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International Dateline: A Good Bookman

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the market. By finding sustainable business models for OA, readers will find the content.

ATG: *We understand that later this year Knowledge Unlatched will move into the second phase, scaling up and involving more libraries and publishers and increased selection. Can you elaborate? Will the project expand and include science publishers and books?*

FP: We are only just now formulating the plans for how we can work with more publishers and deliver more books. A report on what we've learnt through the pilot will be ready in May by which time we'll have established a Library Steering Committee and will be working on setting up the Library Collections Committee. I began this project with Humanities and Social Sciences because their monographs were in the most trouble. But there would be no reason not to include Science books. Ultimately KU is a channel and by working together publishers and librarians will decide what to use it for.

ATG: *We've also been told that there is even a phase three in the offing. What will that involve?*

FP: I've always seen KU in three phases. Just like any other initiative we have to find our route to sustainability. The first was the Pilot — now competed. The second is scaling up. This not only means having more books, it means having the right systems in place —

against the grain publisher profile

Knowledge Unlatched

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OFFICERS: Dr. Frances Pinter, Executive Director; Dr. Lucy Montgomery, Deputy Director; Leon Loberman, Operations and Technology; and Judy Luther, North America Consultant.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS: Affiliated to Library Publishing Coalition.

KEY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES: We are setting up a library consortium to enable open access publishing.

CORE MARKETS/CLIENTELE: Publishers and Librarians.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 4 (some part-time). 🌱

most likely through a variety of partnerships. There doesn't seem to be much point in reinventing the wheel when others have very nice ones running along. We'll be introducing a small handling charge and membership fees so that we'll be independent of grants. Phase three is when we have enough volume to fund the KU infrastructure through the mark up of the Title Fees. We've said that this would be in the region of 5%.

ATG: *It must be exciting to be spearheading such an innovative project but it also demands a lot of energy. What do you do in*

your down time to relax and refresh? Do you have favorite activities or interests outside of publishing and libraries?

FP: I love my work, so there is not much downtime. But I do enjoy the usual things — reading novels, going to concerts, taking a walk in the park with my husband.

ATG: *Frances, thank you. We're very grateful for your willingness to tell us about Knowledge Unlatched and appreciate your open and thoughtful answers.*

FP: Thank you for the opportunity. 🌱

International Dateline — A Good Bookman

by **Rita Ricketts** (Blackwell's Historian and Bodleian Visiting Scholar, Author *Adventurers All, Tales of Blackwellians, of Books, Bookmen and Reading and Writing Folk*) <Rita.Ricketts@bodleian.ox.ac.uk>



"The librarian's, I should say, is the happiest lot, though some may think it lacks the excitement, which risk and enterprise provide. If he is a College or University Librarian, he is perhaps happiest of all, should the bent of his mind be studious." — Basil Blackwell

The good bookman, **Sir Basil**, wrote this in 1945, so we have to forgive his gender specificity. He believes in the spiritual value of books. He believes with **Wordsworth** that books "are a substantial world both pure and good; Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood, Our pastime and our happiness will grow"; with **Carlyle** that "In books lies the souls of the whole past time the articulate and audible voice of the Past"; and with **Milton** that "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." For **Sir Basil**, publisher, bookseller, and would-be author, it was "the reader who really counted." He quotes **Emerson**, who once said, "Tis the good reader that makes the good book." Who, then, was the good reader, **Sir Basil** asked himself? One who reads with zest and intelligence, enjoying by understanding, who attends to the views of critics but judges for him- or herself. One who

remembers the fable of the Emperor's clothes, is wary of false prophets, is quick to detect insincerity in an author and to reject one whose motive is unworthy. One who recommends convincingly a good book, and knows when he or she has found one and then commends it to the next generation ... telling the good news of the discovery. **Richard Ovenden** has spent his life doing just that.

