Strategy
2022–2027

UPDATE 2024
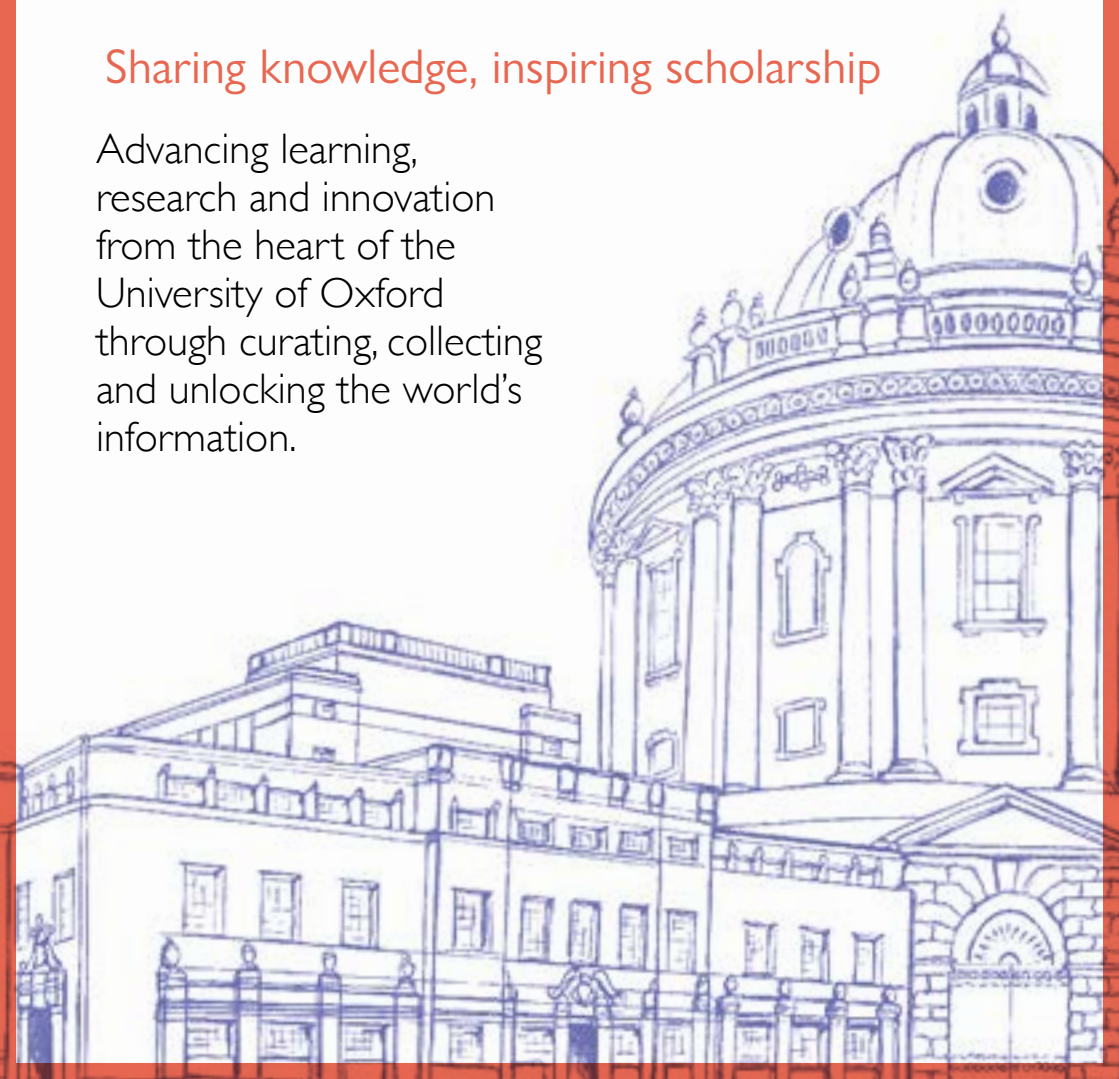
BODLEIAN LIBRARIES
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Sharing knowledge, inspiring scholarship

Advancing learning, research and innovation from the heart of the University of Oxford through curating, collecting and unlocking the world's information.

The Bodleian Libraries has always delivered excellence. So why do we need to change?

Since 1602, the Bodleian Libraries has been one of the foremost research libraries in the world.

