

Dear Students (and Parents/Carers),

Welcome to the Academic Enrichment Newsletter for the May Break and Term 6.

There are so many opportunities for our students to continue to nurture their intellectual curiosity and independent learning!

There is a slight change to this issue in that posts that are NEW to this issue will be printed in light blue, and posts that are still current but have already been published in previous issues will remain in black. This should make it easier for you to navigate the Newsletter.

In addition, we have added a new section for courses and workshops in order to make these opportunities easier to locate, all in one place!

(a) [Events and Exhibitions](#) organised by Institutions such as Museums and Academic Bodies – in-person events and online events will be clearly signposted.

(b) [Websites to explore](#)

(c) [Courses and Workshops](#)

(d) [The Competition Corner](#)

The Academic Enrichment Newsletter is part of the work of the Academic Enrichment Programme (AEP) at King Alfred's, and its aim is to share with the whole school some of the various opportunities on offer in our immediate locality that students can pursue independently. We would like to develop an ever-stronger partnership with our parents in promoting the intellectual development and curiosity of all our students.

Pam Stokell

Head of Academic Enrichment

Date for your Diary

AEP Open Talk: "Dinosaurs Uncovered: Secrets from a Prehistoric World" with Steph Lechki of the Earth Sciences Department of the University of Oxford

Wednesday 11th June 2025, 6:00 – 7:30pm
The Sixth Form Auditorium, King Alfred's



Steph Lechki is a doctoral student at the University of Oxford, and she visited King Alfred's earlier this year to run some KS3 and KS4 sessions on paeleogenetics. She has kindly agreed to return to the school to give a talk on dinosaurs – in particular, some myth busting, an overview of some of the work being done at the moment in the field of dinosaur research, as well as telling us about her own work on the sizing of dinosaurs. Steph is passionate about her work, and she is one of those people whose passion and excitement is quite contagious. Do come and long and enjoy an evening exploring the world of Dinosaurs!



The talk, as always, is FREE to our students and their parents and carers, as well as to all our staff. You can reserve your seats at <https://forms.office.com/e/iKsXFcngQQ>

There are no physical tickets: we will operate a tick-list register at the door.
You can also book seats by emailing AEPAdmin@kas.cambrianlt.org

Another Date for your Diary

The Sir Christopher Ricks Talk 2025
“Body Clocks and Sleep – Biology to Health”
with Professor Russell Foster
Thursday 2nd October 2025, 7:00 – 8:30pm
The Beacon, Portway, Wantage.



The Sir Christopher Ricks Talk was set up in 2017 to celebrate Academic Excellence here at King Alfred’s, and it was named after our most illustrious alumnus: Literary Critic and erstwhile Oxford Professor of Poetry Sir Christopher Ricks.

This year we are delighted and proud to let you know that our Speaker for 2025 will be Professor Russell Foster FRS of the Nuffield Department for Clinical Neurosciences. His life work revolves around understanding our natural body clocks and the role of sleep in ensuring health and well-being.

How do the sleep needs of young people differ from those of adults? What can we do to improve our sleep and bring our body clock to a healthier rhythm? What difference does it make?

His book “LifeTime” was a *Sunday Times Best Seller*, and he has also co-written the [Very Short Introductions](#) on both *Sleep* and *Circadian Rhythms*. At a time when our young people are struggling more than ever to sleep well, Professor Foster’s talk should provide some valuable understanding for the underlying mechanisms.



Please set aside Friday 10th October for an evening at the Beacon, Wantage. You can reserve your seats by submitting [this form](#) or by emailing AEAdmin@kas.cambrianlt.org.



Lucy Cavendish College
University of Cambridge

The Lucy Cavendish Supracurricular Exploration Guide

Lucy Cavendish College has a reputation for being one of the most inclusive and proactive of Cambridge

Colleges in empowering state school students and those from under-represented backgrounds to make successful applications to study at the University of Cambridge. As part of this work, they have put together a fantastic online guide as to why academic enrichment and the super curriculum are important, and it is packed with both general and subject-specific resources. I strongly recommend that all students considering applying to our more competitive universities (not just Oxford and Cambridge, but also universities such as Durham, UCL, Imperial, Leeds, Manchester, Exeter, etc.) take a look at this website and start tapping into their recommended resources!

[Looking for ways to explore your subject? | Lucy Cavendish](#)

In person and/or Livestreamed events from Museums and other Academic Bodies – includes webinars, talks, courses



Love Science and Physics? See below for four talks to get your brain going!

LAMB PUBLIC LECTURE: Fusion energy: why, how and when (in person)

Date and time: Thu 29 May 2025, 5:00 – 6:30 PM

Venue: Martin Wood Complex, Department of Physics

Audience: No background knowledge required. Young people should attend with an adult.

Details: In this talk, Prof Steve Cowley will outline the progress made and the challenges that remain with fusion energy.

More information and booking: Free event, booking required. Visit the [Lamb Lecture event page](#) for more information and booking.

HINTZE LECTURE: First Light: the dawn of stars and galaxies (in person and online)

Date and time: Wed 11 Jun 2025, 5:00 – 6:00 PM

Venue: Martin Wood Complex, Department of Physics OR online

Audience: No background knowledge required. Young people should attend with an adult.

Details: Prof James Dunlop will set the scene for the quest to find the first stars and galaxies which lit up the Universe and discuss the results from the first two years of observing with the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST).

More information and booking: Free event, booking required. Visit the [Hintze Lecture event page](#) for more information and booking.

CHERWELL-SIMON LECTURE: In integers we trust: the periodic table of materials from Mendeleev to topology (in person)

Date and time: Mon 16 Jun 2025, 4:30 PM

Venue: Martin Wood Complex, Department of Physics

Audience: Some background knowledge might be required. Young people should attend with an adult.

Details: Materials science has always balanced on the twin pillars of observation and abstraction—from the alchemists' crude recipes to today's AI-driven materials design.

More information and booking: Free event, booking required. Visit the [Cherwell-Simon event page](#) for more information and booking.

SIR MARTIN WOOD LECTURE: Realisation of Bose-Einstein condensation of excitons (in person and online)

Date and time: Fri 20 Jun 2025, 10:00 PM – 12:00 PM

Venue: Martin Wood Complex, Department of Physics OR online

Audience: Background knowledge required, so A Level students of Physics. Young people should attend with an adult.

Details: After decades of searching, scientists have observed Bose-Einstein condensation of excitons.

More information and booking: Free event, booking required. Visit the [Cherwell-Simon event page](#) for more information and booking.



The Royal Institution
Science Lives Here



Yes, the Royal Institution was set up for the dissemination of scientific ideas, but they are careful to appeal to a very broad range of interests,

and their talks are an excellent place to start looking out for those priceless links between subjects that make learning so exciting. (And which will make you stand out from the crowd if you choose to apply to a top-level university.)



The Royal Institution YouTube Channel holds an archive of their lectures (about an hour long each), but if you are running short of time, you can also find a series of “Ri Shorts” at [\(181\) Ri Shorts - YouTube](#) which are short video talks about 10 minutes long,

And there is also the Royal Institution Animations selection at [\(181\) Ri Animations - YouTube](#) which are typically 5 minutes or less.



