

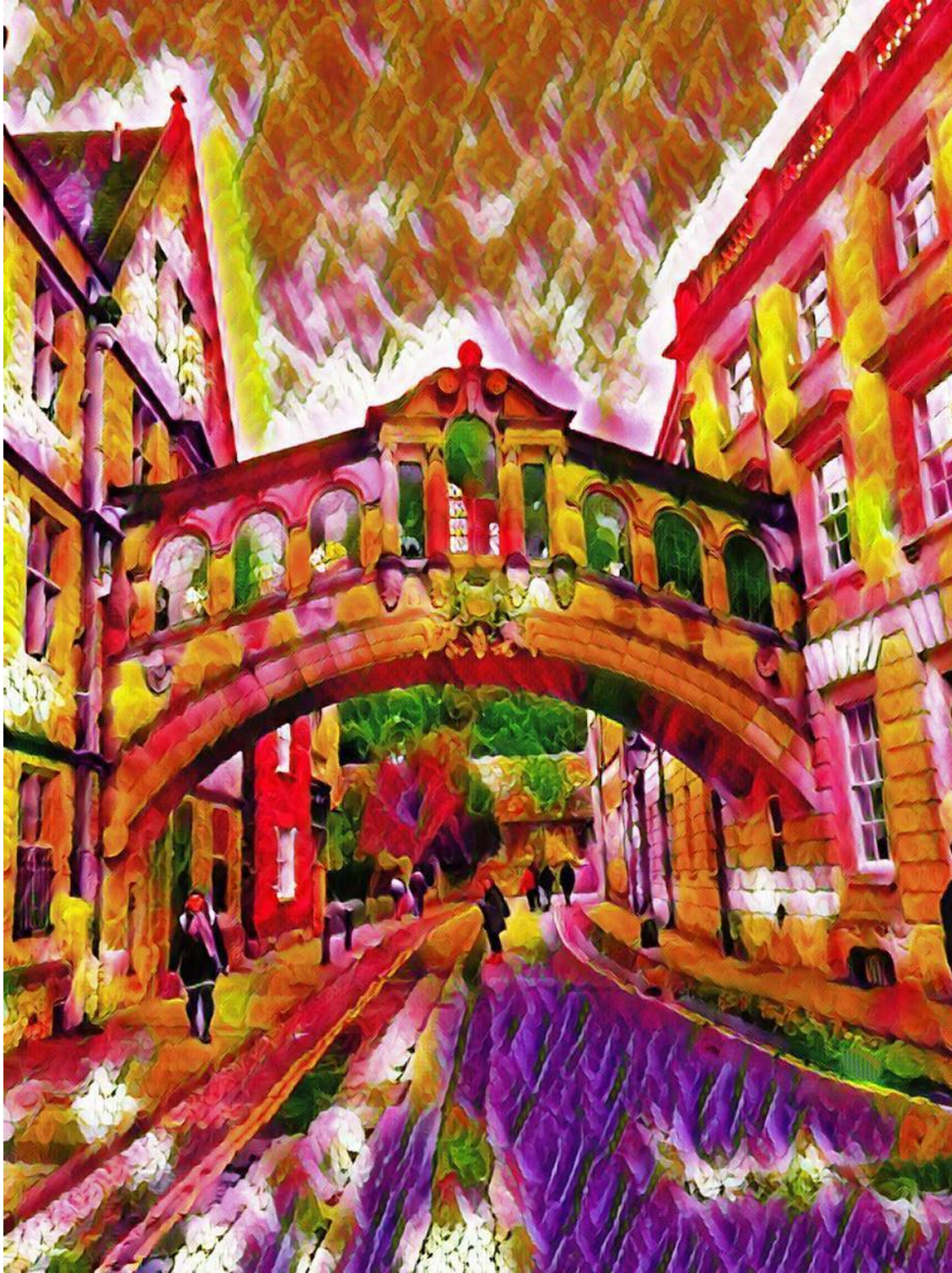
Dear Hertford Community,

I hope that you are thriving, despite the ongoing challenges of this lockdown. It has been great to hear that vaccines, even non-Oxford ones, have reached so many of our alumni, and are now getting to many staff and tutors.

As I write on the last day of term, the sun is shining over Radcliffe Square, and Simpkin has found a spot to patrol outside my office, more I suspect to keep me in than others out. Our main site is still sadly empty of students. But an additional reason it feels so different is that we have dug up the quad. Not, I promise, for long, but to excavate 8m of our history, a Hertford version of *The Dig*. No longboats yet, but we are now down to the late Saxon/early Norman period, and last week found a medieval kitchen. The survey is part of our preparation to create a world-class library. More on that in the future. Meanwhile, any hidden horde might help pay for it.

Happily, it is looking increasingly likely that we will be able to welcome back all students who want to come into residence next term. They have missed out on a huge amount of the normal Hertford experience, but continue to inspire us all with their resilience and patience. Trinity term will still be restrained, but the Covid statistics are heading in the right direction. You can see my latest student video, including the dug up quad, [here](#).

