



Dear Hertford Community,

From my office windows in the West Range of the college, on the one side I look to the outside world: the view of the Radcliffe Camera and the Bodleian, where the only noticeable change is in the leaves of the magnolia tree. On the other side, looking into Hertford, the view is altering radically month by month. The basement of what will be the new library extension is now roofed over, giving a tempting sense of the end being in sight. The reality is that it will be one more year before OB Quad is back and the Lodgings hosting events again, but now that we're building back up rather than digging down it feels as though a corner has been turned.

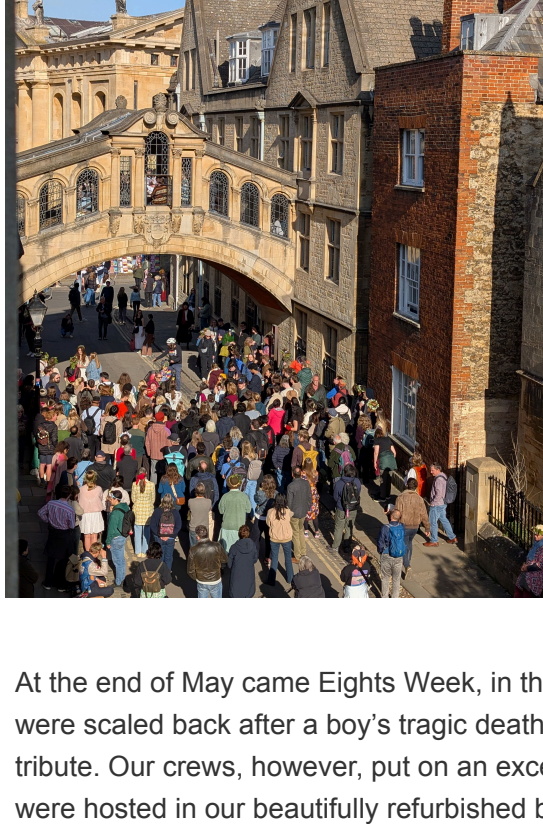


Of course it's not just the building work that makes Hertford feel a busy place. Trinity term has brought the usual whirlwind of events, from April's K-pop event at the new Schwarzman Centre organised by Professor Jieun Kiaer, to June's annual Pride March being greeted with rainbow ice lollies by the catering team and members of the JCR, MCR and SCR as they passed Hertford.

In 2nd week, I attended the final performance in a sold-out run of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* staged by the Mansfield and Hertford Players in Mansfield's beautiful Principal's Gardens. It was produced and directed by second-year undergraduates Richard Morris and Annabelle Higgins – and Annabelle also impressively won the university Shelley-Mills prize for an essay on Shakespeare shortly afterwards. Her tutor, Professor Emma Smith, meanwhile gave the prestigious Shakespeare's Birthday Lecture in Washington DC.



May Day descended upon Hertford with all its usual flamboyant ebullience, and this year the weather was absolutely perfect. Our choir sang to the assembled crowds from the bridge, and a range of different Morris dance sides performed below it. May being the perfect month for ancient rituals, the Beating of the Bounds followed on Ascension Day. Vicars lead a group around their parish boundaries, carrying sticks which are used to beat the boundary stones (or in some traditions, children at the boundary stones!) to help check and remember where the parish boundaries lie. Hertford opens its gates as it hosts the boundaries for the University Church's parish, which are beaten every year.



At the end of May came Eights Week, in the midst of a heatwave. Celebrations this year were scaled back after a boy's tragic death in the river, and all flags were at half mast in tribute. Our crews, however, put on an excellent show, and friends, family and alumni were hosted in our beautifully refurbished boat house, thanks to the generosity of alumnus Martin Dunsby (PPE, 1986). The men's second crew even managed to bump just in front of us all on the final Saturday, to wild adulation. Congratulations to all who rowed.



Congratulations also to Professor Carissa Véliz, tutor in Philosophy, on the release of her new book *Prophecy*, about the power of prediction and AI; to Dr Maria Vincenzi, tutor in Physics, for her New Horizons in Physics prize for building and analysing some of the largest supernova datasets in modern cosmology; to Dr Sam Henry, tutor in Physics and Maths, for his Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics for his work with the Fermilab collaboration that has pushed the boundaries of experimental precision; to Dr Katherine Lunn-Rockliffe, tutor in French, for her Dix-Neuf Prize for her work exploring revolution in the work of Victor Hugo; and double congratulations to Professor Mike Wooldridge, our Professor of Artificial Intelligence! Mike not only released his new book *Life Lessons from Game Theory* but was also made a Fellow of the Royal Society at the end of May.

In June, English undergraduate Hannah Wei and the Hertford librarians curated an exhibition in college illustrating the uses and importance of marginalia in books, based on Hannah's collection which won her the Colin Franklin Prize for Book Collecting from the Bodleian. The exhibition included Hertford's precious annotated first edition of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* and reminds us all how important the carefully climate-controlled archives section of the new library will be in allowing some of our precious collection to be not only preserved, but open to study. We are lucky and proud to have a fantastic library and archives team – Assistant Librarian Katherine Knight not only got a distinction in her recent MA in Library and Information Studies, but is travelling to Bangkok to speak after winning the Association for Information Science and Technology's Best Master's Student Paper Award.



Finally, of course, Trinity term sees Finals exams, and the end of their student days, for many. Almost every night there are Schools' Dinners, and I spent a wonderful evening with those finishing their graduate degrees this summer. I wish all those leaving Hertford this summer the very best as exams finish, results come out, and they form the latest cohort of Hertford alumni.



Alex
Alex Freeman, Principal