Oxford Student Union condemned the action, citing a statute that bars colleges from forcibly taking social event territory. The situation has led to discussions about inter-college norms and territorial integrity.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commemoration_ball> - A Commemoration Ball is a formal event held by Oxford University colleges to celebrate the end of the academic year. Traditionally, these balls are held triennially by the three great Oxford choral foundations: Magdalen College, New College, and Christ Church. The 2023 Commemoration Ball at Balliol College was only the third held since 1969, marking a significant occasion in the college's history.