



MHEAC SPRING NEWSLETTER

Connecting alums across Europe

Welcome Message

A Word from the European Council Chair

Spring always brings a sense of renewal, and this edition of our newsletter captures that spirit beautifully. Across Europe and beyond, our alum community continues to inspire with bold ideas, global impact, and a shared commitment to shaping a more connected world.

Check out our *Spotlight: Global Alum Trailblazers* and meet three remarkable alums with a STEM background whose paths span sustainable energy in Iceland, global health innovation in the Netherlands, and the future of renewable systems in Germany. Their stories remind us how far the MHC network reaches—and how deeply our values resonate across continents.

We also invite you to start dreaming of Edinburgh, where the 18th European Alum Symposium awaits this autumn. The organizing committee is crafting an experience that blends intellectual curiosity, cultural discovery, and meaningful reflection on how we each drive change in our own communities.

You'll also find highlights from recent gatherings across Europe, a recap of our Lunar New Year celebration supporting international students, a report of our record-breaking March4MHC, and a look ahead at upcoming opportunities to stay connected.

I hope you enjoy reading—and feel inspired to join us in the months ahead.

Warmest regards,

Catherine Jourdan '95

Chair, European Alum Council

Stay current by following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), our [website](#), and the [Mount Holyoke European Alum Newsletter](#).



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Spotlight: Global Alum Trailblazers

Claire Fitzgerald '25 – Iceland



[A postcard from Iceland from the winner of the 2025 MHEAC Award for Graduate Studies in Europe](#)

Claire Fitzgerald '25 is the latest winner of the [European Alum Council Award for Graduate Study in Europe](#) program and she is currently pursuing a Masters in Sustainable Energy Sciences at Reykjavik University in Iceland. Life in Iceland is offering her the opportunity not only to explore her passion for sustainable innovation and climate resilience, but also to discover the fascinating culture

and geography of this European country. [Read the full story in the "In the Spotlight" section of the new Global Alum Alliance website.](#)

Abena S. Amoah '00 – Ghana/Netherlands



Advancing global health from the lab to the field

Abena S. Amoah '00 is an immunoepidemiologist and biomedical researcher at Leiden University Medical Center in the Netherlands, where she leads the HypoVax Global Knowledge Hub. Her work focuses on understanding how immune responses and vaccine effectiveness vary across populations worldwide. At this fascinating intersection of research and public health, she advances the journey of addressing global health inequities and improving outcomes for communities most at risk. [Read the full story in the "In the Spotlight" section of the new Global Alum Alliance website.](#)

Ningzi Xia '19 – China/Germany



A path toward sustainability in practice

Ningzi Xia '19 is a researcher and data analyst at Aurora Energy Research in Berlin, where she leads market analysis across Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Her work focuses on electricity markets, energy policy and the future of renewable energy, contributing to projects that support decarbonization and the energy transition. After studying German and Environmental Studies at Mount Holyoke, she went on to complete a Master's in Renewable Engineering in Germany and has since built a career at the intersection of sustainability and data. [Read the full story in the "In the Spotlight" section of the new Global Alum Alliance website.](#)

Enjoy!

Sneak Preview: European Alum Symposium



Close your eyes... and start dreaming of Edinburgh

We are only eight months away from the 18th European Alum Symposium in Edinburgh and the organizing committee, led by Corinne Morgan '13, has been hard at work to offer all participants a truly unique and memorable experience. The venue is secured, the meals are chosen, speakers are falling into place and those little add-ons that make each Symposium unique are waiting to surprise you.

So close your eyes and picture this ... it's cold and dark outside, and yet you are surprisingly cosy sitting with **a glass of something warming**, surrounded by a lush interior with **sweeping views of Arthur's Seat**, whilst conversing with some of the most interesting and intelligent individuals you know. Earlier in the day, you walked through (or should you say under) **Edinburgh's Old Town** learning about the secret rooms that helped shape the city into what it is today. Or maybe you spent some time learning about **Edinburgh's enduring love of literature** or toured the **Scottish Parliament**? Perhaps you took a quick trip out of the city to explore the **surrounding countryside**. Whatever it was, your feet are tired, but your mind is sharp and you are **enjoying a High Tea** so generous that you can never possibly finish.

