

**T**his A-Z of the Bodleian Libraries does not claim to be comprehensive – it aims to give an overview, looking at some things old and some things new.

Hopefully readers will emerge feeling better informed as to what happens in the various libraries in the group that come under the central administration located in the Clarendon Building on Broad Street.

### **E** is for Exhibitions

Exhibitions may be more readily associated with art galleries and museums, but these days, they are part and parcel of everyday life in libraries such as The British Library and the Bodleian.

The Bodleian Library puts on two main exhibitions a year in their Exhibition Room in the Old Schools Quadrangle.

Each exhibition lasts for four to five months. Besides those two there are one-day displays, on average one a week, but occasionally two in one week and these are usually displayed in the Divinity School.

There is a large cabinet in the entrance to the Divinity School that also houses a small display at any one time. The Library has a busy loans programme. It lends across the globe, anything from one item to a whole exhibition. The *Love and Devotion* Persian exhibition for example, which ran between November 2012 and April 2013 and displayed rare examples of 13th- to 18th century Persian, Mughal Indian and Ottoman Turkish illustrated manuscripts, was wrapped up and shipped out to be exhibited in Australia after its stint at the Bodleian.

Similarly, the *Shelley's Ghost* exhibition was a collaboration between the Bodleian and the New York Public Library and it told the story of Mary, daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft who married Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'a family blessed with genius but marred by tragedy' as the Bodleian described it.

What type of exhibition could one expect from a library? Ones related to books, well, yes, probably, but not only books.

Head of Exhibitions, Madeline Slaven, explains how important it is to set the scene.

She mentions an exhibition about John le Carré which showed the scissors and the stapler he used, before the advent of computers, as his homemade method of 'cut and paste'. "This showed a sense of process," said Madeline.

Photographs are an obvious addition to books, especially if they are in frames; pens are another evocative choice and Mary Shelley's dressing case alongside Shelley's baby rattle are a window on their world.

"When we marked Charles Dickens' bicentenary in 2012 we sought to recreate the world he lived in, so we displayed contemporary theatre bills, advertisements, plans of workhouses, diets devised by philanthropists for the inmates of said workhouses, ephemera Dickens could have read or even handled in his time," Madeline added.

"An exhibition to mark the anniversary of publishing of the King James Bible in 2011 attracted 60,000 visitors and the children's fantasy books exhibition, *Magical Books: From the Middle Ages to Middle-earth*, broke the 100,000 barrier. Some adults admitted coming to it twice, once with their children



# An A-Z of the Bodleian

As the Bodleian Library prepares for the opening of the £80m Weston Library in the autumn, Linora Lawrence continues her access-all-areas tour around this ancient and celebrated institution

and then alone to revisit their own childhoods. We are going to recreate Alan Bennett's mantelpiece when we do an exhibition about his archive," Madeline said.

It was announced in 2008 that, having been educated at Exeter College, Alan Bennett felt it appropriate to donate his archive to the Bodleian Library.

If you cannot visit an exhibition in person then it may well be documented online. In the case of *Shelley's Ghost* you can visit the Bodleian version and watch a video by curator, Stephen Hebron.

The timeline for an exhibition at the Bodleian is about three years.

"The first thing is a proposal being made.

Then a curator looks at the subject and the collection the library has; a judgement then has to be made as to whether an object has to undergo conservation work before being exhibited and whether or not books or objects may need to be borrowed," Madeline explained.

"Single sheet manuscripts may have to be mounted, next there is photography in order to produce a catalogue and probably postcards. Items may need to be digitalized. The staging has to be planned. Transcripts have to be considered. This is the case of the next exhibition on the First World War, which will

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showcase Cabinet papers.

"Asquith's handwritten letters have proved too difficult to be easily read by the modern eye and transcripts are being made. A series of public lunchtime lectures are usually planned throughout the time the exhibition runs. Guides have to be trained and merchandise may be produced, and the Bodleian has been doing his for 150 years, all for free entry.

