



# Planning Your Visit

A guide for families with children on the autistic spectrum



Museum of  
**Natural  
History**  
University of Oxford

## 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 3
- Notes on museum layout 4
- A visit planner and image bank 5–19
- A reminder of how to behave in the museum 20

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 museum layout on the next page.
- The following symbols highlight certain sensory aspects of the museum and appear by relevant images in this guide.



**Touch**



**Listen**



**Look**



**Find**



**Dark**



**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](mailto:education@oum.ox.ac.uk)

# 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 on to the My Visit template. Use as many copies of the template as you need.
- The template includes blank space for you or your child to write below each image.

# My Visit to the Museum of Natural History

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

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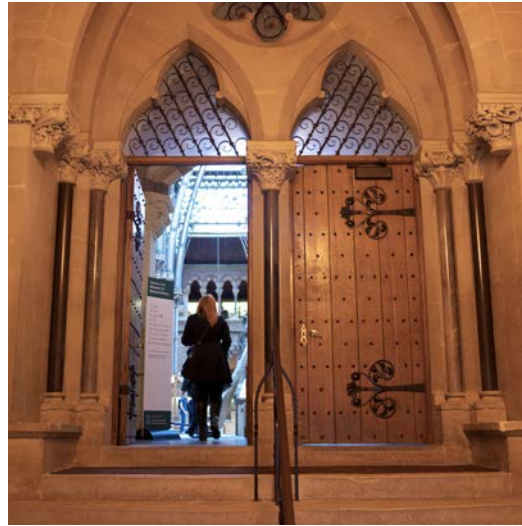
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## Entrances, Exits, and the Lawn



Museum of Natural History



Porch



Accessible entrance



Inside the accessible entrance



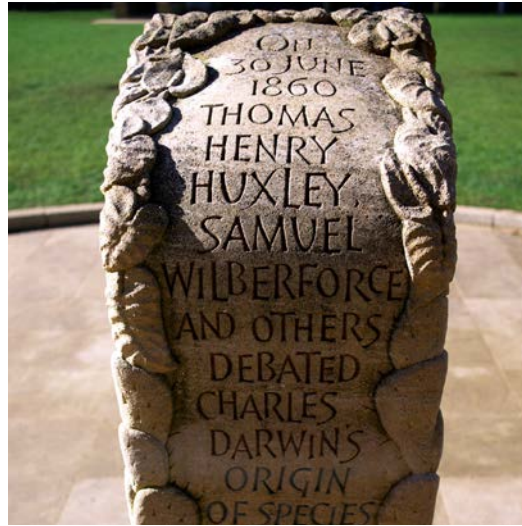
Exit by the main toilets



Exit button by the main toilets



View from outside the main door



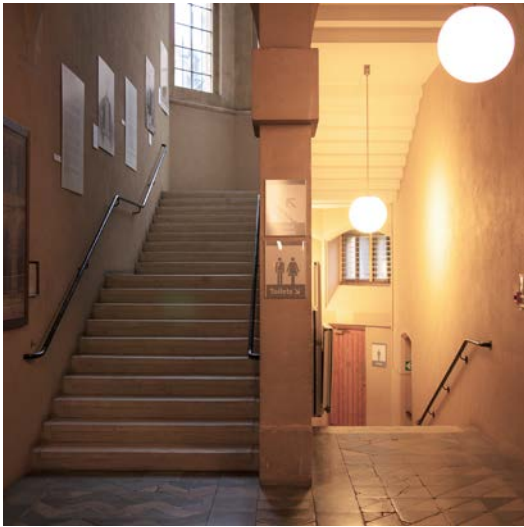
Great Debate plinth outside the main door



