



Planning Your Visit

**A guide for families with children
on the autistic spectrum**



Museum of
Natural
History

The Museum of Natural History is proud of its family friendly status but recognises that visiting with children on the autistic spectrum can be challenging.

This guide is designed to help families feel more confident both before and during their visit by providing a bank of images and highlighting some sensory aspects of the museum.

We recommend that parents and carers first read the [About the Museum](#) guide, which includes much more descriptive information about the museum and displays, and then use this, the [Planning Your Visit](#) guide, as a tool to prepare children for their visit and to give them objects to look for when they are here.

What's in the guide?

- Notes on how to use the guide
- Notes on museum layout
- A visit planner and image bank
- A reminder of how to behave in the museum

This is a long document. Please help to save ink and paper by only printing those pages you intend to use.

How to use the guide

- Use the visit planner and image bank to create your own introduction to the museum to suit your child's needs.
- The About the Museum guide includes descriptions of the main spaces and features, which you may find useful. There are also some notes about the museum layout on the next page.
- The following symbols highlight certain sensory aspects of the museum and appear by relevant pages in this guide.



Listen



Find



Look



Touch



Dark
areas



Live animals
in cases

For further information or advice regarding visiting, please contact the Family Education Officer:
Telephone 01865 282537 **Email** education@oum.ox.ac.uk

PLANNING YOUR VISIT

Museum layout

The images in the 'Ground Floor' and 'First Floor' sections of the image bank are roughly organised to reflect the museum layout from left to right as you face the back of the museum. However, things do move around from time to time and so may not look exactly the same as they do in the pictures or from one visit to the next.

Ground Floor

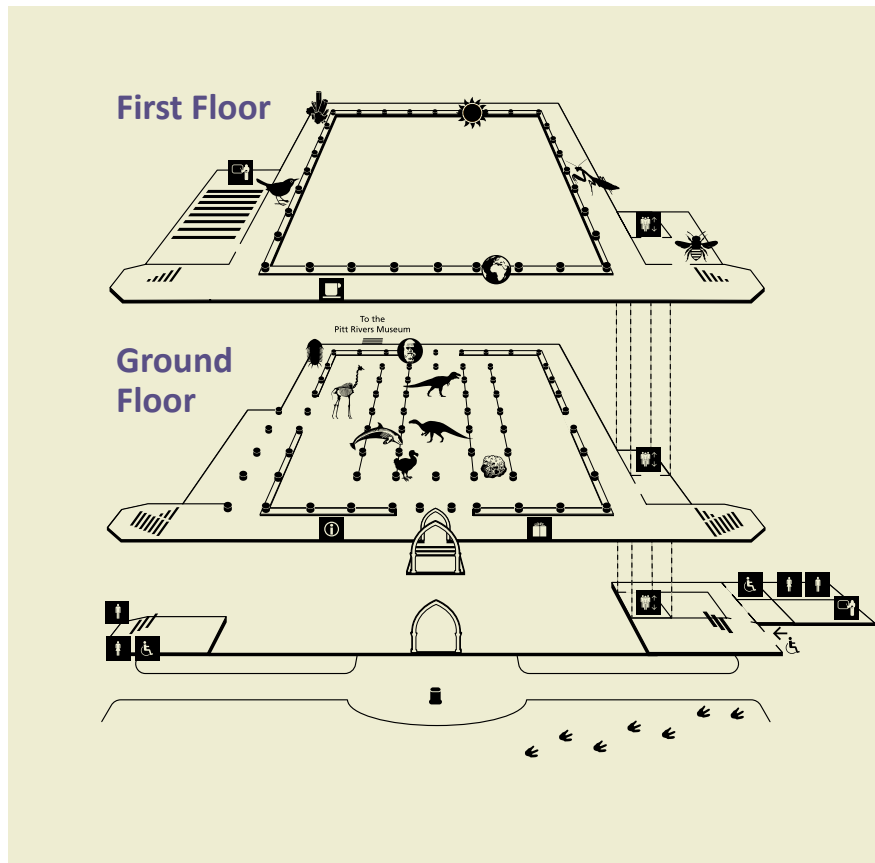
- From left to right, the five Court aisles mainly contain displays about: birds and mammals; fish, amphibians, and reptiles; museum highlights; rocks and minerals; fossils.
- The outer aisles contain displays about classification, evolution, and geology.

First Floor

- The left aisle contains displays about birds, shells, crystals, and gemstones.
- The back aisle is a temporary exhibition space.
- The right aisle contains displays about insects.
- The front aisle is where the café is.

