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ATG Interviews Helen Henderson and Hazel Woodward, Founding Partners, Information Power Ltd.

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ATG Interviews Helen Henderson and Hazel Woodward

Founding Partners, Information Power Ltd.

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*) <gilson@cofc.edu>

and **Katina Strauch** (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

ATG: *While part of the same information industry, your career paths have been somewhat different: Hazel more on the library side and Helen more on the publishing end. When and how did you first meet?*

HH & HW: Surprisingly recently. We first met at an **Institute of Information Scientists Conference** Helen organized in 1999 in Sheffield. Hazel was just about to take up her post at **Cranfield** and arrange the last **Cranfield Conference**, and Helen offered to help organize it. While working on the conference we decided that we really enjoyed working together, the chemistry worked, and it went on from there.

In addition, we both love travelling and have since been on many exciting trips together including sailing around the Greek island's in a racing yacht, exploring the geothermal excitement of Iceland and, of course, our recent gastronomic visit to Tuscany.

ATG: *Now that you have joined forces in the consulting firm Information Power Ltd., you obviously bring different strengths to the table. Helen, can you talk about Hazel's strengths? Hazel, can you talk about Helen's strengths? How do you see your roles in Information Power Ltd. evolving?*

HH: Hazel has an amazing knowledge of e-resources worldwide and how they are being implemented. She also knows European Academe inside and out and has an impressive network in this area.

HW: Helen's network complemented Hazel's amazingly in the information industry, and her commercial knowledge is second to none.

HH & HW: We're really excited about working on projects together and utilizing the complementary strengths and wide range of skills that we have built up over the years. We only want to take on roles where we can really make a difference.

ATG: *How are you positioning yourselves to offer services to our incredibly changing industry? What are the main issues that you feel Information Power Ltd. is most qualified to address? Who do you see as your main clients?*

HH & HW: The main thing to stress is that we are not full-time consultants. **Information Power** is intended to utilize our very specialized talents in identifying areas of change, who they affect and how to manage them. We work right across the information industry where these changes are happening.

We'll work for anyone who needs us as long as we find them and the work interesting.



ATG: *We understand that your husbands also work in the industry. Is either of them helping in this venture?*

HH & HW: Not officially, although **Chris Leamy** acts as Company Secretary of **Information Power** and continues to research trends in the industry (you can't keep him off his tablet – Android, of course) and sends us bulletins of what he thinks is important. **Fytton** puts up with us and cooks amazing meals.

ATG: *Can you tell us what projects you all are currently working on?*

HH & HW: We don't divulge specific customers, but some of our recent work has included specifying new e-resource products for vendors, continuing work in the area of eBooks and digital media services, helping publishers in their interaction with their academic community, carrying out interviews and focus groups and even helping a University with staffing structures to cope with changing requirements.

ATG: *You two have teamed up before, most notably as joint editors of the journal Serials. What makes your partnerships so successful?*

HH & HW: Being able to finish each other's sentences and respond to emails before we have received them from each other. Of course, we have exactly the same sense of humor and respect and essentially are a mutual admiration society. We've noticed as the years go on that people seem to think our names are interchangeable and we now answer to either!

ATG: *Helen, are you still serving as Vice-President for Marketing Research and Development at Ringgold Inc.?*

HH: No. It is now nearly ten years since I founded the company that became **Ringgold** and, as you know, I am an innovator rather than a manager, so I have bowed out and am allowing it to mature and expand. I'm pleased to see they are diversifying and growing and contributing to the industry.

ATG: *Hazel, now that you've retired, are you playing any role at Cranfield University? How about JISC? Or COUNTER?*

HW: I have no continuing role at **Cranfield** but still serve as Chair of the **COUNTER** Board of Directors. I am excited about being the Co-Chair of the **COUNTER** usage factor with **Jayne Marks**. (We did a pre-conference at Charleston.) I keep up my contacts at **JISC**, essentially to be allowed to use the CEO's spare room from time to time, especially while working at the Olympics.

ATG: *Hazel being awarded the MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) is a great honor. How did you feel when you learned that you would be receiving an MBE from the Queen?*

HW: I was immensely surprised but very honoured to have been put forward. What was particularly special were the emails from librarian colleagues across the UK saying they were so pleased that a librarian had been honoured in this way, as it happens very rarely. The ceremony (actually **Princess Anne** rather than the **Queen**) was a wonderful occasion with **Fytton** and both my sons there with me.

ATG: *Helen, how does it feel to have an MBE as your partner?*

HH: I am very honoured. Hazel was so rightly recognized for all the work she has done in the UK for the library and academic community. I like to be able to bask in the reflected glory.

ATG: *And we just learned that Hazel has been working on media logistics at the Olympics in London! That sounds like a tremendous amount of work, not to mention responsibility. How will this impact Information Power Ltd.?*

HH: Thank goodness that was just a temporary job, although I bet they would like to keep her on permanently.