And below you will find this term’s recommended selection of three of the longer talks:



Recorded Talk: What’s eating the Universe?

What are the unexplained riddles of the universe? Award-winning physicist Paul Davies talks you through the strange enigmas that have preoccupied cosmologists from ancient Greece to the present day. Laying bare the audacious research that has led us to mind-bending solutions, Paul will tell you how we might begin to approach the greatest

outstanding enigmas of all. [What's eating the universe? - with Paul Davies](#)



Recorded Talk: How to stop a killer asteroid from hitting the Earth

Asteroids colliding with the planet aren’t just something that the dinosaurs had to deal with. Astronomers think that there are approximately 25,000 “city killer” asteroids in near-Earth orbit – and most are yet to be found. Small enough to evade detection, they are capable of large-scale destruction and represent our greatest cosmic threat. Join volcanologist and

science writer Robin George Andrews as he reveals how an international team of scientists and engineers are working to protect Earth by literally rearranging the night sky, using NASA’s Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART). [How to stop a killer asteroid from hitting Earth - with Robin George Andrews](#)



Recorded Talk: The Chemical History of a Candle

Discover the chemistry of a simple candle in this demo-packed tribute to Michael Faraday's famous 1861 lecture, as interpreted by the Demo team and Ri Innovator in Residence David Ricketts. They have curated an amazing array of demos to teach the physics and chemistry of the simple candle, of the physical world and life. [The chemical history of a candle - with](#)

[David Ricketts](#)

And did you know – the Ri has a Podcast!

Ri Science Podcast



Most of those amazing talks which you can watch anytime on the Ri’s Youtube channel are also available as podcasts, so you can listen in wherever you are. The link below will take you to the great talk by Lucy Cooke, who will take you on a journey through an array of different animal examples as she explores evolution:

[Podcast: How did females evolve? - with Lucy Cooke | Royal Institution \(ri.org\)](#)

And there is lots more at: [Browse our science online | Royal Institution \(ri.org\)](#)

[The Linnean Society Online Talks](#)

The Linnean Society of London is the world's oldest active biological society, dating back to 1788. It has a wide and varied programme of talks, and you can also arrange to visit their library at Burlington House, London.

[The Linnean Society | Communicating Nature Since 1788](#)



FREE Online talks from the Linnean Society

Many of the talks from the Linnean Society are recorded and available through their youtube channel: [\(3\) Linnean Society - YouTube](#). Below are some recommendations to whet your appetite and hopefully prompt you to look for other talks!

[Conservation and Rewilding in a Changing Climate | James Bullock](#)

[How Genetics Explain Tigers and Secure Their Future | Uma Ramakrishnan](#)

[The Unnatural Trade | Naturalists and the Slave Trade | Brycchan Carey](#)

Sixth Formers, if you have a study period during the day, it might be worth checking whether you can catch one of their lunch-time talks. Check out the events page online at: [Upcoming Events | The Linnean Society](#)



The London Mathematical Society

The London Mathematical Society runs a series of talks - the LMS Popular Lectures - which are free public lectures that present exciting topics in mathematics and its applications to a wide audience. They are for anyone with an interest in mathematics, including those without high-level maths training.

There is a real treasury of past talks to be found at [the LMS YouTube channel](#) - click 'subscribe' to be alerted when new videos are added.

You can watch previous LMS Popular Lectures [here](#).



The Oxford Martin School – Finding solutions to the world's most urgent challenges

The University of Oxford boasts that there is no research organisation in the world that is quite like the [Oxford Martin School](#) in that it brings researchers from across all disciplines to work together on finding solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

As part of sharing their work, they have a series of talks – a mixture of in-person and online – most of which are free and open to all. It's worth keeping an eye on their [events](#) page, and also to go browsing through their archive of past talks at: [Past Events | Oxford Martin School](#). You will find something here that is relevant to almost any academic interest. Well worth scanning through if you are doing/considering an EPQ on a topic that involves a threat to the world or to society.

There are some fabulous museums almost on our doorstep – why not take a look around the University Museums of Oxford?

We are lucky to have some world-class museums just a short bus ride away. However, do check on their websites as many of the exhibitions still require you to book a timed ticket in order to reduce congestion in the galleries.

Take a look at:

[The Ashmolean Museum](#)

[The Weston \(Bodleian\) Library](#)

[The Pitt Rivers Museum](#)

[The History of Science Museum](#) and

[The Natural History Museum](#).

Please note that there are other museums in Oxford, but these five are the University Museums and all are centrally situated within walking distance of one another. For example, you might like to visit the [Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum](#) in Woodstock, and our Vale and Downland Museum in Wantage.

And calling all students interested in stories, reading and books: the [Story Museum](#) is on the lookout for **Youth Collection Ambassadors** – a great opportunity to volunteer at the Museum and gain behind-the-scenes experience at a truly magical place! Click on the link above to find out more!

Create and Transform Season at the Ashmolean – a series of events and displays

Discover how creativity reshapes art and history, from transforming wool into felt landscapes to reinterpreting medieval tales through storytelling using our collection. Explore the major exhibition, [Anselm Kiefer: Early Works](#) or dive into topics like women's changing roles, archaeology, and the evolution of artistic techniques. Enjoy a variety of talks, tours, displays, and hands-on activities.



Find out more at:

[CREATE & TRANSFORM SEASON | Ashmolean Museum](#)



Explore in Person

The Main Exhibition at the Ashmolean - Anselm Kiefer: Early Works

Available until 15th June 2025



Anselm Kiefer: Early Works brings together over forty pieces of art rarely shown in public before, and produced between 1969-1982.

This major exhibition will return to Anselm Kiefer's roots, featuring important early paintings, photos, prints, artist books, watercolours and mixed-media work, including less well-known, intimate pieces.

To book your tickets and find out more, please visit:

[ANSELM KIEFER: EARLY WORKS | Ashmolean Museum](#)

Please note: this exhibition has timed tickets, priced at £15.30, with concessions down to £7.65 for a 12-17-year-old child, and free entry for children under 12.

[At the Ashmolean - Explore in Person:](#)

[A few of the Free Exhibitions and displays at the Ashmolean:](#)

(Please note: although entry to all of these exhibitions is FREE, it is advisable to book a free general admission ticket in advance. Please book your tickets at: [EXHIBITIONS | Ashmolean Museum](#))



Kabuki Kimono

Available until 9th November 2025

This display features six of the spectacular kimonos belonging to the kabuki actor Bandō Tamasaburō V.

Textiles Gallery 5



The work of Cheung Yee and his 1960s Contemporaries

Available until 9th November 2025

This exhibition showcases newly-acquired works for the Ashmolean by the Hong Kong artist Cheung Yee (1936–2019). It will be the first substantial display of his work outside Hong Kong, including sculpture and works on paper.

