



100

THE RECORD  
OF HERTFORD  
COLLEGE  
2019-20



MAGAZINE





Hertford College Magazine  
2019-20

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Hertford College Magazine is published for members and friends of the college. The opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily the official views of Hertford College.

Hertford College is a registered charity in England and Wales, number 1137527.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

This has been an extraordinarily difficult year. The following pages reveal some of the many ways in which the fellows, staff and students of Hertford have kept calm and carried on. The editor would like to thank all those who have helped put together this issue, especially Olga Batty, Alicia Povey and everyone in the Development Office team.

# PRINCIPAL'S REVIEW 2019-20

Will Hutton writes:

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**T**he shelves in my office have been emptied of books and the removal men have descended on the wonderful Principal's flat with its breathtaking views over Radcliffe Square. This, my final review of the year (and the nine before), comes in the 100th edition of the *Hertford Magazine*. This anniversary, 2020 and my 70th birthday all align to bring my very happy and fulfilling years at Hertford – filled with bike rides, Hertford Conversations, innumerable Principal's Collections and High Table dinners – to a close. Thanks to so many of you who have shared such generous messages about what the college has achieved under my leadership, and how you feel about me. Believe me, I return the affection to you – with interest. Hertford is a very special place.

Of course, this academic year will always be remembered as the year COVID began. Michaelmas and Hilary seem like dreams. Did we really welcome the freshers at a 120-strong dinner last October, and hold a lecture series on the Constitutional Crisis without a thought of social distancing? Then, students could move freely in and between colleges, and the idea of giving a tutorial in a face mask would have seemed risible. Now it is the new normal.

It's been a surreal way to finish my Principalship: round after round of Zoom calls, and playing the unaccustomed

role of stressing the need for caution in the University's plans. One member of our COVID-19 group joked I must have sounded like Cato the Elder with my repeated warnings that face-to-face teaching was never likely to succeed. The experience of Trinity Term proves that, pedagogically, online teaching should never be considered second best. The real problem, as everyone knows, is that it's the entire Oxford experience that the virus is extinguishing – from the Union to the River, from the College Bar to the Chapel Choir.

If those are Oxford's eternal verities, what has changed over the last nine years? There are three broad clusters of activity where I detect real change. The first is the commitment to innovation. I recall my very first heads of house meeting with the then Vice-Chancellor in 2011, when it was proudly announced that two innovation officers would be recruited. My ears pricked up. Six months earlier I had co-founded a think tank, the Big Innovation Centre, and become an apostle of Open Innovation, the transformative impact of General Purpose Technologies and the urgent need for universities like Oxford to reproduce the high-tech revolution spearheaded in the US by its universities.

What would the criteria be for their selection, I asked, and what were the markers for success? Could Oxford rebalance the UK economy in the



wake of the financial crisis, and look for business partners to transform emergent ideas into high-tech goods and services, from medicines to robots? I was firmly rebuked. Oxford had no such responsibility or aim. The University certainly welcomed financial contributions from business, but within very strict terms: business must support pure academic research, untroubled by commercial applications. Afterwards only one head of house said she supported what I had said.

That exchange would be impossible now. Professor Ian Walmsely and Professor Chas Bountra have led a transformation as successive Pro Vice-Chancellors of Innovation, supported by an extraordinary culture change. Our academics view start-up companies as a badge of success, and see no clash between academic research and real-world applications; indeed, they actively welcome the possibility. The University's achievements are spectacular. Over the last two years we have had more start-ups and pulled in more research funding than any other university. We have three so-called unicorns and OSI (Oxford Science Innovation) is a £600 million fund to support Oxford start-ups, one of the largest in any global university.

The ambition is huge, and the deal that the University's Jenner Institute struck with Astra Zeneca to mass produce a COVID-19 vaccine is not an one-off: it is part of an innovation ecosystem that now has global standing. Hertford has played its part by convening conferences, speaking for the cause, and signalling that we are innovation friendly. At least half a dozen of our fellows are involved in start-ups, not to mention some students, and it was Hertford, Pembroke and Wolfson who launched Tri-Innovate back in 2015, a student competition for innovative

ideas that could become start-ups. This has now become All Innovate, a pan-University scheme. We have also become one of the hot spots for the study of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence and, with the arrival of our new Philosophy Fellow, Carissa Véliz, the accompanying ethical issues.

The second area is access. We all know Hertford's proud record with the Tanner Scheme, but when I arrived just 59% of our offer-holders were from state schools – certainly above the University average of 55%, but nothing particularly special to boast about. Neither Hertford nor Oxford could really say we were scouring Britain for the very best. I leave with Hertford's figure at 81%, and the University's at 68%. Has academic excellence been compromised, as some of the old guard in the big-name colleges darkly warned? Hardly. This year more than half our finalists achieved firsts, putting us in the Norrington Top Ten.

For Hertford this commitment has always been in our DNA. I was lucky that the 50-year anniversary of the launch of the Tanner Scheme fell in my Principalship in 2014, so that fellows, lecturers, the academic office and alumni were all put on their mettle to make the Hertford tradition thrive. We now keep a firm track on our annual access metrics, reporting applications, offers and acceptances by subject area and school to our Governing Body. Every fellow knows their admission decisions – and students' subsequent academic performance – will be reviewed by their peers. This coming academic year we, jointly with Balliol and Wadham, plan to report them formally in a publicly available document, independently audited and reviewed, as part of our joint access initiatives in the East of England.

Our message is to apply to Hertford

if you are academically able. As far as I know Hertford offers more beds than any other college to Oxford's UNIQ summer school, where potential applicants can sample the Oxford student experience. We have some 100 fully trained student ambassadors who visit schools to spread the message, and we have greatly strengthened our access and communications capacity. Dr Kathryn Boast, a new appointment made possible thanks to the generous support of an anonymous donor, specialises in recruiting candidates, particularly women, in STEM subjects. Nathan Stazicker combines schools outreach work with great social media content. They are steadily increasing student interest in Hertford, and last year over 3,000 young people were touched by our efforts. We are delighted that, partly as a result of our outreach work, around 650 applied to us directly.

It's only fair to acknowledge that the University has been making great strides as well. My friend of 30 years, Alan Rusbridger, Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, introduced a foundation year to give disadvantaged students with 'near miss' results the opportunity to take dedicated exams that would qualify them for Oxford entrance. It's been a huge success, and the University has decided to reproduce it, together with a scheme pioneered by Univ offering extra tuition to help students bridge from their A-levels to their first year in Oxford, giving admitting tutors the confidence to make offers they otherwise might not. That the University can scale up these two schemes reflects that the vast majority of colleges are now committed to promoting access. For those admitting tutors who would prefer to play it safe, the Office for Students insists that Oxford do better.

The final and third change is the culture and attitudes of students. They

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have become steadily more concerned with what it means to live the right way, to embrace diversity and contest entrenched inequality. I don't recollect a single vegan back in 2011, and even vegetarianism was fairly marginal: today, there are vegan options for every meal. Similarly, there is an increased urgency about climate change and environmental sustainability: the issues cannot be dodged, and colleges must act to halve carbon emissions by 2030. I was a member of the University's sustainability committee, and Hertford will continue to play its part fully.

There is a parallel change in attitudes towards sexuality. If active acceptance of same sex relationships was my generation's fight, one JCR executive member told me that today's student generation is engaging in the same fight over accepting the fluidity of gender identity. Sex may be biologically determined, but gender is not.



Oxford's prevailing whiteness is no longer remotely acceptable, a concern turbo-boasted by Black Lives Matter. In 2015 the campaign to persuade Oriell to take down their statue of Rhodes fizzled out: in 2020, its Governing Body has agreed to an independent report about how to properly decommission and contextualise it. In 2020, we can and should choose who we venerate. Britain needs to look the sins of its Imperial past in the eye.

There are obvious dangers in becoming intolerant of any who fall outside the new consensus, or those whose views are deemed to be unacceptable. Here a tightrope is walked. The Prevent legislation requires all universities and colleges not to invite speakers who in any way might incite terrorism, but at the same time we must respect freedom of expression. It is a tension which I congratulate students not only at Hertford but across the University for navigating well. The Oxford Union emphatically voted in favour of free speech in a 2019 debate, and I am confident it would do so again.

So to the last year. October 2019 seems an epoch away, but along with our new Law Fellow Dr Aruna Nair, and Management and Accounting Fellow Dr Anette Mikes, we also welcomed the first Porter Fellow for Academic Skills, Dr Catherine Sloan, thanks to the support of John Porter (1971). This is the first fellowship in any Oxford college to support students in developing their learning and pedagogic skills; demand for her services is huge and growing. Sir "Olly" Robbins, Teresa May's Brexit negotiator, joined us as the first Heywood Fellow, created in celebration of the life of alumnus Sir Jeremy Heywood, and gave a number of illuminating talks and dinners. Our Academic Visitors were Dr. "PJ" Thum, who gave a great talk on "Singapore –



a model for post-Brexit Britain?" (he thought not); Professor Judith Herrin (her new book on Ravenna is a must) and Susie Orbach, whose spirited online John Donne Lecture emphasised that humans still need the touch and feel of real-life contact, especially in the midst of a pandemic.

Academically there is lots to report. Professor Zhanfeng Cui led a team developing a new rapid test for COVID. Dr David Dwan followed up his wonderful book on George Orwell with a week-long event investigating the impact of 1984. Professor David Greaves won a teaching award from the Medical Sciences Division, while the University has agreed the Miles Vaughan Williams Prize for the best performing clinical student. Professor Emma Smith became a lockdown star with her Shakespeare webinars, while Professor Pat Roche gave live commentary of the first bright comet for two decades. Professor Mike Wooldridge published the masterwork of the AI story, *The Road to Conscious Machines* (one of the FT's summer reads). Our chaplain, Mia Smith, explored the ethical and theological implications of plant-based diets in her new book, *The Plant-based Diet: A Christian Option?* Honorary Fellow Richard Fisher became inducted into the Texas Business Hall of Fame.

Of course, there are always sad goodbyes. Our academic administrator of 30 years, the redoubtable Sue Finch and a Hertford rock, retired. The wise and no less doughty Dean of ten years Dr Alison Woollard – my sure-footed expert on welfare affairs throughout my Principalship – stepped down to general acclaim and thanks. And Development Director Julia Thaxton, who transformed our fundraising activity, chose to move on the art world at the peak of her powers, to be succeeded by Frances Wheare. In different ways Sue, Alison

and Julia all played a vital role in building contemporary Hertford. My thanks to them all.

But every year is a beginning too. This academic year we welcome Professor Dawid Kielak (Maths), Dr Lambros Malafouris (Arch & Anth), Dr Federica Romei (Economics), Dr Carissa Véliz (Philosophy) and Dr Vladyslav Vyazovskiy (Medicine). One of my last acts as Principal was to induct them by Zoom: they are an impressive and enthusiastic bunch. Our tally of women teaching fellows has doubled during my Principalship to 18, one of the highest in Oxford. Our roll call of Honorary Fellows was increased by alumnus and distinguished physicist Dr Roderich Moessner (Physics 1991), Director of the Max Planck Institute in Dresden.

Our undergraduates have excelled themselves, COVID notwithstanding. A special mention to Lucas Tse (MPhil Economic & Social History), who was awarded one of only two notoriously difficult Examination Fellowships at All Souls College. In March second-year medic, Rafee Ahmed, was one of only three medical students to represent Oxford at the National Undergraduate Neuroanatomy Competition (NUNC), winning a distinction. Sixth-year medic Chloe Jacklin was awarded the Matilda Tambyraja Prize in Women's & Reproductive Health 2018-9 by the University's Medical School for her written work. In sport we are proud of third-year Physics student Alexander Hampshire who secured a bronze medal at last year's under-21 Commonwealth Judo Championships and later represented England, the only Oxford student to be selected for the team. Our students are great ambassadors for outreach: this year Carina Williams, Amelia Fantham, Alicia Fisher, Nina Turnbull, Emma Rumford & Rory Saitch were all awarded the Tanner Prize for their efforts.

Our alumni continue to make their impact on the world. Michael Fordham QC (Law, 1983) has been appointed a High Court Judge. Professor Gideon Henderson (Earth Sciences, 1986) was appointed the new Chief Scientific Adviser to Defra. And Khalid Jawed Khan (BCL, 1989) has been appointed the 35th Attorney General for Pakistan. Congratulations to them all. Meanwhile, Shahnaz Ahsan (History & English, 2006) published her debut novel *Hashim & Family*, inspired by the experiences and struggles of her grandparents' immigrant generation; a transcript of her conversation with Emma Smith appears later in this magazine. Benjamin Goodson (Music 2012), has been appointed Chief Conductor of the Groot Omroepkoor, the Netherlands Radio Choir. Aaron King (Music 2019) won last year's Sir David Wilcocks Carol Competition with his carol, 'A Spotless Rose'. Will Harris (English, 2007) has been shortlisted for a Forward Prize for Poetry, and his first full poetry collection, *Rendang*, has been shortlisted for the Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection 2020.

It was a rich year for Hertford Conversations. In the Autumn we held three lectures on the Brexit-engendered Constitutional Crisis. Alan Rusbridger and Carole Cadwalladr spelled out the degradation of British journalism. Sir Olly Robbins warned how the role of the Civil Service as a crucial check and balance in an unwritten constitution was being challenged. Lord Pannick QC and Deok Joo Rhee QC finished by arguing that the rule of law had just managed to hold and was profoundly entrenched, but it could not be taken for granted. Great lectures – and all but one given by Hertford alumni!

William Sieghart delivered the last Hertford Conversation in the Baring Room before COVID struck, Poetry for Every Woman and Man. It was an awe-

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inspiring evocation of poetry's power by the founder of the Forward Prize for Poetry. Then, courtesy of Zoom, Ciaran Martin, founding CEO of the National Cyber Security Centre on *Cybergeddon or Cyberbabble* (he thought more babble than geddon); environmentalist George Monbiot on whether we can feed the world without devouring the planet (only if we radically change what we eat); and my old friend, the impressionist Rory Bremner, regretting that today's events were "Beyond satire". Professor Jeffrey Stewart – distinguished Professor of Black Studies at the University of California – offered a tour de force on our alumnus and first Rhodes Scholar Alain Locke, based on his prize-winning magnum opus *The New Negro*. Locke suffered appalling racism at Oxford but still held Hertford dear. I rounded off nearly 70 Hertford Conversations with



reflections of my own, some of which began this article.

My thanks also to Professors Zhanfeng Cui and Mike Wooldridge, and Doctors Steve New and Anette Mikes for their great *Hertford Responds* webinars for alumni – more details in Frances Wheare's report. Our Bursar Jamie Clark talked our alumni through our finances and challenges both pre- and post-COVID. We will make it through this current crisis, but ambitions thereafter will depend crucially on our alumni's generosity.

Our programme of renewal and refurbishment proceeds apace. There is a spanking overhaul of the Porters lodge, and we are also renewing every bedroom, staircase by staircase. Our IT system is now close to state of the art. The JCR Equalities Rep, Fenella Sentance, organised a remarkable photo montage of the Hertford community going up the spiral staircase to Hall. There is also

a portrait of yours truly, completed by Bob Tulloch, gracing the Principal's drawing room in the Lodgings. Your eye is ineluctably drawn to his paunch which even the artist, under strict instruction to use all his guile to minimise, could not avoid.

So that's it. My family celebrated two marriages and mourned the death of my mother in Chapel. When Jane, my beloved wife and partner of 42 years, died in February 2016 the college held me up and kept me together. Alongside the tragedies, there has been much laughter, joy and learning. My Hertford years rank among the best in my life.

My successor Tom Fletcher is a lucky man, and I am sure will do a great job. But it's not a job, it's a unique way of life. I hope I leave Hertford better than I found it – the most you can hope for as a leader. So adieu (not goodbye), and above all, an immense thank you. It has been a privilege.



# Hertford Highlights

# PRINCIPAL WILL HUTTON'S VALEDICTION

Professor Tony Wilson writes:

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Will Hutton retired after nine years as Principal at the end of August. It is hard to imagine that nine years have passed since he arrived. He came with little previous knowledge or experience of either the college or of Oxford -- which could have been an advantage in the guise of a drawback. He immediately threw himself wholeheartedly into the job, and continued to contribute his enthusiasm and boundless energy throughout his tenure.

He was elected following a somewhat tiresome and depressing few years for the fellowship, and the state we were in when he arrived was, admittedly, not great. But that soon changed. Will's ebullience and energy were infectious, and his personality so amiable that even those who had faults to find could not be put out with him for long. He cheered us up.

He took the trouble to get to know as many old members as he could, and such was his enthusiasm that when one of them, the late Terry Hughes, proposed the idea of a fundraising bike ride from our Bridge of Sighs to that other one in Venice, he was up to the challenge and cycled the full 700 miles, which he later described in a splendid article published in *The Guardian* newspaper.

Will also engaged with current undergraduates and graduates, most notably by bringing to the college the idea of Hertford Conversations, in which he invited a series of people in public

life to come to the college to discuss various issues and to take questions from the student audience. When COVID-19 struck, the conversations became virtual, and his last series explored how various members of the college were contributing to the fight against the virus. One session, for example, featured Cui, the college's Chemical Engineering Fellow, describing the rapid viral RNA test which he and his colleagues had developed to detect SARS-CoV-2 infection in just under half an hour. Cui took the test himself during the conversation; happily he turned out to be infection-free.

The one desperately sad period in Will's principalship came with the illness of his wife, Jane, and her death in April 2016. She had played a full role in college life before being diagnosed with leukemia late in 2013, and bravely fought the disease for over two years. Throughout that most difficult time, Will continued to fulfil even his outside commitments, in particular his weekly column in the *Observer* newspaper.

I never saw Will's diary, but I cannot imagine there were very many spare moments. In my experience, his reply to the question 'would you be free to...?' was always yes. Along with his willingness to serve, Will's principalship was an ongoing demonstration of the importance of being cheerful, positive, enthusiastic and supportive, which in many ways is responsible for The State We're In.



# VIRTUAL JOHN DONNE LECTURE 2020: WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE OF BODIES IN THIS TIME?

Susie Orbach

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When lockdown started, I was confused by bodies on television. Why weren't they socially distancing? Didn't they know not to be so close? The injunction to be separate was unfamiliar and irregular, and for me, self-isolating alone, following this government directive was peculiar. It made watching dramas and programmes produced under normal filming conditions feel jarring.

Seven weeks in, the disjuncture has passed. I, like all of us, am accommodating to multiple corporeal realities: bodies alone, bodies distant, bodies in the park to be avoided, bodies of disobedient youths hanging out in groups, bodies in lines outside shops, bodies and voices flattened on screens and above all, bodies of dead health workers and carers. Black bodies, brown bodies. Working-class bodies. Bodies not normally praised, now being celebrated.

We are learning a whole new etiquette of bodies. We swerve around each other, hop into the near-empty street, calculate distances at entrances to parks, avoid body contact, even eye contact, and keep a look out for those obliviously glued to their phones, whose lack of attention threatens to breach the two-metre rule. It's odd and disconcerting and isn't quite second nature.

Until the pandemic arrived, many of us were finding texting, email and Whatsapp more suitable to our speeded-up lives. But now we are coming to reuse the telephone, and to enjoy the sounds in our ears and the rhythm of conversation, instead of feeling rushed and interrupted. A few of my sessions as a psychoanalyst are now conducted on the phone but, for the most part, I am spending my time looking into a screen, and seeing faces rather than whole bodies. Until I learned to turn off the view of myself, I, like others, was disconcerted by the oddness of catching sight of myself – a view I don't think we are meant to see.

Conversations in therapy defy many of the customs of social intercourse. There are silences, repetitions, reframings, links across time, reminiscences of fragments, rushes of emotion, shards of dreams, things told and then disavowed. There can be fidgeting or absolute stillness. These form the idiosyncratic and personal ambience between each therapeutic couple. As a therapist, I am also alert to how the dilemmas that beset the person or the couple I am seeing are brought to our relationship.

The conundrums that brought the person to seek therapy in the first place can be replayed right here. For example, a person fearful of intimacy

can experience the therapy relationship or the therapist as too close. Someone else who worries they are too needy may be reluctant to show their longings directly to the therapist, although well able to talk about how things go wrong for them in other relationships. The therapy relationship and the sessions are our petri dish. The field of study is the human subject (and her, his or their ways of being able to develop and change).

The therapist works to understand an individual's personal psychological grammar – to help the person take the risk of unlearning and then learning anew, finding ways to not be in so much hurt. So too with the body. Those with troubled bodies bring them to the session. They may sit too close, for example, or seem to be concave, or dress incongruously, as though presenting a different persona in each session. In the course of therapy, such an abject body experience can be addressed, and, in unlearning and then learning anew, the person finds a more comfortable way to sit in their body.

How is the dematerialisation of bodies affecting us and going to affect us? Me, my patients, you – all of us? For some of my patients, their screen or home is a prison. Their experience is full of woe and worry. Therapy keeps them just about on the border of sane, but it's a sanity that hurts: isolation can maraud all of us as we miss the interactions, intimate or casual, that confirm our sense of our value, our place in our community, our work and the world.

Some of my clinical preoccupations centre on how we acquire a physical, corporeal sense of self. Although psychoanalysis is a theory of mind and body, its main emphasis has drifted to the development of the mind and its structures: what we call defences, and the relationship patterns we

have absorbed. Bodies have been very much the bit player to the main drama of the mind, even when mental processes or disturbance have resulted in bodily symptoms such as eczema or a non-biologically induced paralysis. As therapists, we traditionally read back into the mind the troubles visited on the body, seeing them as the result of mental conflicts. And of course, they often are, but I have long been keen to understand body troubles and body difficulties in their own terms, and to build a theory about the development of the body.

Bodies have always been bound and marked by social rules. Different societies make different sense out of similar bodily actions or gestures. The variety of body adornment and transformations around the world, from rings around the neck to the recent upsurge in labial reductions and penis enlargements, has made it ever more apparent that the body is not simply the product of DNA. The body we inhabit develops within relationships to other bodies. Usually it is within the maternal orbit where, to take an obvious example, we first apprehend gender-based forms of comportment. When I grew up, being told to sit like a girl and not to climb trees were some of the ways we were treated differently to boys. Research across many cultures show that baby girls are weaned and potty-trained earlier, fed less at each feed, and held less, than boys. There may be no biological basis to this, but rather a social, unconscious basis that then informs how we personally experience our particular embodiment.

We have very few verified reports of humans growing up outside of human culture but the feral child Victor of Aveyron, who was discovered living wild in the woods of southern France in 1800, did not have body movements

that were recognisably human. The body-to-body relationship that was foundational for him was with the bodies of the wolves he apparently grew up among. He seemingly mimicked their gait and moves, their posture and their vocalisations. Of course, we know this more familiarly, and less dramatically, from when youngsters develop their group identities by adopting the mannerisms of film actors or musicians.

Through screens, billboards and photoshopped images, we reduce the wide variety of bodily expression. It's as though we are losing body diversity just as we are losing languages. The digitised, westernised body image predominates, and in the last two decades has spawned a cosmetic surgery industry worldwide – from leg-lengthening surgery using steel rods in China (now banned), to rhinoplasty in Iran (which has the highest rate of nose surgery per capita in the world) to double-eyelid surgery and jawbone reduction in South Korea. In the west, surgeons resculpt cheekbones, breasts and calves, and offer day procedures for facial 'thread lifts'. Cosmetic surgery tourism hubs in Hungary, South Korea and Singapore were thriving until the lockdown.

One Chinese smartphone app allows the selfie-taker to adjust their portrait to bring it closer to a very specific standard of beauty known as *wang hon lian*, or "internet celebrity face". It's very popular: billions of *wang hon lian* images are uploaded every month.

The richest Europeans are not in tech, but in the business of beautifying bodies – the owners of fashion, luxury and cosmetics brands such as LVMH, L'Oréal and Zara. Increasing automation has led us to move from using our bodies to make things to turning our bodies the site and the product of our labour, through diet and exercise

regimes, clothing and cosmetics. The surface body is meant to be on display.

Paradoxically, the sweating, smelling, holding, stroking body of the other becomes, for those socially distancing, too distant – while for others, such as those sharing a house with teenage boys, it's all too present. All is on show for families and housemates, while all is hidden for those living alone during lockdown.

The experience of the body on FaceTime or Zoom contrasts with the pulsing, breathing, weeping, sighing, tired, achy or indeed springy and enthusiastic bodies we inhabit. We no longer have social communion in the flesh, the handshake or the hug, the pleasure of eating in a restaurant with a friend or lover while seated near strangers. Afraid of infection, for our protection, we collapse our social space.

During the second world war, the psychiatrist René Spitz studied orphan babies in care. He discovered that those closest to the nurses' station thrived, while those at the end of the ward did not do so well. The difference was touch: the nurses would casually touch and interact with those closest to them, and this gave those infants the essential food for physical and psychological development. They absorbed the will to live. A decade later – in research now considered controversial for the way in which he removed baby monkeys from their mothers – the American psychologist Harry Harlow discovered that baby monkeys given ersatz mothers in the form of basic cloth puppets would find some crucial security and comfort even in this simulation of maternal touch; those baby monkeys deprived of any kind of maternal touch at all became highly disturbed, and many died.

Touch, feel and proximity are central to survival. Consider the genius of

premature infants' capacity to regulate their own and, extraordinarily, their parent's body temperature, if they are held skin-to-skin in a pouch. The gaze – the search to be seen, to recognise and to influence the other – is also crucial to human subjectivity. In a fascinating video made by the developmental psychologist Edward Tronick, he instructs a mother playing with her baby to keep a still face and refrain from interacting with her infant for a minute or two. We observe as the infant girl seeks to engage the mother. When she is unable to, the baby collapses psychologically and physically until contact is restored. What is so shocking is how fast the collapse is.