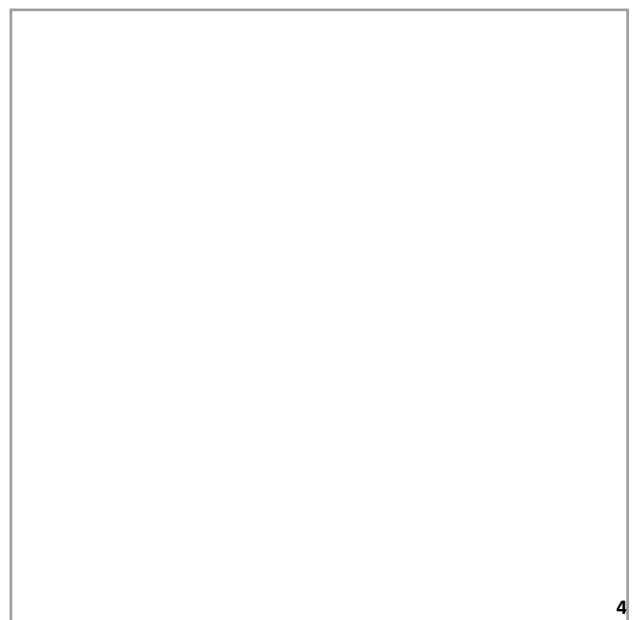
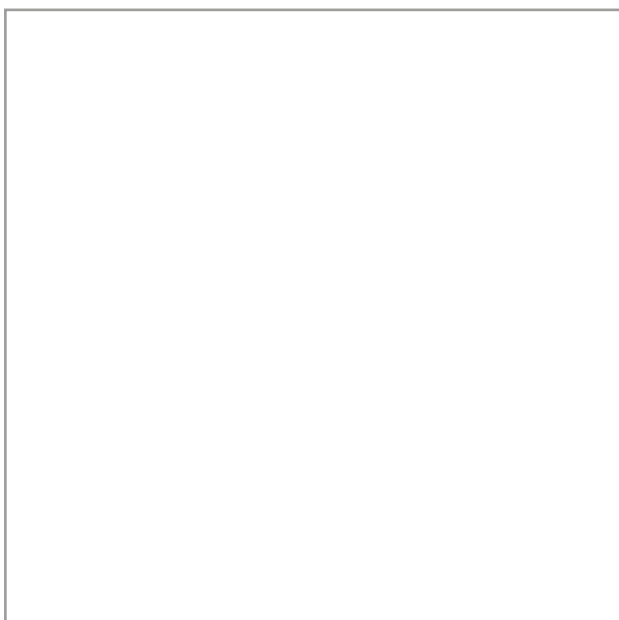
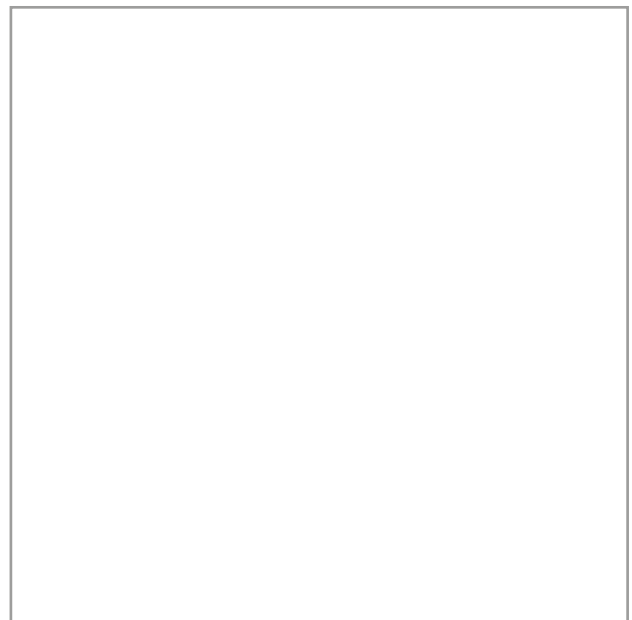
