

Dear Hertford Community,

Hilary Term is well underway. There is frost on the quad and crisp sunlight on the Radcliffe Camera. The cold snap means that Oxford has a particularly quiet feel to it at the moment: there is little lingering in the quads and people have worked out which libraries and buildings are being least parsimonious with the heating (spoiler alert: not the rooms in which we have committee meetings).

There is only one place to start this update: Kenny Lewis. We held his funeral at Hertford this week, with staff and Fellows lining the quad in quiet tribute, and our chaplain Mia Smith leading two moving services filled with memories and gratitude. There were over 700 people at the crematorium, with most then coming back to Hertford for refreshments. I've never seen as many West Ham kits and scarves away from the terraces: an extraordinary turnout for an extraordinary man. You can read [Mia's address](#), as well as [my tribute](#).

Stories poured in - from Fellows, colleagues, students, alumni, team mates, friends. I knew Kenny in all six of those categories, and worked for him too. What is so striking from those stories is that, from whichever angle each of us encountered Kenny: he was the same man. A bustling, loud voice of exuberance at the heart of Hertford. He probably had interactions with more Hertford people than anyone else, ever. And so many of us recall that an interaction with Kenny left us feeling better about life. That essay crisis, social anxiety, bad day or (even) Domus Committee didn't seem so bad after a blast of Kenny. So many people told me that Kenny was the first person to make them feel that they were welcome here. And that irrepressible camaraderie, loyalty, enthusiasm and kindness over almost five decades is - more than the contribution of any other single person - why Hertford is the friendliest college in Oxford. Quite a legacy.



Kenny was of course also our most capped footballer ever, and top goal scorer. And so it was moving to share a [minute of silence for him with our 1st team](#). We could have done with one of his super sub match winning performances (and a better one than I offered) to prevent our subsequent elimination from Cuppers. As we sing so often at reunions, "There's Only One Kenny Lewis". Watch this space for further moments to celebrate Kenny, especially for all those alumni we couldn't squeeze into the chapel.



Kenny celebrating 40 years at Hertford



The guard of honour at Kenny's funeral

Meanwhile, the college is pulsating with activity. Chancellor Chris Patten is coming to speak this week, on China. This kicks off our 2023 lecture series on the peace processes of the future, with sessions to come on peace with the planet, with technology, with our ancestors, and much more. Earlier this month, Lord Patten rendered those translating a recent speech into Latin momentarily nonplussed with his reference to Oxford having turned out too many "plausible bullshitters." I wonder who he meant.

The new Vice-Chancellor, Irene Tracy, is up and running (literally: I often bump into her doing laps of the Parks) and bringing great gusto to the role. It is encouraging to see many of the Hertford 2030 themes at the core of her work: support to teaching and research, climate, an effort to be a better neighbour to Oxford. We were delighted to host her last weekend for the MacBride service, the annual moment when we hear the sermon endowed by a former Principal, followed by madeira and madeira cake as instructed by him. They were surprisingly revitalising at 11am on a freezing Sunday. I see a lot of Irene and the college Heads of House in my committee-heavy role as Vice-Chair of the Conference of Colleges. Amid a packed agenda, we are having bracing discussions with the Charity Commission (in the light of drama at another college); looking at ways to build on the impact of the vaccine to pursue more innovative, world changing research; and pursuing University of Sanctuary status. The main perk is encountering, at almost every meeting, someone senior in the university commenting on something positive a Hertford person has done. Happily the Education Committee have been too polite to mention my phone inadvertently broadcasting Test Match Special during one lengthy discussion of student numbers.

Meanwhile, we are launching new graduate scholarships for international students as an extension of our history of pioneering work on access. My thanks to the generosity of our supporters for making that possible. Also as part of our Hertford 2030 work, we are moving through the gears on the new graduate centre and library, and reviewing our access and outreach work to see how we stay innovative and ambitious. You can learn more, and track progress [on our website](#). The cost of living crisis makes all this harder, but it is vital investment in our future. Watch this space for exciting progress on the overhaul of our sports pitches too.

Welcome to the new JCR Committee, led by Tanya Ranadive as JCR President and Amrit Ark as Treasurer. They and the student body will be a crucial part of our aspirations to become carbon neutral by 2030