Tomorrow you will interact with a curated set of **speakers in keynotes, panels and workshops**. You will learn more about how Edinburgh has been at the **forefront of so many theoretical and physical innovations** that have pushed the boundaries of all aspects of our lives. And, you will discover how the people

of Edinburgh have maintained a tradition of **using past experience to develop new directions for more than 1000 years**. You are particularly looking forward to thinking deeply about how you can apply these principles in your own life, where you are looking to effect change. You have heard that tomorrow's busy day will finish with a **fabulous dinner and a Ceilidh!** It might have been a while since you went out dancing... or was it just yesterday? No matter what, you know that **dancing** with a wonderful caller you will know exactly what to do, and it will be a brilliant time with the individuals who currently surround you. For now, you are going to go **catch up with that friend you haven't seen in person in years** and then walk over to your room to be prepared for the wonderful weekend ahead.

Is this not enough to set your mind on travelling to Edinburgh in November? FAQ and Recommendation pages are already up on the [MHC Global Alliance web page](#), and keep an eye on your inbox for update emails on speakers, optional tours, and, of course, the all-important registration date!

In the meantime, if your curiosity becomes overpowering, please send any questions to mheacedinburghsymposium@gmail.com.

Mar sin leibh (goodbye for now), more to follow soon!



Past & Upcoming Events by Country

Germany - Catherine Jourdan '95



March 2026

German alums, spanning classes of 1964 to 2017, got together for good food and company in Munich.



March 2026

Berlin–Munich alums met up for coffee in Bavaria’s capital city.

Great Britain – Virginia Ross '66



January 2026

Virginia Ross '66 was delighted to welcome Ashley Brown '05 while she was visiting the UK to do research at the Bodleian library in Oxford. Ashley, a professor of the History of Sport and Society at University of Wisconsin-Madison, is the author of a comprehensive biography of Althea Gibson, the first African American tennis player to win titles at Wimbledon and the U.S. Nationals between 1956 and 1958.

Ashley's book, "Serving Herself: The Life and Times of Althea Gibson", details Gibson's career and struggles, ensuring her legacy as a tennis and golf pioneer is remembered, with museum exhibits and events celebrating her achievements. During her stay in the UK, Ashley also delivered a lecture on this amazing athlete at Wimbledon.



