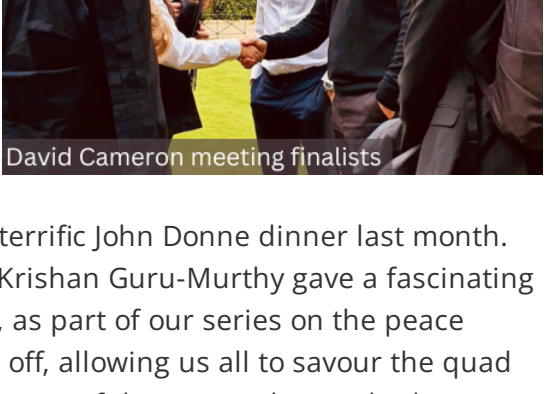




Dear Hertford Community,

There is an exciting and much needed sense of the Oxford season having turned. The sun is glinting off the Rad Cam outside my window. Several tutors are in shades, but – happily – not yet shorts. It is great to see students getting the chance to use the quad, including for a popular JCR lawn party last week, and the sunsets on Port Meadow have been memorable. Hertford of course has its own rituals: Simon, Carl and the team served over 400 May Day brunches on Monday, a new Oxford record. It may be a few more years before our contribution to the festivities fully displaces the choristers of Magdalen, but we are quietly gaining ground. These distractions make it even harder for those approaching exams, but there is an impressive sense of purpose to the finalists as they head to the library. We're all behind them. The finalists received a surprise visit and pep talk from David Cameron last Friday.



Thank you to everyone who joined us for a terrific John Donne dinner last month. Lyse Doucet and Hertford Honorary Fellow Krishan Guru-Murthy gave a fascinating overview of the changing media landscape, as part of our series on the peace processes of the future. The rain then held off, allowing us all to savour the quad before a superb dinner. Such was the eminence of the guests that we had to abandon efforts to have a high table, and instead make the entire hall into one. It has also been excellent to welcome alumni back for the Physics reunion (celebrating Pat Roche in his final year as a Fellow), and a packed and energising 2012/13 Gaudy, including a return of the important pre-lockdown tradition that the evening ends DTB. One particular strand of that which I'm keen to develop through these moments to meet former members is the idea that we can become a community of learners, with lifelong engagement in college life, and an educational opportunity that doesn't end once you graduate.



Closely related to that interchange between alumni and current students, I spent much of the break after Hilary Term leading the 'Head, Hand, Hertford' course. Once again I learnt more than I taught, with a brilliant group of students from across the disciplines and year groups. We had a small shock when one student was briefly hospitalised following a nasty fall onto a spike, shortly but coincidentally after the session on imagining one's own eulogy. This year's speakers included several alumni, who relished the chance to share their experiences after leaving Hertford. The students have asked me to pass on their thanks for their "enlightening lessons and perspectives on life, work, moral integrity and the kinds of people we want to be, which we will carry throughout our lives." Guests included refugees and activists from Sudan and Afghanistan, former Olympians, tech gurus, business leaders, coaches, writers, ethicists, former spy chiefs, UN sherpas and many more.

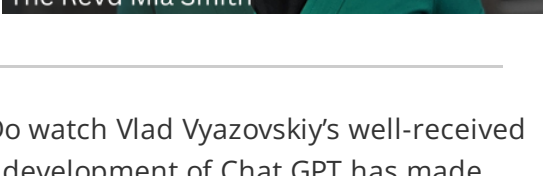
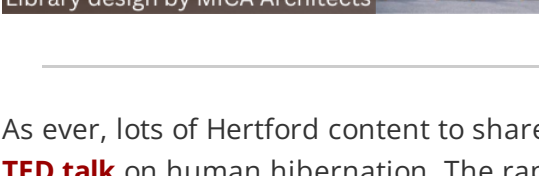


Head, Hand, Hertford participants take part in a session with Athol Williams and Lam Joar

Governing Body has set us an ambitious agenda for the period ahead. This term, Senior Tutor Claire Vallance is leading work on our longer term access strategy, including more work with teachers. Alongside this effort to find the highest potential UK undergrads, I'm delighted that we have launched eight scholarships for graduate students from less advantaged international backgrounds, with thanks to John Doble, and Alex Asseily for their support. GB is also considering how to respond to Charity Commission interest in the way in which Oxford colleges are run, welcoming the chance to ensure the best possible governance. Pro-Principal Emma Smith is leading the library effort, with the initial excavation work imminent. We are also focusing this term on another key Hertford 2030 project: removing finance as a barrier to our students. Watch this space.