But **Richard** has done much more besides. Like the **Bodleian's** founder, **Sir Thomas Bodley**, he is engaged in library building.¹ Working in the second row to support his predecessors **Reg Carr** and then **Sarah Thomas**, he has orchestrated the reconstruction of **Gilbert Scott's** so-called "New" **Bodleian**; to be renamed the **Weston Library**. Its entrance, to be named the **Blackwell Hall** in honour of **Julian Blackwell's** gift, will be open to all and will, appropriately, provide the setting for future exhibitions and events that celebrate the book. It was **Julian**

Blackwell's donation of £5m, the largest single cash donation ever made to a university library in the UK, which has been central in helping **Richard** to put his plan into action. **Julian** had been in on the scheme from the start, conspiring with **Richard** and **Reg Carr** and then **Sarah Thomas** in the bar of a local hostelry. The Hall cements the bond between the library and its world famous bookish neighbour whose current president, **Julian Blackwell**, is the great grandson of **Benjamin Harris Blackwell**, who came to Oxford in the 1830s to save souls from the demon drink and to nourish them with books. He became the first librarian of Oxford's newly founded City Library in 1854. The son of a jobbing tailor from London's East End, he was an autodidact worthy of that honorable tradition. He lies in a shady grave aside the old church of St. Cross, in Oxford, now itself a library. If tombstones had ears, he would be enlivened by the news of **Richard's** appointment.

More fortunate that the self-educated **Benjamin Harris** and his son **Benjamin Henry**, who founded the world famous **Broad Street Shop**, **Richard** won a scholarship to **Sir Roger**

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Manwood's Grammar School in Sandwich, Kent. Founded in 1563, it remains a free grammar school with selection by examination. But **Richard** is a passionate advocate and supporter of the autodidact, as his book on the photojournalism of **John Thomson** bears testament to. His interest in books started in the late 1960s when a dusty old second-hand bookshop in the Kentish port of Deal had more pull than flower power, school cricket, or the fun-fares and arcades of neighbouring seashores. Here he adventured in the mind, in thrall to Kent's Roman and then Viking invaders, its medieval pirates, perennial smugglers, and tales of fisherfolk struggling to make a living. Hastings was nearby, where the Normans prevailed over Harold in 1066, and Canterbury, where pilgrims wended their way to the shrine of **Thomas Becket**. **Richard's** own pilgrimage led him on a treasure hunt in the world of books. He was the very personification of the good bookman as described by **Basil Blackwell**, himself educated at a local grammar school (**Magdalen College School**) in Oxford.

From Deal, **Richard** progressed to **Durham University** and **University College London** and he turned, not surprisingly, to librarianship. Starting at **Durham University Library**, his career took him to the **House of Lords Library**, the **National Library of Scotland** (as Deputy Head of the Rare Books Section), the **University of Edinburgh** (as Director of Collections), and since 2003 at the **Bodleian Libraries**; first as Keeper of Special Collections and, since 2011, as Deputy Librarian. He sits on the Panel of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, is a Trustee of the Kraszna Kraus Foundation and of the Victoria County History for Oxfordshire, serves on the Council of the Bibliographical Society, is currently Chair of the Digital Preservation Coalition, and heads Oxford's involvement with the Google mass digitization project. His scholarly interests, in the future of the information world, in book and photographic history, ensure him a welcome as a fellow of Balliol; he holds a professorial fellowship at **St. Hugh's**. Even in the age of the Kindle and iPad, and given his enthusiasm for digitalization with all that this means for the democratization and dissemination of knowledge, **Richard** believes in the power of the book itself. It has a history going back way beyond the invention of printing and a cultural legacy of four thousand years. The great **Bodleian Library** is a storehouse of this heritage. And its twenty-fifth librarian wants to ensure that it is enjoyed by all: way beyond the confines of Oxford.

Determined to share the **Bodleian's** treasures, **Richard** divined an opportunity to write a new chapter in its history. This metamorphosed into the **Weston Library** Project, which would transform the old **New Bodleian**. **Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's Library**, completed in 1940, had been judged innovative in its time and he was recognised as a great architect at the peak of his powers. The grandson of **Sir George Gilbert Scott**, he is famous for such buildings as Liverpool Cathedral and Battersea Power

Station, and for being the creator of the red telephone box, perhaps the ultimate British design icon. Some of his other buildings in Oxford, like the grade-II listed Hartland House at **St. Anne's College**, are still widely admired; **St. Anne's** is going to great pains, with its current £10m development proposals, to make its own **Gilbert Scott** building more visible. **Gilbert Scott's** task at the **Bodleian** was a daunting one. He had to provide a vast bookstore on a limited site in a building that for aesthetic reasons had to be kept low enough to conform with the general height of neighbouring buildings. The answer was to go underground, with four of the floors, which would house 60 percent of the bookshelves below ground level. Given that the water table sits close to street level for much of the year, it effectively meant that the books were lying, literally, in a lake. This uncomfortable truth dawned on the National Archives, who questioned the future of the **Bodleian** as an approved repository for housing archival collections of national significance.

