



A Brief History of the Bodleian Library

Mary Clapinson

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The University of Oxford's Bodleian Library has become one of the most celebrated libraries in the world, boasting a collection of nearly twelve million books and manuscripts and a fascinating history that spans more than four hundred years.

A Brief History of the Bodleian Library takes readers through the Library's history, from its founding in 1602 by Sir Thomas Bodley to the present day. Along the way, the book traces the development of the Library's incomparable collection, complete with details that reveal the eccentricities of those who have helped shape it, including Bodley himself, who conceived of the Library as a "republic of the learned," and King George VI, who inadvertently delayed the opening of the New Bodleian in 1946 when he broke the key in the lock. Covering the major moments in the Library's history and with a great many fun facts—How did the Library come to own not one of Shakespeare's First Folios but two?—the book also apprises readers of its present concerns, including the building of individual subject libraries across Oxford, the use of underground passages, and the perennial search for more space.

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