

CLT Academic Enrichment Newsletter **October Break and Term 2, 2025-26**

Dear Students (and Parents/Carers),

Welcome to the first Academic Enrichment Newsletter of the school year 2025/26, and a new look as Academic Enrichment becomes a feature of the Cambrian Learning Trust as a whole.

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

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



KAAEP Series of Talks 2025/26
Alzheimer's Disease: Rare as Hen's Teeth
With Professor Brian Anderton
Emeritus, King's College London
Tuesday 2nd December 2025
5:00 – 6:30pm
King Alfred's Sixth Form Auditorium



We have our lovely Miss Rion to thank for this talk: she engaged Professor Brian Anderton in conversation during this year's Sponsored Walk, as we were all walking along the Ridgeway, and he offered to give a talk at our school!

Alzheimer's disease

"Rare as hens' teeth"

Research into Alzheimer's & related neurodegenerative diseases
discoveries, disappointments - and hope?

Please set aside Tuesday 2nd December for a thought-provoking evening on this frightening disease... and come away with a message of hope. You can reserve your seats

by submitting [this form](#) or by emailing pstokell@kas.cambrianlt.org.

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



The Wantage Literary Festival

Saturday 25th October – Wednesday 6th November 2025

This year, once again, the tireless committee of the Wantage Literary Festival have pulled together a fantastic collection of authors and speakers. Don't make the mistake of thinking that "literary" means just English – you will find talks on all sorts of topics,

from Football tactics to Politics, and from a range of historical events and personages to Science, Business and stress management! The only thing drawing the topics together is that the speakers have written a book about it!

So do take a look at the programme: [Wantage Literary Festival | Wantage Oxfordshire](#), where you will also be able to book your tickets.



IF – The Oxford Science and Ideas Festival

Sunday 12th October – Sunday 2nd November 2025

Running throughout the second half of October, the Oxford Festival of Science and Ideas is brimming with

some superb thought-provoking events, from performances to talks to exhibitions!

You can find the Schedule here: [2025-IF-Oxford-Programme_Thu-28-August-2025-1.pdf](#).

However, if you go onto their website at [Oxford science and ideas Festival: 100 events in October - IF Oxford](#), from p. 4 onwards you will find several pages of archived material from previous festivals – recorded talks, performances, stories and more – all available for free!



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 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:



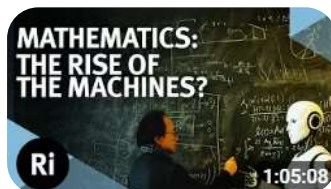
Recorded Talk: Benzene – the chemical that changed the world

Benzene has played a significant role in modern science and industry since it was first isolated by Michael Faraday in 1825 - originally from whale oil as a by-product of gas production - here at the Royal Institution. In this Discourse, Judy Wu explores the discoveries, challenges, and unexpected revelations encountered by chemists who devoted their work to unravelling the mysteries of benzene and its significance. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, various chemists presented different models to account for the structure and the extraordinary chemical stability of benzene. [How benzene changed chemistry forever - with Judy Wu](#)



Recorded Talk: The Chemistry of Murder – Agatha Christie's Deadly Science

Agatha Christie revelled in the use of poison to kill off unfortunate victims in her books, using poisons more accurately than any other crime writer. But how is it that some chemicals in such small quantities can be so deadly? And how feasible was it to obtain these chemicals both in Christie's day, and today? Join chemist-turned-writer Kathryn Harkup as she explores how Christie's extensive knowledge of drugs and medicine mixed with real life cases, created her brilliantly plotted crime novels. Her poisons were picked with care to give clues, red herrings and interesting new twists to her classic crime novels, whilst maintaining scientific accuracy. Kathryn will uncover howdunnit, but whodunnit is still up to you to find out... [The science of murder: Agatha Christie's deadly poisons - with Kathryn Harkup](#)



Recorded Talk: Mathematics- the Rise of the Machines?