Gallery 11



The work of Daphne Wright: Deep-rooted Things

Available until 7th December 2025

Daphne Wright works in unfired clay and jesmonite and has long experimented with casting. This Exhibition is the fourth in the series *Ashmolean NOW*, where contemporary artists are invited to create new work inspired by the Ashmolean's historical collections.

Gallery 8



Images of Authority

Available until 15th March 2026

As we grapple with the possibilities and excesses of our image-obsessed culture, this free exhibition looks back at the way in which a specific kind of image – portraits – dominated the lives of three contemporaneous rulers: **Fath Ali Shah Qajar** (1797–1834), **King George III** (1760–1820), and **Napoleon Bonaparte** (1799–1814)

Gallery 29

[Explore at Home](#)

[Dive into the Ashmolean's Collection of Short Story Videos](#)

This is a great collection of *short* snippets that reveal more about some of the recent exhibitions, as well as some of the hidden stories behind some of the items in the Collections. Stimulating and thought-provoking. Do take a look! [STORIES | Ashmolean Museum](#)

[Have you looked at the Home Learning Section?](#)

Ideal for KS3 exploration on a rainy day! Here you will find videos, short articles, photographs and things to make and do, on topics from Ancient Egypt to the Anglo Saxons, as well as jigsaw puzzles, Animal Crossing characters, and art and craft activities to do at home. [HOME LEARNING | Ashmolean Museum](#)



[And if you are inspired to see more, then browse through the Ashmolean's Treasures](#)

You might retort that the whole of the Ashmolean Museum is filled with Treasures, so these items that are especially selected as the Museum's Treasures must have great significance indeed, possibly because of their rarity, or the place they held at the time. Do take a look, and then maybe head over to the Museum to see them for real!

[TREASURES | Ashmolean Museum](#)



[Explore online:](#)

[The Ashmolean for Young People](#)

This is a great section to explore, with advice on the sorts of careers that you find within a museum (you might be surprised!!), as well as challenges and other activities to try out at home.

[YOUNG PEOPLE | Ashmolean Museum](#)

[From the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum](#)



Exhibition: E. H. Shepard – Above and Beyond Winnie-the-Pooh

Available until 31st August 2025

Best known for his original illustrations for the Winnie-the-Pooh books, E.H. Shepard documented the War as he saw it as an officer for the Royal Garrison Artillery. This exhibition of his pencil sketches, pen-and-ink drawings and watercolours gives a very special insight into the War. Well worth the visit. For more information, see [E. H. Shepard: Before & Beyond Winnie-the-Pooh – Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum](#)



Exhibition: Threads of Memories – Iraqi Women, Art and War

This stunning exhibition is the result of a project to give women who had been affected by war and conflict an opportunity to process their experiences and tell their stories through Art. For more information, see: [RJI Museum & School Service](#)



Recorded Online Talks

The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum has a fantastic collection of recorded talks, with titles including *The Secret Life of Ian Fleming*; *The Pegasus Bridge Story* and *T.E. Lawrence: the Unconventional Warrior*. You can find all three series of talks here: [Online Talks – Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum](#)

[Step into the Pitt Rivers Museum](#)

Step into the Pitt Rivers and it is like stepping back in time, into a Museum ages past, where exhibits from all over the world crowd in on you from all sides. But the Pitt Rivers is totally modern in its outlook and seeks to represent the world in all its wonder and diversity. Booking is now only needed if you are attending a special event with limited numbers.

[Explore in Person](#)

In addition to the permanent Exhibitions, do take a look at some of the current temporary exhibitions and displays at the Pitt Rivers:



Exhibition – Hawaii: Ma Uka to Ma Kai

Journey through the Hawaiian landscape in this special exhibition, a unique collaboration showcasing the contemporary works of various artists and artist groups. With displays across the Museum linked to the Exhibition.



Exhibition: In this Place we Breathe, by Khadija Saye

This exhibition presents a series of nine silkscreen prints by artist Khadija Saye (1992-2017) exploring her fascination with the 'migration of traditional Gambian spiritual practices' that formed a part of her childhood experience growing up in London with Gambian parents.

Upper Gallery

Display: Wandering other Worlds

Explore Evenki Cosmology and Shamanic traditions through this display, but also the 360° video which you can watch online here: [Wandering in Other Worlds PRM 2](#). You can find out more about this at: [Wandering in Other Worlds: Evenki Cosmology and Shamanic Traditions | Pitt Rivers Museum](#)

Display Case C.22.A (Main Court)



Nothing without us: Experiences of Disability – Museum Trail

Nothing Without Us is a co-produced gallery trail that shares the lived experiences of disabled people, their stories revealed by objects in the Pitt Rivers Museum. This trail invites you to reflect on how such experiences have not only shaped their lives, but have a deeper connection and meaning that matters for all of us.



His Dark Materials – Trail around the Museum

If you are a fan of Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, and you watched the BBC HBO TV series, then do pop along to the Pitt Rivers as, dotted all around the galleries, you will find props from the series. To find out more, visit: [His Dark Materials | Pitt Rivers Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)



Online Archive: Curious about some of the Past Pitt Rivers Exhibitions that you may have missed?

You will find many of the past exhibitions here: [Past exhibitions | Pitt Rivers Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

Pitt Youth Action Team



Are you wondering what goes on behind the scenes at a vibrant Museum such as the Pitt Rivers? The Pitt Youth Action Team are a group of like-minded young people – typically aged between 16 and 19 – who meet at the Museum once a month. They are offered opportunities to have a real impact on the way the Museum interprets its collections, usually going behind the scenes to advise and consult with staff over exhibition materials, run activities at public events and plan projects. If you would like to know more, please [contact](#) the young people's co-ordinator at the Museum.

At The History of Science Museum of Oxford:

The Museum is open between 12:00 and 5:00pm Tuesday to Sunday.

Please note that the top Gallery of the Museum is currently closed for essential maintenance, and that the lift is also out of action so there is no disabled access.



Exhibition: A healthy future for all? – Explore the science behind the pandemic headlines

To save lives during the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists took innovative approaches to produce rigorously tested, clinical-grade vaccines and drugs at speed.

But how can these new techniques deliver wider healthcare benefits for all of us?

A Healthy Future for All? empowers you to discover the science for yourself. Find out how the immune system works, and explore how researchers are using the pandemic experiences to prepare for the next pandemic outbreak.

[A Healthy Future for All? | History of Science Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/a-healthy-future-for-all/)

Exhibition: Step into Lyra's Worlds – props and costumes from the BBC HBO series *His Dark Materials*

The History of Science Museum influenced the design of the Alethiometer. Come and discover your Daemon and journey through the Museum with your daemon guide to discover stories of creative leaders, resourceful adventurers, daring visionaries and ingenious scholars.



There are objects and stories to find as a family in each gallery before you enter the world of Philip Pullman's international best-selling trilogy, *His Dark Materials*. Step into Lyra's study, under a canopy of stars and Dust, to discover props and costumes from the BBC HBO production, including Lyra's alethiometer from the series.

Explore the Museum's intriguing dials and devices that inspired Philip Pullman to create the alethiometer. *Basement Gallery*.

