

The Hertford Literary Festival AT THE HERTFORD CLUB



2025

We continue
to stand
with Ukraine

PROGRAMME

4TH JULY
ECLECTIC FRIDAY

5TH JULY
ALL BOWIE SATURDAY



Welcome To The Hertford Club

The place to relax and unwind in
a peaceful, historic setting



We're delighted to open our doors to the public and welcome you to our club - we hope you enjoy the festival as much as we do. If you are enjoying your surroundings and interested in membership, then do read on.

The Club has a well-stocked bar and cellar, an oak-beamed restaurant with delicious home-made meals served all week, a full-sized snooker table, and two function rooms.

As a member, you can enjoy our well maintained garden and riverside terrace whenever you choose; a peaceful location providing the perfect setting to enjoy time with a friend or colleague.

VISIT WWW.HERTFORD.CLUB FOR MORE INFO

£99
p/year

Membership Benefits



Space To Relax & Socialise



Use Of Garden & Terrace



15% Off Drinks



Homemade Meals All Week



Exclusive Events Schedule



Discounted Venue Hire



Bring A Non-Member



Wifi Access

Pick up a membership form from inside The Club today!

A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

Welcome!

It is my great pleasure once again, to welcome you all to our seventh Literary Festival, which promises to be our most entertaining, enlightening and exciting yet!

The festival commences on Friday 4th July with a truly diverse line-up, ranging from on stage conversations with American actor Michael Brandon and 'Lion of London Bridge' Roy Lerner led by the Club's Rick Mayston to artist/author Darren Coffield and international crime/conflict expert Jack Margolin. Add to all that, lots more hot topics and burning issues and you can see why we are calling it 'Eclectic Friday'!

For the first time this year, we have devoted Saturday entirely to a single theme – The Life and Works of David Bowie, and we are excited to welcome back, Kevin Armstrong, former guitarist with David Bowie, Iggy Pop and countless other rock gods – as well as Suzi Ronson, creator of 'that' haircut, author/Bowie pianist Clifford Slapper and Bowie gurus Simon Goddard and Nick Smart. Finally, we will round off this year in style with a live set of Bowie songs from Kev Saunders' King Angry & The Blackstars and a very special solo set from another Bowie alumnus, our very own Rob Clydesdale, who worked with Bowie on 'The Buddha of Suburbia'.



At the decade's halfway mark, we intensify our focus on the Hertford Club Renaissance 2030 Project, in the firm belief that celebrating and building upon our rich heritage in the present, will ensure that the Club and its growing vibrant community will continue to thrive and flourish in the future. The Literary festival is a key part of that vision for the Club's future. As in previous years the entire event is open to everyone, and admission is free.

I would also like to express the Club's gratitude to the growing list of local, national and now international sponsors, without whose support none of this would be possible. Indeed their presence is proof, if any were needed, of our event's impressive growth and development in just a few years.

Rob Bryan

Chair, The Hertford Club

A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO

OUR 2025 SPONSORS



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Colony Room Green



KEEP THE HERTFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL FREE AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

2026 SPONSORSHIP

Without the support of our sponsors providing funds and donating their time, the Hertford Literary Festival wouldn't happen and we are forever grateful.

If you are a business keen to support community events and reach an engaged, local audience then do get in touch via the website.

hertfordlitfest.co.uk/contact

FOOD & DRINK

Enjoy the Hertford Club's fully stocked bar & home cooked food. Teas, coffees, soft drinks and bar snacks served all day.

The Hertford Club prides itself on its beer and real ale and keeps a well-stocked cellar. As well as real ales, the Club offers still ciders, mostly from local producers.

Our house chef will be serving freshly cooked food throughout the festival.

