

THE GOLDEN COMPASS TOUR



The Golden Compass, starring Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig was based on the novels of Philip Pullman. The author was a student at Exeter College, Oxford and although as the original title suggests, the frozen wastes of the Arctic do feature, the star locale is, without doubt, Pullmans adopted home of Oxford, playground for the child heroine Lyra Belacqua.

In 2008, joining the existing CS Lewis, Tolkien, Morse and college walks a new official Golden Compass tour is due to debut, further details available from the Oxford Information office. In the meantime why not try our unofficial guide below.

A - The Pitt Rivers Museum



The Pitt Rivers Museum (often spelt Pit Rivers Museum) was founded in 1884 when Lt General Pitt Rivers, an influential figure in the development of archaeology and evolutionary anthropology, gave his collection to Oxford University. His two conditions were that a museum was built to house it and that someone should be appointed to lecture in anthropology.

Oxford University agreed to his request and the Pit Rivers Museum of natural history was founded. The Generals founding gift contained more than 18,000 objects but there are now over half a million. The Pitt Rivers Museum features displays of archaeological and ethnographic objects from all parts of the world. Many were donated by early anthropologists and explorers. Today the Museum is an active teaching department of the University of Oxford. The Pitt Rivers is the only natural history museum in Oxford so if you would like a souveneir dont forget to visit the museum gift shop!

Tour Facts

The Pitt Rivers Museum is a fantastic repository of anthropological artefacts and was clearly an inspiration to the author. In the film it is where Lyra is observed and approached by Sir Charles, who plans to steal her alethiometer. If you venture inside the museum, which is free, you can find a skull that has a neat hole (supposedly to relieve pressure on the brain) but also very similar to those that the Tatars make in the film. You can also see some Inuit Parkers that are very similar to those worn in the film.

Opening Times

Every Day 12.00 - 16.30 From the 1st May 2007 the opening hours will be extended to: Tuesday-Sunday 10.00 - 16.30, Monday 12.00 - 16.30, Bank Holidays 10.00 - 16.30.

Contact Details

+44 (1865) 270927

Address

South Parks Rd, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX1 3PP

B - The Bodleian Library



The Bodleian Library is the main research library of the University of Oxford. It is also a copyright deposit library and its collections are used by scholars from around the world. But what is perhaps most spectacular is the stunning architecture that hides the vast underground caverns of literature it has to be seen to be believed. The library is a truly unique example of Oxford architecture.

Tour Facts

The Bodleian Library was featured in the opening sequence of the film and the Bodleian reverts to its original name of Bodleys Library in Lyras world.

Opening Times

Please see the website for details

Contact Details

Tel: 01865 277180 Fax: 01865 277105 Email: admissions@bodley.ox.ac.uk.

Address

Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BG

C- Exeter College



Still situated in its original location on Turl Street, Exeter College was founded in 1314 by Walter de Stapeldon of Devon, Bishop of Exeter and later treasurer to Edward III, who intended it as a school to educate clergy. During its first century, it was known as Stapeldon Hall and was significantly smaller, with just twelve to fourteen students. The college grew significantly from the 15th century onward, and began offering rooms to its students. It was at this time that the Chapel ? a small-scale replica of the Sainte Chappelle in Paris ? was built. The present Hall was built in the year 1618 with the rest of the college completed by 1710.

Tour Facts

Exeter College is where the author of the Golden Compass, Philip Pullman read English in the 1960s, although he is rumoured to have read a disproportionate number of American thrillers as well. In the books, Pullman has said that Exeter College was his primary model for Jordan, and that Jordan inhabits the space in Lyras world that Exeter does in our world.

Opening Times

Daily 2pm-5pm. Maximum 20 people in a group

Contact Details

Tel: 01865 279600

Address

Turl Street, OX1 3DP

D- The Randolph



Oxford's leading hotel - The Macdonald Randolph - is situated in the heart of the city opposite the world famous Ashmolean Museum. Built in 1864 and recently refurbished, the hotel offers each guest the highest level of comfort and service in a traditional and welcoming environment. The location makes the Macdonald Randolph Hotel an ideal base for exploring the historic sights of Oxford or the thriving shopping centre just two minutes walk away. The Randolph was one Oxford's only top rated hotel but now faces competition from the Old Parsonage Hotel and the more trendy boutique style Mal Maison hotel in the new Oxford Castle development.

