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Transcript

Seun Sowunmi

Hi everyone and happy New Year to our lovely listeners. Welcome to the Oxford Student Voice, our podcast here at the Oxford SU, where we talk to staff and students from across the university about issues in Oxford that matter to us. My name is Shaman Shiomi and I'm the president for undergraduates and today I'm joined by Ant Burton from the Bodleian Libraries. and we're going to have a little deep dive into all the goings on at our beloved libraries. So over to you, Anne. Give us a little introduction to yourself and what you do at the Bodleian.

Ant Brewerton

OK, thanks, Shyanne. Well, can I first thank you for inviting me along to talk today. I always love working with the SU, as you know, and it's been great working with you this year. So thank you for inviting me along to be one of your interviewees. I'm Anne Brewerton and I'm one of the senior team at the Bodleian. My job title is I'm Associate Director for Academic Library Services and Keeper of Collections, which is a pretty cool job title, also a pretty long job title. So what does it actually mean? Well, it means I work a lot with the teams that support students, academics and researchers and members of the general public as well. My guys acquire the books for your reading lists. They run the reading rooms in our 23 libraries across the city. They support students with their academic skills. They make our fabulous special collections available physically and digitally as well. They put on exhibitions and events to engage with the university community and also the local community. It's all the sort of front facing bits of the library. And I always think it's about working with our collections, but it's also about working with people. And I came into librarianship because I like working with books. But I think actually what I really like is working with people. So it's a marvellous combination for me. So it's a role I love.

Seun Sowunmi

That's really beautiful. How long have you been at Oxford?

Ant Brewerton

Well, I've been in my post for nearly four years. I looked on the calendar yesterday because I've got a mark on my calendar. I think it's in March that I've been here four years. But also, I was an undergraduate here. That was a while ago, and I spent a lot of my time, I suppose, when I was an undergraduate in the History Faculty Library, as it was called then, and also my college library at Worcester. But I think most of my essay crises were usually spent in the Rad Cam. I spent a lot of nights in the Rad Cam. What was your degree in?

Seun Sowunmi

History at Wadham.

Ant Brewerton

I thought you were a historian as well. So I think, you know, us historians, we spend a lot of time in the grad cam and sadly I probably, looking back at those years, probably spent too much time looking at the magnificent ceiling rather than writing magnificent essays. But hey ho, such is life. And then after that, after graduating, I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do and I ended up getting a job in the philosophy library and I just loved it. I loved working with the students and I thought, well, if I'm going to do this, I'm going to become qualified, become a librarian. So I went off to Leeds and got my library qualification. And since then I've worked in quite a lot of university libraries. So I worked at Brookes, I worked at Reading and I spent quite a while working at Warwick as well. But it was really, really nice to get the job in Oxford because it really just felt like coming back home. And so it's been great. It's been really, really good to be back in Oxford. Interested to see how Oxford's the same, but also how Oxford's changed. and changed for the better in many ways. It was great when I was here, but it's interesting looking at things around diversity, seeing how we've changed. So it was really, really great to be back home.

Seun Sowunmi

That's good. That's really good. I can't wait to celebrate when your four years comes up.

Ant Brewerton

Oh, I'm sure there's a cake somewhere. Trust.

Seun Sowunmi

What is your favourite item or book or even collection within the libraries?

Ant Brewerton

As my job title is, I was thinking about my job title and as its keeper of collections, I probably have to say that the collections are sort of like my children. So I obviously, I love them all equally. I love them all equally. But if I was going to recommend one of