For Artificial intelligence is no longer confined to crunching numbers—it is beginning to propose original theorems, sketch proofs and reveal new and unexpected patterns in the abstract world of mathematics. Join Yang-Hui He of the London Institute for Mathematical Sciences—one of the pioneers of AI-assisted discovery—as he explores how machine learning is transforming both the practice and philosophy of mathematical research. [Mathematics: The rise of the machines](#)

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 \(riqb.org\)](#)

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

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!

[Three new recorded talks for you to explore:](#)

[How to Bee-Friendly: The Best Plants for Bees and Other Pollinators | Natasha de Vere](#)

[Mountains, Lizards, and the Battle with Temperature](#)

[Alfred Wallace's Remarkable Discoveries in the 'Malay Archipelago' | George Beccaloni](#)

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 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. See below for a couple of the talks coming up soon, but there are many more on their events page.



['Feeding the world while preserving earth's liveability: the biofuel barrier' with Prof David Tilman](#)

Wednesday 22nd October, 2025 5pm

The two fastest-growing global uses of food crops are their conversion into biofuels and their use as livestock feeds. These trends are accelerating the risks of species extinctions, of agriculturally-driven climate change, and of agricultural water and air pollution.

FREE event, but you must register in advance. Available both in person and online.



['The energy transition: too little/too late or a new hope?' with Alan Haywood](#)

Wednesday 5th November 2025 5pm

With the impacts of climate change becoming ever more evident and challenging – can we “transition away from fossil fuels”, and create a new energy system which meets the many & divergent needs of the global population?

FREE event, but you must register in advance. Available both in person and online.

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 don't miss out on [Modern Art Oxford](#)!

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!



Explore in Person

The Main Exhibition at the Ashmolean - This is What you Get

Stanley Donwood/ Radiohead/ Thom York

Available until 11th January 2026

This major exhibition will explore the visual art of Stanley Donwood and Thom Yorke and the iconic images of Radiohead.

More than 180 objects will be on display from the artists' 30-year collaboration, including original paintings for album covers, digital compositions, etchings, unpublished drawings, and lyrics in their sketchbooks. This Is What You Get will reveal how

the artists experimented with early technology, and explore the evolution of the images for Radiohead's legendary albums and Yorke's later projects. To date the band, which was formed in Oxfordshire in the mid-1980s, has sold 30 million records worldwide.

Please note some artworks and labels in the exhibition include strong language.

For more information, please refer to: [THIS IS WHAT YOU GET EXHIBITION | 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



Pat Suet-Bik Hui and the three Perfections

Available until 28th June 2026

Pat Suet-Bik Hui (b. 1943) is a US-based Hong Kong artist. This exhibition showcases her work alongside others who engage with the tradition of the 'three perfections', which brings together the three art forms of poetry, calligraphy, and painting.

The exhibition includes works by Hui, her contemporaries, her teacher Lui Shou-Kwan and others of his generation, as well as earlier examples.

Gallery 11.

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: Remembrances of War
Art by Paul Joyce**

Available until 18th November 2025

Paul Joyce was born in 1940, under the shadow of the Second World War even before his birth: while heavily pregnant, his mother was pursued across a field in Whitchurch by machine gun fire from a German plane. His work bears this legacy, mixing childhood memories of playing amid the rubble of a bombed-out Crystal Palace with the received cultural memories of a city, nation, and world nearly destroyed. The paintings in the collection reflect this interplay between first-hand and received experience: paintings of the smouldering detritus of South London sit alongside imagined scenes of the destruction at Hiroshima and elsewhere across Europe. For more information, go to:

[Remembrances of War: Art by Paul Joyce – Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum](#)

Exhibition: From Conflict to Peace – celebrating VE and VJ Days

Available until 18th November 2025

This Exhibition marks the 80th anniversaries of Victory in Europe and Victory of Japan Day, as well as those of many other key events from the final stages of the Second World War.

The exhibition covers celebrations across the county itself, but also the experiences of Oxfordshire people serving in the armed forces throughout 1945, and for many, beyond the end of the war. For more information go to: [Oxfordshire's VE & VJ Day Stories – Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum](#)



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.

