



GOOD TIMES GUIDE 2014



HERTFORD MCR
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This guide offers you some suggestions of places, which I think are above average and worth checking out. I hope that it will act as a starting point for your adventures in Oxford, as you discover the many other good venues nestled amongst the dreaming spires.

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CAFES

THE MISSING BEAN

TURL STREET

The Missing Bean has anything you could ever want (except alcoholic drinks). As the name reveals the place is mostly about coffee, but they also have good sandwiches and cakes (try their raspberry and white chocolate muffin). At 'the Bean' – as the more verbally lazy have come to call it – (mostly) experienced baristas will serve you up a flat white while playing funky tunes on the stereo.

ZAPPI'S CAFÉ

ST MICHAEL'S STREET (ABOVE BIKE ZONE)

A bit further from College, but still close, Zappi's henchmen serve up great coffee in a less crowded space – the bikes add a nice Italian feel.

THE VAULTS AND GARDEN

RADCLIFFE SQUARE

The Vaults and Garden (practically across the street from Hertford) and its sister restaurants Alpha Bar (Covered Market) and Woodstock Road Deli (close to Hertford's North Oxford houses) are all lovely and relatively inexpensive places to lunch. All three places offer salads, soups, and daily hot meals. The food is healthy, vegetarian/vegan friendly (though the meat dishes are also excellent), locally sourced (as much as possible), and incredibly tasty. The Vaults is a nice place to sit while the Alpha Bar and the Deli are better suited for takeaway. The Vaults is also a good choice for afternoon tea.

THE TURL STREET KITCHEN

TURL STREET

Opened in the fall of 2011, The Turl Street Kitchen quickly became a local favourite. TSK serves tasty breakfasts, lunches, and dinners that feature seasonal and local ingredients. At least one decent vegetarian choice is always on offer. The location on Turl Street spans several floors of a lovely old building making TSK a good place to sit and read quietly over tea or meet up with friends for dinner. An evening prix fixe menu is nice for a more decadent (though affordable) treat. TSK is also the location of Oxford Hub, the "home of student volunteering and social action in Oxford."

THE GARDNER'S ARMS

PLANTATION ROAD

The Gardner's Arms is a lovely vegetarian pub tucked away on Plantation Road (near Hertford's North Oxford houses). The actual garden is cute and the pub has both a main room and a back area that looks like a North American 'rec room' from back in the day. The beers rotate and are always exciting. The food is mostly vegetarian with some vegan options and ranges from Indian Thali platters and mushroom pies to burgers and calzones. Sunday night is quiz night and is always quite hilarious.

THE GRAND CAFE

HIGH STREET

The Grand Cafe's opulent interior immediately sets it a world apart from all the Starbucks and Costas that are springing up around the place at the moment. The decadent chandeliers, huge mirrors, and palm trees make it the perfect environment in which to consume the best coffee around. The food is also superb, with silver platters of sandwiches, cakes, and scones. Even better is the fact that it's licensed, so you can enjoy a glass of champagne while you're here. The Grand Café serves cocktails in the evenings. Come during a half-price special to pick them up at only £3.50 apiece.

GEORGINA'S

COVERED MARKET

Tucked away upstairs in the Covered Market, with its location only marked by an unassuming sign above a small doorway, Georgina's remains to many an undiscovered gem. With some of the tastiest coffee in the city, definitely worth a visit. It's all about the atmosphere, with 60's throwback posters lining the walls and ceiling and an Austin Powers grooviness pervading the place. Very shagadelic, baby. The food is good, but space is limited so it can be difficult to find a table at peak times and the portions can sometimes be on the small side.

BROWNS CAFE

COVERED MARKET

Not to be confused with (and bearing no relation to) Brown's restaurant on St Giles, Brown's Cafe is the archetypal greasy spoon cafe. Near the northeast entrance to the Covered Market, this is the place to head for if you're hungover. My advice would be to go for one of the deceptively titled "mini grills": they contain all the essential contents of a great fry-up in large quantities, and are good value for money. The tables are covered in PVC cloths and it's run by a fat bloke. What more do you need to know?

STREET GILES CAFE

ST GILES

The place to head for if you are hungover, or just can't bear the thought of making food in the morning and are needing something to warm you up. Prices might seem a little expensive when you go in, but when you actually get your food you realise why. Real live mountains of sausage, egg, bacon, beans, chips... the works. And all of this with the added bonus of a real life working mechanical cash register (it's worth it just for that) Old school squeeze bottles for the sauce. The only thing to be aware of is their opening times. It seems that they follow no real rules, and close when they get bored of things.

