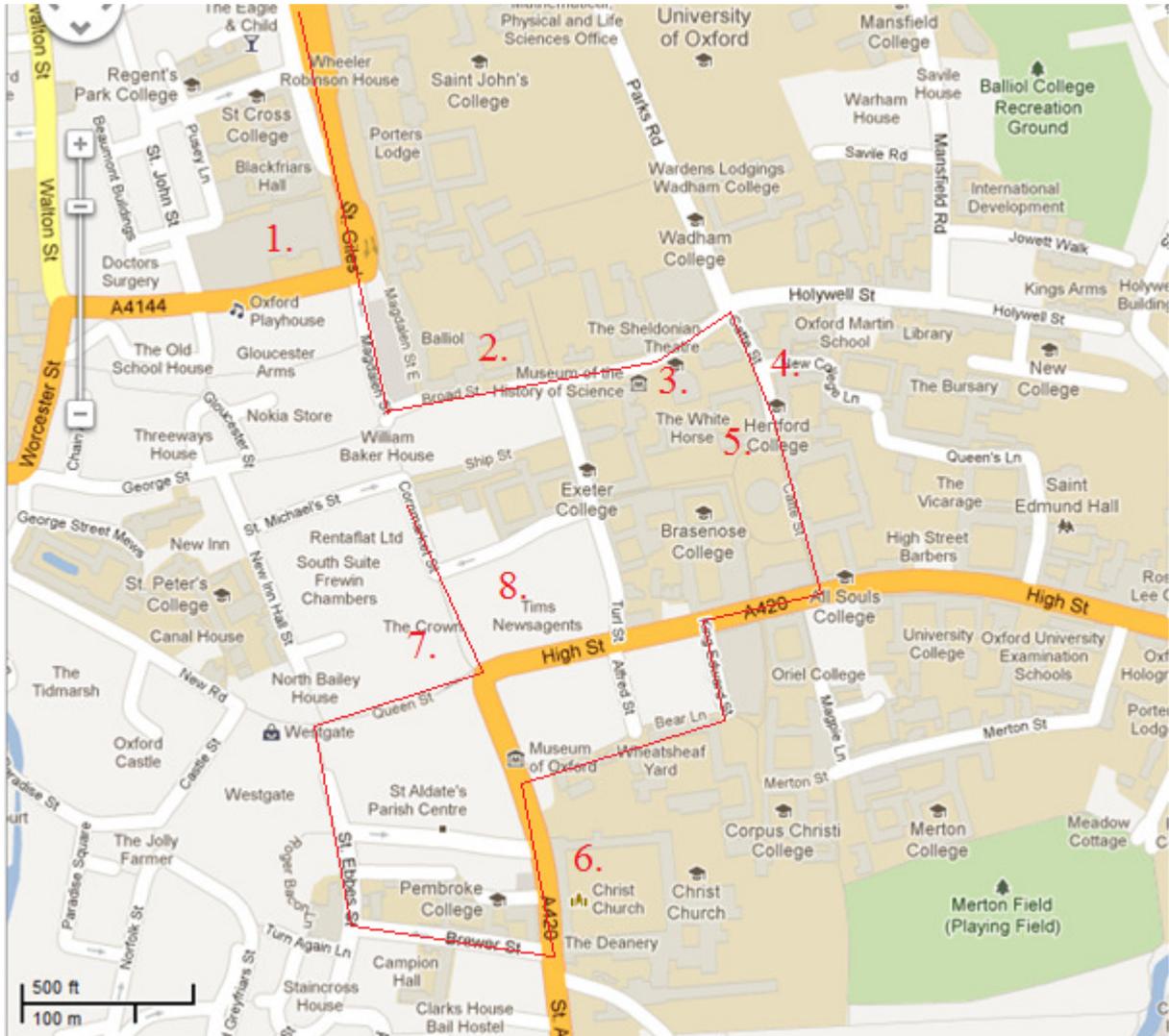


Walking Tour of Oxford

Friday, 9 March 2011, 5:00-6:30pm. Tour starts from St Anthony's College Library.



Tour Highlights

1. The Ashmolean Museum

The **museum**, which opened in 1683 and is Britain's oldest, houses a stunning collection of antiquities as well as European and British art (Rembrandt, Michelangelo, Turner, Picasso etc). The museum was closed at the time of research while a stunning new building, designed by architect Rick Mather, was being completed to replace all but the original Cockerell Building (1845). It will provide some 39 new galleries and 100% more display space than the former building.

2. Broad Street

Located on Broad Street are: Balliol College, Trinity College, Exeter College (front entrance in the adjoining Turl Street), the Museum of the History of Science (the original location of the Ashmolean Museum), and the Sheldonian Theatre. The first city wall was built just south of the street in 911. The street was the site where the Protestant Oxford Martyrs, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley (16 October 1555), and later Thomas Cranmer (21 March 1556), were burnt at the stake just outside the then northern city walls. A cobbled cross in the road opposite Balliol College marks the location.

3. Sheldonian Theatre

Built from 1664 to 1668 the monumental Sheldonian Theatre was the first major work of Christopher Wren, at that time a University Professor of Astronomy. Inspired by the classical Theatre of Marcellus in Rome, it has a rectangular front end and a semicircular back, while inside, the ceiling of the main hall is blanketed by a fine 17th-century painting of the triumph of truth over ignorance. The building is named after Gilbert Sheldon, chancellor of the university at the time and the project's main financial backer. The Sheldonian is now used for college ceremonies and public concerts but you can climb to the cupola for good views of the surrounding buildings.

4. Hertford Bridge

Completed in 1914 the bridge is often referred to as the Bridge of Sighs because of its supposed similarity to the famous Bridge of Sighs in Venice. However, Hertford Bridge was never intended to be a replica of the Venetian bridge, and indeed it bears a closer resemblance to the Rialto Bridge in the same city. There is a false legend saying that many decades ago, a survey of the health of students was taken, and as Hertford College's students were the heaviest, the college closed off the bridge to force them to take the stairs, giving them extra exercise.

5. Bodleian Library and Radcliffe Camera

The Bodleian Library is the main research library of the University of Oxford, is one of the oldest libraries in Europe, and in Britain is second in size only to the British Library. Known to Oxford scholars as "Bodley" or simply "the Bod", under the *Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003* it is one of six legal deposit libraries for works published in the United Kingdom. Just south of the Bodleian library is the Radcliffe Camera, the quintessential Oxford landmark and one of the city's most photographed buildings. The spectacular circular library was built between 1737 and 1749 in grand Palladian style, and boasts Britain's third-largest dome.

6. Christ Church

Oxford's 38 colleges are scattered around the city. The grandest is **Christ Church College**, founded in 1525 and now massively popular with Harry Potter fans, having appeared in several of the films. The main entrance to the college is below Tom Tower (1682), designed by Christopher Wren and containing Great Tom, a 6.35-tonne bell. Visitors should enter farther down St Aldate's via the wrought-iron gates of the War Memorial Gardens and Broadwalk. The college chapel is **Oxford Cathedral**, the smallest in the country.

7. Carfax Tower

Carfax is the ancient heart of Oxford: its name is derived from *Quadrifurcus*, where the four roads from the four city gates meet. It is dominated by the thirteenth-century church tower of the former St Martin's Church, the main part of which was rebuilt in 1820 and then demolished in 1896 in order to widen the street.

8. Covered Market

The Covered Market was officially opened on 1 November 1774 and is still active today. The Covered Market was started in response to a general wish to clear 'untidy, messy and unsavoury stalls' from the main streets of central Oxford. Today the covered market is still home to numerous traders, around half of which are food retailers.