The unprotected columns which formed the building's skeleton presented a fire risk that would be totally unacceptable in any modern library, never mind one that happens to store a **Gutenberg Bible**, the earliest surviving book written wholly in English, two **Shakespeare** first folios, the original manuscript of **Frankenstein**, the papers of six British Prime Ministers, and more than 10,000 medieval manuscripts. Renovating the **Bodleian** created an opportunity to make it an integral part of the environment of Broad Street and transform the old fortress into a fairway for visitors from all walks of life and climes. But it was not just an egalitarian dream, it was a necessity and it was to cost over £78m, which by hook and by crook was found. **Wilkinson Eyre Associates**, architects, stunning design respects the building's heritage while modernising the infrastructure: replacing the central stack, the development of three floors of secure storage below ground level, the provision of additional reading rooms, and the creation of dedicated spaces for curation and conservation. The new glass frontage facing out to Broad Street will entice the public to come in from the street; it was not open to them in the past. "People will even be able to see books from the street," said **Sarah Thomas**, **Richard's** predecessor. Shafts of light will illuminate the new exhibition galleries and learning spaces, and the atrium, which will provide a place to meet over coffee, leads off into rooms with both permanent and temporary exhibitions.

Bodleian exhibitions already attract about 100,000 visitors a year; the new exhibition rooms will bring more opportunities for more people. But crucially, the **Weston Library** will serve an ever-widening commonwealth of scholars, providing them with better facilities while reaching out to the local community and the next generation still at school. It is a model of egalitarianism and a gateway to treasures as yet rarely seen. But **Richard's** remit, as head of the **Bodleian Libraries**, is far wider. He is at the helm of a national and international cultural and scientific institution, engaging in collaborative projects worldwide while ensuring that his staff has the requisite skill set. His task is enormous. As higher education becomes increasingly glob-

al, connected by digital mediums, devising ways to meet the demands of users will challenge even someone as stalwart as **Richard**. Yet the **Bodleian Libraries** are under-resourced and **Richard** is hard on the heels of possible donors. He spares no effort as he travels the world, and he has a host of entrepreneurial solutions up his sleeve, such as licensing, publishing, and retail. "As we move further into our fifth century as a library, our challenges can be summed up in one sentence: matching the legacy of the past with the promise of the future."² And the future is bright with **Richard's** plan to open the **Bodleian's** treasure trove to the world.

The first exhibition planned after the **Weston Library's** public opening on 21 March 2015 is **Marks of Genius**, which will feature some of its prized gems. A preview of this exhibition, made possible by the generosity of **Julian Blackwell**, will be on show at the **Morgan Library** on Madison Avenue in New York. It will feature approximately sixty rare and exceptional objects from diverse disciplines that serve as points of departure for exploring some of the fundamental meanings of genius. The ways in which genius has been cultivated, recognized, and venerated will be explored through such works as early manuscripts of **Euclid's Elementa** and **Gregory I's Regular Pastoralis**, the oldest book written in English; an Arabic manuscript book of constellations; a unique papyrus of **Sappho's** poems; the copyright deposit copy of **Shakespeare's First Folio**; a thirteenth-century manuscript of the *Magna Carta*; the definitive account of Aztec civilization; the manuscript of **Handel's Messiah**; **J. R. R. Tolkien's** drawings for *The Hobbit*; and **Mary Shelley's** manuscript draft of *Frankenstein*.

Bodley's new librarian has struck gold, and he will be registering his mental thanks with the unknown bookseller who first inspired him in Deal. But the Libraries of Oxford have struck a more than good deal. **Richard** has already proved to be a living treasure and his ability to juggle many portfolios, not least the delivery of the **Weston Library**, has the hallmark of genius.

*Rita Ricketts, Oxford, February 2014. Rita's latest book, **An Oxford Education**, will be published by the **Bodleian** in 2015. That she has been able to complete this work, enjoying all the benefits of Oxford's institutions, is largely due to the generosity and encouragement of **Richard Ovenden, Julian Blackwell**, and the **Warden and fellows of Merton College**.* 🌿

Endnotes

1. In addition to the completion and opening of the **Weston Library**, a smaller scale specialist library for Chinese studies, within the university's new China centre, will be developed. Together with **Sarah Thomas** he has already overseen the construction of a high-tech nine million volume book storage facility, giving the **Bodleian** decades of growth in the storage for its physical collections.
2. Interview RO by **Claire Shaw**, *Guardian*, Wed 7 Aug. 2013.