



*Dear Hertford Community,*

The first three decades of my time at Hertford end today. Below is a video with some parting thoughts, including a shameless photo op in the digger which works at such volume outside my office.

Thank you for the chance to be a small part of your story. Thank you to the staff, an extraordinary team whose thousands of actions add up to a community. To the alumni, our fourth common room, who remind us where we have come from. To our academics, whose research and teaching is at the heart of all we do. And most of all to our students, who are the reason we do it.

**Professor Pat Roche** takes over as Interim Principal, and brings experience, wisdom, compassion and - most importantly - a love of Hertford. We are fortunate to have his readiness to serve your project. I know you will give him every support.



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Congratulations to our **new Honorary and Visiting Fellows**: writers Elif Shafak and Laline Paull, businesswomen Pip Holland and Marian Bell, theatre producer Kate McGrath, and civil servant Lucy Smith. In the 50th year since the arrival of female students we have new Honorary Fellows from the first three decades of that transformation. Our excellent six part speaker series to mark the 50th is well underway; all are welcome to the next instalment on **28 November**.

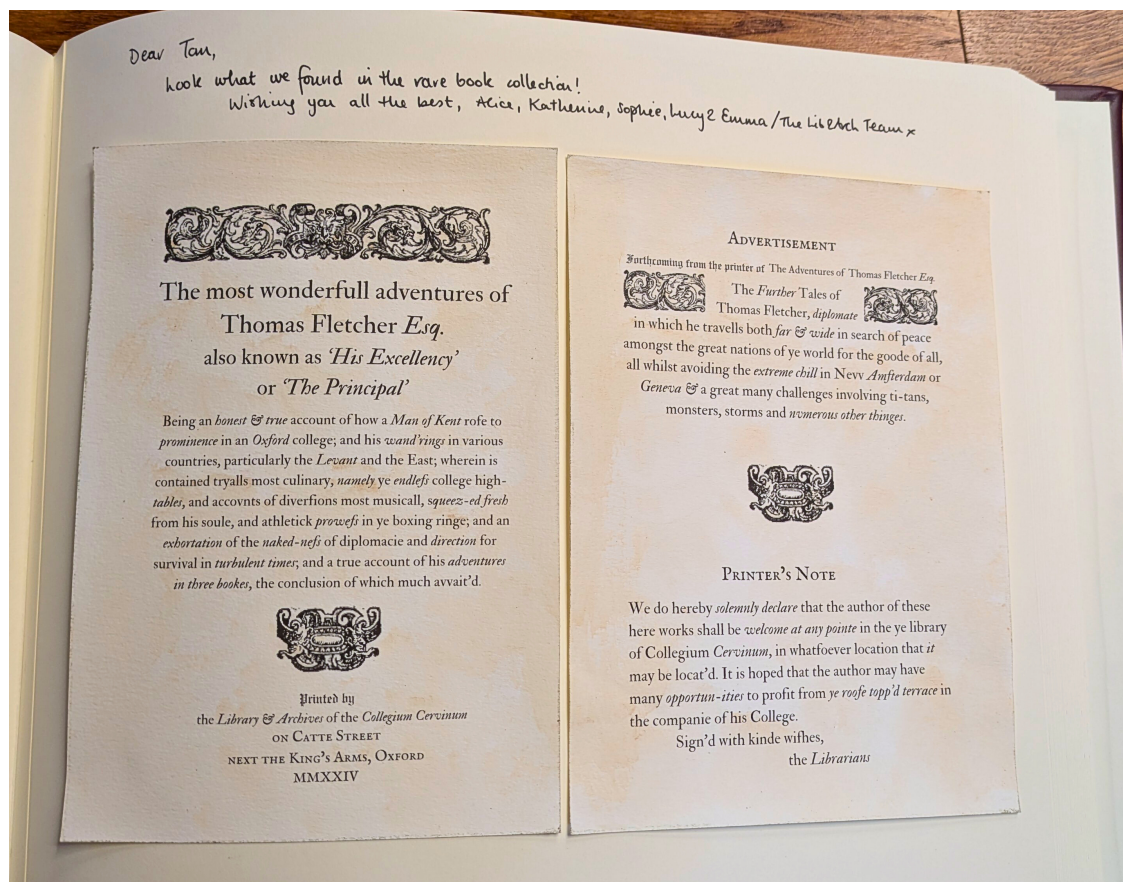
Don't forget to vote in the Autumn election that really matters - for Oxford's next Chancellor: all the remaining candidates have spent time at Hertford and will support our future.

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I applied to Hertford as a student not because I knew then what I know now about this special place, but because it was at the top of the second page on the Oxford prospectus. If the font had been smaller, I might have ended up at Jesus. My neighbour in NB3 was Steve New, now the ever patient Senior Fellow who has steered us through this transition. There were noise complaints, but he normally piped down after a visit from the porters.

I applied to Hertford as a Principal because I knew by then how special we are. Being Principal is very like being a history student in the '90s - too many dinners, missing deadlines, passing predecessors' work off as your own, the occasional all-nighter, not enough money ... and Professor Tyerman telling you you're wrong. I have loved it all as much the second time round.

This has been an emotional week. I struggled to hold it together as the students sang the Sound of Music farewell at the end of Sunday's dinner, and presented me with my very own Hertford puffer jacket at a surprise gathering on Tuesday. I'm not sure the Fletcher masks will catch on, nor the edible images on the cakes at the staff party, but JCR President Eimaan Fatima's parody speech was painfully accurate. I will truly treasure my book of messages from the community. And I look forward to giving the Fellows a gift that reminds them of the elusive quest for short meetings.



I hope that Hertford retains its unpretentious mischief; boisterous encouragement of the collision of ideas and argument; and unapologetic commitment to access, sustainability and opportunity. The library, grad centre, roof terrace, and café will be transformational. I'm grateful to everyone who has made this our best fundraising year, and got the balance sheet in its most resilient ever shape. We

cannot falter in the endeavour to secure what we do for future generations - my [final ask](#) of alumni is to get our overall donor numbers above 1,000.

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I've often said in these bulletins that education is upstream diplomacy. When one Fellow asked me at my interview panel if I had any experience of negotiation, I mentioned some of the rogues with whom I had dealt as a diplomat. He suggested the Governing Body would be much harder. I will take the experience back to the comparatively gentle work ahead.

One of the great privileges of this job is seeing how the Gaudies change over time: competitiveness and social anxiety give way to a sentimental nostalgia and a sense of just being glad to be here. A sense that all we must do is pass it on. As I let go, too soon, not yet house trained, and with much left undone, I hope to reach that state of serenity. In any case, I've learnt that if you think you understand Oxford, you haven't understood the question.

The most useful thing a Principal can do is to help set the tone. So enough sentimentality, [here](#) is a playlist that has helped me in these final weeks.

Barring last minute calamity, the cat outlasted me.

*Warmest wishes,*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'P. B.', written in a cursive style.