Irene Tracy, new Vice-President of Oxford University



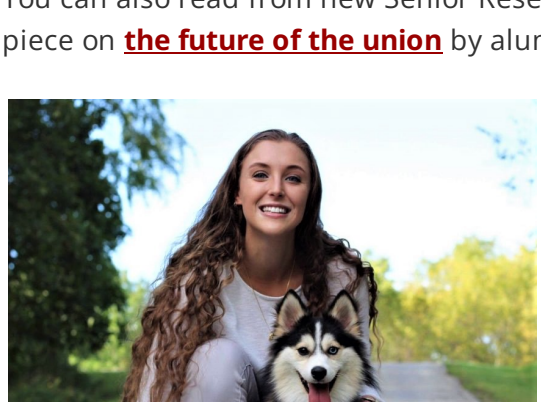
JCR President Tanya Ranadive



JCR Treasurer Amrit Ark

One interesting emerging discussion across the university is on AI and education, as we all marvel at what ChatGPT can do. I know that the teachers among our alumni are also closely engaged in this debate. Clearly the pace of machine learning will have implications for assessment (less coursework?) and admissions. Tutorials will be more valuable than ever. In our discussions, building on pioneering work from Steve New, we have been trying to find the advantages for our core role of educating our students. As I argue in the latest Hertford Magazine, we have to work harder to teach the skills that the machines can't yet emulate. We are fortunate in having great experts in AI, including [Mike Woolldridge](#), [Carissa Veliz](#) and [Andy Cropper](#). You can hear Mike speak on ChatGPT [here](#). For the record, this bulletin was not written by AI: I have a couple more in me yet before being disrupted.

More Hertford content. Our Tutorial Fellow in Biochemistry Alison Woollard took part in a panel discussion at the Global Young Scientist Summit in Singapore recently, which you can watch [here](#). Please also look out for the latest from Alex Preston, Louisa Reid and [Emma Smith](#), and [Ian McBride](#) on In Our Time. Emma and I will between us be taking over lunchtimes on BBC Radio 4 in March/April. Emma has five episodes on what Shakespeare would say about today's crises. I have three on the battle for democracy. DPhil student Lara Bampfield has been part of a Discovery documentary on archaeology in Kish and Nimrud, drawing on her work as an assyriologist looking at cuneiform texts and cylinder seals. Ashira Biswas came second - worldwide - place in the [Nobel Peace Prize Challenge 2022](#). You can also read from new Senior Research Fellow (and alum) Ciaran Martin in a piece on [the future of the union](#) by alum James Hawes.




Lara Bampfield has been working on a Discovery documentary



Ashira Biswas at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony

Looking ahead, Jonathan Powell and other architects of the Good Friday Agreement will join us on 16th February for a discussion of the peace process 25 years on, and I'll give a talk at Stormont to commemorate the anniversary. Paralympian and veteran Mark Ormrod is [here on 9 February](#), and Fraser Riddell to mark LGBTQ+ History month. We're welcoming 2012/13 alumni back on 1 April (no comment) for their first gaudy, and our [Physics alumni](#) will gather in March, giving Pat Roche the first of what will surely be many send-offs as he prepares for retirement. The John Donne dinner in April will be headlined by Lyse Doucet and Peter Frankopan. The college's Music Society has yet again organised a fantastic series of lunchtime concerts - please come along if you're in town.



TERM CARD

Hilary 2023

HCMS CONCERT

Featuring Jessy Band, Choir & Orchestra

28 Feb | 7.30pm | Free Entry | Holywell Music Room

LUNCHTIME RECITALS

1.10pm • Hertford College Chapel • Free entry

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| 25 Jan Wed 2nd Week String Trio Hugo Max (violin) Hannah MacFarlane (cello) Kilian Meißner (viola) | 22 Feb Wed 6th Week Violin Solo Eugenie Dalglish (violin) |
| 1 Feb Wed 3rd Week Viola Solo Rosa Bonnin (viola) | 1 March Wed 7th Week Piano Solo Will Jeys (piano) |
| 7 Feb Tue 4th Week Piano Trio Amy Moynihan (violin) Miriam Mayer-Rieckh (cello) Mar Umbert Kimura (piano) | 8 March Wed 8th Week Violin & Piano Jennifer (violin) Amalia Young (piano) |
| 15 Feb Wed 5th Week Music for 4 Hands Will Jeys (piano) Felix Kirkby (piano) | |

THE ALTERNATIVE LUNCHTIME CONCERT

Featuring a range of styles and genres from a range of performers - an alternative to the usual recital!

TBD Feb | 1st Week | Baring Room | Free entry & informal vibes

@hertfordmusic
hertfordmusic@gmail.com

Later in the year, we hope that many of you will return to Oxford for our Hertford Festival (1-2 July). We are putting together a fantastic programme of guest speakers, academic talks and family activities, and plenty of opportunities to sample our wonderful Hertford catering. Please mark your diaries and watch this space.

Summer Eights peak on 27 May, when we'll ensure that we toast Paul Gleeson, one of our greatest ever rowers, who recently passed away. Paul arrived here as a non-rower, yet made the Oxford boat in little more than a year. He won three successive boat races, including as part of the famous 'Mutiny Year' Oxford crew of 1987. More importantly, he was part of our greatest Summer Eights crew. The 1987 crew won blades. The 1988 crew went our best, moving into the first division and winning blades with a double over bump on Wadham.

As ever, this just scrapes the surface of everything going on. For those not currently studying, please do call in and see us if you are passing - it is always great to see alumni and their families.

All best wishes,

Tom