Beyond Hertford 2030, Governing Body has created some space for thought about the college and university in 2050. We don't want to be a dining club in a theme park university in an uncertain country in a fragile world. We need to be aware of the opportunities and threats ahead (and technology like Chat GPT is both), but not dazzled by them; and aware of the competition but not defined by it. There are opportunities out there if we hold fast to our values, and to what we do well (including the tutorial); make our expertise much more accessible; double down on the effort to be a frontline for a better society; stay ahead of the way in which assessment and accreditation will change; and give our people freedom and support to experiment and build confidence on emerging platforms.

After seven extraordinary years with us, Revd Mia Smith moves on to the next adventure at the end of this academic year. It is hard to imagine the college without her, and we will be celebrating her later in the term. Do mark your calendar for her final service on 11 June. Alongside her position as Chaplain, Mia has also played a vital role as our welfare lead, and so many students and staff have much for which to thank her. In the next bulletin, I'll share news on how we will ensure that the Chapel continues to thrive, including through the period of OB Quad renovation.



As ever, lots of Hertford content to share. Do watch Vlad Vyazovskiy's well-received [TED talk](#) on human hibernation. The rapid development of Chat GPT has made Mike Wooldridge – and his reassurances that the end of humanity is still a few years away - a national treasure. [Claran Martin](#) continues to play a similarly reassuring media role on cyber threats, including to Eurovision. Emma Smith's radio series 'Taking Issue with Shakespeare' is scheduled for this month on BBC R4. [Here](#) is Emma's latest on the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's First Folio. Linda Speight spoke on flood forecasting for [Earth Day](#). Suzanne Heywood's new book, [Wavewalker](#) is out and she'll join us at the Hertford Festival to discuss it. Laline Paull has now been shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction for her book [Pod](#). You can see my TED talk at Stormont to mark the 25th anniversary to the Good Friday Agreement [here](#), and my BBC series on the battle for liberal democracy [here](#). If you would like to read our Hertford publications online, you can do so on our [website](#).

Congratulations to Mike Wooldridge for his appointment as Chair of AAI-24, one of the leading AI conferences. Also to Honorary Fellow Richard Fisher for receiving the Council for Economic Education's Visionary Award. Two further Honorary Fellows (Krishnan Guru-Murthy and Fiona Bruce) are in contention (with their teams) for BAFTAs. Well done to student Rosalie Chapman for her election as OU Student Union VP for Welfare.

The chapel is the first college chapel to have been awarded a bronze Eco Church award. The Domestic Bursar, the Chaplain, and undergraduate student Nell Mills have been working on the scheme, which encourages churches to express concern for the environment in worship and teaching; in how we look after our buildings and land; in how we engage with the local community and in global campaigns, and in the lifestyles of the congregation.

Plenty of events to come. This week's guest night dinner will mark the Coronation. I've just returned from the sunny Coronation Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, having failed to spot Lionel Richie. Do watch out for my wonderful counterpart at University College, Baroness Valerie Amos, doing the proclamation at the start of the formal service. And best of luck to the King's Private Secretary (and more importantly Hertford alum) Chris Fitzgerald, as he treads the diplomatic minefield of keeping all those Heads of State invitees happy.

Our peace processes of the future series looks next at peace with our local community (led by Ewa Gluza from the Accounts team) and peace with the planet (led by our Heywood Fellow and recently the UK's top climate negotiator, Jonathan Black). Many thanks to Academic Visitor Paul Keim for his fascinating talk on 'peace with our DNA', covering his work on biological weapons threats. You can see his starring role on anthrax in this [Netflix documentary](#). Despite his daily proximity to terrifying substances, Paul has been a popular guest at dinners this year. On the sports pitches, I'm hearing growing confidence on our prospects for Cuppers mixed hockey, where we have emerged as something of a force in the university. The mixed frisbee captains have just ambushed me in the quad to report that we are also among the favourites for that accolade this weekend. Do look at the concert list below from the music society. To avoid any risk of boycotts, the Principal's Recital next week alludes to the host rather than the soloist.

