

## SOCIETY OF AFRICANIST ARCHAEOLOGISTS

### 25th BIENNIAL MEETING: AFRICAN ARCHAEOLOGY — A 20:20 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

#### Conference Excursions

##### 1. Bristol

Led by Prof. Mark Horton, an Africanist with extensive experience in the historical archaeology of Bristol and the Caribbean, this excursion will visit the urban landscape of Bristol, a little over an hour to the west of Oxford and a major centre for both the trans-Atlantic slave trade and continuing debates over its legacy (e.g. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-47670756>). Travel to and from Bristol will be by train, departing at 9.20 a.m. from Oxford railway station. Those taking part will be met at Bristol Temple Meads station by Prof. Horton and returned in time to catch an early evening train back to Oxford. Later departures are also available for those wanting to stay longer.

The tour will begin with a trip by ferry through Bristol's harbour (<https://www.bristolferry.com/our-fleet/emily/>) followed by a guided walk (±75 minutes) through its city centre taking in sites on the city's recently developed Slavery Trail (<https://geographical.co.uk/uk/discovering-britain/item/3000-walking-bristol-s-slave-trade> and <https://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/collection/bristol-slavery-trail>). After lunch (which does not form part of the excursion price) the tour will resume with a visit to the M Shed Museum and the newly installed CARGO art exhibition on College Green, which offers an 'alternative narrative' to the trans-Atlantic slave trade (<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/whats-on/whats-on-news/cargo-bristols-biggest-art-event-3412104>). A minibus will then take participants to the Saltford brass mill outside Bristol, the only surviving institution that made goods such as Neptunes (bowls) and Guinea kettles for trade to the African Atlantic, before returning to Bristol Temple Meads. Background information on the Saltford mill can be found at [http://www.brassmill.com/saltford\\_brass\\_mill\\_005.htm](http://www.brassmill.com/saltford_brass_mill_005.htm)

**Costs** The cost for this excursion is £ 40.00, inclusive of train travel between Oxford and Bristol and transport by ferry and minibus within Bristol. Travel to and from Oxford railway station is additional and participants should arrange this themselves.

**Number of participants** This tour is limited to a maximum of 28 people.

##### 2. Neolithic and Medieval Wiltshire

Lying to the south of Oxford the Marlborough Downs and Salisbury Plain are home to one of Europe's richest concentration of prehistoric monuments dating to the Neolithic and the Bronze Age. This excursion offers participants the opportunity to visit two of the most famous of these.

Departing from St Hugh's at 8.30 a.m. the excursion will first visit Stonehenge (<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/stonehenge/history-and->

[stories/history/](#)), one of Britain's most iconic archaeological monuments and a centrepiece of the Avebury and Stonehenge World Heritage Site. With evidence now suggesting that Stonehenge may have held ritual significance for local hunter-gatherers as early as 8000 BC, in the course of the late fourth, third, and early second millennia BC it developed into a principal focus for an elaborate ceremonial landscape that continues to be investigated by archaeologists.

The tour will then move on to Avebury for lunch at the local pub or National Trust café. There will be then be time to walk around Avebury stone circle (<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/avebury/>), a mostly Neolithic henge monument of the third millennium BC. Like Stonehenge, this is part of a vast Neolithic and Bronze Age sacred landscape that also includes several other ritual sites, burial places (including West Kennet Long Barrow) and the enormous artificial mound of Silbury Hill. For those who wish to do so, a visit to the adjacent Alexander Keiller Museum is also possible. We will return to Oxford by 5.30 p.m.

**Costs** The cost of this excursion is £ 50.00, including bus travel to and from Oxford and entrance to Stonehenge. Access to the Avebury stone circle is free of charge, but for those wishing to visit the Alexander Keiller Museum an additional £ 4.40 payment will be necessary on the day.

**Number of participants** This tour is limited to a maximum of 15 people.

### Self-guided tours

#### 3. Blenheim

The World Heritage Site of Blenheim Palace lies 11 km north of Oxford in the village of Woodstock. Birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill, it has been the principal residence of the Dukes of Marlborough since being built in the early eighteenth century for the first Duke as a gift following his military triumphs against France and Bavaria in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). Churchill himself is buried a 40 minute walk away in the village of Bladon.

The palace lies within the estate of the former royal manor of Woodstock, a frequently visited hunting lodge of medieval and early modern English monarchs, one of whom — Elizabeth I — was imprisoned here between 1554 and 1556 prior to her accession to the throne. Oxford's School of Archaeology has recently begun a collaborative project with the Blenheim Palace authorities to investigate the archaeological record of the estate, which also includes Roman and prehistoric sites. Further information can be found at <https://www.blenheimpalace.com/visitus/>

**Costs** The palace and its gardens are open to the public at a cost of £ 28.50 per person (£ 27.00 for students and over-60s with valid ID). There is also free access to the Great Park that surrounds the palace itself.

**Travel** Buses to Woodstock can be taken from outside St Hugh's by turning left at the Porter's Lodge and going to the junction of St Margaret's Road and Woodstock Road. The bus stop is across Woodstock Road outside St Aloysius School. Relevant services

are Bus 7 and Bus S3 and the journey takes approximately 25-30 minutes. Timetable information can be found at <http://www.stagecoachbus.com> Return bus fares between Woodstock and Oxford are of the order of £ 5.00.