Museum Late Night: With the hands – crafting a shared humanity



Friday 7th November 2025, 19:00 – 22:00

Celebrate crafting from around the world in the Museum after dark! Visit the museum at the Late Night and take part in a mix of drop-in and booked activities from craft making to object handling. Make and take your own creations designed and delivered by Multaka volunteers. Knot and bead Chinese keepsakes, make Ukrainian Motanka dolls and create delicate flowers fit for fashion

designers., and much more! For more information, go to: [Museum Late Night - With These Hands: Crafting a Shared Humanity | Pitt Rivers Museum](#).

This is a FREE event, but must be booked in advance.

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.

For more information, see [Exhibitions and Displays | Pitt Rivers Museum](#)



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](#)

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 \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://pitt-rivers-museum.ox.ac.uk/past-exhibitions)

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.historyofsciencemuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/a-healthy-future-for-all/)



Performance: Almost nothing but Blue Ground

Thursday 23rd October, 2025 6:30 – 8:00pm

Almost Nothing But Blue Ground is a performative lecture by artist Tom Pope, created with Matthew Benington.

Tom's performance will weave together storytelling, cyanotype prints, and archival discoveries to trace the life and legacy of Anna Atkins — the trailblazing botanist and photographer who published *Cyanotypes of British Algae* (1843), the first book to be

photographically printed and illustrated. For more information and to book your FREE tickets, go to: [Almost Nothing But Blue Ground | History of Science Museum](https://www.historyofsciencemuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/almost-nothing-but-blue-ground/)

Exhibition: One Passion – A World of Histories



Why did a businessman like Lewis Evans build one of the finest collections of timekeepers from Europe and the Islamic World?

It started with a gift: a sundial, given to a 16-year-old Lewis by his eccentric father.

As he explored this ingenious instrument, Lewis discovered a world of histories: from the ancient science of time-telling to the bustling workshops of late 1600s Paris.

And he was inspired to learn more.

Over 50 years, Lewis built a collection to rival any museum, then or now.

From Persian astrolabes and German sundials to first edition books by Europe's most influential mathematicians, he collected and researched them all.

Step into Lewis' study and discover how to hold time in your hand.

To find out more, please go to: [About Time | History of Science Museum](#)

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*.

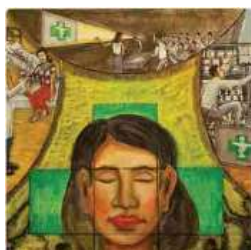
Alice in Typhoidland: The Past and Present of Typhoid

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 \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

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](#)

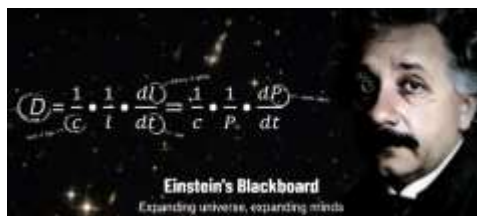
[Display \(FINAL\) \(genial.ly\)](#)



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 \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/making-waves).)



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](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/einstein-in-oxford) 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](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/the-babbage-archive-project)

[Archive Project | History of Science Museum](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/the-babbage-archive-project)

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 \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.historyofscience.ox.ac.uk/past-exhibitions-and-displays)

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)

Discover the Collection: Science in the Islamic World

The History of Science Museum houses one of 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.hsm.ox.ac.uk/science-in-the-islamic-world)



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.hsm.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.hsm.ox.ac.uk/current-displays-and-exhibitions)

And from the Natural History Museum of Oxford:



Special Exhibition: Breaking Ground

Available until April 2026

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](https://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-work/education/learning-resources)

[of Natural History](https://www.nhm.ac.uk)

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](#)



Event: Good Natured Conservation Film Festival

Friday 25th October 2025 18:00 – 21:00

[Conservation Optimism](#) presents an evening of inspiring and empowering stories from across the natural world.

In the face of environmental erosion and human negligence, it is all too easy to regard our planet with despair. But nestled amongst the prevailing stories of loss and destruction, there are inspiring stories of regeneration — of communities who nurture the planet, and who benefit from it in turn.

