



Dear Hertford Community,

It is somehow the last day of term, and somehow the end of another packed academic year at Hertford. There is pride, relief, and a bit of exhaustion.

Today we are saying farewell to our finalists. This is always one of the hardest of our rites of passage. We have shared in their journey, taken pride in their achievements, worried when they stumbled. They are an incredible group, and it has been a privilege to see them grow. We all look forward to seeing what they do next, and to welcoming them home in the future. Being part of Hertford doesn't stop when you finish your studies. This is base camp.



For our Summer BBQ in the Quad today, we had organised nominations from staff, tutors and students of people who embodied Hertford. Over 100 proposals came in, as students recognised favourite porters, tutors, catering staff and scouts, and

staff picked out the colleagues and students that make this community. Some anonymised quotes give you a flavour ...

"The Gold standard of IT support! Will take time to fix problems, however trivial (often PEBKAC – Problem Exists Between Keyboard and Chair)."

"During challenging times, she has been a pillar of support, providing not only academic guidance but emotional reassurance."

"An absolute lifeline this year. He embodies the ideal tutor and Hertfordian: approachable, down-to-earth, dedicated, highly knowledgeable, and exceptional in pastoral care."

"Despite losing his Mum last year, he is always a kind presence at Hertford. He has a smile for everyone. His Mum would be incredibly proud."

"An absolute Pillar, Rock, the foundation of everything good that happens in the kitchen. A hero of catering!"

"Straddling the roles of therapist, surrogate mother, and defender of anyone in need, truly one of the unsung heroes of Hertford. She is always self-effacing and modest, but her kindness, sense of humour and tea selection are unmatched, and she is eternally patient with the emotional ravages we present her with each day."

"Her tutorials strike a perfect balance between challenging and reassuring, intense yet light and fun as well. No matter how rough a subject may have been, every week I have walked out of her office with a smile. Hertford prides itself on combining friendliness and excellence, and she is a perfect example of that; demanding, awe-inspiring, extraordinarily kind and encouraging."

"She is someone I am always happy to see on duty in the lodge: I think she is nicely indulgent and fond of our students while keeping a close, no-nonsense eye on them. I like her friendliness and am very proud to have her as the first face of Hertford for visitors."

"She perfectly represents the Hertford mentality in that I've never met anyone so open-minded, so mature, and who always engages in conversation to try to

understand the opinion of others, however far removed from her own it may be. A true model of resilience, courage, and humanity, raising awareness for the situation in her country of Ukraine, which has enabled me to keep faith in humanity.”

“She genuinely saved my life. I cannot understate my gratitude for everything she's done for me.”

“One of the most positive, inclusive and passionate members of the college. He's a very kind and genuinely very curious person who always makes you think of new things or re-perceive things in a different light. I think he's part of what makes Hertford so special.”

I could not agree more. Those thousands of interactions; these hundreds of people; the work we do and the way we do it: seen and valued.

Of course, college life will barely pause as we shift into summer mode, umbrellas at the ready. International programmes will start to arrive, we have [Open Days on 26 & 27th June](#) (all welcome), and the spades go into the quad in early July, as the new library starts to become reality. The team are also busy planning events to mark the 50th anniversary of the arrival of women undergraduates, and the 150th anniversary of our refoundation. Alice in the library has asked me to remind students that we can post you books over the break.



As I write we are still drawing breath after a sensational two days launching the [Oxford Ministry for the Future](#), with cli-fi author Kim Stanley Robinson, Doughnut

economist Kate Raworth, alumna Laline Paull, and cross discipline climate academics from across the University. This was a chance to challenge ourselves to think more boldly and imaginatively about our role in tackling the climate emergency. The video of the main Sheldonian event will be available soon. Huge thanks to Professor Anette Mikes for having conceived, curated, and energised this work. I have particularly enjoyed hearing from our academics about how their work – from using AI to map the world’s water to enlisting beavers to cope with flooding to inventing new ways to organise a carbon economy – is making a practical difference. It was also great that our students and alumni were at the heart of the discussions, plus sustainability officers from business.



We have had plenty of other visitors this term, including William Hague, Will Hutton launching his powerful new book, ‘This Time No Mistakes’, alumnus Stuart Munsch (now running NATO Europe), and the President of Latvia. I’ll be doing a Q&A with Rory Stewart on 19 June at the New Theatre.