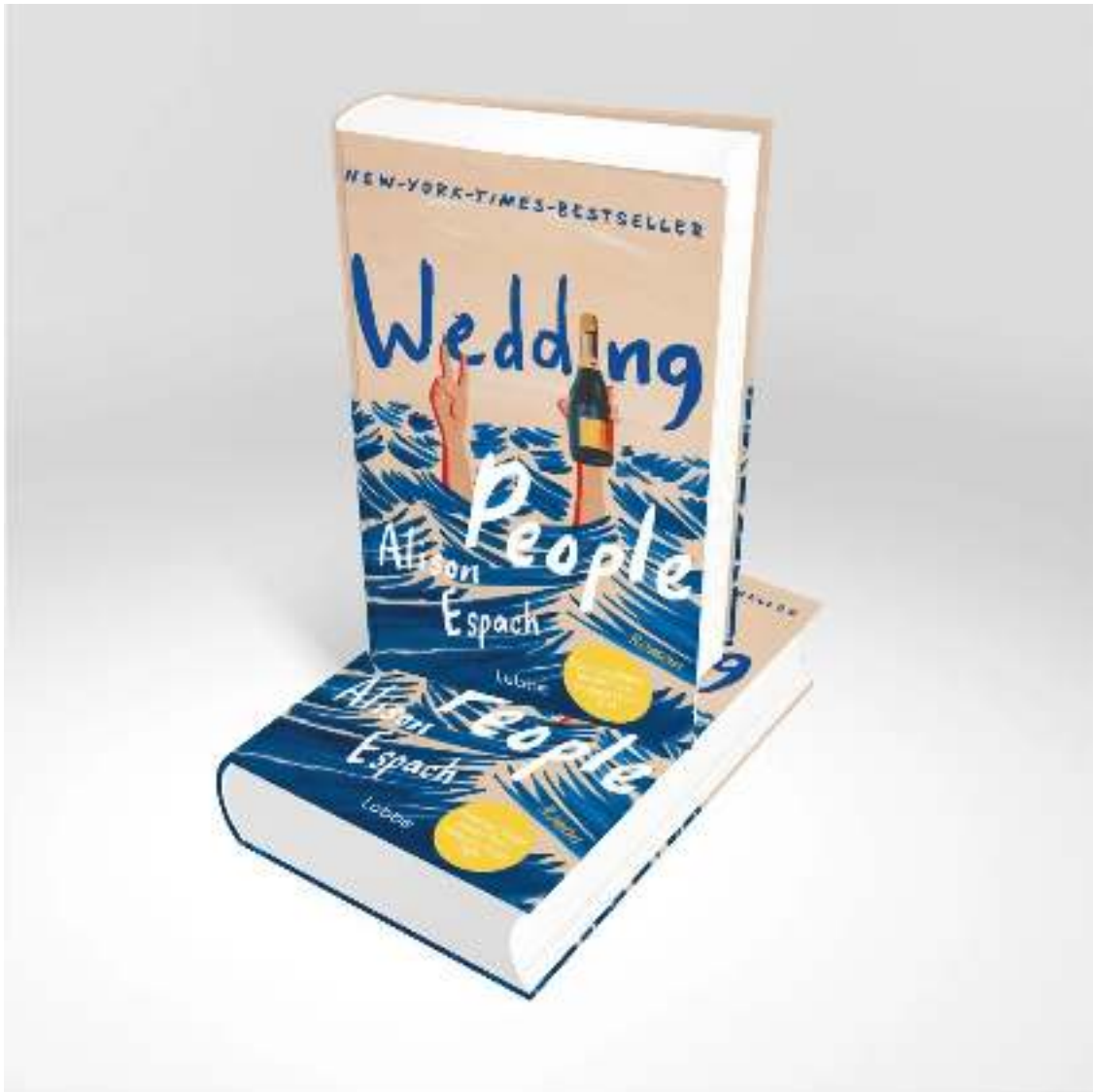
February & March 2026

The Mount Holyoke Club of Britain recently launched a series of Career & Life Coffee Chats, an initiative led by Club Co-President Sylwia Wasiak FP'04, which aims to offer informal career tips and advice to alums. The plan is to hold regular monthly meetings in Central London and allow alums to (re)connect and support each other in relation to life and career challenges. The events are free and open to all alums who live or happen to be in London at the time of the meeting.

Here is how Sylwia describes the initiative: *Whether you're in your 20s, 40s, or 60s, mapping out your path or still figuring out what that path might be, these sessions are designed for you. Come and join us for an uplifting hour in a relaxed setting, filled with conversation, insight, and connection. Whether you're polishing your CV (bring it with you!) or preparing for an interview, or career planning such as returning to work after a break or simply exploring new possibilities, wherever you are on your journey, you're welcome to join! You will walk away with practical guidance, renewed clarity, and the momentum to*

move forward. These one-hour sessions offer a supportive space for individuals at any stage of their life and professional journey. Expect meaningful discussion, actionable tips, and a warm, informal atmosphere.

The first meetings took place on Sunday 22 February and Sunday 22 March, from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. The next event is TBA. Do contact Sylwia Wasiak at mhcbritain@gmail.com for more information about the next event.



March 2026

In March a core group of four keen readers sat down together for the inaugural meeting of the Zoom MHC Britain Book Club (official name still pending). This time they discussed Alison Espach's *The Wedding People*. The wide ranging and convivial conversation covered everything from Covid to where to start with reading Virginia Woolf, and even the participants' own wedding planning mistakes (and joys!). The group plans to meet monthly and their next conversation will be on April 27th at 7:30 discussing *Build Your House Around My Body* by Violet Kupersmith (Class of 2011!). Please reach out via mhcbritain@gmail.com or through the Club WhatsApp community if you'd like to join!



Upcoming Event!

Date: Wednesday, 8th April

Time: 18:30–20:00

Location: Garden Museum, 5 Lambeth Palace Rd, London SE1 7LB, UK

Jane Hammond's collages at the Garden Museum are vibrant, intricate and uncannily alive. Bringing together flowers, grasses, seeds, insects and birds from decades of printed and painted matter, Hammond creates spectacular arrangements that feel both historical and contemporary. Rooted in tradition yet radically inventive, these works reimagine the great lineage of flower painting for our own unsettled age. A committed gardener at her home in Massachusetts, Hammond's knowledge of plants, flora and fauna is at the heart of this body of work; on display at a British institution for the first time.

Please join artist Jane Hammond '72 and gallery owner Lyndsey Ingram '01 for a private viewing of Jane's upcoming exhibition at the Garden Museum in London.

For full details and to RSVP, [click here](#).



Upcoming Event!