It has been more than ten years since I became the 25th Bodley's Librarian. Since then, we have acquired millions of books, many miles of archives and manuscripts, expanded our infrastructure for preservation, and welcomed millions of students, researchers, and members of the public to engage with our collections. We have digitised millions of pages from our collections and begun to curate born-digital collections at scale. This work has had a positive impact: we have supported the learning of students, aided cutting-edge research such as the Covid vaccine, and inspired musicians, filmmakers, software developers, and others, to create ground-breaking new work.

Simultaneously, we have had to roll with the punches thrown at us by global crises and conflict: Brexit, the global pandemic, inflation, and the growth of AI, to name only a few. We have all had to adapt in our own lives to ensure we can thrive in a world marked by volatility and uncertainty. We are listening to our workforce of 500+ colleagues, taking great interest in the challenges they face now, and those that they envisage facing in an uncertain and exciting future.

As we reach the halfway point of our strategy, we are channelling everything we've learnt so far into three galvanising actions: *Sustain, Enhance,* and *Transform*. We have many projects and initiatives underway. We have completed some, are part-way through many, and just beginning to start others. Where things work well, we will keep doing them. Where they could be better, we will improve them. Where they are no longer fit for purpose, we will use insights and information to do them differently.

What does this mean for the Bodleian? It means celebrating what we have already achieved. It means being clear about what we want to do next. It means being more agile in the way our projects adapt to the fast-moving world in which we live: the availability of resources, financial, human, and technological. It means focusing our efforts where they will have the most impact and stopping or reducing activity in response to our users' feedback.

We aim to maintain excellence every day across our library system and the services we deliver. Yet excellence is not a 'one and done' deliverable. This means making a continuous commitment.

Our strategy is simply a tool to help us focus our efforts on the most important things that we must do. It does not embrace all our core activities, but it highlights those that need us to make a push to create, improve, or enhance. It embraces all our staff, and our users.

As the digital world continues to change and grow, the emphasis within the strategy on engaging more deeply and urgently with the challenges of AI, social media, and other developments is timely, but poses interesting questions for a centuries-old library in how its staff, buildings, and services must respond to the realities of the world we live in. We must recognise that these are not threats but opportunities. I also see them as a responsibility. Our predecessors made bold judgements about collecting and curating materials that have enabled the formation of entire fields of scholarship. What contribution can the Bodleian make to learning in the 21st century, that our successors will give thanks for? I can't wait to work with our colleagues and users to answer that question!

RICHARD OVENDEN, BODLEY'S LIBRARIAN

How & why are our **services** changing?

ANT BREWERTON ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARY SERVICES

Today's readers expect far more from the Bodleian than just access to information.

Supportive environments that enhance learning, research, and wellbeing, are equally valued. With ongoing improvements at historic sites such as the Radcliffe Camera and Radcliffe Science Library, as well as the upcoming Schwarzman Centre, we are listening to our community and redefining what a library can be. Our space improvements are designed to accommodate a variety of study preferences and research activities, ensuring your needs are met whether you seek quiet contemplation or collaborative study.

Meeting the needs of the people using our libraries remains at the heart of everything we do. We are making it easier to use our libraries, unifying physical lending rules and improving our digital collections. More readers will be able to access and borrow from our world-class collections both across Oxford and from our knowledge warehouse in Swindon.

We can also make things simpler for our readers by making collections more accessible and equipping them with information skills to critically evaluate sources and use technology responsibly. Our goal is to support our readers to become better researchers and digital citizens.

From undergraduate and postgraduate students, to researchers, international visitors, and the Oxford community, our audiences are wide and varied. It is important to us that the Bodleian is somewhere that everyone feels welcome and included, and we continue to collaboratively design our library services and public programme to this end. Our approach will allow us to create tailored services that support scholarly pursuits and improve readers' sense of belonging at the Bodleian.

Amidst all these changes, our goal remains consistent: to give people what they want and build on over 500 years of the Bodleian's experience in supporting research and learning. Driving these changes across the libraries are the people running them, our expert staff. Their commitment to supporting readers to have satisfying learning and research experience, remains central to our strategy.

How & why are our **collections** changing?

AMY WARNER MAY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR SCHOLARLY RESOURCES

Our mission at the Bodleian to preserve truth and integrity has never been more critical.