Tour Facts

The Randolph hotel was featured in the film probably due to its spectacular Gothic style architecture. If you are a big fan of the Golden Compass you could consider splashing out and staying at this luxury hotel. For more information on the Randolph take a look at our best hotels section.

Contact Details

Tel: 0870 400 8200 Fax: 01865 791678

Address

Beaumont Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX1 2LN

E - The Covered Market



Historic City centre market selling fish vegetables and mixed produce with a number of cafes and food outlets.

Tour Facts

The next stop on the itinerary is the covered market, a Dickensian emporium in the book. You may wish to stop here for a coffee or food as there are plenty of cafes to choose from. In the Golden Compass it is the site of one of the child snatchings that starts the film.

F - Christ Church



One of the more attractive Oxford colleges, boasting some truly stunning works of architecture. The college was also the location for the Harry Potter films, a must see for all Harry Potter fans, and home to author Lewis Carroll in his student days. Christ Church, founded in 1546, appears to be one of the more aristocratic colleges, producing thirteen British Prime Ministers, more than any other college in Oxford or Cambridge college. Christ Church is also the only college in England that is also a cathedral, which also boasts the world famous Christ Church choir.

Interesting Facts

Every evening at 9:05pm the Christ Church bell (Great Tom) chimes 101 times. Why 9:05pm? Well this is 9:00pm Oxford time, Oxford is 1° 15' 24" west of Greenwich. Why 101 chimes? Christ Church was founded with 101 students in 1524, the bell rings once for each student to tell them to return to the College before the gates are locked.

Tour Facts

In the film Christ Church College becomes Cardinals. This is where the mail zeppelin balloon departs to London. Pullman was probably inspired by reality here as there is a plaque on Christ Church's wall marking the first balloon ascent by an Englishman (1784) from the adjacent meadows — James Sadler, pastry cook and aeronaut.

Opening Times

Every day except Christmas Day, Mon to Sat 9am to 5.30pm, Sun 1pm to 5.30pm Last admittance 4.30 Christ Church Cathedral closes at 5pm, for special services see church website. Large parties may be split. Advanced booking is not required, except for special behind the scenes tours, for which an additional fee is payable.

Address

St Aldates, OX1 1DP

Cost

4.50 adult, 3.50 seniors, student, children

G - Christ Church Meadow



A lovely expanse of countryside within the confines of Oxford city, with walks down by the riverside where one can watch the rowing clubs training. Matthew Pinsent, the British Rowing Olympic Gold Medalist, would have graced this stretch of river with his skills.

Tour Facts

Adjacent to Christ Church College is Christ Church Meadow a spectacular grazing meadow alongside the River Thames which makes an ideal spot for a picnic and imagining Lyra's world in reality as you gaze at the college.

H - Worcester College



Worcester College was founded in 1714, but it was preceded by a learning institution in the late thirteenth century that was a college for Benedictine monks. The college buildings are a clever mixture of modern and old, and in fact there is a row of mediaeval cottages that are amongst the oldest residential buildings in Oxford today. While Worcester is in the centre of Oxford today, it used to be on the edge of the city in the eighteenth century. As a result the college has been able to retain 26 acres of gardens, boasting a lovely duck pond and playing fields for all sports within college grounds - certainly a rarity in Oxford today.

Interesting Facts

Media mogul Rupert Murdoch was educated at Worcester College. His enterprising spirit and his aspirations in advertising showed through in his student role of selling advertising for the student newspaper, Cherwell.

Tour Facts

Worcester College is the final stop on the tour and the film company is rumoured to have spent a small fortune securing filming rights for this location. Check opening times above to ensure that you can see inside the college.

Opening Times

2pm-5pm daily. Maximum eight people in a group.

Contact Details

Tel: 01865 278300

Address

Worcester College Oxford OX1 2HB

Cost

None

Map of Attractions:

