

## Leader column

# A remarkable archive to be cherished and explored

Described as ‘TED Talks meets Hay Fest’, the fifth annual undergraduate research experience (UGRE 2015) – a student-led event within the Faculty of Arts celebrating exceptional research – provided a timely reminder of the inspirational work of our students and the importance of the Brotherton Library and its Special Collections.



University Librarian Stella Butler with the new archive

In February, I had the privilege of attending UGRE 2015 with its snappy five-minute presentations on subjects as diverse as mapping religions, Anglo-Japanese relations, and the bombardment of Hartlepool in 1914; and some fascinating and interactive research stalls, including insights into Old Bailey trial proceedings, asylum seekers and refugees in Leeds, and medicine in the First World War. All of the students I spoke to talked of the wealth of information, support and resources available to them from the Brotherton Library, including its Special Collections.

We must never take for granted the importance of the Brotherton as one of the UK's most important research libraries, attracting students and scholars from around the world to its rich and extensive print, online and manuscript collections. Alongside the Brotherton Library, the provision in the Edward Boyle, Health Sciences and the St James' University Hospital libraries includes more than 2.8 million print and 500,000 online books and more than 37,000 print and online journals, with two million visitors borrowing three million items every year.

The completion of the Laidlaw Library in a few months time and the complete refurbishment of the Edward Boyle Library – approved by Council in January – over the next two years will enhance the current provision even further. The total cost of these works is £52.2m; sobering when you consider that Lord Brotherton's donation of £100,000 in 1927 paid for the building of a new library in his name.

The Special Collections, housed predominantly in the Brotherton, have some of the finest collections of rare books and manuscripts in the world. Ours is the only library to have five of its Special Collections<sup>1</sup> awarded Designated Status by the Arts Council. This is a mark of distinction, authenticity and quality, and recognises the creative aspirations of the team working under the leadership of University Librarian, Stella Butler.

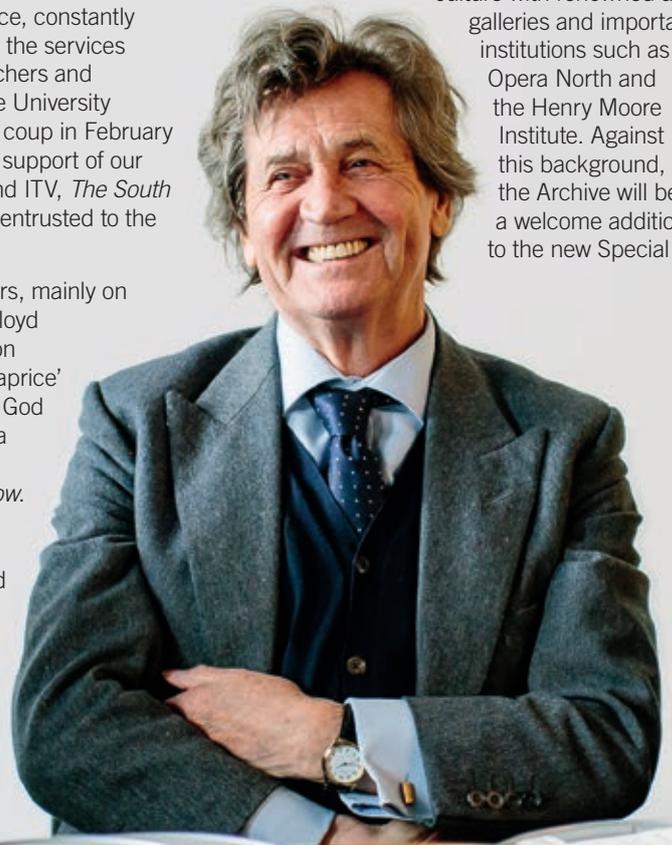
The library is a dynamic place, constantly adding to its collections and the services it provides for students, teachers and researchers. In this spirit the University announced a major cultural coup in February with the news that, with the support of our Chancellor Melvyn Bragg and ITV, *The South Bank Show Archive*<sup>2</sup> will be entrusted to the University.

From 1978 for some 32 years, mainly on Sunday evenings, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Variations* based on theme of Paganini's '24th Caprice' and Michelangelo's hand of God giving life to Adam through a lightning bolt signalled the start of *The South Bank Show*. Conceived and edited by Melvyn Bragg, the show's unique blend of high art and popular culture provided an enjoyable and uplifting close to the weekend for a mass audience.

Now carefully stored in climate-controlled conditions in the University, almost 8,500 tapes and reels of film contain up to 700 hours of footage of interviews with leading cultural figures of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, providing a rich resource for scholars of music, film, theatre, fine art, literature and more. We have been granted an exclusive licence to use the material for educational purposes so, as well as using the archive for research and teaching, we plan to digitise parts of it so that the public can view some of the materials too.

This remarkable archive will be cherished and explored by students, teachers and researchers from around the world, but it's particularly appropriate that it has found a good home in Leeds. More than half the University's students study the arts, humanities and social sciences; and the City of Leeds has a vibrant arts

culture with renowned art galleries and important institutions such as Opera North and the Henry Moore Institute. Against this background, the Archive will be a welcome addition to the new Special



Melvyn Bragg and Vice-Chancellor Alan Langlands





Collections Treasures Gallery funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Jack Brotherton-Ratcliffe family, which is due to open in November 2015.

The great success of the University's Library and Special Collections owes much to the Brotherton family, the inspirational leadership of Stella Butler and her predecessors, and the energy and commitment of generations of staff. In 2014, this success was tinged with great sadness at the loss of Chris Sheppard, who joined the Brotherton in 1979 and was the Head of Special Collections from 1993 until 2012, and Gallery Advisor and Brotherton Fellow from 2012 until 2014.

The University's obituary<sup>3</sup> for Chris described him as "the consummate 'scholar librarian', [with] the gift of being able to express to

others the joy and satisfaction to be gained from literature and, simply, from books." That same joy and satisfaction was evident at UGRE 2015, and perhaps this is the greatest compliment that the University can pay to its library. A memorial service for Chris Sheppard will be held on 6 March 2015.

Alan Langlands

<sup>1</sup> The Arts Council Designated Collections are: the English Literature Collection; the Leeds Russian Archive; the Liddle Collection; the Cookery Collection; and the Romany Collection.

<sup>2</sup> More details can be found at <http://goo.gl/zpPSTa>

<sup>3</sup> An obituary for Chris Sheppard BA, BPhil, MA, can be found at <http://goo.gl/M39vxb>



## Contents

News

Page 4

Infrastructure and sustainability

Page 5

Opportunities for students

Page 6

Research and innovation

Page 7

International/community engagement

Page 9

Valuing our people

Page 10

In the news

Page 12

Our people/honours

Page 13

News/small ads

Page 14

Events

Page 15

FAQs

Page 16

## About the Reporter

The Reporter is the University of Leeds' staff magazine, produced eight times a year. More than 7,600 copies are distributed to our staff and stakeholders. The Reporter is produced by the Communications team.

If you have an idea for a story, want to write a letter, comment on this edition or would like to voice your opinion about University matters, please get in touch:

Email: [the.reporter@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:the.reporter@leeds.ac.uk)

Tel: (0113) 343 6699

Web: [www.leeds.ac.uk/forstaff/reporter](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/forstaff/reporter)

If you would prefer to receive an electronic copy of the magazine, please email [internalcomms@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:internalcomms@leeds.ac.uk) quoting your staff number or, if you are external to the University, your name, postcode and preferred email address.

The front cover shows Melvyn Bragg speaking at the launch of the archive.