GREEN'S CAFE

STREET GILES

Green's cafe is one of Oxford's most popular places to study and work over a cup of coffee or a light lunch. Sporting free WiFi and a good selection of sandwiches, toasted paninis, baguettes, muffins and various other lunch and brunch-time fare, Green's presents the ideal spot to relax whilst pretending to get some solid work done with your afternoon.

BLACKWELL'S

BROAD STREET

Blackwell's is Oxford's, and probably the world's, best bookshop. OK, so the coffee shop within it is one of the generic, every-high-street-has-three types (can't even remember which brand it is now) but the experience of finding a book from the extensive shelves and settling into a comfy window-seat sofa to read and sip an espresso while looking out onto the Sheldonian Theatre and Clarendon Building is not to be missed. And if the book turns out to be rubbish, you don't need to waste the money on buying it

G & D'S

LITTLE CLARENDON STREET/ST ALDATE/COWLEY ROAD

I think it's impossible to study in Oxford and not visit G&D's at least once, and why anyone would come here only once, I don't know. The Little Clarendon Street venue (fully known as George and Davis) has been around even longer than me, and more recently a new, but equally good, parlour was opened on St Aldate (George and Danver). More recently still, the G&D's empire has expanded to Cowley with the recently opened George and Delila's on Cowley Road. At least ten varieties of imaginatively flavoured, top quality ice cream and frozen yoghurt are always available, all homemade, along with drinks and savoury snacks such as pizza bagels and salads. If none of the ice cream flavours are exotic enough for you, there's also a petition book through which new flavours can be suggested. Open until midnight, and a great alternative to kebab on the way home, especially in the summer when it can sometimes still be warm.

THE JERICHO CAFÉ

WALTON STREET

The location of The Jericho Cafe on Walton Street makes it perfect for those of us living in North Oxford, and it's well worth a visit if you're up from the south as well. A comprehensive menu of main dishes, salads, etc. is offered, and there's always a good selection of homemade cakes to choose from afterwards. Seating on the ground floor level is limited, but stairs lead down to a surprisingly spacious and funky basement seating area.

RESTAURANTS – EAST ASIAN

LIAISON

CASTLE STREET

Liaison is off the beaten track, especially for Hertford students, as it is situated on Castle Street, round the back of the beautiful Westgate Centre. However, if you want a slightly different take on Oriental food, their dim-sum is amazingly varied and (if you go with someone who knows what to choose) excellent, and makes a unique eating experience. The chickens' feet are a must - surprisingly, they taste like liquorice - and the egg tarts and dumplings are also superb. Good service and a great wine list surprisingly (I'd recommend the New Zealand white). Get your folks to take you here, as it can be a touch on the expensive side.

THE CHIANG MAI KITCHEN

OFF HIGH STREET

If you want to eat the best Thai food in Oxford (as well as some of the best food of any type) then go to the Chiang Mai Kitchen. Just make sure you book first, as its sheer quality has made it one of the busiest restaurants in town. The flavours of the food are as complex and subtle as you could wish for, even in the spicier dishes, and the menu includes a classification system according to spiciness (one chilli for mild ranging to three for hot) so you know what you're going to get. Although the food is Thai, the decor is very English: the building is situated down an alley off the High Street, traditionally built with whitewashed walls and exposed beams inside and out, and very well presented.

THE OPIUM DEN

GEORGE STREET

The Opium Den rises above its surroundings on George Street with a classy atmosphere - an intimate feel, cool lanterns, quality furniture - and fantastic oriental food. Definitely among the best Chinese in Oxford, all the dishes are cooked to the highest standards, and the service is equally impressive but you have to pay for it. It's good value for what it is, but expect a fairly hefty bill at the end of the evening. One for the special occasions.

NOODLE NATION BAR

GLOUCESTER GREEN

Provides cheap and cheerful Chinese, with their emphasis on take-away with no frills eat-in service available. Noodle Bar is slicker though less individualistic than some others. You can be well fed for not much above a fiver.

