

INFORMATION SERVICES

LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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Background

This report to Senate provides an overview of the programmes and achievements delivered across two Information Services Directorates in 2023-24 – Library Services and Business Relationship Management (BRM).

Some of the highlights for this year include the start of the Library Annexe Cladding Programme, and the introduction of a major project to replace the current Library Management System. Service developments include two new services to support staff and students: Reach Out IT and the Alternative Formats Service.

Publisher negotiations remained challenging over the year, particularly for Read and Publish deal renewals in the fields of Chemistry and Engineering. This meant a great deal of work and commitment from the Library's Content Management team who made major contributions to national negotiations. The UK academic library community worked closely with academics, university partnerships, scholarly communication groups, national organisations, and the sector-wide partner JISC to achieve progress.

The year also saw the first publication from the Scottish Universities Press (SUP), a fully open access publishing press, managed by Scottish academic and research libraries on a not-for-profit basis. The Press is committed to advancing open access publishing, making high-quality scholarly research available to a global audience. The University and Library Services made a significant contribution to the development of the Press.

Maximising the value of our collections

Discovery

A major milestone in Glasgow Collections discovery portal was reached with the addition of the Library's rich rare book collections. This work, involving the preparation and import of 198,000 catalogue records, now allows users to explore the full scope of the University's Collections, across Archives & Special Collections and the Hunterian, through a single search.

Complementing this work was the upgrade of 40 catalogues for archive collections relating to the Scottish brewing industry. A key strength within the Scottish Business Archive, the brewing collections are now all fully discoverable online. Since its launch in May 2023, Glasgow Collections has attracted a worldwide audience and built a steady user base of approximately 2,250 active users per month.

Collections



The Adam Smith Collection

65 items

The University of Glasgow Archives & Special Collections has a significant repository of documents related to Adam Smith, the renowned ...



Adamson and Robertson Photographic Collection

99 items

This collection provides a selection of digitised materials from the **Papers of James Adamson and William Robertson, photographers**, c1880s-1930s, ...



Blackhouse Charters Collection

30 items

This set provides a selection of digitised materials from the **Blackhouse charters** collection at the University of Glasgow Archives & ...



Citizens Theatre Glasgow

24 items

Discover the story of the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, with our curated digital collection. One of the leading theatres in Britain, ...



Hunterian Psalter

1 item

The Hunterian Psalter is part of the Hunterian Collection, housed in the University of Glasgow Library Archives & Special Collections. ...



Influential moments in Scottish theatre

20 items

Discover some of the most influential moments in Scottish theatre history with our curated digital collection from the holdings of ...



Johnny Beattie

21 items

Explore the career of Scottish actor, variety entertainer and comedian Johnny Beattie (1926-2020) with our curated digital collection. In a ...



Pantomime in Scotland

13 items

Pantomime is one of Scotland's greatest popular art forms. This digital collection has been curated from material held in the ...



Playbills and posters

17 items

Explore Scotland's theatrical heritage with our curated digital collection of playbills and posters from the Scottish Theatre Archive. This collection ...



Stars of Scottish Variety and Music Hall

23 items

Scotland has produced a rich seam of home-grown Music Hall and Variety stars. Explore this theatrical heritage with our curated ...

In addition, nearer 300 collection items from the Scottish Theatre Archive were added to JSTOR's open access Community Collections, which brings together images and primary sources from libraries, museums, and archives around the world, amplifying the global reach and usage of Glasgow's collections.¹ Researchers from across North America, Europe and Asia regularly access this content, with the Adam Smith and Adamson & Robertson collections enjoying ongoing appeal with an average of 100 accesses per month.