them to you today, I think one of the things, one of the collections I think, which I think is really, really great and really important and sometimes overlooked by some people, is the John Johnson collection of printed ephemera. Ephemera, of course, is the stuff that people normally throw away, stuff that's not meant to last. And printed ephemera is usually things like bus tickets, sweet wrappers, gig flyers, political publications that you get handed in the streets, also the placards that people use on protests. They're all things that get thrown away. And John Johnson was the printer at Oxford University Press. And he basically kept the things that people throw away. And at the time, I think his colleagues thought he was mad. They thought, why are you keeping all this rubbish? But I think we're grateful today because he's preserved our day-to-day history. And I think it's interesting because it captures history, it shows social mores, but also it really triggers thoughts. Sometimes you'll see something, you think, I remember that. It's like when you watch a television programme and they got this sort of continuity right and then they're showing something from your youth and you think, I remember when Corn Flakes used to look like that. And he's captured all of that stuff. And I think that's a really, really important thing because it's sort of like capturing our history. So we try to capture, still capture things today. So when the Queen died, for example, we collected memorabilia about that, when the new King was crowned, we collected memorabilia about that. I think at the moment the guys are focused. interested on things like weddings. So looking at weddings and my niece got married last year and she had her own printed menus and things like that and they were completely different than you would have got 20 years ago or 30 years ago. So I think it's important to collect that and I think one of my proudest moments was saving some protest banners that have been tied around the railings around the Rad Camp and it was about the war in Ukraine and it was they were really touching. They were sort of an artist had done screen prints of people who had died in the war. And it was just absolutely beautiful, absolutely touching and really it was time. And we always leave those sorts of things up for a few days and then they were gone. And I thought, oh, I hope they haven't been thrown away. And I'm glad we were able to save them. And the last time I saw them, I was in the John Johnson office and they were in a great big bag to be catalogued. So I think that's really important. I'm just going to mention one other thing. I think probably the strangest thing, one of the strangest things in our collection, we've got loads of great things in our collection as I'm sure students know, but we've got one of my colleagues collects artist books. So some of them quite small print runs and I think one of the strangest ones in the collection is by an artist called Ben Denza and it's called 20 Slices. And what it is, 20 slices of processed cheese bound in a book. Is it mouldy? No, it's not mouldy because when we bought the book, we thought, well, we can't just put it on a shelf in the Bodleian, so we had to buy its own fridge. So it's got a fridge with it as well. So that was that was one of the hidden.

Seun Sowunmi

How did you borrow that?

Ant Brewerton

My colleagues use it very often when we have show and tells for special collections. People will come in and they'll expect to see some of the sort of like the Shakespeare's and some of the political things from the past. But they're really surprised when you see a book which is made of processed cheese. I think some other libraries have got them and I think some of them have had to replace some of the pages of processed cheese. But it is, it's a terrific, but it shows, but it's really good because it makes you think what is a?

Seun Sowunmi

That's true.

Ant Brewerton

What is information? What is knowledge? What is art? And it's really, really, really good for those conversations. You weren't expecting me to say that today, were you? I was not. I was really not.

Seun Sowunmi

My goodness. What is the oldest or most expensive book in the Bodleian collection?

Ant Brewerton

Right, this is really, in many ways, it's a really difficult question. I think the oldest items predate books. And I was talking to my colleague, the head of special collections, and he suggested, one of the things he suggested was that we have fragments of Plato's lackeys, I think it's called. It's his dialogue on courage, and it's from the 3rd century BC, and it's written on papyri. So that's really, really old. And obviously, that always has issues. It hasn't got its own fridge, but there are issues about how we can serve and protect and keep books like that. We have a copy of Shakespeare's First Folio, of course, and I think there's some videos on YouTube with some academic colleagues talking about that. We've got 4 engrossments, 4 versions of the Magna Carta. So some of the really, really important publications from history. As to value, different books are of different value to different people, of course. And I suppose when I was an undergraduate, I think the book which probably had the most value was the one I hadn't been able to get hold of for writing my essays. And I'm sure we, I have distinct memories of being in the history faculty library with a list of books. And there was a book I thought, oh, there it is, just to see someone's hand reach. I'm sure, I'm sure you've had that. I'm sure a lot of your listeners have had that as well. Reaching out and getting that thought. I haven't got it now. So that was at that moment in time, that was probably the most valuable book in the world as far as I was concerned. Of course, if something is unique

and some of the things in our special collections are unique, you can't go out and buy a replacement. So that's a sort of element of value. So value is complicated. It also depends on the market because some things go in and out of fashion, as you can imagine. For printed books, we do have a copy has been listed on our web pages before when there's been discussions about valuable books. We have got a copy of the Bay Psalm book, which is sometimes called the first printed book in colonial North America, which was printed in 1640. And there's very few of those survive. I think there's about 11. who survive. And occasionally they go, obviously we look after ours and keep ours, but sometimes you'll see people selling those and they go out to auction. And I think it's described as the most expensive book ever sold at auction. I think the last one was sold for something like \$14 million a few years ago. So a hugely expensive book. But as I say, you know, if something can't be replaced, how do you assign value? And as I say, I think there's loads of really And as I say, people have different reasons for the value. What I would say is you can buy a cheaper version of that book from the Bodleian Shop if you want to read it. So that's a slightly cheaper alternatives.

