



BODLEIAN
LIBRARIES

A guide to
Group Visits

Visit the world-famous Bodleian Libraries –
a must-see cultural destination in the heart of Oxford



Welcome to the Bodleian

A trip to Oxford is incomplete without a visit to the world famous Bodleian Libraries. The Bodleian Library dates back to 1488, with the library, as it stands today, opening in 1602. In its reading rooms generations of famous scholars have studied through the ages, amongst them monarchs, Nobel Prize winners, British Prime Ministers and writers including Oscar Wilde, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien.

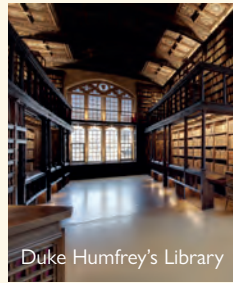
*Learn more about the library's history from the Bodleian Library:
Souvenir Guide available in the Bodleian Library Shops*

About the buildings

THE OLD SCHOOLS QUADRANGLE is the intellectual heart of the university, the citadel to the 'Republic of Letters' to which Bodley dedicated his library. The buildings were designed to house lecture and examination rooms ('schools' in Oxford parlance) to replace what Bodley called 'those ruinous little rooms' on the site in which generations of undergraduates had been taught. Work began in 1613 and was completed in the 1620s.



Divinity School



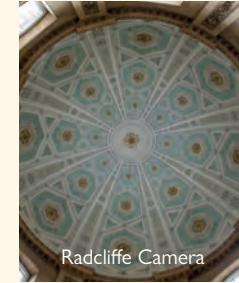
Duke Humfrey's Library



Convocation House



Chancellor's Court



Radcliffe Camera

DIVINITY SCHOOL

A masterpiece of English Gothic architecture built between 1424 and 1488. Featuring a beautiful stone carved ceiling and furnishings dating back to 1669, it is the university's oldest teaching room and the first examination school.

DUKE HUMFREY'S LIBRARY

The atmospheric heart and the oldest library room of the Bodleian Library features a ceiling of beautifully painted panels with the arms of the University and a special reading booth built for King Charles I. The books in this library were historically chained to the shelves and can only be consulted in the Bodleian reading rooms to this day.

CONVOCATION HOUSE

This impressive 17th-century room was built to house meetings of the University's supreme legislative body. It also housed Charles I's parliament while he was resident in Oxford during the English Civil War (1642–46).

CHANCELLOR'S COURT

With its fan-vaulted ceiling and oak panelled dock from the 1630s, the University's imposing former courtroom sets the scene for proceedings of the past. Here, students were put on trial by the University for their misdemeanours and high jinks.

THE RADCLIFFE CAMERA

Oxford's most iconic building and a beautiful piece of classical architecture. It is named after its benefactor, the royal physician, John Radcliffe who had left money in his will to purchase land, build a library, purchase books, and pay a full-time librarian. The distinctive circular library was based on designs by the famous architect James Gibbs and built between 1737–49.



Group tour packages

NEW
IN 2024

The official UNIVERSITY *of* OXFORD TOUR

The Bodleian Libraries has partnered with the Oxford Guild of Tour Guides and an iconic Oxford college to create a one of a kind experience.

- MONDAY – FRIDAY (SEPTEMBER – JUNE)
- 3 HOURS
- FROM £550 PER GROUP

Explore the 600-year history of the Bodleian Library on a guided tour of the Divinity School and medieval Duke Humfrey's Library. Immerse yourself in the fascinating history of Oxford with our incredible green badge walking tour guides and complete your experience with a tour of the stunning University of Oxford college: Christ Church.

Whether you are a Harry Potter fan, history enthusiast or want to experience as much of Oxford as you can, this tour is for you. We have suggested itineraries that we are happy to discuss further with you to help plan your day in Oxford.

USEFUL INFORMATION

- Maximum group size: 13 people per tour
- Ages 11+

For more information or to book one of these tours email us at tours@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

Prices valid from April 2024 – March 2026

30-MINUTE LIBRARY TOUR

- Historic Divinity School
- Medieval Duke Humfrey's Library

£110 PER GROUP
WINTER DISCOUNT £94

60-MINUTE LIBRARY TOUR

- Historic Divinity School
- Medieval Duke Humfrey's Library
- Impressive Convocation House
- Imposing Chancellor's Court

£165 PER GROUP
WINTER DISCOUNT £140

90-MINUTE LIBRARY TOUR

- Historic Divinity School
- Medieval Duke Humfrey's Library
- Impressive Convocation House
- Imposing Chancellor's Court
- Iconic Radcliffe Camera

£228 PER GROUP
WINTER DISCOUNT £194

USEFUL INFORMATION

- A winter discount will be applied to all group library tour bookings from the 1 November – 31 January
- Maximum group size: 13 people per tour
- Ages 11+





CITY of OXFORD WALKING TOUR



*In partnership with the
Oxford Guild of Tour Guides*

- 90–120 MINUTES
- FROM £160 PER GROUP
- STARTS AT THE WESTON LIBRARY



Discover the vibrant history of the oldest university in the English-speaking world and how Oxford grew from a small market town to become the city of dreaming spires.

Our popular City of Oxford Walking Tour will take you on an entertaining journey that will reveal the secrets of this historic university city. All tours are conducted by accredited guides, ensuring you receive the most accurate and interesting facts and anecdotes.

“My students found Iain engaging, funny, and stimulating. His obvious interest in the colleges’ lore rubbed off on them... All in all, an excellent tour - we will certainly use this tour for our students again.”