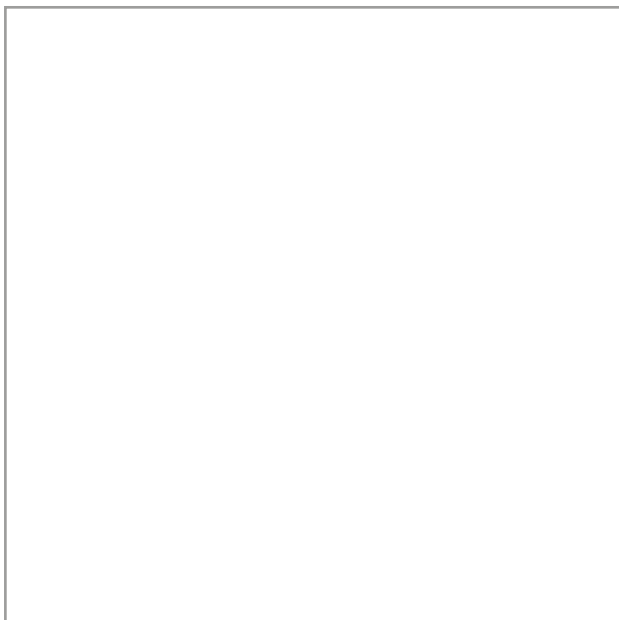
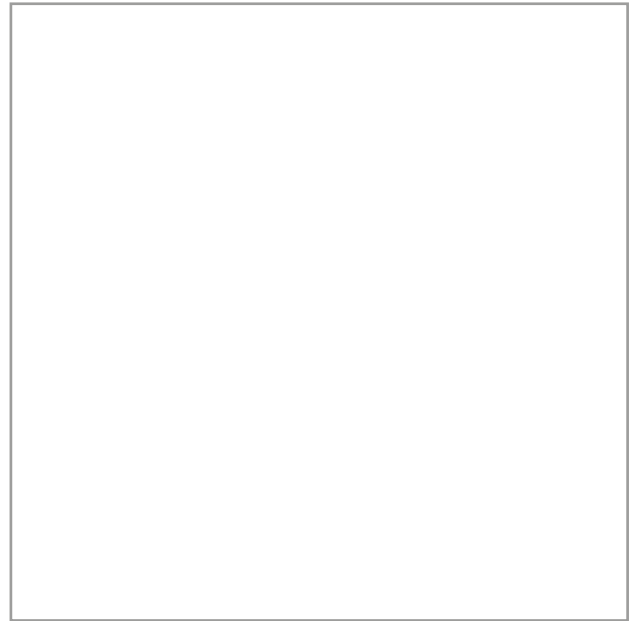
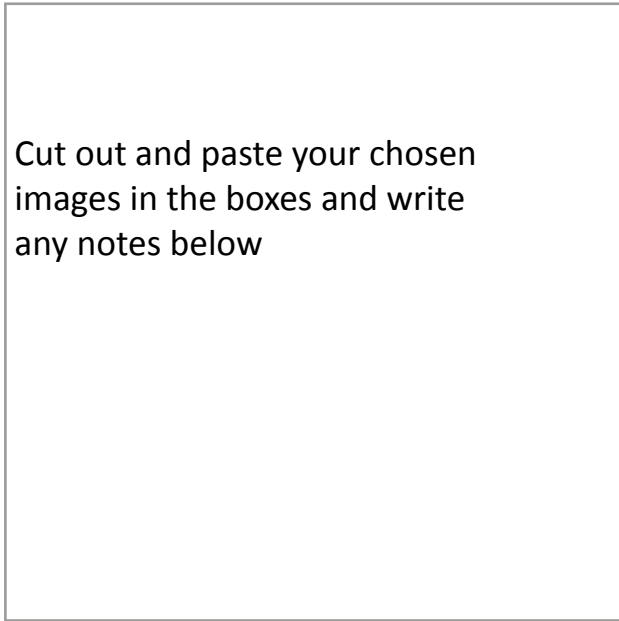
Visit Planner and Image Bank

