

The Oxford University Museum of Natural History is a glorious Victorian Gothic building that opened to the public in 1860. Designed as a cathedral to science, the main display area is the Great Court, with a glass roof supported by 30 composite cast iron columns - a masterpiece of Victorian engineering. The court is surrounded by four arcades in the form of a cloister.

The **central aisle** of the Great Court features some of our treasures: the dodo remains and our connection to 'Alice in Wonderland', and the Oxfordshire dinosaurs. There are also impressive collections of minerals, insects, and biodiversity. The **Earth Materials** aisle has displays of meteorites, rocks and minerals. At the far end is a case of fluorescent minerals in the form of a giant crystal. **Extinct Reptiles** features the giant reptiles of the Mesozoic era. At the front of this aisle are freestanding tables with **Touchable** birds, animals, rocks and fossils. The **Lower Vertebrates** aisle is devoted to the diversity of lower vertebrates – fish, reptiles and amphibians and their early relatives. The **Mammals** and **Birds** aisle contains examples of many rare and attractive species.

The ground floor arcades house new displays on **Evolution**. These approach the topic from a historical perspective as well as explaining modern scientific ideas. A sequence of cases devoted to the evolution of **Primates** and of humans follows. The walls of the east and south arcades are dedicated to the **History of Life**. The display begins with a huge slab of sandstone crowded with giant trilobites. The story of life on our planet follows, with more than a thousand fossils on display. The inner sides of the north, east, and south arcades are occupied by table-top cases devoted to the biodiversity of **Invertebrates**. The displays combine spectacular colour photographs of live animals in their natural habitats with actual specimens and fossils.

Upstairs four galleries overlook the Great Court. On the inner side are displays of **Shells**, **Insects** and **Plants**. In the NE corner are **Gemstones**. The **Geology of Oxfordshire** is displayed on the east wall, **Birds** on the north, and more **Insects** on the south. The west wall is used for temporary art exhibitions.

Fossils



Animals



Rocks and Minerals



Insects

Architecture



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Opening hours:
Every day 10-5 pm

Free admission