Date: Monday, 27th April

Time: 19:30

Location: Online (Zoom)

A few weeks ago, a core group of keen readers sat down together for the inaugural meeting of the MHC Britain Virtual Book club (official name pending).

We plan to meet monthly on Mondays to discuss a book chosen by the community. Our next conversation will discuss *Build Your House Around My Body* by Violet Kupersmith (Class of 2011!). Please register your interest on the [website](#) and join the [Club WhatsApp community](#) if you'd like to participate!

Iberian Peninsula – Elizabeth Ta’eed ’09



December 2025

Spanish alum Belén Millán '90 recently opened an art exhibit at the Centro Cultural MVA (Maria Victoria Atencia) in Málaga, Spain. The exhibit, titled "INperceptibles", is born from ecosystems that still appear untouched yet bear the silent infiltration of human trace. Within them, Belén intervenes using recovered materials, reimagining waste as a living matter.



Upcoming Event!

Date: Saturday, 11th April

Time: 13:00

Location: Albufeira, Portugal

BBQ Lunch & Pool Party on 11th April at 13:00 in Albufeira, Portugal, generously hosted by Catherine Jourdan '95.

Join the fun and bring a bottle of something for burgers on the grill (meat and veggie available) overlooking the ocean, followed by a pool party.

Please RSVP by 6th April by messaging Elizabeth Ta'eed '09 or messaging [through the MH Iberia website](#)

Ireland – Barbara Schmidt '69



February 2026

Alums in Dublin were delighted to meet three members of the class of 2027 who are spending the semester in Ireland. They gathered for a Picasso exhibition and some tasty pizza, and enjoyed talking about life and events at Mount Holyoke.

The Netherlands – Silvia Maulini '80



February 2026

Alums in the Netherlands gathered at a typical Dutch “bruin cafe” near Utrecht for their traditional annual “winter lunch”. It was a great chance to catch up, discuss local and world events, and to make plans for future gatherings.

Norway – Nicole Ratté Guttormsen '91



November 2025

Tiffany and Mika welcomed the newest member of the group in Oslo, Amila, over a dinner of Palestinian cuisine.