EDAMAME

HOLYWELL STREET

A small (and I mean really small) family-run Japanese restaurant nestled among the houses on Holywell Street, Edamame offers a wide range of authentic dishes. Seated at the cosy tables, it feels as if you're dining in someone's front room probably because you are. However, this is no bad thing as the service is friendly and the prices reasonable. Edamame supposedly serves Oxford's best sushi, but only on Thursdays. Booking is not possible, so be prepared to turn up and queue for a bit.

THE ORIENTAL CONDOR

PARK END STREET

One of a cluster of Chinese restaurants in west Oxford, the Oriental Condor represents great value for money, and seems to be frequented by lots of Chinese people - always a good sign. The menu is extensive and contains all the classic dishes you would expect, at very reasonable prices, along with some surprises: mango flavoured fish, anyone? The atmosphere is slightly odd, as the diners appear to be seated in someone's conservatory, but you can expect to walk in and get a table due to the size of the place

THE DANCING DRAGON

BANBURY ROAD

Those of you living in Summertown have a treat on your doorsteps. Just head a little north of the shops on Banbury Road and you'll find the Dancing Dragon. Not much to look at from the outside, but once you get in and ask for the all-you-can-eat Chinese buffet you know you've made the right choice. The food is good and you're guaranteed to have to roll home. Go for a friend's birthday for the cheesiest rendition of "Happy Birthday" ever and maximum embarrassment.

WOK AND ROLL

WOODSTOCK ROAD

Great for those who work near the Science Area to grab a late-night take-away on their way home from the lab. Good Chinese food with all the usual dishes available at cheap prices. Bonza.

MY SICHUAN (成都映象)

OLD SCHOOL BUILDING NEAR GLOUCESTER GREEN

Authentic Sichuan restaurant guaranteed to impress with their spicy selections. A veritable thesis of a menu, will ensure you won't be disappointed.

RESTAURANTS – INDIAN

AZIZ

ABINGDON ROAD

I have to confess that I've never been to Aziz but it's widely acclaimed as the best curry house in Oxford by those in the know, so I thought I'd better tell you about it. The cuisine has a Bangladeshi air to it, and the starters and fish dishes are said to be especially good. Book in advance to avoid disappointment, as it gets very busy especially at weekends.

THE BOMBAY

WALTON STREET

If you find yourself on Walton Street with a couple of beers in your hand and a hunger in your belly, you could do a lot worse than go to the Bombay. As with Jamal's opposite, the bring-your-own drink policy helps to keep your spending down, but the curries are better here, and there are fewer crowds of pissed footballers/rugby players/rowers. But on the other hand, there's no big brass elephant

THE INDIA GARDEN

HIGH STREET

For an all-round Indian experience, it's difficult to beat the India Garden. Located conveniently in the city centre up some suitably sleazy-looking stairs, it specialises in reasonably hot curries from the traditional curry house menu - no frills here. The prices also reflect this (you won't spend a bomb) and there's a bring-your-own option. Sadly the shiny mosaic depicting the Taj Mahal has recently been consigned to the history books, but the Indian music looks like it's there to stay.

MIRCH MASALA

COWLEY ROAD

A worthy curry house among the hordes present on Cowley Road, Mirch Masala serves richly flavoured dishes in a relaxing setting. Their balti dishes are especially good. Also, and this must be unique for an Indian, it has a take-away sandwich bar open during the day.

JEE SAHEB'S

NORTH PARADE

A popular option for those living in North Oxford, Jee Sabeh's is known for its excellent service and tasty traditional curries. Serves both as a nice place to visit for a meal out or as the perfect option for take-away when cooking seems like just too much trouble.

RESTAURANTS – EUROPEAN

BRANCA

WALTON STREET

Pretty new, and not all that expensive, considering what you will pay in some places in Oxford. Only problem is that you will have to buy your sides all separately, which can bump up the price. Great place to take that special someone though, with low lighting and lots of tables with not many seats – if you know what I mean. There's plenty of pubs around as well to sit in and have a drink if you have to wait for your table.

PIERRE VICTOIRE

LITTLE CLARENDON STREET

With decor like a slightly rustic French bistro, Pierre Victoire on Little Clarendon Street serves great French food. The menu is extensive and varied and the house wines are good. For a competitively priced three-course meal, you can't go past their set menus at either lunch or dinner.

