

Dear Hertford Community,

Earlier this week, the sun was starting to reflect again off the Rad Cam, and it is becoming easier to imagine a long winter passing. I won't stretch the metaphor, but it is also now easier to imagine a normal college again, something that most of our students haven't experienced. We are all longing for that.

The student bar reopened last weekend after two years out in the marquee. Having worked in it as a student and worked hard as JCR President to keep it open, I never imagined that one of my jobs as Principal would be to keep it shut for so long. Our focus is of course academic, but it has been heart breaking to see Hertford students missing out on so much of the wider experience. We are determined to make that up to them.

Topically, we welcomed this week Britain's most decorated soldier, former SAS commander General Sir Graeme Lamb, to talk to the students about leadership, communication, and overcoming adversity. Last week we held events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day and - led by Foster Professor Ian McBride - to discuss the lessons of Bloody Sunday 50 years on (catch up through [My Oxford Online](#)). Later this term we'll be involved in events on modern slavery (with Theresa May), with the Aviation Minister, and to christen the new Terry Hughes boat. Second years will take part in our first 'Head, Hand and Hertford' course over the spring break, working together on the skills they need for life, work and citizenship.

Variants permitting, we are also working up a busy programme of gatherings over the coming months. We will launch the new [John Porter Diplomacy Centre](#), with announcements on scholarships, research on the SDGs, and initiatives on the peace processes of the future, including with our planet, with tech and with our descendants. And, as we look ahead to [Hertford 2030](#), we are planning a series of events for alumni, staff, tutors and students to celebrate Hertford's past, present and future. We look forward to sharing more details with you very soon.



New Professors Lambros Malafouris, Jieun Kiaer & Vlad Vyazovskiy

Congratulations to new Professors Jieun Kiaer, Lambros Malafouris and Vlad Vyazovskiy for their [recognition by the University](#). They are working on the fantastically varied fields of Korean grammar, the anthropology of handmade pottery, and how the brain behaves during sleep. Zhanfeng Cui was elected as a foreign member of the [Chinese Academy of Engineering](#) in recognition of his contributions to chemical engineering and promotion of UK-China academic exchanges and cooperation. And welcome to the new JCR and MCR Execs, led by Eloise and Teresa - I'm looking forward to seeing what they achieve this year.



New JCR & MCR Presidents, Eloise George and Teresa Taylor

Congratulations also to Hertford's two [University Challenge](#) teams. The current students made the second round with an impressive performance. Meanwhile, our alumni team of college celebrities stormed their way to Hertford's first final in the programme's 60 years with a stellar performance on the Christmas specials. Excellent work from Soweto Kinch, Elizabeth Norton, Adam Fleming and Isabelle Westbury. Do seek out Izzy's [Ashes commentary](#) too. Congratulations too to Bridget Phillipson on her appointment as [Shadow Education Secretary](#), having previously shadowed the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. And, in excellent news for one of our most recent graduates, former Organ Scholar Charlotte Corderoy has been selected as one of seven exceptional female conductors to join the Royal Philharmonic Society's inaugural [Women Conductors](#) training and development programme.



Our alumni team on Christmas University Challenge

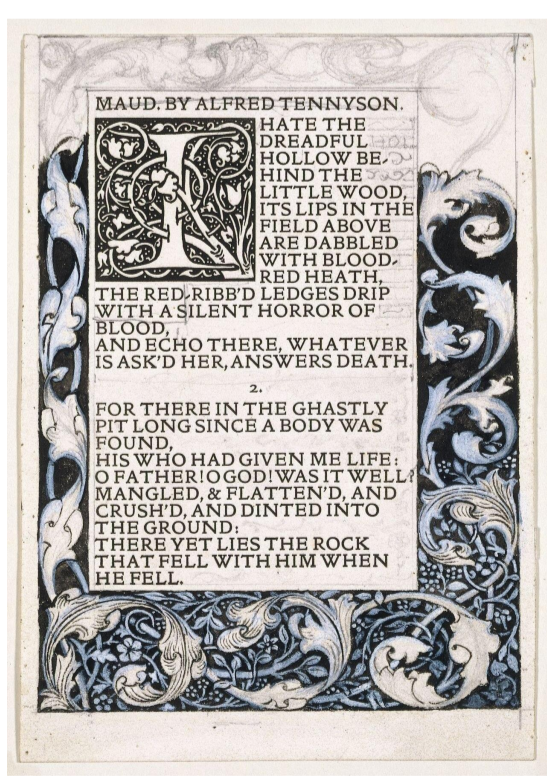
As ever, there is plenty of Hertford content for you to dip in to. [Listen here](#) to all six episodes of Emma Smith's brilliant podcast with Hertford writers including [Alex Preston](#), whose new novel 'Winchelsea' is getting great reviews. [Louisa Reid](#), another podcast guest, wrote about the [power of storytelling](#) on our revamped [Bridge Blog](#), as did environmental journalist Anna Turns on [how to reduce our chemical pollution](#) - also the topic of her [new book](#). In other publishing news, Carissa Véliz's successful ['Privacy Is Power'](#) is now out in paperback with a new afterword on data and geopolitics, while Honorary Fellow Paul Muldoon scooped a Waterstone's Book of the Year and Christmas bestseller with Paul McCartney's ['The Lyrics'](#), which he edited. I spent much of the break enjoying it alongside the trilogy of Get Back films. Suzanne Heywood's brilliant [biography](#) of Hertford alumnus Jeremy Heywood is now out in paperback.



A toxic cocktail

By Anna Turns (Biological Sciences, 1998)

[Read More](#)



On storytelling in verse

By Louisa Reid (English, 1994)

[Read More](#)

We are continuing our work on the [Hertford 2030](#) aspirations. The new library will be a major focus of the next two years - details of all that on the way. Alongside that we will make progress this term on our net zero effort, on reducing the financial barriers for students to study and on celebrating our research more widely. Look out for the arrival of the latest Hertford College magazine later this month with accompanying Donor Report, both of them an excellent record of what we've achieved together over the last year and what we hope to do next. All 100 issues of the Magazine, stretching back to 1910, are now [available to download](#) from the college website - enjoy and let us know if you find any hidden gems.

Finally, you may have heard from [Cherwell](#) and Mumsnet about the ongoing fallout from CatGate. I'm pleased to report that Simpkin has taken the escalation from Exeter in good spirit. We are calling for de-escalation and a return of Simpkin's full feline rights to go where he wants and nibble whatever he chooses. But we retain the right to take further unicateral measures if Exeter persists with their provocative approach. Meanwhile, Simpkin's handlers have set up his first Instagram account so do follow [@simpkinthehertfordcat](#) to get the latest official updates.

All best wishes,
Tom