I've been thinking of how impossibly difficult and challenging our quasi-dematerialised life through the Zoom screen is, whether chatting with friends or being in a meeting. Conflict and harmony become cartoonish as subtle gestures collapse and the conversations we have with our eyes are shut down.

Reading each other well enough is a new skill in the therapy room, too, for both people. By now we are used to the screens and the telephone, and the occasional technical blips. We are seeing a physical interior – a study, bedroom, shed or kitchen, and being surprised by an occasional child that floats in. We hear the suddenly hushed voice of someone not wanting their partner to get a drift of the conversation we are having. It illuminates aspects we didn't see before. Is it better? No. Is it worse? Marginally. I miss noticing how people enter the therapy room – the subtle difference from the session before, or the way they may hold their face and body; above all, the animate body in the room. I suspect that I am more animated to make up for the loss of that precious physicality.

Former hostages Terry Waite, John

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**The experience of the body on FaceTime or Zoom contrasts with the pulsing, breathing, weeping, sighing, tired, achy or indeed springy and enthusiastic bodies we inhabit. We no longer have social communion in the flesh, the handshake or the hug, the pleasure of eating in a restaurant with a friend or lover while seated near strangers.**

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McCarthy and Brian Keenan have all written and spoken eloquently about solitary confinement and their struggles to find a way through and back – or should I say forward – to familial and social life. It was tough. And although many of us are not self-isolating alone, unless one is able to do interesting or valued work during this period, or have enough people to hang out with, we can expect considerable psychological difficulties to follow as we come out of lockdown. How will we re-establish social interaction with other bodies? What kind of rhythms will we want and be able to have going forward?

Many have been ultra-busy with home schooling, working from home, managing three generations and so



on. Time has bent and contracted in perplexing ways. Busyness has increased for some, while others, for whom slowing down is a foreign concept, have had idleness forced on them. Empty time feels alien – or at least did at the beginning. For many it has been an unexpected pleasure. No need to rush to social occasions. No need to dress. No need to get everything done and more. Being wanted, being needed, being in demand have been psychological supports that have melted away. Finding new ways to nourish one's needs in this new reality – especially in the absence of touch and gaze, which we unknowingly rely upon to recognise ourselves – can be tricky.

Today, there is a frightened, wary, social body. A body that is tense, in which avoidance is the watchword. The covered face, whether by a hoodie or a veil, which formerly some found challenging, now offers reassurance.

Indeed, many public places – from Eurostar trains to the streets of New York, Prague, Dubai, Havana and many more – now demand it. Meanwhile, much of society is now paying attention to bodies that had been scandalously overlooked. The bodies of working women, the carers who go in and out of the houses and homes of the people they look after. The faces of vast numbers of black, Asian and minority-ethnic bodies, particularly in the health service, who are finally being recognised for their value, and the shockingly disproportionate number of their losses.

Before COVID-19, the ruling party were happy to slash social and health funding, to put money into management in the NHS, and not into professional carers, doctors and nurses. Now society is waking up to the value of care and medical expertise that comes from the hospital floor – that is to say, from the doctors and nurses who are reorganising



what occurs there. The people keeping society going in every sector – transport workers, small shopkeepers, workers in food production and delivery – are often first-generation immigrants. More people are seeing a more nuanced social landscape. The opportunity is here for reframing how we represent the social body. It is of necessity differently hued, and that needs acknowledging, as does the shame of our previous marginalising. COVID-19 is cleaning the lens, so we can see more clearly.

From the individual to the social body, and how it is being challenged by the pandemic, we turn to the corporate body – the body of state – and what we have been learning about how it has functioned. On 17 April, Professor Anthony Costello, a former director of the Institute for Global Health at UCL, told the select committee on health and social care that he feared Britain might have the highest number of

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deaths in Europe, which has now been confirmed. Costello had estimated 40,000 deaths; on 5 May the official UK death toll was just over 32,000, but the *Financial Times* reported the same day that the true figure had likely already surpassed Costello's estimate. London and the north-west of England are showing higher rates of death than other regions, while according to the ONS, people in the most deprived areas of England and Wales are dying at twice the rate of the most affluent areas.

Costello argued for this figure because we were slow off the mark to take precautionary moves early on. He spoke to the chair of the committee, Jeremy Hunt, who has spent this period appearing to stress about the lack of testing, ventilators and PPE equipment. This is the same Hunt who, as the longest serving health secretary in British history, also had social care in his portfolio, and the pay of doctors, nurses and social care workers. Even more damningly, he was the minister in charge during Exercise Cygnus, the UK government's drill to test our preparedness for a pandemic, carried out in 2016.

The full review of Exercise Cygnus has never been officially published, but leaks have revealed that it showed the UK's health system and local authorities were woefully unprepared for such

an eventuality. The exercise showed hospitals and mortuaries being quickly overwhelmed, and shortages of critical care beds, ventilators and personal protective equipment for hospital staff.

Cygnus, and other such exercises, are meant to show the government what they need to do to be prepared – which was not, as Hunt was doing, cutting beds. On 28 March of this year, when the Cygnus debacle came to light, we were told that the projections were not remedied because of worries that beds, ventilators and PPE would become outmoded or obsolete and that the government had worked on securing reliable supply chains. (As we have seen, in a pandemic, reliable supply chains become very quickly overwhelmed.) A 2018 Red Cross conference report on Cygnus and infectious diseases stated: "The financial and human cost of an outbreak can be staggering and early response reduces the cost." Our government chose not to act.

The Fund for Peace, the Washington-based NGO that publishes the annual Fragile States Index, lists criteria for a failed state. I think we have come dangerously close to fulfilling two of their criteria: the inability to provide public services for the poor, and the inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community.

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As these last months' farcical developments show – the question about the independence of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), the alleged missing communications with the EU on PPE, the political decision not to cooperate with the EU, the posting out of tests without return envelopes, and the expired dates on PPE equipment – the government is in *Fawlty Towers* territory.

Plans for British companies to design new ventilator machines, detailed by the *Financial Times*, went belly up. Our government chose to source new ideas rather than build to the existing plan under licence. Why, one must ask? Could it be Brexit hubris?

I don't want to contrast the UK's response with that of the EU, because the latter has not always covered itself in glory during the pandemic. The ethics of cooperation in Europe and the ethics of transparency and honesty have been mightily tested in the past months. Perhaps now though we can be encouraged by the joint project of the European Investment Banks and WHO to bolster global healthcare systems. Will the UK state be contributing? I think not. So much depends on the actions of citizens now to move things forward. In this light, it is encouraging to see the formation of a new independent panel of experts – a "rival" to Sage – led by the former UK government chief scientific adviser David King, whose deliberations are on YouTube for us to watch.

I am not sure how we characterise the following failure of the state, because it is in part the expression of public good: of the 750,000 people who signed up to volunteer to help the NHS, invited by the government, fewer than 100,000 have been deployed. As citizens, we want to contribute. This squandering of people's generosity is disturbing. Fortunately, people such as Captain

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Tom Moore or the many making masks and contributing 3D printers keep on going. And the programme Feed NHS, in which the restaurant chain Leon and other chefs are prepping to feed patients, doctors, nurses, hospital porters and ambulance workers, is now in train. This voluntary work, in which groups of people self-organise, is outstanding, and yet it is in contrast to the inability of our state to mobilise those who wanted to help.

The Gates Foundation's contributions to seven different vaccine programmes, and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's donation of \$1bn, are impressive. Will hedge funds in the UK such as Ruffer investment, which pocketed £2.4bn in March, or Somerset Capital (the fund Jacob Rees Mogg used to run) who see COVID-19 as a "once or twice in a generation" opportunity for investment, make a contribution, too?

There are several dozen UK-based hedge funds managing assets worth £1bn or more. Could the mood of the country be such that hedge fund investors and managers might be persuaded to donate some of their obscene profits to the coronavirus response or to sponsor migrants from beyond Europe (who work here as cleaners, carers, drivers), who do not earn the £30,000 currently demanded for a work permit?

COVID is a sad story. It is also a story of resilience. The body of state has failed us. We need to grow up and recognise that. COVID-19 has exposed unforgivable systemic failure. In the years leading up to this, we've seen a reduction in the status of civil servants and a downgrading of health workers. We have seen teachers, doctors and academics hidebound in a managerial economy. At least it seems that micromanagement has been temporarily overturned in hospitals, thank goodness, because right now doctors and nurses need to be running the show.

And to return to our bodies – the live ones, so many devoid of touch and gaze, facing a long period of isolation, and frightened. How can I conclude?

In a way, I can't. We are far from the other side of this crisis. Psychological therapies are going to have a huge part to play in the remaking of body and soul. I don't much like the word trauma, because it has become so overused, but we are a society that is in trauma. A societal trauma gives opportunities for people to go through things together, rather than suffer alone, as long as we don't bury or make light of what we have experienced and continue to experience. We will have to find new ways to live with our fears and discomforts, to overcome Covid-minted social phobias, with what we

project on to other people's bodies and the fears we have about our own vulnerabilities. We will need all the help we can get in reshaping our relationship to our own and each other's bodies, to find a way to build bonds of attachment and respect.

What started with the dematerialisation of the individual body has now morphed into the dematerialisation of the body of state. The economist Joseph Stiglitz reminds us that, with the stripping back of the state under Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, we lost capacity. This needs to be addressed.

There is a lively debate from a range of economists on how to get to a more equitable economy. *MoneyWeek* editor-in-chief Merryn Somerset Webb's call for a sovereign wealth fund, with the government owning shares in bailed-out companies, is interesting, as is political economist Will Hutton's idea of expanding the British Business Bank and the Future Fund. UCL Economics Professor Mariana Mazzucato insists that the state must invest in innovation.

We began trying to make a different kind of society after the second world war. We will have to do that again. Principally, we will need to recognise the contributions and the losses of the UK's minority and working-class people, above all. Our governments have shamed themselves through creating divisions in society, particularly since austerity was imposed under David Cameron's government. Now we have an unexpected chance to redress the divisive fallout of Brexit.

The impact of remote working and the need to balance domestic and work life, allied with dire warnings on mass unemployment, gives us an opportunity to write a social contract in which we divide work more fairly. At both ends

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of the pay scale, people overwork. The evidence for a more balanced relationship between work and home is compelling.

Since the crisis began, the outpourings of artists, musicians, programmers, cultural and scientific workers at all levels has been outstanding. The talent, the will, the desire is there to remake our world. The urgency is not in question. Globalism can't simply be a celebration of "just-in-time" deliveries. It will need to be recast as mutuality – local and global mutuality – so that we learn from each other, including those who've been in lockdown in the war zone.

Our institutions will need to be rebuilt with transparency, with heart and by learning from the people who have been staffing them, not just the

managers and owners. Doctors, nurses, carers and delivery people have things to say about how their institutions could be better run. The body politic and the politics of the bodies that make up our world must be reconfigured, and we need to start thinking about that now.

I conclude with Freud: "The aim of psychoanalysis is to turn hysteria into ordinary human unhappiness." That is an accomplishment for an individual and for a society. We cannot escape unhappiness. It is constitutive of being human, just as are creativity, courage, ambition, attachment and love. Let's embrace the complexity of what it means to be human in this time of sorrow as we think and feel our way to come out of this, wiser, humbler and more connected.

# LAW'S POWER

Dr Kate Greasley

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The power of the law is ubiquitous. Nowhere was this more publicly on display, of late, than in Lady Hale's lacerating rebuke, in the *Miller 2* decision of last year, of the UK government's use of a prerogative power to prorogue parliament for an unconventional length of time. Landmark decisions about questions of fundamental constitutional importance such as were at issue there are of course among the flashier displays of the power of the law—specifically there, the power of judicial review—at work. Like many cases of constitutional significance, the *Miller 2* decision drew its import from partly shaping and refining the very boundaries of legality within which the government is obliged to act. But the law's ability to shape and direct features of the environment we inhabit, sometimes, in transformative ways, is by no means limited to judicial decisions bearing so much constitutional clout.

In many ways, the power of the law is a very trivial truth. As a practical authority, able to deploy coercion if necessary, the law can prohibit, regulate, and restrict in any domain of human conduct. It can also empower, legitimate, and stipulate the terms on which a power, a right, or a status will be underwritten by the force of law, thus constituting such powers, rights, or institutions as the very things that they are. There is no such thing as a property right, a binding contract, a will, a divorce, or a tortious injury outside of a system of law which defines the associated duties and rights and is willing to back them up, in the last

instance, through compulsion. I have a greater interest, though, in law's power to determine features of human life by authoritatively declaring certain things to hold not just as a matter of legal, but also of moral reality. Here are two examples from the purview of my own work.

The first is the famous (or, rather, infamous) case of *R v R* (1992). The case was an appeal of a conviction for attempted rape, and the facts accepted by the House of Lords were briefly as follows. After a period of marital strife, the defendant's wife had left the family home, along with their son, to return to live with her parents. She and the defendant had been living apart for a matter of some weeks, the wife having communicated her intention to initiate divorce proceedings, when the defendant forced his way into her parents' home (in their absence) and attempted to rape her. The question for the House of Lords was whether, despite the victim's refusal of sex, the fact of their being married precluded a conviction of rape or attempted rape. Up until that point, the common law had operated on the presumption that a woman's consent to a marriage equated to indefinite consent to sexual intercourse with her husband, so that it was legally impossible for a man to rape his own wife: the notorious 'marital exemption rule'. In *R v R*, the court finally overturned the marital exemption rule, declaring the idea that a woman, upon marriage, gives advance, indefinite

consent to sex with her husband as never anything more than a fiction.

Every year afresh, I shock a new crop of first year Law undergraduates when I tell them that 'marital rape' was a legal oxymoron until as late as 1992. But *R v R* did not only change the juridical concept of rape; it made a pronouncement about what always had been rape, whether the law had recognised it or not. The law's definition of rape, we take it, is an ongoing attempt to track an extra-legal phenomenon: the moral reality of what rape is. *R v R* ruled that earlier courts had abjectly failed to track that moral reality, and in so doing, made a crucial statement about what counts as rape outside of the law.

My second example is also drawn from the back catalogue of shocking historical rules about sexual offences. *DPP v Morgan (1976)* concerned the culpability standard required to be convicted of rape. The low-life at the centre of this case was a man who had invited a few of his friends back to his house to have sex with his wife. On the dubious facts as they were assumed for the sake of argument, the man had instructed his friends, falsely, that any show of resistance by his wife was only an act and not to be taken seriously. Though the physical injuries sustained by the victim made this ludicrous, for the purposes of the legal appeal, it was assumed that the men honestly, if unreasonably, believed the woman's husband as to the fact of her consenting. On appeal, this honest belief was taken to be a bar to conviction, since, as the court held, a genuine and honest belief in consent was enough to preclude the crime of rape; there was no requirement that this belief be reasonably held. This time, rectification came only by way of statute, when the 2003 Sexual Offences Act explicitly reformed the law of rape to hold that an unreasonable belief in

consent, even if honestly held, suffices to meet the culpability standard of rape. Every year afresh, I shock a new crop of first year undergraduate students when I tell them that until 2003, an honest belief in consent, even if totally unreasonable, borne of blind optimism or reckless indifference, was enough to dislodge a rape charge.

Like *R v R*, the legal change ushered in by the 2003 Sexual Offences Act did more than just amend the law. By authoritatively proclaiming that an honest but unreasonable belief in consent could not shift culpability for rape, it also, arguably, helped to shape how rape culpability is conceptualised in the public imagination outside of the law. In this area, as in others, one might think that the law is deeply implicated in stipulating the standards we are called to live up to by decreeing a certain factual matrix to constitute rape—or discrimination, harassment, or defamation—including when that appraisal is not yet embedded in our common consciousness.

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As these examples reveal, law does not only reflect back the conventional morality of its age; it can do much to improve that morality, or to deteriorate it. Since law has such power, it matters greatly what we make of it.

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Some legal revolutions in the realm of sex equality have proven to be cataclysmic for how we frame certain aspects of human life. When American feminist legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon first advocated for the law to recognise sexual harassment in the workplace as its own ground of legal redress, there was as yet no widespread appreciation of sexual harassment as a distinctive wrong, or of the utterances and behaviours now unequivocally recognised to constitute sexual harassment as being a veritable practice of sex-based discrimination. In this recognition, the law got there ahead of the rest of us, and arguably, was instrumental for the broader revelation of sexual harassment as the thing that it is. There was nothing inevitable, though, about this legal turn. It took actual, particular people to argue and

advocate for the law's recognition of this distinctive wrong, when they without question could have been doing more reliably profitable things.

As these examples reveal, law does not only reflect back the conventional morality of its age; it can do much to improve that morality, or to deteriorate it. Since law has such power, it matters greatly what we make of it. Undergraduate students in law typically arrive entrenched in the view that liberal values demand banishing all questions of morality from legal practice and thinking. The deprogramming can be arduous, but starts by pointing out just how inescapably shot through the law is with moral concern. Even the famed liberal philosopher John Stuart Mill's popular 'harm principle' of legal restraint—according to which legal interference with human conduct is only licit when in the service of avoiding harm to others—is first and foremost a moral principle, premised on the badness of harm and the virtues of freedom. A system of enforceable property rights presupposes the legitimacy of private property, a value-laden position we know is not universally shared. The idea that there are civic wrongs which warrant forcible compensation is a claim about what ought to be the case.

There is certainly one type of relationship between morality and law that does not hold: nothing about the fact that a standard or rule is a legal one means that the content of that standard or rule is necessarily morally laudable. This idea, very roughly expressed here, is the gist of what has been called the 'legal positivist' school of thought in legal philosophy to which I subscribe, and which is also crudely captured by Jeremy Bentham's oft-quoted adage that 'the existence of law is one thing; its merit or demerit is another'. Moral soundness is not part of the validity conditions for

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**It is ultimately these practitioners in a legal system—those who write the law, deploy it, interpret it and argue about it—who will determine its value, including whether it helps to improve moral behaviour in certain domains (even against the run of play), erodes it, or simply safeguards the status quo.**

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law; thus it is that we can have laws that are odious or discriminatory without these deficiencies detracting in any way from their legality. Once we appreciate that nothing about the forms of legality guarantees that it will work to the good, the responsibility to be vigilant in our moral appraisal of the law becomes even more sharpened. If nothing else, this is one thing that I hope my own law students will always remember after having been forced to study legal philosophy. While the law might be distinctively well positioned to secure certain goods, it is also distinctively well positioned, by dint of its power, to do serious harm. Which potential is the one realised in a given instance is down to the law's framers, interpreters, and practitioners.

It is ultimately these practitioners in a legal system—those who write the law, deploy it, interpret it and argue about it—who will determine its value, including whether it helps to improve moral behaviour in certain domains (even against the run of play), erodes it, or simply safeguards the status quo. The accountability of legal practitioners for what the law is, and hence what it

does, is the second main thing I hope law graduates of Hertford will always bear in mind, although it is not on the curriculum. When studying for their law degree, the form of accountability with which law students are most concerned is accountability for their academic standards. It is, hence, mercifully shortlived. For those who go into legal practice, though, accountability for what they do to shape the law into what it is, and for how their own practice is instrumentalised, for good or ill, is, I hope, a form of accountability they will always carry with them, cognisant of the reality that Catharine MacKinnon alluded to in an address whose title I shamelessly ripped off here.

**‘When I say law is power, you are thinking “them”. Of course, it’s also us. And for you, the graduates, now or soon, it’s you.’**

# BEFORE THE STORM: MARTIN MAIDEN'S TERM AS HERFORD'S SENIOR PROCTOR, MARCH 2019 -MARCH 2020

Professor Martin Maiden

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On the morning of Wednesday 13 March 2019 the Principal and Fellows of Hertford assembled in OB Quad dressed to a person elegantly, if uncharacteristically, in sub fusc. They processed the short distance to the Sheldonian Theatre, joining similar processions from Balliol and St John's, the Vice Chancellor, the outgoing Proctors and Assessor, the Bedels, and various colleagues and guests. All were assembled for the annual demission and admission ceremony for the two Proctors and the Assessor. Colleges nominate these positions in turn so, for each college, this event comes around only every 13 years or so. After the ceremony, as Hertford's newly-installed Senior Proctor, I returned to college with the Vice-Chancellor, the Principal, the former Senior Proctor, and the fellows for a celebratory lunch in Hall. The whole college rose to the occasion magnificently to make the event a fitting celebration of Hertford's contribution to the collegiate University.

Any discussion of the Proctors and Assessor requires at least some description of these ancient officers of the University. Most undergraduates think of them, if they think of them at all, as archaically-dressed kill-joys, but,

in reality they do not admit of such a cursory explanation. The Assessor is relatively recent, for Oxford, but the Proctors date from the very earliest times of the University. By University statute they are elected for one year only and any one person can serve only one term. All three officers represent Congregation on the executive of the University: they are trustees of the University and *ex officio* members of most committees, including Council. They have a right of attendance and speaking at any University meeting and also have a right of access to 'all persons and all papers' in fulfilling their oversight role. If this were not enough, the Proctors are in charge of examination regulations, student discipline and appeals, and they or their deputies, the pro-Proctors, have to be present at all official occasions – quite a portfolio.

Although viewed in some quarters as at best an anachronism and at worst a meddlesome irritant, the Proctors and the Assessors are an expression of one of Oxford's fundamental aspirations: to be a self-governing community of scholars. In my view, Oxford's long-term strength and success is a consequence of its democratic structures with Congregation at its centre. This



constitution is founded on the contention that individual academics are best placed to make decisions about teaching and research, a model that serves the University well. In general, over-centralised administrations are inherently prone to error and being thrown off course by 'events'. By contrast, devolved structures can be resilient, fleet-of-foot, adaptable, and innovative (remember Tanner?). The Proctors and the Assessors have an increasingly important role as 'coal-face' academics, fresh from teaching and research, at the heart of University governance. They are guardians of the academic institution who, all too frequently in my experience, are the only active teachers and researchers in the room when weighty matters are considered.

In his demitting oration, my predecessor reflected that his had been a quiet year for the Proctors. That could not be said of my year in office, with the University taking a number of major steps including the foundation of a new college, the receipt of a major donation for the Humanities, and entering a 'joint partnership' for developing staff and student housing. Much of this activity was consequential on the University's 'Strategic Plan', an ambitious document with a wealth of priorities (many unfunded, but that is another story), which foresaw the continued expansion of the University, especially in graduate numbers. Having observed them close to, I have to say that the administrative overheads of these activities were very far from negligible. As we laboured over the multiple meetings and

voluminous 'paper work' involved, little did we know how much would fall into question as soon as we demitted. In their time Proctors can achieve relatively little, rather like the ghost of Christmas Present, but one change that Sophie Marnett, the Junior Proctor, and I achieved was the introduction of 'Proctoral iPads', to ensure that seemingly endless reams of paper were not expended on our behalf. In retrospect this proved to be a very wise legacy to our successors, who will have had to work exclusively electronically and via 'Zoom' and 'Teams'.

In their second role, it is up to the Proctors to investigate and adjudicate on a wide range of student-facing issues, including appeals, complaints, and breaches of discipline. Although the investigations are undertaken and briefs prepared by the Proctors Office,

staffed by an excellent team of clerks, it is up to the Proctors to make final decisions and they have very wide powers and discretion in this respect. Again, on reflection this is a strength, the clerks provide continuity and detailed knowledge of the regulations whilst the Proctors adjudicate on the basis of their academic experience and insight. Working through difficult cases with the clerks is a simultaneously challenging and stimulating task and arriving at a fair and just outcome is highly satisfying. Less enjoyable are those occasions when a student has to be disciplined, perhaps having to leave the University without an award. While the Proctors, by their very nature, see some of the worst side of the University and its members, being a Proctor affirms that the great majority of the University's members are hard-working and diligent and that most of its processes work well.

Just as with my year in office, this article is swiftly drawing to its end, and I can add only few words on the ceremonial aspects of the role. Oxford's ceremonial tradition is a characteristic, and in the case of the degree ceremonies a joyful, part of University life, which involves tremendous amounts of work for everyone involved, from the Vice-Chancellor down. I was very fortunate in having two very forbearing and accommodating Hertford Pro-Proctors, Jieun Kiaer and Sam Henry, to assist throughout the year. As a Proctor one develops great respect for the Bedels, Proctors' Officers, and administrative colleagues who keep the ceremonies running flawlessly year after year. Oh – and yes – another of my achievements as Proctor was to secure University-issued coats to protect the Proctors' Officers whilst performing their duties in inclement winter weather.

The morning of the 18 March 2020

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saw a very different ceremony in the Sheldonian; indeed, it was the last Congregation to be held for very many months. Everyone wore sub fusc, of course, but only the principal actors were present, all suitably 'socially distanced'. The ceremony was curtailed and the Senior Proctor's demitting oration was not given, although it had been written in collaboration with the Junior Proctor and Assessor and was subsequently published in the *Gazette* as usual. There were no processions and certainly no celebratory lunches. What remained was the symbolism of the ceremony, which is important if somewhat brutal. As soon as the incumbent Proctor demits office, they lay aside their authority, and are obliged to remove their cap as only the Chancellor and Proctors, or their acting

deputies, can retain their academic caps in Congregation. On demission the Proctors instantly become 'ordinary' members of Congregation, without the particular privileges, influences, and powers of the office of Proctor. This is an annual reminder that University officers hold authority from Congregation by virtue of their office, not their personal qualities. In a wider society, which is ever-increasingly dominated by individuals and personalities, it is as well to reflect that our University is a society, a democratic community, and that leadership is a service. The offices of Proctor and Assessor are not always popular, not least with those who actually hold them, but in our University they are a vital service and long may they continue.

