



Department for  
Digital, Culture  
Media & Sport

PRESS RELEASE  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**21,804 GAZETTES AND ORDINANCES HOUSED AT McMILLAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY NOW  
AVAILABLE AS DIGITAL EDITIONS**

The digitisation of archives housed at the historic McMillan Memorial Library began in November 2020, with the provision of public access to digitised archives as the main outcome of this project by Book Bunk. Following the completion of the digitisation of 21,804 gazettes and ordinances identified as endangered due to the effects of climate change, these archives are now available for public access via [www.nrblibraries-archive.org](http://www.nrblibraries-archive.org). The archive comes in time as the library celebrates its 90th year anniversary on 5th June 2021 marking a significant milestone in the history of the country and the library.

Speaking about the launch of the archive, Ms. Wanjiru Koinange, co-founder at Book Bunk and Kenyan author, noted:

*'Access to digital archives has been one of the most popular requests from our library users. So it's a huge milestone to be able to deliver this digitisation. This is only the beginning of a long project and it's been a wake up call for all of us. We're glad to have been able to save some of the library's collection but can't help but wonder what has been lost over the years - here and in other libraries.'*

In addition to preserving the endangered archive and creation of digital access, this work also informs the larger restoration project, which seeks to transform these spaces into accessible and safe community spaces, granting access to crucial services including public co-working spaces. These sentiments were further echoed by Ms. Angela Wachuka, co-founder at Book Bunk and one of Kenya's leading publishers;

*"We are elated to complete the first phase of this digitisation project, with further digitisation of other items including photographs dating back to the 1800s as well as newspapers dating back to 1906 already underway since May 2021. Achieving equitable access to these archives is a main tenet of our overall restoration work, and we look forward to these archives informing research and learning about Kenya's history."*

Following a milestone partnership agreement with Nairobi City County government in 2018, Book Bunk embarked on the restoration of one of Kenya's most iconic libraries - the McMillan Memorial Library on Banda Street, and its two branches in Eastlands; Eastlands Library in Makadara and Kaloleni Library in Kaloleni. This landmark restoration project involves both physical renovations of all three buildings, as well as the creation of digital possibilities that match those of the city. As such, Book Bunk created the libraries' first-ever digital catalogue of items housed across all three branches, consisting of 137,705 items in total. The larger goal is to transform these spaces into centres of cultural leadership, heritage, public art, knowledge production, shared experiences and information exchange.

The project has also created resources to share knowledge around the management, promotion and care of collections through workshops conducted by African Digital Heritage Foundation.

**ABOUT THE PROJECT:** This project was generously supported by British Council's Cultural Protection Fund, in partnership with the UK's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and was delivered in partnership with African Digital Heritage Foundation and the Built Environment Surveyors & Infrastructure Consultancy (BESIC) Group. To access the platform, visit the web page: [www.nrblibraries-archive.org](http://www.nrblibraries-archive.org)

**ABOUT BOOK BUNK TRUST:** Book Bunk Trust is working to restore some of Nairobi's most iconic public libraries into sites of cultural leadership, heritage, public art, knowledge production, shared experiences and information exchange. Book Bunk's flagship project is focused on the complete restoration of the McMillan Memorial Library on Banda Street and two of its branches in Kaloleni and Makadara in Eastlands, Nairobi. In June 2020, Book Bunk completed the physical restoration of the Kaloleni Library, with similar work on the Eastlands branch in Makadara completed in March of 2021. For more information about Book Bunk, please visit our website [here](#).

**ABOUT BRITISH COUNCIL'S CULTURAL PROTECTION FUND:** The British Council's Cultural Protection Fund, in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, supports projects which protect cultural heritage at risk due to conflict or climate change, mainly in the Middle East and parts of North and East Africa. More information on the Cultural Protection Fund is available [here](#).

**ABOUT McMILLAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY, NAIROBI:** Opened in 1931, this library was built by Lady Lucy McMillan as a memorial to her husband, Sir Northrup McMillan, who died in 1925. The oldest library in Nairobi and the second oldest in Kenya, it is the only building in Kenya protected by an Act of Parliament; The McMillan Memorial Library Act Cap 217 of 1938 (revised in 2012). More information about this library is available [here](#).

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Images available [Here](#).

1. Digitation work at the library: <http://bit.ly/CPFVid>
2. President Uhuru Kenyatta applauds Book Bunk's work during the launch of Maktaba Kuu (Kenya National Library Service) in November 2020. Watch [here](#)
3. A Palace For The People: A podcast by Book Bunk about Nairobi's Public Libraries: <https://www.bookbunk.org/media/podcast/episodes>
4. Restoration of Kaloleni Library (completed in June 2020): <https://bit.ly/KaloleniLibrary>
5. Ongoing restoration of the Eastlands Library in Makadara (work to be completed in June 2021): <https://bit.ly/EastlandsLibraryWerk>
6. Cataloguing Kenya's history at McMillan Memorial Library: <http://bit.ly/MMLCatalogue>

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