Seun Sowunmi

I'll be there today.

Ant Brewerton

Okay.

Seun Sowunmi

Do you have a favourite library in Oxford?

Ant Brewerton

Again, I could never say I have a favourite library. In the same way, I can't say I have a favourite collection. I don't think that'd be fair. I suppose I'd have to say I do have a soft spot for the Radcab. going back to my student days, of course. I do sometimes think I might have written better essays if I'd spent more time in the Gladstone Link rather than the Radcam. But it is so beautiful, the Radcam. And I had some visitors the other day and sometimes we take them on tours around and occasionally I'll take them into the Radcam and it's just magical when you go in there. And it's also, but also as a working library, it's just great how popular it is. Always really popular with the students. As a local resident, I suppose I've been a fan of the Western for a long time, and the Western was 10 last year, so I must have been going there for a long time, going into the cafe and visiting the brilliant exhibitions. Since I've worked here, the Radcliffe Science Library has reopened and we've got the Humanities Library, which I think they're both brilliant libraries. Do you like the Humanities Library?

Seun Sowunmi

I really, really like it. I like all the different like spaces, especially like just outside the Humanities Library where they've got like the big group tables and stuff. I like sitting there doing work with some of my friends.

Ant Brewerton

Yeah, I love working around there because, you know, I don't... When I worked in Warwick, we had this place called University House, which was a big sort of big atrium, had a big atrium, and all the staff and the students would all mingle in there. And it hasn't really felt like we've got somewhere like that, but I think we've got that now when you look in the atrium area of the Schwarzman building. And Humanities Library is just brilliant. It's really, from day one, we had really good feedback from the students. So, I think they're both pretty cool. I suppose a surprise contender for me. and you're probably going to find this a bit strange, but you might agree with me, because I know you've been there, is the collection storage facility in Swindon.

Seun Sowunmi

I love that place. It's so good.

Ant Brewerton

Isn't it great? It's amazing for any people who haven't visited. It's like, I suppose it's like an Amazon warehouse, really. Oh.

Seun Sowunmi

My God, it is shocking, guys. We need to post it on our Instagram. It's so massive. Like, I... you think there's a lot of books like in the rad cam, just go there and you'll be stunned. And.

Ant Brewerton

It's got these little automated trucks, aren't they? They'll go whizzing around and they'll go along an aisle and the aisle is just so tall and all of a sudden they go, wee, right up. And then they come and pick off the items of stock. So unlike the libraries where they're arranged by subject, they're just arranged by how they come in. So it reads a barcode and it knows because it's got Sort of an electronic map in its head, I suppose, where to go and find this, and it picks these out and sends them off to the reading rooms, and it's absolutely, absolutely... When I first went there, some of the staff there, they said to me, so what, they said, what's your favorite library? And I said, oh, it might be the Radcap. And they said, wait till you see this. And it is, it's absolutely amazing, absolutely amazing. If you haven't, have a look on the internet, do a Google search for the collection storage facility for the Bodleian and you'll be amazed.

Seun Sowunmi

You will be amazed. Trust and believe. Like it's just so. It's just so like busy, even though there's just seven people like running it.

Ant Brewerton

Yeah.

Seun Sowunmi

Like you don't even like, you can't even imagine the amount of work that just goes into getting your book for you the next day.

Ant Brewerton

Yeah.

Seun Sowunmi

Click and collect.

Ant Brewerton

Click and collect. And I think there's about 10 million items in there. Yeah. It's absolutely astounding. And it's and it's there's the books there, of course, but you know, I mentioned John Johnson. I first time I was there, I discovered a whole drawers and drawers and drawers of posters from the John Johnson collection. So lots of really great stuff there. So and it's really good that stuff's available for students. Students should borrow. Get your orders in early and you get them the same day.

Seun Sowunmi

The students really value our library spaces, clearly. What have you been doing recently to improve these like study environments?

