

# FROM LOCKDOWN WITH LOVE

LINACRE  
COLLEGE

**LINACRE LINES**

**Trinity Term 2020**



# postcards to linacre

## IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

### Front page:

Linacre entrance gate in the sunshine

### This page:

Linacre crest with white shells and open book showing the letters Alpha and Omega

# EDITOR'S NOTE

## Friederike Pank

Dearest Linacre,

what a strange term this has been! With Oxford's streets emptied, the CR abandoned, the garden fallen quiet, it was quite a challenge for many of us to live through Trinity term - and for some, to end their time in Oxford far away from Oxford. I'm all the more grateful for the tremendous efforts made by college staff, the CR Exec, and all other wonderful human beings who lent a helping hand, looked out for, and listened to each other. For it was also a time of keeping up a lively community spirit and it warmed my heart to see, hear, and experience that this community cannot be defeated. THANK YOU, LINACRE for all your support!

This edition is an homage to our community spirit: a compilation of loving greetings from fellow Linacrites who share glimpses of their life in lockdown, express their gratitude for Linacre life, and reflect on the lessons learned from the past few months.

As this is my last edition as Linacre Lines editor, it's time to say THANK YOU once more, to everyone in the College community and the CR Exec for their support and contributions of this year. I profoundly cherished the time with you and leave my post with a weeping and a laughing eye.

I hope this edition brings you joy, wherever you are!

*Friederike*

# First things first ... CONGRATULATIONS!

## Thomas Linacre Studentships 2020

### **Gerardo Montalvo**

For outstanding contributions to College including as Social Secretary, as Welfare Officer, as a Peer Supporter, as a Senior Student and going above and beyond the duties of all of these positions. For going out of his way to make Linacre a safe and supportive home for so many.

For always having a friendly word to say and an open ear to listen to other students' needs and worries. For consistently and compassionately promoting welfare and well-being during this troubling time and making a large effort to make everyone feel supported.

### **Ndjodi Ndeunyema**

For volunteering his time, his compassion, and demonstrating leadership, perseverance, diplomacy, and care in so many different and discreet ways. For embodying the public face which we should all aspire to display as ambassadors of the Linacre community and this University more broadly. For supporting many African and Diaspora students when they need help, and supporting the prison rehabilitation/debate project through the Linacre Africa Network.

For providing a much needed and appreciated voice of legal and principled reason at various forums. For leading the research at the Human Rights Hub and recently co-leading the Rhodes Must Fall movement in Oxford.

**Thanks both of you for all your efforts, engagement, and goodwill.**

**We're proud of you, happy and grateful for having you in our community!**

# 10,000 MILES AWAY

## Simren Sekhon

oh how i miss you! to the community that you are, i can't express enough how important you shall be to me always. as i sit writing this from over 10,000 miles away, i remain so grateful that i was lucky enough be in linacre - and am even more thankful that it is a place i shall continue to call home. sincerely, thank you for being my element of certainty through the world's time of instability, pain and grief. i have always believed that home is where the heart is and that people make a place - a sentiment that you proved to me. i knew this to be true from the day i moved in, when fellow linacrites offered a helping hand with my bags. this was a warmth that carried through to friendly conversations in queues during freshers bbq...the forever iconic sexy subfusc...& forever more!

the common room has been the place of some of my fondest memories in oxford: from every birthday surprise, to so many laughs during cocktail night, to being drawn from the library for pick-me-up chats and games of fooseball! these are times i remember so very fondly and despite having cried over the idea that it may all never be again, there is no community that i have more faith in. from diverse corners of the world, we will continue to come together - virtually, always in spirit & eventually physically, celebrating life as linacre always does! thank you for adding colour (specifically black and yellow) to my understanding of family. i hope linacre means as much to you as it does to me - that it brings a smile to your face and a little warmth to your heart. or you may think i'm being super cheesy - but hey, has there been any other time that has necessitated this much mushy gratitude? i think not xx

lots of linacre love forever & always,

*simren*

# LOVE FOR OLD BRICKS

**Gerardo Montalvo**

Hey there old friend,

It has been such a weird couple of months without you. It may sound silly, but I just miss that feeling of walking through your blue door and bumping into a familiar smile. I miss the warmth of your people, the tranquillity of your back garden on Sunday mornings, and the spontaneous laughs in the Common Room.