¹ <https://www.jstor.org/site/university-of-glasgow/>

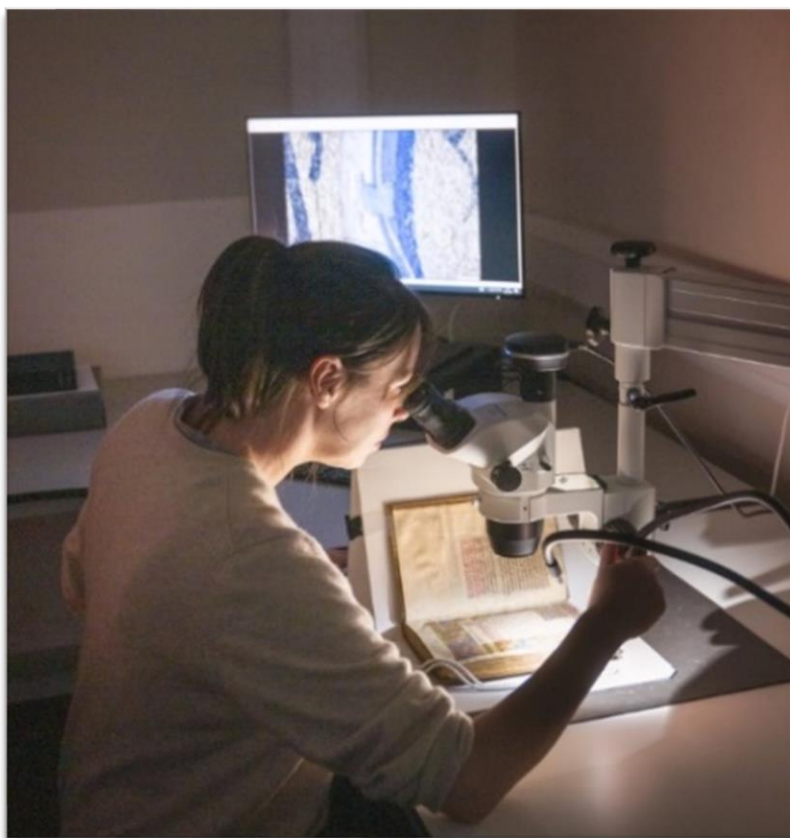
Cataloguing

Thanks to generous funding from the Friends of Glasgow University Library, a number of significant cataloguing projects were completed this year. Researchers can now fully access the archives of Scottish Ballet and the actor Johnny Beattie, as well as explore Professor Don Cruickshank's collection of Spanish Golden Age rare books.

This year also saw the conclusion of a multi-year project to document the provenance, annotations and bindings of over 500 books acquired by William Hunter in the 18th century. Looking ahead, a programme to process and provide access to the born-digital archives of the innovative arts organisation NVA will begin in 2024-25.

Conservation and photography

In 2023-24, two priority projects further developed the Library's skills and infrastructure in collections photography.



Building upon investment in equipment supported through the AHRC's Capability for Collections Fund, a research project used microscopy to analyse pigments in a selection of the Library's medieval manuscripts, to determine the risk of loss or deterioration from the digitisation process.

The outcomes of this research has informed preservation strategies, enabling the complete digitisation of twelve of William Hunter's important medieval manuscripts.

A generous grant from the Lunder Foundation enabled access to a collection of 19th-century press-cuttings albums held in the archive of James McNeil Whistler. Previously too fragile to safely consult, this grant allowed for essential conservation treatment to be carried out to stabilise the volumes and enable the capture of 1,500 high-resolution images.

To maximise the value of this investment, curated digital collections of both these projects will be made available through the University's JSTOR Community Collections portal in 2024-25.

Alongside this focused project work, the Library's on-demand collections reprographic service completed 300 high-resolution digitisation projects producing 10,000 images to support academic teaching, research and publication.



*Whistler press-cuttings album, 1881-85
(MS Whistler/PC/5/43)*

Exhibitions and loans

Across the second half of the year, preparatory work was undertaken to support the loan of items from the archive of the artist Bet Low to Glasgow School of Art and to the Pier Arts Centre in Orkney. This exhibition, opening January 2025, will mark the centenary of Low's birth in 1925. Similar preparations are underway to facilitate the loan of John Bereton's 1602 volume "A briefe and true relation of the discoverie of the north part of Virginia" for an exhibition at The Hold in Ipswich in 2025.