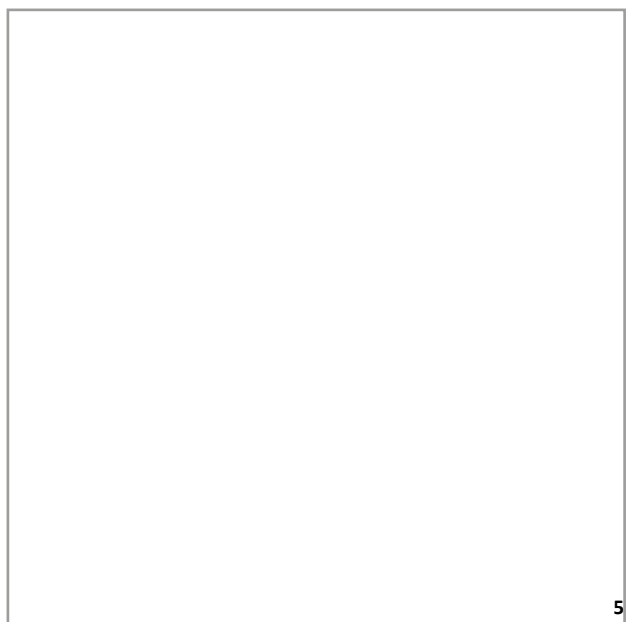
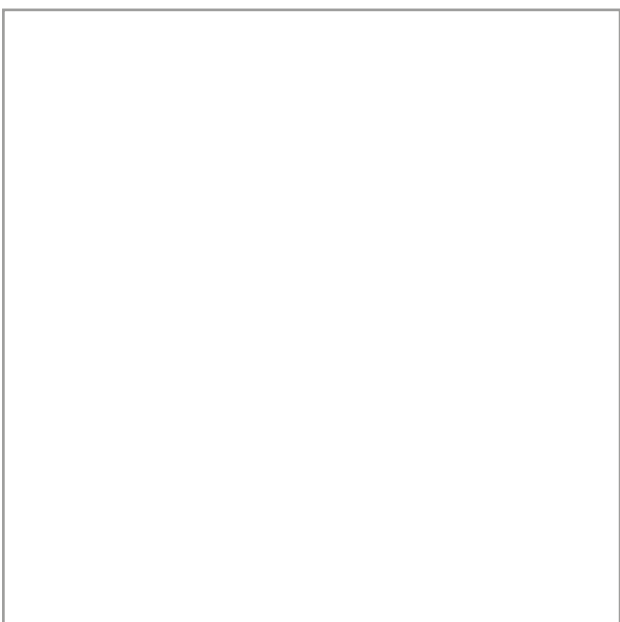
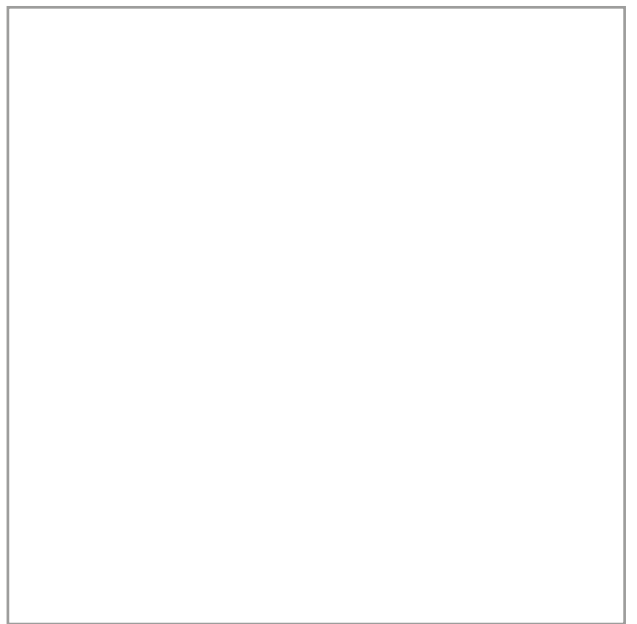
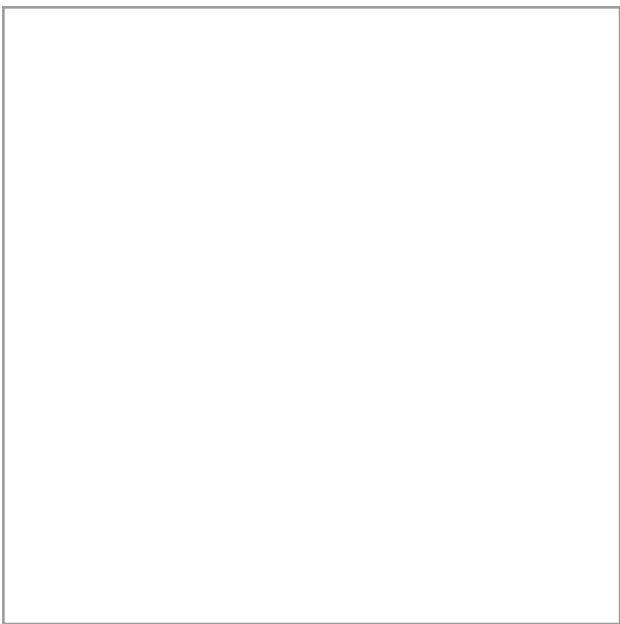
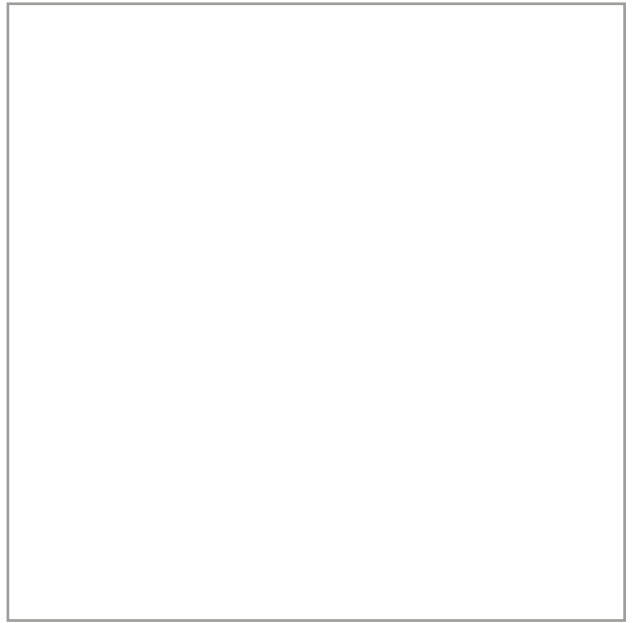
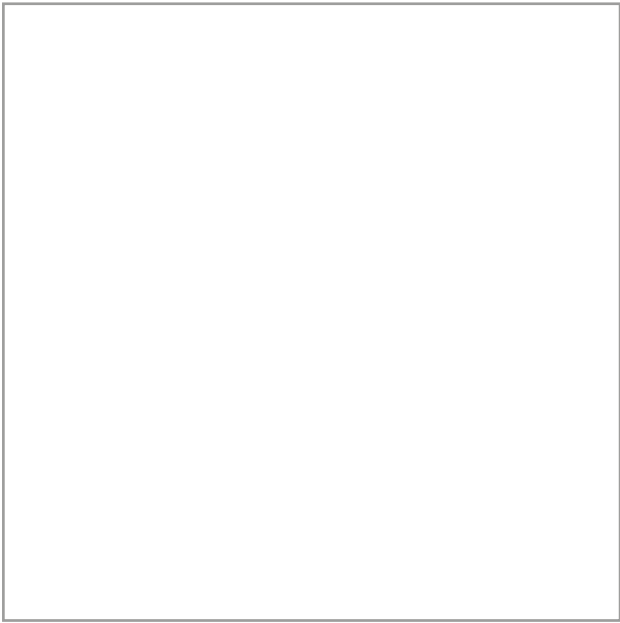
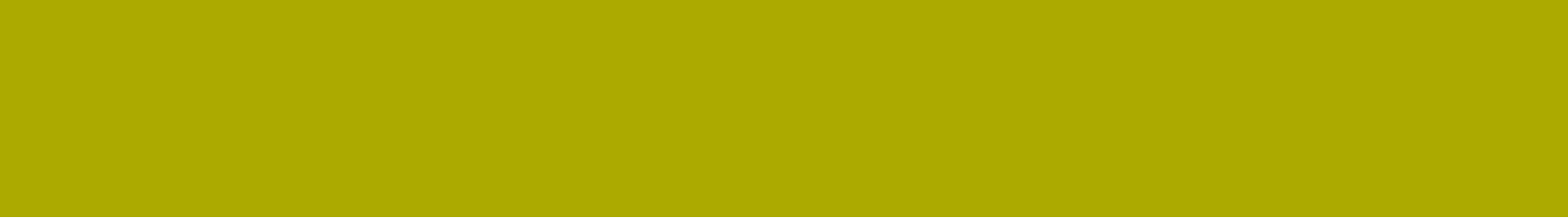
- There are 60+ images in the image bank. Please help to save ink and paper by only printing those pages you intend to use.
- The images are a mixture of general views and specific objects and displays.
- 'Sensory' symbols appear where relevant.
- Print, cut out, and paste your chosen images onto the My Visit template. Use as many copies of the template as you need.
- The template includes blank space for you and your child to write below each image.



