

SITE PORTRAIT

To move
and to
preserve

The Iron Library at Klostergut Paradies is a magnet for academics from all over the world.

Schlatt, Switzerland

WHAT WE know is a drop. What we don't know is an ocean." A wise pronouncement, and one which still has validity even in today's information society. It was formulated by one of the most eminent scientists of all time—Sir Isaac Newton (1643 to 1727), the English physicist, astronomer and philosopher. As the man who discovered the law of gravity, Newton was one of the guiding intellectual forces of his time. In 1687, he published his "Principia Mathematica," the seminal work of modern science and one that is, to this day, considered to form the bedrock of the scientific and technological age.

ONE OF THE precious preserved copies of this work is among the treasures to be found at Georg Fischer's Iron Library. The first edition had a print run of just 20 copies—today, this edition is thought to be worth more than 165,000 dollars. Yet this rarity is just one of many jewels held by Georg Fischer's reference library based in the Swiss town of Schlatt. Today, the company's collection numbers well over 40,000 publications on the subject of iron, and every year a further 450 items join the ranks. Alongside significant works by grand masters such as Isaac Newton, the library also maintains a comprehensive collection of modern day specialist literature. Because of this, the stock of books held at Klostergut Paradies is truly one of a kind. No other private or public collection in the world can offer such a depth of material.

ALTHOUGH THE LIBRARY is supported by the company, it has also been open to the public since 1952. "We're not just a museum for books. Our aspiration is to be both a research forum and a source of inspiration for the staff and guests of Georg Fischer," explains Britta Leise, Chief Librarian for the collection. It is therefore not uncommon for well-known

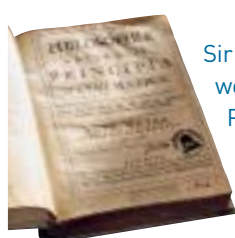


↑ Britta Leise, 41, was appointed Chief Librarian at the Iron Library as of January 1. The historian has been Head of Corporate Archives since 2004.



→1 The Iron Library brings together old and new literature →2 Britta Leise (2nd from right) and her team (left to right): Christof Sulzer, Heike Bazak, Katja Böspflug and Cécile Sturzenegger →3 Britta Leise updating the online catalogue, which covers the entire collection →4 The garden at Paradies

academics from all over the world to spend some of their time working in Schlatt—indeed, Georg Fischer grants researchers access to the full collection. Modern Internet workstations provide optimal



Sir Isaac Newton's key work: *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*

research conditions—the Iron Library is in no way shutting itself off from modernisation. Its entire inventory is administered via an online catalogue which is also available to the public for research purposes. Last autumn saw the forging of a further

link between past and present with the launch of the e-codices project. In the past, individual manuscripts from the library's holdings could not be made accessible to the public due to their high value. In response, they were simply scanned in, and they are now available via the Internet—a textbook example of how to make exclusive exhibits accessible to a wider audience.

"New information channels are giving us the opportunity to direct attention back to the book as a classic medium," explains Leise. "Our credo is: To move and to preserve." Here, the past and the modern age are linked together in a meaningful way in order to help us all make the ocean of what we do not know just that little bit smaller. Which is precisely what Newton was talking about. ■



The Iron Library

A collection that ranks as one of the best science and technology libraries in the world.

40 000

PUBLICATIONS in the library's collection

1500

GUESTS from all over the world visit the library every year

450

WORKS are added to the library's stock every year

The Iron Library in figures

120

GUIDED TOURS are given per year

30

PER CENT of all guided tours are organised for staff and guests of GF

750

MAGAZINE SERIES are available

A PLACE IN PARADISE

Since January, the new Iron Library team has been complete.

→ Heike Bazak, 30, has been with Georg Fischer AG since 2005. The historian works as a research assistant in the historical corporate archive unit.

→ Katja Böspflug, 34, is the librarian for the reference library. She studied English, German and medieval history in Zurich, Sweden and China.

→ Cécile Sturzenegger, 61, has worked for Georg Fischer for more than ten years. She currently holds the position of assistant to the management. She will be retiring in July of this year.

→ Christof Sulzer, 23, has been working with the Iron Library team since March 2006 as a student assistant for specific projects. He will be with the team until the end of July this year.

Useful information



GUIDED TOURS:

By arrangement (also at weekends)

ADDRESS:

Eisenbibliothek
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Klostergut Paradies,
CH-8252 Schlatt,
Tel.: +41(0)526312743,
www.eisenbibliothek.ch,
eisenbibliothek@georgfischer.com

www.e-codices.ch/en