"Making connections, that is what curating an exhibition is all about," Madeline concluded.

For the full programme of exhibition and lectures at the Bodleian visit the website: [www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson](http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson)

### Friends for Friends

Formed in 1925 and constituted as a registered charity in 1945, the Friends of the Bodleian is the oldest established 'Friends' charity in Oxford and the oldest for libraries in the world.

"The Friends are jolly good value," explained the chair, Professor McCabe, Fellow of Merton College. "We spend the least possible amount on administration. Only one member of its staff is actually employed by the Friends and that is a part-time post which deals with day-to-day business."

This post is currently held by Calista Meinert. All other expertises come from librarians such as Margaret Czepiel, secretary of the Friends, and other supportive academics.

There is a 16-member council which meets to decide on how the Friends' subscriptions and donations should be spent.

The way it works is that someone, for example the Keeper of Special Collections, will put forward a proposal for the purchase of a rare item that is not in the library's possession. Often the item may add to, complement or complete a collection already in the library. The council will consider the proposal and if they approve and the cost is within their budget they will purchase the item outright.

Or, in the case of a large, valuable archive, such as the Fox Talbot or the Kafka letters, the council will give a grant towards the purchase and this often helps to attract further funding.

Other recent purchases of note are Felix Mendelssohn's final working autograph of *The Hebrides Overture*, Jane Austen's manuscript of *The Watsons*, and an autograph draft manuscript of Gerald Manley Hopkins's famous poem *The Binsey Poplars*.

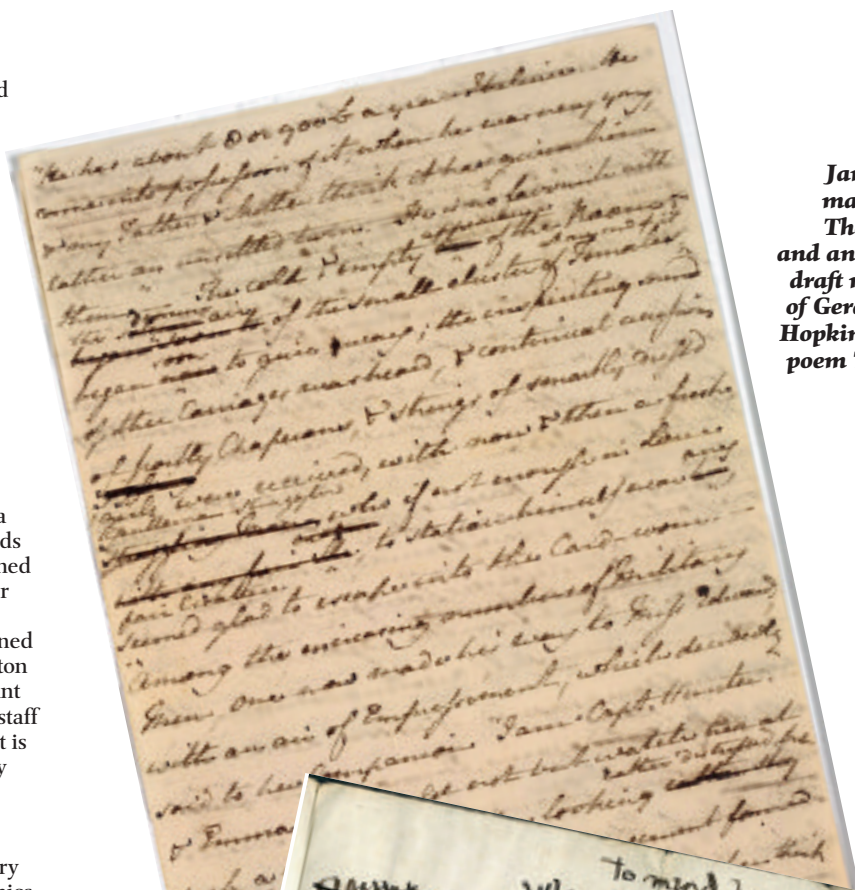
Manley Hopkins was an undergraduate at Balliol College and served as a curate at St Aloysius's Church in Oxford.