As the landscape of information evolves, vast amounts of data are now available digitally. Much of this information is shared in fleeting formats vulnerable to loss. We are committed to capturing these ephemeral treasures for future scholars. We continue to invest time, talent, and resources to develop robust infrastructure so we can preserve our digital collections long-term.

 Our vision for the next few years goes beyond preservation. We are also prioritising how we can make our collections increasingly accessible for a community that lives online more and more. Since 2022, this includes the launch of our 'Manuscripts and Archives at Oxford' discovery tool, which makes it easier to explore our Special Collections.

Enhancing our digitisation efforts underpins so much of this important work, enabling us to digitise more by expanding our capacity while lowering costs through innovations, and renewed partnerships, notably with Google Books.

The focus on such collaborations is set to make thousands more of our print resources accessible to communities worldwide.

Of course, our collections must meet the research and learning needs of our readers. Our work alongside Oxford's researchers and the University Divisions looks to ensure that the Oxford Research Archive (ORA) remains the premier Oxford repository of scholarly output. We will continue capturing content that will maintain ORA as an indispensable resource.

Since 2022, we have enhanced the technology that underpins SOLO ('Search Oxford Libraries Online'), and we are about to deliver important improvements to our reading list system, 'Oxford Reading Lists Online' (ORLO).

 Finally, we plan to review the way that we manage our collections to put user experience at the heart. Our goal is clear: to make our collections operations a centre of excellence.

How & why are our **ways of working** changing?

LAURA HOW CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Meeting the needs of the people running and using our services sits at the heart of our strategy.

We are reviewing our current working practices, technology, environments, and ways of working, to support out people to drive and adapt to change.

Our aim is to empower teams to realise their full potential. By investing in skills, professional growth, and knowledge, we want to not only equip colleagues, but support them to excel in their work and flourish in their careers. This dedication to excellence will deliver benefits to all who engage with our libraries.

Building on our progress in inclusion and equity is a priority. We continue to emphasise wellbeing, belonging, and continuing professional development. We strive to attract and retain top talent while encouraging our colleagues' engagement in activities across the libraries and wider University.

This includes a review of our environmental responsibilities. We are collecting data to better understand the carbon impact across our libraries, and what we can do to reduce our energy usage. We are creating a plan that helps the University to meet its 2035 net zero target.

Financial sustainability is essential to support our strategic ambitions - diversifying our funding sources and seeking efficiencies will help advance our services without increasing financial or resource demands on the University. As part of this endeavour, Bodleian Enterprises will actively forge new partnerships and explore innovative market opportunities. Our goal is to find new customers, enlarge the market for our products and services, and build on our sustainable and ethical foundations.

We will also seek support from our benevolent friends and patrons of the libraries, through our philanthropic Future Bodleian campaign, to help make our ambitions a reality.

Through these efforts, we are proactively shaping a future where the Bodleian Libraries lead by example in service delivery, outstanding collections and a commitment to staff wellbeing.

What are our goals?

Help ensure that the University of Oxford remains at the forefront of academic teaching and research worldwide

Contribute leadership to the broader development of the world of information and libraries for society

Provide a sustainable operation of the Libraries

What are our guiding principles?

We will listen to our readers and focus on their experience of using the library service

We will foster and value inclusion and diversity in everything we do

We will actively lead and engage with change, and be curious and agile learners

We will be clear and constructive communicators

We will play a full and active part on the collegiate University, especially as part of GLAM (Gardens, Libraries and Museums)

Transforming *our services*
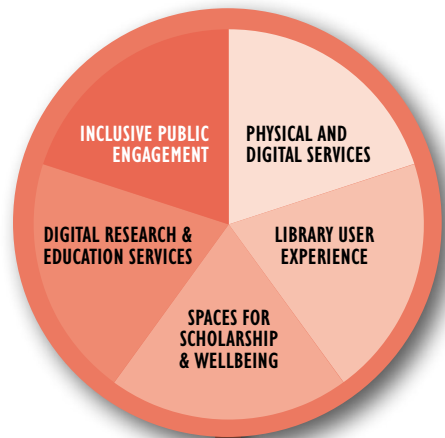
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Develop our **physical and digital services** in order to improve access to, and benefit from, library collections and provide for disciplinary differences for all library users.