To find out more visit hertford.club



Got a question about the festival? Check out our FAQs
hertfordlitfest.co.uk/faqs

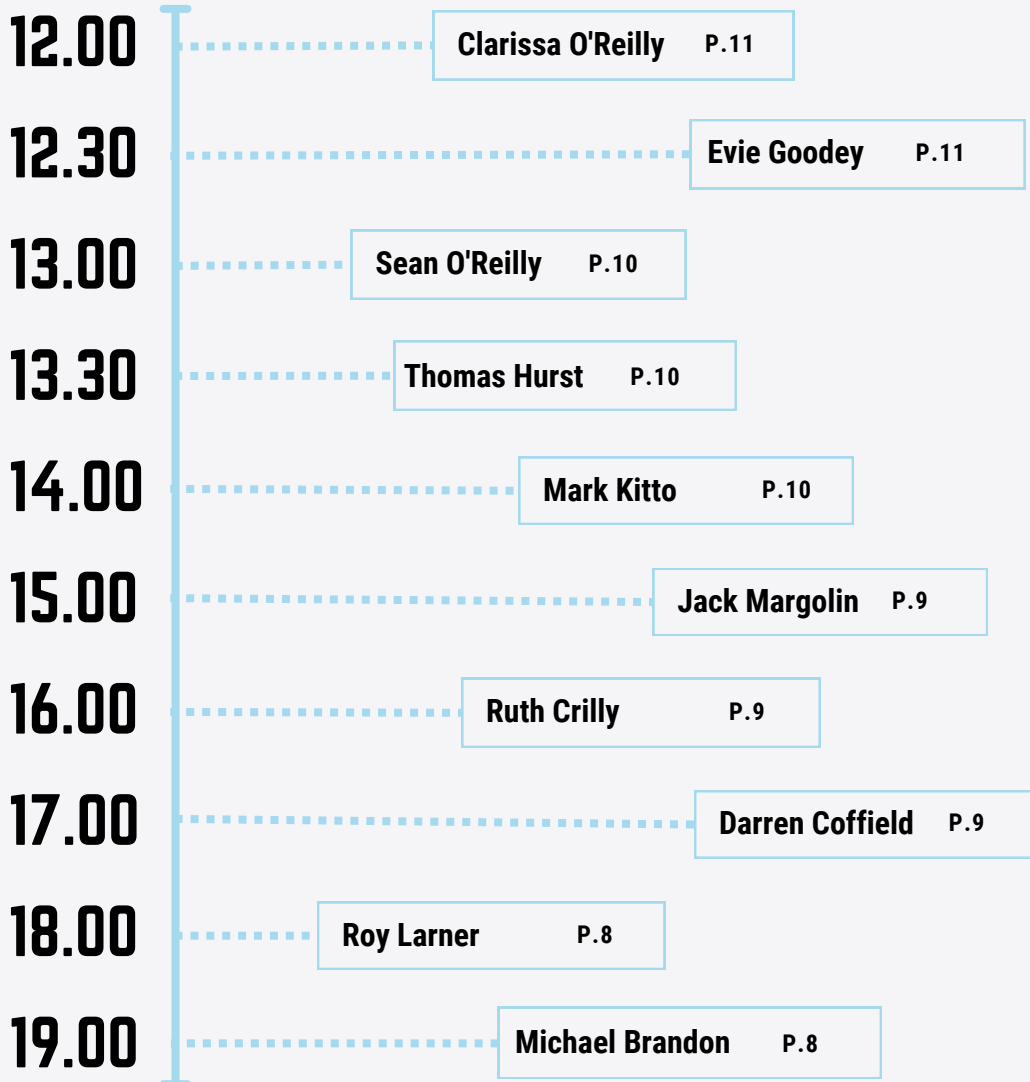
ECLECTIC FRIDAY

Join us for the first day of our festival with one of our most varied line-ups yet! If you are looking to be inspired, educated, amused, surprised and entertained by an array of fascinating guests, culminating with an interview with actor, Michael Brandon, Eclectic Friday is for you.



ECLECTIC FRIDAY

THE SCHEDULE



LOVE WHAT YOU ARE HEARING?
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT BY TAGGING & SHARING



#HERTFORDLITFEST24 @HERTFORDLITFEST

ACTOR & AUTHOR

MICHAEL BRANDON

Friday 4th July @ 7pm

That's All I'm Sayin'

Join Rick Mayston for an entertaining and fascinating interview with Michael Brandon.

Pulling back the curtain on the golden era of film and television, revealing the highs, the heartaches, and the hard truths behind the glamour. With razor-sharp wit and unflinching honesty, he dives into the reality of working in the industry, the abuse of power behind the scenes, and the moments that defined his extraordinary career.