Apart from the satisfaction of contributing to an arc of knowledge Friends enjoy two newsletters a year, discounts in the library's shop and café, invitations to openings of exhibitions and various workshops.

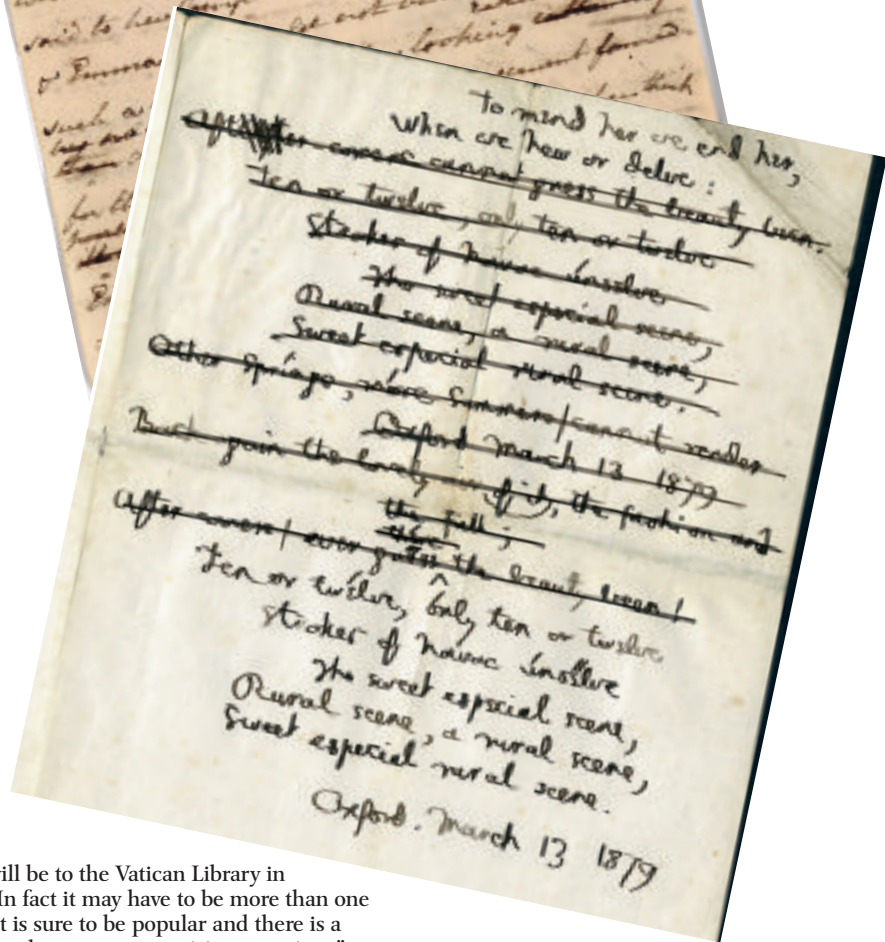
Six free lectures a year (two per term) are part of the Society's Public Benefit. The venue for the lectures is Convocation House in which Charles I held his last Parliament. There follows a wine and sandwiches lunch for those who pay and book in advance and this is laid out in Chancellor's Court.

Concerts and plays are organised and there are regular trips to places of related interest such as Merton College Library and, further afield to Lambeth Palace Library and the National Portrait Gallery.

"We are in the midst of planning our most ambitious trip yet," said Professor McCabe.



Jane Austen's manuscript of *The Watsons*, and an autograph draft manuscript of Gerald Manley Hopkins's famous poem *The Binsey Poplars*



"This will be to the Vatican Library in Rome. In fact it may have to be more than one trip as it is sure to be popular and there is a limit as to how many may visit at one time."

The AGM held in June each year is the event of the season with members invited to a tea party in the Divinity School.