Exhibition: Alice in Typhoidland: The Past and Present of Typhoid

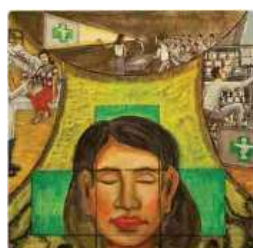
Discover the long history and cutting-edge research behind the typhoid vaccination and its roll-out.

Discover how Victorian doctors and scientists helped make typhoid visible and developed the first typhoid vaccines, and **Learn** about the current challenges of typhoid across the world and what researchers in Oxford are doing to tackle it.



To find out more about the Exhibition, visit: [Alice in Typhoidland | History of Science Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/alice-in-typhoidland/)

You will find the Exhibition in the *Basement Gallery*.



Display: The Disease of Greed – Fake, falsified and substandard medicine

Fake objects in museums may seem harmless, but fake medicines and misinformation have real consequences for all of us.

Come and investigate hoaxes, forgeries and fakes in the world of public health in Southeast Asia. Bear in mind that, although this display explores the problem in one area of the world, the issues arising are not confined to that area. Take a closer look online before visiting the display: [2024 Fakes](https://www.genial.ly/2024-fakes)

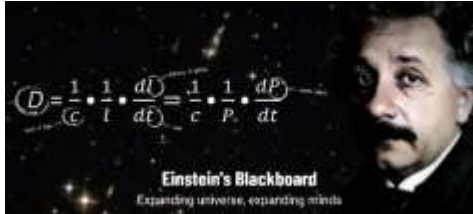
[Display \(FINAL\) \(genial.ly\)](https://www.genial.ly/2024-fakes)



Meet Guglielmo Marconi – one of the minds who made the modern world

Through the work and experiments of Marconi, Radio was born. This exhibition explains some of Marconi's journey of discovery and its legacy in the terms of radio and microwave physics. Explore how Marconi's science experiments revolutionised the way that the whole world stays connected.

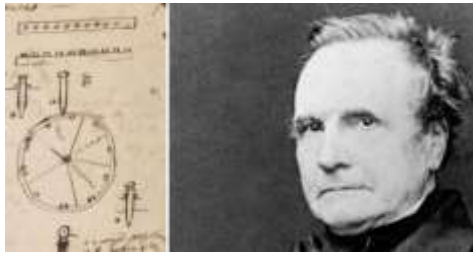
Basement Gallery (You can also explore some the exhibition at home: [Making Waves | History of Science Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](#).)



Display and Online Story Blog

One of the most famous artefacts on display at the History of Science Museum is Einstein's blackboard, hanging high on the wall of the Basement Gallery. Visit This blackboard is more than a glimpse into the mind of a genius, however: it is a key moment in our understanding of the Cosmos. To find out more, visit the online story

here: [Einstein in Oxford | History of Science Museum](#) and, next time you're in Oxford, pop into the museum to see the blackboard for yourself.



Blog: The Babbage Archive Project

The History of Science Museum holds important material associated with Charles Babbage (1791 – 1871) comprising: components of Babbage's first (unfinished) mechanical computing machine; and an archive of his personal notes about his machines.

This project revolves around conserving and digitising this material. To find out more, please visit: [The Babbage](#)

[Archive Project | History of Science Museum](#)

Step back into online version of previous Exhibitions, dating back to the 1995!

The History of Science Museum has been creating virtual versions of their past Exhibitions for over 25 years – a real treasure trove of learning. Do take a look at:

[Past exhibitions and displays | History of Science Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)



Discover the Collection: Science in the Islamic World

The History of Science Museum houses one the world's most comprehensive collection of astronomical instruments from the Islamic World.

Ranging from the 800s CE to the present day, these scientific objects were created and used by people living in *lands where the majority religion was — or is — Islam*.

While the artisans who made them came from different regions — Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia — the objects themselves still share many similar, distinctive characteristics.



And though the instrument makers all lived and worked in the Islamic World, they were not all themselves Muslim. The result is a fascinatingly rich and diverse collection. For more information, please go to: [Science in the Islamic World | History of Science Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/science-in-the-islamic-world)

Online Exhibition: Mirror of the Stars



“Pick up an Astrolabe, and you hold the Universe in your hands.” Join Museum curators Dr Federica Gigante and Mathilde Daussy-Renaudin to explore how astrolabes mirrored the traditional view of the Earth at the centre of our moving universe. This step-by-step tour of the Exhibition takes you through what astrolabes were and how they were used in so many aspects of everyday life. Visit: [Mirror of the Stars | History of Science Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/mirror-of-the-stars)



Read the Blog: Why our History Matters – a look at the decolonisation project that will explore the origins of the founding collection

Consider the role of museums in general and then explore the origins of some of the key collection artefacts, learn about the way the items were procured and discover some of the hidden voices and stories within them.

[Finding and Founding Blog One Our History Matters | History of Science Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/finding-and-founding-blog-one-our-history-matters)



Watch again: the collection of recent past talks

Scroll down the page to reach the Museum’s Youtube collection of recent past events, which include a talk on Board Games and Mediaeval Medicine, and a discussion on whether science can always be considered “fact”.

[What's on | History of Science Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/whats-on)

You can also go on to take a virtual tour of the galleries at:

[Current Displays and Exhibitions | History of Science Museum \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/current-displays-and-exhibitions)

And from the Natural History Museum of Oxford:



Special Exhibition: Breaking Ground

Available until September 2025

The Breaking Ground Exhibition explores the age of 19th Century discovery as, through fossils and new methods of study, our understanding of prehistory came alive. The exhibition focuses on the work of William Buckland, geologist and palaeontologist, and Mary Buckland (née Morland), a scientific illustrator. They both helped to establish new scientific methods and ideas, which led to fascinating discoveries in palaeontology, including the first ever dinosaur to be named to science.

This exhibition showcases important specimens and fossils along with drawings, prints and paintings made by Mary Buckland and others, which helped spread the understanding of extinct groups of animals and plants among the 19th-century scientific community. It is a marvellous journey not just of discovery, but of the developing scientific methodology of the time. Find out more at [Breaking Ground | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](https://www.nhm.ac.uk/exhibitions/breaking-ground)





Explore in Person: New Displays now open

What connects prairie dogs to blister beetles? How do spiders communicate with each other? And why are cockatoos considered pioneers? Check out the new displays to find out. To get an online taste, please visit: [Life, As We Know It | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)

[of Natural History](#)

In addition, the museum has a number of events (talks, panel discussions, tours, workshops) over the coming months. Below is a selection, but do take a look at their [WHAT'S ON | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#) to find a full listing. Many of their events are free, but most need to be booked in advance.



