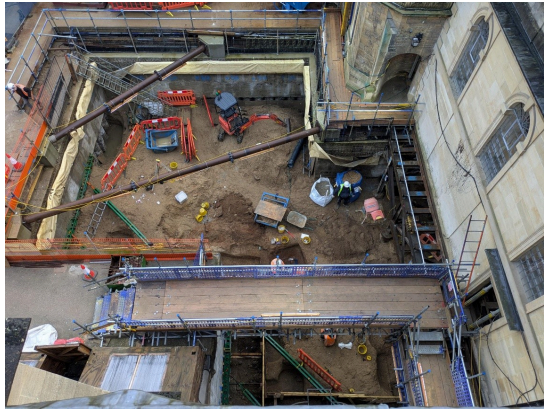


Dear Hertford Community,

Following on from the quiet of the Christmas break, Hertford College has come back to life. Our students, staff and academics have returned to a cool, drizzly Oxford, while our prospective undergraduates for this October's intake have received letters revealing the outcome of their applications. Meanwhile, the admissions exercise for graduate students is ramping up, ensuring there is little respite for Alfie, Emma and other members of the Academic Office.

Work on the library development has restarted after a brief pause, with the contractors battling some very poor weather. Ongoing discoveries from the medieval period of the Catte Street site are being examined and recorded by Oxford Archaeology, who are now working in the excavations below the Old Chapel, coordinating with the underpinning works to complete their investigations. Once the remaining corners have been excavated, we will have a better idea of the schedule for completion (anticipated in the summer of 2027) and the opening of our beautiful new library facilities.



It is a deep pleasure to celebrate new achievements by our fellows. **Fernanda Duarte** has been awarded a European Research Council Consolidator Grant to support the work of her Chemistry research group in using AI to develop innovative molecular modelling. This project aims to speed up the design of new molecules with tailored properties offering potential uses in, for example, drug development and reaction catalysis. A Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship has been awarded to **Emma Smith** to allow her to concentrate on her research investigating 'Imperial bibliography: books, race and value', in which she will explore the overlap of marks used to indicate book ownership with other indicators of possession.

These awards add to the success of our academics in securing funding to support their research against stiff competition from other institutions in the UK and beyond. Fellows of Hertford College currently hold four ERC grants and three Leverhulme Research Fellowships. This recognition of the quality of their research, together with many other awards, at a time when universities are under such financial pressure, is an outstanding testament to the leadership and impact of our fellowship.

We are delighted to welcome our new Professor of Geography **Bob Hilton** as a fellow of Hertford. Fresh from St Peter's College and the Department of Earth Sciences, Bob will continue our strong geographical presence, working on the carbon cycle with research programmes in northern region water systems.



Hilary term is getting underway with a mix of standard and special events:

Nowhere, commissioned by Visiting Fellow **Kate McGrath**'s production company Fuel Theatre, is being performed by actor and activist Khalid Abdalla at the Oxford Playhouse from 22 to 24 January. The play is based on Abdalla's experience of the Egyptian revolution in 2011 and the counter-revolution that followed.

University Sermons date back to the medieval period and take place, at the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor, at the University Church and college chapels throughout the year. One of these, the Macbride sermon, is hosted in Hertford's chapel. This year, it will be delivered by Professor Louise Lawrence of Exeter University during evensong at 5.45pm on 25 January, accompanied by our wonderful choir.

We are delighted that alumnus, Visiting Fellow and acclaimed film producer and innovator **Anthony Geffen** will return to Hertford on 28 January (Baring Room, 5pm) to discuss the future of immersive education, exploring the use of AI and VR in training and education.



We can also expect the upcoming college dinners, including a Burns Night celebration, Halfway Hall, Scholar's Dinner and Finalists' Fling, to be fine occasions with delicious food and good company. The Darwin Dinner, for recent graduates in Life Sciences, is scheduled for 20 February, and, marking the equinox in style, a Mathematics Reunion Dinner is planned for 21 March, followed by a Gaudy on 28 March for those who matriculated in 1977–79. Other events include an Oxford Ministry for the Future discussion on AI and Big Tech at the Saïd Business School on 10 March, and a dash around Holywell Quad for a pancake race on Shrove Tuesday (17 February).

As our library development passes the halfway point, we will be redoubling our fundraising efforts with a Giving Day on 5 and 6 March, appropriately coinciding with World Book Day. Stay tuned for more information...

Hertford College

GIVING DAY 5-6 MARCH

By that point, I will be engaged in handing over to **Alex Freeman**, who will take up her position as Principal at the end of Hilary term in mid-March.

Wishing you a fulfilling term – and looking forward to the arrival of spring.


Professor Pat Roche, Interim Principal