

Annual General Meeting of the Hertford Society – 13 September 2025

Chairman's Report

President, ladies and gentlemen

Since our AGM over a year ago, the Society has continued its efforts to support Hertford: by helping to strengthen ties with past and present students; and by giving financial support to a variety of College projects.

The Committee held its end of year meeting last November, at the Oxford & Cambridge Club. Each year we give some money to both the JCR and MCR to support their respective Freshers' Weeks and we agreed to donate £1,000 to each. Simpkin received the usual £250 for his upkeep.

An important part of our role is to pay for selected small scale College projects and contribute towards larger ones.

We discussed how we might recognize Tom Fletcher's services to the College and his support of the Hertford Society, and we decided to contribute £1,500 to one bursary for an undergraduate in need of support. I reported that I had received a letter of thanks from both Tom Fletcher and Pat Roche expressing the College's gratitude for recent donations, totalling £4,250.

It was agreed in principle to sponsor an item in the new Library. I can report now that the Committee, at its meeting today, agreed to donate £5,000 to name one of the larger tables in the new College library and asked the College to add a plaque to the table marking the Society's donation.

In February of this year, we held a Committee meeting at the RAF Club. Among other business, we discussed the suggestion by former Principal, Sir Walter Bodmer, that students at the College and those who had recently gone down should be given free membership of the Society. The Committee recognized the attractiveness of this suggestion but considered that the introduction of free membership along these lines so soon after students and recent alumni had been offered a reduced annual subscription to the Society of £10 would potentially be confusing and add to the administrative burden of the

Development Office. It was agreed to keep Sir Walter's suggestion in mind but not to proceed with it at present.

It was reported that Angela Fane had resigned from the Committee. The Committee expressed its gratitude for her many years of service and commitment, and the hope that she might continue to be responsible for the Society scarves.

After the meeting, we held our Annual Committee Dinner which was attended as our guests by Digby Gough-Boyack (President of the JCR) and Filipa Paes (President of the MCR). Also at the dinner were our former Treasurer Stephen Kinsey and our former President Roger Westbrook CMG.

In July this year, we once again held a reunion drinks and canapé party for recent Hertford leavers, at the Oxford & Cambridge Club. This event, for JCR and MCR members who have left the College in the last three years, was planned, organized and given generous financial support by our Committee member Bob Smith who had conceived the idea. We are grateful to him and to the Development Office for making this successful evening happen. We believe it is so important for the Society to reach out in this and other ways to Hertford alumni and we hope to maintain contacts with many of them in the future. Pat Roche spoke at the event, outlining recent developments at the College and its ambitious plans for the future.

Another Society event which is being reprised is our House of Lords Tea, to be held on Thursday 23 October, the second in three years. The tea, again kindly sponsored by our President, Lord Pannick KC, has proved a spectacular sell-out and once again there is a waiting list. Chris Mockler, our Membership Secretary, is the genius behind these teas in the Upper House and for this we are more than grateful.

Having restored the World War II memorial outside the Chapel, we are looking into renovating and conserving the Annunciation carvings on the Octagon above the door in Cattle Street. An expert from the College's heritage consultants will establish the best approach and recommend who should be taken on for any work. Liaison will be maintained where necessary with English Heritage.

We are working very closely with Simon Lerwill, the Interim Director of Development, to strengthen and develop the Society's contribution to alumni

relations. We are pleased that Simon will be speaking at the House of Lords Tea. We also look forward to meeting the new Principal once appointed.

The number of Society members has been increasing, which is encouraging. It seems that our policy of offering members of the Society discounted tickets to our social events is persuading alumni to sign up.

The Hertford Society Committee, our governing body, will be strengthened by the election today of five new members, adding welcome new blood to our management. The proposed new elected members of the Committee are Nick Graves (1974 Chemistry), Rosalind Atkins (1975 Medicine), Julian Soper (1982 Physiological Sciences), George Panagopolous (1995 Law) and Daniel Villar (2016 Zoology at Wadham; joined Hertford in 2020.)

I am going to end by giving special thanks to my fellow Society officers: our Secretary Graham Jones, Membership Secretary Chris Mockler and Treasurer Steven Hubbard. They work hard and cheerfully to make the Society function. And I also want to thank the Development Office, and in particular Georgia Weir, for all their help and work on our behalf.