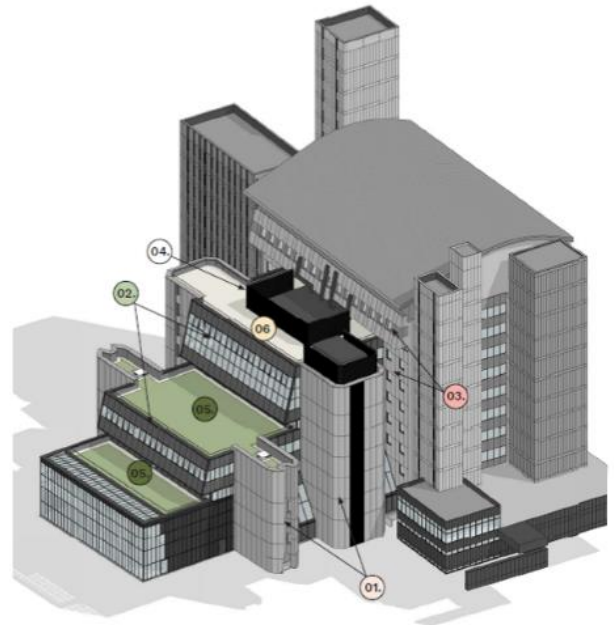
Pencil sketch 'Hoy hills with reflection' by Bet Low (MS Gen 1764/C/5/5)

University Library Infrastructure

Library Annexe Cladding Programme 2024

In November 2024, the University began a major £23 million project to upgrade the Library Annexe. The project includes renewing the exterior with energy-efficient materials, enhancing insulation, and improving fire safety. Interior upgrades will deliver better ventilation, heating and cooling, as well as increased access to power and natural light, creating more comfortable and sustainable study spaces.

To enable these works, Library staff worked with specialist contractors to relocate 7,300 linear metres of stock within the Library, move 4,000 linear metres of periodical and journal stock to the Library Research Annexe, and to decant sensitive glass plate photographic collections to specialist offsite storage.



Replacement library management system (LMS)

Preparations are underway to procure and implement a new, 'next generation' library management system (LMS) in the years to 2027. An LMS is the technical backbone of research library operations, enabling the description and discovery of both digital and physical items, the acquisition of those items, and circulation management of physical objects.

Glasgow has been using a 'legacy' LMS for many years, bringing with it issues in technical interoperability with adjacent digital library systems, concerns around cyber security, and a suboptimal student and staff experience. Library Services is committed to advancing the University's digital infrastructure to support strategic objectives, and ensuring the University of Glasgow delivers 'best in class' digital library services.

'Project Alex' (so named in celebration of the Great Library of Alexandria) seeks to procure a new LMS solution, one that is fit for purpose within a research-intensive university, and which delivers a significantly improved user experience to both students and staff. Project Alex will also support the discovery of Glasgow's world-class collections, reinforcing the institution's international reputation, while improving internal processes and system integrations.

Repository software and operating system upgrades

The Library manages six digital repositories (the 'Enlighten repository portfolio') that store, curate and provide access to University open research outputs, research data, open educational resources, knowledge exchange and impact, undergraduate dissertations, and postgraduate theses. During the reporting period, these repositories have undergone a process of software and operating system upgrades, to ensure they are running on the latest technology and demonstrate resilience, security, and fitness for purpose.

These infrastructural improvements have laid the groundwork for the digital experience of the repository portfolio to be refreshed. Work has been undertaken to develop and update the 'look and feel' for the repository ecosystem, as well as improve the integration of these repositories with other scholarly research services. This user experience work has been undertaken in collaboration with colleagues in Information Service's Digital Experience Team, harnessing their recently launched 'Digital Design Framework'. This improvement is planned for implementation on all repositories in the first quarter of 2025.

Workspace Futures 2030 - University Services

Information Services, including several Library teams contributed to an early Workspace Futures project to relocate University Services teams to Level 1 of Tay House in June 2024. This required a repurposing of the current workspace to support team anchor days across Information Services and Finance Executive Directorates. Teams worked in collaboration with Estates to ensure optimum use of the space across a wide range of service requirements and successfully relocated over 200 staff whilst ensuring a neighbourhood approach.