Display: Microsculpture – the photography of Levon Biss

Available until 4th January 2026

The stunning high magnification insect portraits by [British photographer Levon Biss](#) were first shown in the Microsculpture exhibition in this Museum in 2016. Since then, the show has toured to 44 cities in 22 countries around the world. This is a chance to see some photographs made after the 2016 Exhibition. You can see them interspersed among the exhibits in the six new Main Court Display Cases. Find out more at: [Microsculpture | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



Half-Term Adventure: Fossils and Findings (Years 7-9)

Wednesday 28th May 2026, 14:00-16:30

Step into a world where science meets creativity. Join us for a unique afternoon of hands-on exploration, inspired by the Breaking Ground exhibition. This COTO event is specifically designed for curious minds aged 10–14.

This event is FREE but you must book in advance at [Fossils and Findings: A Hands-On Half-Term Adventure | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



Talk: Seeds of Change – the power of Citizen Science

Wednesday 4th June, 2025 18:30 – 19:30

Headlines like '60 Harvests Left' and 'Water Shortages by 2050' can leave us feeling scared, vulnerable and resigned to a negative future. But what if it was possible to be part of the solution to these challenges, even in a small, and manageable way? The empowerment and education to act can give us optimism and hope for future generations.

To find out more and to book your tickets, please visit:

[Seeds of Change | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



Talk: Digital Fossils – using x-rays to uncover the past

Wednesday 11th June, 2025 18:00 – 19:00

Thanks to *Jurassic Park*, *Walking with Dinosaurs* and other computer-generated imagery, we are familiar with dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals brought to life on our screens. But how do scientists know how dinosaurs moved, fed, the sounds they made and their colouration? In this talk Professor Emily Rayfield will discuss how far palaeontologists can make statements about the behaviour of extinct animals, and the evidence they use for this.

FREE Event but booking required. Find out more and book your places at:

[Digital Fossils: Using X-ray to Uncover Secrets of the Past | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



Talk: Mary Anning and the Museum

Tuesday 24th June 2025, 18:00 – 19:30

Explore the Museum's incredible Mary Anning specimens with expert Tom Sharpe and the Museum's collections' staff. The event will include a talk by Tom Sharpe and Eliza Howlett on Mary Anning's connection to the Museum's collections, followed by a chance to look at some of the Mary Anning specimens in the Museum and some special archive material. FREE Event but booking required. Find out more and book your places at: [Mary Anning and the Museum | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



Talk: Nature needs You!

Friday 4th July 2025 18:00 – 19:00

Described by the RSPB as 'a voice for nature', Hannah Bourne-Taylor, author and bird conservationist, has written the extraordinary story of how she became a solo campaigner who created a national campaign to save swifts from extinction. Come and find out more! FREE Event but booking required. Find out more and book your places at: ['Nature Needs You!' | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



Talk: Dinosaurs! The true beginning of a global phenomenon

Tuesday 8th July 2025 18:00-19:00

A talk by palaeontologist Dr Emma Nicholls, Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Come along for a journey of exploration into the first ever dinosaurs to be scientifically named and described, and discover how they led to the invention of the word 'dinosaur' itself. How did an enigmatic toothy fossil from Oxfordshire kickstart the last 200 years of global dinosaur research and fandom, and what do we know now about these animals, compared with two centuries years ago?

FREE Event but booking required. Find out more and book your places at: [Dinosaurs! The true beginning of a global phenomenon | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



A Treasure of Online Exhibitions!

From Architecture to Animals, and from Bacteria to Brains, browse through the Museum's collection of digital exhibitions and learn more about all aspects of the Natural World. Dive in at: [Online exhibitions | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



The Learning Zone, from the University of Oxford's Natural History Museum



This is packed with resources and ideas for learning about the Living World, the Earth, and Fossils. Most of the materials are aimed at upper KS2 and KS3, so if you are in Years 7-9, you should find plenty of interest: games, videos, activities, and ideas for further exploration. Do take a look! [Home | The](#)

[Learning Zone \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

The Natural History Museum has a number of regular family-friendly events, such as *Science Saturdays*, *Autism-Friendly Openings* and *Family Friendly Sundays*. Do take a look at their website to check out the whole programme of events: [WHAT'S ON | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)

The museum also holds regular sessions on object handling. To find out more, head to [WHAT'S ON | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#) where you will find several pages' worth of events.



[Young People at the University of Oxford's Museum of Natural History](#)

DO visit this section for ideas of how to get involved (e.g. the regular Youth Forum for ages 16-19) as well as online challenges and resources. Keep an eye on this page as it is updated.

[Young people | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)

From the Bodleian Libraries

If you find yourself in the city of Oxford, why not take a walk down Broad Street and pop into the Bodleian Library to see one or more of the four Exhibitions listed below. All are FREE to enter, and you do not need to book beforehand.

Also, do take a look at the Events listings, as many of these are free to access as well. Please visit: [Events & Exhibitions | Visit the Bodleian Libraries \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)



Exhibition: Listen in – How Radio Changed the Home

Available until 31st August 2025

Once upon a time, Radio was the newest of new technologies. Drawing on a rich range of visual and aural material, this exhibition explores the hype and reality of the early years of radio.

Focusing on the first two decades of radio, the exhibition charts big changes – such as radio's impact on family dynamics – to everyday concerns about its influence on dinnertime conversation.

The Treasury, Weston Bodleian Library. Free admission, no booking required.



Exhibition: Treasured (coming soon)

Available from 6th June until 26th October 2025

What makes a treasure? Is it age, rarity, beauty – or something else?

Treasured invites you to explore the meaning of value itself through some of the world's most remarkable books and manuscripts, several of which were acquired with the help of the [Friends of the Bodleian](#) which celebrates its 100th

anniversary in 2025.

ST Lee Gallery, Weston Library



Display: Magna Carta 1215 1225

This display celebrates the 800th Anniversary of the definitive issue of the Magna Carta by King Henry III. This document is rarely displayed to the public – well worth a quick look!

Blackwell Hall

You will find the full list at [Events & Exhibitions | Visit the Bodleian Libraries \(ox.ac.uk\)](#).

Section 2. Sites to explore online



The Climate Podcast

This podcast from “Outrage and Optimism” is just what you are looking for if news about Climate Change causes you anxiety. In a well-balanced mix, this podcast keeps you up to date with developments, not hiding from the bad news, but highlighting all that is good that is also happening in this area.

There are several past episodes to catch up on, including the one below:

[The End of Oil? Inside the Hidden Decline of Fossil Fuels | Earth Day](#)

[Special - Outrage + Optimism: The Climate Podcast | Acast](#)

If you have a special interest in Earthquakes:



Great Newsletter, straight to your inbox: Earthquake Insights

There are various options for subscription to this Newsletter, but the basic one is free and, if you have an interest in earthquakes, well worth signing up for. It can be quite technical at times, but there is clearly humour and enjoyment within the writing, and you can begin by picking up the gist of an article and exploring the terms that are unfamiliar to you. Before long, it will all start to make much more sense!

(This one was recommended by Mr Taylor – many thanks!)

[Earthquake Insights | Judith Hubbard & Kyle Bradley | Substack](#)



Lots of cool learning resources about Earthquakes!

The US geological Survey Website has a an excellent Education section with interactive resources, including the maps and stories behind some of the more recent and notorious earthquakes, as well as cool facts and the science behind them. Strongly recommended for anyone with an interest in earthquakes.