Collaborate with Oxford's students, researchers, and academic staff to **improve their library experience** and ensure their needs are met.

Improve our library spaces to support **scholarship and wellbeing**, deliver key Bodleian building developments, and promote the unique value of library study spaces for learning, research, and collaboration.

Develop services to support new forms of **digital research and education** and provide accessible, integrated, expert support for the research lifecycle.

Deliver an **inclusive** physical and digital **public engagement** programme, which inspires new and existing audiences to share knowledge and make connections with our collections, Oxford research, buildings, and history.

INCLUSIVE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL SERVICES

DIGITAL RESEARCH & EDUCATION SERVICES

LIBRARY USER EXPERIENCE

SPACES FOR SCHOLARSHIP & WELLBEING

Our services programmes

1.1 Develop our physical and digital services in order to improve access to, and benefit from, library collections and provide for disciplinary differences for all library users.

1.1.1
Establish effective staffing models to translate service innovation during COVID-19 to an integrated set of onsite and remote services, operating across all Bodleian Libraries.

1.1.2
Expand the proportion of books available for borrowing,
to increase the use of the modern print collections.

1.1.3
Develop revised and unified lending policies to improve student experience.

1.1.4
Scope and realise the functionality of the integrated library system (SOLO) to help deliver a programme of service improvement.

1.2 Collaborate with Oxford's students, researchers, and academic staff to improve their library experience and ensure their needs are met.

1.2.1
Partner with taught postgraduate students, disabled students, and part-time students to co-design library services that meet their specific needs.

1.2.2
Investigate and improve library support and communications for academic transition and progression, to help students and Early Career Researchers make the most of library services.

1.2.3
Develop a wellbeing support programme to improve students' library and university experience, and help them become effective learners.
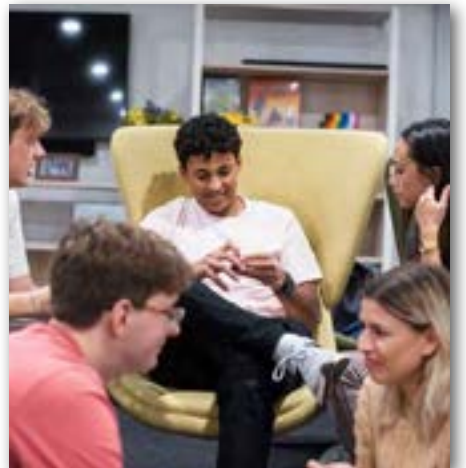
1.3 Improve our library spaces to support scholarship and wellbeing, deliver key Bodleian building developments, and promote the unique value of library study spaces for learning, research, and collaboration.

1.3.1

Improve existing library spaces to provide comfortable, accessible study environments suitable for modern scholarship.

1.3.2

Provide well-equipped, bookable spaces for collaborative and hybrid working.

1.3.3

Complete the refurbishment of the Radcliffe Science Library to provide library facilities for Oxford's scientific communities and Reuben College.

1.3.4

Open a new merged Humanities library at the heart of the Stephen A. Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities which reflects the current and changing service requirements of its readers.

1.3.5

Work with GLAM to deliver additional off-site storage and access for researchers to collections.

1.4 Develop services to support new forms of digital research and education and provide accessible, integrated, expert support for the research lifecycle.

1.4.1

Comprehensively review library support for information literacy to meet the existing and emerging needs of students and researchers.

1.4.2

Through the Centre for Digital Scholarship, and national and international partnerships, expand the provision of services to enable innovative digital uses of the Bodleian's collections across all Divisions within the University and beyond.

1.4.3

Provide accessible, integrated, expert support for open scholarship, research data management, and copyright.

1.5 Deliver an inclusive physical and digital public engagement programme, which inspires new and existing audiences to share knowledge and make connections with our collections, Oxford research, buildings, and history.

1.5.1
Expand the public-facing formal and informal learning programme.

1.5.2
Build effective collaborations across all academic Divisions to use the collections, spaces and expertise of the Bodleian Libraries to support research outputs and the public's engagement with University of Oxford research.

1.5.3
Investigate and implement models for digital programming that will enhance audience experience and increase audience participation.

