

## **Chair's Report 2017-18**

### **Mission**

Publishing is a major industry in Oxford and the surrounding area. Since its inception in 1997, the Oxford Publishing Society (OPuS) has been committed to providing the Oxfordshire publishing community with education and networking opportunities through an annual programme of events. The Society is a not-for-profit organisation, and is reliant on your continuing support and involvement. We are delighted that for 20 years now the majority of our members, large and small, continue to renew their membership and we continue to attract new members from a variety of publishing sectors.

### **Activities**

Attendance continues to be good: we regularly received 50-80 attendees at events in the past year. As always, our thanks go to the event organisers, the speakers, and to Oxford Brookes for providing the venues and catering. For a summary of the past year's events, please see below.

### **Past Events (in reverse chronological order)**

#### **November 2018: Publishing in China - What's Next?**

Our November speaker event, in collaboration with the Confucius Institute at Oxford Brookes was a lively discussion about the future of the Chinese publishing industry – and what it means for the UK publishers who want to access it.

With a population of over 1.4 billion people, China is the biggest market in the world – and with the book market estimated at over £14 billion, this means big business for publishers. With the organisers of the Beijing International Book Fair (BIBF) reporting an increase of 30% in the number of publishing professionals attending this year, international publishers are clearly keen to get a piece of the action.

Our speakers were:

Angus Phillips, Head of the School of Arts and Director of the Oxford International Centre for Publishing Studies and The Confucius Institute, Oxford Brookes

James McCall, Visiting Lecturer and Professor in International Publishing at various Chinese universities and consultant to donor agencies and governments on textbook publishing policy

Su Yen Hu, Director of Snowflake Books, an Oxford-based independent publisher of children's books drawn from ancient Chinese fairy stories and legends, with full texts in English and Chinese

#### **September 2018: Careers in 21st Century Publishing**

Our September event was an inspiring discussion about how to develop a career in the publishing sector - from getting entry level positions, to moving between different roles, to looking for opportunities outside of the traditional publishing company. Our trio of speakers, Ian Campsall (Elsevier), Aaron O'Dowling-Keane (Sherlock: The Game is Now) and Saskia Watts (Vitalsource/Ingram) had some great insights on skills building and career development, based on their own varied experiences of the industry - as well as touching on the importance of a healthy work-life balance.

Our amazing sponsors, Atwood Tate wrote a blog post where you can read more about the event: <https://blog.atwoodtatepublishingjobs.co.uk/21st-century-publishing-careers-oxford/>

### **August 2018: OPuS and SYP (Society of Young Publishers) Joint Summer Party**

### **May 2018: Bookselling Today - Different Perspectives**

Our pre-summer event addressed the topic of how booksellers are innovating for the 21st century. Focusing on topics such as how independent booksellers are diversifying and organising more events in order to survive in a competitive marketplace, this was an important and informative discussion for anyone in the consumer publishing sector.

Our speakers were:

Ian Collett, owner The Bookstore, Abingdon.

Adam Hewson, Company Director Hewson Books Ltd, owner Kew and Sheen bookshops and head of book buying Royal Horticultural Society bookstores.

Rachel Phipps, owner The Woodstock Bookshop

### **March 2018: Securing Trust and Reliability in Scholarly Publishing**

In a background of 'fake news', technology breaking down barriers and authors exercising their right to pay to publish - the issue of trust has never been more pertinent in the world of academic content. Focusing on their own specific experience in an industry needing to secure trust and academic credibility, three speakers from a diverse range of companies gave their unique insight into the vital issue of editorial standards.

Our speakers were:

Catriona Fennell, Director of Publishing Services, Elsevier

Chris Graf, Director, Research Integrity and Publishing Ethics, Wiley

Pippa Smart, independent research communication and publishing consultant

## **February 2018: Letting Books Be Books: Breaking Gender Barriers in Children's Publishing**

This spirited debate tackled the question of how gender is portrayed and represented in children's books today and whether the industry is doing enough to take on traditionally polarised views of gender. The discussion included the role that publishers and booksellers can play, the question of whether they are 'cultural gatekeepers', and if they have a responsibility to avoid stereotyping gender in the books they commission, develop and promote.

Our speakers were:

Fen Coles, Letterbox Library

Beth Cox, Inclusive Minds

Megan Perryman, Let Toys be Toys

## **December 2017: Eat, Drink and Be Merry Christmas Party with Bookmachine**

## **November 2017: The Future of Illustrated Publishing**

This event discussed the future of the illustrated publishing sector - from co-editions to print-on-demand to the next significant developments to come. Our speakers detailed their own experiences in this fascinating sector to date, and looked at some of the challenges it is facing, along with the potential solutions for the years to come.

Our speakers were:

David Graham, Managing Director, Pavilion Books

Greg Hill, Managing Director, Atlantic Publishing

You can read more about the event on the Oxford Brookes Publishing blog:

[https://publishing.brookes.ac.uk/blog/article/the\\_future\\_of\\_illustrated\\_publishing/](https://publishing.brookes.ac.uk/blog/article/the_future_of_illustrated_publishing/)

## **2019 Programme**

We aim to continue to provide an eclectic mix of event subjects — including new technologies, debates, and initiatives that affect the publishing industry today, alongside our regular summer author event. Future plans include our annual author talk, and an event focusing on illustrated

publishing. We actively encourage members to make suggestions for events they wish to attend. Please give your suggestions to any OPuS committee member.

## **MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RATES 2019**

**Note that they have been held for several years**

Number of Employees Rate

Freelance or Individual £30.00

2–10 employees £45.00

11–25 employees £80.00

26–50 employees £160.00

51–150 employees £310.00

151–250 employees £410.00

251+ employees £775.00

## **Current OPUS committee**

The Committee for 2018-19 is chaired by Polly Silk (OUP), currently there is no Vice-Chair in post.

Mike Gibbons (Taylor & Francis), Membership Officer

Beverley Tarquini, Leander Reeves, and Jane Potter (Oxford Brookes)

Anthony Watkinson (CIBER Research)

James Harrison (Oxford Folio)

Rupert Jones-Parry (freelance consultant)

Jason Mitchell (Elsevier)

Kerys Martin (Wiley Blackwell)

John Hudson (Historic England Publishing)

Helen Newsome, Administrator gives fantastic support to the team

## **Get involved with OPuS**

- Visit the OPuS Website [www.oxfordpublishingsociety.org](http://www.oxfordpublishingsociety.org) to keep up with upcoming events. Please note that we recently moved to this new site and are currently updating some of the information and material available there. Our hope is to be able to add more value to our membership base this year - offering additional services and events that our members will benefit from. If you have any thoughts on this you would like to contribute, please get in touch.
- Join the committee or become your company's in-house OPuS representative! We would welcome any OPuS member who wishes to help us to ensure the continued success of the organisation. Please email Helen Newsome, the OPuS Administrator at [opussecretary@gmail.com](mailto:opussecretary@gmail.com) if you're interested.
- Please continue to attend our events – they are for you.

Polly Silk, Chair

27th January 2019