FRIEND, MILLWALL SUPPORTER , ORDINARY BLOKE, HERO

ROY LARNER

Friday 4th July @ 6pm

The Lion of London Bridge



Roy Lerner, the Lion of London Bridge, was, and still is, an ordinary decent bloke who went out for a pint with a few mates, fellow Millwall supporters, and finished the day saving the lives of possibly 30 people. Join Rick Mayston as he talks with Roy about his experience and memories of this well documented event.

ARTIST AND AUTHOR

DARREN COFFIELD

Friday 4th July @ 5pm

Queens of Bohemia and Other Miss-Fits

Renowned artist and author Darren Coffield talks about his latest written work, 'Queens of Bohemia and Other Miss-Fits', which is sure to be a cult favourite alongside his previous two books 'Factual Nonsense: The Art and Death of Joshua Compston' and 'Tales From the Colony Room: Soho's Lost Bohemia'



AWARD-WINNING ONLINE WRITER AND CONTENT CREATOR

RUTH CRILLY

Friday 4th July @ 4.00pm

How Not to be a Supermodel.

Social media content creator, blogger, Ruth Crilly tells us all about her first book, 'How Not to be a Supermodel', which was published last year and instantly became a Sunday Times bestseller. Perhaps not surprising since her blog, 'A Model Recommends' has been read over fifty million times!



INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER AND AUTHOR

JACK MARGOLIN

Friday 4th July @ 3.00pm

The Wagner Group: Russia's Mercenary Army

Using extensive leaks, first-hand accounts, and the Byzantine paper trail left in the group's wake, Jack Margolin traces the Wagner Group from its roots as a battlefield rumour to a tens of thousands-strong private military enterprise that eventually comes to threaten Putin himself.



MAGAZINE PUBLISHER, WRITER AND ACTOR

MARK KITTO

Friday 4th July @ 2pm

Shanghai in the (really) noughties

Mark Kitto has been detained and accused by the Chinese government of being a Muslim separatist, has published two racy China memoirs, countless articles on the country, and now his first novel is out. 'China Running Dog' tells the REAL story. He's joining us to talk about his novel and its setting, Shanghai in the (really) naughties.

POET & LOVER OF LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

THOMAS HURST

Friday 4th July @ 1.30pm

Scholar's Mate: Literature against Language

This session covers a philologist's communication with his wife, which deteriorates after he begins playing chess with a male student: believing that the moves of the game provide better knowledge of another's soul, he comes to distrust language itself and its ability to express anything truthful.



STORYTELLER

SEAN O'REILLY

Friday 4th July @ 1.00pm

The Path to Rome

Reflecting on Hilaire Belloc's book 'The Path to Rome', Sean talks about his own pilgrimage; more the road not taken than the one taken – although he did make it to Rome, more by luck than judgement – and not without human trials and tribulations.



HEALTH COACH

EVIE GOODEY

Friday 4th July @ 12.30pm

How to get your energy back in midlife

Many women aged over forty struggle with constantly being tired – and Health Coach Evie loves helping them change their daily habits to reclaim that energy, vitality and strength – and to boost their metabolisms with the right food, exercise and stress management.



LITERARY SCHOLAR

CLARISSA O'REILLY

Friday 4th July @ 12.00pm

Ghost Light and Colonial Imagination

Clarissa O'Reilly explores how Joseph O'Connor's 'Ghost Light' does just that. The novel reimagines the lives of the actress Molly Allgood and playwright John Millington Synge, whose love is sternly opposed by friends and family due to their differences of class, religion and heritage.



LITERARY AND MULTIMEDIA AGENT

RICK MAYSTON

Friday 4th July @ 6.00pm & 7.00pm

Interviews: Michael Brandon and Roy Lerner

Rick's interviews are thorough and full of fun, leading questions helping to uncover the real personalities and stories behind his guests' public biogs.



LIVE MUSIC

Friday 4th July from 8.00pm

PAT CRILLY

Pat runs the Four Rivers Folk Club which is based in the Hertford Club and is a seasoned performer on the local folk scene. His songs reflect the places he's worked, the people he's encountered and his observations of life.



PETER CROSSLEY

Peter has been writing and performing for many years. He has supported The Blockheads and The Troggs as well as had his music played on Radio 2.



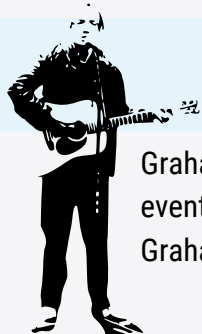
MEL QUINN

Mel is a quirky and upbeat female singer songwriter with much to say and cry about!



