

## Dear Hertford Community,

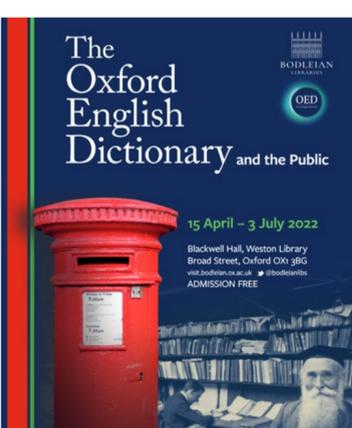
This is shaping up to be an extraordinary term.

We celebrated John Donne's 450th anniversary last weekend with music, food, drink and poetry. Donne arrived at Hertford at the age of just twelve. I recommend Katherine Rundell's accessible biography, *Super-Infinite*, for a lively guide to a fascinating life. A cast of former JCR Presidents took part in this moving rendition of his 'A Lecture Upon the Shadow'.



Ukraine has of course been very much on our minds. The bridge remains [lit yellow and blue](#) and we will be hosting Ukrainian academics displaced by the conflict. Jody Bragger is just back from several weeks in Kiev, and BBC journalist Jeremy Bowen joined us to discuss the conflict. Our new [Porter Diplomacy Centre](#) will seek to offer practical initiatives to support the peace processes of the future.

Congratulations to Hertford fellows Nick Barton and Jieun Kiaer for securing prestigious [Leverhulme humanities research grants](#), and to lecturer Charlie Lee-Potter for picking up a [creative journalism award](#) in Paris. Do look out for Emma Smith's new book (published yesterday), [Portable Magic: A History of Books and Their Readers](#). You can hear Emma talking about her book on [Start the Week](#), or read more in the [FT](#) and [Guardian](#). I'd also recommend a visit to the Weston Library on Broad Street to see a [new exhibition](#) on the Oxford English Dictionary and its first editor's correspondence, co-curated by Charlotte Brewer.



Over the spring break I enjoyed leading a new course - '[Head, Hand and Hertford](#)' - for students on preparation for life, work, and citizenship. Guest speakers included a whistle blower, spy chief, Artificial Intelligence guru, bestselling author, FTSE 100 CEO, education pioneer, Britain's youngest ever black ambassador, Olympic rower and many more. Over the vacation we were also very pleased to host the first [EMPower Oxford residential](#) for Black Year 10s interested in engineering, materials and physics - we're looking forward to supporting this novel access programme as it continues to develop.



The 'EMPower Oxford' group of Year 10s who stayed with us over the vacation

The pace does not look like slowing. Some finalists are already sitting their exams and the Hertford Ball returned on Friday, the first for several years. We enjoyed May Day singing under the bridge at the weekend, followed by 304 Hertford brunches! And this week some of us are looking forward (others more than me, I suspect) to tackling the Town & Gown 10K.

We are hosting a series of great speakers this term, including science fiction writer and climate activist **Kim Stanley Robinson** (14 June - [click here to get an email reminder when booking opens](#)), author **John Kampfner** on Germany, **Shona Jolly QC** on human rights law, **James Hawes** on Tyndale, **Ruth Sherlock** on American politics, **Sigrídur Snaevarr** on Iceland, and **Nik Gowing** on 'Thinking the Unthinkable'. The MCR are also hosting a series of research presentation workshops in the Octagon, which all college members are welcome to attend - [sign up here](#). Hertford College Music Society recitals have also returned to the Chapel - [find this term's programme here](#) and do join them on Wednesdays at 13:10.

We're looking forward to a busy summer of events for alumni too, starting with our usual Summer Vllls celebrations on 28 May and concluding in the autumn with a series of gaudies and subject reunions. We're particularly excited to welcome back our recent graduates for a postponed leavers' BBQ, so do look out for an email with full details of how to book if you missed out over the past few years. I will be travelling to the US in June, visiting Washington, New York, and San Francisco, and I'm excited to meet alumni in these regions.

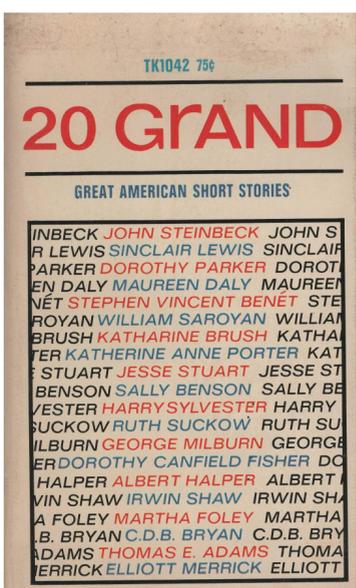
Hertford will be holding our first ever Giving Day on 16-17 June, which will be an opportunity for the college to come together in support of our Hertford 2030 aspirations. There will be plenty of opportunities to get involved, so make sure you keep an eye on our social media and emails for more information.



### From cancer to cosmetics

By Lauren Murrell (Geography, 2006)

[Read More](#)

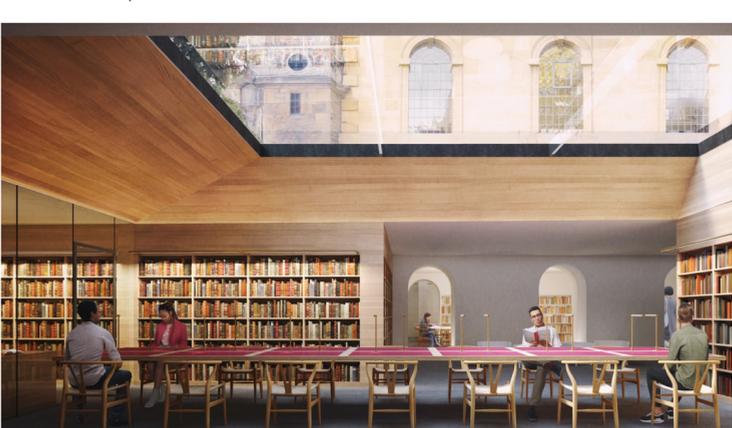


### Why short stories are precious

By John Millard (English, 1985)

[Read More](#)

The centrepiece of our 2030 efforts will be the [library redevelopment campaign](#), launched last month. Do please support us. For more information, contact me, Development Director Frances Wheare, or Fellow Librarian Emma Smith. Given the importance of this project, I'm very grateful that Emma has also agreed to serve as Pro-Principal to help lead it. Meanwhile, the Governing Body has also been discussing (and ideas on access, academic excellence, and reflecting on what the college (and higher education more widely) will be like in 2050. If you can help us work that out, please do!



MICA Architects' plans for the new library reading room below the quad

Like everyone, Hertford is emerging from this period of lockdowns and distance with a mixture of excitement, relief and trepidation. We are trying to make up for time lost, rebuild vital connective tissue, and hold fast to what we have learnt about what matters most. That start with recognition that we are all adjusting at different speeds. Thank you to everyone for being part of this collective effort.

All best wishes,  
Tom