MY VISIT TO THE MUSEUM

Cut out and paste your chosen images in the boxes and write any notes below

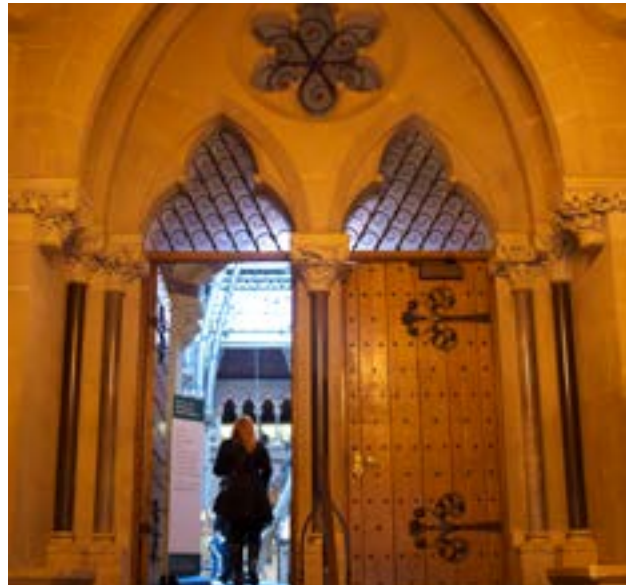




ENTRANCES, EXITS, AND THE LAWN



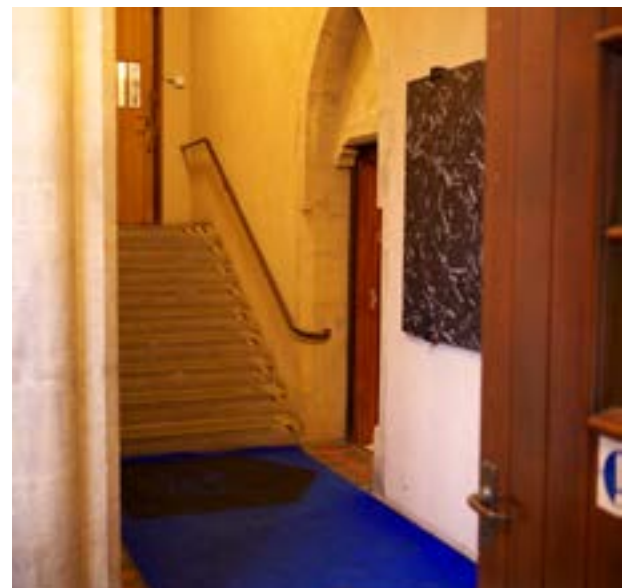
Museum of Natural History



Porch



Accessible entrance



Inside the accessible entrance



Exit by the smaller set of toilets

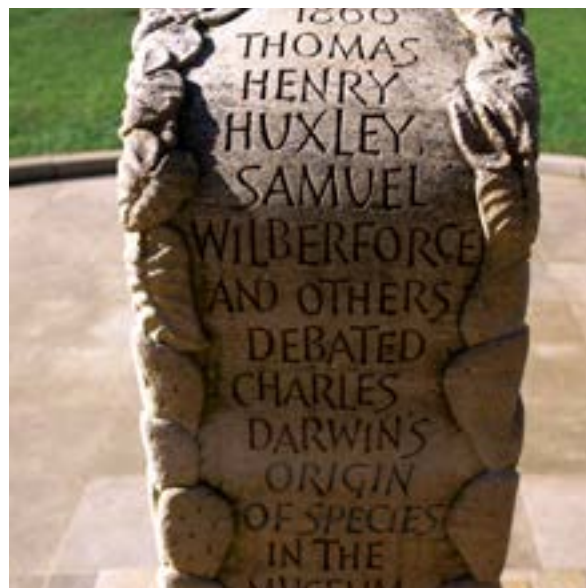


Exit button by the smaller set of toilets

ENTRANCES, EXITS, AND THE LAWN



View from outside the main door

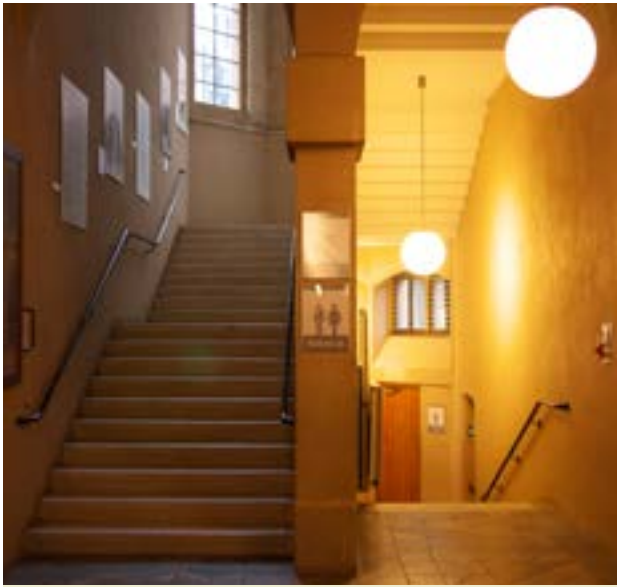


Great Debate plinth outside the main door



Dinosaur footprints

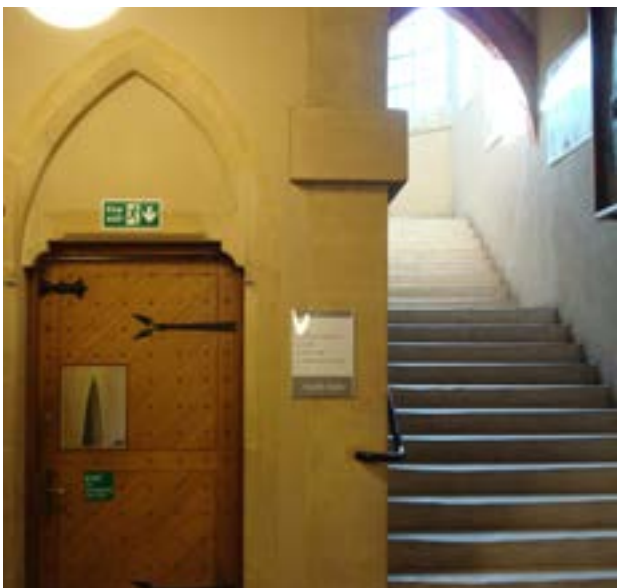
THE STAIRS AND LIFT



Stairs on the left as you enter



Stairs on the left from the first floor



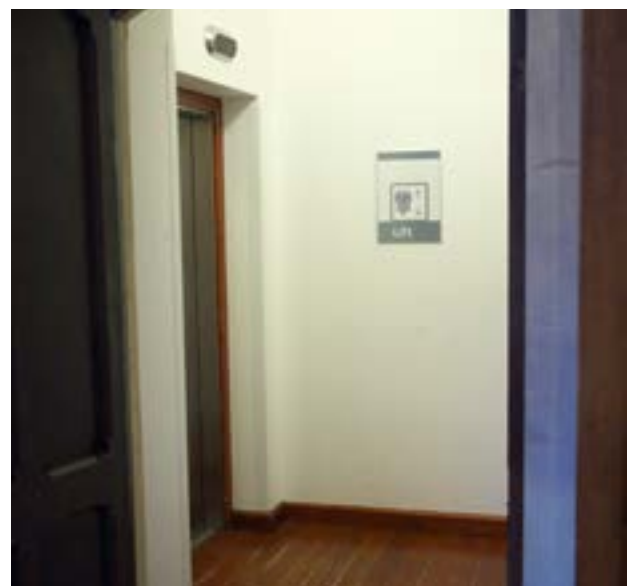
Stairs on the right as you enter



Stairs on the right from the first floor



Lower ground floor / accessible entrance



Ground floor lift

THE STAIRS AND LIFT



First floor lift

TOILETS



Accessible entrance toilet



Inside the accessible entrance toilet



Toilet Door



Inside the larger set of men's toilets – near accessible entrance



Inside the larger set of men's toilets – near accessible entrance



Inside the larger set of women's toilets – near accessible entrance

TOILETS