Supporting the Student Experience

Launch of Reach Out IT

This year, with support from the Student Experience Strategy Programme, Information Services launched Reach Out IT. The project built on the existing expertise of the IT Helpdesk Team and focused on a new, simple interface which would be more accessible and have longer opening hours. The aim of the project was to make it easier to get IT help in-person, both for existing services and for areas of IT support which traditionally had not had an in-person front end.



Mini projects arising from the initial concept have included eight pop-ups across campus at key dates, to bring IT support to new spaces, and focused information sessions on specific topics. Since launch, the number of people using the service increased by over 100% and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with satisfaction ratings consistently at over 90%. The project is making extensive use of user feedback to inform future developments to the service.

Alternative Formats Service

The Alternative Formats Service launched in September 2024, providing a centralised service to provide accessible copies of library resources and teaching materials to print-disabled students and staff. This service is critical to supporting University obligations arising from the Equality Act 2010, whilst also ensuring optimal levels of student experience.

Though in its infancy, the service is already remediating all essential and requested reading for a growing number of students (over 500 items, including journal articles and entire book titles), as well as providing access to self-service tools to a greater number of students. The service is accompanied by the provision of a new tool, SensusAccess, an automated service that students and staff can use directly to convert readings and teaching materials into a wide variety of alternative formats, depending on user need. The service has also delivered bespoke accessibility training and guidance to staff.

Arts & Humanities Library Associates

This new initiative, involving collaboration between the Library and the College of Arts & Humanities, launched in semester 2 of 2023-24.

Twelve Associates were drawn from the College's student group to take forward a specific project, learn more about how the Library works, and provide valuable feedback on their use of the Library.

Importantly, involvement in the programme is credited in each student's academic record. The posters, guides, and blogs produced by the Associates all focus on helping their peers make full use of the Library and its resources. Feedback from the scheme was extremely positive and two cohorts of associates will join across 2024-25.



'Library Hidden Gems'
by Library Associate, Xiaohan Gao

Supporting Learning and Teaching

Reading Lists @ Glasgow

The Reading Lists @ Glasgow service continues to be a core service to support teaching. A large-scale project to remove non-active and duplicate lists from the reading lists system has ensured over 3,000 relevant lists are now visible to support teaching. The Aspire reading list system has been updated to meet WCAG 2.2 accessibility standards and to improve the student and academic experience. The Reading Lists team has engaged with the new Alternative Formats Service regarding accessibility issues with reading list content and plans are underway to identify improvements that can be made, including an accessibility audit of e-book platforms and support for streamlining of reading lists.

Content to support teaching

Demand for electronic textbooks continues to grow and the marketplace for this type of material continues to be complex. Access to in demand e-textbook collections have been secured for multiple years to provide stability. Despite an overall trend of e-book usage dropping across HE after the Covid pandemic, e-book usage at Glasgow remains strong at 4.3 million requests. The Taylor & Francis e-book collections have proven very popular and Taylor & Francis usage has increased by 68%.

The Library continues to diversify its collections. This year it purchased the ProQuest Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion e-book package and subscribed to CABI's Global Health database, both of which support efforts around decolonisation of the curriculum and the collection, as well as bring global research in this area to the fore.

To support the School of Humanities and promote understanding of Scotland's ties to the transatlantic slave trade, the Library also supported Glasgow's membership in *Slave Voyages*, a global digital initiative documenting historic slave trades. Glasgow is the first European institution to join this consortium, which includes the University of the West Indies, Harvard, and the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture. The database provides vital access to records such as ship registers and the names of freed African people. Membership will aid research on Scotland's role in the trade and help develop educational resources.

Supporting student use of Library collections

Through the College Library Support and Archive & Special Collections (ASC) teams, the Library continues to adapt and expand its services to effectively meet student needs. Demand for the College Library Support Team's one-to-one sessions remained steady, with around 200 sessions delivered throughout the year. A further 60 library information sessions were provided for student induction programmes.



The trend of increasing demand for ASC's Collections Classroom service continued in 2023-24, with a clear preference for in-person group learning.

While virtual classroom sessions saw a slight decrease from the previous year, the number of in-person classroom sessions grew by 36%.