HW: This was just one of the best experiences of my life, a great team, and a great atmosphere, but I am also glad it was temporary.

HH & HW: We are not actually planning to branch out into media logistics as **Information Power**, or even running the next Olympics in Rio, but it would be nice to be asked.

ATG: *All this activity will not leave much time for fun things. How do you plan to get some down time to recharge your batteries?*

HH & HW: As we said, we are being very careful not to over commit ourselves, and have a pact which doesn't allow one of us to take on work until the other has done a sanity check. If we didn't, we would both be working far more than full-time again. We

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both have lots of fun things planned. **Helen** is just back from a month driving a Jeep around the Rockies, and **Hazel** is planning to do a house swap with a friend in Australia for the spring. Once **Helen's** hip is up and running again, she and **Chris** have several grand plans for adventures, some of which include **Hazel** and **Fytton**. Thank goodness for Skype and email.

ATG: *We know Helen likes golf and kayaking. How about you Hazel? What are your favorite activities?*

HH: It is actually **Chris** who does the kayaking. I just watch him race or track him with special devices.

HW: I love walking, having just been up to the Lake District and scaling several peaks. I also love tennis, and I keep on promising **Helen** I'll continue my golf lessons.

HH: Once **Hazel** can actually hit the ball, we have some fabulous golfing holidays planned.

ATG: *Are there other favorite pastimes that we don't know about?*

HH: I'm having a wonderful time in Scotland cooking with our fabulous local produce. There are a lot of friends coming to stay in with us, so much of the time I am running an upscale bed & breakfast for them (however, they do have to reciprocate when I'm travelling to see them!). I'm beginning to

against the grain
publisher profile



Information Power Ltd

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OFFICERS: Helen Henderson, Dr. Hazel Woodward, and Chris Leamy.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS: UKSG

KEY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: Consultancy services for publishers, vendors, and libraries.

CORE MARKETS/CLIENTELE: Publishers, vendors, and libraries.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 2 (plus contractors)

HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR COMPANY/PUBLISHING PROGRAM: **Information Power** was originally set up in 2002 as a consultancy company providing services to publishers and vendors. It now carries out consultancy projects relating to e-content, strategic positioning, and product specification with research and focus groups. 🌱

get involved with the local arts scene around Kirkcudbright, which is very vibrant.

HW: I am also a keen cook, and we love cooking together and swapping recipes. Don't ever let us loose in a market, as we'll spend a fortune. You should have seen what we brought back from Siena after the **Fiesole**

Retreat. A lesser known fact about me is that I am a volunteer custody visitor and spend quite a bit of time in police cells — which is very rewarding.

ATG: *Thank you both for taking the time to talk with us. It was fun! And we learned a lot.* 🌱

Library Marketplace — Interview with Norman Desmarais

Professor Emeritus, Providence College and Author of *Battlegrounds of Freedom: A Historical Guide to the Battlefields of the War of American Independence* <normd@providence.edu>

Column Editor: **John D. Riley** (Eastern Regional Sales Manager, BUSCA, Inc.) <jdriley@comcast.net> www.buscainc.com

Congratulations Norm on your retirement as acquisitions librarian at the Providence College Library and also upon your Emeritus Professor status there. But you haven't slowed down a bit in your retirement. You have always been famous for your many projects, such as writing for CD-ROM Professional, CD-ROM Librarian, CD-ROM World, Against the Grain, and other periodicals as well as for your CD-ROMs and books on HTML and other subjects. In your spare time, you also devote a lot of energy to American Revolutionary War history and re-enactments. That passion has now become a full-time project for you (other than spending time with

your grandson Lucas). I think the Against the Grain audience will be fascinated to find out more about your transition from librarianship to full-time scholar, author, and re-enactor.

You are now the author of six books on the Revolutionary War, and you have covered all the major and minor battles from Canada to Florida. You have personally participated in many of the re-enactments of those battles, giving you a unique perspective as an author. Was it much of a transition from your library work to working full-time on your writing and publishing?

Norm: No, it wasn't. I have been involved in writing almost my entire career as a librarian. During my last sabbatical, I devoted myself full-time to writing and completed two volumes of my *Guide to the American Revolutionary War*. Toward the end of that sabbatical, I estimated that it would take me another 20 years to complete the rest of the set while continuing to work full-time as a librarian. I

decided to retire and write full-time, and I can now see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. I expect to finish the final volume by the summer of 2013. However, that doesn't mean I've exhausted the subject. During the course of my research, I found a number of topics that I want to research further and write about in journal articles.

How did you first become interested in the history of the Revolutionary War?

Norm: I've been interested in the Revolutionary War since I was in junior high school. When I was editor of *CD-ROM World*, I did some consulting for a publisher who asked me, in a casual conversation during dinner, if I had all the funding and necessary resources at my disposal, what topic would I cover and how would I go about it. I responded immediately that I would create a multimedia CD-ROM on the Revolutionary War because nobody was writing about it at the time, and it's the period

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