Honestly, I miss everything about you. The truth is that you have become more to me than I ever expected to feel towards an old pile of bricks (no offence, I still love your old bricks). You represent a safe space. You are fraternity. Security. Familiarity. You have become a home, to me and many others.

Lots of #LinacreLove,  
Your friend

*Gerardo*

# THE MŒURS OF THE QUAILS

Alexandre Szenicer

Hello Linacre!

I hope lockdown is treating you well.

Oddly, I have truly enjoyed this time of isolation. Even though I cherish the amazing social atmosphere at Linacre, being forcefully removed from it allowed me to focus on new beautiful aspects of this place. Did you know that we have a myriad of birds visiting our backyard, from chunky robins to mischievous magpies, and even a resident duck couple! I have become quite the bird watcher over these last few months. I certainly didn't see it coming, as my impression was that all bird watchers are like my weird uncle Alfred who lives with his mom and wears socks in his sandals. And yet here I am, rocking in the hammock with my morning coffee, studying the mœurs of the quails.

Stay safe everyone, lots of love.

Alex

# FORMALS, BOPS, AND MANY LAUGHS

**Charlie Newton**

Hey Linacre Peeps!

Here in Liverpool wishing I was in Oxford with you guys! Whilst it may not have been the ideal ending to my time as a student with you guys, I loved my time at Linacre and the family vibes! I especially loved the formals, bops and many laughs had in the common room.

I hope everyone is coping as best they can in these crazy and uncertain times, and that the college will be back to its full glory as the best college in Oxford. (I mean, no other college does bops quite like Sexy Sub Fusc.)

Basically, thank you for giving me the best experience for my year in Oxford xxx

*Charlie*

# DOUBLE-SHOT G&T(S)

**Cristiana Tisca**

**Dear fellow Linacre Bar goer,**

It's been a while since we've had our double-shot G&Ts, sometimes Greenall's, occasionally Hendricks, and on under extremely special circumstances Monkey 47. We'd joke around with Claire or Gerardo, sink into one of the CR couches, and just wait for enough people to show up to make it socially acceptable to order another drink on a Monday night.

**Dear fellow Linacre Formal goer,**

Do you miss squeezing into one of your best (and tightest) dresses (oh, how you'd regret that halfway through the cheese course...), putting on your high heels, making it to the CR just in time to have one of the last glasses of Prosecco, talking to some student from Teddy Hall who spends more time playing (and talking about) rugby than doing his DPhil, pretentiously eating your bread and butter while you wait for your miso aubergine (you went for veg with fish, obviously), then ending the night sinking into one of the CR couches, finishing the halfway-empty bottles that you nicked from the tables after dinner?

**Dear fellow Linacre bopper,**

Remember that time we waited way too much in line for SSF, and you ended up losing your bod card in the marquee during the pole dance performance? We took our high heels off sometime at midnight and danced on the sticky dining hall floors, occasionally going for another double-shot G&T, and finally ending the night eating chips and cheese at Hasan's. Oh, don't even remind me of the next-day hangover...

**Dear fellow Linacre ball goer,**

Remember when we were living la vida loca? Or was it la dolce vita? I definitely annoyed everyone with my karaoke singing, and we spent way too much time queuing for the shisha tent. But you really enjoyed the (four, or five, or maybe six) glasses of wine you had, and the post-midnight double-shot G&T(s), the Gatineau croissants and G&D ice cream, and dancing to your own rhythm during silent disco (you actually put my own earphones in because you didn't like any of the channels). We were baffled at sun rise – how did time pass so quickly?!

**Dear fellow Linacre student,**

I could write a very sad paragraph here about lockdown... But I've just spent the last four ones trying to make you nostalgic and happy (and potentially reflect on your fairly unhealthy drinking habits), so I won't do that. I look forward to seeing you at the dining hall, and having coffee at lunchtime, bumping into each other in the library, playing pool, or having (yet another) drink after the CR meeting.