Dinosaur footprints



## The Stairs and Lift



Stairs on the left as you enter



Stairs on the left from the first floor



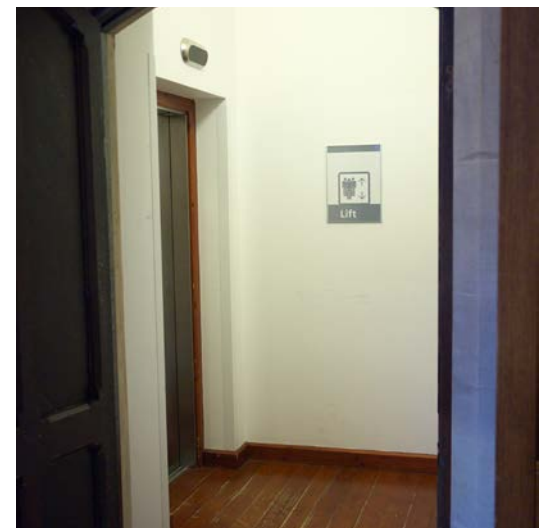
Stairs on the right as you enter



Stairs on the right from the first floor



Lower ground floor / accessible entrance lift



Ground floor lift

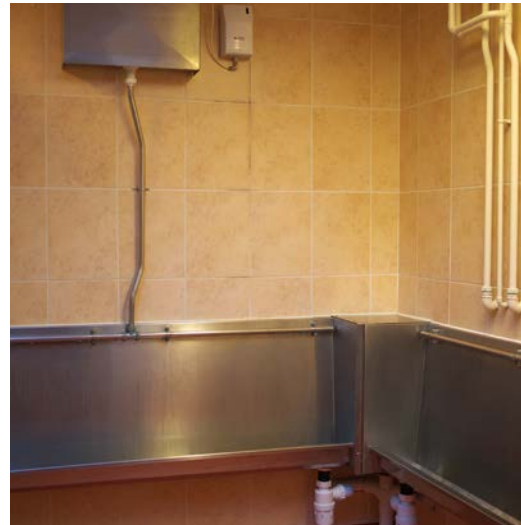


First floor lift

## Toilets



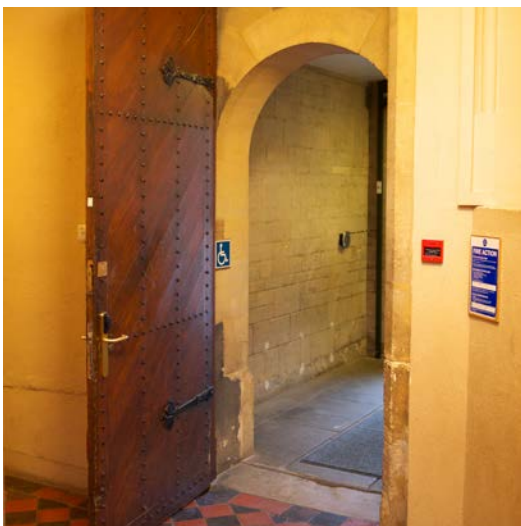
Men's toilet



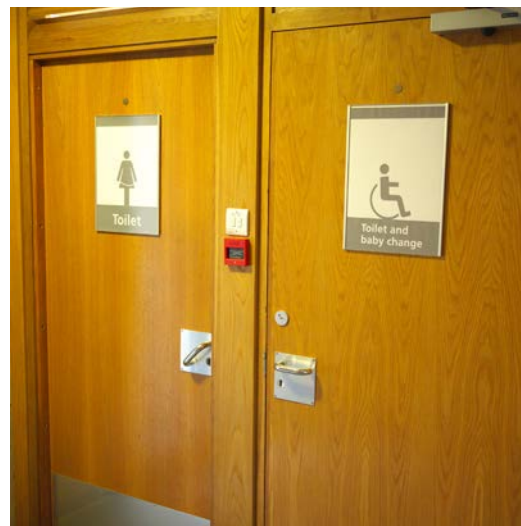
Inside the men's toilet



Inside the men's toilet



Doorway before the women's and accessible toilets



Women's and accessible toilets



Inside the accessible toilet



Inside the women's toilet



Inside the women's toilet



Accessible entrance toilet

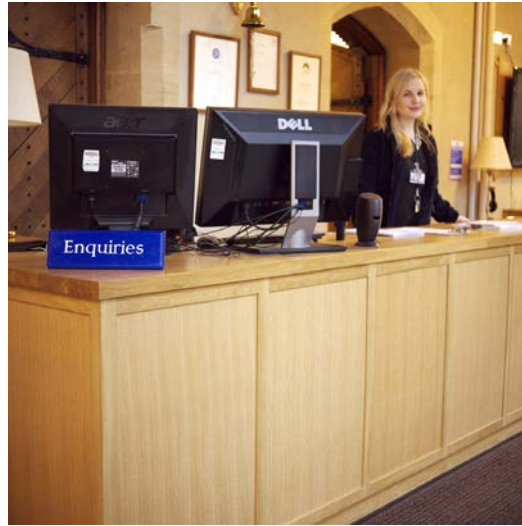


Inside the accessible entrance toilet

## Ground Floor



View from inside the main door



Welcome desk



Screen by the welcome desk



Family activities trolley



A - Z drawers



Feely boxes

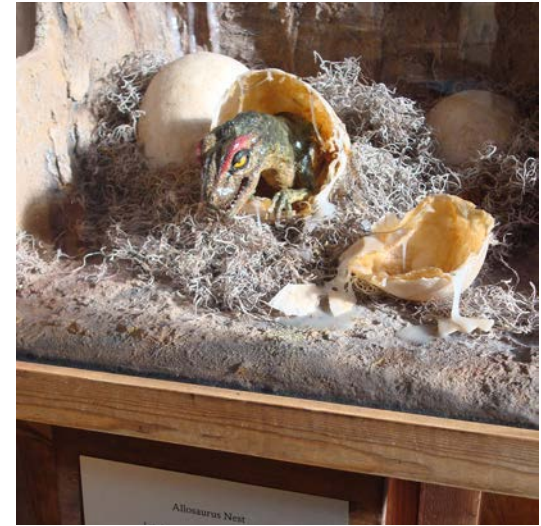




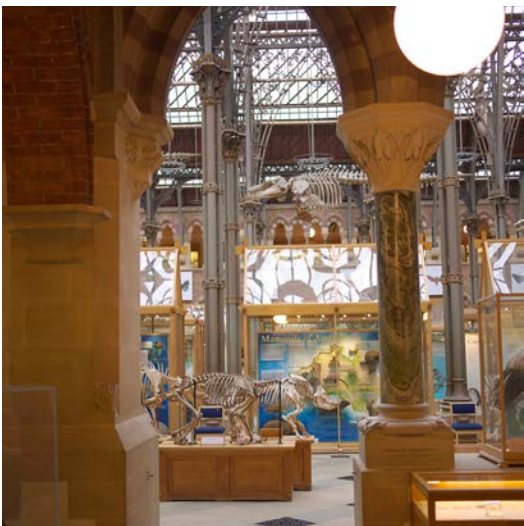
DNA model



An outer aisle



Dinosaur donations box



View in to the birds and mammals aisle



Sensing Evolution table of touchable objects



Elephant skeletons in the birds and mammals aisle





Pitt Rivers Museum entrance



Statue of Charles Darwin



Fish, amphibians, and reptiles aisle