For more information and to book your tickets (£5): [The Conservation Optimism Short Film Festival | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



Talk: Megalosaurus – where Dinosaur science began

Tuesday 28th October 2025 18:30 – 19:30

This is a free event and there is no need to book in advance. Join Museum Staff an exploration of the first ever dinosaur to be scientifically named and described. 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? You will also hear some exciting stories about the Museum's recent dinosaur-related discoveries.

Westwood Room



Event: Colour Communicates (ages 9-13)

Join artist and author Katherine Child for a creative drawing workshop. What messages can we send just using colour and what can we communicate? Explore the theme of colour through interactive drawing exercises.

FREE. There are three workshops, and advance booking is needed at [Colour Communicates | Oxford University Museum of Natural History](#)



Talk: Elephants, Biodiversity and Climate Change

Monday 10th November 2025 19:00 – 20:00

From meeting elephants in mountain gorilla habitat, and making the first study of elephants underground, in the caves of Mount Elgon, Kenya, to lobbying for apes and elephants at the UN, Ian Redmond has been an elephant advocate for half a century. Hear why he has dedicated his life to these animals in this fascinating talk describing their essential role in ecosystems. Tickets £3 at the door. No need to book in advance.



Talk: Hogs on Film

Monday 1st December 2025 19:00 - 20:00

Hogs on Film began as a means to collect data on the UK's native hedgehog population; bridging the gap between those who film and feed hedgehogs from their own gardens, and the research community. Urbanized animals often face novel challenges and by studying their behaviour, we can understand what adaptations are advantageous in this niche. Hogs on Film aims to collect UK wide data on the impact of human provided food sources on the social interactions and species dynamics occurring in privately owned gardens. Hear from us as we introduce our project and share our findings so far!

Tickets £3 at the door. No need to book in advance.



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 \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/learning-zone)

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 \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

Half-Term Special Event: Hevelius Days

Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th October 2025

Head to the Bodleian Weston Library on Wednesday 29 and/or Thursday 30 October for a celebration of Johannes Hevelius, one of the great scientists of the 17th century, who drew the first detailed map of the Moon.

A pioneering astronomer and brewer from Gdansk in Poland, Hevelius built his own instruments and observatory, and his lunar atlas remained unrivalled for generations.

The Bodleian is hosting a special display of Hevelius's work, as well as family activities, workshops and talks, in collaboration with the Oxford Polish Association, the Polish Cultural Institute and others.

This event is FREE – just drop in. **However, booking is required for the talk.**



Exhibition: Treasured

Available until 1st February 2026

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



Exhibition: John Le Carré – Tradecraft

Available until 6th April 2026

Discover the enduring legacy of one of the greatest writers of the past century.

Tradecraft draws upon the vast archive of John le Carré, otherwise known as David Cornwell. Held at the Bodleian Libraries, this material – much of which is displayed for the first time – spans Cornwell's entire life and career, from his time as

a student at Lincoln College, Oxford, to drafts penned in his final weeks.

This exhibition offers unique insights into the working methods of the writer who shaped the modern spy novel. For more information: [John le Carré: Tradecraft | Visit the Bodleian Libraries](#)
The Treasury, Weston Library. FREE Exhibition, no booking needed.

Display: A song of Myself

This is a wire sculpture by Tom Phillips RA, on long-term loan.

Blackwell Hall, Weston Library





Exhibition: Paddy Summerfield – The Camera Helps

Available until 30th November 2025

Paddy Summerfield (1947–2024) was a photographer who developed a new psychological vision of photography, turning the camera on the innermost workings of the human mind and heart.

Despite an ongoing battle with bipolar disorder, leading the photographer to continue living with his parents in Oxford, Summerfield rose to prominence in the 1980s. Later, his five critically acclaimed publications depicted Summerfield's most intense and enduring photographic obsessions: desire and alienation.

Blackwell Hall, Weston Library. Free Exhibition, no need to book.



Talk: Thinking with a Photograph – Uncovering the story of the girl in the middle

Tuesday 28th October 2025, 13:00 – 14:00

What does it mean to think about an old photograph as a primary source for historical research? How can a picture change our understanding of the past?