Ant Brewerton

I think that's a really important question because improving study spaces is one of the strategic priorities of the Bodleian libraries because I think people very often think of the old buildings and they think of the collections and the old books and the valuable books and things that we've talked about already. But for a lot of our students it's really a study space, a really important study space. And we've got a whole variety of study spaces. Sometimes I do a talk for new members of staff. And I've got a slide which shows the variety of study spaces. And it's incredible to believe that these are all bodily in libraries. They look so different. You know, you've got the RadCam on one hand, and then you've got the library in the business school on the other hand, completely different. When I started at the Bodleian in 2022, we just had the results of our reader survey. Now we do the reader survey every three years. It's a really good way. I'm sure you filled it in before and I'm sure a lot of your listeners have. And it's a really good way of us for us to

understand what's working and what isn't working so well. I'm glad to say that this year our results have been really, really good, really positive, but there's always stuff we can do better. And then when I got here in 2022, The result was I thought, this is quite good. This is the library service is quite good. But I was surprised there was quite a few negative comments about the spaces, specifically about things like chairs, about desks, about the comfort of spaces, about access to group study spaces and the effectiveness of Wi-Fi. And there's a lot on Wi-Fi. Some of you might remember a few years ago. But I was really struck by how much there was about how uncomfortable some of the chairs are. Because I suppose I'd previously worked at Warwick and we'd got, I suppose, quite sort of modern furniture there. But of course, if you've got a heritage site, like let's talk about, you can't have bean bags. You've got to think about what fits in with the heritage site. So that was a real, that really struck me as how do we improve the comfort for the students, but also maintain that sort of heritage feel. And we've done a lot to address comfort over the last few years. As I said, the RSL and humanities are wonderful additions and student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from day one. We have collected post-it notes with their comments on. Thanks to philanthropic support, we've also put more comfortable heritage style chairs in the RadCam. As I said, we've refurbished the desks and replaced the carpets. The chairs were the most popular, though, I think I'd have to say, because we always, because we have the survey, we always try to capture feedback after we've made changes. And I think my favourite piece of feedback was a Post-it note, which just read, My back, thanks you.

Seun Sowunmi

That's really sweet.

Ant Brewerton

Because I think if you know what it's like, students, we study in for hours and where I can. And if the chairs are uncomfortable, it does. it does affect you physically. So I was really pleased to see that. We've recently invested in new monitors because people want to plug their laptops into the monitors, height adjustable desks and ergonomic chairs in several sites. And we've worked with IT services to improve the Wi-Fi because IT services look after the Wi-Fi that we work. with them. And in 2022, I checked, I checked the figures, we had 422 negative survey comments about Wi-Fi. This year we were down to 11.

Seun Sowunmi

Wow.

Ant Brewerton

So that's really, really, really, really improved. And that's great because we want to make sure that students have got a good environment to work in. Yeah.

Seun Sowunmi

There's a lot of effort being put into that.

Ant Brewerton

And I think it's really great to see the response to the students. But we also worked with the students. So one of the things we did before we changed the seats, we said, what do you want? And we had a flip chart.

Seun Sowunmi

I remember it.

Ant Brewerton

Yeah.

Seun Sowunmi

I was going to study in the RadCam that day and I saw it and I was like, oh, why do they want me to I just put stickers on which one I liked, but I did it anyways. To see the change was really nice.

Ant Brewerton

Yeah, so you could see that some, everybody wanted a padded seat and a padded back. Some people wanted arms, some people didn't want arms. So we bought padded seat, padded back, some with arms and some without arms.

Seun Sowunmi

Catering to everyone.

Ant Brewerton

Yeah, I think the more we can do that, the better.

Seun Sowunmi

Yeah. Are there any resources within the libraries that could support academic skills that you wish students were more aware of?

Ant Brewerton

I think, as I said at the beginning, I think one of the things that my guys do, my teams, they do a lot with students on their skills, and I think coming to university, there's There's so much information there and you're writing essays in different ways. So I think

it's important to develop academic skills. And so obviously we've got lots of books on study skills, which you'll find. And very often at certain points in the year we'll have displays in the libraries and you'll be able to find those. But I'm going to give you my top two tips for today for improving your information skills. And I think #1 is check out our iSkills programme. Yeah, I think.

Seun Sowunmi

I used it in first year to learn how to use Solo because I was like confused and not understanding it.