#### **4. Bath**

The historic city of Bath is also within easy distance of Oxford and can be reached by train. The city centre is a World Heritage Site famed for its eighteenth/early nineteenth-century Georgian buildings, its medieval abbey, and its Roman baths. The city centre is easily accessible on foot.

Admission to the Roman baths (excavated by Barry Cunliffe, Emeritus Professor of European Archaeology at Oxford) costs £ 16.50, but queues may be long. The museum houses finds from the site, including a large range of lead tablets bearing curses and votive offerings to the goddess Sulis Minerva. The abbey is next door. Further information is available at <https://www.romanbaths.co.uk> and <https://www.bathabbey.org> Both sites are open 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Trains to Bath Spa in the city centre of Bath depart from Oxford's main railway station at half-hourly intervals and the journey takes about 75 minutes. Return train tickets cost approximately £ 20-30.

#### **5. Visiting London**

Travel between Oxford and London is straightforward by both train and bus.

Coach services with the Oxford Tube depart every 15-20 minutes from Oxford's Gloucester Green bus station close to the Ashmolean Museum with the journey to central London taking 1.5-2.5 hours depending on traffic. A return ticket costs £ 15.00. Timetables and further information can be found at <https://www.oxfordtube.com>

Train travel has two options. Trains from Oxford's central railway station arrive in London Paddington and depart approximately every 30 minutes. Unless you want to enjoy the scenery of multiple small railway stations you should aim for a fast service, via Reading and Slough, which takes about 1 hour.

Trains from Oxford's central railway station, calling at Oxford Parkway on the north side of the city, arrive in London Marylebone, slightly closer to central London. Once again, the time taken is about 1 hour and trains depart roughly every 30 minutes. Buses to Oxford Parkway depart from the bus stop on Banbury Road a few metres north (away from the city centre) of the St Hugh's Porter's Lodge. Tickets are bought from the driver.

Tickets are significantly cheaper if bought online a day or more in advance (at <https://ojp.nationalrail.co.uk/service/planjourney/search>). They can either be downloaded to your telephone or printed in the station, but can also be bought at the station itself via self-service machines or the ticket office.

Note that travel to and from London is significantly more expensive during early morning and evening commuting times and that many train tickets have restrictions on the specific times at which you can travel.

When in London you may find it easy to walk to some destinations, but will likely also want to use the underground system. Unless you intend to go only to and from a single station you will probably find a Zone 1-6 day travelcard the cheapest option. These cost £ 12.60 per person. Alternatively you may wish to buy a rechargeable personal Oyster Card, priced at £ 5.00 + a minimum of £ 10.00 credit. Further information is available at <https://www.londontravelpass.com>

## **6. Oxford**

Oxford has many sights on offer, from colleges and museums to parks and gardens. Below are some suggestions for places to visit.

### *Colleges*

Many of the Oxford colleges are open to visitors for free or for a small fee of up to £ 5. Further information on opening times and entrance charges is available at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/visitors/visiting-oxford/visiting-the-colleges?wssl=1>

### *Museums, libraries & places of interest*

The Ashmolean Museum (<https://www.ashmolean.org/>), established in 1683, is the oldest museum in the UK and one of the oldest in the world. It houses the University's extensive collections of art and antiquities, ranging back over four millennia. The museum is located centrally on Beaumont Street and is open from 10.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. daily. Admission to the permanent exhibitions is free. In September there is a special exhibition entitled *Tokyo: Art & photography*, for which there will be charge of around £ 10–15.

The Oxford University Museum of Natural History (<https://www.oumnh.ox.ac.uk/>) houses the University's collections of zoological, entomological, palaeontological and mineral specimens. With 4.5 million specimens it is the largest collection of its type outside of the national collections. The museum is located on Parks Road, next to the Pitt Rivers Museum and is open from 10.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. daily. Admission is free.

The Pitt Rivers Museum (<https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/>) holds one of the world's most extensive anthropology and archaeology collections, with objects from every continent and from throughout human history. The museum is accessed through the Museum of Natural History. It is open from Tuesday–Sunday and admission is free.

The Bodleian Libraries of the University of Oxford form the largest university library system in the UK. The Old Bodleian Library and the Weston Library are open daily to visitors. Daily guided tours allow visitors to step inside the historic rooms of the Old Bodleian Library, including the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Divinity School, medieval Duke Humfrey's Library and the iconic Radcliffe Camera. For admission to the Divinity School (which featured in some of the Harry Potter films) or to book tickets for the

30, 60 or 90 minute tours see: <https://visit.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/tours>. Tours are very popular and often sell out — to avoid disappointment it is recommended to book in advance. Tours cost between £ 6 and £ 15 per person, depending upon their duration. The modern Weston Library offers free access to a wide range of exhibitions and events – most of which are free of charge (<https://visit.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/events-exhibitions>). There is also a café and shop on site.

Designed by Christopher Wren, the Sheldonian Theatre (<https://www.sheldonian.ox.ac.uk/>) on Broad Street is the principal meeting and ceremonial venue of the University. It offers excellent panoramic views over Oxford. It is open from Monday–Saturday 10.00 a.m.–1.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m.–4.00 p.m.. Access to the Main Theatre, Attic and Cupola costs £ 3.80.

The Botanic Garden (<https://www.obga.ox.ac.uk/>) is the oldest botanic garden in Britain, and forms the most compact yet diverse collection of plants in the world. It is located on the High Street and is open from 9.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m. daily. Entrance to the garden costs £ 5.45.