Sweden – Nisha Nilsson '91

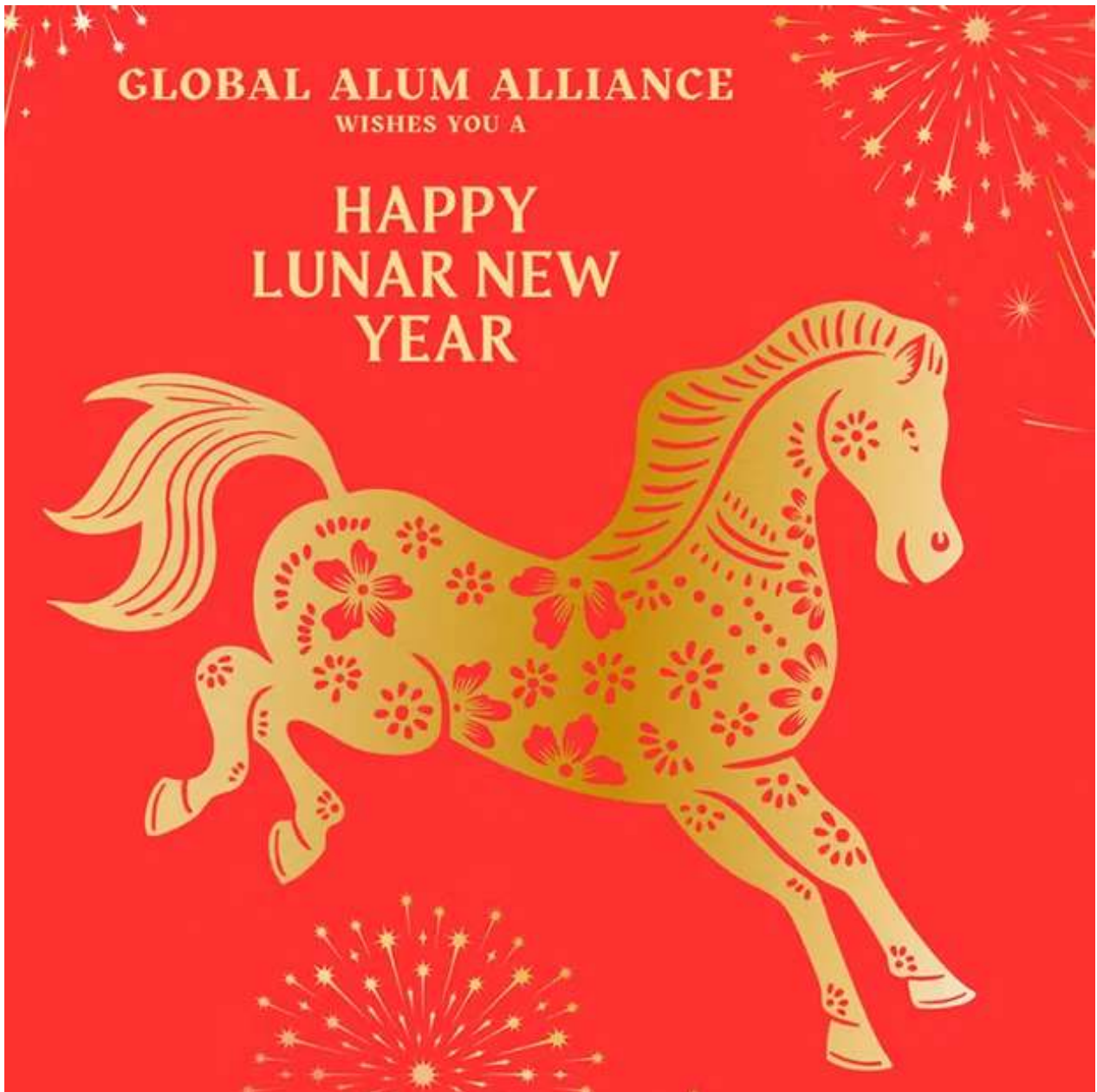


February 2026

Swedish European Alum Council delegate Nisha '91 traveled to India and managed to get together with local and other international alums from the US

and Switzerland in Mumbai, turning independent journeys into spontaneous alum meetups!

Lunar New Year 2026 Celebration Supports International Students



Mount Holyoke alums, students, faculty and staff shared Lunar New Year greetings to welcome the Year of the Horse. Inspired by an anonymous alum donor, 372 participants joined the Red Envelope Challenge — surpassing the Level 1 goal of 188 participants and unlocking \$1,837 for international student scholarships through The Mount Holyoke Fund. The initiative inspired matching funds and a surprise gift, bringing the total raised to an auspicious \$3,888. Thank you to everyone who participated, and special thanks to volunteer

leaders Eleanor Chang '78, Yucheng Miller '13 and members of the Global Alum Alliance.

A Record-breaking March4MHC



The Mount Holyoke community showed up in an extraordinary way for the seventh annual March4MHC Challenge. Together, more than 5,100 alums, family members, friends, faculty, staff and students came together in support of Mount Holyoke, surpassing the goal of 5,000 donors. Along the way, the campaign unlocked \$500,000 in challenge funds and raised a record-breaking \$3.2 million for The Mount Holyoke Fund. At a time when higher education faces real challenges, this collective effort affirms the values that define Mount Holyoke and helps sustain scholarships, academic programs and resources that empower students to thrive.

See the results here: [March4MHC 2026](#)

Ongoing Virtual Events

Join Us for Virtual M & Cs!



The well-established **Sunday evening virtual M&Cs** continue to be very popular with alums from all over the world—and have just celebrated their **6th anniversary!** If you wish to connect and chat with other MHC alums from all generations please feel free to join every Sunday evening at 8:00 PM (CET) 7:00 (GMT) at <https://mtholyoke.zoom.us/j/99698796120>.

The link to the sessions is also pinned in our [Mount Holyoke European Alum Facebook](#) group page each Sunday morning, together with a yummy cookie recipe, courtesy of Corinne Morgan '13.

Join Us for French!



Parlez-vous Français?

Are you eager to practice your French and connect with Francophile alums from all over the world? Remember to join Méryem Puill-Châtillon '80 every other Thursday at 6:30 pm CET for an hour of French conversation and fun. This bi-monthly event is open to all levels.

Bienvenue à toutes!

Check the [MHEAC Facebook](#) or email mhceurope@gmail.com page for the date of the next meeting! À bientôt.

Zoom link: <https://mtholyoke.zoom.us/j/92564224779> - no code required!

If you did not receive this newsletter as an email directly to your inbox, and you want to keep up with the latest from the Mount Holyoke Alum Community of Europe...

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