# TEN YEARS AS HERTFORD DEAN: SOME REFLECTIONS

Professor Alison Woollard

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I have to confess to a certain relief at stepping down from being Hertford's Dean at this particular moment in time. I see huge challenges ahead for the coming academic year as the college navigates the extraordinarily fine lines between safety, scholarship and fun in the time of COVID-19. There is no doubt that we will find our way through it, bursting as we are with talent, resourcefulness and goodwill. It's exciting, too, to be part of a University that is front and centre of the global efforts to create a vaccine. But it's also a time of unprecedented uncertainty for our students. What will University life be like this year (especially for Freshers)? How will wider economic issues impact

on them, both now and in the future? Will they be anxious about friends, family, job prospects?

My ten years as College Dean, with primary responsibility for managing overall student support, has taught me many things. I've learnt to listen without dispensing advice all the time, to try not to be judgemental, to take advice from others who know much more about student mental health than I do. I've also learnt how incredibly resilient some of our students are, and taken huge personal inspiration from many of them. My long-held philosophy, that we are, all of us, just a few questionable decisions and a bit of bad luck away from disaster, has certainly been proven on many occasions. I've been incredibly, wildly, proud of some pretty mediocre (from a strictly academic standpoint) degree classifications over the years, because they have represented the most extraordinary triumph over seemingly impossible odds.

More than anything else, I've learnt a huge amount about how communities work, or at least how they can work, at their best. And how they can sometimes go wrong. I think the role of college Dean can be best summed up as "chief-holder-of-relationships" – between students, academics, members of staff, external professionals, and so on. There are tricky balancing acts to be had. It's almost impossible to get anything completely right. I could often

be accused of both overreacting and underreacting to a situation by different constituents, often within the same hour! Advocating for students can risk irritation from fellows, and yet pointing out when "college authorities" have a good point, can trigger a very large inbox from angry students! The only way I've survived is to try to occupy all the different mindsets involved (not for too long in some cases...) and to attempt to apply the principles of fairness and natural justice. And be willing to accept with good grace when it turns out I was completely wrong.

When I took over the role, being Dean meant being in charge of both student welfare and discipline. This always seemed an uneasy combination to me. In my view, student "discipline" ought not to be a thing. We're not a boarding school, after all, we're a community of adult scholars, thriving on shared values and mutual respect. It turns out that this is mostly correct, although on occasion the more hedonistic-minded did enjoy the odd roof incursion, or full-on rave (usually in Leckford Road – or "Leckbiza"). So, I was delighted when my wonderful colleague Steve New volunteered to be the first Student Conduct Officer, taking charge of the odd miscreant and generally ensuring good order. Community self-policing is the name of the game at Hertford, though – so much more compelling for students to learn about community spirit and endeavour from each other than being lectured by old fuddy-duddies like me and Steve. Our mantra: don't go looking for trouble....!

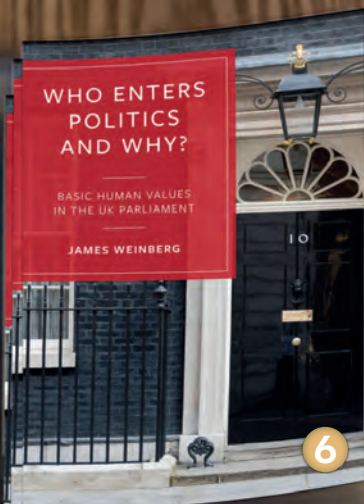
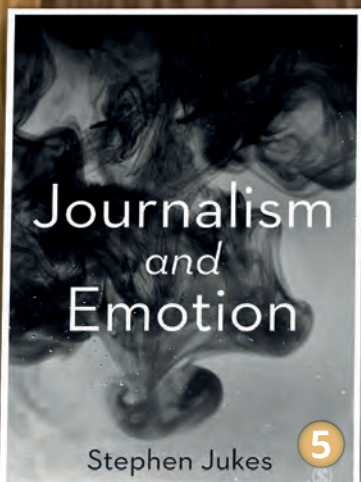
Hertford has changed a lot over the last ten years. Governing Body have encouraged significant investment in the academic office, bursary, welfare and domestic teams, with the result that

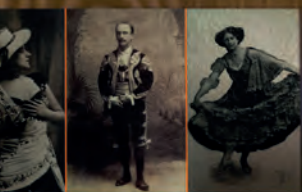
student services have become highly professionalised, allowing silent running to be the norm. It feels like everyone is pulling in the same direction. In the welfare team, I've been blessed with an extraordinary mixture of talented, dedicated and life-affirming individuals – Yo Davies, Leanne Roberts and Mia Smith, to name but a few, as well as numerous resourceful junior deans, always on hand to help out with huge patience and goodwill. Just as well, because the demand for student welfare and support services has gone through the roof. Many experts have ideas about why this is the case – social media, parenting styles, elongated adolescence, too much assessment, the list goes on – but whatever the causes, our students are definitely hurting more than they used to. Whether we think it's justified or not, their pain is real, and we must respond. And we do. But I suspect the need will continue to grow, and the college will need to put even more resource into this area in the future.

It's an extraordinary privilege to share a part of the journey with so many of our students. So, it can be frustrating at times not to know what happened next. It's a bit like starting so many intriguing novels, only to have them snatched away after the first chapter. So, if you're out there and have some updates, get in touch! We never forget you, you know – and the more difficult you think you might have been then, the more pleased we'll be to hear your stories now, whatever they are.

I wish all the luck in the world to my successor, Dr. Oliver Noble Wood, and I know that I'm leaving the Deanship in excellent hands. For myself, I'm looking forward to some exciting new projects in science, education, public engagement and writing. I'm even planning to work in the lab again!

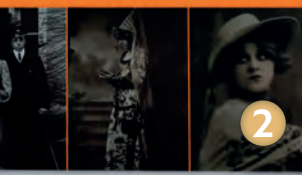
# HERTFORD BOOKSHELF



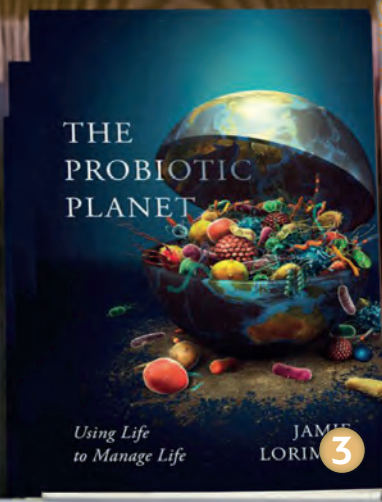


**The Edwardians**  
and the Making of a  
Modern Spanish Obsession

Kirsty Hooper



2

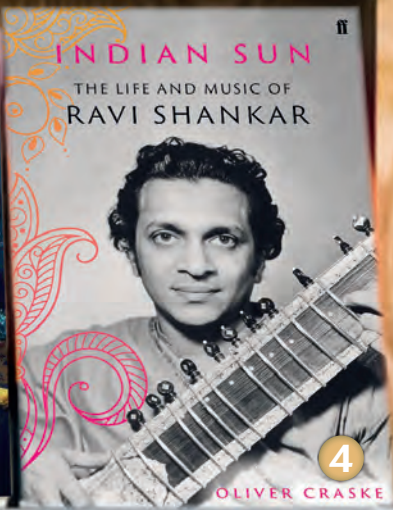


**THE PROBIOTIC  
PLANET**

*Using Life  
to Manage Life*

JAMIE  
LORINCZ

3

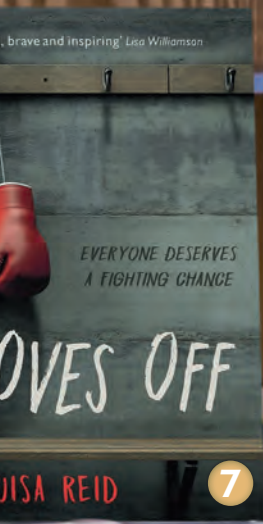


**INDIAN SUN**

THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF  
**RAVI SHANKAR**

OLIVER CRASKE

4



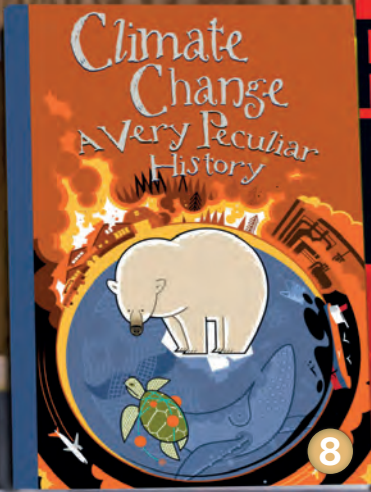
...brave and inspiring' Lisa Williamson

EVERYONE DESERVES  
A FIGHTING CHANCE

**LOVES OFF**

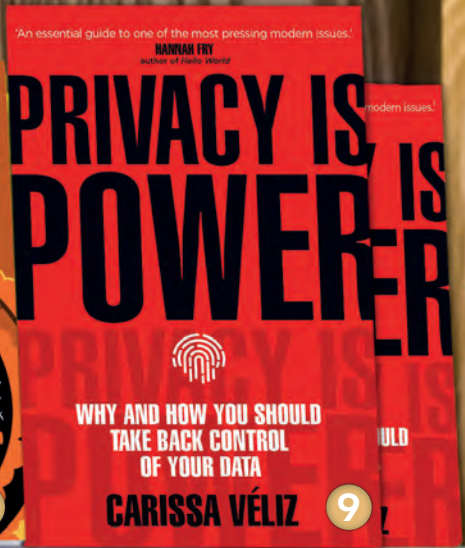
LISA REID

7



**Climate  
Change**  
A Very Peculiar  
History

8



'An essential guide to one of the most pressing modern issues.'

HANNAH FRY  
author of *Love, World!*

**PRIVACY IS  
POWER**

WHY AND HOW YOU SHOULD  
TAKE BACK CONTROL  
OF YOUR DATA

CARISSA VÉLIZ

9

1

**A FORGET-ME-NOT SUMMER**

JOHANNA GRASSICK  
(MODERN LANGUAGES, 1992)

It's taken years, but Natasha Brown's life is finally on track. Running a florists in the quaint village of Willowbrook, she's put her short-lived marriage to Luc Duval far behind her. That is, until he unexpectedly walks through her shop door, three years after their divorce.

2

**THE EDWARDIANS AND THE MAKING OF A MODERN SPANISH OBSESSION**

KIRSTY HOOPER  
(MODERN LANGUAGES, 1993)

Set against a background of unprecedented emotional, economic and industrial investment in Spain, the book traces the extraordinary transformation that took place in British knowledge about the country and its diverse regions, languages and cultures between the tercentenary of the Spanish Armada in 1888 and the outbreak of World War I 26 years later.

3

**THE PROBIOTIC PLANET: USING LIFE TO MANAGE LIFE**

PROFESSOR JAMIE LORIMER,  
TUTORIAL FELLOW IN  
GEOGRAPHY

Most of us are familiar with probiotics added to milk or yogurt to improve gastrointestinal health. In fact, the term refers to any intervention in which life is used to manage life—from the microscopic, like consuming fermented food to improve gut health, to macro approaches such as biological pest control. In this ambitious and original work, Jamie Lorimer offers a sweeping overview of diverse probiotic approaches and an insightful critique of their promise and limitations.

4

**INDIAN SUN: THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF RAVI SHANKAR**

OLIVER CRASKE (PPE, 1990)

Oliver Craske paints a vivid picture of a captivating, restless workaholic, who lived a passionate and extraordinary life – from Shankar's childhood in his brother's dance troupe, through intensive study of the sitar, to his revival of the national music scene; and from the 1950s, a pioneering international career that ultimately made his name synonymous with India.

5

**JOURNALISM AND EMOTION**PROFESSOR STEPHEN JUKES  
(MODERN LANGUAGES, 1972)

How can we understand the complex relationship between journalism and emotion? In a world of live-streamed terror, polarised political debates and fake news, emotion has become central to our understanding of contemporary journalism.

6

**WHO ENTERS POLITICS AND WHY?**DR JAMES WEINBERG  
(HISTORY, 2009)

Exploring unique survey and interview data on the personality characteristics of British politicians, this book provides a timely psychological analysis of those individuals who pursue political careers and how they represent their constituents once elected.

7

**GLOVES OFF**LOUISA REID  
(ENGLISH, 1994)

A page-turning and immersive young adult novel in verse, telling the story of Lily who is mercilessly bullied at school and who turns to boxing in an attempt to fight back; a story of hope and resilience breaking through even the most difficult situations.

8

**CLIMATE CHANGE, A VERY PECULIAR HISTORY**

DAVID ARSCOTT (ENGLISH, 1971)

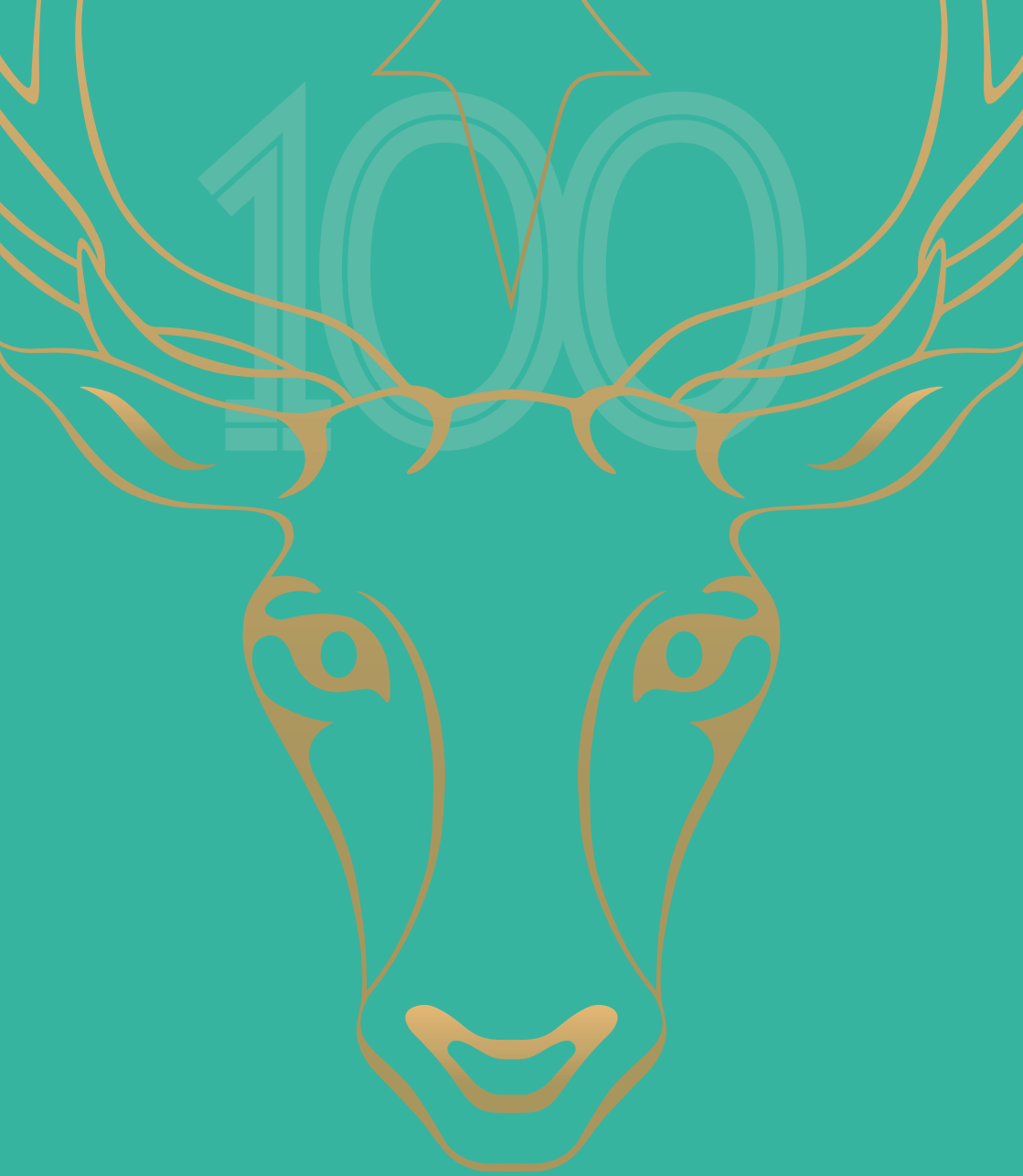
Climate Change: A Very Peculiar History arms you with an introduction to the scientific concepts behind climate change, then hits you hard with the bizarre and, at times, disputed facts that go along with the theory.

9

**PRIVACY IS POWER**DR CARISSA VÉLIZ, TUTORIAL  
FELLOW IN PHILOSOPHY

The first book to call for the end of the data economy. Dr Carissa Véliz exposes how our personal data is giving too much to big tech and governments, why that matters, and what we can do about it.





Hertford Year

# THE HERTFORD SOCIETY

Graham Jones, Secretary of the Hertford Society, writes:

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The last report was composed in August 2019 and appeared in the Hertford College Magazine which was distributed in January 2020. Putting it mildly, a great deal has happened since then!

On Saturday 7 September 2019 the Society had its AGM and its triennial black-tie dinner in Hall. We had the AGM at 5pm in the Ferrar Room which was the MCR in my day and even further back was known as "Pollicott's Room", named after the battels clerk whose domain it then was. The AGM went smoothly and reasonably briefly. Most noteworthy was the fact that we were able to elect a Membership Secretary for the first time for some years. We are grateful to Christopher Mockler

(Modern History, 1963) for taking on this important and onerous job.

We commenced with champagne in the OB Quad at 6.45 pm. This went extremely well with all 60+ members and guests conversing vigorously. At about 7.15 pm I wanted to address the throng but such was the crowd noise that I was rather at a loss to get their attention. At this point our former President General Sir Roger Wheeler was able to demand their attention with a voice honed by his lengthy army career. I was then able to call forward Kenny Lewis, the college's loyal staff member who had retired the previous year after 40 years of service to the college. Kenny had previously been given a fine portrait of himself by the college, and it was now the Society's turn to make a gift on behalf of all the former undergraduates and graduates that Kenny had looked after in various ways in his time. The gift was a framed print of the Hertford Bridge flanked by the adjoining buildings. It was inscribed "To Kenny Lewis, from the Hertford Society 2019". Kenny gave a greatly appreciated few words in response.

We then moved into the Old Lodgings to hear a delightful rendition from the College Choir of *Like as the Hart desireth the Waterbrooks*. This was commissioned by the Society in 2011 from Samuel Pegg in memory of Brian Galpin (Law, 1940), a founding committee member and also a member of the London Bach Choir. We are

most grateful to Charlotte Corderoy, Senior Organ Scholar, for arranging the performance and also accompanying the choir on the grand piano.

Next came the main item on the programme when we went up to the Hall for an excellent dinner, presided over by our President, Rt Hon Jacqui Smith. Simon Robinson, the new Head of Catering Services pulled out all the stops in the appointment of the Hall with much college silver on the tables surrounded by flower arrangements and candelabra. The quality of the food and drink and the smartness of its service were all widely praised. Simon Brewster, the College Cellar Master very kindly recommended and sourced the wines for the evening. In the run up to the dinner Mrs Jordan Davies, the college Events Manager, put in sterling work in printing the programme booklet, table plans and place settings and name badges.

A number of guests on entering the staircase up to the Hall remarked on the newly installed handrails on either side of the very first few steps up from the Quad. Handrails had long been fitted on either side of the main staircase, but these first few steps had no such aid for disabled and elderly persons. A few years ago John Wells (Physics, 1970) approached me for advice on whom to contact as he wished to fund the addition of the extra handrails. I was able to direct John to the right college department and the handrails were in due course installed – strong, and in keeping with the style of the building. John was as good as his word and paid for the rails and their installation.

The Society's next event was the MCR/Hertford Society joint party in the Octagon. This was organised by Liisa Parts from the Society and Sam East, President of the MCR. It was well-attended by Society members and

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Quite a few of the Society attendees were able to recall the Octagon as the JCR in their day. When the Holywell Quad was opened in 1982, the JCR transferred to a purpose-built room in that quad, and the MCR came down from the Ferrar Room to the Octagon.

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MCR members and provided a great opportunity for both to mingle and compare college experiences. Quite a few of the Society attendees were able to recall the Octagon as the JCR in their day. When the Holywell Quad was opened in 1982, the JCR transferred to a purpose-built room in that quad, and the MCR came down from the Ferrar Room to the Octagon. We were delighted to see Sir Walter Bodmer at the party. As principal from 1996 to 2005 and also now a vice-president of the Society, Sir Walter has been a staunch supporter of the Society throughout.

On Thursday 5 March we held the annual committee dinner in the Oxford and Cambridge Club. This dinner is attended by past and present committee members and past and present officers of the Society. We always invite the current presidents of the JCR and MCR and on this occasion both were able to join us – Rebecca Simpson (JCR) and Sam East (MCR).

The dinner is traditionally informal but I was allowed to say a few words of welcome and to point out that at the table we had three presidents and two past presidents – Jacqui Smith (Hertford Society), Rebecca and Sam, and then Roger Wheeler and Roger Westbrook (both Hertford Society).

Little did those of us at dinner that evening realise how much everything in our lives was going to change in less than three weeks.

Back in January we had booked the Hall for the usual summer buffet lunch on Saturday 27 June 2020. This would be preceded by the Society AGM in the Old

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**By the time this reaches you, our new Principal, Tom Fletcher CMG (1994, History), will have been in post for about four months. The Society did of course send him a message of warm congratulations in January 2020 and received an equally warm message in return. He said that he was looking forward to a challenging decade and looked forward to working with the Hertford Society.**

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Lodgings. These outline arrangements were announced to the Society membership at that time. However, like many such events throughout the country, we were obliged to postpone the AGM and lunch to an unspecified date. With the progress of the pandemic still uncertain, we have not been able to arrange another date.

A farewell party in college for Will Hutton was arranged for Saturday 25th July. This event did go ahead, but not in the format originally planned. In place of a jolly party with all invited participants physically in college we had instead a Zoom party from 5pm to 6.30 pm, equally jolly in its way. The party was chaired (if a party can be chaired!) by Professor Emma Smith, Tutorial Fellow in English. She called on thirteen persons in turn to speak fairly briefly about the Will Hutton that they knew. The coverage was quite comprehensive – Fellows (Tutorial, Emeritus, and Honorary), JCR presidents past and present, a former MCR president, and a range of alumni with particular connections with Will. I was privileged to be asked to speak on behalf of the Hertford Society and the Geoffrey Warnock Society. I did of course pay tribute to Will's characteristic cheerful and friendly approach to all alumni that he encountered. I had also been asked to recall a couple of anecdotes which might be of interest. In response to this I recalled the Hertford Bridge Centenary event in 2013 when impresario Will brought his brother and his rock band over from Italy to bring the event to a rocking conclusion in the marquee in the OB Quad. Not many heads of house could have done that, I ventured to suggest.

By the time this reaches you, our new principal, Tom Fletcher CMG (1994, History), will have been in post for about four months. The Society did of

course send him a message of warm congratulations in January 2020 and received an equally warm message in return. He said that he was looking forward to a challenging decade and looked forward to working with the Hertford Society. I am confident that by the time you read this report, the Society and the new principal will have already cooperated in various ways.

I must of course finish with some thanks. In January 2020 the college's Director of Development Julia Thaxton, stepped down after a number of years in post. There is no doubt that a close cooperation between the Society and the Development Office is essential and Julia fostered that cooperation in a most helpful and friendly way for which the Society is very grateful. Other members of the Development team have also been most helpful, in particular Olga Batty, Jason Fiddaman and Alicia Povey. Julia's successor is Frances Wheare. I have had the pleasure of meeting Frances a number of times. I much look forward to the Society cooperating with Frances in the same way as in previous years. More generally of course, I must thank the Governing Body for their support in many ways within the college.

I will finish close to home. The Hertford Society is run by its officers and committee as a team. Alumni mostly read my words in its various communications, but I must emphasise that everyone in the committee contributes to the Society's work.



# ACADEMIC OFFICE

Lynn Featherstone, Registrar and Director of Admissions, writes:

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**I**t's been quite an eventful year in the Academic Office. As academic activities were adapted and moved online on account of the pandemic, so has the supporting administration.

Following national restrictions in March, it soon became clear that students would remain at home for Trinity term, with all teaching and revision entirely online. Whilst having to adjust to the challenges of remote working themselves, the Academic Office team for on-course matters – Sue Finch, Julia Howe and Kim Jones – as well as our indefatigable Librarian, Alice Roques, Porter Fellow for Academic Skills, Dr Catherine Sloan, and Director of the Visiting Student Programme, Dr Josephine Reynell were quick to adapt.

Alice supported tutors and students by moving reading lists online and supplying electronic versions of key texts. Where only a book would do, online purchases and postal deliveries were made to students at home. Catherine transferred the academic skills programme online, and also tailored materials to reflect the unusual circumstances in which students were having to study and revise.

Whilst most Prelims and Mods exams were cancelled, Finals papers were set as remote, open book examinations. The Hertford students performed exceptionally well in such challenging circumstances, with 61 students achieving a first class degree and a further 58 securing a 2.1, representing 97% of our final year cohort. A number within the cohort were awarded coveted University prizes. These phenomenal results are the college's best in many years, and are a testament to the students' hard work, resilience and determination.

