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Oxford– A City Guide

By Maria Williams

Introduction

Oxford is a city and local government district in Oxfordshire, England, with a population of 134,248 (2001 census). It is home to the University of Oxford, the oldest university in the English–speaking world. It is known as the "city of dreaming spires", a term coined by Matthew Arnold in reference to the harmonious architecture of the university buildings. The Oxford suburb of Cowley has a long history of carmaking, and still produces BMW MINIs.

History

Oxford was first occupied in Saxon times, and was initially known as "Oxenaforda". It began with the foundations of St Frideswide's nunnery in the 8th century. The University of Oxford is first mentioned in 12th century records. Oxford's earliest colleges were University College (1249), Balliol (1263) and Merton (1264).

During the English Civil War, Oxford housed the court of Charles I in 1642, after the king was expelled from London, although there was strong support in the town for the Parliamentary cause. In the 19th century the controversy surrounding the Oxford Movement in the Anglican Church drew attention to the city as a focus of theological thought. Oxford's Town Hall was built by Henry T. Hare, the foundation stone was laid on 6 July 1893 and opened by the future King Edward VII on 12 May 1897. By the early 20th century Oxford was experiencing rapid industrial and population growth, with the printing and publishing industries becoming well established by the 1920s.

Places of Interests

Oxford has numerous major tourist attractions, many belonging to the university and colleges. As well as several famous institutions, the town centre is home to Carfax Tower and a historical themed ride, The Oxford Story. In the summer, punting on the Thames (sometimes called the Isis as it flows through Oxford) and the Cherwell is popular.

Other notable attractions include:

- " Christ Church Cathedral
- " The Church of St Mary the Virgin (the University Church)

- " Martyrs' Memorial
- " Ashmolean Museum
- " Pitt Rivers Museum
- " Museum of Natural History
- " Museum of the History of Science
- " Science Oxford
- " University buildings
- " The University Parks
- " The University Botanic Garden
- " Cornmarket Street, Oxford
- " Turl Street, Oxford
- " Little Clarendon Street
- " Oxford Covered Market
- " Westgate Shopping Centre

Museums and Art Galleries

Oxford has a large number of museums and galleries open for public. Following are the world famous and a major tourist spot in Oxford:

- " Ashmolean Museum, Britain's oldest museum
- " Pitt Rivers Museum
- " Museum of Natural History, home of (the remains of) the Oxford Dodo
- " Museum of the History of Science, in Britain's oldest purpose–built museum building
- " Museum of Oxford
- " Museum of Modern Art
- " Science Oxford

Shopping

Golden Cross, an arcade of first–class shops and boutiques, lies between Cornmarket Street and the Covered Market. Parts of the colorful gallery date from the 12th century. Many buildings remain from the medieval era, along with some 15th– and 17th–century structures. The market also has a reputation as the Covent Garden of Oxford, with live entertainment on Saturday mornings in summer. In its way, Alice's Shop, played an important role in English literature, it functioned as a general store (selling brooms, hardware, and the like) during the period that Lewis Carroll, at the time a professor of mathematics at Christ Church College, was composing Alice in Wonderland. It is believed to have been the model for important settings within the book. Today, the place is a favorite stopover of Lewis Carroll fans from as far away as Japan, who gobble up commemorative pencils, chess sets, party favors, bookmarks, and in rare cases, original editions of some of Carroll's works. The Bodleian Library Shop, specializes in Oxford souvenirs, from books and paperweights to Oxford banners and coffee mugs. Castell & Son (The Varsity Shop), is the best outlet in Oxford for clothing emblazoned with the Oxford logo or heraldic symbol.

Food and Drink

Oxford offers European and Middle–East and Asian cuisine. Some of the restaurants are:

- " Cherwell Boathouse Restaurant
- " Gee's Restaurant
- " Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons
- " Rosamund the Fair
- " Al–Salam
- " Browns.

Except these restaurants Oxford hosts some Traditional and historic pubs

- " The Eagle and Child
- " The Turf Tavern
- " The Lamb and Flag
- " The Bear

Education

The University of Oxford, located in the city of Oxford, England, is the oldest university in the English–speaking world.