Ant Brewerton

Which is great because you come to a new university, you come to university and you need to be able to use Solo because it's a really important tool. So I think that's a really important thing to do. Our IC skills programme even, we've just enhanced. So we've been doing some work over the last year or so to improve it. This offers a huge programme of support. beyond solo, which you can dip into when you need it. And we've developed new pathways to support students at all levels across their time at Oxford, because I think sometimes it didn't feel quite joined up. So you can now sort of see what are the useful things to be looking at. And it covers everything from getting started in Oxford libraries. And I think some people do find them confusing because I don't know about you, but my school library was tiny. It was good. It was one little room. It was one little room. It was one little room. And then all of a sudden here you've got 23 massive libraries around Oxford plus a warehouse in Swindon that we just talked about. Preparing for your literature review, because I think, you know, once you've got your reading list, that's one thing, but once you actually start doing your own research, once you look at the bibliographies in books, and what have you. How do you move on and prepare for a literature review? Referencing a course is important for all of us. Keeping up to date, I think is good, really, because us historians, even us historians, we like to keep up to date, don't we? Yeah, we do. And then, but it also goes to things such as designing a conference poster as well, which I'm going to need that soon. That's another skill. So make sure you come on the iSkill session for that one. We've recently developed new courses on critical thinking with academic sources. And also we're looking at when we're using AI. We've developed when we're using AI to find, analyse and share information sources as well, because obviously that's becoming increasingly important. So that's tip one #1. My other top tip. is get to know your subject librarian, which I think is important because they're invaluable in helping you to find and evaluate information, conduct literature searches, advise on citations and referencing, managing your data and your outputs. And they can also save you valuable time because I remember what it was like being a student. You think, surely I'll be able to find this out by myself. But someone can sort of use their expertise to help you. So They're my two top tips and check out our website for more information. And there's an

extensive list of colleagues who are ready to help you there as well as all the lib guides and things like that.

Seun Sowunmi

We'll be using those sources, trust me. Especially next year, I'm going to need them.

Ant Brewerton

Oh yeah.

Seun Sowunmi

So Oxford is constantly changing and as it becomes more diverse, how do we ensure that the body and libraries are inclusive?

Ant Brewerton

Again, this is something we're doing a lot of work on this, and this is really close to my heart. As a student from a working-class family and the first to go to university, I found Oxford great. I really, really loved Oxford academically, but it was a bit unlike anything else I'd experienced, and it's a it is it is a strange it's a strange thing to sort of get your head round, and sort of I was doing some work with some of my team, one of my staff across the whole of the Bodleian today, talking about the work we're doing around belonging. And I think the sense of belonging is really, if you want to be successful anywhere, you need to feel that you belong. And I think helping our students to feel belonging is really important. I still sometimes hear students find Oxford daunting, they find some of the libraries a bit daunting. And we're doing a lot to help to break down perceived barriers. I think it's really, really great that the university's equality, diversity and inclusion strategy is called Everyone Belongs. Because you can think about what does diversity mean, what does inclusion mean? But it's really about developing that sense of belonging. And if you feel you belong somewhere, you're going to be more successful, as I say. In the Bodleian, we've actually just started a belonging group. which is developing our strategy for inclusion. We actually had a meeting last week to see how we can actually start to develop work, practical work around some of that. We've done work on representation and review challenging items in our collections before from our colonial past. And we had a project called We Are Our History. which about. And We Are Our History, the name We Are Our History comes from a quote from James Baldwin, who I adore James Baldwin. And I think it's true because all of us, we are our history, aren't we really? Oxford, we are our history. Me and you, we are our own history. And there were some quite challenging things in the collection. And as part of that process, we did some work with local artists, young artists looking at things in the collection. and surfacing those things. And partly using art is quite a good way because you can have a debate and discussion about things. So we had things in there, things which sort of like, there's a version of the Bible. which is called the Slaves' Bible, known