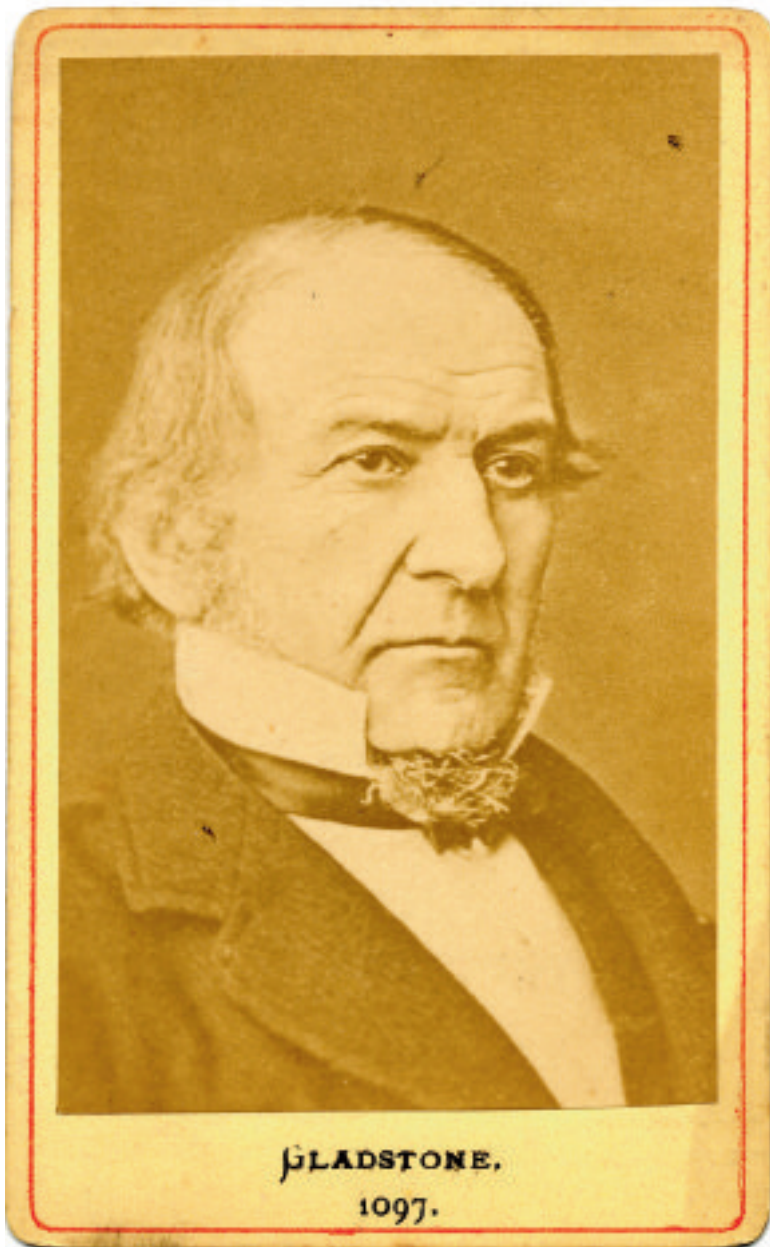
Prior to that they listen to a distinguished guest speaker – last year it was John Carey, Emeritus Merton Professor of English Literature, who spoke on *Dickens and Murder*. Dickens had a particular fascination with murder and public hangings.

This year Professor Jon Stallworthy who, apart from his great academic standing, is a

renowned contemporary poet, will speak on the subject of war poetry, an appropriate topic for this year's anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

"Three years ago we instituted Duke Humfrey's Nights, and they have proved to be tremendously popular," Professor McCabe said.

"On a Saturday close to Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester's birthday in October, approximately 50 items are displayed in Duke Humfrey's Library in the hope that guests will



*The Gladstone Link where there are still shelves designed by Gladstone, below*

be moved to sponsor either a recently-acquired rare book or unique manuscript or a conservation project. “

Last year there was also a video presentation of the work of Bodleian conservators on its original copy of Shakespeare’s First Folio.