Hertford College Music Society

LUNCHTIME RECITAL SERIES

Every Wednesday • 1.10pm • Hertford College Chapel

Week 1	Kaitlyn Bennett (piano)
Week 2	Lucie Tenet (trinet) accompanied by Matthew Crompter
Week 3	Matthew Eldridge (trinet) accompanied by Matthew Crompter
Week 4	Orlando Grant (piano) 1.10pm
Week 5	Leo Yablans (saxophone) & Owen Chan (organ)
Week 6	Oliver Swordest (trinet) accompanied by Skye Lisset

Snipe for more!

Hertford College Music Society

LUNCHTIME RECITAL SERIES

Every Wednesday • 1.10pm • Hertford College Chapel

Week 7	Will Jeys (piano)
Week 8	Maria Copley (trinet) & Eleonora Sarvidou (trinet) accompanied by Victor Wang

Plus...

The ALC is back!

More performers, more
entertainment and a very chilled
after-dinner "TBC" - more info
to sign up to our list!

ALC PRESENTS
CONCERT

HCMS Principal's Recital

2nd Week • Tue 9th May
6pm • Principal's Lodgings

6, the very best of Hertford's talent and
followed by the 1st HCMS Festival!

HCMS Trinity Term Concert

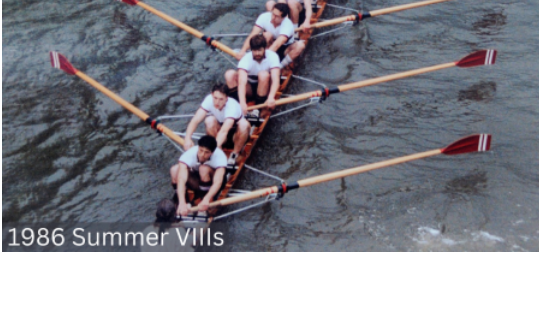
6th Week • Sat 3rd June • 7.30pm • Hilarywell Music Rooms • Free entry

6, more from Oxfords, just head to Chapel

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Our annual summer celebration on the river is also ahead, following the triumph of our recent blades in Torpids. On Saturday 27 May, we are pleased to welcome current and former Boat Club members for brunch in Hall, followed by riverside viewing open to all at Hertford's Boat House from midday. We will also remember the lives of former members Paul Gleeson and Huw Peach with an evening drinks reception and black-tie dinner at Hertford for Boat Club members and guests. In June we welcome the S30, the chief sustainability officers from thirty of the largest global companies. We are also inviting our younger alumni body (post 2007) to a drinks and networking event in London on 15 June.

We're very excited that plans are coming together for the [Hertford Festival](#) on 1-2 July. With topics ranging from literature and history to journalism and data science, we hope everyone finds something of interest. Guest speakers include Honorary Fellow Fiona Bruce, Peter Frankopan, and Sarah Brown. Saturday's programme will finish with a special Festival Dinner, joined by our speakers and others (including actor Kyle MacLachlan) and on Sunday alumni and their families are invited for breakfast in Hall followed by a Hertford special edition of University Challenge. We are working hard on the questions for the star alumni and student teams. In the afternoon we will move to our sports ground for a family day and a football tournament in memory of Kenny Lewis. Tickets are now on sale, and the full programme is available on the [festival website](#).



Our two-week telethon drew to a close at the end of March. Our student callers enjoyed speaking with alumni and gained some valuable advice for life post-Hertford. This year was one of our most successful campaigns, raising over £200,000. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who donated and to more than 300 of you who gave time to speak with the students. Our alumni were a crucial part of setting the Hertford 2030 objectives, and are equally important to delivering them. Several alumni have said to me that we should be clearer on the fundraising ask. So, apologies in advance if you feel you have been asked enough, but the place where we most need your help right now is the library. This campaign will be a real community effort, and you can find out how to be part of it [here](#). Do contact the [Development Office](#) if you would like to update your contact preferences.

Finally, we are reviewing college communications this term, having welcomed Sophie Carp as our new Comms Officer. Do [let her know](#) if you have feedback or suggestions, including on these bulletins (too many? too few? too much informality on optimism? too little? Etc). We want all members of the Hertford community (alumni, students, tutors, staff) to feel closely involved, but not overwhelmed by communication. As part of this, do let me know if you have ideas for our speaker series next year.

I hope that you are thriving.

All best,

Tom

Tom Fletcher