This resulted in an 80% increase in the number of students attending in-person Collections Classroom sessions, with 1,100 students benefiting from direct access to unique archives and rare book collections.

Over 100 students also benefited from placements working with collections in both a Reading Room and online environment, with activities ranging from metadata creation and historical transcription to pigment analysis.

Library Click and Collect Service

The Reach Out Library team launched a new Click and Collect service, enabling users to request up to 10 items in advance without the need to browse the shelves. Reach Out Library staff will collect the items and users can collect from within the High Demand collection at a time that is convenient to them. The service has been well-received by both the staff and student University community.

Understanding student use of Artificial Intelligence

The way in which students learn and engage in study, particularly within research libraries, is changing rapidly. GenAI is having an unprecedented impact on education but has created uncertainty in our understanding of the skills students require to engage in their learning. Improving this understanding will enable libraries to provide support and services to help their students use AI ethically and responsibly in their academic studies and future careers.

To this end, Library Services participated in a cross-institutional project (with Universities of Leeds, Exeter, and Dundee) through Alterline, a library research consultancy. The findings of the Alterline project point to several areas in which local library services can innovate to better support students in their use of GenAI to improve support of the student learning experience. Innovations arising from the findings are expected to be implemented 2025-26.

Supporting Research

Resources to support research

Highlights from the many new collections and resources purchased to support research were two new additions to the Sage Research Methods portfolio. These support inclusive research and provide techniques to carry out quantitative and mixed methods projects. Large publisher e-book collections continue to offer wider access to electronic content and the portfolio expanded this year to include a Manchester University Press Evidence Based Acquisition collection.

Access to primary source material increased with the end of the year-long ProQuest Primary Sources trial that resulted in outright ownership of several resources, including Women's Magazine Archive I, LGBT Magazine Collection I, Women's Wear Daily Archive and British Periodicals III and IV. Further archives purchased included two British Online Archive collections via a JISC purchasing scheme, the Wiley Digital Archive: Environmental Science and History, the IET Journal Archive, an upgrade to the Education Source Ultimate Collection, and the Listener Archive via Gale. The purchase of Gale's Listener Archive supported a 12-month subscription to the Gale Accelerate model. This allows access to a bespoke package of Gale resources at a heavily discounted cost across the academic year 2024-25.

Major journal negotiations

The Library contributed to the national negotiation of several transitional journal agreements for 2024 ensuring access to a wide range of key journals, often including open access publishing arrangements for University of Glasgow authors. Large transitional journal agreements concluded for 2024 include Wiley, Taylor & Francis: Social Science & Humanities, Medical and Science & Technology collections, Oxford University Press, and a 5-year agreement with ACM providing unlimited open access publishing in their subscription and fully open access journals.

The negotiating landscape remains challenging. The recent co-signed UK sector statement on financial sustainability calls on vendors to provide cost-effective sustainable solutions for UK HE institutions.² All ongoing negotiations are shared and advised upon by the University's Library Committee and individual Schools as negotiations progress.

Glasgow is committed to progressing these discussions and are key consultees as current Chair of the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL).