The rest of the time is spent in Duke Humfrey’s Library viewing the display and talking to curators and conservators about their significance.

Last year the oldest item on show were Egyptian papyri dating back to the sixth century AD and the most recent were printed ephemera from the 1950s.

For some this is also a unique opportunity to spend unrushed time absorbing the very special atmosphere of Duke Humfrey’s Library. The viewing ends with the tolling of Bodley’s bell, which to this day is rung each evening to announce the closing of the library.

Membership of The Friends of the Bodleian presently stands at 1,500 but a drive will shortly be launched to attract another 500 new members. Initial enquiries may be made by telephone to 01865 277234 or by e-mail to fob@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

### **G** is for Gladstone

In 1894, the then Bodley’s Librarian, EWB Nicholson, wrote a pamphlet entitled *Mr Gladstone and the Bodleian*.

In it he records Gladstone’s various visits to the library, letters that passed between them and Gladstone’s great fascination with books in general.

Gladstone’s first visit was in the mid-1880s while staying with the Warden of Keble College. Given that he was the Prime Minister of the country, Nicholson himself took him on a grand tour of the library.

Gladstone was intrigued by the librarian’s perennial problem, how to best use space in order to store the optimum number of books. On one of his subsequent visits he produced a sketch on the back of an envelope, which the Bodleian has still in its possession, depicting his solution.

He envisaged an oblong room with windows at either end (light being essential for reading), a gangway taking up the central third of the



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room and rolling bookcases on either side running on rails on the floor.

As long the books were correctly catalogued and the bookshelves labelled accordingly, one could pull out the relevant bookcase into the gangway and retrieve the desired book.

Nicholson was much taken with this design and he longed to purpose-build a wing according to Gladstone's plan, however the funding simply did not exist at that time, nor could it be raised despite the verbal backing of the Prime Minister who, although supportive of the Bodleian, had his own plans for his personal library of books.

Gladstone went on to build St Deniol's Library (the only residential library in the Great Britain) at Hawarden on the Welsh/Cheshire border which is his living memorial.

Mobile shelving was eventually installed in 1913. The shelves were made by W Lucy and Co, Oxford's famous iron foundry which was, by then, the chief manufacturer of such shelving. Similar systems were also installed by Lucy's in the India Office Library and the Patent Office.

Nicholson would be pleased to know that recently the underground bookstore has been completely reorganised into an extensive reading room with many books on open shelving and this area has been named The Gladstone Link.

**G** is also for gate  
The Great Gates of the library open on to Catte Street. This mighty pair of wooden gates is impressive in its own right but are even more so if one 'reads' them. The Coats of Arms displayed on the gates tell a story.

To a would-be student standing in front of them in, let's say 1600, they were effectively a prospectus.

Reading from the top left across the first coat of arms is, logically, that of the university's; next is that of James I denoting royal patronage and, just to back it up, the Arms of the Prince of Wales (later Charles I); then the colleges that made up the University in order of foundation starting with University College (1249); followed by Balliol (1263); Merton (1264); Exeter (1314); Oriel (1326); Queen's (1340); New College (1379); Lincoln (1427); All Souls (1438); Magdalen (1458); Brasenose (1509) Corpus Christi (1517); Christ Church (1546) Trinity College and St John's College (both 1555); Jesus College (1571) and the newest college at the time, Wadham (1610).

Pembroke was founded in 1624 and is not depicted.

**H** is for Health Care Libraries  
Yes, there is more than one. This overall title originally covered four libraries including the original Cairns Library at the old Radcliffe Infirmary in Woodstock Road.

The library moved 'up the hill' when the new John Radcliffe Hospital was built though it maintained a library presence at the Infirmary until that building ceased to be a hospital.