I miss you. See you soon,

*Cristiana*

# THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY

**Hajarah Chaudhry**

To put into words how much I love Linacre would be difficult!

Being away from the fold I realise now, more than ever, the value of the beautiful community of people that made settling into Oxford so much more wonderful. With the BLM campaigns and the additional awareness of bias and discrimination I find myself ever grateful that I joined a college which is, at its very heart, diverse and accepting.

I particularly miss my lovely housemates; I'd do anything for another hastily cooked group dinner in our kitchen.

#BradmoreRoadGangForever <3

*Hajarah*

# A SEASON OF OSCILLATION

**Zahra Didarali**

On some days I feel great, on others I am exhausted – mentally, physically and emotionally. Some days I live in fear and on others, in palpable optimism. This lockdown has been a season of oscillating feelings and emotions, but also, of enforced gratitude that has offered me a chance to pull back from busyness and get clear cognitively, on my weaknesses and soft spots. While I have fallen victim to my doubts on various occasions, I have risen - by leaving my safe harbour of an old way of being, by getting comfortable with things that are not in my control and, by having the courage to set audacious goals. I have also taken this time to audit my values and habits - to ensure integrity and alignment through introspection, prayer, meditation, and yoga.

Oxford has been a wonderful place to be during lockdown. The well-watered parks with their great expanse of green, coupled with the presence of friends from two meters away have maintained my sanity and social skills to some level. Long walks with fellow Linacrites have also been memorable and made me nostalgic of all the fun and random moments spent in the Linacre Common Room. I am most grateful for the serendipitous interactions I have had with different people from Linacre and outside, specifically on the couches in the CR. I miss the Linacre community.

The last thing that has been on my mind is how much I am resisting the idea of going back to normal. Normal is boring, normal is uninspiring and absurd. In a time where we have been forced to change our ways, to pause and dream of better days; how can we long for the same madness that put us into this mess?

Zahra

# GIFTS AND PAIN

**Maya Adams**

To the one who reads this,  
I slipped my toes into the depths of solitude  
that unfurled around me  
as the city shuffled to sleep

and within these depths  
I was embraced by visions  
of myself; apparitions of the  
past and the future  
of ghosts that the shallow wells of my  
mind keep

some brought gifts and  
others brought pain.  
so with the gifts and the pain,  
I built a fortress  
to shield from the storm of the unknown  
that silently bellowed outside

but as seasons shift  
and water flows  
so did time and space  
divide

and here again  
in bubbles and flashes  
are the hesitant sounds of closeness

so I swim from this solitude  
with lessons and gifts  
tied around my waist

almost ready to say hello to this  
new path, future, existence  
that we all knowingly  
or unknowingly  
face.

*Maya*

# IN THE YEAR 2020

Awa Ndiaye



**Link to the video:** <https://vimeo.com/430701819>

Imagine that 50 years from now, your grandchild gets to learn about the year 2020. What story do you think would be told?

For many of us, 2020 has felt quite apocalyptic, at times, but might there be something other than the fear, the anxiety and the injustice? In this poem, I take you on a journey to explore the very real difficulties overshadowing many lives in 2020, but also to look out for any glimpses of hope, before bringing you back inward.

Shout out to my very talented friend, Maya Adams, for the footage.

*Awa*

# THE PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED US

**Melis Karabulutoglu**

I was having my blissful holiday in South Africa with a lovely bunch of people until the 14th of March.... That was the time when reality slapped my face! The virus... the self-isolation fears, the stay-home-policy....

It was such a sudden change to our lifestyles! It was very scary in the beginning, at least for me. I was just confused with the idea of not being outside freely, not going to work, social distancing, lack of travelling and the list goes on and on. We all struggled with dozens of fears. Some of us, left the country and decided to be with our loved ones while some of us stayed here in Oxford.