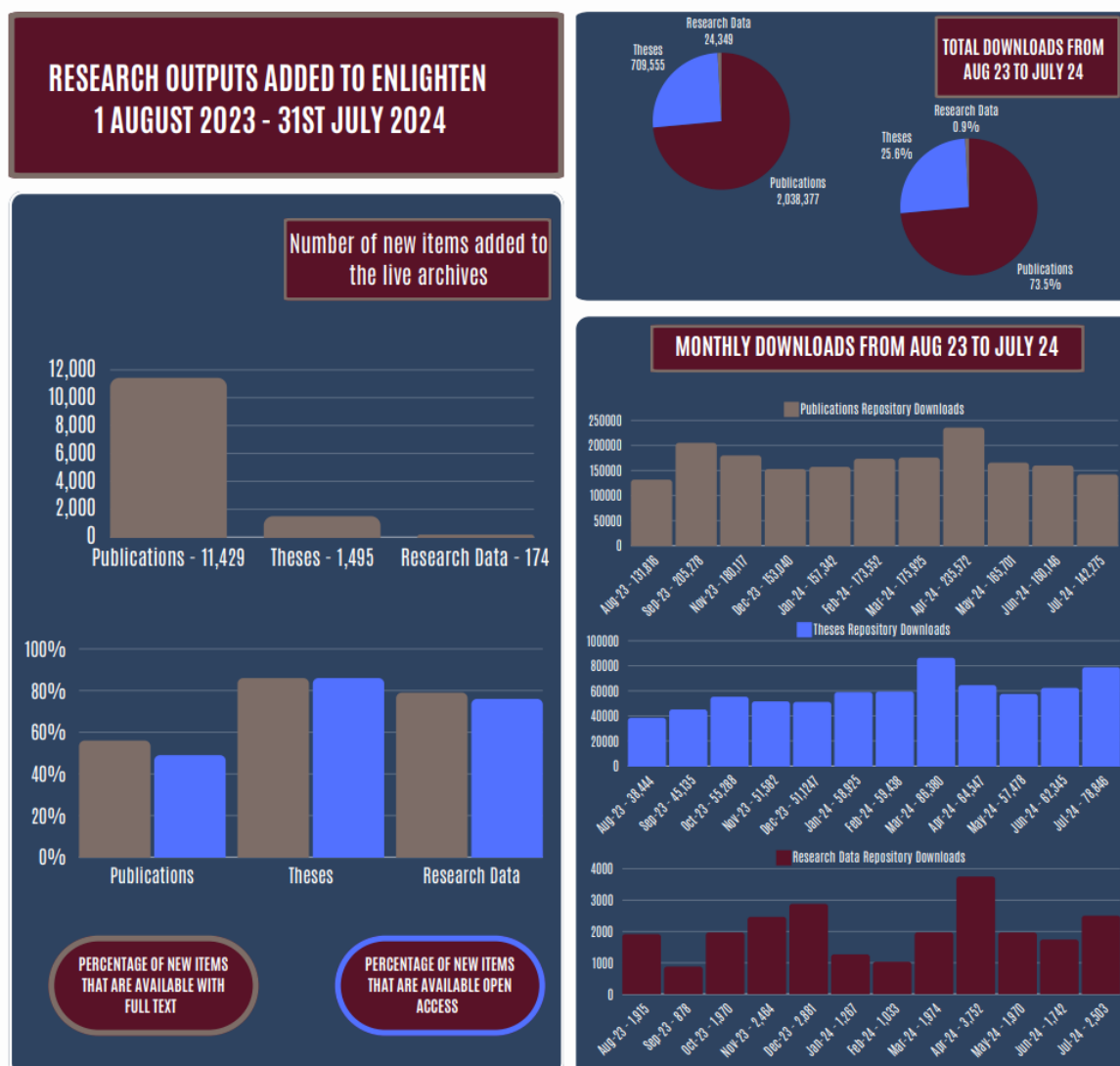
² <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/news/all/navigating-financial-challenges-a-call-to-suppliers-to-support-the-sustainability-of-further-and-higher-education>

REF2029

As a part of REF2029 preparation, the Library has contributed expertise in the implementation of tools and services. The team has been instrumental in the planning and development of the new output modelling tool (known as 'PROMPT') that provides the mechanism for REF outputs scoring and selection. This has involved working with colleagues in the HR Systems team, Research and Innovation, and across Colleges to develop requirements and build integrations with Enlighten: Publications, thereby ensuring accurate and timely output data flows into PROMPT.

Supporting research outputs

In 2024, the University of Glasgow made significant strides in supporting open research through various initiatives and collaborations. The Enlighten repository services continued to aid academics and students in maintaining their research outputs, ensuring compliance with university and funder requirements, and enhancing the discovery and usage of Glasgow's open scholarly research content.



The Digital Library team plays a crucial role in the Digital Curation Centre (DCC), which focuses on making research data FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reproducible). Through the European Commission-funded FAIR-IMPACT project, over 150 teams across Europe engaged with open research, with Glasgow colleagues contributing to improving the FAIR-ness of research software. Additionally, a member of the Digital Library team was invited to join the G7 Open Science Working Group, aiming to implement policies for FAIR data and equitable research outputs.