AL ANDALUS

LITTLE CLARENDON STREET

La Plaza provides a taste of Spain in the heart of Oxford. During the evening, tasty tapas are served at two sitting times to get the timing right for flamenco dancing between courses. The decor is very Mediterranean as are the waitresses, and the paella is fantastic. Not a cheap option in the evening, there is a lunch time menu (Mon-Fri) which is very reasonable. Good for a laugh.

CHEZ GASTON

NORTH PARADE

A small creperie on North Parade, Chez Gaston will provide for all your crepe needs, be they sweet or savoury. Pasta and paninis are also available in this attractive setting and all are good value for money. However, what really sets Chez Gaston apart from the crowd are the desserts: the alcoholic and non-alcoholic sweet crepes are superb.

GINO'S

GLOUCESTER GREEN

This small Italian adjacent to the bus station provides a welcome surprise inside, given its surroundings. The interior is thoughtfully decorated in the style that only Italian restaurants can be, and diners are treated to some of the best Italian food about in generous portions. Far more interesting than going to ASK or Pizza Express, and better too.

SANDWICH SHOPS

ON THE HOOF

NORTH PARADE

Handy for the north Oxford houses, this North Parade sandwich shop is famed for its "Bookies Bap" - the finest and most comprehensive bread-based take-away breakfast you'll find in town. It's thoughtfully run by two Spanish ladies, and has a dedicated following of regulars who will often be encountered in the small eat-in area (with complementary newspapers).

BROTHER'S

COVERED MARKET

Often overlooked as a take-away venue, Brothers in the Covered Market has a small counter round the back serving baguettes and paninis to go. The choice of fillings is fixed, but good, and all the sandwiches are full to bursting, giving good value at around £2.50.

TAYLOR'S

ST GILES

Taylor's is pitched at the upper end of the lunchtime snack market, as demonstrated by its location near Little Clarendon Street and its slightly pretentious air. However, the sandwiches are good, with a wide range of custom made fillings and a selection of delicatessen-type foods (e.g. cold meats, olives, ground coffee, etc) is also available.

HEROES

SHIP STREET

Also a more expensive alternative, Heroes does a fantastic line in hot toasted ciabattas, and their club sandwich is great. Convenient for those hanging out in the MCR.

MORTON'S

COVERED MARKET/BROAD STREET

Morton's has two outlets in the city centre. The Broad Street shop is mainly take away cold baguettes, which are ready prepared, but there is also a small cafe area. The covered market shop is larger and caters more for the eat-in crowd, with more hot food (paninis etc,) available.

ALTERNATIVE TUCK SHOP (A.T.S.)

HOLYWELL STREET

A popular choice for students and very conveniently located for College, the speed of the service is something that has to be seen to be believed. Big, good sandwiches at reasonable prices.

PUBS

THE TURF TAVERN

BATH PLACE

The Turf is hidden behind, err, Hertford, so you should be able to find it easily enough - access is via two small alleys (one off Holywell St and the other from New College Lane). It is the most "olde worlde" of all the pubs in Oxford: Low ceilings, thick stone walls, and outdoor seating bordered by the old city wall, with charcoal burning braziers to keep you warm during the winter (as well as indoor seating areas!). There are always a wide range of beers on tap, some of which are of the more esoteric varieties, which should satisfy even the most adventurous drinker. Tends to get busy particularly after Matriculation and big exams.

THE KING'S ARMS

HOLYWELL STREET

Something of a tourist trap in summer due to its location at the end of Broad Street, the King's Arms deserves a mention for three reasons: a) if Hall fare is getting you down, the KA is a reasonable bet for reasonably good food close to college; b) this is the obvious place to come when you're done with lounging on the college lawn after having finished your last exam, and c) there is a quiz machine with every relevant game you could ever dream of playing in an alcohol-serving atmosphere.

THE ROSE AND CROWN

NORTH PARADE

Everything about the Rose and Crown is charming. From its situation at the centre of the bunting-strewn North Parade, through serving pistachio nuts at the bar by the pint or half and depositing your cash in a mechanical till, to the intimate beer garden complete with vines and awnings. Always stocked with a good supply of Adnams beers, and also serves very respectable food at decent prices. Just don't drink lager here unless you're feeling very rich - the landlord appears to have a vendetta against southern shandies.

THE LAMB AND FLAG

ST GILES

Heavily under both the geographical, economical, and political influence of St John's College, but with enough redeeming factors to make this something worth putting up with for a cheeky drink in the Lamb. The drinks are above average (especially the "Betty Stoggs" - go and try one now), but it's the pork scratchings that keep drawing the punters back for more. Crispy and flavoursome, these savoury delights come in packs which look refreshingly amateur but belie the complex nature of the product within. Pig skin at it's finest hour.