Crocodile in the fish, amphibians, and reptiles aisle



Central isle



Insect display in the central aisle





Touchable bear



Mineral aisle



Mineral tent



One of the touchable objects in the mineral aisle



One of the touchable objects in the mineral aisle



Fossil aisle





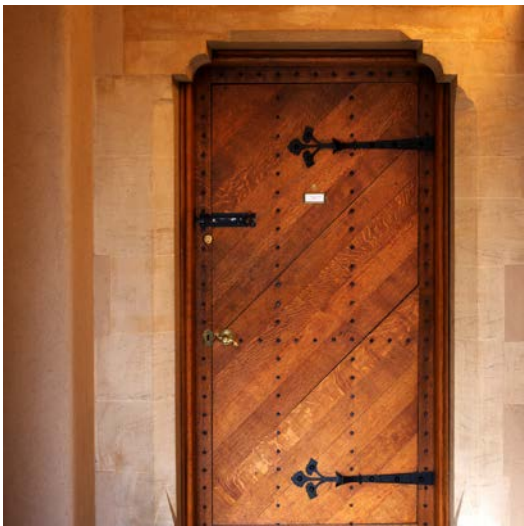
Shop



Chair



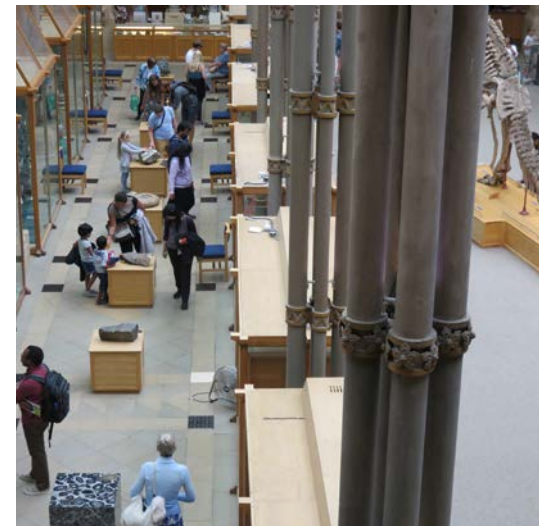
Flooring



Door



'Please Touch' sign



Visitors in the museum

## First Floor



Bird aisle



Gemstone case



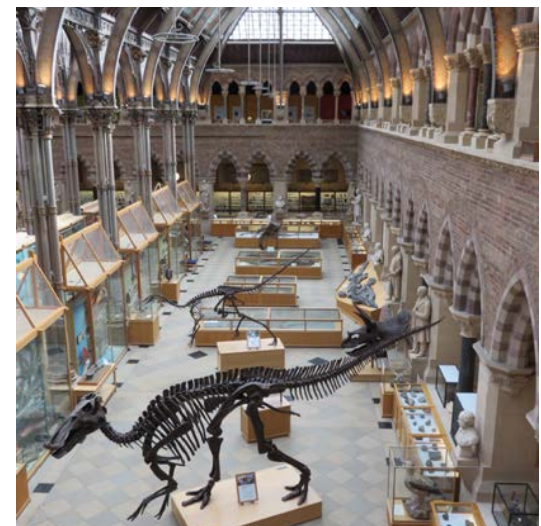
Entomology aisle



Live animals in the entomology aisle



Interactive screen



View down to the Court



Bee hive in the Bee Room



Screen in the Bee Room



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 water anywhere in the museum. You can eat food and drink other drinks in the café, in the porch, or outside on the lawn. Do not eat food 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.



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Photography by Pete Ryan

Design by Claire Venables at Giraffe Corner

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

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[www.oum.ox.ac.uk](http://www.oum.ox.ac.uk)



Museum of  
**Natural  
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University of Oxford



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