GRAHAM MOSS

Graham is a singer songwriter musician. He played his first ever event at Strum City. Having been a few chords on guitar by a friend, Graham can be seen performing regularly at events around Hertford.



WOTCHA

By Kev Saunders

Kev Saunders's first novel oozes coal-black humour, sex and drugs and rock and roll... Paperbacks on sale at the festival – and Paperback, Ebook and Audiobook online. Please note, the Kindle version is worse than useless at propping up wonky tables.

'A rollicking rollercoaster... The perfect mix of raw sex, drugs and rock and roll with black comedy in beautiful poetic prose.'

N. GAME

'I can't recommend this highly enough!'

HENRY ROBINSON, Hertford Literary Festival Director

'An amusingly filthy page-turner.'

D.G. HUNT

'Unfunny liberal elite filth.'

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ALL BOWIE SATURDAY

Join us on Saturday 5th July as we celebrate one of the world's greatest musical icons with a captivating line up of guests, each of whose personal experiences will help to paint a unique picture of who David Bowie really was.

We can't wait to spend a whole day (a Drive-in Saturday!) with friends and colleagues who shared a stage with him, helped develop his myriad mutations and characters, wrote with him and followed his career – every insane, fascinating step of the way.



THE SCHEDULE

ALL BOWIE SATURDAY

14.00

Nick Smart P.21

15.00

Suzi Ronson P.20

16.00

Simon Goddard P.20

17.30

Clifford Slapper P. 19

19.00

Kevin Armstrong P.19

20.30

Live music P.22



FOR EVEN MORE INFO ON ALL OUR GUESTS
PLUS LINKS TO THEIR SOCIAL PROFILES VISIT:

HERTFORDLITFEST.CO.UK

In 1993, our very own Rob Clydesdale found himself recording at Queen's studio in Montreux when David Bowie – drawn by the sound of them jamming upstairs – invited the band to collaborate on the soundtrack for 'The Buddha of Suburbia'. Catch Rob performing on Saturday evening.



HERTFORD'S

ROCK N ROLL PAST

David Bowie: The Hertford Connection

written by Kev Saunders

Why, you might ask, are they devoting an entire day of the Hertford Literary Festival to the late and sorely missed David Bowie? Well, as if his immeasurable influence on music, fashion and culture in general were not reason enough, the starman actually landed in Hertford on the 23rd March 1967 to play a gig at St Nicholas Hall. Who knew!

Although it's on the small side for a county town, Hertford's always punched way above its weight when it comes to rock 'n' roll heritage.



For instance, Deep Purple famously formed here in the 60s, when they were a still a psychedelic band, Marty Wilde and Kim Wilde are just up the road, and of course George Ezra grew up here, still lives here and now runs a local magazine.

But what's all this about Bowie? It is a little known piece of Hertford history that years ahead of Ziggy Stardust and the Thin White Duke and his many other 'wild mutations', David Bowie and The Riot Squad played this little-known venue in St Andrew Street, Hertford.

Not familiar with it? Well that's hardly surprising since the place hasn't been used as a public hall for more than half a decade.

Originally opened as a place where, 'all ages and ranks might meet together for their common good', together with the iconic Verger's House, the hall was best known since the early 70s as the home of Beckwith & Son Antiques.

More recently it was occupied by Brotherhood Art Gallery – and today it's home to Flowered Up (as well as a new shop called A Little Bit of Cheese – not sure what they sell).

Unlike the later, far better-known, Bowie bands, The Riot Squad was no mere Bowie vehicle – this was an established pop group in its own right, produced by the legendary Larry Page (and later Joe Meek) and signed to Pye Records. It was early in 1967 that Bowie joined the band on saxophone, guitar and lead vocals – at the same time as he was recording his eponymous debut album.



If you're curious to hear what The Riot Squad sounded like with David on vocals, try searching for their cover of The Velvet Underground's 'I'm Waiting for the Man' or an original Bowie song called 'Little Toy Soldier' whose chorus is a pre[re]direct steal from 'Venus In Furs'!

And if you fancy a mini pilgrimage, you can find St Nicholas Hall pretty much unchanged and untouched next to St Andrew Church, St Andrew Street, Hertford SG14 1HZ.