THE TROUT

GODSTOWE ROAD

A trek upstream along the Thames (or Isis as we like to call it here, darling) will bring you to the Trout, situated in a picturesque setting by a weir that handily masks the traffic noise from the ring road only a stone's throw away. Peacocks roam free in the garden on the bank of the river, making strange clucking noises and bearing all for the unsuspecting public to see. The other reason for coming here is the food, which is of a very high standard, and makes it well worth the effort of getting here (it tastes much sweeter when you've earned it!). Come outside peak time (not at weekend lunchtimes) to avoid long waits for a table and food.

COPA

GEORGE STREET

If you want the antithesis of the pubs listed thus far in the GTG, mosey on down George Street and hit Copa - but try not to get hit by any of the other patrons. Copa, thanks to its location and size, is one of the more townie-orientated pubs around, however, this can be refreshing if the slightly stuffy Oxford atmosphere is getting to you. It also serves a mean range of European beers - if you like your weissbrau and continental lagers this is the venue for you - and has big screen TVs that show major sporting events (this is relatively uncommon in pubs in the town centre). However, beware, as Copa has above average pricing.

THE PUNTER

OSNEY ISLAND

The Computer Clerk's favourite. Great atmosphere and location in a really quiet area of the city. Open space outside for sunny days and definitely (according to the Computer Clerk) the best chips in the city (don't forget to ask garlic sauce!), worth a visit.

SWIFT ONES

THE WHITE HORSE

BROAD STREET

Very small and a bit quaint, good beers but the quality of the food can be variable at beStreet

THE THREE GOATS HEADS

ST MICHAEL'S STREET

The cheapest pub in Oxford with a unique character.

THE BEAR

BLUE BOAR STREET

Small and old, good beer and Pimms during summer; big collection of ties.

THE EAGLE AND CHILD

ST GILES

Once frequented by Tolkien, but no Hobbits in evidence.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

FRIAR'S ENTRY

Overlooked by most, quiet, lots of art.

THE RED LION

GLOUCESTER GREEN

Formerly "The Goose", cheap food from an extensive menu, avoid at weekends. Recently changed ownership, apparently to the same owners as The Trout.

THE ST ALDATES TAVERN

ST ALDATES

The nice landlord's gone, but still alright for a swift pint or two.

THE OLD TOM

ST ALDATES

Named after the Christ Church bell opposite but don't hold that against it, cosy garden.

HEAD OF THE RIVER

ST ALDATES

Worth going when it's sunny to sit by the river, but touristy.

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE

WESTERN ROAD

A real "local" with pool upstairs and amusingly random jukebox.

THE FOLLY BRIDGE INN

ABINGDON ROAD

Mad regulars, cheap food, big games room upstairs.

THE ROYAL OAK

WOODSTOCK ROAD

Good food, bar billiards, range of beers, and close to Winchester Road. What more could you want?

JUDE THE OBSCURE

WALTON STREET

Hip Jericho pub, generally pretty lively.

THE JERICHO TAVERN

WALTON STREET

Next door to Jude the Obscure, features live bands! The Sunday Roast can be variable.

THE RADCLIFFE ARMS

CRANHAM STREET

Unbelievably cheap but good food, with conservatory.

THE OLD BOOKBINDERS ALEHOUSE

CANAL STREET

Store their barrels behind the bar, well worth the effort of finding.

KEBAB VANS

MCCOY'S

PEMBROKE ROAD (OPPOSITE CHRISTCHURCH)

This one is on your way home (for most in the Grad Centre). Don't be fooled by Sid's, walk the extra few meters and cross the road to McCoy's. The best kebab's in Oxford. Served in pitta or naan, comes in three different sizes and with a whole range of sauces I haven't even got round to trying all the combinations yet. And by the way, the extra large is a meal in itself. Also does burgers etc. for those strange people that don't like kebabs. You'll be visiting this in freshers week, look forward to it, I am.

HASSAN'S

BROAD STREET

The most "Hertford" of the kebab vans, Hassan's on Broad Street has even been known to sponsor college sports teams. The chips and cheese is a legendary staple, and the doner and chicken kebabs are particularly good. A friendly atmosphere and lashings of burger sauce with everything.