In 1868, celebrated Civil War photographer Alexander Gardner travelled to Fort Laramie to document the federal government's treaty negotiations with the Lakota. He posed six federal peace commissioners with a young Native girl wrapped in a blanket. The hand-labelled prints carefully name each of the men, but the girl is never identified.

By identifying the unnamed child and unearthing her life history, Martha Sandweiss uncovers her surprising connections to the well-known men in the photograph, and finds a broader story about the violence of the 19th century American West. The child's story, long lost to history, truly matters.

This event is FREE, but booking is required. This is available both in person and online.

[Thinking with a Photograph: Uncovering the Story of the Girl in the Middle | Visit the Bodleian Libraries](#)



Talk: Letterlocking – the hidden history of the Letter

Wednesday 3rd December 2025, 17:00 – 18:00

This public lecture delves into the fascinating art of letterlocking—an innovative method of folding and securing a letter to function as its envelope for delivery. This centuries-old practice served as a crucial document security technology, utilized by notable historical figures from

Elizabeth I and her spies to Japanese samurai lords. Remarkably, letterlocking transcended cultures, borders, and social classes, highlighting its significance in history.

This talk is FREE, but advance booking is needed at [Letterlocking: The Hidden History of the Letter | Visit the Bodleian Libraries](#)

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

Modern Art Oxford

Summer Exhibitions and Events at Modern Art Oxford

Modern Art Oxford is one of the UK's leading contemporary art spaces. Our programmes offer opportunities for all for inspirational exchange and creative participation, both in person and online. Well worth a visit. Take a look at their range of workshops, exhibitions, performances and other activities at: [What's On | Modern Art Oxford](https://www.modernartoxford.org.uk/what-s-on)



Exhibition: Suzanne Treister – Prophetic Dreaming

Available until 12th April 2026

Prophetic Dreaming is the first major institutional retrospective by pioneering digital and para-disciplinary artist [Suzanne Treister](#) (b. 1958). Spanning more than forty years, the exhibition maps Treister's visionary practice and investigations into new technologies, networks of power, alternative belief systems, and the futures they prefigure. Full Price £9.50, concessions £7. No

need to book in advance.

Two Exhibitions from local Museums



Wantage Vale and Downland Museum

Exhibition: The Wantage Tramway

Available until 31st January 2026

This special exhibition marks 100 years since the closure of the Wantage Tramway Passenger Line, as well as the 200th anniversary of the modern railway.

FREE admission, and no need to book.

Faringdon Museum

Exhibition: Are we nearly there yet? 4000 Years of Transport

Next time you're in Faringdon, why not pop into the Faringdon Museum which is situated within the Information Centre, Pump House, Market Place, Faringdon. Their new exhibition fits in nicely with the current Wantage Exhibition, as they both relate to transport within the two communities. The exhibition shows the effects of changing transport within the town.

There is also a permanent exhibition regarding the history of the town, which is quite quirky – come and find out why there are pink pigeons on some of the town's window sills...

[Faringdon Museum – Faringdon Town Council](#)



Section 2. Sites to explore online



IF – The Oxford Science and Ideas Festival

Visit the website at [Oxford science and ideas Festival: 100 events in October - IF Oxford](#), from p. 4 onwards you will find several pages of archived material from previous festivals – recorded talks, performances, stories and more – all available for free!



Oxford Festival of the Arts 2026 – “Signs, Symbols...& Secrets”

Every year, from May – July, the Oxford Festival of the Arts brings together an impressive series of events to celebrate the Arts, including talks, performances, guided walks, book launches, concerts, workshops and more. This coming year, the theme for the festival is “Signs, Symbols... & Secrets”. To keep up to date with all events as they are announced, do subscribe to their newsletter at [Oxford Festival of the Arts](#). And if you want a taster, do take a look at this year’s offerings at [Full OFA 2025 Listing - Oxford Festival of the Arts](#)



Communicating Mathematics

Recommended by Mr Taylor, this page from the University of Warwick Mathematics Institute showcases the work of undergraduate maths students who took part in a module or work regarding the communication of mathematical ideas. As part of this, the students had to produce some video content on a mathematical topic of their choice, and this page shares some of their work. From the mathematical structure of music to rare encounters in Pokémon, you will be both instructed and entertained!