BOWIE FILMING 'EXTRAS' WITH RICKY GERVAIS AT ELBERT WURLINGS, PEGS LANE, HERTFORD

On 6th June, 2006 (yeah, getting on for two decades ago) Bowie beamed down to Hertford to shoot his episode of Ricky Gervais's 'Extras' at Elbert Wurlings, the funky music bar on the site of the old John O' Gaunt in Pegs Lane, Hertford (still no blue plaque!!). What Ricky had in mind was David singing at the piano – a new composition especially written for the occasion.

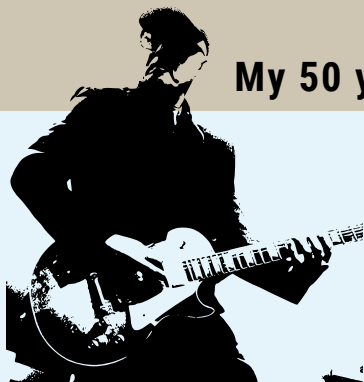
Look it up on YouTube: the suggestion was he sing something a bit like the eternal Bowie classic 'Life On Mars'... Bowie's swearsy response? Along the lines of... "Oh yeah, I'll just knock out a f**king Life on Mars!" But anyway, working with Ricky, he did deliver a kind of Bowie classic!

PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN, WRITER, PRODUCER AND BANDLEADER

KEVIN ARMSTRONG

Saturday 5th July @ 7pm

My 50 years as sideman for David Bowie



Kevin Armstrong has played guitar for some of the biggest names in music from the mid1980s to the present day. From David Bowie and Iggy Pop to Thomas Dolby, Prefab Sprout and Sinéad O'Connor, he has worked with many of the most diverse and fascinating talents on the planet.

In his book 'Absolute Beginner', Kevin's anecdotes, photos and videos drawn from half a century as a professional musician, writer, producer and bandleader give us an insight on how to survive in the fickle world of rock 'n' roll.

PIANIST, PRODUCER AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR

CLIFFORD SLAPPER

Saturday 5th July @ 5.30pm

Bowie's Piano Man

Exclusively at the Festival, Clifford Slapper will reveal the startling personal background to the first and only authorised biography of Mike Garson, the pianist who played alongside David Bowie more than any other. Clifford will also premier material from his own next album, out this summer, 'Bowie Songs 2.0 by Clifford Slapper & Friends: the songs of David Bowie, reimagined for voice and piano'.



AUTHOR & MUSIC JOURNALIST

SIMON GODDARD

Saturday 5th July @ 4pm

Bowie Odyssey 75

Already author of over a dozen books on popular music, Simon Goddard is over halfway through his proposed ten-book 'Bowie Odyssey' series chronicling the life and art of David Bowie against the social and cultural backdrop of the 1970s, year by year.

So far, two volumes in the series have made the Sunday Times Books of the Year list and in conversation with Darren Coffield, Simon will be discussing the Bowie Odyssey series and in particular the latest volume: Number Six.



AUTHOR, SONGWRITER, AND FORMER STYLIST

SUZI RONSON

Saturday 5th July @ 3pm

Me & Mr Jones



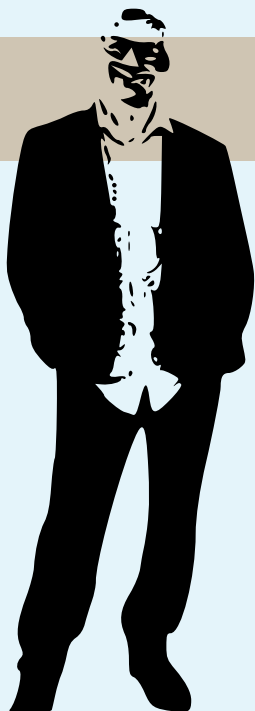
As the only working woman in David's touring party, Suzi was the creator of Bowie's iconic Ziggy Stardust hairstyle. Suzi joins us at the festival to talk about her book, 'Me and Mr Jones', providing not only a unique perspective on one of the most beguiling stars of our time but also on a world on the cusp of cultural transformation, charming the highs and lows of her life, usually as the only woman in the room as it happened.

AUTHOR. MAGAZINE EDITOR. DESIGNER. PHOTOGRAPHER. TEACHER.

