

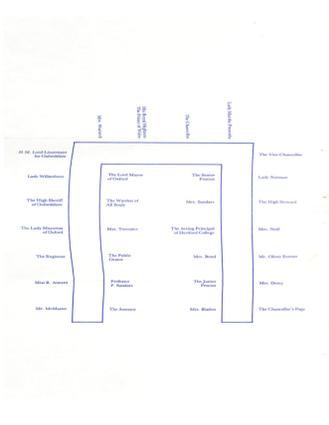
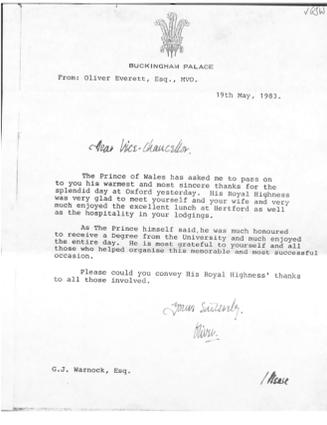
Dear Hertford Community,

We are on the verge of another academic year. Graduate Freshers are already here, and the undergrads arrive in the coming days. We are looking forward to a new set of students setting out on their Hertford journey. Remember that this year's undergrad Freshers have had both GCSEs and A Levels disrupted by protecting us all from Covid: we owe it to them to help them achieve their potential. It is also a reminder of the flux of the last two years that our third years will for the first time next week see the OB Quad lawn in all its glory. Dinners for the new undergrad and grad Freshers are no longer socially distanced over six nights, to the great relief of many of us, not least those who have to listen to my speech on repeat. Their matriculation ceremony is on 15th October, before which we will line up en masse under the bridge. It is a sobering and challenging thought for me that this year's undergraduate Freshers will be my age in 2050: the global challenges ahead of us are not science fiction for them.



Of course, the uncertainties beyond the college gates have not gone away. A visit this week to discuss our new Porter Diplomacy Centre by NATO Commander for Europe and Africa, Admiral Munsch (a Hertford alum), was a reminder that we are in for the long haul on Russia/Ukraine and the knock-on impact on energy costs. That has to change how we operate. With concerns mounting over cost of living, we have matched the Oxford Living Wage to support staff through a tough winter and beyond. Over a third of our undergraduates are on bursaries of some kind. We'll also be aiming to work with staff and students to keep energy costs down. And much of our research and support to students is of course part of the solution to the challenges beyond Cate Street. Our first three graduate scholars from refugee backgrounds arrive this term, and a senior academic displaced from Ukraine. Meanwhile, Hertford alumni Fiona Bruce, Krishnan Guru-Murthy, Adam Fleming, Carole Cadwalladr and others are doing a great job holding the powerful to account in the media.

We marked the death of Queen Elizabeth II earlier this month with a service in the chapel and the flag at half-mast. I took part in the Oxford Proclamation of the new King, only briefly interrupted by a heckle from a bystander reminding the crowds of the visits of his royal namesake to Oxford. Toby Barnard has meanwhile reminded me that Charles III came to Hertford in 1983, lunching in the Old Hall with Geoffrey Warnock and the then Chancellor, Harold MacMillan. The new King is well supported by his Deputy Private Secretary, Chris Fitzgerald (a Hertford alum).



Keep looking out for Hertford content. You can hear [David Dwan on Orwell on In Our Time](#). Catherine Harvey talks about her new Radio 4 series on the Dialect Poets [here](#). The new [Oxford Handbook on Digital Ethics](#) is edited by Carissa Veliz. You can learn more about the fascinating work of our new Biology Fellow, Beth Mortimer [here](#). I enjoyed [Winchelsea and The Poet](#) over the break, written by Hertford alums Alex Preston and Louisa Reid. Mike Wooldridge continues to [reassure us](#) all (sort of) about Artificial Intelligence. [Here](#) are our students explaining what Hertford means to them. Congratulations to Dawid Kielak on the [Whitehead Prize](#), to Mark Potts for coming top of the University in Master of Mathematical and Theoretical Physics, to alum Moazzam Malik on his [appointment as Managing Director for Global Delivery](#), and to Louise Slater on her [AGU Early Career Award](#). Congratulations of a different kind are in order for E&M alumni Riya Grover (2006) and Eamon Jubbaw (2010) on the [success of their recent funding round](#) for their new venture, Sequence.