[Education | U.S. Geological Survey](#)



The USGS Earthquake Notification Service

The Earthquake Notification Service (ENS) is a free service that can send you automated notification emails when earthquakes happen in your area, New accounts default to receiving notifications about earthquakes with magnitude 6.0 or greater however you can customize ENS to only deliver messages for certain areas, at specified times, and to multiple addresses. For most carriers, ENS can also send text notifications to your mobile. [Earthquake Notification Service](#)



Crash Course World History Channel, with John Green

This is a great channel with over 70 episodes, each lasting less than 15 minutes, covering a specific aspect of world history. The first episode kicks off with the Agricultural Revolution, but there are episodes on all aspects of history across the globe, from Latin American Revolutions to Mesopotamia. John Green's presentation style takes some getting used to, but his material is good. Worth a try! [The Agricultural Revolution: Crash Course World History #1](#)



Gonville & Caius
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Caius Explore – a fantastic resource to develop your academic interests

Although this is aimed at Year 12 in that only Year 12 students can submit their work to Caius College for feedback, it is an excellent resource **for students of any year** to begin exploring their academic interests. Listed under each subject heading (and there are lots of subjects!) are three or four tasks, each with suggested resources, background material and suggestions for further research. For each task, there is guidance on how to tackle the question(s) and suggestions for what you might consider.

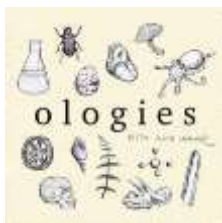
As a way of exploring your academic interests, I cannot recommend this enough. Year 12, this is just what you need to help you develop your super curriculum in preparation for making a strong application to university. Find out more at: [Caius Explore | Gonville & Caius](#) (If you are in Years 7-11 and would like some feedback on your work, please feel free to send it to me at pstokell@kas.cambrianlt.org.)



OxfordMaterials

Find out more about Material Sciences

If you have an interest in chemistry, physics *and* maths, then a course in Materials Sciences might suit you down to the ground. Find out more by exploring the Youtube channel from the Material Sciences Department at the University of Oxford – you will find past talks, as well as recordings of workshops tackling some PAT questions (these are great for stretching your knowledge and application of physics! - the PAT is the Physics Admissions Test), and information on applying to study Material Sciences at Oxford, if that is something that would interest you. [Welcome to Oxford Materials](#)



Ologies

This is a fun series of podcasts on all topics ending with “ology”, some real and some contrived (e.g. sparklebuttology – the science of fireflies!). Each podcast is about an hour long, and it is the form of a conversation between an invited expert and the presenter Alie Ward, exploring not just the science but also the professional life of the expert. [Ologies Episodes — alie ward](#)



The Cambridge University Anthropology Podcast

What is anthropology? It is the study of the biological and social features that make us human, with an aim to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and ethnic differences between our beliefs and perspectives. This podcast is aimed at students of Anthropology and academics in the subject, but it can be useful for giving our older students a good idea about the wide range of topics and research areas within the subject of Anthropology. Dip

into different talks and interviews to find out more!

[Camthropod | Department of Social Anthropology](#)

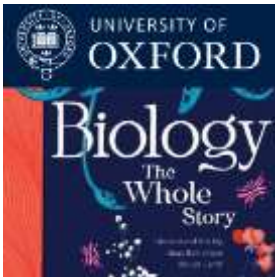


University of Oxford Podcast: Fantasy Literature

Fantasy Literature has emerged as one of the most important genres over the past few decades and now enjoys extraordinary levels of popularity. The impact of Tolkien's Middle-earth works and the serialisation of George Martin's 'Game of Thrones' books has moved these and their contemporaries into mainstream culture. As the popularity grows so does interest in the roots of fantasy, the main writers and themes, and how to approach these texts.

Oxford is a natural home to fantasy literature with those who worked or studied here having written so many famous and influential texts. These lectures, short talks, and interviews seek to take listeners into these works and these writers and beyond.

[Fantasy Literature | University of Oxford Podcasts](#)



University of Oxford Podcast: Biology – the Whole Story

Biology is the science of the 21st Century and everyone should know the fundamentals. In this series, Professor Lindsay Turnbull from the Department of Biology will guide you through key concepts, building a big picture of what Biology is all about. Based on her recent book, this video series is perfect for GCSE or A-level students, especially those looking for a University perspective.

[Biology: The Whole Story | University of Oxford Podcasts](#)



Podcast – The Forum

A fantastic podcast for exploring ideas, culture, current issues and world history with some of the world's leading experts. From how Picasso reinvented the way we see the world to how we can save or "reawaken" dying languages; and from the unexpected in science to life and synthetic biology in extreme environments. There are currently 75 episodes to

explore. Well worth a visit!! [BBC Radio 4 - The Forum](#)



TEDEd – lessons worth sharing

This is a really useful variant on the popular TED Talks. TEDEd pulls together some of the best educational content on the Web so that you have a one-stop destination for super curricular exploration. Just like the popular TED Talks, the TEDEd video clips tend to be

under 10 minutes long – engaging, thought-provoking and stimulating. Get into the habit of diving into TEDEd on a regular basis! [Lessons Worth Sharing | TED-Ed](#)

Two new projects from Zooniverse

For all those citizen science enthusiasts, here are two projects to whet your appetite. If neither of these grab your attention, then head over to [Projects — Zooniverse](#) where you will find hundreds of other projects, on all sorts of topics, from languages to astrophysics, and from medicine to the Arts. **And did you know that working on Zooniverse projects can count towards the volunteering bit of your D of E qualification?**



Monkey Health Explorer

This is part of a larger project investigating how genes and health influence social behaviour using rhesus macaque monkeys as a model. These highly social monkeys are excellent models for understanding human social behaviour, including individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). What we learn by studying the monkeys can be used to help us understand similar processes in humans. To find out more and get involved in this project, visit: [Monkey Health Explorer — Zooniverse](#)



Maturity of baby Sounds

This Zooniverse project seeks to understand more about the development of language in babies. Did you know that, well before saying real words, children produce very different sounds with their mouths? Already at birth, they cry and cry. We all know these sounds! A little later, they also begin to babble - that is, produce sounds closer to adult speech, because they have nice and clear consonants (like "t" and "p") and vowels (like "a" and "i"). These are the ones that the project focuses on the most. These speech-like sounds become more prevalent as babies grow older, but not a lot more. For instance, we don't know whether this happens at similar rates regardless of the language the baby is learning, nor when they begin to match adults in terms of how frequently they make them. We are also interested in seeing whether sounds babies make are different in infants that go on to have a medical diagnosis, such as Autism. To find out more and get involved, visit: [Maturity of Baby Sounds — Zooniverse](#)

Top Tip to practise your Languages: For an extra challenge, why not attempt to work on a project in either Spanish or French? Zooniverse has translated several of its projects into other languages. Whatever your chosen project, look for the Language button on the top right of the project's home page.



Seriously – a podcast to savour!