Doorway before the smaller set of women's and accessible toilet



Inside the accessible toilet



Inside the smaller set of women's toilets

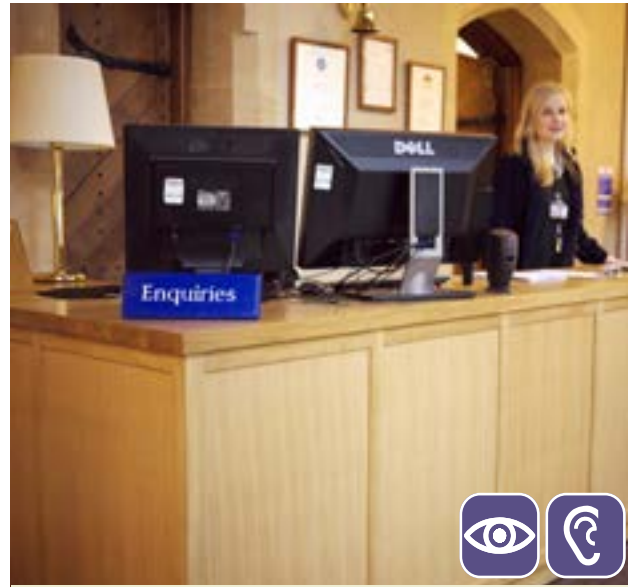


Inside the smaller set of women's toilets

GROUND FLOOR



View from inside the main door



Welcome desk



Screen by the welcome desk



Family activities trolley



A-Z drawers



DNA model



GROUND FLOOR



An outer aisle



View in to the birds and mammals aisle



Elephant skeletons in the birds and mammals aisle



Pitt Rivers Museum entrance



Statue of Charles Darwin



Fish, amphibians, and reptiles aisle

GROUND FLOOR



Crocodile in the fish, amphibians, and reptiles aisle



Central aisle



Insect display in the central aisle



Sensing Evolution table of touchable objects



Touchable bear



Mineral aisle



GROUND FLOOR



Mineral tent



One of the touchable objects in the mineral aisle



Fossil aisle



Out of the deep display case



Shop

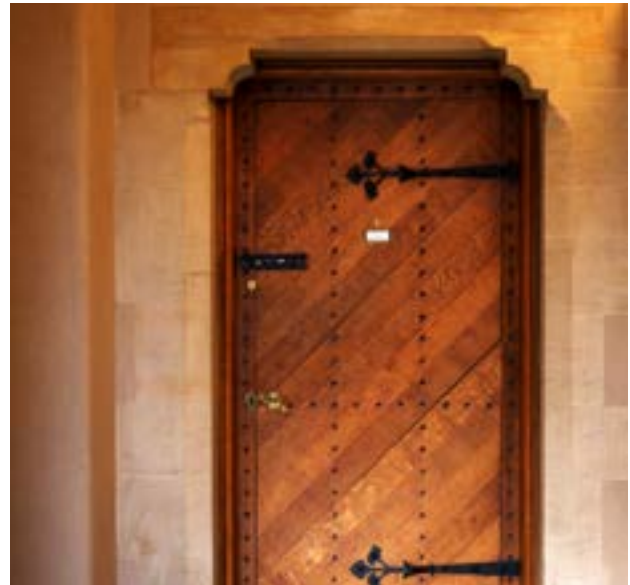


Chair

GROUND FLOOR



Flooring



Door



'Please Touch' sign



Visitors in the Museum

FIRST FLOOR



Bird aisle



Gemstone case



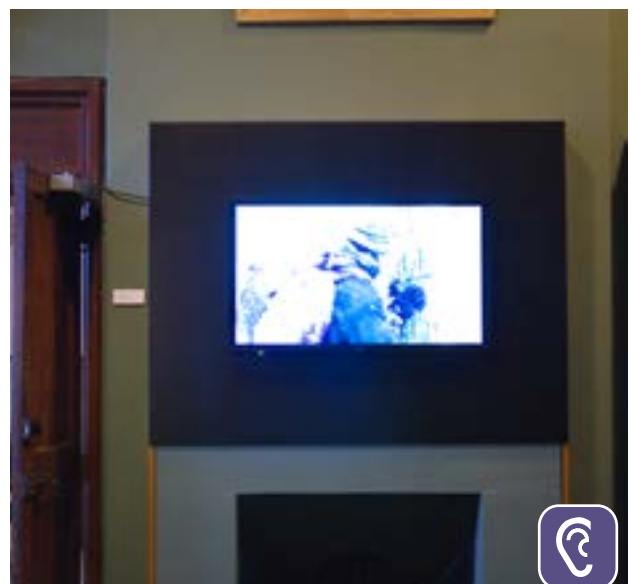
Entomology aisle



Live animals in the entomology aisle



Bee hive in the Bee Room



Screen in the Bee Room



FIRST FLOOR



Café

How to behave in the museum

- Walk when you are inside the museum. Do not run.
- Speak in your normal voice.
- Stay with your adult.
- Do not climb or sit on the cases or the stonework.
- You can drink bottled water anywhere in the museum. You can eat and drink other drinks in the café, in the porch, or outside on the lawn. Do not eat or drink other drinks anywhere else in the museum.
- There are people working in rooms behind the doors in the museum. Do not open a door or go through a doorway unless you have checked with your adult.
- You can touch objects in the museum if they are next to a sign that says 'Please Touch'. Do not touch other objects in the museum unless an adult says you can.
- There are live animals in some of the cases. Do not tap on the glass of these cases.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS PAGE

Written by Caroline Cheeseman and Susan Griffiths, Joint Museums Outreach Service & Carly Smith-Huggins, Public Engagement.

Photography by Pete Ryan & Scott Billings

Design by Oxford University Design Studio

Many thanks to Rae Sellen for instigating the resource and to the museum for its support.

Last updated November 2019

www.museums.ox.ac.uk

Oxford University
Museum of
Natural
History



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**