For the second year, we celebrated Pride with breakfast in the quad and handed out over 1,000 rainbow ice creams in Catte Street. I learnt from students that my music taste is ‘heritage gay’.

Summer Vills were superb once again. Thanks to all the alumni, tutors, staff and students who once again made the boathouse the liveliest on the river. I’ve just seen the Blades that will be awarded to our M2 boat, for the second year running. We are running out of walls to chalk: a great problem to have. Hertford are also [mixed lacrosse champions](#) for the first time in our history, and doing brilliantly in so many other sports.



At the end of May we said goodbye and a warm thank you to Frances Wheare as Development Director. Fran took over in the depths of lockdowns, a tough time to be asking for the money we vitally need. Among her many achievements were to increase the overall number of our donors by 20%, and to get the library campaign underway. Looking ahead, we have restructured the team, to separate alumni engagement/events and communications from fundraising. I am also delighted that [Professor Mike Wooldridge](#) has agreed to be Fellow for Development, providing real heft to the next phase of the effort to get ourselves onto a long term sustainable financial footing. The next two years are crucial.

I wrote in the last Bulletin about our useful interactions with the Charity Commission over governance. This has been a major focus of Governing Body's work this term, culminating in a very productive meeting with the Commission in May. We are making changes to the way we seek external and independent advice on risk, remuneration and audit. Thanks to alumnus Ciaran Martin for his help in our effort to ensure the most robust possible systems of governance.

You may have seen media coverage of Gaza protests in Oxford. At Hertford we have spent much of the term discussing practical ways we can support academics whose universities have been destroyed. Across our community there are strong views, and we have tried to listen and learn from each other. All common rooms have been firm in their rejection of antisemitism and islamophobia. As Deputy Chair of Conference, I've been part of the effort to ensure our core business of teaching and research can continue, and that the right to lawful protest is

protected. The college doesn't take positions on political issues, but you can follow in the media my personal views on the importance of a durable ceasefire and protection of civilians. Following debate with the students we have updated our ethical investment principles, and reviewed our portfolio to ensure that our investments do not breach our commitments on international law.



Last week Governing Body elected Athol Williams to an [Honorary Fellowship](#). Athol is an extraordinary human – business leader, poet, ethicist, whistle blower and much more. We are very proud to have this association.

Congratulations to ... Students Iseult De Mallet Burgess for receiving the Oxford-BNU creative writing award, and Vit Ruzicka for being invited to speak at the inaugural TED AI Conference in Vienna this autumn; IT Officer Danish Raza on his MSc in Computer Science for Cybersecurity; and porter Franklin Nartey on his MPhil in Industrial and Organisation Psychology from the University of Ghana. Professor Bjarke Frellesvig has published a [Handbook of Historical Japanese Linguistics](#), Dr Jieun Kiaer is [organising a K-pop extravaganza at the Sheldonian](#), and Dr Federica Romei is about to address the world's top central bankers. Alum and former Obama adviser R. David Edelman has just published '[Rethinking Cyber Warfare](#)'.

Thanks to young alumni for a high energy London gathering last week. [Alumni lawyers gather next week](#), with a great panel. I'm looking forward to welcoming home the [1980-82](#) and [2004-5](#) Gaudies in September.

A quick plug for [HertNet](#), our mentoring network where alumni and students can connect for career advice. If you would like to be a point of contact for students or would like to get in touch with alumni offering advice, please contact the [Development Office](#). And a reminder that Hertford alumni who wish to host a private dinner in Oxford are able to do so at Hertford in the Old Hall (for 35 people) or Lower SCR (for 18 people). Please do get in touch with the [Events Office](#) to discuss your plans. Meanwhile, the Hertford Magazine and Donor Report are about to hit doormats. If you have any news you'd like us to include in the next Magazine, please contact our [Communications Officer](#).

A last word to thank Chris Patten for all he has done as Chancellor and beyond. It was fun to pull together tributes from seven Prime Ministers and many others for our Sheldonian event. Such a wise, humane and far-sighted force. Voting for his successor starts in the autumn, so keep a continued eye on our high table guests.

All very best wishes,



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