colloquially as the Slaves' Bible, from 1807. And all the stories in the Bible about the enslaved people rising up and getting their freedom in Exodus and things like that, they were taken out. So you're reading passages of the Bible that you're quite familiar with, and all of a sudden it's just blank. And all that story, because they didn't want the enslaved people who were reading this to start having ideas that they could find of freedom. Also, one of the things that we displayed in an exhibition quite recently was this thing called Clark's Map. Clark's Chart of the World, I think is the real title, but it's always known as the Savage's Map because it shows different parts, and it shows different parts of the world and which parts are enlightened and which bits are savage. And it makes these assumptions that, obviously Europe is, refined. Other parts of the world are not. And it's amazing. What's also really amazing, we've got one from 1822, and it's the 2nd edition. So someone's done this once and then they haven't thought, this is a terrible thing to do. How can we make these assumptions? They've done it again. But it's important that we face up to this because these were the feelings and the thoughts of the time. And we need to look at that. We need to, you know, we're historians. You need to know the past to understand the future. And I think it's been really important that we've sort of surfaced some of this stuff. And we had really, it was really, they were really, really good exhibitions, but it was great talking to people from particular communities saying, This is great, but you need to do more, and I think that that's really important. I'm proud to say that the We Are History Project, we won the VC's award for commitment to ED&I with that. But to say, there's a lot more we need to do. So now we're doing some more work looking at digital bodily and making sure that that's diverse because in the past you might have collected books with a Western focus. Nowadays, the danger is that your digital outputs have got a Western focus as well. So you need to make sure that they're more inclusive. It was great to work with you on Black History Month.

Seun Sowunmi

Yeah, I loved that. It was amazing.

Ant Brewerton

And I'm sure your listeners know this, but we work very closely with the SU and it was good. We hosted a student panel in our lecture theatre.

Seun Sowunmi

Yeah, in the Western, which was really good.

Ant Brewerton

Which was really good. And we also did some show and tell sessions with things from the special collections and it was great that you came along to one of those and it was really great that the SU promotes that to the students. And I just love it when, I think it

is, It was a couple of years ago I was on the Pride March and I saw all these students with Pride banners and I realised that they'd printed those in our print room as well. So it was great to have that. We're currently doing some work with neurodiverse students and we're looking to see how we can develop stuff, services for them as well. So there's a lot going on. Stay tuned. This is a big area of focus for us.

Seun Sowunmi

Watch this space.

Ant Brewerton

Watch this space.

Seun Sowunmi

What does environmental sustainability look like at the libraries?

Ant Brewerton

Again, this is another, well, I suppose this is a huge priority for all of us, isn't it, in our day-to-day lives. So I'm glad to see it's a priority for the university, for GLAM and for the Bodleian. And I've got a colleague who's doing a huge amount of work on this. The Bodleian is committed to the two university goals of Carbon Net Zero. and biodiversity net gain, both by 2035. So big areas of work, and as I said, my colleague John is doing a lot of work with that. We've embedded this into our strategy. We've just completed a quite detailed piece of work to understand our carbon footprint and to set ourselves targets, because you talk about your carbon footprint, but what does it actually mean? And our footprint falls into four key areas. So firstly, ours are buildings. So as you know, there's They're all buildings. We've got 23, I think it's 24 sites we've got now because we've got one in Banbury, but it's 23 libraries all across Oxford. So we're sitting in a room and there's an Oxford University banner and I can just see the rad cam on there. So, but we've got buildings all around Oxford. Old buildings, as you say, buildings where we have to have the lights on when people are in there. So we walk past the Bodley in the evening and you can see all the lights on. So there's issues around and you need to heat the reading rooms as well. So there's issues around that. So there's a sustainability issues there. The suppliers we use. So obviously we need to buy the books in. And on one hand, you think, a lot of them are, they must be local. There must be things that we can get locally. And local is good. But by the same time, we're trying to do work where we diversify our collections. So we need to get things from African publishers. We need to be doing more of that. So that's going to have a sustainability issue as well. Our commercial operations have sustainable issues as well. And as you probably know, if you walk through the, around the old library at the weekend, there's lots of tourists there and they've come from somewhere. And there's also things around staff travel that the university's doing. And we sort of obviously seeing how we be more green with

doing that. So we're doing work in all of these areas. I suppose examples of good practice. One of the things we've done, we've got solar panels at OSNI. Over in OSNI, we've got the place where the books come in and we process them. And there's teams at work, some of the systems or teams and other other teams, research support teams, et cetera, are based in OSNI. We've got the team in Swindon, as we say, and we've got solar panels at both those sites. So that's been a good thing to do. We're a member, and you have heard this right, we are a member of the Sustainable Wedding Alliance.