Having undergone a recent big refurbishment the Cairns library, situated on level three of the JR's main building, is light and airy with a cleverly created sense of space aided by the use of glass dividers, comfortable



seating, floor to ceiling windows with a great view and numerous work stations accommodating a wide range of wireless access.

The other library currently under the Health Care Libraries 'umbrella' is the Knowledge Centre at the Old Road Campus in Headington. Under the care of Eli Harriss, the Knowledge Centre Manager, this provides a service to the Churchill Hospital and supports the teaching and research that takes place on the Old Road Campus.

Head of Health Care Libraries, Donald Mackay, explains that the Health Care Libraries work for both the University of Oxford and the NHS.

They provide services to any member of University Medical Sciences Division and to staff of any grade in the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, be they administrative or clinical.

They work closely with other local hospital libraries such as the Warneford, the Nuffield Orthopedic Centre, the Horton Hospital at Banbury, and with NHS library colleagues across the Thames Valley, Reading and Berkshire, even down to the Isle of Wight.

Working with other healthcare libraries means operating an inter-library loans service and sharing expertise, training courses and facilities. They serve all medical students, teachers, academics, clinicians and research staff and, indeed, anyone who works within the Oxford University Health Trust.

"We see the students at the beginning of their 4th year courses – they would have used the Radcliffe Science Library in Parks Road up to that point. They are then with us through to the end of their sixth year," Donald said.

"The new Book Storage Facility at Swindon has proved to be fantastically useful. It has opened up a lot of space here in the library that can be better used for year when they come up to us having finished their pre-clinical study and training.

"For example, we can now provide areas for E-learning which the NHS is very keen on for statutory and mandatory training."

Unlike the main Bodleian Library, the Cairns is not a legal deposit library. Books held at the Cairns and Knowledge Centre can be borrowed and reference books held at the Book Storage Facility may be ordered electronically and will arrive in Headington often within 24 hours.

As far as the collections are concerned (the books physically stocked) we have not only medical text books but any book relevant to any job in the NHS. That can mean key skills such as English Language Teaching, Numeracy and Literacy, NVQs materials or, for example, books on management skills through to high level clinical research materials.

Donald said: "Recently we have made all the medical books published by Oxford University Press available to our readers online."

This is clearly a tremendous boon given the cost of such publications.

"Another marked contrast to some other parts of the Bodleian is that due to the rapidly changing nature of health care knowledge, most of our books are removed from our shelves as soon as they are ten years old," Donald added.

There is a journals area where staff can relax and browse publications such as the British Medical Journal, but all medical and scientific journals are also available and some are available only online.

This saves on space, though some shelves of older journals are used as sound barriers at key points in the library space, and is more convenient for library members. These days your hospital doctor is more likely to have an app for his journal than a hard copy.

Outreach is the latest buzz word at the Health Care Libraries.

Outreach Enquiry Services Manager, Liz Osborne heads up a term of librarians who each have an area of expertise within the Health Care Libraries.

Liz Callow, for example, covers pediatrics and women's health. Clinical staff members are incredibly busy people sometimes needing to research something quickly and with no time in which to do it. This is where the Outreach Librarian comes in like a Guardian Angel.

The clinician contacts the library with his/her request for information. An enquiry form is passed to the librarian with the expertise in the relevant field and suddenly the clinician has his or her own personal manager, both of course aiming at the same goal – healing the patient.

A quick glance at Liz Callow's in tray reveals a variety of enquiries: a midwife is seeking to update a patient information leaflet; a nurse is researching a new pain assessment questionnaire; someone else is investigating congenital hypothyroidism and so it goes on.

In some cases the librarian goes to the clinician on site but often they prefer the peace and quiet of the library, especially after a shift on a busy ward.

Liz takes her turn on the help desk but says she can work on a literature search during that time.

Donald Mackay is now in his ninth year as Head of the Health Care Libraries.

He is full of enthusiasm for Health Care Libraries, believes passionately in the Outreach programme and thinks the world of his staff. It all makes for a very healthy library. 