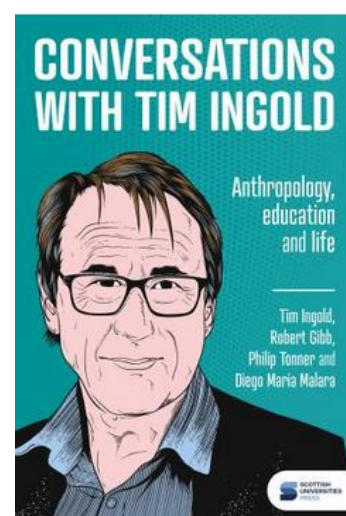
Library Services also committed to a five-year sustaining membership with CORE, a not-for-profit service dedicated to the Open Access mission. CORE aggregates open access research papers, facilitating scientific discoveries and the creation of new scholarly tools. This membership underscores the University's support for global open scholarly infrastructure. The Research Information Management (RIM) service responded to numerous complex enquiries and provided sector-wide leadership and training in open research. This was recognised with The Open Research Scotland Group, initiated by University of Glasgow staff, winning the contexts panel award in The Hidden REF 2024. The RIM team also contributed to the UK Reproducibility Network's Open Research Programme, leading pilot projects on indicators for open research practice and data availability statements.

Colleagues within Information Services tested and implemented petabyte-scale storage to improve the secure storage of large final datasets. Such datasets emerge at the end of research projects and typically exceed 500GB in size. The new petabyte-scale storage provides a higher level of data security and integrity, while delivering improved cost-effectiveness. The storage builds on the University's longer term storage service for researchers working with large data.

Support for Open Access

In the realm of Open Access, the recently approved Research Publications and Copyright Policy was embedded into the open access workflows and staff led the REF Open Access consultation. Participation in the latter resulted in early announcements on the exclusion of monographs from open access requirements for REF 2029 and the extension of new requirements for articles and conference proceedings to January 2026.

The University of Glasgow has been instrumental in the development of Scottish Universities Press, with Library representatives on the Management and Editorial Boards.³ Professor Rhona Brown from the University chairs the Editorial Board. The first Scottish Universities Press book,



'Conversations with Tim Ingold', the first SUP publication

³ <https://www.sup.ac.uk/>

featuring University of Glasgow authors, was published in October 2024. Featuring social science researchers who have collaborated with anthropologist Tim Ingold, the book includes contributions from Robert Gibbs, Diego Maria Malara (School of Social & Political Science) and Philip Tonner (School of Education), each of whom lead on a series of engaging interviews exploring Ingold's contributions to anthropology and other disciplines.

The Glasgow Open Journals service, launched in November 2023, provided a platform for staff and students to manage and publish open access journals. The service supports journal managers with advertising, submission, copy-editing, and publishing, and offers Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) and indexing in relevant catalogues. There are currently six journals live and public in the service and a further three where journal managers are developing their journal sites.

Outreach and Engagement

A busy and successful year of collaboration across the University showcased the Library's heritage collections at University events, visits and exhibitions.



HRH The Princess Royal viewing the matriculation record of Lord Kelvin held in the University Archives