Whilst finalists had the opportunity to sit their exams, for many of our undergraduate offer-holders school-leaving exams were cancelled. In the unusual circumstances, subject tutors were keen to provide a first 'virtual reading list' designed to be a broad collection of media relevant to the subject (including ebooks, webpages, YouTube videos, podcasts) to encourage continued and wide engagement with

their subject. We also ran a number of webinars which included information and advice from Catherine and Alice on virtual study.

Nathan Stazicker and Kathryn Boast in the outreach team were also quick to move activities online, recognising the importance of our continuing engagement with younger students in the midst of school and college closures. The open days, when we would usually welcome thousands of visitors through the Catte Street entrance, became virtual events. This was very much a collective effort of tutors, student ambassadors, and our admissions and outreach team: Nathan, Kathryn, and our Admissions Officer, Caitlin Kennedy. We produced 29 pre-recorded videos and ran live-streamed Q&A panels with student ambassadors and admissions

staff on each day – no mean feat at only a few weeks' notice! The virtual college tour proved particularly popular – you can watch it online to hear directly from our students about why they love life at Hertford.

Unsung Heroes of Science competition, which challenges students to make a short video sharing and celebrating those scientists who have hitherto been excluded from conversations and history books, goes from strength to strength. This year's competition, opened up to students from around the world, saw a record 56 submissions from students living as locally as Oxford and as far away as New Zealand. This year's winner, Drishya from Canterbury, was announced in a special virtual awards ceremony by Professor. Alison Woollard. Drishya's







entry promoted the work of Howard Florey and Ernst Chain. The videos of shortlisted entrants have since been viewed on the college YouTube channel over 50,000 times. A suite of resources for teachers based on last year's videos are available to download from the college website.

In July, we said a fond farewell to Sue Finch, our Academic Administrator, who retired after 30 years at Hertford. Since joining the college in January 1990, Sue had guided thousands of students through their academic careers. Sue was also the right-hand woman to a succession of college officers, fellow and lecturers, and has been instrumental in building Hertford's reputation as an open and welcoming community. To celebrate her retirement, fellows, lecturers and staff came together for a special Zoom send-off, with the principal leading the tributes. Sue regaled us with stories of her three decades at Hertford, from the fax machine, electric typewriter and multi-coloured paper forms she relied on in 1990 to the new technology we've all been getting used to during the pandemic. She emphasised how her motivation has always been to help our students and support them to achieve their best. We thank Sue for her long service and wish her all the very best for her retirement.

Last year, I wrote that the college owed a debt of gratitude to the Academic Office team. That's never been truer than in 2020. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated team willing to go the extra mile to support teaching and learning, examinations and assessments, and admissions and outreach.

# THE BURSARY

Bursar Jamie Clarke writes:

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As I write, we are on the verge of launching into a new academic year. Ordinarily, this would be an exciting time, with the expectation of new challenges and an element of the unknown. If one thing is certain this year it's that we have lots of the latter, but excitement has been replaced with a universal anxiety. We have made our preparations, and believe we are in good shape. Only time will tell.

Given that it has consumed almost all our waking hours for several months now, it would be easy to stick with news about how we are planning to deal with any challenges that COVID may yet throw our way. However I'm conscious that, although it has loomed large over the best part of the last year, the topic has reached saturation point. And, believe it or not, other things have been

going on too! So I wanted to take this opportunity to report on what else has been happening.

I have written in the past about the development of our estates strategy. That strategy is now becoming a reality, and we have been making some very good progress, with some key achievements under our belt. One of the most noticeable of these is our brand-new Lodge. At least, it would be have been noticeable had lockdown not struck pretty much just at the point that we opened it. Still, the next time you visit, I hope you will be impressed by the difference. With a sleek new design, three entrance doors, a brand-new post room and extensive office space, it represents a major upgrade.

For those of you who remember living in Holywell, you may be pleased to hear that we are in the final stages of a full refurbishment project. Every student room will, by the start of the new term, benefit from new paint, carpets, sinks, and brand-new fitted furniture. A set of new student kitchens have also been created, and we shall top it off with an overhaul and remodel of all the bathrooms.

We have successfully completed competitions to select architects for two of our flagship estates initiatives. The library project is now in full swing, a c.£15m state-of-the-art new facility (and despite some reservations, I don't think that is a wholly inappropriate term in the context). The plans include a large new area under OB quad, and bring some of

the most impressive rooms in our Cattle street buildings within the scope of our future student experience. We will also restore some of the distinctive features of the old chapel. Our Winchester Road development is also firmly underway, where Hertford is leading a joint project with the University to establish over 150 new graduate rooms (our share is approximately half), as well as two brand-new departmental buildings. On both these projects, we hope to be submitting detailed planning applications within the next six months.

Our IT strategy has taken a leap forward, and we have been able to make some significant improvements over the last year. Our new payment card system (using BOD cards, an online portal and mobile apps) has worked very well, and established a pay-as-you-go approach for all student catering. Over the summer we have replaced our entire WIFI network (around 150 brand-new access points) to support what we expect to be a year of major demand on our virtual infrastructure. We have also just commissioned a purpose-built new student and staff data system that takes a direct feed from the University, and updates our internal accounting and catering systems automatically. Admittedly, these changes are perhaps less interesting (and invisible) for many, but they are close to a bursar's heart, so

I offer only a mild apology for including them. We were joined a few months ago by a new Head of IT, Stewart Tolhurst, under whose auspices our IT provision will continue to improve.

Looking ahead, we are clearly going to have our challenges. Directly out of my window I can see our new marquee, which covers about 80% of the quad. It would have been more, but for the tree. This will be a social hub for college members for the next term and possibly longer, offering nearly 300m<sup>2</sup> of "social distancing" and "ventilation mitigation" – two terms that I could not have predicted being part of everyday language six months ago. It is certainly going to be a rather different year. However, if the last six months have done anything, they have confirmed to me that Hertford is exactly the sort of place that one would want to be when something like this comes along. Testing though it has been, the recent past has revealed our latent strength, and ability to work together. Our staff have been fantastic, and our students understanding and supportive. I have worked in a range of teams, for a number of organisations, over my career. The current situation is far from what one would wish for. But if it has to be, I couldn't have wished to be in a better place.

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**We have successfully completed competitions to select architects for two of our flagship estates initiatives. The library project is now in full swing, a c.£15m state-of-the-art new facility.**

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# THE LIBRARY

Fellow Librarian Professor Emma Smith writes:

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Surely there are things to report from last Michaelmas and Hilary, but it is the closure of the college, and the library, for Trinity term that looms largest in our sense of this year. Under the expert direction of Librarian Alice Roques, the priority was to continue to make materials available during lockdown, especially to those taking exams or finishing dissertations. The library shifted towards digital resources: Alice was a wizard at tracking down e-books (many of them temporarily available and so not centrally catalogued) or alternatives, suggesting journal articles in place of print books, and sending some new acquisitions direct to students in their homes. We collected loans on behalf of department and faculty libraries from those finalists who visited Oxford to

collect their things and say a strange goodbye. And we spent time preparing for Michaelmas, with click and collect services, quarantining of returned books, limited access to our physical collections, and a makeshift study space in the Baring Room. Fresher inductions and dissertation resource workshops have been done by Zoom. Even Simpkin's routine of sleeping in the library and biting the unwary has been disrupted.

Current circumstances have given us the opportunity to take stock of what's most important in the library's provision. Epitaphs for the book have been intoned at intervals since Amazon launched the first iteration of the Kindle in 2007, but they continue to be premature. After years of growth, e-book sales seem to have stalled. Although we have invested in more e-books as part of University purchasing consortia, the majority of our resources continue to be required in physical form. And we all miss study spaces.

So alongside the changes to support students during lockdown, we have continued to develop plans for our new library. The experience of going virtual has reinforced our belief in the central importance of a physical library space at the heart of the college. We will soon be able to share with you this exciting project, which will provide much improved and expanded accessible study and shelf space, exhibition and display areas, high-spec storage of the college archives and rare books,



and new office space for library and collections staff. Long-desired facilities – loos! lifts! water fountain! – are all part of the new plans.

It's not all coronavirus, though. Books continue to be at the centre of cultural and political debates, and libraries are never neutral spaces. We are grateful to JCR members, especially BME rep, Caleb Bram, for devising a new 'liberation collection' in the library in collaboration with Alice and with Dr Elizabeth Baldwin, Tutor for Diversity and Equality. These new academic texts cover topics such as race, class, empire, gender, sexuality

and women's rights will eventually be shelved within their respective disciplines (I'm looking forward to seeing Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* in between Vorticist Wyndham Lewis and Elizabethan playwright John Lyly.) They are also searchable as a collection via SOLO, Oxford's library database. [bit.ly/hertfordliberation](http://bit.ly/hertfordliberation). As Caleb says, 'the new collection is a promising step forward in Hertford's commitment to proactive and continual education on issues of social inequality'. The library will continue to embody that commitment.

# COLLEGE ARCHIVES

Archivist Dr Lucy Rutherford writes:

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This has been an unprecedented year for the College archives. Along with the rest of the college departments, the archives were closed to external researchers in March 2020. We have been working primarily from home and will continue to do so while the current COVID-19 restrictions are in place. The physical care of the archives has clearly been more difficult to manage during this period (although the porters have done sterling work on monitoring environmental conditions in the store rooms) and plans for larger scale projects such as re-boxing the collections have had to be postponed. Although the archive will remain closed to external researchers for the foreseeable future, we still welcome research enquiries, which we do our best to answer if at all possible, although

restricted access to the collections mean that it may take longer to give an answer than usual.

The priority is to provide as normal a service for college staff and external researchers as possible, so we will have to develop new ways of enabling access to our collections and of making information available to our users. We are still able to answer queries for college staff; and Professor Tyerman has been able to continue his research for the College History. Although on-site access to the archive for external researchers is not currently possible, we are still able to answer many enquiries through other sources of information. We will spend time during the next year planning how to improve access to the archives for our researchers. In particular we will aim to provide more online resources to support their research; and a key activity in the coming year will be to photograph our most frequently used records and to develop more user-friendly ways of making these accessible. Work on our online archive catalogue has continued throughout this period, and we plan to make this publicly available during Michaelmas term. This will give researchers access to vital information about our collections and allow us to provide digital images of key documents. Keep an eye on the archive webpages at <https://www.hertford.ox.ac.uk/and-more/rarebooks-archives/archives> for further information about our catalogue launch.

From The Chairman



Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club



MUSICAL TIMES

MAY ISSUE

**HERTFORD COLLEGE  
MUSIC SOCIETY  
OXFORD**

May 11 ORGAN RECITAL  
8.15 DONALD JAMES

MAY 19 ORCHESTRAL CONCERT  
8.30

SATURDAY MAY 25  
Recital by **PETER PEARS**  
and the **WILBYE CONSORT**

Held in Oxford Town Hall (8-15)

... and claims (at least, hope  
claim is valid) to be based on original  
manuscripts.

*[Handwritten signature]*



Another key project during the coming year will be the rationalisation and preservation of the college's digital archives and modern records. We are delighted to have been able to participate in a new University-wide platform (known as DigiSafe) for managing digital records and archives. This will provide secure, long-term storage for our digital archives and

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**In spite of the college closure, this year has seen some 53 accessions into the archives.**

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an efficient platform for managing departmental records which are increasingly in a digital rather than paper format. The DigiSafe platform can be accessed remotely so the implementation of this essential project will be able to continue over the next year regardless of external circumstances.

In spite of the college closure, this year has seen some 53 accessions into the archives. Much of this consisted of recording previously unaccessioned records which were already in the custody of the archives, but it also includes some very welcome external gifts. One small but significant donation in March 2020 was a folder of correspondence and notes kept by the Hertford College Music Society in the early 1970s. This covers the college centenary concert that was held in Oxford Town Hall on 25 May 1974; at

which Sir Peter Pears performed with the Wilbye Consort. The folder contains a single letter from Pears, outlining his arrangements for the concert but no further information; and it would be lovely to discover some more detail about this event. In October 2019 we received a wonderful donation from Annabel Howland, a relative of Principal Henry Boyd, consisting of watercolours and drawings made by Principal Boyd. Boyd was a painter of some note and the college already has a number of his paintings in its collections; this has been added to with a further donation by Oxford resident Richard Hewar of another Boyd watercolour which had belonged to his father. The college archive holds a small set of Boyd's personal papers, which includes two volumes of his travel diaries recording an extended journey through Greece, Egypt and Turkey in 1854. It would make a fascinating future project to look at Boyd's papers in more detail and to examine whether the paintings might tie in with his travels. We are always delighted to consider new accessions to the archives; so please contact us on [archives@hertford.ox.ac.uk](mailto:archives@hertford.ox.ac.uk) to discuss any potential donations.



# CHAPEL

Reverend Mia Smith writes:

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In my pre-Hertford life as a nurse, I was inspired by Sister Calista Roy, a nun and Professor of Nursing. Roy promoted an ethos of health as adaptation, in which we bio-psychosocial beings constantly interact with a changing environment. We use innate and acquired mechanisms to adapt to change, and we do so in groups, families, organisations, and communities. Wellbeing occurs when people respond positively to environmental changes.

Adaptation has been an apt description of this academic year. Michaelmas Term began with a bit of upheaval and adaptation in Chapel, as we moved around the icon, the prayer boards, and the votive stand to make space for a harpsichord. Built in the 1670s by Flemish artisans, the beautifully painted instrument was on

loan from the Bate Collection. Music finalist Testu Isaji treated us to some wonderful recitals by candlelight, which showcased the recent adaptations to Chapel – updated heating, and new choir stall lanterns.

Our theme for Michaelmas was 'Living Well', highlights included the principal addressing us on the importance of religion in public life, comedian Reverend Ravi Holy sharing his story to encourage us to live well beyond chaos, and Rabbi Debbie Young Somers sharing the wisdom of Sabbath.

In Hilary term the MacBride sermon was preached by the Bishop of Truro, the Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen. We did not have to look very far to 'Find Wisdom', our theme for the term, with an all-Oxford cast of speakers including Michael Ward (the wisdom of C S Lewis), and Bethany Sollereder (on wise study).

One of the highlights of the year was the exhibition 'James Parkes and the Age of Intolerance'. Parkes, an alumnus, was an Anglican clergyman who from the 1920s onwards fought against antisemitism, in particular challenging the Church's role in this. Remembering activists such as Parkes is partly to honour their work, but also illustrates the failures of their contemporaries to act during an age when intolerance was all too common.

Sadly, with the growing threat of COVID-19, some of our international students experienced racist treatment on the streets of Oxford. A tea party, 'Solidaritea', was arranged by the




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Our choir concert this year comprised a creative programme based on the nine Greek muses, compiled by Senior Organ Scholar Charlotte Corderoy. As pandemic fears increased, we had a small but faithful group of parents and supporters to enjoy what for most of us, was the final live concert before lockdown.

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Director of the Visiting Students Programme, Josephine Reynell, and the Chaplain, to which all members of college were invited. Hertfordians were encouraged to chat to those whom they had not already met, and the principal addressed college, saying that each member of our community is valued, and that racism and intolerance is not the Hertford way.

In our Eucharist services our book of the term was *We need to talk about Race* by Ben Lindsay. This led to some interesting discussions highlighting our goal of anti-racism.

In Hilary we also hosted an 'atmospheric gig' in our 'unexpectedly perfect venue for a rock show' (Cherwell), as music student and Choral

Clerk Nathan De Giorgi brought along his band Rai Kah Mercury to perform their refreshing and experimental sounds.

Our choir concert this year comprised a creative programme based on the nine Greek muses, compiled by Senior Organ Scholar Charlotte Corderoy. As pandemic fears increased, we had a small but faithful group of parents and supporters to enjoy what for most of us, was the final live concert before lockdown. Following our service of passion carols, we had to shut down services.

Trinity Term took place in lockdown. The prayer board became an online document, exam carnations were of a virtual 'click and like' variety, and Chapel



became *Chapel at Home*, as Zoom Compline and pre-recorded video Evensong became the norm. Evensong comprised some pre-recorded music from the catalogue of Hertford student Faaris Zaki, along with our exciting adaptation 'Choirantine', our remote choir, directed by Junior Organ Scholar Andrew Liu. Our theme for the term 'Looking forward to normal' included a short interview from a college member each week, and remote sermons from Ben Lindsay, Chaz Howard (speaking from Philadelphia, USA), and others. Chapel drinks continued by Zoom, and instead of a Chapel Dinner to mark the end of the year, we had a black tie party via Zoom, ending with the customary singing of *Locus Iste* by Bruckner and a Compline service.

As we began to slowly emerge from

lockdown, cancelled weddings were re-booked, taking place with a handful of guests, but hundreds from around the world joining in on Zoom, and offering some very 2020 photographs!

This year our charitable giving has supported the international humanitarian efforts in Syria through the Hands Up Foundation, a local charity called Home Start, supporting vulnerable children and families, and the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, supporting the mental health of young people.

Thanks must go to Charlotte Corderoy. Our Senior Organ Scholar has brought flair and talent to her role, and to Andrew Liu, whose remarkable adaptability as director of Choirantine has brought stability and community in a time of uncertainty. Thanks too to Torrance



# DEVELOPMENT

Director of Development Frances Wheare writes:

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I started writing this article at my desk in my office in college. Not the most noteworthy occurrence in an ordinary year, but as this is the first time I've spent more than about ten minutes in the office since March I thought it was worth a mention (it's now September). Indeed, by my calculations, I will have sat at this desk just 20 times in my first six months in post! It's good to be back in college, if only infrequently for now, but the silence takes a bit of getting used to – being opposite Dr Benjamin Skipp, I'd got used to hearing occasional bursts of music during my working day.

We have all, over the past nine months, had to adjust to a new virtual world. Our day-to-day life – meetings, socialising with friends and families, shopping, even visits to art galleries or the theatre – have, until very recently,

taken place through a screen. The physical environments with which we are so familiar have now become remote, almost totemic; we reminisce over our favourite spaces, and post or like images on social media. For me, I take some comfort from the picture hanging on the wall in front of my makeshift workspace on the dining room table: a view of the Bridge of Sighs, painted by my mother-in-law to mark my husband's graduation from Hertford in 2004. It's a nice sight to gaze upon when in need of inspiration!

Buildings give us a place to work or study, and they bring us physically together. Often, they are inextricably linked with our happiest and most treasured memories, such as the lifelong friendships our alumni made at Hertford. So what happens when some of those spaces are no longer accessible? How do we, an institution which prides itself on high-quality, small group teaching, adapt to a world in which face-to-face interaction is discouraged? How do we maintain our outreach activity, ensuring that Hertford continues to attract and welcome the most talented students from all backgrounds, when we're unable to bring people to the site? How can our academics undertake research when labs and libraries are closed? And (most importantly for me and my team) how do we react when all of our events have had to be cancelled?

In all cases, the answer has been to direct our resources online. Trinity term has been deemed a success, with



fellows and students quickly adapting to online teaching and learning. In early July, we held our first online open days, complete with filmed tutorials, Q&A sessions and virtual college tours, and these will be repeated in the future. Despite the increased demands that come with planning and delivering online learning, research continues apace, as demonstrated in the latest issue of *The Bridge*.

And, although no substitute for real-life interactions, we're proud of the virtual alumni community we've created. To date we have had over 2,000 attendees across our online events, including those who viewed recordings after the fact. Our online gatherings included a reunion for Philosophy graduates, and a networking event for our graduating students and recent alumni. We also instituted a new webinar series, Hertford Responds, in which our fellows talked about how their research intersects with the challenges caused by COVID-19. We're thrilled that those of you who may not ordinarily be able to get to Oxford have been able to participate online.

It's strange to think that there was a time when we could gather together in large numbers, and be in the same space as scores of people from outside our households. Nevertheless, I'd like to highlight a few events that took place in 'the before' – both before COVID-19 and before my time. We welcomed alumni from 1969, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 for gaudies; we hosted our Maths alumni, with speeches from Professor Alan Lauder and Professor Martin Bridson; we teamed up with the University's Social Sciences Division for a panel discussion, chaired by the Vice Chancellor Louise Richardson, on Information, Security and Democracy at the Royal United Services Institute; we gave a presentation on college finances; and we held our usual round of drinks events in Oxford and London. We're grateful to Jonathan Eyal, Jonathan Kewley and George Panagopoulos for hosting us at RUSI, Clifford Chance and Reed Smith respectively. I'd also like to give an honourable mention to Rob Lusardi, who would have hosted a wonderful event for our US alumni in New York in April had circumstances not intervened.

On 28 February I attended my first (and, at least for now, my last) event at Hertford. Diversifying Careers in Government and Politics was organised by two alumni, Dr James Weinberg and Josh Platt, with the intention of encouraging students of all backgrounds to consider a political career. We welcomed 60 students from Oxford, Reading, Oxford Brookes and Sheffield, who enjoyed a programme of talks, teamwork exercises, networking opportunities and practical advice on writing a CV or application. The event was a huge success, and presents a model for future activities. We'd like to thank Josh and James for organising it, as well as all the speakers, including Hertford alumna Rt Hon Jacqui Smith, former Labour MP and the first female Home Secretary.

At the time, none of us had much of an inkling that this would be the last

event before the world ground to a halt. At the time I was busily planning trips to the US and East Asia, and we were preparing for our annual John Donne Lecture, to be given by Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell. Many of us (and many of you!) were also starting training for the 500-mile Venice to Oxford Bike Ride in July. But only a few weeks later we



were rapidly reassessing and changing our plans. I'm pleased to say that, with a little thought and creativity, we were able to move almost all of our planned events online, and we look forward to rescheduling the biannual Hertford Society lunch in due course. The bike ride was, unfortunately, the only casualty, but your legs may thank us for that!

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported Hertford in any way over the last year. All of you – whether hosting, attending or participating in events; giving up your time to attend committees; talking and offering advice to current students; contributing to our blog; and sharing memories on social media – have played an integral part in Hertford's community. We are also enormously grateful to our donors, whose loyalty and generosity to Hertford enables us to achieve so much. We're particularly grateful that so many of you – the majority, in fact – have chosen to support our Unrestricted Fund, which allows us to allocate your funding wherever the need is greatest. This is particularly important in times such as these, which are impossible to prepare for and demand an agile and responsive approach.

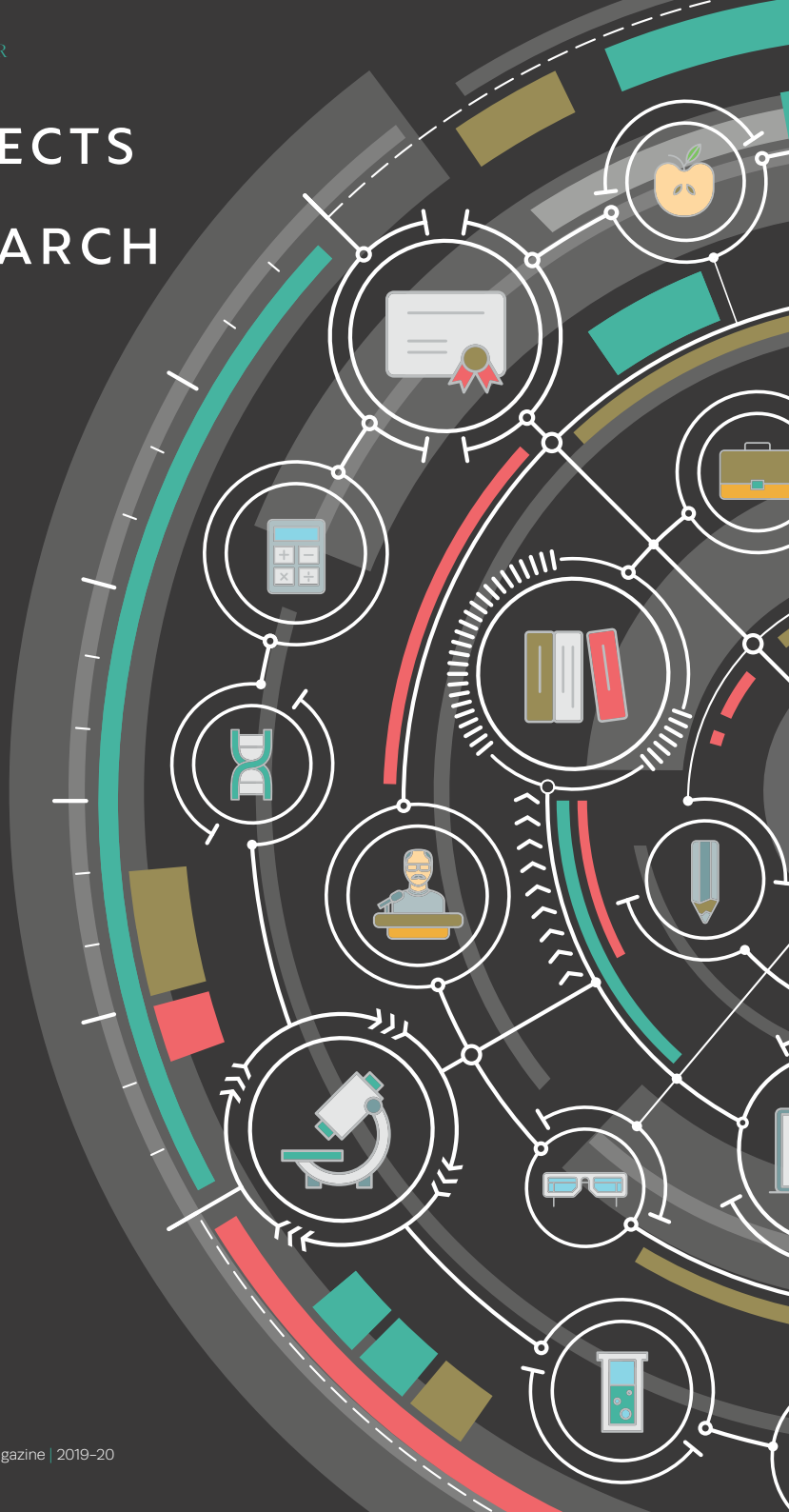
All in all we raised just under £1.35m in donations this year – with the exception of an outlier year, in which we received our single biggest donation, these results continue our steady upward trajectory. It would be foolish to think that the coming year will be plain sailing, and we recognise that these are uncertain and challenging times for us all. But I'm confident that the community will pull together, helping to ensure that the future generations of Hertfordians receive the same incredible opportunities.