NICK SMART

Saturday 5th July @ 2pm

David Bowie: The Art of Influence



Nick Smart explores how Bowie collected and repurposed ideas from art, literature, film, theatre, and beyond, shaping his ever-evolving persona and ground-breaking music.

Based on exclusive interviews with Bowie's friends and collaborators, this session offers fresh insights into the creative genius of one of the 20th century's most influential artists.

HENRY SHIPTON

Meet our official festival photographer, Henry Shipton.

Check out his work on Instagram and give him a follow @henryshipton



LIVE MUSIC

Saturday 5th July from 8.30pm

LIAM STEVENS

Among the most accomplished jazz pianists in the UK today (and an all-round decent guy to boot!), Liam is celebrated for his virtuosic command of swing and bebop.

A leading figure in the Soho jazz scene, he brings infectious energy and remarkable technical skill to every performance. His artistry is often compared to jazz greats like Oscar Peterson, Art Tatum and Tubby Hayes, and this evening he'll be applying his unique blend of dexterity, soul and impeccable timing to some well-chosen Bowie classics.



TOM WING // DANIEL FELL



Two-thirds of the Garage-Punk band The Teamsters without any spontaneously combusting drummer. Their self-titled album on Moody Monkey Records and 'Sharp Suited Sun Of A Gun' single are worth seeking out if you're into Primitive Beat Combos.

ROB CLYDESDALE

Local singer, multi-instrumentalist, songwriter and producer Rob's worked with everyone.

From his own bands 3D Echo, Perfect Distortion and D.Foe (currently recording another soundtrack for Sky comedy series Mr Big) to Los Ladrones Del Amor and someone called David Bowie (in 1993, 2 weeks into their sessions at Mountain Studios, Montreux, Switzerland, one Mr Bowie turned up and they found themselves working with him on the 'Buddha of Suburbia' soundtrack album!).



QUIVERING LIP

Sammi-Jo and Robbie
Thunders twist and pout a
couple of gorgeous, knee-
trembling, gusset-wetting and
slightly soiled Bowie covers
before they're absorbed into...



KING ANGRY AND THE BLACKSTARS

As featured at the Kevolution's annual Bowie frenzy on or around the 10th
January, King Angry is Kev Saunders... and the Blackstars are a hastily
assembled band comprising Quivering Lip, Bill 'The Exaggerator' Clarke,
Neil Gowans (sans Winos), Rich Hurst and someone on drums!



Love a game of chess?



The Hertford Chess Club



Tuesdays from 7.45pm



The Hertford Club



hertfordchessclub.org.uk



hertfordchess@gmail.com

Over the years, Hertford Chess Club has played at a number of venues in Hertford including Shire Hall, the Dimsdale Arms and the former Territorial Army centre in St Andrew Street.

In 1986, the club unfortunately had to close due to rising costs and a dwindling membership.

But in 1992, the club was able to re-establish itself thanks to a concerted effort by local chess players including former members of the club.

With the help of Hertford and Stortford MP, Bowen Wells, a new venue was found at the Hertford Club in Bull Plain, a place the chess club has called home ever since.



Once established at the Hertford Club, the chess club quickly attracted new players and was soon running several teams and winning against the other chess clubs in Hertfordshire. In 1995, Hertford won the Hertfordshire County Division 1 league, a feat they repeated for the next 6 years in a row.]

Although that winning spell in the league came to an end, Hertford then went on to win the Russell Trophy, the premier cup competition, 8 times in a row from 2005 to 2012. The achievements in more recent times have been less frequent, but we continue to thrive as a club with a solid membership of about 35 players.

We run multiple teams of all strengths competing against the other 15 chess clubs in Hertfordshire and we also play online in the top divisions of the national 'Four Nations Chess League' competition.



For those not playing in the competitions, the Hertford Club kindly allows us to play friendly chess downstairs in the bar area on club nights.

Hertford Chess Club is the only chess club in Hertfordshire that hasn't had to move home in the last 30 years. The club venue is unique in offering facilities for both serious and social chess, and we are always looking for new players. Why not make the right move and come along to the club?

President: Alan Brewis

Secretary: Andrew du Boulay



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The Hertford Literary Festival is a not-for-profit organisation
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The Hertford Literary Festival

AT THE HERTFORD CLUB



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