Seun Sowunmi

Okay, sustainable weddings.

Ant Brewerton

Okay. What's that all about? Well, also, if you're on the old library at the weekend, you will probably have seen we do a lot of weddings.

Seun Sowunmi

How to be fair, how soon? Do you mean like people taking like wedding photos like under the bridge of size, like there's like puffy dress, everything, all that kind of stuff?

Ant Brewerton

Sometimes they're people who appear in the morning and walk around and just have their photograph taken, but we do have we do have weddings, so we'll have weddings in Convocation House. We have weddings take place and we also have wedding breakfasts and what have you. Have you ever been to one? In the Divinity School? I haven't been to one formally, but we had a training session for the commercial team. They have their own conference. And last year, to show the rest of the Bodleian how the weddings work, two members of staff got married.

Seun Sowunmi

Really.

Ant Brewerton

I hope they didn't really get married because one of them got married properly a few weeks later. But I think one of my colleagues did print off a divorce certificate just to make sure he was okay to get married to his real fiancée. But so we do have weddings. One of the things, all joking apart, one of the things is to help to provide money to do things like develop the spaces and what have you and to keep the bodily and successful and doing some of the things we want to do. We do have a big commercial wig. So, we do weddings, but we have, we're now a member of the Sustainable Wedding Alliance, which is really important to make sure that they're sustainable. We're also working with key publishers on their sustainability goals, as I said, so we can sort of still, you know,

look to get to buy books in from across the globe, but how do we do that? We regularly have digital clean-ups, So the staff will get rid of emails that they don't need and that of course is a sustainability issue. I think in the shop we, if you look in the shop, we used to have our greetings cards wrapped in plastic and they're not anymore. Like a lot of good shops do. And we're reducing air travel as well. We're part of the, in the UK there's a Green Libraries campaign and we're part of that and we're all very active on Green Libraries Week. as well. And we're also leaders in the university's green impact work. So our team that's based at OSNI, Jason and his colleagues, they're especially impressive. And we've been awarded beyond gold in the university's green impact awards on more than one occasion. So really, really good areas of work and something really, really important to us.

Seun Sowunmi

That's lovely. And finally, Students at Oxford, we love TikTok. Are you the one that comes up with the Bodleian's TikToks and which one has been your favourite to film?

Ant Brewerton

Well, I really love appearing in the Bodleian's TikTok videos, as do several of my colleagues, including Bodleian's Librarian himself. So we both appear in quite a few of the TikTok videos along with some of my colleagues in Comms. So there's quite a lot of us. involved in them. Sadly, I don't come up with the ideas. My talented colleagues in our comms team do that. Sometimes they'll come up with sort of new ideas and things which are just done by us. Sometimes... And as TikTok works, they spot things that are trending which might be suitable for the bodily and treatment. So when other people were doing the Prime Minister's dance from Love Actually, my colleagues looked at it and they said, they thought, we can probably do that better. I got an e-mail from Molly who does our social media and she said, would you be willing to do something like this? And then sent me a link to the video. And I thought, go on then. And it was great. And I think we did a really good one. And perhaps it wasn't my dancing. I'm realistic about that. But I think our beautiful reading rooms are also a great backdrop for these sorts of things. And it was really, really, really great fun dancing around the old library, Duke Humphreys and the Rad Cam before opening time. That was great fun to do. I like the lip syncing videos. They're always good fun. And we all seem to do these in about one or two takes, which also keeps them fun, because it doesn't feel like hard work. But I think my favourite one probably remains the Gen Z video, where I was going around and explaining the whole of the Bodlian library in Gen Z styly. And that was good fun. That was definitely slay. Yeah.

Seun Sowunmi

You ate that. So thank you so much, Ant, for having this little chat with me.

Ant Brewerton

No, thank you. That's been great fun.

Seun Sowunmi

Honestly, I really, really enjoyed myself. I've learned so much about all the amazing work that you do in the libraries. I think one of the things that's going to stick with me now is the cheese book forever. And if any of our listeners want to learn more about the Bodleian, please check out their website and their social media. Go like Ant's videos. Thank you to our listeners. I hope you enjoyed this episode. I'll speak to you soon. Bye bye. Bye.