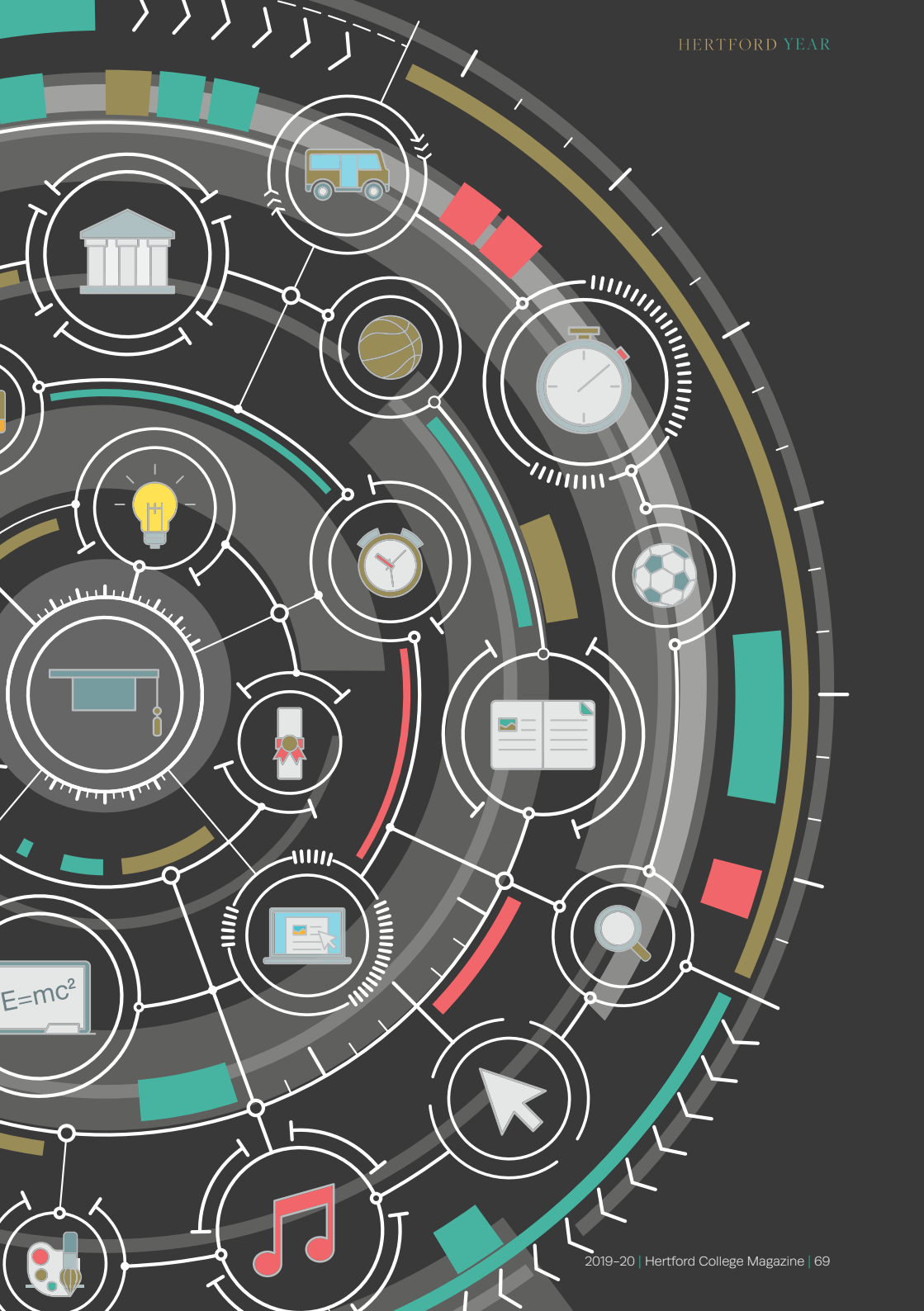
I'm pleased to say that we will be continuing our programme of online engagement and events during Michaelmas term and beyond, with more Hertford Responds webinars as well as regional get-togethers and more online networking events. We also have a number of events planned to introduce you to our new principal, Tom Fletcher. Please do check our website, like our Facebook page, and make sure you're subscribed to our e-newsletters so that you don't miss a thing.

On a personal note, I have greatly enjoyed meeting many of you over the past few months, albeit virtually. I feel very lucky to have landed at what our former principal, Will Hutton, describes as the 'friendliest, funkiest' Oxford college – I can't speak for the latter, but the former is certainly true, and I already feel like a long-standing member of the Hertford community. In these conversations, I've asked people about their memories of Hertford and what makes it special. Many have mentioned their favourite places – the Bridge of Sighs, the staircase leading to the Hall, the OB quad and so on – as well as the opportunities Hertford unlocked. But overwhelmingly what people remember, and with the greatest fondness, is people. Their favourite tutor, the friends they made on their first night in college, various iterations of Simpkin stalking through the quad (as a cat owner, I'm afraid I put felines in the people category too!)

Buildings are important, yes, but if the last nine months have taught us anything, it's that it's what you do with them, and the people you fill them with, that really counts. We're looking forward to being back together in person again but until then, we know that the Hertford community will continue to thrive.

# SUBJECTS AND RESEARCH





$$E=mc^2$$

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Professor Nick Barton writes:



With the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year, Hertford welcomes a new tutorial fellow in Cognitive Archaeology to the fold. Dr Lambros Malafouris comes to Hertford from Keble College where he was a Research Fellow in Creativity since 2010. Lambros specialises in the cross-disciplinary study of the interaction between cognition and material culture. His work critically examines many deeply entrenched assumptions about the boundaries, ontology, evolution and uniqueness of the human mind. Lambros is currently directing the HANDMADE project (funded by the European Research Council ERC) looking at the process of making by hand focusing on the anthropological study of clay and the craft of ceramics. Lambros will be sharing the teaching of the Anthropology and Archaeology joint degree with Professor Nick Barton. This comes in the wake of Professor Mark Robinson's recent retirement although we are very pleased that Mark will

continue to take an active part in the college and invite the participation of Hertford undergraduates on his exciting fieldwork project in Pompeii.

Of course, this year has been dominated by the turbulent events surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. Apart from the obvious hardships and continuing anxieties over social distancing and self-isolation we have all had to get used to a very different teaching and educational environment. Despite an extremely disruptive Trinity term Hertford's Archaeology and Anthropology students all rose magnificently to meet the various new challenges of remote lectures and distance tutorial teaching, as well as major changes to examination procedures. Three of our third years were awarded first class degrees (Rosie Bound, Philippa Kent and Sophie Street). Our second and first years bore the brunt of online tutorials last term but these seem to have worked very

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Making forms and lines with clay on the island of Sifnos, Greece

well and the students have said they found them enjoyable despite having to cope with occasional interruptions from over-exuberant domestic pets! With the start of the long vacation, our second years have been engaged in an exciting range of summer activities, and have somehow managed to combine these with research on their dissertations. Topics as usual are very wide-ranging and this year are dominated by anthropology topics including 'Tea drinking and its origins in colonialism' (Iona Cargill); 'What it means to be British today for members of the Windrush generation' (Olivia Roberts), and 'The cult of superfood in the 21st century' (Kate Furber), with one on archaeology concerning

'Shipwrecks around Vancouver Island' (Ella Speckeen). After the academic rigours of Trinity term, our first years would normally have taken part in fieldwork over the summer. This, of course, has had to be postponed due to coronavirus but that didn't stop one of their number, Liberty Hinze, exploring the partially submerged petrified forest and peats on the shore between Borth and Ynyslas, near Aberystwyth. The peats, more than 4,500 years old, show surviving human footprints including those of a four-year-old child. We are greatly looking forward to welcoming our students back to Oxford soon to hear more about what they did this summer.

## BIOCHEMISTRY

Professor Petros Ligoxygakis writes:



What a rollercoaster of adversity this year has been. Stopping lectures and tutorials at the time when third year students were thinking about initiating their revision for finals or their fourth-year college siblings doing the last experiments for their research project. If ever there was bad timing. Not that any other time would have been better, but at that point in the proceedings the disruption was important and the anxiety palpable, as well as the sense of foreboding. The first years dropped everything just after two terms.

Finals were postponed for the third-year students to November (online) and the fourth years had to start writing their project report with what data was at hand several weeks short. Everyone left and we communicated through Zoom. I continued teaching but-to keep my sanity and their engagement-I decided to do every tutorial on SARS-CoV-2. I wanted to give the students a sense of how quickly things were moving, so much so, that the international scientific community could not review it fast enough for publication in peer-reviewed journals, so it was deposited in bio or medical archives (bioRxiv or medRxiv respectively). So, we had to trawl the archives!

This developed in parallel to a University-wide effort initiated by DPhil students in Immunology to review and present a summary of all notable peer-reviewed papers and archived manuscripts on SARS-CoV2 as the worldwide race to understand the virus unfolded. One can find these short reviews in *Nature Reviews Immunology* and in the dedicated site of the OxImmuno Literature Initiative. As I was part of that effort, I tried to connect our undergraduate students to the really intense production of knowledge and how that related to their course. Our first years learnt how to find the

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question a scientific manuscript wanted to address as well as the question that the authors *did answer* in the end (two things that are not necessarily always the same!), what were the "holes" in the researchers' reasoning and what was the significance of their findings. As this was happening in the backdrop of a pandemic, reading and thinking about the virus in terms of biochemistry, cell biology and genetics gained, for them and for me, a sense of urgency. As ever, the teaching team namely, our brilliant lecturers, Dr Delia O'Rourke, Dr Maria Gravato and Emily Baker as well as our mentor Professor Alison Woollard were fellow travellers in this strange journey.

Our students responded brilliantly. Their main achievement? To overcome adversity by producing work of great quality. Moreover, the results of the fourth year students were excellent: three firsts out of six students, including two University prizes. One of these students will be going to do a PhD at the Sanger Centre in Cambridge supervised by Emma Davenport (who my sources tell me graduated from college around 2010) thereby taking the Hertford family very seriously! The new year will bring more online teaching and less free-form interaction in college. Nevertheless, we will still be able to retain our sense of wonder at and still be excited by cellular and molecular mechanisms. It will be apparent now more than ever, that understanding these mechanisms has a role to play in global health.

## BIOLOGY

Dr Odile Harrison writes:



This year the new Biology degree was introduced at Oxford with students now having the option to continue to a fourth year and graduate with an MBIol. Thus, in MT2019, the new course began and included seven first year Hertford students. All did admirably well, and all succeeded in navigating life at University and Oxford. This year two Hertford finalists achieved firsts with the remaining finalists all obtaining 2.1s which is excellent. I wish them all the best for the future, and I hope to meet them again one day at one of the Darwin dinners (a joint event for all Biochemists, Biologists and Human scientists). It has to be said I think all of the students showed incredible resilience and courage midway through the year when faced with the challenges of learning remotely due to the pandemic and I am looking forward to seeing some of them in person again soon.

This was my first year as a lecturer on the MBIol course and, although at times very stressful and nerve-wracking, this was an incredibly exciting and rewarding experience as I got to meet

amazing people, both students and other members of the faculty. I have now taught in lectures, tutorials and practicals and I find this invaluable as I can now see more clearly how all of these forms of teaching should align. Ultimately, I hope that some of my passion for genomics and infectious diseases will rub off on at least some students leading to future leaders in this field which has to be said, has been very much at the forefront of public health in recent times!

This year, my research on the sexually transmitted bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* has escalated. This bacterium has also often been in the news due to its increasing resistance to treatment with antibiotics. My work involves the analysis of thousands of genomes belonging to this pathogen and the development of tools with which to detect resistant strains directly from sequence data while also furthering our understanding of the population biology of this complex bacterium. The availability of genome data also provides a resource that can be mined for both alternative prophylactic treatment options but also potential vaccine candidates. Asides from research and teaching, I am also involved in outreach events and really enjoy reaching out to school-age children particularly as I have two of my own. I can see first-hand how important it is to provide opportunities for children to explore STEM activities and be shown that there is more to life than Instagram, Xboxes and TikTok!

## CHEMISTRY

Professor Fernanda Duarte writes:



This past academic year started as usual, with busy teaching terms and a wide range of academic and social activities. We welcomed Thomas Fay as stipendiary Lecturer in Physical Chemistry and a cohort of five first years. However, all the sudden, things changed, exams, Part II projects, and academic activities were cancelled, and Teams/Zoom/Google/Skype meetings became the norm.

We were lucky to have the Annual Chemistry Dinner just before the pandemic arrived in early March. For many of us, this was the last social activity we would have for an extended period. We had a great time, celebrating Women's Day and all the many achievements from undergraduate and graduate students. Little we knew of what was coming.

Despite the many challenges we all faced during lockdown, we continued learning, participating in tutorials, and supporting our research groups as much as we could. First and second years sat departmental collections

with solid results, third years started revisions for their final exams, and fourth years successfully submitted their Part II Theses, with two students gaining first class degrees. In addition to that, students went into exciting new activities during the year. During summer, Ben Church put in practice his lab skills and became a cherry expert, doing quality controls in a cherry grading factory; Maddy Buffett worked with the Chemistry Teaching Laboratory team developing outreach resources for students visiting the University and Joe Morrow and Anderson moved into PhD studies in the area of Computational and Organic chemistry. Andrew discovered his passion for politics and successfully transferred to PPE at Hertford. Outside of chemistry, students kept challenging themselves with sports and other activities. Iain McLauchlan has been teaching himself German and practising bouldering, and many have kept regular runs as part of the lockdown routine.

Tutors had a busy summer too, preparing teaching for the year ahead, doing research, but also enjoying a bit of the break either in Oxford, Cornwall or Wales. Despite not been able to

enjoy her sabbatical fully, Professor Claire Vallance continued her research work remotely, and was kept busy with her newly formed spin-out company. The company, which develops nanoparticle analysers for the field of nanomedicines, was recently awarded the Business Start-up prize from the Institute of Physics, well done! She has also continued on her role as President of the RSC's Faraday Division. Looking for something different to do, she cycled thousands of kilometres, including a trip to Cornwall and back and took up marathon kayaking.

During the summer, Dr Fernanda Duarte worked with a group of researchers at Oxford and Bristol on the design of potential inhibitors for one of the key enzymes that form part of the SARS-CoV-2 machinery. Beyond the scientific work arising from these efforts, these interactions have been an excellent opportunity for her team to expand their network of collaborations and expertise. She was also busy organising a virtual conference via Twitter called *LatinXChem* which showcased research by the LatinXchem community and became a huge event, including more than 1,200 posters and a closing seminar by Professor Frances Arnold, 2018 Chemistry Nobel Prize. Together with colleagues in the UK and India, she has also launched the UK-India Innovation & Sustainability Chemistry Consortium.

This new academic year will bring more online teaching/meetings and social-distancing rules. Despite these challenges, we will continue working hard to gain a better understanding of chemistry and apply it to the many aspects of life where each of us can make significant contributions. We wish all of our chemists all the best for 2021!

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## COMPUTER SCIENCE

Professor Michael Wooldridge writes:



This year, after a sabbatical, I was placed back in the hot seat as Head of Department of Computer Science. I started the academic year with a visit to China, where I was an invited speaker at the International Conference on Logic and Interaction (LORI) in Chongqing, followed by a week giving the Jin Yuelin Lectures in Logic at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Hilary term is my teaching term, and I gave my Computational

Game Theory course to about 60 students this year. At the same time, we had a long list of appointments planned in the department for this year – 11 Associate Professor appointments were on the schedule in total. This is quite a big load, but after a year of sabbatical I felt I had the energy to dive back into things with a spring in my step. And then... well, you know what happened next. By late February, it became obvious to us from colleagues in Italy and Spain that a lockdown in the UK was inevitable, and we only just managed to get to the end of Hilary term. The week after the end of term, we started to work from home. I guess many people across the globe will report the same feelings, but looking back, the period from the middle of March to the middle of May seems like a dream: we proceeded with remote interviews and we did teaching and examining by Zoom and MS Teams, while everyday the news seemed to get worse and worse. Like everyone else, we had to improvise, and I have to say I lost a lot of sleep simply worrying about whether we would be able to function as a tutorial university when Trinity term arrived. Well, it wasn't a conventional Oxford experience, but it worked. Actually, it worked pretty well.

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**I have to say I lost a lot of sleep simply worrying about whether we would be able to function as a tutorial university when Trinity term arrived. Well, it wasn't a conventional Oxford experience, but it worked. Actually, it worked pretty well. Our students took their exams and engaged with tutorials from wherever they were in the world.**

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Our students took their exams and engaged with tutorials from wherever they were in the world, and our tutors and lecturers found new ways to present their material and interact with their students. The end of Trinity was a huge relief, and we, like the rest of the collegiate University, have spent the long vacation so far planning for how Michaelmas will work, for a range of different possible scenarios. At the risk of tempting fate, I think we are now ready. It again won't be a quintessential Oxford experience next year, but I am quite sure it will be a world-class education.

While all this has been going on, research has continued apace. This year saw the publication of my book *The Road to Conscious Machines* in the iconic Pelican series. The book is a 400-page popular science introduction to AI, intended to reframe the narrative around AI, away from dystopian robots-take-over fearmongering, to the reality of AI today and for the foreseeable future. The timing of publication turns out to have been a disaster: just as the lockdown started, so publicity opportunities were very limited. Still, I have been heartened by making the *Financial Times* summer reading list, and by the positive feedback the book received on Amazon and Good Reads – although one reviewer did suggest I lacked a moral compass. Oh well.

I was pleased to take on a group of three DPhil students this year, and one of the very bright spots in my lockdown schedule has been our weekly meetings. Their intellectual curiosity, good humour, and endlessly positive attitude has been a continuing inspiration. I very much look forward to working with them over the next three years.

## ECONOMICS

Professor Elizabeth Baldwin writes:



2019–20 has been a very strange year for economics at Hertford, as for everyone, but also a successful one. The team adapted quickly to online teaching and learning -- making a start on this at the end of Hilary term in response to student concerns -- and rounded off the year with a delightful online finals dinner, complete with online pictionary.

There was a lot to celebrate with our finalists. All eight of those reading economics and management achieved first class degrees, including five of the top seven degrees across the University. In PPE, we had six firsts and five 2:is. And excitingly, that is not the academic end of the story for many of these students: four of them are now starting masters programmes, three of which are in economics, and another three are seriously considering a masters in economics very soon. That is, nearly a third of this cohort might take a masters in economics! Many congratulations to all of them.

The first and second years have also done well, adapting quickly to our new

learning environment. University first year exams ("prelims") were cancelled but we cruelly set them anyway at the college level -- they provide a useful framework for consolidating the material we teach in this year, which the rest of the degree will build upon.

We were very happy to welcome Olga Gdula to the teaching team. She is finishing her doctorate in econometrics and has taught both macroeconomics and quantitative economics in the college this year. Dr. Richard Povey continues his central role in our teaching, and also continues his work on the economics of altruism. One of his many altruistic acts was to put together a talk and workshop on Universal Credit for Wessex Public Health last July. Dr. Teodora Boneva has, among other things, undertaken a new project on the labour market impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic -- read more at [covidinequalityproject.com](http://covidinequalityproject.com). However, she has now left Oxford and Hertford to take up an assistant professorship at the University of Zurich. Our second tutorial fellow is now Dr. Federica Romei, who has joined us very recently from the Stockholm School of Economics; her work is in monetary economics, fiscal policy and international macroeconomics. As for myself, my year has been slightly dominated by my part in a significant rewrite of our first year course -- now following the "Core curriculum" to give a broader perspective much more rooted in practical contexts, you can look it up at [www.core-econ.org](http://www.core-econ.org) -- and in writing a new third year lecture course in environmental economics and climate change. I'm currently working, with colleagues Paul Klemperer and Alex Teytelboym, and in partnership with the RSPB, EnTrade and DotEcon, on an auction which we hope will rejuvenate the UK turtle dove population. Hopefully I'll be able to explain more about this to the Hertford community in due course.

## ENGINEERING

**Professor Manolis Chatzis writes:**



In the academic year 2019-2020, we welcomed five new engineering freshers. Despite not having the opportunity to demonstrate their progress in a Prelims Examination, all of our students were working very well throughout the year and we are sure they are very well equipped as they are entering their second year. Our eight second year students were having their postponed 2nd-year exams during MT of 2020 and should be complimented on their willingness to adjust to the new online versions of their coursework modules and tutorials. We expect that they all have done very well and are looking forward to seeing their results later in the year. Three of our third year students continue on track for very good performances in the very high 2.1 and first class regions and we believe that they are well equipped to make the most of their fourth year. Finally, our fourth year graduates did exceptionally well. Holly and Patrick achieved first class degrees. Yifu and Ina were very

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near the threshold between a first and a very high 2.1, and Yishun and James achieved a high 2.1 classification. Further congratulations to James, Patrick, Holly and Ina for the exceptional performance in their fourth year project, with James being one of the finalists considered for the best Chemical Engineering project. We are very proud of the strong finish and continuous improvement of our students over the years, and we wish them the best in the next step.



## ENGLISH

Professor Emma Smith writes:



Everything in the English school at Hertford, as elsewhere, has been disrupted by the pandemic. We are proud of our students' resilience in taking Trinity term online. First years turned to dissertations in place of cancelled Prelims exams, and produced strong research work on a range of topics drawn from their studies so far; second years continued tutorial work via Zoom. Finalists achieved great results – six firsts and four 2.1s – despite the new stresses of online exams. We look forward to celebrating with them in person when we are able. Well done to all.

Other plaudits go to our Senior Scholar Georgina Wilson, who has been appointed to a Junior Research Fellowship in Cambridge, and to Namratha Rao, Stipendiary Lecturer, who has won a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship, to be taken up in October 2021 at University College London. Congratulations also to David Dwan, who has won a competitive Leverhulme Fellowship for 2021 to work on the idea of the public intellectual in Ireland.

Charlotte held a curtailed visiting professorship at Aix-Marseille University for part of the year, and has continued work on the treatment of gender and sexuality in dictionaries, including on her *Examining the OED* website. David organised a week-long event in connection with his book on George Orwell, including an art exhibition and symposium on *1984*. Ayoush has been working on comparative histories of emotion, and her book on this subject (*Emotion in Islamic and Christian Contemplative Texts, 1100-1250: Cry of the Turtledove*) is due soon. Namratha has been working on the manuscript of her first monograph, *Poetics of Corporeality: Spenser and Milton*. Emma's book *This Is Shakespeare* was published in the US, and in the UK in paperback.

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## GEOGRAPHY

Professor Jamie Lorimer writes:



Hertford Geography has celebrated another productive year. In spite of all the disruption to Trinity term, four of our six students achieved firsts at finals. Students completed excellent research dissertations on a diverse range of topics spanning atmospheric dust in the Middle East and the place of punk music in 1970s Belfast. First and second year students responded with equal resilience and ambition to the challenges of lockdown, with the second years generating an array of creative desk-based dissertation projects.

The academic team have been equally productive.

**Jamie Lorimer**, Tutorial Fellow, has published two books this year. The first, entitled *The Probiotic Planet*, draws together work he has been doing over the last five years on ecological restoration across different scales – from the body to the wider countryside. The book examines efforts to reintroduce important species like beavers and gut microbes to restore different ecologies, and maps a 'probiotic turn' across policy

domains in which scientists and citizens are turning to ecology to tackle health and environmental problems. His second book, entitled *The Wildways of the Oak* is a collaboration with a local artist. Through text and illustrations, it details the central roles of the oak in rewilding the British countryside. Jamie is also leading a research project looking at the rise of plant-based eating and meat alternatives in Europe and North America (see [www.leap.ox.ac.uk](http://www.leap.ox.ac.uk)). This work is funded by the Wellcome Trust.

**Louise Slater**, Tutorial Fellow, has just completed her first year as the new Tutorial Fellow in Physical Geography at Hertford. In Hilary term 2019, she was appointed as the Chair of the Oxford Water Network (OWN), a multi-disciplinary research community from the natural, social and engineering sciences. OWN supports a diverse portfolio of water research spanning 31 different departments, institutes, centres, and schools. Dr Slater also continues as editor for the journal *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences*, and as Outreach and Education secretary for the British Society for Geomorphology. In recent research, she has established the existence of a link between climate variability and the conveyance capacity of rivers, which has implications for engineering and flood modelling around the world. Her research focuses on developing new approaches for better understanding, modelling and predicting flooding in the context of changing climate and land cover.