Events and organizations and institutes officially connected with the University include:

- " Worcester College, Backs of medieval cottages

- " The Oxford Union Society
- " The Oxford University Press, the world's oldest and largest university press
- " The Bodleian Library
- " Major Research Libraries (including the Sackler Library)
- " Oxford University Department for Continuing Education
- " The Taylor Institution
- " The Oxford University Student Union
- " Oxford University Newman Society – Catholic speaker society
- " The OICCU, the undergraduate Christian union
- " The Oxford University Museum of Natural History (sometimes called The Oxford University Museum)

- " The Pitt Rivers Museum
- " The Ashmolean Museum
- " The Bate Collection
- " Oxford Botanic Garden and Harcourt Arboretum
- " Oxford University Sports Federation
- " Oxford University Boat Club
- " The O'Reilly Theatre
- " Moser Theatre
- " Rothermere American Institute
- " Said Business School
- " The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art
- " Computing Laboratory
- " Isis Innovation

Sports

Oxford City FC and Milton United FC among others are two famous football club and play regular club and league matches. Oxford Cavaliers Rugby League Club is the rugby club playing for Oxford city. Drayton Leisure Golf Driving Range is the golf course with 9 HOLE (PAR 3) COURSE and 6 HOLES FLOODLIT. As a city in UK it has a number of cricket teams and hosts tournaments like Bernard Tollett Oxfordshire Cup, National Cricket Club Championship, The Cricketer National Village Championship etc

Tours and Sightseeing

There are a number of tour operators in Oxford. The tourist information center is also very helpful to find out a way to enjoy the visit of Oxford.

Hotels and Accommodations

Accommodations in Oxford are limited, though recently, motels have sprouted on the outskirts — good for those who want modern amenities. In addition, if you have a car, you may want to consider country houses or small B&Bs on the outskirts of town

Some of the notable hotels are:

- " Victoria House Hotel
- " Cotswold Lodge Classic Hotel
- " Westwood Country Hotel Ltd
- " Holiday Inn Oxford
- " The Oxford Hotel
- " Oxford Thames Four Pillars Hotel

- " Express by Holiday Inn Oxford Kassam Stadium
- " The Bat & Ball Inn
- " The Upper Reaches
- " Abingdon Four Pillars Hotel
- " Oxfordshire Inn
- " Days Inn Hotel Oxford
- " The Plough at Clifton Hampden
- " Marlborough Arms Hotel
- " The FEATHERS
- " Macdonald Bear Hotel
- " White Hart Hotel

Transport

Oxford is located some 50 miles (80 km) north west of London; the cities are linked by the M40 motorway, which also links northwards to Birmingham.

Rail connections include services to London (Paddington), Bournemouth, Worcester (via the Cotswold Line), and Bicester. The city also has regular train services northwards to Birmingham, Coventry and the north. The railway service connecting Oxford and Cambridge, known as the Varsity Line, was discontinued in 1968.

The Oxford Canal connects to the River Thames at Oxford.

Oxford Airport at Kidlington offers business and general aviation services.

Local bus services are largely provided by the Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach South Midlands.

Biography

Name: Maria Williams

Occupation: Traveller

Website:

www.sleepuk.com

Biography: Maria writes for Sleep UK – providers of discounted hotels to make your stay in the UK as comfortable as possible.

A Guide To The Oxford And Cambridge University Boat Race

By John Rivers

I have been fascinated with the annual Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge University for as long as I can remember. I didn't attend any of these top two British Universities, nor do I have an avid enthusiasm for rowing but this traditional race of the two boats over exactly 4 miles and 374 yards still holds a fascination for me. I am not alone as the televised event is broadcast, from the historic River Thames, to hundreds of countries and has an audience of millions. The idea for the boat race between these paragons of academia was dreamt up by two students, both named Charles, funnily enough. Charles Merivale was at Cambridge University and Charles Wordsworth was at Oxford.

Cambridge issued their challenge to Oxford on March 12th 1829. Ever since then, it has been a tradition for the loser of a year's race to challenge the other boat to a rematch the following year.

On 10th June 1829, thousands of enthusiastic people descended on the small town of Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire. They were there to witness the first ever staging of the Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge's best rowing teams. In a rather embarrassing turn of events the race had to be stopped shortly after both boats had begun to be rowed. It was restarted and Oxford was the winner of the first boat race against Cambridge.

One thing that I didn't realise about the Boat Race until fairly recently was that the members of both crews do not get any special dispensation as far as their studies go. If they can't keep up with their academic commitments then the students must resign from that year's boat squad.

The Boat Race is on a Sunday in March or April and the main event is preceded by a competition between Isis and Goldie. These are the reserve boats for Oxford and Cambridge in that order. About half an hour later the Blue Boats, as the first teams of each University are known, takes place.

Cambridge is light blue and Oxford dark blue.

John Rivers is the owner of The Boat Blog. On his blog you will find resources, tips, and advice on boating. For all interested in sailing, yachting and boating

<http://www.theboatsblog.com>



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