[Communicating Mathematics](#)



Podcast from the Historical Association: the British Templars

Dr Steve Tibble unpacks the true history of the Knights Templar, challenging centuries of myth and conspiracy to reveal their real legacy - particularly in Britain. He explores their origins during the Crusades, the evolution of their military and religious roles, and the dramatic events that led to their downfall. Tibble also examines how their story has been distorted over time, fueling modern legends and fictional portrayals. Drawing from his book *Templars – The Knights Who Made Britain*, he offers fresh insights into one of history’s most misunderstood orders.

[The British Templars / Historical Association](#)



PERIODically Podcast

PERIODically is a podcast created by undergraduate and postgraduate Chemistry students at the University of Oxford to discuss their experiences of how having a period has affected their time studying Chemistry. The podcast aims to discuss how the physicality and intensive nature of studying Chemistry can be affected by symptoms of periods (such as cramps, mental health and medical issues) and seeks to shed light on these problems,

tackle stereotypes and misconceptions, and start a conversation on how study can be improved for those with periods. [Periodically | Podcasts](#)



Podcast: Free Thinking

A podcast where leading thinkers discuss the ideas that are currently shaping our lives, looking back on the news and making links between the past and the present.

[BBC Sounds - Free Thinking - Available Episodes](#)



Podcast: Sideways

Just like the podcast mentioned above, this one also purports to explore the ideas that are currently shaping our lives. Best-Selling author Matthew Syed is determined to make you see the world differently.

[BBC Sounds - Sideways - Available Episodes](#)



Podcast: What's Up Docs?

With information on health and medicine, Drs Chris and Xand Van Tulleken explore a range of questions and how they affect our lives, from back pain to the ridges on your nails, and from menstrual health to the effects of noise.

[BBC Sounds - What's Up Docs? - Available Episodes](#)



Wild Tales Nature Podcast – from the National Trust

Lively podcast exploring a wide range of issues related to British nature and environment. From untangling the strange mating habits of spiders and digging up the greatest fossil finds, to meeting mysterious ocean giants and finding out why there's no such thing as a seagull, you'll experience our natural world in a

whole new way. [Wild Tales nature podcast | National Trust](#)



Economics Podcast – How did I get here?

 What is an economist, really?

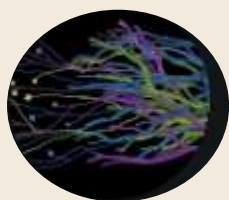
Spoiler: it's not just "men in suits crunching numbers".

Discover Economics has put together a fascinating podcast series, "**How did I get here?**", where they sit down with economists from all walks of life - from students and apprentices, content creators and journalists, to Chief Economists and academics.

You'll hear real stories - personal journeys, what drew them to economics, what they're working on now, and why they love what they do. You can find it at [Podcast | Discover Economics](#) or wherever you usually get your podcasts.

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?**



Mind Mapper

Have you ever wondered how the brain works? Want to help scientists learn about how the brain is wired? Knowing how our brains are wired can teach scientists how various brain diseases progress and what we can do to slow their progression or even prevent them! We need your help on this new Zooniverse project: [Mind Mapper!](#)

Warning: This project shows 3-dimensional data of brain tissue from non-human primates imaged using fluorescence microscopy.

Your help in identifying and labeling axons, the information transfer highways of the brain, will help scientists identify actual brain connections.

You will be shown brain images with bright lines that correspond to axons (brain cells) and you just need to trace each axon that you see.

To speed things up, you will get some help from an algorithm so that once you start tracing an axon, the algorithm will try to finish it for you. But maybe it doesn't know exactly where the axon goes so you have to step in and guide it.

This project uses existing brain imaging data, so no new animal experiments are being performed specifically for this Zooniverse project.