**David Thomas**, Professorial Fellow, has been continuing his research on dryland environmental change although this has been hindered by the effects of COVID-19. A new four year grant won from the Leverhulme Trust, aiming

to address how the Indus Civilisation responded to environmental change with multi-method approaches (see [www.leverhulme.ac.uk/research-project-grants/collapsed-or-evolved-what-happened-bronze-age-indus-valley-civilisation](http://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/research-project-grants/collapsed-or-evolved-what-happened-bronze-age-indus-valley-civilisation)), has not been able to start as scheduled fieldwork has been indefinitely delayed. Ongoing research in Namibia and Botswana has similarly been hindered. In January David took over as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Arid Environments*. He has also spent a considerable amount of time as an assessor for the Hong Kong 2020 Research Assessment Exercise and as the Geography panel chair preparing for the UK's national REF assessment that takes place in 2021. In March, he also started work as a sustainable drylands environments advisor to the G20 in Saudi Arabia.

**Janet Banfield**, Stipendiary Lecturer, has been developing a new undergraduate option course on geography and public policy, due to launch in HT 2021. She is currently awaiting publication of a chapter on academic expertise in spaces of interdisciplinarity within an edited volume on knowledge and space, and has extended her research into puppets and puppetry, with a paper on cultural constructions of 'puppetness' also progressing towards publication. Janet organised two puppetry workshops for Hertford geographers this year, which – due to lockdown – were conducted online in the long vacation, thanks to the enthusiasm and perseverance of participating students. She hopes to develop these activities into innovative approaches to geography teaching at Hertford next year.

## ENDLESS CONVIVIAL EXPERIMENTS: DOMESTICATION AND THE MICROBIOGEOGRAPHY OF TRANSLATED FERMENTATION PRACTICES

**Josh Evans (Geography and the Environment, 2017) writes:**

We are, it seems, microbial beings all the way down. The current flurry of interest in the microbiome throughout academic and wider worlds is driven not only by practical implications for health and well-being—and there are many—but also because this revelation unravels neat notions of human individuality and autonomy. It is not even that we are entangled with microbial others as humans; it is rather that we emerge as human in and through microbial entanglements.

Food fermentation, as one of humanity's oldest and most extensive co-evolutionary relationships with microbes, offers a particularly rich site for engaging with how microbes and humans have made and remake each other in open-ended ways. My research focuses on what I call the 'translated' fermentation practices of leading chefs and culinary researchers in Copenhagen, some at a restaurant named Noma and others at a distillery called Empirical Spirits, who are combining traditional fermentation techniques of different cultures with Nordic raw materials to create foods that have never existed before. Their stated goal is solely the creation of new flavours but based on how quickly microbes reproduce and adapt to new environments, it is possible, if not probable, that these convivial experiments may also be shaping microbial life in unexpected ways.



I focus on a delicious fungus called *kōji*, a charismatic microbe at the heart of many of Japan's staple foods. *Kōji* has come to be a key actor in translated fermentation in the New Nordic Cuisine, a culinary movement that emerged in the early 2000s that sought to articulate a shared culinary regional identity based on Nordic products and traditions. As the New Nordic Cuisine evolved and Noma, its leading innovator, looked further afield for inspiration, *kōji* and its many applications in Japanese cuisine became an important part of these chefs' pursuit of regional flavours, in particular Nordic expressions of umami taste. They developed, for example, a range of Nordic misos, based not on rice and soybeans as would be traditional in Japan, but on barley, yellow peas, and other regional grains and legumes.

Building on these fermentation experiments carried out for years now by the teams at Noma and Empirical, I designed and conducted structured experiments to see whether these translated practices might be shaping the misos' ecologies and the *kōji*'s evolution. Analysing these experiments with metagenomic sequencing, and situating the scientific results within a

broader multispecies ethnography, I aim to trace how microbial and human collaborators shape each other's behaviours, bodies and appetites, in emergent rather than deliberate ways.

My research thus intersects with broader ongoing cross-disciplinary debates on domestication, a key concept for understanding human agency in the evolution of other organisms, and other organisms' agency in our own. The predominant story of domestication tends to make significant assumptions: notably that humans are always the dominant agent, and that they shape the nonhuman in question with intention and foresight. Here, however, the lack of intention to change microbial ecology or evolution, and the emergent behaviours microbes and humans are drawing out from each other without either in clear control, make these fermentation experiments poised to contribute insights into how humans and non-humans make and remake each other in loopy, never-ending ways—whether in past domestication processes, or in the novel, unpredictable, rapidly shifting ecologies and evolutionary trajectories of the Anthropocene.

## HISTORY

Professor Giora Sternberg writes:



This has been a year like no others for Hertford historians. Tutors and students have faced the abrupt challenge of adjusting to the 'new normal' in the midst of a busy academic year. Some have been at the forefront of broader college efforts. David Hopkin has worked tirelessly as Senior Tutor and member of the COVID-19 Group. Catherine Sloan, who has joined Hertford at the beginning of the year as Career Development Fellow in History (specialising in the history of childhood, youth, and education in Modern Britain) and Porter Fellow for Academic Skills has explored new ways of extending these skills to virtual environments. All history tutors have adapted reading lists, teaching habits, and domestic routines to new circumstances, greatly aided by the untiring initiative of our College Librarian, Alice Roques. Last but not least, undergraduate and postgraduate

students of all courses and year groups have risen to the challenge of online learning and research at a time of general and sometimes personal adversity, and the undergraduate cohort of 2017 completed finals successfully. Among those who achieved a first class result, Jennifer Coulton has also been awarded the Joan Thirsk Prize for the best thesis on Medieval History (*Verba Visibilia: An Examination of Hand and Arm Flexures in Early to Final-Phase Anglo-Saxon Graves*).

Naomi Lloyd-Jones, our College Lecturer in British History, has received the KCL-Elsevier Doctoral Studies Prize for Outstanding Doctoral Thesis (*A New British History of the Home Rule Crisis: Public Opinion, Representation and Organisation*). Lucas Tse, MPhil student in Economic and Social History working on nationalism in post-WWI Republican China, has been awarded an Examination Fellowship at All Souls College.

We are saying goodbye to Bethany Marsh, who has completed her year as Irish Government Senior Scholar. Besides working on her monograph during her time at Hertford she has published a few pieces, including an article in *History Today* on 'Fake News' in early modern Britain (*A War of Words: Politics, Propaganda and Censorship during the Civil Wars*). Thanks to generous benefactions from the Irish Soldiers and Sailors Land Trust of the Irish Government, the Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust, and the Normanby Foundation, this Senior Scholarship has now become the Roy Foster Irish Government Research Fellowship in the History and Culture of Ireland. As the first incumbent, this year we are welcoming Deirdre Foley, who has explored the first Commission on the Status of Women in Ireland.

## HUMAN SCIENCES

Clive Hambler writes:



Human scientists sailed through the peak of the pandemic to win two firsts and an upper second. But it was not easy sailing for students or tutors: doing exams on computers ('open book') with revision and marking online. Everything seemed to take longer, for me at least, as the internet crashed, screens froze, people gatecrashed tutes and essay handwriting was blurred on photos from mobile phones. Good job Hum Scis are adaptable – and probably more so now. There was one dissertation on the relationships of pandemics to attitudes such as xenophobia, one on national borders and conservation, and one on climate change communication through art.

The first years missed their Prelims and the second years will miss their Presentation, so we'll have to find substitutes for these exciting experiences!

Those of you I taught in the first year may (!) remember my tute on population regulation, including emergent diseases.

So it's been frustrating to watch the narrow way the world reacted to this long-predicted outbreak. A more holistic 'Human Ecology' approach is needed – for example little has been done on nutritional deficiencies elevating risk, so I've published on a potential 'zinc link' <https://osf.io/xybzr> which would be easy to test.

We have four freshers this year! The necessary restoration of predicted exam grades meant we have a bonus student, but I'll still be teaching mostly one-to-one. I'd be allowed two in my room, with the windows open!

My paper on false widow spiders, a lesser emergent health issue, was published online at <https://osf.io/axbd4/> and I'm going to expand this work internationally.

After years downloading raw data and plotting graphs, I have two 'Working Papers' online for discussion (and in review). One's on sea ice and carbon dioxide, which links to one on sea ice and methane. They expand my interests in the global influence of the biota on atmospheric composition – which is probably far less than was thought for these two gases (in the short term). Both are available in the Oxford University Research Archive (<https://ora.ox.ac.uk/>) and will be even more controversial than my previous papers – which is saying something. This continues a critical approach instilled when I was receiving tutes as a student. So be careful how you use my teaching: it does not foster a quiet life. Feedback welcome!

Looking forward to seeing you after liberation at gaudies, Darwin Dinners and other chances to compare predictions with reality – and to hearing how you are.

## LAW

Dr Aruna Nair writes:



As with other subjects, the main theme of our year in Law has been coping with the effects of the pandemic. The first-year students bore the brunt of the initial disruption in March, with Law moderations being unexpectedly postponed from the end of Hilary term as usual to the start of Trinity term. Tutorial teaching shifted to online-only and remote teaching, with students participating in tutorials from their bedrooms at home and sharing parents' (sometimes strained) wifi. Finalists were faced with a transformation in the

demands of their schools examination at short notice, with a shift to open-book and online-only exams.

As a new Fellow in Law, this was a daunting introduction to the academic life of the college but colleagues and students rose to the occasion remarkably well. The college librarian, Alice, made extraordinary efforts to ensure that students were not disadvantaged by their loss of access to Oxford's physical libraries in Trinity term: in addition to endless scanning and sometimes re-scanning of texts, she went so far as to post textbooks to students at their home addresses. First-year students coped well with the shift to online teaching and examinations, achieving a very good set of results in Law moderations, including Distinctions in Constitutional Law for two students. The Finalists also delivered a remarkable performance, with all students achieving at least upper second degrees and three students achieving firsts. There were University prizes in Company Law and Environmental Law. We are delighted that one of our graduating finalists, Eileen Casey, has returned to us for her MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice; others have gone on to further study at St Catherine's College, Oxford (BCL) and Harvard Law School (LLM).

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## MANAGEMENT

Dr Steve New writes:



Like everyone else, Economics and Management cohort at Hertford have faced some really difficult challenges in the last year; but overall, the story has been one of tenacity, resilience – and spectacular success.

The main development in the year has been the arrival of our new Management Fellow, Dr Anette Mikes, who joined Dr Steve New for the new academic year. Anette, formerly of Harvard Business School and HEC Lausanne, is an accounting scholar with a focus on risk management. Anette was the 2017 laureate of the prestigious ACA Prize of the University of St.-Gallen. She has been working hard to enhance the accounting teaching at college and across the University. Steve New has continued his work on working conditions in supply chains, collaborating on an AHRC-funded project with the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights on the corporate reporting requirements of the UK's Modern Slavery Act. Both Anette and

Steve were able to contribute to the college's 'Hertford Responds' seminar series, Anette on "Risk Management During a Global Pandemic" (available at <https://tinyurl.com/HertfordResponds-Risk>), and Steve on "Global Supply Chains After COVID-19" (available at <https://tinyurl.com/HertfordResponds-Supply>)

The pandemic inevitably cut short the range of extra-curricular activities in the management field, but just before the crisis emerged, we were delighted to invite our Oxford colleague Professor Colin Mayer to address the E&M students for a much-appreciated session on corporate purpose. The closing of regular teaching had a significant impact on the E&M cohort – exams for first year students were abandoned, and instead Hertford students engaged in a range of remotely-conducted group research projects on a diverse range of pandemic-related projects: excellent work was done on the experience of home-based working, the reconfiguration of global supply chains, the impact on hospitality and travel sectors, and effect of the crisis on mergers and acquisitions. The third-years were faced with taking their final exams online, but the daunting challenge seemed to only galvanise the spirit of teamwork and mutual support that characterised the group: when the results were announced, we found the eight Hertford E&M finalists to have achieved an astonishing clean sweep of first class degrees – with Hertford students occupying nearly all the top places across the University. We wait with great anticipation for the opportunity to celebrate this amazing success in person, in happier times to come.

## MATHEMATICS

Professor Alan Lauder writes:



To start with some good news, we were very fortunate in securing a brilliant young mathematician as the new tutor in Pure Mathematics at Hertford. Dawid Kielak studied in Oxford from 2004, first as an undergraduate and then later completing a D.Phil. with our Hertford old member, and now honorary fellow, Martin Bridson. I am very much looking forward to working with Dawid.

Of course the pandemic has loomed heavily over everyone this year, and our mathematical readers may be interested to hear how this has affected the examinations. The headline news is that the first year exams were cancelled and students declared to have passed.

Since 2012 these exams have been called Prelims, but before that were, as you well know, Moderations. Now passing Moderations has for centuries been the requirement to proceed to the honours school, and I have no idea what precedent the step taken this year might have in this long history. (On this note, some Oxford mathematical trivia:

who was the first person to obtain a first class honours degree in Mathematics in Oxford? The first person to write in to me with the correct answer will get a special mention next year, if I remember.) I feel cancelling Prelims was a mixed blessing for our first years, as although it has made the last few months much easier for them, they are much less prepared for what lies ahead. Our third (Part B) and fourth (Part C) year students had their exams reduced in scale from eight to six papers and taken online, with in addition a generous safety-net put in place to catch any dips in performance. The verdict so far is that this all worked remarkably well. My sympathy though lies mostly with our second year, who have had their Part A examinations postponed until Weeks 0 and 1 of the coming Michaelmas term. The dates for Part A exams were not decided until quite late in the Trinity term, which left both students and tutors in an uncomfortable limbo for some time. I feel I must say though that I am very proud of how all of our Hertford mathematicians have managed their work over the last few months.

Unsurprisingly most of our third year are hoping to stay on to complete the M.Math. next year. The employment situation has of course been very difficult for our graduating fourth years, but three have secured doctoral positions at other universities (Birmingham, Warwick and Rice).

To finish, I would like to thank all of you who attended the mathematics reunion last November. It seems like an eternity ago now, but I do recall we all had a lovely evening in these innocent days, and look forward to when we can all next meet like this again.

## MEDICINE

Professor David Greaves writes:



All six years of medical students at Hertford were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Final year clinical students had their electives cancelled or cut short, they were graduated in absentia and drafted into local hospitals to help out on the wards. Fourth and fifth-year students' clinical teaching was curtailed as their teachers were drafted in to contribute to the Oxford University Hospitals Trust's response to SARS-CoV-2. Teaching for our pre-clinical students in years one to three moved entirely to online delivery and year one and year two BM examinations were cancelled or postponed. Despite these enforced disruptions to their studies Hertford medical students seemed to adapt well to remote tutorial teaching.

In setting up remote tutorial teaching for our first year students in Trinity term 2020 I was very ably supported by Hamish Lemmey, a vascular biologist and stipendiary lecturer. Additional remote teaching support was also provided Poppy Iveson (a fifth year Hertford medic) who organised a series of informal tutorials with the first year

Poppy Iveson (5th year medic) volunteering with the Oxford Covid Vaccine Trial Group.



students engaging them in discussion of different aspects of the emerging pandemic. Poppy's tutorials covered virus replication, transmission and pathogenesis and she talked about vaccine development for COVID-19 drawing on her own experience of working as part of the Oxford COVID Vaccine Trial Group. Poppy took care of some of the 543 volunteers in the UK who received the ChAdOx1CoV-19 vaccine developed in Oxford and I was very proud to see her listed as one of the co-authors on a landmark paper published recently in *The Lancet*.

I was impressed by how well our third-year students, Amelia Bowman, Laura Hudson, Lauren Keiller, Harry Jackson-Smith, Nathan Appanna and Callum Webster adapted to the changes imposed by lockdown in March 2020. I enjoyed the discussions we had via Zoom about a wide range of topics in biomedical science ranging from genome editing and cell biology to antimicrobial resistance and virus evolution. This cohort of students were among the first Oxford undergraduates to ever sit open book finals examinations over the internet and they all obtained excellent results which included a Wronker Prize for Amelia Bowman.

The complete shutdown of college prevented our getting together for our TT2020 Vaughan Williams Dinner (where Antonia Lloyd-Lavery (matric. 2003) would have been our visiting speaker) and our end of term Schools Dinner, robbing us of the opportunity to enjoy each other's company at the end of a hard term and our traditional fancy-dress end of year photograph.

Working in the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology I continue to study the biology of immune cells called macrophages in human disease. Despite the near complete shutdown

of my lab for three months due to COVID-19 we have been able to publish some of our research in peer-reviewed journals including a paper on re-purposing cancer drugs for the treatment of metabolic inflammation in *The British Journal of Pharmacology*. At the time of writing we are back in the lab doing experiments, observing social distancing and adapting to the 'new normal'.

### Mr Simon Brewster, Consultant Urological Surgeon writes:

In 2020 we introduced the new Clinical Medicine prize, given to the best-performing clinical student in memory of the legendary tutor in Medicine at Hertford, Professor Miles Vaughan Williams.

Professor Miles Vaughan Williams (1918 – 2016) was a cardiac pharmacologist and academic. He was best known for the Vaughan Williams classification of anti-arrhythmic drugs. Born in India, a relative of the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, he studied Philosophy & Classics at Oxford. He became an ambulance driver during World War Two. Upon his return to Oxford, he switched to study Medicine. From 1955 to 1985, he was a fellow of Hertford College and tutor in Medicine.

During his tenure he taught generations of medical students and laboratory scientists. Apart from his teaching and research, major contributions to the college included improvements to the fabric of the building and the design of the Holywell Quadrangle. He used donations from pharmaceutical companies to provide travel funds and bi-annual educational events for medical students at the college. He attended and spoke at these events until 2015. The investments he



Chloe Jacklin – 2020 winner of the Vaughan Williams Clinical Medicine Prize

made continue to support Hertford college medical students to the present day, under the jurisdiction of the current medical tutors led by Professor David Greaves and myself.

Application for the Hertford College VW Clinical Medicine Prize was open to students in their final (sixth) year at the college and scored on evidence of achievements during years four to six, presented in seven domains by a panel of clinical tutors. Domains included teaching experience, training in teaching, presentations, publications, quality improvement initiatives, positions of leadership and commitment to a medical career or speciality (including medical school examination merits and prizes).

For the inaugural Hertford College VW Clinical Medicine Prize, there were three truly excellent applications. The winner was Dr Chloe Jacklin, followed closely in second place by Dr Ifan Jenkin and in third place Dr Aditi Aggarwal. I want to say how impressed we were with the quality of all three applications; they would already score competitively at national core medical/surgical

trainee interview level. Since this is the inaugural year we have decided that all three applicants will receive a small sum from the VW Fund in recognition of their excellence and hard work.

I wish very good luck to all seven of our newly qualified doctors heading into their professional careers. Together with other NHS employees I have worked throughout the lockdown providing urgent and emergency urological care for local patients using appropriate PPE. Often I consulted by phone or video when face-to-face appointments were not possible or essential and this is likely to continue. On 20 July 2020 the clinical medical students were permitted to return to the wards, clinics and operating theatres with limitations, wearing PPE and social distancing to avoid putting patients at risk. Bedside teaching is still not permitted, a stance that is not sustainable, so I look forward to resuming this important learning activity for our students by the end of the year I hope.

## MODERN LANGUAGES

Dr Oliver Noble Wood writes:



Like their immediate predecessors, this year's finalists put in an excellent performance at FHS, with five students achieving firsts. The whole cohort showed admirable calmness and resilience in the face of disruption to teaching and examining arrangements (as well as to both immediate and longer-term post-Hertford plans). We look forward to celebrating their achievements more fully—and hearing what they have all been up to since Trinity—when circumstances allow for a belated Schools Dinner.

Thanks go to everyone involved in Modern Languages teaching this year, especially Thomas Clark, who covered Spanish during Oliver Noble Wood's sabbatical, Reinier van Straten, who has continued to hold the fort in German during Joanna Neilly's leave, and Elsa Baroghel, who took over French language teaching from Claire Bitoun in Michaelmas. All three are now well versed in some of the perils and pitfalls of online delivery, which is particularly challenging, it seems, in the case of oral classes.

At the same time as resuming her duties as senior subject tutor, following her sabbatical last academic year, Katherine Lunn-Rockcliffe has been continuing work on her next monograph, on the poetry of Victor Hugo. The move to remote teaching in Trinity—especially when then combined with prolonged home schooling (a common experience, no doubt!)—means that the finishing touches on this project are still to be applied... She is grateful to students for being so tolerant of the frequent appearances in Zoom tutorials made by a young teaching assistant dressed as Darth Vader.

Readers of last year's subject update may recall that Oliver Noble Wood's sabbatical plans for 2020 included a prolonged research stay in Spain. As things turned out, most of his leave was spent immured in OX4, not burning the midnight oil in Madrid. As a result, he has had more time than envisaged for writing, completing further work on the drama of Calderón (notably, his play on the story of Alexander the Great, Apelles, and Campaspe). He is currently trying to familiarise himself with lecture capture software, and the Dean's job description, in preparation for MT20.

As we approach Michaelmas, we wish all those heading off on their year abroad well, especially in these uncertain times. In October we look forward to welcoming back the next group of finalists, and hearing further tales of their own disrupted time abroad; to continuing work with those going into second year (who also adjusted to the new regime with good humour in Trinity); and, of course, to getting to know the incoming Modern Languages students.

As ever, it has been wonderful to hear from all those graduates who have been in touch over the past year, and we would encourage all others who are so inclined to follow suit.

## MUSIC

Dr Benjamin Skipp writes:



This year's Music entry was supposed to include the report of the music students' and my trip to Vienna. It was to have been a joyous and educational trip, a chance to show our undergraduates the sites of some of the most splendid music-making and composition in the history of European art music. Alas, COVID has meant we have had to postpone until 2021. Hopefully this time next year we will have photos of us standing outside Café Frauenhuber where Beethoven is reputed to have played.

The music students had a productive year and they dealt well with the tuition via Zoom. Although the Oxford degree is not a 'practical' course in the sense that instrumental tuition is effectively extracurricular, it is still useful to play musical examples on the piano, something which is not always easy across a computer screen. They coped admirably. The three finalists were particularly successful in their exams and two of them have elected to pursue their studies in musicology, one at the 'Other Place' and one in York with a specialism in the (increasingly competitive) field of

music psychology. The third is aiming to study conducting at the Royal Academy after a gap year as music graduate assistant at Charterhouse.

We were also delighted to welcome in 2019 a new music lecturer, Dr Alice Barron to Hertford. Dr Barron completed her doctoral research in the exciting and evolving practice-led area of improvisation, collaboration and exchange, with a focus on Karnatic violin playing. She is also a professional violinist, having toured with Nigel Kennedy, as well as establishing her ensemble, the iyatraQuartet (see *photograph*). We are delighted to have her join the small teaching staff of Dr Tom Czepiel and myself at Hertford which enables us to cover most of the syllabus 'in-house'. My research was somewhat slowed by the COVID virus but I hope to have completed my article on Haydn's art of gesture in solo keyboard works of the 1770s by the end of 2021.

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## ORIENTAL STUDIES

Professor Bjarke Frellesvig writes:



As we all know, the academic year 2019–2020 turned out unlike any we have experienced before. Until the middle of Hilary term it was pretty much business as usual. Michaelmas was busy welcoming our freshers to Oxford, welcoming our third years back from their year in Japan and China, and getting the finalists started on the final stretch of their course. And it was going well in all of those respects. In the vacation between Michaelmas and Hilary, I spent about a month in Japan, visiting the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics in Tachikawa on the western side of Tokyo, working on the *Oxford-NINJAL Corpus of Old Japanese* (the ONCOJ), which takes up most of my research time. It is the largest and most detailed annotated corpus of texts from the Old Japanese period of the Japanese language (8th century AD), including the large poetry anthology *Man'yōshū*. The ONCOJ is freely available at <http://oncoj.ninjal.ac.jp/>. I also used part of my time in Japan to continue editorial work on the *Handbook of Japanese Historical Japanese Linguistics*.

I stayed in Tokyo until 12 January and towards the end of my stay there the Japanese news increasingly reported on the new highly infectious disease emerging from Wuhan in China. And we all know what happened next. Towards the end of Hilary term the pandemic was in full flow; a few weeks into the vacation, lockdown came, with all the general disturbance and disruption it brought with it. Needless to say, the disruption was greatest for our finalists. Some of ours stayed in Oxford, moving into the Graduate Centre, whereas others managed to go home. For all of them, the lockdown nullified their carefully worked out revision plans for the vacation and for Trinity term. Teaching went online, and we all learned both how to do that, and also that online tutorial teaching can be remarkably efficient. As most readers will know, exams ended up being moved online, a new and untested format for us here.

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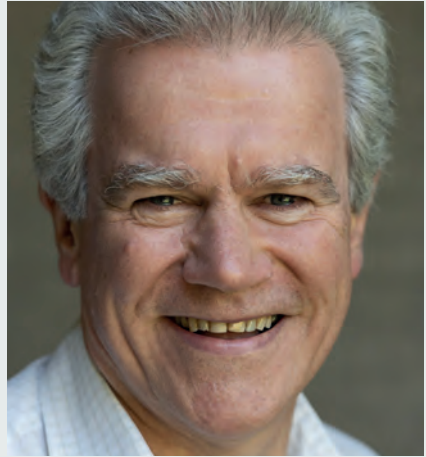
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I would find it difficult to overstate how impressed I was with all of our students and the way they coped with the situation. In particular, our finalists rose to the occasion with maturity and resilience, adjusting to a new and unforeseeable way of studying and revising. We had six finalists in Oriental Studies, and they all rose to the occasion most impressively. In terms of results we got four 2.1s and two first, including the best first in Japanese in the University.

To round off an extraordinary year, we had Schools Dinner on Monday of 9th Week, as usual, after all the exams were done. It is always difficult to say goodbye to the finalists whom you get to know well in the course of their time here, and this year even more so, as we hadn't been able to meet in person in Trinity or before or after the exams. Obviously we could not have the Schools Dinner in person, and so we held it online, spanning many time zones. I would never have thought that would work particularly well, but it turned out to be a highly successful and enjoyable evening. That warm and pleasant June evening in the – remote – company of my finalists will be a lasting memory for me from this past year.