As ever, lots of news to share. Congratulations to Radoslaw Zubek for being awarded the Jean Monnet Fellowship at the European University [Institute](#) in Florence, and to Andrew Cropper who has a five-year Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council fellowship to stay in Oxford. Do look out for Sally Bayley's new book, [No Boys Play Here: A Story of Shakespeare and My Family's Missing Men](#). And for Sebastian Page's [Black Resettlement and the American Civil War](#). As of a few moments ago, Sofiiia Verkhoturova and her Unbox - a first career-discovery hub for young people - team came runner up in the [All-Innovate](#) Ideas Competition. Well done also to Oliver Brewster whose team reached the final, and to Samantha Brown and Anton Fedotov who were both shortlisted.



PhotoArt by Alan Slater

I hope you are following Hertford's [Desert Island Discs](#). There are some great selections from students, tutors and staff, though my Hertford contemporaries (and sons) might suggest mine are stuck in the mid-90s. I also recommend [Humans of Hertford](#) as a great way to get to know some of our extraordinary students. Our last 21st Century Survival Skills [session](#) was on practical ways to protect yourself from having your data stolen. Not just through Oxford University's occasionally exasperating new 16 character password and multi-factor authentication, but with expert advice from Academic Visitor, alum and former head of UK cyber security, Ciaran Martin, and his Blavatnik colleague, Noran Fouad.

Online events coming up include more 21st Century Survival Skills, more alumni gatherings by region and subject group, and an [Ireland seminar with Professor Ian McBride](#). On 26 March, I'll co-host with Jan Royall (Somerville) [an evening to remember](#) Jeremy Heywood. Jeremy was a towering Cabinet Secretary, a huge influence on modern British policy making, and my former boss. Most importantly, a Hertford alum. We'll be joined by Suzanne Heywood, who has just released a [biography](#). And by others from the Oxford community who worked with Jeremy, including Helen Ghosh, Jonathan Phillips and Suma Chakrabarti.

Obviously, we're all keen to start thinking again about offline events too. We'll start with a cautious approach, until the government guidelines are clearer. We are hoping we'll be in a position to open up more of the estate for use by the Hertford community over the Summer. More details to come.

Also coming up. We are now accepting entries from 16-18s anywhere in the world for the [Unsung Heroes of Science](#) competition. The competition will be judged by Alison Woollard and every shortlisted video will win a signed copy of 'Superior' by Angela Saini. Further afield, four Hertford undergrads are planning to climb Mt Kilimanjaro. You can read more about their partner charity, The Nasio Trust, [here](#). Best of luck to Matthew, Bridget, Matt, Lucy, and Harry, representing Hertford in the next series of University Challenge, with our first round match to be filmed on 24 March. Flynn Bizzell is trying to run from the Bridge of Sighs to Tower Bridge non-stop over the summer if anyone would like to join him. And I'm delighted that we are partnering with Na'amal to provide online training for Syrian refugees in Jordan. 15 Hertford students will be involved in the first phase. Among so much else, Hertford is an academy that helps people make a positive impact on society.

All of which brings me back to Hertford 2030. I am delighted that Governing Body decided last week that we should aim to be net carbon neutral as soon as possible, and by 2030 at the latest. This will involve tough choices. We'll need commitment, help and advice from across the community, and climate has been a strong theme to my discussions with alumni. We are currently working with students to identify immediate changes, and carrying out a wider audit of the costs involved in the wider changes we must take. I hope that bold and urgent action, alongside the brilliant research of Jamie Lorimer, Louise Slater, Anette Mikes, Elizabeth Baldwin and so many others, will position us to be an active voice on the climate crisis, and to help develop hundreds of students equipped to help counter it. Do get in touch if you would like to know more.

More widely, we are looking to launch the wider Hertford 2030 strategy in May. Thank you for the excellent ideas so far. Alongside climate, we are looking at ways in which we can be a centre for excellent teaching by active researchers; a pioneer of equality, sustainability and opportunity; a thriving community that prepares young people for the challenges of the 21st century; and a home for debate, critical thinking, and curiosity.

Some of this will be through a renewed programme of excellence, across everything we do. Some of it will be through our most ambitious ever estates plan. Some will be through specific initiatives on access, digitalisation and outreach. And some will be through more ambitious Mars shots. All of it will require us to draw on the expertise, creativity and support of all parts of the Hertford ecosystem. I was reminded last night at an event with some of our MBA grads the extent to which so many of us are dealing with similar challenges as we emerge from this pandemic. I hope that our 10,000 strong Hertford community can be a place where we can support each other with ideas, solidarity and camaraderie.

I hope you get a good Easter break, and look forward to welcoming many of you back to Hertford in person soon. Meanwhile, we have a hole in the quad to fill in.

All best wishes,

Tom



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