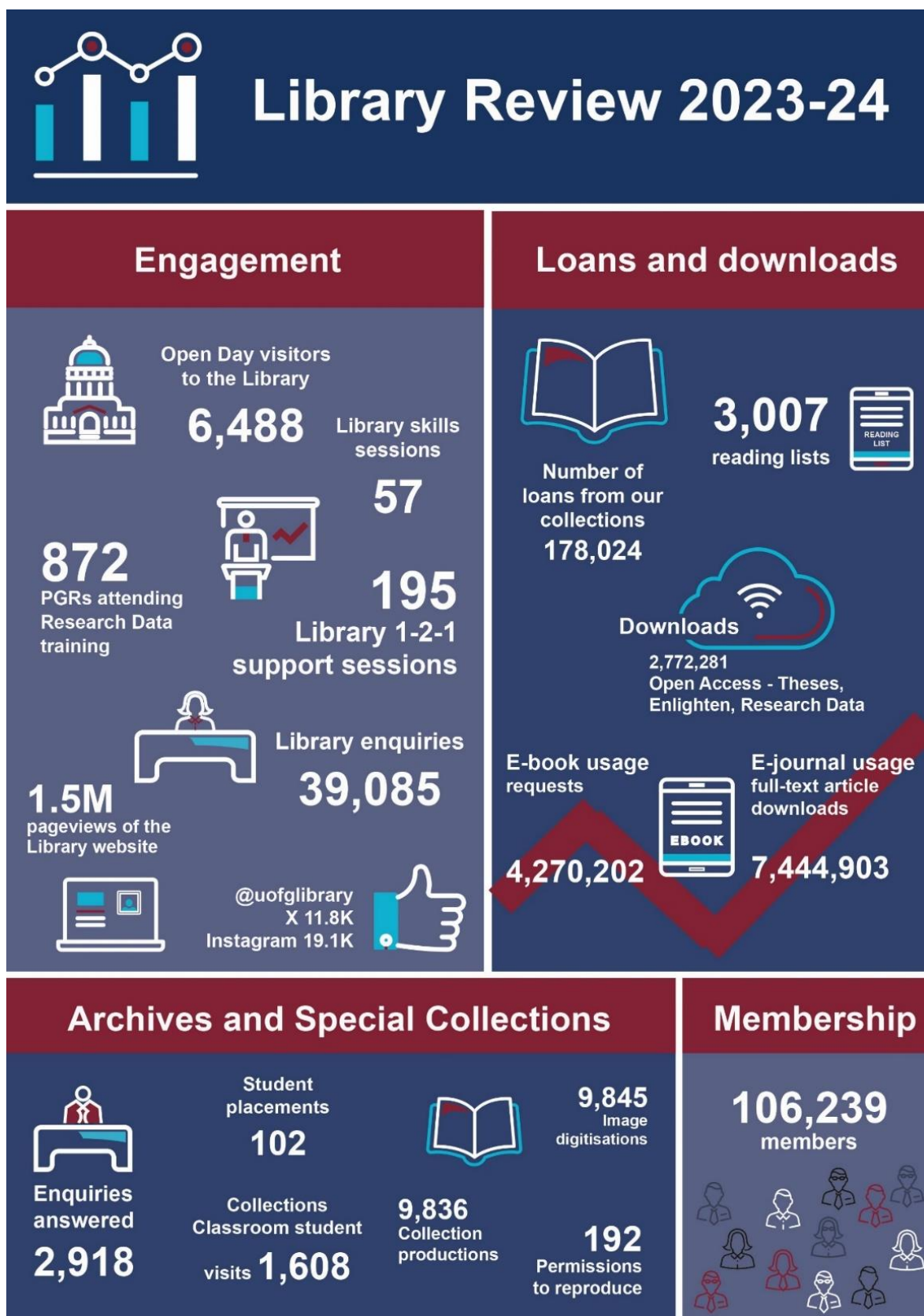
Support for the University's Lord Kelvin 200 commemorations was a high point of the year. The Kelvin 200 visual brand identity drew heavily from the Library's collections, and selected highlights were exhibited in the Mazumdar-Shaw Advanced Research Centre.

A successful collaboration with The Hunterian and SRC saw a series of Kelvin-related tours offered to University visitors. This work continued throughout the bicentenary year of 2024.

A focus on high-prestige on-campus opportunities led to the reintroduction of a programme of displays in the Principal's Lodgings and a regular pop-up display for meetings of the University Court. Bespoke displays were also arranged in the Lodging's for VIP guests, including the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and Australian ambassador and former Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd.

Looking forward to 2026, and the University's 575th anniversary, the Library is working with colleagues across the University to develop a programme of events that showcase the inventions, interventions, and innovations that have shaped, and continue to shape, the world.

Key Library figures 2023-24



Acknowledgements

Information Services teams would like to thank colleagues across the University community, external partners and funders for their support in delivering Library services to the University.

Particular thanks to Martin Hendry, Convenor of the University Library Committee and to members of the Library Committee for their support and guidance, as well as current and past sabbatical officers of the Student Representative Council for their valued support and commitment over the past year.