This is a wonderfully eclectic (look the word up!) podcast that explores topics in just about every subject you can think of, combining sources from

politics to STEM, and geography to philosophy.

Among the more recent topics are:

How Wars End

Woke: The Journey of a Word

Bambi: The True Story

Bad Blood – several episodes exploring genetics and eugenics

And you get the idea – lots to learn about and explore! Seriously, just take a look, download some episodes, and listen in on your way to and from school.

[BBC Radio 4 - Seriously... - Downloads](#)

If you are thinking ahead to Higher Education and know that you want to apply to some of the country's top universities... but not sure what subject to choose for your degree, then attending subject taster webinars is a great way to explore your options and find out what you really like.



Subject Taster Webinars

This series offers online taster lectures followed by a Q&A that are delivered by some of the University of Cambridge's most prestigious fellows. The aim of these webinars is to give students who are considering applying to the University of Cambridge (and, if you are female, Murray Edwards College) an insight into the breadth of the degree programmes on offer; the content and research that is involved; and the teaching style that is used (the teaching style at Murray Edwards will be the same as that offered by other colleges).

The series spans a huge range of subjects across arts, humanities, social sciences and STEM. If you want to learn what it would be like to study at Cambridge, explore the webinars on offer at the link below and sign up to register your interest in attending. Do check back again as they will be adding more webinars over the term.

And worry not if a webinar you wanted to watch has already taken place: you can catch up with them at the Murray Edwards College [YouTube](#) channel .

To view up and coming Webinars and to register to attend, please go to: [Webinars | Murray Edwards College](#)



Subject Focus Sessions – explore subjects for University

Each Subject Focus session will involve an introduction to Cambridge University and Homerton College from a member of Homerton's Admissions Team, followed by a taster session to give you an insight into the subject. To conclude, there will be Q&A with current Homerton students studying the subject. There are lots of subjects on offer, from Linguistics to Archaeology, and Law to Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and Norse. To find out more and sign up for your chosen subjects, please go to: [Subject Focus Sessions](#)



Five Books – Expert Recommendations by Subject!

Find out which books have been recommended by hundreds of experts in various fields, from philosophy to history, literature to politics. Browse by subject or read the commentary on why these books are so important

and influential. You can find both non-fiction and fiction recommendations. Browse by genre or subject.

[Five Books - Expert Book Recommendations](#)



The Times Higher Education Podcasts

An interesting collection of podcasts exploring issues within Higher Education, Politics, Current Affairs and Economics, from a variety of different perspectives and sources.. Worth taking a look!

[Podcasts | Times Higher Education \(THE\)](#)

Especially for Y10s – Y13s looking to broaden their super curriculum in preparation for University Applications (also great for EPQ ideas!):

Super-curricular activities are not mandatory. However, they can help you make a competitive application, and prepare you for a challenging academic environment, so we strongly recommend them. Super-curricular participation can enhance your personal statement, give you greater confidence in your subject choice, show that you are serious about your area of study, and give you a wealth of ideas to draw upon in discussions if you're invited to interview. It's likely that you'll develop new ideas and opinions, critical thinking and analytical skills, and an ability to understand new information from different sources – this is all great preparation for succeeding at university. [Super-Curricular Activities \(cam.ac.uk\)](http://www.cam.ac.uk)



The University of Oxford's Digital Resources Hub

The University of Oxford has compiled the best of its digital resources into a Digital Resources Hub to support learning and exploration. It is helpfully organised by age to help you find the resources that are best suited to your stage in education. They can also help parents and teachers to feed the curiosity of growing minds and inspire them to think broadly. These resources can also enable older students to explore their passions and interests further, and to discover more about Oxford. Go to: [Digital resource hub | University of Oxford](http://www.oxford.ac.uk/digital-resource-hub)



HE+

This website is for anyone interested in exploring ideas and developing their own critical thinking skills. Each topic is produced by Cambridge postgraduate students and academics at the cutting edge of research in their field. The topics provide guided activities, questions to think about and suggestions for further reading.

It is aimed at older students, but there is absolutely no reason why younger students cannot take a look and start thinking ahead. The main subject pages also give you a quick guide to what it would be like to study the subject at university level and suggest some further resources to check out. Click on a subject icon or search all topics to get started! Visit the HE+ website at <https://www.myheplus.com/>

Super Curricular Suggestions from the University of Cambridge:



Strong applicants to Cambridge and other competitive universities tend to have explored their chosen subject through wider reading outside the classroom, as well as doing very well in their GCSEs and A-levels. We call this sort of exploration 'super-curricular', as it builds on and enhances what you are studying in school. This selection of suggested reading lists and resources has been gathered from the Cambridge departmental and College websites, other universities and other sources on the internet. These lists provide some suggestions for places to start exploring your own interests in your chosen subject independently - you do not need to engage with any of the specific websites, books, podcasts etc mentioned and can easily find your own alternatives. The following lists are

suggestions only. [super-curricular suggestions.pdf \(cam.ac.uk\)](http://www.cam.ac.uk)



Trinity College Library Quad

This is a treasure of super-curricular enrichment: a collection of resources from current Oxford Trinity College Students. The difference here is that all these resources come recommended as having been helpful in preparing for university.

[Library Quad | Trinity College Oxford](http://www.trinity.ox.ac.uk)

Courses and Workshops

This new section is set aside for courses and workshops, both in person and/or online, which students are able to access independently. They are almost always offered by academic bodies with a mission to develop the intellectual potential of curious young minds.



COMPOS – Comprehensive Oxford Maths and Physics Online School (online course)

When: Sept 2025 - Jul 2026 –

assignment released 18th August 2025, deadline for registration is Sunday 28th September (deadline for first assignment is Sunday 5th October 2025)

Audience: Year 10 – Year 12 students from UK schools

Venue: Online

COMPOS (Comprehensive Oxford Mathematics and Physics Online School) aims to increase students' confidence, independent learning, and enjoyment of physics. Its curriculum complements the school curriculum by presenting material at a deeper and more advanced level, with a strong focus on problem-solving skills in both physics and maths. Through a long-term programme of extracurricular support, COMPOS seeks to nurture the talent of the next generation of STEM graduates and scientists. The programme is currently free to all UK state school pupils

Booking and more information: Register through the summer, entrance assignment released 18th August. For more information visit the [COMPOS website](#) and to apply see the attached poster.



Y10 BPhO Physics Taster Day (in person)

Date: Sat 14 Jun 2025, 10.00am - 4.00pm

Venue: G-Research, 1 Soho Place, London, W1D 3BG

Audience: UK students in Year 10 at non-fee-paying schools.

Priority will be given to students from under-represented backgrounds.

About the event: The Year 10 BPhO Physics Taster Day is an event aimed at encouraging state school students to study Physics at A-level. The day provides students with an opportunity to discuss physics ideas, problem solving, observational and practical skills and to meet other keen students of physics.