For more information or to book one of these tours email us at tours@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

Plan your visit

The history of the Bodleian Library is the history of the University of Oxford. Located in the city centre it is a natural starting point for any visit to the city. You can easily spend half a day at our site touring the buildings, exploring exhibitions of our rich collections, sitting down for a break in the café and browsing our two unique shops. Get in touch and we are happy to help you plan your full visit.

To make the most of your visit to the Bodleian Libraries we recommend:

EXHIBITIONS & DISPLAYS

Discover more from the Library through our changing exhibitions. Located in the Weston Library are two museum-grade galleries as well as an additional exhibition case in Blackwell Hall used for smaller displays. The Weston Library runs up to three exhibitions at once, giving you a chance to marvel at the breadth and depth of material from the Bodleian's collections.

visit.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/events-exhibitions

ADMISSION IS FREE

Recommended time: 30 minutes per exhibition



SHOP & CAFÉ

As part of your visit, we recommend making time to visit our shop and café. With two shops to choose from, we have plenty of exclusive gift ideas and souvenirs to take home with you, all inspired by the library and its collections, as well as famous Oxford authors.

Our Benugo café in the Weston Library serves a delicious selection of hot and cold drinks and snacks. We highly recommend sitting down for a break in the beautiful and modern atrium, Blackwell Hall.

Please check opening hours here
visit.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/cafe-and-shops



Booking your visit



BOOK IN ADVANCE

To guarantee your visit, we ask that bookings are made in advance, at least a month prior to your visit, via our Tours and Groups Coordinator.

GROUP SIZES

Maximum tour group capacity is 13, due to the Bodleian being a working library. Walking tour group sizes are flexible.

PAY IN ADVANCE

Payment can be made via invoice prior to visiting.

BUSY PERIODS

During peak seasons we may restrict how many groups can book per day.

LANGUAGES

All guided tours of the Bodleian are delivered in English.

We can accommodate other languages on our City of Oxford Walking Tour. Please contact our Tours Coordinator for further information.

ACCESSIBILITY

All tours of the Bodleian Libraries include a number of stairs and some walking, no lift is available.



Getting here



BODLEIAN LIBRARY

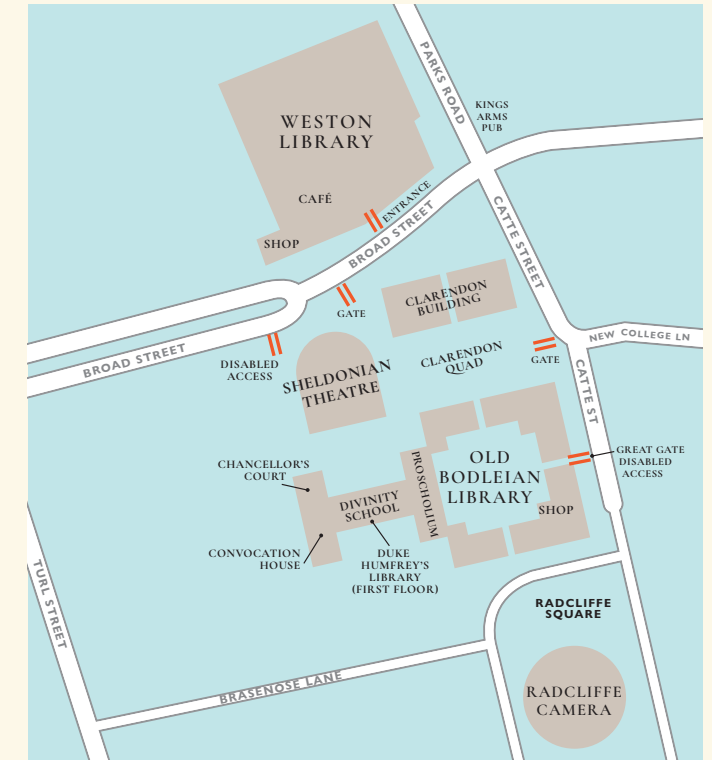
BROAD STREET, OXFORD OX1 3BG

We recommend accessing the Old Bodleian via Catte Street (to the East) using the Great Gate. All guided library tours begin in the Divinity School. Access to this is through the Proscholium, directly opposite the Great Gate and through the glass doors.

WESTON LIBRARY

BROAD STREET, OXFORD OX1 3BG

The Weston Library is located on the corner of Broad Street and Parks Road. It has two exhibition rooms as well as space for smaller displays in Blackwell Hall, the main atrium. The cafe, Bodleian shop and ticket office are in this building.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

TRAIN

With links to London and Birmingham, Oxford is easily accessible by bus and rail. The Old Bodleian Library and Weston Library are a 15-minute walk from Oxford train station.

BUSES

Buses travel in from outside Oxford and there are five Park and Ride sites connected to Oxford.

COACH

Oxford City Centre has coach bays for drop-off and pick-up only. These are located at:

- Beaumont Street (westbound): opposite the Ashmolean Museum OX1 2PH (closest to the Bodleian)

- St Giles' (northbound): in the lay-by by the Taylor Institution Library (Taylorian) OX1 3NA
- St Aldates South (northbound): just south of the Combined Court OX1 1TL

Coach parking is not available in the city centre.

We advise coaches and mini-buses park at Redbridge Park and Ride, South of the city.

Find out more about the Oxford City Council coach permits here www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/parking/parking-permits



BODLEIAN
LIBRARIES
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD