

TAYLOR INSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION

The University acquired the funds for the establishment of an institution for the study of European languages and literature from a bequest from the architect, Sir Robert Taylor (1714-88). His will was contested by his son, Michael Angelo Taylor, who substituted it with an arrangement of his own. This was contested by the University, which finally received its settlement of £65,000 from Sir Robert Taylor's estate by agreement made in November 1835, a year after Michael Angelo died.

Fourteen delegates were appointed by act of Convocation on 24 October 1839, to select plans for the construction of the Taylor Institution and the University Galleries, which were separately financed from a fund begun by the legacy of Sir Francis Randolph in 1796. A competition was held for the design of the two buildings, one of which would house the Taylorian library and lecture rooms and the other an art gallery, which later became the Ashmolean Museum. The competition was won by architect Charles Robert Cockerell. Construction began in 1841 on a site in Beaumont Street formerly owned by Worcester College, and by 1844 the building was substantially completed.

The first regulations for Sir Robert Taylor's Institution were approved in Convocation on 10 April 1845 and 4 March 1847. The first Curators, nine in number, were appointed in May 1845, with four of them acting *ex officio*, the Vice-Chancellor, the two Proctors and the Regius Professor of Modern History, with the other five all being members of Convocation and holding office for five years. They met three times a year in the second week of February, May and November and whenever summoned by the Vice-Chancellor, five being the number constituting a quorum. Their duties were to nominate the professor and teachers; to appoint the librarian and porter, and to remove them if need be; to appoint a deputy for a limited period, whenever the professor or any of the teachers were unable to carry out their duties in person; to discharge the ordinary and incidental expenses of the building and Institution out of the Taylor Fund; to exercise the general government of the Institution and to carry the regulations into effect; to employ a sum not exceeding £1000 in the purchase of books; and to employ a further sum, not exceeding £100 in each year, in the purchase of books, pamphlets, periodicals and journals. After 1869 the Professor of Comparative Philology replaced the two Proctors, but the total number of Curators remained nine, as there were now six members of Convocation elected. The Curators of the Taylor Institution continue, in 2007, to be a University committee.

The first regulations required one professor to be appointed for a period of five years with the title, Professor of Modern European Languages, and he was to receive an annual stipend of £400. His duties were to lecture on the philology and literature of the principal languages of Europe, delivering a course of not less than eight lectures in each term. The regulations also called for a librarian, appointed by the Curators, who was to receive an annual stipend of £150. His duties were to be resident in the building and to have the superintendence of it; to catalogue and enter books as delivered in a register; and to go through the building each evening to see that all lights and fires had been extinguished.

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The regulations stated that the library was to be open to all members of the University within certain hours during daylight and that the Curators were to make decisions regarding people taking books out of the building. The regulations stipulated that teachers should be appointed at first in French and German, then in Italian as funds allowed. The teachers were to be appointed for five years and received an annual stipend of £150. Their duty was to teach or lecture for four hours daily and they were also allowed to teach privately with the consent of the Curators. The regulations also stated that a porter was to be in attendance at the door, to clean the rooms, to make and attend to the fires, and to be subject to the authority of the librarian. The accounts were to be kept by the Curators and submitted annually to the Delegates of Accounts.

The proposed regulations for the Institution first submitted to Convocation in 1845 provided for the appointment of a Professor of European Languages who was also to act as librarian aided by an assistant, but the statute of March 1847 establishing the first regulations provided for a librarian to hold office under the Curators and to be independent of the new Professor of Modern European Languages. The first librarian, John Macray, was appointed when the first regulations passed in 1847, two years before the Library was officially opened in early 1849. Aside from library duties the post also involved being a resident superintendent until a resident porter was appointed in 1868. The second librarian, Dr Heinrich Krebs, was appointed in May 1871 and remained in office for fifty years. During his time as librarian, Krebs rearranged and catalogued the entire library. The first regulations for the use of books belonging to the Institution, approved in 1856, allowed for the borrowing of books for the first time, but this was strictly regulated. Regulations for the library of the Institution were established in 1866, the year the Library Committee was founded. After May 1869 permission to read or borrow books was not to be given without a quorum of four Curators, and restriction was later placed, by a resolution of the Curators on 11 November 1893, on the borrowing of novels. In 1925, undergraduates with written permission were allowed to borrow novels. From 1906 a number of special libraries were established for students studying particular languages. There was a Seminar Library for research degrees, a German Departmental Library, a French Departmental Library, an Italian Departmental Library and a Spanish Departmental Library.

The need for a policy on book acquisitions led in November 1850 to the appointment of a Book Committee to prepare lists of books to be purchased. These lists, drawn up by the Committee, were submitted by the librarian for approval at Curators' meetings. In November 1866 a Library Committee assumed the responsibility for book acquisitions. In the Library Committee two Curators formed a quorum, and meetings were attended weekly rather than fortnightly as had previously been the case. In addition to the business of the former Book Committee, it was to receive applications for admission to the privileges of the Library, to conduct the administration of the Institution, and on other matters it could prepare reports for the consideration of Board meetings summoned by the Vice-Chancellor.