Booking and more information: Free event. More information and registration [Click here for more information and to apply for the Y10 BPhO Physics Taster Day](#)



Oxford Online Maths Club

Online every Thursday, but you can access recordings at any time

Oxford Online Maths Club is a livestream from the Mathematical Institute, aimed at prospective students. The level of maths is therefore at A Level standard. It's free, interactive, casual, and relaxed, and the livestreams are recorded so that you can watch back afterwards if you can't make it

to the live broadcast on Thursday afternoons. To find out more, and to access past recordings, please visit [Oxford Online Maths Club | Mathematical Institute](#)



Free Courses from the Open University

There are over 900 courses to explore, most of which are 3-6 hours in length, and you can choose how you do the

hours. From the evolutionary tree of mammals to the formation of exoplanets, and from understanding mental capacity to introducing public health, The range and scope of these courses is tremendous. Do take a look! [Free short courses from the Open University | OpenLearn - Open University](#)

Competition Corner

“Why bother entering competitions? I am probably not going to win anything.”

And this is very true. But entering academic/educational competitions is an excellent way of stretching your brain and your abilities, and you will learn and hone many skills along the way. Once you are in Year 10+, entering academic competitions and being able to reflect on your experiences is something that will make you stand out in university and high-level apprenticeship applications. So *do* get into the habit of checking the **Competition Corner** of the *KAAEP Bulletin*, or looking online for other competitions. (If you find something, do please let me know so I can share it with others!)

Year 12 is an important year for this as the most competitive universities seek out those students with the motivation and enthusiasm to enter academic competitions.

- (a) They make you stand out from the crowd - you can talk about your research in your personal statement.
- (b) They help you to explore and discover new interests.
- (c) They are a good way of testing whether studying the subject at university is really for you.
- (d) They improve and develop your critical thinking and essay writing skills in readiness for stepping up to university.

“It is a great idea to enter a competition in an area that you enjoy or are good at whilst you are still at school. If you win or are placed, that is excellent, but even if you don’t, it demonstrates commitment, interest, drive and immediately differentiates you from others. It looks good on your UCAS Form.” Student Ladder – Steps to Success.



Y12 Woolf Essay Prize

The Woolf Essay Prize, inspired by Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, is an essay competition which may be of particular interest to those studying English Literature, History, Politics, Philosophy or Sociology and adjacent subjects. *A Room of One's Own* raises a number of questions surrounding the place of women in society, culture, and education, and the competition allows students to

contemplate these themes and ideas while developing the independent research and writing skills essential to university-level study. This year, the Woolf Essay Prize is open to all Women in Year 12, regardless of school or country. For more information, including the question list, word limit, and submission details, please consult the Information and Questions document on the webpage.

Find out more, [here](#).

Submissions close 09:00am BST on Monday 9th June



For Year 12 - St. John's College Academic Poster Competition 2025

This competition invites you to undertake a research project on an academic topic or question that interests you (from any subject area and which relates to the competition theme) and create an academic research poster about it. The theme of this year's competition is 'Imitation'.

Open to: UK-based students in Year 12

Deadline: 4pm, 4th August

[Find out more here](#)



Youth STEM Award

The Youth STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Medicine) Award (YSA) is a flexible and personalised skills award for young people, empowering you to design your own programme of STEM activities.

Participants work towards a Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award by completing activities at school, at home, or online—choosing experiences that align with your interests.

Open to: students aged between 11 and 19

[Introductory video here](#)

[Sign up here](#)

Featured activity: [choose a project and do research for NASA](#)



For Years 7 to 13: BioArtAttack (2D) 2025 competition!

This competition is for young people to draw or paint their favourite animal, plant or fungi. The competition is open to entries of two-dimensional artworks only. All winners will be invited to an experience day at the [Royal Veterinary College](#), and other prizes

are also available.

Deadline: 3rd July

Open to: students aged between 7 and 18

[Find out more and apply here](#)



For Years 7 to 13 - Young Geographer of the Year competition 2025: Understanding Islands

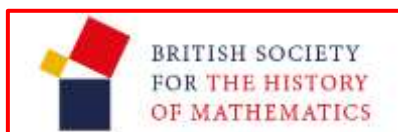
We are looking for eye-catching, creative and informative posters and StoryMaps (KS5 only) that delve into the socio-economic, cultural, political and physical aspects of a range of islands, showcasing their features and exploring how islands can be connected through the

challenges that they face and the solutions they use to address those challenges.

Deadline: 5pm, 3rd October

Open to: students aged between 7 and 18

[Find out more and apply here](#)



For Years 7 to Year 13 - British Society for the History of Mathematics' Schools Prize

For 2024-25, we are asking students to write or make a presentation/film/song (or make a submission in any other

medium) on *Ethnomathematics*.

Deadline: 12am, 27th June

Open to: students studying at schools in the UK aged between 11 and 19

[Find out more and apply here](#)



Royal Geographical Society's School Essay Competition

The 2025 School Essay Competition, organised in partnership with the Financial Times, invites students to answer the following question: *What are the implications for different countries of international trade policies in the contemporary world?*

You can submit your essay at any time before the deadline; it should focus on the relevant geopolitical situation at the time of writing.

Deadline: 5pm, 31st October

[Find out more and enter here](#)

The University of Oxford Saïd Business School Climate Change Challenge



Hang on a minute – the Saïd Business School is organising a Climate Change Challenge? But surely climate change is about geography, isn't it? What does it have to do with business? This is just one example of the way all real-life problems are multi-disciplinary (involve many subjects). The economic toll of climate change-related health issues is projected to exceed billions of

dollars annually. At the same time, addressing climate change is predicted to create an estimated 30 million new jobs worldwide by 2030, offering a unique opportunity for innovation and economic transformation.

The Student Challenge: Teams of three to five students will propose innovative solutions to address one or more of the following themes:

- air pollution,
- extreme weather events,
- food security,
- water scarcity and/or
- biodiversity.

This is a fantastic opportunity for you to work together on a project that could take you to one of the world's most prestigious business schools and open the doors to a future in business and economics.

"Climate change is not just an environmental issue – it is a public health emergency, an economic challenge, and a humanitarian crisis. The Oxford Saïd Global Climate Change Challenge 2025 empowers students and educators to drive meaningful solutions at the intersection of these urgent issues."

Josephine Fawkes

Director of Global Inclusion and Youth Education at Saïd Business School

To find out more and to register for the Challenge, please visit: [Oxford Saïd calls on students and teachers worldwide to combat climate change and health risks | Saïd Business School](#)

Deadline for submission of entries: 30th June 2025.



Film of the Month Competition – any film, any genre, any time of year

This is an ongoing competition for young people aged between 5 and 19. Although it does say "any film", there are some guidelines that you need to follow. You can submit at any time. The website has guides and resources to support your film-making as well. If you are interested in the

idea, take a look at: [Details of our active competitions. - Film of the Month - Into Film](#)



Ghost Stories – a Writing Competition for 12-18-year-olds

Few stories are as much fun to write as a good, spine-tingling ghost story. Those that get your readers on the edge of their seats!

This competition is open all year round, and is free to enter.

For more information and details of how to enter, please visit: [Fright Club \(12-18 Year-Olds\) | Young Writers](#)