## PHILOSOPHY

Professor Peter Millican writes:



In last year's *Hertford College Magazine*, I gave an overview of how Philosophy at Hertford has flourished over recent years, mentioning various highlights such as our annual 'Philosophy Retreat', an impressive run of examination results, and our considerable outreach activity. I also described some of my own recent research. This year's report will be quite different, coming at the end of an extraordinary year which has combined both the best thing to happen to Hertford Philosophy in a long while, and perhaps the worst (namely, COVID-19).

First, the good news. Last summer, after extended discussions of the utmost secrecy – and thus completely out of the blue for the rest of us – it turned out that the billionaire philanthropist Stephen A. Schwarzman was giving a huge donation to Oxford to build a Centre for the Humanities and to create an Institute for Ethics in AI. Support for the Institute was to include the establishment of several new joint Faculty/College posts, with

the first two of these to be appointed in 2020. As reported in the last Magazine, Hertford's Governing Body had already agreed that we should attempt to recruit a second Philosophy fellow when circumstances permitted. So when bids opened in November, we applied for one of these posts. We were optimistic, because preference was to be given to colleges having only a single fellow, and in particular, to those that were committed to supporting the degree in Computer Science & Philosophy. The next week we heard to our delight that we had indeed been awarded the post, with the faculty costs provided by the Schwarzman donation, and the college costs later being generously supported by Clifford Chance.

Oxford's rigorous recruitment procedures took some months, but finally, at the end of May, we were able to appoint Dr Carissa Véliz, the first time ever that the college has had two Tutorial Fellows in Philosophy! Carissa comes to us with a terrific record of study at Salamanca, New York and Oxford, and an already impressive array of publications, especially in the area of Data Ethics, in which she has a book *Privacy is Power* shortly appearing with Penguin, and another book, *The Ethics*

*of Privacy in the Digital Age*, contracted with OUP (more details can be found through <https://www.hertford.ox.ac.uk/staff/carissa-veliz>). Alongside Ethics, she will be teaching Philosophy of Mind, and we aim soon to establish together a new course on AI Ethics for students in both CS&P and PPE, linking Hertford's interdisciplinary strengths.

I very much hope that alumni will soon be able to meet Carissa in person. When planning a Philosophy reunion dinner for May 2020, I anticipated that the appointment would already be made, but the same circumstances that forced the reunion to go online also delayed the appointment procedures, so all I was able to report to the many alumni who attended that enjoyable event was that the interviews had started and seemed promising. When genuine reunions become possible, it will be a great pleasure to arrange an opportunity for you to meet our excellent new fellow.

Just before the online reunion, it occurred to me to run some calculations on Philosophy student numbers at Hertford since I arrived in 2005. To my great surprise – as I reported at the event – it turned out that the three-year averages of Philosophy fresher

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arrivals had increased almost exactly linearly, from 7.7 in 2005-07, to 9.7 in 2008-10, 11.7 in 2011-13, 12.3 in 2014-16, and 15.7 in 2017-19. In the coming year we shall have 17 freshers (nine in PPE, five in CS&P, two in PML, and one in PhysPhil), and we now have a total of 56 students overall (27 in PPE, 20 in CS&P, five in PhysPhil, and four in PML). Obviously the growth of CS&P has been the single biggest factor here, but it is also very pleasing to note that Hertford has become a fairly regular recruiter for the joint degrees with Modern Languages and Physics, in which for many years we only had tiny numbers.

I don't know much about numbers prior to my arrival in 2005, but they can't have been high, because in 2001 my immediate predecessor, Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, was appointed with only half a stint at Hertford and the other half at Oriol. This parsimony, whereby the college employed in effect only half a Tutor in Philosophy, was easily shown to be unsustainable during my first term, using a few graphs displaying students-per-fellow and applicants-per-fellow. Governing Body accordingly voted to end it, though the arrangement continued until Oriol was able to work out a new structure

in 2007, at which point – in a delicious twist – Gonzalo came back to Oriol to fill the space created (so the only two people to have held that strange joint post have, since 2007, occupied the same two colleges as full-time fellows). Those early days now seem an age ago, and it is wonderful to look forward to a future in which at last Hertford has two established Tutorial Fellows in Philosophy. We are also delighted to be keeping Nick Tasker, one of our two excellent Philosophy Lecturers for the last three years, and although we are saying goodbye to Jonny McIntosh – who has been recruited to a larger role at Oriol – we plan to swap teaching between the two colleges to continue to cover the same wide range of teaching.

As for our students, I am delighted to report their continuing success, which has been even stronger than that of last year. In PPE, they achieved an unprecedented five firsts (out of nine), while all five of our other third and fourth years (four in CS&P, one in M&P) scored firsts. They also picked up three University Prizes in CS&P – though this has become almost routine for Hertford – with outstanding performances from Joar Skalse (fourth year) and Shashvat Shukla (third year).

These great results were, of course, achieved in the shadow of COVID-19, with both teaching and examining all done online. This was hugely disruptive for both students and staff, and quite extraordinarily time-consuming, with so many things – lectures, classes, tutorials, examinations, outreach – having to be reorganised and rethought at speed. But the burden on College Officers and administrative staff has been an order of magnitude greater than on the rest of us, having to plan for the coming year against a constantly changing situation, and negotiating various crises (including the sudden loss of conference income

for the year, and the sudden need for more rooms owing to the A-Level fiasco) which have been completely unprecedented. Observing their calm professionalism and effectiveness – and also that of other colleagues who have been combatting the pandemic in a variety of ways – has inspired feelings of deep pride in our college and its people.

Through all this, Will Hutton has been an excellent leader, and we say goodbye to him with heartfelt thanks, not least from the community of philosophers. Will has been a particular friend to PPE and E&M, bringing numerous fascinating speakers from politics, economics and the media to his 'Hertford Conversations' and related events. He has also supported – and helped to raise crucial funding for – the growth and financing of Computer Science in the college, from the arrival of Mike Wooldridge, through the Tutorial Fellowship of Andreas Galanis and the Junior Research Fellowship of Andrew Cropper. Will arrived in 2011, with the CS&P degree yet to start and Computer Science at Hertford merely a gleam in the eye of the Philosophy Fellow. Now, as he leaves, this has become a vibrant and hugely successful community of scholars and students within the college.

We now embark on another year which is probably going to be as strange as the last, under new but still excellent leadership, and with a team who have already proved what they can do. I am confident that Hertford will come through it in great shape, and hope that by then, our social events for alumni will have been fully restored so that we can again meet up in convivial surroundings and chat about the college, both past and future. It will then be a huge pleasure to be able to introduce you all to Carissa Véliz, who will no doubt be playing a very significant role in that future.

## PHYSICS

**Professor Siddharth Parameswaran writes:**



In an unusually challenging year, Hertford physicists have responded admirably to the many changes in their Oxford experience. The vast majority of students left Oxford to head home for the Easter vacation at the end of Hilary term only to enter lockdown far from their classmates, their books, their unfinished practical experiments, and Hasan's kebab van on Broad Street (sources differ as to which loss was felt most keenly). Sadly, the final Tanner dinner of the year had to be cancelled and replaced with a virtual "dinner" gathering, so we will have much to make up for when we can fully resume social interactions.

A dizzying array of changes to teaching methods and exam rules followed: lectures and tutorials moved online, with students and tutors forced to adapt to Zoom tutorials and shared online whiteboards. first year students were spared the stress of Prelims, but second and third years entered summer with the looming spectre of exams in Michaelmas, while fourth-years



were faced with handling take-home assessments and completing their MPhys projects while working from home.

Despite these challenges, it has been a year where we can report many stories of student success. Our strong finals results included firsts in mathematical and theoretical physics and in the three-year BA, while one of our finalists was awarded the Metaswitch Prize for the best use of Software in a MPhys Project. Over the summer, two of our students completed (remote) research projects supported by college bursaries; one worked on statistical mechanical problems in biophysics, while the other worked in Sid Parameswaran's group on a challenging problem on the dynamics of quantum magnets. Both students did exceptional work that is likely to lead to publishable results in the near future, and gained valuable research experience that will help them plan their postgraduate studies.

The impact of the pandemic has been felt just as keenly by the tutors as by the students. The uncertainty in the form of exams to be taken kept us on our toes and lingered all the way through the summer vacation, with requirements for organisation and preparation of papers

for September resits only for them to be abandoned, and finally a decision that the second and third year exams would not be sat in person as originally planned, but rather would be taken remotely. On the research front, Sid Parameswaran's group continues to grow in size thanks to support from an ERC grant, and the continued attractiveness of Oxford – despite challenging global events – as a place for leading young researchers with independent funding to spend their post-doctoral years. Recently his group solved a long-standing puzzle about magnetic scattering experiments first done at Oxford ten years ago. While the Large Hadron Collider is in Long Shutdown 2, Sam Henry is filling his head with test procedures and database protocols to track construction of the ATLAS detector upgrade; while also promoting Public Engagement, to keep everyone informed about exciting new results like the first measurement of the Higgs boson decaying to two muons. Pat Roche's research has also been impacted by the pause in telescope operation and data collection around the world; the backlog will take a long time to clear, but safe operation is clearly the highest priority. This summer has been a challenge.





# STUDENT LIFE



## JCR

**Rebecca Simpson (Geography, 2018) writes:**

Sitting down to write this report, I have had to come to terms with just how different (and at some points difficult) this past year has been for the JCR. My first two terms as president have certainly not been straightforward, but numerous challenges have only enhanced the creativity and teamwork of the Hertford network. I would therefore like to use this opportunity to reflect on how we have been able to master the art of 'improvise, adapt, and overcome'.

As always, Hertford Fresher's Week was a resounding success, and I would like to make a special mention to Charlotte Fraser-Morris and her team for their creativity and commitment to welcoming all our 'fawns' with open arms. Transforming Hall into a Jazz bar, and bopping 'Back to the Future' was no mean feat, but I feel confident that Hertford's reputation as the friendliest college in town remains a well-founded one.

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The integration of freshers into Hertford life was further proven by their evident commitment to the intercollegiate Planet Pledge (which took place throughout November 2019). With an impressive 282 JCR members choosing to reduce their environmental impact via giving up meat, boycotting air travel and avoiding fast fashion, Hertford claimed second place behind Brasenose, and more importantly contributed to the crucial efforts against climate change.

Our hard work throughout the Michaelmas was rewarded with a wonderful selection of Oxmas activities. It was lovely to see so much enthusiasm for Christmas formals (with each sitting selling out before you could say Jingle Bells), and carols in the quad attracting an audience from across the city.

Sports-wise, the Hertford 'underdogs' took Hilary term by storm, fighting for victory in the Women's football Plate Cup Final and an awe-inspiring second place in division 1 of Netball Cuppers. It was a shame to see rowing so heavily disrupted by high-river levels after last year's Bumps success, but the formation of a strong squad (that have continued to train together throughout lockdown over Zoom) has set us up well for future competition. The deer is still very much feared.

Hilary also saw the completion of building work in both the Old Quad and Holywell Quad, and it was great to see the college modernise and evolve in line with its students. Our beloved Porters certainly seemed to enjoy their new 'control centre', and I am personally highly envious of anyone who will be living in any of the renovated rooms in Holywell 2 and 3.

Before I reflect on the enigma that was Trinity term 2020, I would like to make a special mention to the Hertford Ball Committee, and particularly its President Ahmed Alhussni. Setting a

date for 13 March, it was brilliant to see creative minds coming together to organise a truly memorable event to be held in Oxford Town Hall. Its cancellation was certainly devastating for the whole college; however, I am confident that all of the committee's hard work will not go to waste, and instead will serve as an invaluable blueprint for an unforgettable future Hertford Ball that perfectly captures the celebratory spirit of our college.

To conclude this brief synopsis of the last academic year, I would like to focus on what I have learnt from the most unconventional Trinity term for a long time. Tutorials held via Teams have demonstrated that nothing will stand in the way of Hertford students being involved in impressive intellectual discussion, whilst impressive results in both internal Collections and external exams encapsulate the hardworking attitude intrinsic to every Hertford student. It was great to see our finalists celebrate the end of their time at Oxford with family trashings. Teamwork was in no way disrupted by physical distance created by COVID-19, with sports teams training together virtually and rehearsals and concerts enabled by the power of video call. Social events were also in no way sacrificed, with the Entz committee pioneering a 'virtual bop', and numerous DTB quizzes and JCR Yoga sessions being held throughout the term. The charitable efforts of the JCR were also second to none, with a raffle organised by the Male Welfare Officer, Rory Saitch, raising £320 for the NHS Charities during the height of the pandemic.

It is ultimately through challenge and problem-solving that we grow as people, as students, and as young adults preparing for life in an ever-changing world. What we have faced as a JCR over the past year has undoubtedly been profound, but I feel confident in saying that at Hertford we have masterfully manoeuvred these

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challenges and grown stronger as a collective. When we return to the City of Spires in October we will be without our beloved graduates and retiring principal Will Hutton, and university life will be very different. However, I am sure that I speak on behalf of everyone in saying that we are more than ready to embrace the academic year under the leadership of a new principal, Tom Fletcher. I look forward to working closely with him and continuing to foster the brilliance of college. The extended time period that we have all spent away from our beloved Hertford will undoubtedly make returning in the Autumn an especially exciting and poignant experience, and I cannot wait to see everyone under the Bridge of Sighs very soon.

## MCR

**Samuel East (Biochemistry, 2018) writes:**

This year, Michaelmas saw the arrival of over 100 new Graduate Freshers. As always, we kicked off the academic year with three weeks of events designed to welcome new members to Hertford. We hosted a wide variety of social occasions, including tours, meet-ups with other MCRs, a BBQ and a welcome buffet; all capped off with a Fresher's Ball. New members got the chance to get to know each other and also to meet the returning members of the MCR, and they quickly became familiar faces around our common rooms. With Freshers' Week over, students swiftly settled into daily life at Hertford. Whether their days were spent in laboratories, on fieldwork, or in libraries, our community got back into

the swing of research and education. Hertford's graduate students study a great range of disciplines; to mark this we hosted regular and very well-attended Academic Soirées at which members could present their findings and talk them through with their peers. Later on during Michaelmas, we continued our annual celebration of Waugh Night – in honour of Evelyn Waugh; writer and Hertford alumnus – with a 1920s themed dinner and drinks reception.

On Burns Night we held our traditional celebrations – starting with a meal of haggis and whiskey in the Hall, before moving on to a Ceilidh in the wonderful setting of our Octagon, with music provided by our own students! We were also delighted to welcome back the Hertford Society for a third year running, as we organised a joint wine-and-cheese tasting event, which



served as a fantastic opportunity for current students to get to know people from the wide network of Hertford alumni.

Of course, our MCR was – and remains – deeply impacted by the events of the COVID-19 crisis. We found ourselves needing to suspend all social activities and close our common rooms before the end of Hilary term, as the first cases became known in and around Oxford. Whilst this is certainly a sad and frustrating turn for the year to have taken, I remain incredibly proud of the kind, caring and understanding manner in which our community adapted to this new way of life. From our members who took swift action to self-isolate when they developed symptoms of the disease so as to protect others, to those who volunteered to bring food and welfare supplies to those under quarantine, I was humbled to witness everybody pitch in and support one another through these unprecedented times.

We swiftly evolved our style of working to cope with this new normal – we held several fully online general meetings, and virtual hustings for this year's elections; a new committee has been duly elected and they are well equipped to face the undeniable challenges and uncertainties that the year ahead shall bring. In lieu of our normal photograph, which is usually taken as a group in OB quad but which had to be cancelled this year, we instead collected pictures which were arranged into a digital collage of us all, to hang on our walls and remind us that we didn't let these strange times stop us.

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to this year's committee for all of their hard work – through both the good times and the bad! Thanks especially go to Matthew Lloyd (Secretary/VP) and Catherine Jenkinson (Treasurer); I could not have asked for a better exec. It has been a real honour to serve as President, and I know that whatever form this upcoming year takes, Hertford College MCR shall continue to thrive.

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## MUSIC

### Nathan De Giorgi (Music, 2018) writes:

This year has been very busy for college music! Despite the academic year being a truncated edition in comparison to its usual form, it has well and truly been jam-packed! We were fortunate to welcome exceptional new music students to our college, including our soon to be Senior Organ Scholar Andrew Liu, who will replace the fantastic Charlotte Corderoy from next academic year. Charlotte has been my college mother and I am sure that all those involved with college music will join me in wishing her all the best in her undoubtedly highly promising future. The same goes for Maddy Withers who has made a massive contribution to college music, as well as Tetsu Isaji who claimed glory for Hertford in Music Cuppers.

Under the direction of Charlotte Corderoy and Andrew Liu, college choir has gone from strength to strength. This year saw the premiere of new works by college music students, an exceptional concert structured around the Nine Muses and a stellar choir football performance that saw us progress to the semi-finals! Choir has continued to see high levels of attendance and has entertained important University figures at events such as the MacBride sermon.

Orchestra, led by Nathan De Giorgi, has seen an exceptionally high level of attendance. We have benefitted from the outstanding musical credentials of both Hertford and external students, who were drawn to our orchestra both by the friendly environment and the outstanding level of performance. Repertoire this year included a full performance of Haydn's London

Symphony (No. 104), a Phantom of the Opera Suite, the finale of Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5 and De Giorgi's Symphony No. 2. Our orchestra is non-auditioned, but thoroughly stepped up to the challenge of at times very difficult material.

Two concerts were delivered with tremendous success, raising hundreds of pounds for Hertford College Music Society.

Jazz Band, under the excellent direction of Daniel Cubbon, proved itself once again to be one of the most exciting and dynamic collegiate jazz ensembles within the University. As well as performing familiar standards, the jazz band also performed exceptional compositions by Cubbon himself. Outstanding concert performances combined with a welcoming, down-to-Earth atmosphere has solidified our Jazz Band's reputation as a first-rate ensemble and a valuable musical asset to the college.

Hertford College Music Society has had an exceptionally successful year, building upon its outstanding reputation as the premiere non-auditioning college music society within the University. Students enjoyed a thoroughly good night at our annual Jazz & Drinks event which once again proved to be a roaring success. Over £200 was raised for Homeless Oxford at our annual Carols in the Quad event. Both students and public alike gathered in the quad with mince pies to listen to our choir sing Christmas carols. In Michaelmas term, HCMS was led by Nathan De Giorgi, who in a customary manner passed on the baton to George Palmer in January. The start that George has made to his tenure suggests that he will surely further enhance the prestige of our wonderful college music society.

## POLITICS AND ECONOMICS SOCIETY

George Priestley (E&M, 2018) writes:

Despite the unusual times we are in, and the circumstances we faced in Trinity term, it has been another fantastic year for the Hertford Politics and Economics Society (HPES). One of the great successes I believe has been securing speakers from beyond the politics and economics base and maintaining the excellent calibre. This has enabled more members, with more wide ranging interests, of the JCR to get involved in both the discussions and the dinners than ever, and of course, bringing new ideas and insights.

We began the year with a visit from Academic Visitor Dr PJ Thum who unpacked many myths surrounding Singapore and explained some of his challenging confrontations with the Singapore government. Next, there was the Britain's Constitutional Crisis series, a three-part lecture series discussing Brexit & Journalism, the Civil Service, the Judiciary and Rule of Law. This series took place in the Weston Library across the road from college and we had the pleasure of hosting Alan Rusbridger and Hertford alumna, Carole Cadwalladr, Lord Pannick QC and Deok Joo Rhee QC. In addition, we got to hear from my personal favourite of the series Sir Oliver Robbins (another Hertford alumnus) who brought insights from the very centre of British government and its handling of Brexit.

Also in the Weston Library, we had the pleasure of hosting poet William Sieghart who brought forward his case for poetry as a tool for promoting empathy and dialogue. We also got the opportunity to hear from Will Hutton about Brexit in his event *The EU: Not Dead Yet!*, which provided the opportunity for lively debate between students and Will

– always an exciting and entertaining experience.

With Trinity Term being moved online, the society had to adapt to all events being hosted on Zoom. Although we faced our fair share of technical difficulties, we experienced some really enjoyable discussions. This did unfortunately mean that Will could not host his infamous post-event dinners which allow students to personally interact with guests and involve themselves in the discussion. I must thank Will for organising these excellent dinners and the catering staff for always being so accommodating. Despite being moved online, Trinity was a busy term for HPES. We had the opportunity to hear from Hertford alumnus Ciaran Martin, Director of the National Cyber Security Centre, arguably the world's leading expert in the world of cybersecurity. We also heard from *Guardian* columnist and environmental campaigner, George Monbiot, who passionately spoke about solutions to factors of the impending climate crises – such as how to feed the growing population. Furthermore, the term was capped with interesting conversations with satirist Rory Bremner and from Professor Jeffrey Stewart biographer of Alain Locke, Oxford University's first African-American Rhodes Scholar.

The most popular event of Trinity, and probably the year, was The Principal's Goodbye. Will gave a fascinating and amusing review of his nine-year tenure at Hertford and then fielded questions from students in what led to a memorable event. Will's contribution, involvement and support in the HPES cannot be understated. The society would simply not be what it is today without him. I personally would like to thank him on behalf of all students, past and present, who have benefitted from the society under his tenure as Principal for the work he has put in, he will be missed.

## SPORTS

**Sofia Baldelli (Medicine, 2018) writes:**

Although it seems an age away, the sporting calendars of Michaelmas and Hilary ran very much as normal and Hertford had two very successful terms. One of the highlights has to be HCNC's rise to Division 1 and subsequent success in the league. In Michaelmas term, after adjusting to the level of play, the team managed to secure a mid-table finish. In Hilary term, following a gritty win against the infamous 'stash-loving' St. John's team, the team managed to win all but one match to obtain second place in only their second term in the league. Unfortunately, as with many other things, the coppers tournaments were cancelled this year as was the annual HCAFC vs HCNC 'Hertford for the Homeless' charity netball match. In its place a virtual quiz was hosted in which the netball, football, rugby, and rowing teams competed against each other to win an IOU prize from DTB. Football managed to come out on top with a

strong quizzing performance from their new captain Luke Saitch.

Women's sport at Hertford has continued to grow and be of the highest calibre with both the success of the netball club and also Hertble. This year they strived to recreate their successes of last year but struggled initially, having lost a few key members to graduation. However, with key and talented returning members such as Eleanor Frew, Katie Chester and Laura Eacott putting in very strong performances, they managed to push through the season to an incredible win in the Cuppers Plate final with a 5-0 win against Jesus. This was an incredible win with a relatively new side under the bright lights of Oxford City football club and a huge congratulations is in order for the side and their captain Mia Gainsford.

The men's side of the football club also enjoyed a good season. The 1sts went on a six-match winning run in JCR first division with everyone in the team contributing but particularly the new freshers impressing. Their Cuppers



run was not to be, but the team have a very successful future ahead with such a strong backing of players. The second team also enjoyed a strong season under George Priestley's self-proclaimed 'iron fist' approach to leadership. They reached the semi-final of the 2nds Cuppers cruelly missing out on progressing on penalties after some questionable refereeing.

Rugby experienced a strong season with a confident run in Cuppers with their new striking kit, until losing out narrowly in the quarter-finals to a strong Christchurch college side with many a blues player starting for their formidable side. Other notable performances include a 20-0 win against Worcester and a valiant effort against Teddy Hall which resulted in multiple injuries including a hospital visit for James Stringer with a broken nose. Despite their on-field success their biggest win may have come on screen as members of the team got the opportunity to appear on BT's *Rugby tonight* in November. Two second years George Hargrave and George Priestley

were chosen to represent Gloucester and Tolouse respectively during a match review, and other members of the squad were used to demonstrate tactical moves including how not to strangle an opposition player! To counter the boredom that many of the team (and college) were beginning to feel during lockdown, the rugby club opened up voting for the all-decade line-up to create a virtual all-stars team. Jordan Ayling made it into the voting and is now coaching the University' Rugby League men's side back in Oxford.

This year saw the re-creation of the Hertford basketball team led by Paddy Christy-Parker. Having trained regularly throughout Michaelmas and playing a few matches it was a disappointing and abrupt end to the season with the cancellation of Cuppers in Trinity. The club, however, has proven to be very popular so I am sure they will find the cuppers success they deserve next year!

Along with the reinstatement of Basketball, this year we had the first Hertford Darts Darts match for two years with the team securing a 7-5 win against



a strong Corpus side. With a couple of freshers in the team the future of Hertford Darts is bright!

At University level, Hertford continues to be well-represented with 30 individuals competing for University squads this year. Particular highlights include Ellen Hobson competing for the blues equestrian team and being appointed the club's president and Alexander Hampshire competing at the European Universities championship in Judo. The breadth of representation in over 20 different sports at University level places the college in a very strong position for the college competitions that will begin again, hopefully, in Michaelmas.

The academic year of 2019/20 has been like no year Hertford has seen before and sport was not immune to the disruption brought on by COVID-19. In order to maintain the important sense of community and the engagement that sport at Hertford brings, a Strava competition was started at the beginning of lockdown. With the promise of a £10 voucher for the individual who had run

the furthest each week Hertford's JCR members mobilised and covered some vast distances. Although we were not victorious in the 'Strava Cuppers', some runners such as Milan Campion, who runs for the University cross country team, regularly posted over 60km a week at rapid pace. Other members of the Hertford community aimed to recreate to some degree the legendary efforts of Captain Sir Thomas Moore. Niall Shaban ran 10km in his North London back garden on his birthday for the mental health charity 'Calm zone' and managed to raise over £800 for such an important cause. Lockdown and the pandemic as a whole has been such a hard time for everyone in and out of the community at Hertford, but I am so proud of the contribution our members have made and what they have achieved.