Transforming *our collections*

DIGITAL
INFRASTRUCTURE

DIVERSE
COLLECTIONS

DIGITISATION

RESEARCH &
EDUCATION
RESOURCES

BORN-DIGITAL
COLLECTIONS

OUR AIMS

Develop better **infrastructure** and tools to enable the curation, discovery, access, use, and long-term preservation of the full breadth of our collections for the benefit of current and future users.

Develop an efficient **digitisation** programme that transforms the scale and scope of our digital library collections, offering greater diversity and a broader representation of our collections.

Create a sustainable, world-leading capability to preserve and give access to **born-digital collections** acquired by the Bodleian Libraries.

Ensure the **resources** provided by the library enable us to remain in step with the **research and education** strategies of the University.

Enhance the Bodleian's unique and distinctive **print and digital collections**, and associated curatorial mission, for **diverse global** audiences.

Our collections programmes

2.1 **Develop better infrastructure and tools to enable the curation, discovery, access, use, and long-term preservation of the full breadth of our collections for the benefit of current and future users.**

2.1.1
Build on Digital Bodleian for our image collections, and develop platforms and delivery mechanisms for other forms of digital content.

2.1.2
Further enhance the digital preservation provision for our digital repositories to ensure we hold (at least) two copies in a technology-agnostic structured layout.

2.1.3
Deliver a new service for search and discovery across manuscript and archival collections held in the Bodleian Libraries and Oxford colleges.

2.1.4
Building on Bodleian Electronic Archives and Manuscripts (BEAM), scope an end-to-end infrastructure solution for born-digital collections.

2.2 **Develop an efficient digitisation programme that transforms the scale and scope of our digital library collections, offering greater diversity and a broader representation of our collections.**

2.2.1
Determine and implement the available approaches to digitisation that are scalable, sustainable and appropriate for the collection being digitised.

2.2.2
Digitise a variety of our collections.

2.2.3
Create a framework to guide the Bodleian Libraries in becoming a centre of excellence in the use of AI and automated processing in the acquisition, cataloguing, preservation and use of special collections.

Our collections programme continued

2.3 Create a sustainable, world-leading capability to preserve and give access to born-digital collections acquired by the Bodleian Libraries.

2.3.1
Determine the policies and services required to unlock the potential of our born-digital collections, including intersection with other formats of contemporary archives, for the benefit of current and future researchers.

2.3.2
Enhance our web archiving services, and work towards new capabilities and building partnerships in social media archiving, to preserve evidence of contemporary digital life for the benefit of current and future researchers.

2.4 Ensure the resources provided by the library enable us to remain in step with the research and education strategies of the University.

2.4.1
Develop efficient, effective, user-centred collections management functions, which support the research and education of current and future library users through provision of library collections.

2.4.2
Support a sustainable transition to Open Access via Read & Publish deals, and innovative publishing models, that deliver value for money and foster market diversity.

2.4.3
Implement the relevant recommendations from the University reviews of Research Data Management, ensuring full integration within the research lifecycle.

2.4.4
Ensure provision of library resources supports the University's Digital Education Strategy.

2.5 Enhance the Bodleian's unique and distinctive print and digital collections, and associated curatorial mission, for diverse global audiences.

2.5.1
Assess and improve how we present our global collections to global audiences.

2.5.2
Review and refresh our existing policies and practices of global and inclusive collecting, to reflect a breadth of scholarship and include previously under-represented areas.

2.5.3
Assess and improve how we present other diverse communities their culture and history.

Transforming
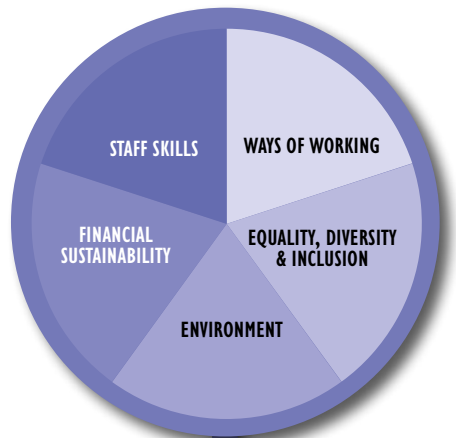## *our ways of working*

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Develop **new ways of working** across the Libraries to support strategic endeavours.

Become a model of excellence and innovation in **equality, diversity and inclusion**, for the benefit of our current and future users and staff.

Contribute to the University's aim to achieve **net zero carbon**.

