



Dear Hertford Community,

I write to you from the flight home from Asia, where I have greatly enjoyed time with our Singapore and Hong Kong alumni. It is superb to see the breadth of Hertford impact, across business, academia, government, civil society and much more. Thanks to everyone who joined us, and to alumna Pauline Yeung for projecting a Hertford welcome onto the Hong Kong skyline.



Meanwhile, Trinity Term is well underway. The Music Society held their Spring Concert earlier this week. We also hosted our popular (and record breaking) May Day public breakfast. A Hertford team will be joining the **70th anniversary celebrations of the Bannister Mile** on 6 May, and several of us will be attempting several slower miles at the Town and Gown 10K on 12 May. The irrepressible Will Hutton will be back on 9 May as part of the **launch of his new book** *This Time No Mistakes - How to Remake Britain*. Practising and aspiring lawyers should look out for our latest **online careers event** for students and recent alumni on 15 May, and an **in person gathering for alumni** on how to be human in the legal profession in London on 20 June.

Later in term, Hertford alum (and now Head of NATO in Europe and Asia) Admiral Stuart Munsch is hosting an event here on 16 May. William Hague will speak before Guest Night on 23 May. We also have visits from the head of UK pandemic preparedness (the college needs him to do a top job), and the President of Latvia. **Summer Eights** is 25 May, with Simon Robinson's team once again hosting the celebrations at the most energetic boathouse on the river (as well as the Boat Club Dinner in Hall after). **Young alumni London drinks** are happening on 6 June. We'll host our second Pride breakfast on 8 June, with university and city leadership joining us. We hope to make it an annual tradition. Later that day, the Hertford cricket team (led by Rosie Wilson) will take on my XI, with nine - yes, nine - spaces still available for courageous alumni and tutors on my team. Do please hold the date for a spectacular 13 June event we are holding at The Sheldonian, with Kate Raworth, Kim Stanley Robinson, Laline Paull and other inspiring speakers: more details to follow.



One of the highlights of my job is leading the 'Head, Hand, Hertford' course each spring. Over two weeks we discussed purpose, communications, curiosity, leadership and much more, among an excellent group of students and visiting speakers. Filipa Paes has a better **summary here**. Several headteachers joined us, curious to participate in the discussions of the future of education. One exercise involved preparing me for a BBC R4 interview with only minutes of notice. As ever, I learnt much more than I taught.

Congratulations to Professor Sid Parameswaran for [winning a prestigious ERC Consolidator Grant](#) to deepen his team's research in moiré structures. The library team were [nominated for a VC's award](#) for their vital work in maintaining access to the library while we prepare to start its transformation. Music tutor Oliver Chandler won the [inaugural Adele Katz music prize](#) for early career researchers. Congratulations too to Honorary Fellow Soweto Kinch on his [new jazz programme](#) on Radio 3.

Governing Body has another busy term ahead, including deliberations over strengthening governance (alongside our meeting with the Charity Commission in late May); ensuring our size and shape is genuinely sustainable; and ambitious estate plans. We were sad to mark the death of Hertford alumnus Daniel Dennett, one of the most significant figures in modern philosophy and AI. [More here](#) on his life and work.



Over the Easter break, 'Reeling for Ukraine' raised money to rebuild homes damaged in the conflict. Of course, this term also takes place against the backdrop of the Israel/Gaza war. I have been trying to argue in the media for diplomacy and de-escalation. The Oxford Diplomacy Society just held its annual dinner here, with much discussion of how the next generation of policy makers can contribute to a more peaceful world. I was also involved over the break in the launch of a [new report on the future of UK foreign policy](#), in response to which a Times columnist suggested that universities had become places that ideas go to die. In my experience here that could not be further from the truth.

Three updates and requests for alumni. [Do let us know](#) if you are aware of others who would like to receive these blasts of propaganda and news. For those who graduated in the last ten years, please do consider [joining Hertford10](#). For £3 a month, benefits include: reduced ticket prices to Hertford events, exclusive events invitations, a termly newsletter containing college updates and tips for young professionals, and donor board recognition. Membership costs support current Hertford students and matched funding means your membership donation will be doubled. Finally, many of you have told us we should be pushing harder for legacies. With this year marking the 150th anniversary of the refoundation of Hertford College, leaving a legacy is a meaningful way to contribute to the college's future, helping to secure this incomparable institution for another 150 years and beyond. Please [contact the Development Office](#) or [visit Hertford's website](#) for more information on tax-efficient legacy giving, legator benefits, and words from others who have remembered the college in their will.

You will also have seen that Chancellor Chris Patten is standing down this Summer. He has been a great supporter of, and regular visitor to, Hertford, and will be greatly missed. I joined him for his last public appearance as Chancellor, and put together a tribute video with contributions from six Prime Ministers and others. The plan is that voting for his successor will take place – online for the first time – through June and July. You may have read in the media that the process has been stitched up – in a surfeit of wokery – to exclude politicians. Not true. Perhaps if there are volunteers for the role out there this could be Hertford's time? Either way, it would be good to make our collective voice count in the election. Alumni for whom the university have email addresses will receive personalised links to register. Those located in the UK, but who have not provided email addresses, will receive a notice by post with directions to register online. There will also be a public voter registration form which will aim to capture anyone for whom we have no contact details, or who have only provided an overseas postal address. Remember that you need to have your degree conferred to vote. There will be extra *in absentia* degree ceremonies set up for those anxious not to miss out. Do get in touch if you have not yet got round to graduating.



And finally a distant Hertford cellar master laid down several bottles of 1927 port, which we have been advised to drink this Summer. Do contact current cellar master **[Simon Brewster](#)** if you would like to purchase one, perhaps for a big event or Gaudy. The experts tell us that some will be magnificent, and some undrinkable. It will be fun to find out. We have also recently discovered a stash (if that is the correct collective noun) of Hertford crested chamber pots from the same era if anyone would like to purchase an even more striking gift.

I wish you all the very best for the weeks ahead.

All best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul Fletcher'.



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