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In 2000 the University made changes to the governance of its libraries in order to make them an integrated body and created Oxford University Library Services. The Library Committee was replaced by the Committee on Library Provision in Modern Languages from 1 October 2000.

The Swiss philologist, Francis Henry Trithen, was the first to be appointed to the Professorship of Modern European Languages in 1848. Prior to this, two teachers of French and German had been selected in October 1847, with Wilhelm Fradersdorff being the first teacher of German and Jules Bue the first of French. It was at this time that the Curators drew up the first regulations for lectures in the Institution. In 1854 Friedrich Max Müller was appointed to the Professorship. Max Müller was later, in 1868, appointed to the new chair of Comparative Philology and around this time the Professorship of Modern European Languages was abolished. In his new position, Max Müller also became an ex-officio Curator. A teacher of Italian was established in 1856, with Aurelio Saffi being the first appointed to the post. Two years later a teacher in Spanish, Lorenzo Lucena, was appointed. And so by 1858, teaching of the four principal European languages of German, French, Italian and Spanish was chiefly provided by four teachers. The Institution administered a fund, known as the Ilchester Fund, left by the Earl of Ilchester in 1865 for lectures on Slavonic languages. From this time an annual Taylorian Lecture and other special lectures supplemented the instruction given by the teachers. The Slavonic lectures paved the way for the establishment of a Reader of Russian Languages in 1889. William Morfill was the University's first Reader of Russian and was succeeded by Nevill Forbes in 1910, both men later leaving their personal libraries to the Institution. Serge Konovalov was later appointed to the first Professorship of Russian in 1945. A Professorship of German Language and Literature was established in 1907, with Hermann Fiedler occupying the post until his retirement in December 1937, after which he was replaced by James Boyd. In 1909 a Professorship of the Romance Languages was established, with Hermann Oelsner appointed to the first post. In 1919 Cesare Foligno was appointed to the new post of Serena Professor of Italian Studies and in 1932 WJ Entwistle was appointed to the new Professorship of Spanish Studies. A Lectureship in Portuguese Studies was approved by Congregation in 1933. Professor Entwistle was appointed the Director of Portuguese Studies and Antonio Rodrigues was appointed the first lecturer in Portuguese in January 1939.

Taylorian scholarships for undergraduates to study modern European languages were introduced in 1857, with four being available per year, tenable for two years and providing £25 annually. In 1869 these were altered to one scholarship worth £50 and one exhibition worth £25, awarded annually and each tenable for one year. From 1893 two scholarships worth £25 and tenable for one year were available in each of the four languages, offered once in two years, until they were abolished in 1905.

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In 1877 a University Royal Commission undertook, as part of a larger investigation, an inquiry into the teaching of modern languages at Oxford. It suggested the creation of an honour school of Modern Literature. This recommendation slowly gained support and in 1903 a School of Modern Languages was established under a board of studies separate from the Institution. From 1906 the Institution's teachers were given the status of University lecturers and the teaching staff was increased. The end of the annual Taylorian lectures, which were re-founded in 1917, and the abolition of the Taylorian scholarship in 1905, released funds for the support of the new School. An examination in Modern Languages became one of the Honour Schools in the Second Public Examination. The first examination in Modern Languages, covering French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian, took place in 1905. Medieval and Modern Greek was added in 1913, with the establishment of the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages and Literature.

Planning for the extension to the building, which had begun with the purchase of four adjacent shops in 1910, commenced in 1924. In 1931 the design of a new wing for the Institution was undertaken by architect T Harold Hughes and the extension was formally opened by the Prince of Wales in 1932.

The records of the Taylor Institution were transferred to the University Archives by the Librarian of the Institution in 1971. The records were re-catalogued in 2007.

LIBRARIANS OF THE TAYLOR INSTITUTION

1847-71	John Macray
1871-1921	Heinrich Krebs
1921-49	Lawrence F Powell
1949-70	Donald M Sutherland
1970-96	Giles G Barber
1997-2003	Elizabeth A Chapman
2003-	James Legg

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Brock, M G and Curthoys, M C. *The History of the University of Oxford*. Volume VI, Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part 1, 1997.

Firth, C. (1929). *Modern Languages at Oxford 1724-1929*. Oxford University Press.

Oxford University Calendar

Oxford University Statutes

TL 1/7/1, 5 Signed minutes of the Library Committee. 1866-71, 1980-2000

TL 3/1 Regulations of the Institution and Library. 1847-1959

UR 6/TI/3-5, file 1 Taylor Institution, teaching of Portuguese; Taylor Professorship of German; Lecturerships and Readership in German.

Taylor Institution Library website: <http://www.taylib.ox.ac.uk/>

The records are arranged as follows:

TL 1 CURATORS, COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

TL 2 FINANCE

TL 3 LIBRARY

TL 4 TEACHING

TL 5 BUILDING

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