It was great to welcome back two packed and exuberant gaudies from the early 90s this month, perilously close to my own year group. This weekend we hosted several generations of geographers, obviously avoiding any obvious references to colouring crayons, and three decades of our archaeologists and anthropologists. Thanks to those who filled in the alumni survey – we'll be using your feedback to inform our events and engagement over the next year and beyond. Don't hesitate to contact the Development Office if you have any further thoughts or suggestions, or if you'd like to come and stay. Alumni can also support students through our [HertNet platform](#), which connects current students and recent graduates with those working in their chosen fields and helps give an idea of where your career might take you. [link to video on our Bridge Blog]. Do join us at our [London drinks event on 30 November](#) and look out for invitations for further events. Pro Principal and Fellow Librarian Emma Smith and Development Director Frances Where are greatly enjoyed meeting US alumni in June. Covid kept me off the plane, but I look forward to getting across soon.



We were sorry to learn of the death of Honorary Fellow Sir Bruce Pattullo, former Chief Executive and Governor of the Royal Bank of Scotland, who read Agriculture at Hertford in 1959. In happier news, we're thrilled to be hosting weddings in the chapel again after many months of COVID disruption. It was a particular pleasure to host the wedding of Naomi and Tom Gray, with the ceremony led by mother of the bride, our Chaplain Mia Smith, alongside Junior Dean Blake Trimble. A true Hertford family affair. We also think that we hosted the final wedding of Queen Elizabeth's reign, with the vows exchanged moments before the announcement.

As ever we'll be hosting many other visitors this month. The Chief Executive of the British Red Cross (Hertford alum Michael Adamson) and the Governor of Guernsey were here this week. Chancellor Chris Patten is coming, plus many others including Matt Western MP, Krishnan Guru-Murthy, and a group to discuss 'Saving Democracy' (no pressure there). Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai is staying for a week in October to take our new 'Head, Hand and Hertford' course.

This is a period of transition for the University, with Louise Richardson completing her time as Vice Chancellor, and Irene Tracy taking over. Louise has been a great supporter of our various work on Ireland, and we'll host her farewell in November. Irene, a neuroscientist, comes with what we Heads of House see as the vital experience of having been Head of House, albeit at Merton College. Meanwhile I've just started a two-year stint as Vice Chairman of the Conference of Colleges, so my aspiration to a job with fewer committee meetings is still on hold. But it is a good way to become a little better informed about how the University works, and hopefully to make progress on issues that matter to Hertford, including being a better neighbour to the city (and beyond), cycling safety, sustainability, and access.



Louise Richardson



Irene Tracy

Finally, I wanted to mention our new college/student charter. We are making commitments to excellent teaching, support, food and accommodation; to sustainability, diversity, equality and free speech; and to financial support where it is needed. We're asking students for curiosity, commitment to learning; independence and autonomy; an understanding that this is a small, close knit community; and an openness to debate, challenge, feedback. This includes respect for the rights of others to express views with which we may disagree. For all of us (students, tutors, staff, alumni) this is most importantly an opportunity to be part of an extraordinary place with an extraordinary story. We don't expect perfection from each other: being a student (and a human ...) is a journey of discovery, and it is fine to make some mistakes along the way. Our hope is that our new students also feel this is a great place for them; look out for and support each other; develop a passion for learning; make the most of the opportunities here; and leave better prepared for life, work and citizenship. We want them to feel that Hertford is a positive part of their story, as it is for so many of us.



Simpkin, in repose.

I hope that my not-so-subtle references in this update to what just a tiny fraction of Hertford alums are doing is a reminder why all this matters.

All best wishes,

Paul Fletcher