**23 October 2020**

**Mystery at the Museum of Natural History**

A door creaks. The circle of torchlight swings round the exhibition hall, picking out ribs, a spine, rows of teeth in its beam… Hang on – what’s this – an empty showcase...?

On 4 December at 7pm, BAFTA-winning wildlife presenter and explorer Steve Backshall (*Deadly 60*, *Blue Planet Live, Expedition*) will take you on a hunt for a missing exhibit in a unique live-streamed, interactive puzzle challenge.

Devised by Steve Backshall and escape room creators Agent November, *Mystery at the Museum* is a live online event taking participants on a virtual behind-the-scenes adventure through the spectacular building of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. To save the missing specimen, online participants will help Steve solve a series of puzzles based on the Museum exhibits, learning about the natural world along the way.

*Mystery at the Museum* is free for all to attend online, and is designed to raise funds for the Museum’s ambitious [HOPE for the Future project](https://oumnh.ox.ac.uk/hope-future), which is preserving the 200-year-old Hope entomology collection. Designated by Arts Council England as being of national and international importance, the Hope collection contains over 1 million British insects, from butterflies and beetles to flies and fleas. Under the HOPE for the Future project, insect-related teaching, outreach and events will inspire a new generation of scientists and increase public awareness of the climate and biodiversity crisis. Participants in *Mystery at the Museum* will be given an opportunity to donate to this exciting project during the event.

“This is going to be an interactive spook fest, as my online audience guide me around the Museum by night, solving puzzles and challenges, using their animal and dinosaur knowledge to help me.” Said Steve Backshall, “It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity to see behind the scenes at the most atmospheric building in the nation, and have me completely at your command, having to do everything you say!!!!”

*Mystery at the Museum* is for people of all ages with a passion for the natural world. It runs from 7-8pm on Friday 4 December 2020. More details and tickets at: [https://oumnh.ox.ac.uk/mystery](https://oumnh.ox.ac.uk/mystery-at-the-museum).

**For further information and interviews, contact:**

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**Notes to editors**

**About Oxford University Museum of Natural History**

Founded in 1860 as the centre for scientific study at the University of Oxford, the Museum of Natural History now holds the University’s internationally significant collections of entomological, geological and zoological specimens. Housed in a stunning Pre-Raphaelite-inspired example of neo-Gothic architecture, the Museum’s growing collections underpin a broad programme of natural environment research, teaching and public engagement.

In 2015, the Museum was a **Finalist in the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year**. In 2016, it won the top accolade, Best of the Best, in the **Museums + Heritage Awards**.

[www.oumnh.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oumnh.ox.ac.uk)
[www.morethanadodo.com](http://www.morethanadodo.com)

@morethanadodo

**About Steve Backshall**

Steve has been passionate about the wild world ever since he could crawl. Growing up, he counted the animals that lived around him as his best pals – from the asthmatic donkey to the grass snakes in the manure heap!

After leaving Exeter University with a degree in English and Theatre Studies, Steve studied martial arts in Japan attaining his black belt. Over the following years Steve wrote for the Indonesian Rough Guides and during his travels became conversant in the local language, drank blood with uncontacted tribes, nearly got caught in fatal crossfire in riots in East Timor, came nose to nose with Komodo Dragons and attempted to walk solo across Irian Jaya (a woeful failure)!

Armed with an idea for a television series, Steve headed out to Colombia. Whilst living in the jungle he wrangled snakes and ended up in a Colombian jail (through no fault of his own)! National Geographic Channel International bought the resultant video and Steve was taken on as ‘Adventurer in Residence’, producing, filming and presenting adventure and natural history programmes. Steve has circumnavigated the globe time and again, venturing into the Sinai desert , completing the Israeli paratroopers selection course, catching anacondas, vipers and cobras and (perhaps the best job ever) making “The Ten Great Dives of the World”, for the long-running series ‘Earthpulse’

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**About Agent November**

Agent November Escape Rooms is a puzzle company based in London, which runs escape games online and in real life. They have won four consecutive Trip Advisor "Certificates of Excellence" and their work has been seen at the Edinburgh Fringe and the Houses of Parliament.

[www.agentnovember.co.uk](http://www.agentnovember.co.uk)

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