With social distancing and stay-at-home orders in place, it was easier than ever to feel isolated from the rest of the world. But as the days stretched into weeks, I've decided that the only way to keep up a positive spirit is by making sure the people I care about know exactly how I feel about them.

Truth is, the pandemic has changed us. Some of us loved the idea of slowing down by putting less pressure on ourselves. Some of us started new hobbies, including baking, bread making, gardening, volunteering to help their community, learning to play new instruments and adding daily exercise routines to our lifestyles, or spending more time in nature.

We realised that we've spent years rushing through life, pressuring ourselves to get the right job, attend the right event, even if all that status-chasing was making us miserable. Right now, cities are reopening, lockdowns are lifting slowly... and some people are starting to feel they can gradually glimpse a return. And I am wondering: What is normal? How will things change after lockdown? Although in the beginning we were complaining a lot, the surprise is that many of us have realised there are some things about quarantine life that are worth preserving. We're questioning the very fundamentals of the "normal" we'd all come to accept unthinkingly – and realizing we don't want to go back, not to that.

As anyone who's ever tried a New Year's resolution knows, maintaining new habits is hard. But psychologists who specialize in behaviour change say there are things you can do now to make it more likely that you'll succeed down the line. For instance, you can prime your environment, whether by setting up an automatically recurring monthly donation or putting running shoes by your bed to nudge you to go for that morning run. It's also good to reward yourself each time you engage in the target behaviour – but make it an intrinsic reward, not an extrinsic one. So instead of reaching for a smoothie after every run, pause to savour the extra energy and strength you feel.

But what's important to note that if you don't emerge from this pandemic with any great new habits, that's ABSOLUTELY FINE! Sometimes only surviving is another accomplishment in itself. So, hey, don't put any pressure 😊 We all survived, it was a tough, challenging journey for all of us. The world is a scary place right now anyway, and just living another day is excellent enough.

Little note, being part of Linacre, meeting with amazing beautiful-hearted people from all over the world, organising parties, balls, being part of the Green Society, writing newsletters (my new hobby!! 😊 ), and being part of the Linacre boat club have been great so far!!! Thanks everyone for making this journey very special with all the bits and pieces! I can't wait to have another great (final) year here in Oxford (post-pandemic!)

Wherever you are right now, hope you all have a great summer!!

Mel

# WHAT A TIME!

**Danielle Perro**

Dear Linacre,

What a time the last few months have been.

While of course this time away from the lab, the hustle of a busy city centre, and a pint at the pub has not been without uncertainty, anxieties, and longing, I will look back and remember this time fondly. I will remember developing my love for baking, and even more so, eating those baked creations. I've got a mean cinnamon roll recipe that's been tried (many times) and tested (even more).

I will rejoice in the fact that I've been able to rekindle old friendships with those back in Canada. I will smile when I think about the extra time that I've spent with those I love. All of this said, I will not forget the fears and stress that this lockdown has brought; namely not knowing when I would see family and friends again, and hoping that they were healthy.

Seeing the uncertainty in people's eyes at Tesco, as we try to manoeuvre around each other with caution. Watching the news and feeling a fear and sense of isolation I'd never felt before.

Now more than ever, I've come to realise how important communication really is. Whether it be calling friends from home, saying hi to a neighbour across the street, or using our voices to move forward the Black Lives Matter Movement. It is integral to our relationships, mental health, and enacting change.

After transferring to Linacre last year as a second year DPhil student, I didn't give myself the opportunity for strong lines of communication within the Linacre community. Now, as the incoming Linacre Lines Editor, especially at a time where we are relying on many forms of communication, I couldn't be more excited to join the conversation! I want to learn more about this community, immerse myself, and elevate the voices and stories within it.

While the uncertainty of this time seems to be unwavering, I am certain that this community is one that I can't wait to be a part of.

*Danielle*

**Welcome,  
Danielle!**

Thank you so much  
for taking over the role  
of Linacre Lines editor.

I wish you all the best for the  
work, which I experienced as a  
true joy and inspiration! ENJOY!

# HAPPY SUMMER TO YOU ALL!

**With lots of  
love & sunshine,**

*Friederike*