For more information and to get started, visit [Mind Mapper](#).



Snail Scribe Archive

The Invertebrate Zoology Collection at the Field Museum houses nearly 5 million specimens. Each specimen tells a unique ecological story - when and where it was collected, what species it is, who collected it, etc. Together, these specimens can unlock how biodiversity has changed through time and geographic space. The problem, however, is that much of this data remains

hidden in handwritten ledgers, slowing scientific discovery and conservation efforts.

This project uses Field Museum's historical handwritten ledgers, which contain invaluable biodiversity data of the who, what, where of Invertebrate Zoology specimens. Help transcribe and make these data accessible to researchers and the general public around the world. By volunteering a little of your time to digitize these records, you'll be directly supporting biodiversity research. No special expertise is. The easy-to-follow workflows and tutorials will walk you step-by-step through the transcription process, and you'll join a community of fellow volunteers passionate about uncovering the stories these snails have to tell.

For more information and to get started, visit [Snail Scribe Archive](#).

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.

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](#)



Lucy Cavendish College
University of Cambridge

An Excellent Resource: 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](#)

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 \(cam.ac.uk\)](https://www.cam.ac.uk/extra-curricular)



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](https://digitalresources.ox.ac.uk/)



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 \(cam.ac.uk\)](https://www.cam.ac.uk/extra-curricular/super-curricular)



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](https://www.trinitycollegeoxford.org.uk/library-quad)

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.



St John's College Inspire Programme – for Students in Years 9 – 12

Free online programme to inspire Critical Thinking, run by St John's College of the University of Oxford. Each year group

explores a different overarching question:

Year 9 – Why is Language so Powerful?

Year 10 – Does Crime always deserve Punishment?

Years 11 and 12 – What does the Future hold?

These questions are addressed from multiple perspectives over the course of four online workshops. The programme runs from January – April 2026. You will be set challenges to complete, express your views on polls and have the opportunity to win prizes.

To find out more and sign up, visit: www.sjcinspire.com

There is also the possibility of an invitation to the Summer School.

The deadline for registration is: 7th December 2025



STEM SMART – a 16-month STEM support programme from the University of Cambridge for high achieving students currently in Year 12

The programme is made up of weekly online assignments that students can complete at home. These are delivered in 3 phases – where Phase 1 is about consolidating knowledge and developing problem-solving skills; Phase 2 is about preparing to make a strong application to a competitive university; and Phase 3 is about securing strong examination performance.

The Programme runs from January 2026 to May 2027.

Although this programme has specific eligibility criteria regarding disadvantage in education, the range of eligibility criteria is very wide. DO check the [eligibility criteria](#) to see whether you qualify to apply. And if you qualify for both academic and non-academic criteria, and you are interested in STEM, I suggest that you consider applying! Watch this Tik-Tok video to see the Programme in action: [Are you a UK state school Year 12 student studying A level Maths, with... | cambridge university | TikTok](#)

Deadline for Registration: 30th October 2025



Future Learn – short online courses across a range of subjects

Another great resource for exploring your subjects beyond the curriculum. Great for checking that you really enjoy a subject enough to study it at university for 3-4 years, as well as providing you with sterling material for a personal statement. [FutureLearn: Online Courses and Degrees from Top](#)

[Universities](#)



Youth STEMM Award

The Youth STEMM (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 STEMM 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](#)



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](#)



Wireless Philosophy – online course

If you are curious about philosophy, this course explores some of the main areas within the subject, as well as its history. This course's nuanced coverage of philosophical topics makes it an excellent companion to A Level and undergraduate psychology courses, and it can also be used by lifelong learners who are

curious about modern applications of philosophy. [Wireless Philosophy | Partner content | Khan Academy](#)



Open Yale Courses

This site from the prestigious Yale University provides free and open access to a selection of introductory courses taught by distinguished teachers and scholars at Yale

University. The aim of the project is to expand access to educational materials for all who wish to learn. To find out more, go to [Welcome | Open Yale Courses](#)

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.