It has been another excellent year for sport at Hertford even with it being truncated, and I invite everyone to follow us @sportathertfordcollege on Instagram for regular updates on all sporting successes!

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## ENVIRONMENT AND ETHICS

Laura Watson (Geography, 2019) writes:

Throughout the year, the Hertford College JCR social media pages have been an avenue used by the E&E rep as well as the JCR more widely, to share events and significant news relating to climate change and positive ways we can make a difference. For example, the Sustainability Strategy Consultation, allowing contributions for how the University can make changes, as well as the Climate Crisis Quiz associated with the Student Switch Off.

Hertford College gained second place overall in the Oxford's Planet Pledge with 282 pledges made, more than a 300% increase from 2018. We hope to see this continue! This accolade meant that students at Hertford College made the second most pledges to reduce their carbon emissions. These pledges included committing to reduce meat intake, adopt a vegan diet, or even more significant lifestyle changes such as no plastic, no flying, or even no fast fashion! The achievement of second place is not all that this is about however – it encourages people to make a positive change to their lives for at least a month, with many choosing to continue these changes beyond. Of course, the colleges' commitments to

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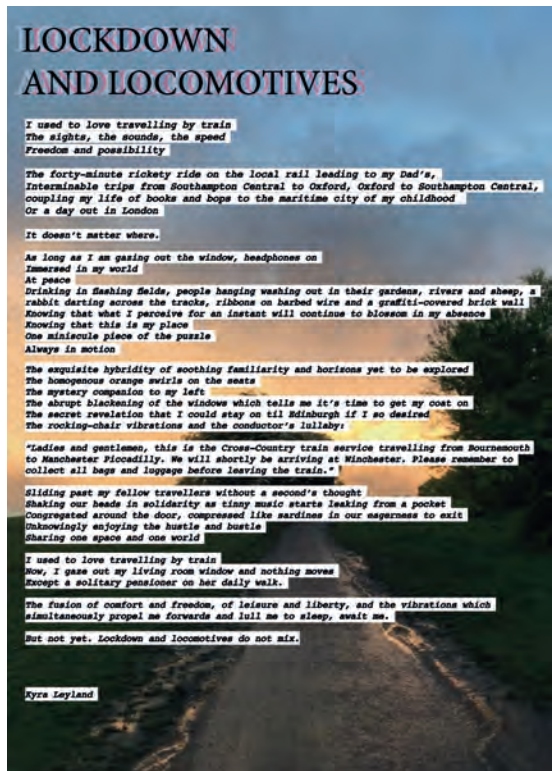
reduce waste continue. While systemic change is needed, this is a clear example of how Hertford is committed to individual actions showing that we, as Hertfordians, are committed to change.

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## ARTS

**Eve Dickie (English, 2018) writes:** This year, as we all settled into an online term, our yearly arts festival called HARTfest sadly couldn't go ahead. This certainly didn't stop Hertfordians from getting creative though! What we lacked in jazz, adapted plays and Pimm's, we made up for in Zoom events and an online Zine composed of people's lockdown endeavours. Contributions included illustrations, paintings, poems, and an intricately whittled spoon. As the Arts Rep, I wrangled the phenomenal Anoop Dey into helping me compose the zine (I am forever indebted to the MANY hours he spent with me over Zoom picking fonts and rearranging

pages). Aptly called *HartAttack* (named after an iconic children's TV show, and, of course, cardiac arrest), it was finally released in eighth week to celebrate everyone surviving and thriving through this strange Trinity. A still life drawing class over Zoom was another way to connect online, and a list of online resources including digitised exhibitions, plays, and books gave ways to pass the time. Long ago in Hilary term, sessions also involved a very popular watercolour painting class and an origami session, perfect for winding down and constructing complex animals (the frogs were both intricate and hop-able!).





After Hertford

# HASHIM & FAMILY

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Professor Emma Smith interviews Shahnaz Ahsan (History and English, 2006) about her newly released book:

**ES:** Just to start off, tell us the title of your book and what it's about.

**SA:** *Hashim & Family* is my debut novel, so it has been a long time in the making. It is the story of a family who move from East Pakistan, which we now call Bangladesh, to Manchester, in the 1960s. That part of the storyline is very much inspired by my grandparent's experiences. It follows the family over a period of 20 years, the relationship between Britain and Bangladesh, and the challenges they faced settling into one new place while still having ties to the place that they left behind.

**ES:** I absolutely love that about the novel – the parallels between the different places and the two families. Can you talk a bit about the relationship between Britain and Bangladesh in terms of your novel? How do you or your characters see the two places?

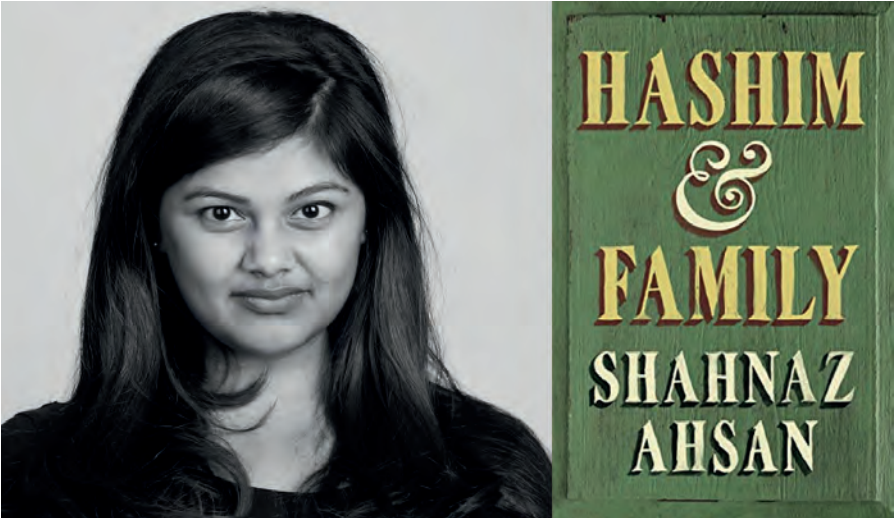
**SA:** I think each of the characters view the different places in their own particular way. There are four main characters, and the ones that we see who do the migrating are two cousins called Hashim and Rofikul, and Manira who is married to Hashim. You see some of them really putting their all into being English, and sometimes even more English than the English, as that's what they feel like they need to do to be accepted. You see them dabbling with changing their names, for

example. You also see that pull of home, which I think a lot of migrants or children of migrants feel, no matter when they made their move.

**ES:** What about the politics of East Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh? One of your characters goes back as a war reporter and we get a horrific depiction of war and what it's doing to the country. What was interesting to me about that was that you're not idealising a kind of home country. You've obviously structured the book so there isn't that idyllic place back home – it's more complicated than that.

**SA:** Yes, absolutely and I think that's something that is quite common to people who have migrated from somewhere that then undergoes war or natural disaster, and the guilt that people feel for having escaped that trauma back home and having that safety somewhere else. The reason why I wanted to explore the politics of the birth of Bangladesh is because it was something that I was never exposed to throughout my education in the UK, so everything I knew came from the stories that my parents or grandparents told me. It's such an important part of recent history – this only happened in 1971 – and it's a way to understand so much about migration history and patterns in the UK as well.

**ES:** I was thinking about your novel as a sort of love child of classic *Coronation Street* on the one hand and something like *Midnight's Children* on the other. The sense of a kind of a domestic story set against an extraordinary political



landscape. You said that part of the inspiration for this was your grandparent's journey to the UK, but what were your more literary inspirations? Who do you draw upon as a writer?

**SA:** I love Louis de Bernières and the idea of really delving into a place – whether that's wartime Greece or an island off the coast of Turkey during the decline of the Ottoman Empire. I think now there are more writers talking about partition and different writers who talk about the Bengali migrant experience, such as Jhumpa Lahiri. She's a writer that I really respect, and she talks very much about more recent migration from Bengal, and India, going to America.

**ES:** Tell me about the '& family' element of the title of your novel. In some ways, that conjures up quite a conservative idea, but in fact the family that you talk about is an extraordinarily blended, extended, non-traditional one in many ways, with two really close women friends, Manira and Helen, at the heart of it.

**SA:** A few people have commented on how it seems like a very non-traditional family arrangement that we see in this book. But for early migrants, that was even more common than we think; space was often an issue, so people living in extended families, and lots of people living together was not unusual. I think we often think that migrants keep themselves to themselves, they don't integrate with other people and we hear language about ghettoisation. Actually, people did live alongside each other and these early inter-racial relationships really did happen and they weren't all frowned upon either. I think in a way that generation was a lot more pragmatic and in some ways more open-minded than they ended up being when they settled in the UK.

**ES:** I don't want to give too much away as the book really unfolds with beautiful rhythm but there's a scene that really strikes me in the final third of the book when the second generation migrants clash with the National Front and fascist

protestors in the 80s, and there's a conversation between them and two people from this older generation – Vincent and Hashim. Did you feel that the older generation had to keep their heads down? In your book it seemed that it was the next generation who were able to be angry and stand up against racism.

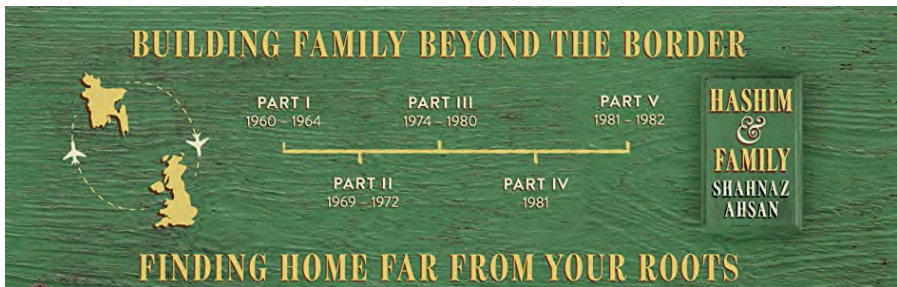
**SA:** I think that comes naturally, but there is a difference between moving to a place and being born there. I think when you've moved to a place, it takes time to work out the system and what the status quo is, then how much you can push that. At that time, as you say, people really did want to keep their heads down, get on with it and weren't looking for trouble. I think trouble often found them and that comes through in the book. Harassment and worse, were things that they certainly experienced right from the beginning. The next generation, who have been born in the UK and feel like they have some kind of claim on this country, expect more.

**ES:** I thought that what was interesting about the migrant 'experience', is what the UK enabled for some was double-edged. Some characters are able to progress and change their economic situation. For example, Manira is an ambitious, clever woman with a husband who supports that brilliantly. She's on her way and she gets what she wants –

employment outside of the home. On the other hand, there is this background of fear, with people not wanting to walk home on their own. That too is very clearly and unflinchingly depicted.

**SA:** That's the reality of what a lot of families experience. Maybe it was naivety, but I don't think those early migrants coming over really had any idea of what really to expect and so, as you say, it is double-edged. Hashim came over and said that it would be for five years, to earn some money to take back home and then what often happens is that those advantages of being in Britain take over. There's a functioning healthcare system, a functioning education system, for example. Those very practical things, especially when you have children, are enough to keep you here. That's what I think people mean when they talk about the sacrifice – they're the ones who really do give up their sense of belonging and that's something that's hard for us to understand. Then the next generation come up and have expectations beyond that. It's not enough to just have these opportunities, they're citizens, they belong, and they feel that they deserve more than that. That's a conversation that we see throughout the book.

**ES:** I was struck that in the book when there is racism or racists, that they are very faceless in the narrative. I wonder if that was a conscious decision?



**SA:** I think on some level, I must have made that decision. Often racists or those types of people become the subject and I didn't want them to be that. It's quite uncomfortable to admit, but I think that there were institutions and systems that were then and still are racist and discriminatory. By talking about it as if it's more generic, I think that means that we all need to be a bit more aware of our own complicit part in this.

**ES:** A part that I found unbearable was the actions of the schoolteacher and that seemed to be a moment where you were explicitly political. There's no redress with her, or resolution in that story, which makes it really shocking. Were there more of those instances that you wanted to suppress? Did you feel like you had obligations in writing this novel?

**SA:** That part, more than any of the rest of the book was personal for me. It was based on an actual classroom experience that I had in primary school. I wonder if there's some raw feeling which comes through and that's what you're picking up on. In terms of responsibility, there were a few different elements to depict. These days people can get cross when you say something is racist. Now it's like that's the worst thing you can possibly be called, even if that's what you're doing. We know that racism is a bad word and we don't want to be associated with it and yet it still exists and pervades in so many ways. What that particular incident does, is show the different ways that it can exist. We've got language for it now – we call it a microaggression. I had someone tell me once at a dinner party that I got this book published because it's trendy these days to be talking about this kind of stuff. And that's a microaggression – they're saying that your ability alone is not enough, people

are doing you a favour. Racism isn't always just someone getting beaten up, and it's not always National Front demos, there's all of these different facets to it. I didn't want to bang the drum too hard in terms of writing the book, but in a way, I didn't really have to because when you talk about the lives and experiences of people, that's enough.

**ES:** What are you writing now? What's next?

**SA:** The book only came out a month ago, so I've taken a few weeks off, but yes, I am part way into the next book. That's also focusing on a South Asian family, but this is set in an anonymous town in West Yorkshire which is very much based on the town that I grew up in. It's this idea of children moving away and then coming back home.

**ES:** I'm really pleased to hear all of that, but particularly that it's set in West Yorkshire which is both of our 'homeland'.

**SA:** I'm looking forward to writing about somewhere that I'm a bit more personally familiar with having grown up there. I think it'll be nostalgic as well. I quite like writing about places when I'm not there, in a way. I think you remember places a bit more sharply and vividly when you're not actually physically there.

**ES:** Fantastic! We should probably wrap up. It has been so great to talk to you. I absolutely loved the book: I've been thinking about the characters since, which is a feeling I have when I read someone like Anne Tyler who is a really great chronicler of ordinary but extraordinary inter-relationships. I had the same feeling after *Hashim & Family*.

Thank you and congratulations. We're all really looking forward to the next one.

# THE BLACK PERIL 'QUARANTOUR' – TOURING AND CREATIVITY UNDER THE NEW NORMAL

Soweto Kinch (Modern History, 1996) writes:

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Quarantine and restrictions due to the coronavirus have been particularly devastating for the arts sector and musicians such as myself: we rely on live audiences, international travel and thrive on human interaction. Venues and promoters I've established working relationships with over decades are now facing an uncertain future. However, the backdrop of the end of furlough, a looming evictions crisis and over 50,000 deaths this year has forced me to consider why I make art, and it's intended audience. Complaining about losing a tour of Moscow or Cape Town feels recklessly self-indulgent when compared with frontline workers literally risking their lives for £9/hour. Following in the footsteps of my heroes like Max Roach, John Coltrane or Hugh Masekela – I felt like my creativity should respond to turbid and uncertain political times, and profound questions of inequality thrown up by the pandemic.

I've had more time to consider how my history studies at Hertford have had a bearing on my practice as a jazz musician. So much of what I do as an artist is encode stories of the black diaspora into sound: sonically archiving historical influences such as Charlie Parker, Joe Harriot or Louis Armstrong into my own music. Curating #BlackPeril2020 however, gave me the opportunity to

explore this historical/artistic relationship even more directly – drawing inspiration from historical events and connecting with kindred minds in ways I didn't think possible before lockdown.

I released my most recent album *The Black Peril* last November, inspired by the British Race Riots of 1919. Like many, I was looking forward to a busy period of touring this summer and autumn – but realised soon into the COVID crisis that this would be impossible. So, I began planning an online festival – #BlackPeril2020. Initially, it was designed as a means of continuing to work with artists who were part of the album recording and November debut. However, the deeper I went into the history that inspired *The Black Peril*, I recognised the space and opportunity for something more involved and hopefully groundbreaking.

For all of the obvious disadvantages of lockdown, it was also the first time everyone (on both sides of the Atlantic) was relatively contactable through the ubiquitous Zoom call. I was able to contact and assemble academics, musicians and historians quickly without the logistical drama of flights and accommodation. As everything slowed to a halt, we all had more time to reflect. Very practically, I was able to use the stories of race riots in 1919 across Britain as the foundation for a socially distanced 'Quarantour.'

Throughout the summer, a small group of musicians, dancers and I visited the squares, streets and bridges that were the scenes of race riots a century ago. Transforming these sites into stages and plinths, we realised that improvised performances and responses would be a novel way of creating new work, and providing an introduction to this greatly obscured history.

From Glasgow to Barry, South Shields and Liverpool the entire country experienced a slew of racial attacks from 1919-1921: groups of 10-20 black people had to defend themselves from attacking white mobs of up to 5,000! The history of what happened to these sizeable black communities in Cardiff, Liverpool or London seems deliberately obfuscated to maintain the myth of a 'white working class' and of black Britons as a purely recent post-Windrush phenomenon. What's more, race rioting across Britain was accompanied by the 'Red Summer' in America: streets and properties in Chicago, St Louis, New York, New Orleans, Houston and many more were set ablaze by racial animus. It seems, then as now, global questions of racial inequality, serious ruptions in the social contract and scapegoating – amidst the backdrop of a pandemic – reached a fever pitch.

Throughout the process, my love of jazz was being melded with my love of history even more closely. #BlackPeril2020 would host detailed interviews/panel discussions with artists and experts on the history; yet the music and dance would express the emotional resonance of this past in ways that words fail.

And then... Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor were murdered. Violent racism around the world went into hyperdrive, accompanied by equivalent reactions of mainstream denial and deflection. Watching as the statue of Edward Colston was plunged

into the Avon, felt personally, like a huge cathartic moment – the nation was forced to draw the lines between a deadly pandemic, unchecked capitalism, slavery and systemic racism.

BLM protestors assembling, Indian sweatshops in Leicester and migrants on dinghies were being blamed for spreading COVID-19 rather than the criminal negligence of our government, and its mixed messages. Suddenly, the relevance and focus of #BlackPeril2020 was brought into sharper relief. It wasn't just another platform to share music and dance, but also a forum to make sense of 100 years of race riots and the ways in which they have shaped our modern reality. When establishment cronyism and ineptitude are exposed, migrants and outsiders suddenly become the targets.

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# #BLACKPERIL2020

SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> -18<sup>TH</sup> 2020 — ONLINE FESTIVAL

SALFORD • LIVERPOOL • HULL • CARDIFF • NEWPORT • LONDON

[SOWETO-KINCH.COM/BLACKPERIL2020](http://SOWETO-KINCH.COM/BLACKPERIL2020)



The national lack of awareness of the 1919 race riots, and a maniacal attachment to figures such as Churchill and Rhodes is part of a pattern. Britain creates so much diversionary noise and click bait that the serious issues of injustice get drowned in a sea of outrage. The 'woke' BBC banning Rule Britannia, Uncle Ben-gate or Diversity's inflammatory body popping: this culture war which has raged for months, seems like a timely means of deflecting serious questions. The 'government' appears to be getting away with murder.

Our country has consistently ignored communities and people who have made the greatest sacrifices for Britain's 'Greatness' – whether dockworkers a century ago or black nurses and bus drivers today. 'Staging' an online festival has been hugely cathartic in helping to unpack many of these issues. Our creativity felt unleashed without the

regular commercial concerns of trying to sell out a box office. We got so much positive feedback from spectators to local councillors who were unaware of this history in their own wards – it's really affirmed the transformative power of art. We've also created valuable resources and an account of how we as artists experienced and responded to this turbulent year.

I'm as desperate as any for the return of the good old days of touring, and human contact – but the lessons from this year have really helped me to view my creativity with a renewed sense of purpose. I think we have more to gain from confronting difficult questions together, than from being attached to national delusions of grandeur. We'll need all of our creativity and improvisational nous to navigate the new normal.

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# ALUMNI ANNOUNCEMENTS

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**RICHARD FIDLER (E&M, 1998)**

Congratulations to Richard Fidler and Laura Graham (Jesus College alumna, Classics, 2004) who got married in November 2019.



**KHALID JAWED KHAN  
(LAW, 1989)**

Congratulations to Khalid Jawed Khan who was appointed Attorney-General for Pakistan.



**RUTH MARGETTS  
(ENGINEERING SCIENCE, 2011)**

Ruth and Jon got married in July 2020. They were scheduled to have a big celebration, but due to COVID, they had a small service followed by a picnic in the park. Congratulations!



**PAULA BALDWIN (ENGLISH, 2004)**

Paula Baldwin Lind has received the Teaching Excellence Award in the area of Humanities, Universidad de los Andes, Santiago de Chile, where she currently works at the Institute of Literature. Dr. Baldwin was recognized for her permanent concern for generating deep learning in her students and her interest in incorporating new teaching methodologies. Congratulations!

# OBITUARIES

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We record with regret the following deaths of alumni, listed in order of the dates of matriculation. Use of an asterisk (\*) indicates that an obituary follows; we are most grateful to those who have supplied this material.

**1938**

John Harrison\*

**1941**

Tony Sale

**1944**

Donald Pannell

**1952**

David Sharp

**1953**Eric Doorbar  
Derek Roebuck**1955**Peter Icke  
Gordon Glanville**1957**

Peter Whiteman

**1958**Tony Bacon  
Andrew Stubbs  
Tom Wandbrough**1960**

David Lury

**1962**

David Webb

**1965**

Anthony Hood

**1966**

Paul Thatcher\*

**1970**Donald  
McCready\*  
Jan Saxl**1974**

Richard Grove

**1975**

Charles Pichon

**1977**Martin  
Underwood**1979**

Peter Alderson\*

**2008**Stephen  
Robinson

## JOHN HARRISON (MODERN LANGUAGES, 1938)

John was born in Wellington, Somerset and went up from Wellington School to Hertford in 1938. There he studied Modern Languages, French and German (with Honours), with Enid Starkie among others. He went on to do Economics at LSE.

After time in the war as a cook and ambulance driver (he was a conscientious objector, his mother having been a Quaker), he came to the US as one of two English students to get internships at the UN.

That was his first taste of New York. He went back to London to organise student tours between England and the continent but was soon back in NY, first in a travel agency where he met his wife Ruth, and then as Manager of Special Marketing at Scandinavian Airlines where he spent over 30 years.

After he retired, he began teaching English to the foreign-born. He had always had a strong interest in language, and with an excellent vocabulary he firmly believed in providing his students with word families. He was a very avid reader, devouring the *New York Times* every day and the *Economist* when it came out. He loved going to classical concerts, having been a church organist in his youth. He said music should be listened to live and often listened with his eyes closed.

He was also very fond of red wine and his daily walk, right up until the end. The walker did not deter him at all. He was very proud to reach 100, he had been striving for it. When asked how he did it he said: "Just keep going." He moved from New York to Allentown, Pennsylvania to live with his son and daughter-in-law in his last year, but prior to that he was always the star figure at Rob Lusardi's wonderful Hertford parties in Manhattan, accompanied by his daughter, Alice. He is also survived by a sister Mary, in New Brunswick, Canada.

### PAUL THATCHER (HISTORY, 1966)

Paul Thatcher, who died on 27th February 2020 after a sudden aggressive illness, was born in 1948 in Godshill in the Isle of Wight, where his father was a policeman. He attended Sandown Grammar School before coming up to Hertford in 1966 to read History. After graduating in 1969, he stayed on for the PGCE course which optionally included a year's Voluntary Service Overseas. So much did he enjoy his time at the Government Secondary School, Zaria, a town in the part of Northern Nigeria which is now called Kaduna State, that he decided to return there and teach on contract terms. He continued to work in Nigeria until 1985, for a time acting as Principal of Government College, Keffi, and finally as one of the founding lecturers at the Kaduna State College of Education.

After his return to the UK in 1985, he obtained a post at his alma mater, now redesignated as Sandown High School, where he was a doughty defender of its academic inheritance. But he was also an enthusiastic organiser of sporting and other outdoor activities.

Paul's inspirational promotion of his subject, as well as his idiosyncratic demeanour, will be remembered with affection by former students both in Nigeria and here in Britain.

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### DONALD MCCREADY (PPE, 1970)

Donald McCready, a graduate of Hertford College died 8 April 2020. Donald was born in Scotland on 16 December 1951 but brought up in Manchester, where he attended Eccles Grammar School. He matriculated in October 1970 and read PPE at Hertford, graduating in 1973. He returned in 1977 to study for a Diploma in Social Work and was elected President of the MCR. He was the Director of the Volunteer Programme in China for Voluntary Service Overseas in the 1980s and was later Executive Director of the European Children's Trust. He was a longstanding member of the Hertford Society and an active and generous supporter of the alumni activities of the college, attending many of the college Gaudies and social events, where he was a familiar and well-liked presence.

He received a cancer diagnosis some two and a half years ago that appeared to have been treated successfully, but unfortunately it returned recently and the doctors pronounced it terminal. He subsequently acquired a bacterial

pneumonic infection and died peacefully in his sleep. At the time of his death he was the director of a home improvement company, living in Forest Hill, London. He leaves three adult children by a previous marriage. It is hoped to arrange a memorial service in London once the COVID-19 emergency is over. All who knew him found him a warm and agreeable companion as well as a loyal and generous friend.

**PETER ALDERSON  
(PHYSIOLOGICAL SCIENCES,  
1979)**

Peter died on 1 February of this year. He had been diagnosed with cancer in October. Peter had very fond memories of his time at Hertford. He attended in 1979 and matriculated in Physiological Sciences (BA 1984, MA 1986) before qualifying in medicine at Guys. He worked as a dedicated anaesthetist up until the time of his diagnosis.