Exercise responsible stewardship of **finances** to support strategic endeavours.

Develop key **skills** of all our staff to anticipate the changing operational environment and deliver the strategic goals in line with our guiding principles.

STAFF SKILLS

WAYS OF WORKING

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

ENVIRONMENT

Our ways of working programmes

3.1 Develop new ways of working across the Libraries to support strategic endeavours.

3.1.1

Develop new ways of working across Libraries, considering options for adopting hybrid working models and optimising use of both remote working technology and library office space.

3.1.2

Establish new approaches to workforce planning and resourcing to facilitate strategy work.

3.1.3

Improve the ability to deliver strategy and manage projects throughout the Bodleian Libraries.

3.2 Become a model of excellence and innovation in equality, diversity and inclusion, for the benefit of our current and future users and staff.

3.2.1

Use the We Are Our History framework for inclusion as a basis for frameworks for other protected characteristics.

3.2.2

Identify and address the barriers preventing under-served demographics from accessing the resources and facilities of the Libraries.

3.2.3

Promote a culture of inclusiveness and maximise the personal achievement of our staff.

3.2.4

Ensure the necessary resources and training are available to allow staff to feel supported in EDI work.

3.2.5

Work with external networks and partnerships to co-design projects that encourage participation from under-represented audiences.

Our ways of working programme continued

3.3 Contribute to the University's aim to achieve net zero carbon.

3.3.1
Embed a culture of environmentally sustainable behaviour among staff.

3.3.2
Review and integrate environmental considerations into operational decisions and activities across the Libraries.

3.3.3
Reduce carbon use.

3.3.4
Save money.

3.4 Exercise responsible stewardship of finances to support strategic endeavours.

3.4.1
Implement a new commercial strategy in line with GLAM's commercial vision.

3.4.2
Develop new approaches to raising income to deliver external funding of £10m per annum.

3.4.3
Develop and implement new financial processes to facilitate strategy work.

3.5 Develop key skills of all our staff to anticipate the changing operational environment and deliver the strategic goals in line with our guiding principles.

3.5.1
Deliver a programme of digital skills development to improve levels of digital confidence, competence, and contribution of all our staff.

3.5.2
Embed user experience approaches throughout the Libraries, as part of all staff using evidence-based methods in their work.

3.5.3
Deliver a programme of data skills development in line with GLAM's Business Intelligence and Data Strategy.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

DONATE

The continuous generosity of our supporters helps to fund special projects which further expand, preserve, and make available the treasures in our collections. Or you can join our Friends and Patrons scheme, to support the continued acquisition and preservation of treasures in the Bodleian.

SEARCH *Donate to the Bodleian*

EXPLORE THE BODLEIAN

Take a guided library or city of Oxford walking tour with one of our expert guides, visit one of our free exhibitions and events in the Weston Library, or treat yourself at our café and gift shops with your family and friends.

SEARCH *Visit the Bodleian*

VOLUNTEER WITH US

We're often seeking volunteers who have an interest in our collections, culture, and values, to play a role in welcoming the public to our Libraries, offering tours, and supporting events.

SEARCH *Volunteer at the Bodleian*

JOIN US

If you have a research need, you can apply for a Bodleian Reader Card. You don't need to be a student at the University of Oxford to do so.

SEARCH *Apply for a Bodleian Reader Card*

RESEARCH WITH US

We participate in collaborative partnerships and support academic funding proposals for research related to our collections.

SEARCH *Research partnerships at the Bodleian*

SHARE WITH US

We are committed to understanding the needs of our users and assessing our performance in meeting these needs, striving to ensure your voices are heard. You can provide comments and raise questions and concerns with us.

SEARCH *Bodleian's performance and feedback*

DISCOVER OUR COLLECTIONS ONLINE

Anyone can discover the delights of our digitised special collections at Digital Bodleian, where you can view treasures such as *Shakespeare's First Folio* and the Magna Carta.

SEARCH *Digital Bodleian*

DELIVER CHANGES

Do you work at the Bodleian Libraries? If so, you can find out more about how you can affect change and deliver the Strategy.

ON THE BODLEIAN INTRANET SEARCH *Strategy Hub*

BODLEIAN
LIBRARIES

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OXFORD
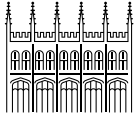
Thoughts?
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