Essay competition: The Holodomor

The Foundation for the History of Totalitarianism are looking for students who will be in Year 12/13 in 2025-26 to [submit essays](#) about the Holodomor genocide/man-made famine as part of an essay competition. The deadline for entries is noon on Sunday, 25th January 2026.

LSEUPR
Annual Essay Competition
2025

Year 12/13 London School of Economics Annual Essay Competition

There are several question prompts for you to choose from. There is a word limit of 1000 words, and you will find guidelines and more information (including details of the

prizes) at [LSEUPR Welcomes Submissions for the 2025 Annual Essay Competition - LSE Undergraduate Political Review](#).

To submit your work, use this form: [LSEUPR School Essay Competition 2025 Submission Form](#)
The deadline for submission is 10th November 2025



Quantum on the Clock Video Competition

In celebration of the International Year of Quantum 025, Year 12 and 13 students are invited to take part in Quantum on the Clock—an exciting online video competition that challenges students to explain a quantum concept in just three minutes.

This is a fantastic opportunity for students in the final two years of pre-university education to:

- Deepen their understanding of A-level (or equivalent) quantum physics
- Spark curiosity and creativity
- Create a standout project for future education or career applications

Why take part?

- Over £2,000 in cash prizes
- Winning videos featured on the Institute of Physics' YouTube channel
- Invitations to an exclusive prize-giving event
- Contribute to a growing library of classroom resources
- A valuable addition to university, college, or apprenticeship applications
- Learn more about the rapidly growing field of quantum science

Students will also gain valuable experience by reviewing other entries, and winners will be selected by a panel of expert judges, including leading quantum researchers and science communicators. Find out more, including details of how to enter, at: [Quantum on the Clock Competition | Institute of Physics](#)

The deadline for entries is Monday 12th January 2026 at 5pm.



Centre for Personalised Medicine Art Competition

The Oxford Centre for Personalised Medicine is inviting students in Years 7–9 to get creative and share their thoughts on the meaning of 'personalised medicine' through art. Personalised medicine means different things to different people – from using genetic

information to tailor treatment, to understanding a person's story and what matters most to them. This competition is a chance for young people to express what they think it means. Students can submit any form of visual art – a drawing, painting, collage, sculpture, or more – as long as it can be photographed. All entrants receive a certificate, and cash prizes will be awarded to standout submissions. Group entries are welcome too! Winning artworks will be considered for display at prestigious locations across Oxford, including the John Radcliffe Hospital, Churchill Hospital, Centre for Human Genetics, and St Anne's College. More details, including a short video about the competition, and downloadable information for teachers available at [Art Competition 2025-26 - cpm](#)

Deadline for entries – 30th January 2026



Practical Ethics and Responsibility Competition, Years 11-13

"How am I responsible for the environment? Should there be limits on how we can punish people who do wrong? If very ill patients want to die, should doctors be held responsible if they help them? Who is responsible for the

global spread of infectious diseases?"

If these and other questions about our responsibilities towards each other, our planet and our future make you think, then this competition is for you!

The Uehiro Oxford Institute focuses on how to tackle some of the biggest ethical problems facing us today. This is called [Practical Ethics](#).

Who can enter: Anyone in Years 11, 12 or 13, in teams of three to five people.

What do you need to do: Make a 3-4 minute video to inform about an ethical problem and how you think responsibility is involved.

Deadline: [5th January 2026 at 4pm.](#)

Full details of the competition plus the terms and conditions are available on the [How to take part](#) page and you can see video entries of previous years on the [Past winners](#) pages or on the Uehiro [YouTube Channel](#). More information can be found at [Practical Ethics and Responsibility Competition | The Uehiro Oxford Institute](#)



Year 11 and 12 - Solving Global Challenges Poster Competition

Oxford Edge, the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Christ Church Access are delighted to launch a poster competition for Year 11 and 12 students

in UK state schools. The theme is “What global challenge would you solve with entrepreneurship and how?”.

For more information and details of how to submit your work, visit: [Solving Global Challenges Poster Competition | Christ Church, University of Oxford](#)

The deadline for submission of work is Midday on 5th January 2026



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](#)



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](#)