HOUSSAIN'S

ST GILES

If you head for Houssain's opposite St John's, just make sure you don't accidentally go to the Roving Gourmet adjacent to it instead. Houssain's however is very good, with a wide ranging menu, top-notch barbequed chicken drumsticks and mixed kebabs, and succulent pickled chillies. And burger sauce, of course.

AHMED'S

HIGH STREET

Ahmed's is worth visiting simply to sample the delights of "special chips". An exciting fusion of chips, fried mushrooms, fried egg, cheese, and a sauce of your choice it is an experience not to be missed. Ahmed's is the only reason for attending Oriel College - apparently they can get their kebabs from here on battels.

KEBAB KID

GLOUCESTER GREEN/COWLEY ROAD

Technically Kebab Kid shouldn't be allowed in this section as they are shops rather than vans, but the quality of the food justifies sneaking them in. The kebabs are served in naan bread rather than pitta (that should satisfy all you northerners) and the chips are of the chippie shop variety, rather than the more common crispy French fry type. Jumbo sausages are also on offer.

BARS

THE UNIVERSITY CLUB

MANSFIELD ROAD

Opened at the beginning of the summer of 2004, the University Club is a private club for graduate students and university staff only and is thus very competitively priced. There is a bar (serves decent food), restaurant, cafe, gym (so you can work off the long-term effects of the beers), and guest rooms, and, best of all, it's free to join! The bar is a good place to get Friday night started after a heavy week in the lab/library, while you're waiting for the college bar to open.

THIRST

PARK END STREET

Handily located opposite Park End (see next section) the Thirst bar staff mix some of the best drinks in town. Refreshing woo-woos, creamy African rumbles, and tart caipirinhas fly from their hands to greet you. Even better than the drinks are the deals, stupid hour lasts from 5.30-8pm and happy hour from 8-10pm, and the fact that it's open past regular closing time. The atmosphere is on the "club" side of things, with DJs and loud tunes, so you don't even have to bother crossing the road to Park End to strut your funky stuff.

THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE

LITTLE CLARENDON STREET

With a vast range of cocktails that rival Thirst for quality, decor that's all dark wood, leafy pot plants and mirrors, and the Little Clarendon Street cachet the Duke is definitely the classier option. Go during happy hour (5-8.30pm) for half price drinks or get your mum to pay - it's up to you. The only thing that grates about the DOC is the slightly over-pretentious air but, hey, it's Oxford - you'll get used to it!

FREUDS

WALTON STREET

"FREVDs" as the sign reads is also rather pretentious, and frequented by the pink pashmina/pink shirt crowd. Once you've got over (or into) that, the drinks are good, but not cheap, and the food is good too, and cheaper. Freuds is in a converted church, and hence has a fairly unique atmosphere. Letting it all hang out on the dance floor where the altar previously was is a slightly bizarre feeling!

RAOUL'S

WALTON STREET

With Frevds, this is one of the few places you can drink after 11 on an evening. Generally no cover charge, but the drinks are very expensive, but they are great cocktails and prepared properly by well trained staff. This does mean that service is slow though. If you are feeling flash it is worth it though.

CLUBS

THE PURPLE TURTLE

FREWIN COURT (JUST OFF THE CORNMARKEt)

Wearing the Oxford Union like a shell made from Lego is the subterranean Purple Turtle, a.k.a. the PT, the most legendary venue in Hertford MCR folklore, and probably in Oxford as a whole. The one and only reason why it's worth joining the Union (this allows you to get in here free) the PT is somewhere in the grey (or purple?) area between a club and a late opening bar. It's busy and sweaty on Fridays and Saturdays, but during the week can make a surprisingly reasonable venue for late night drinking and the table footie is always good for a drunken laugh. Low ceilings and a small dance floor only serve to add to the atmosphere of the place. Has to be seen to be believed. Free to get in Mon – Wed.

THE BRIDGE

HYTHE BRIDGE STREET

Not too bad for a small student-orientated club, the Bridge is however overpriced at the weekend and can involve long queues on popular nights (student nights are on Tuesdays). The upstairs dance floor is reasonably well proportioned for the size of the club and usually plays a fairly cheesy selection of student favourites. An enticingly shiny pole increases the opportunities for dancing in ways that seem far more embarrassing the following day than at the time. There are lots of sofas for lounging on in close proximity to the large downstairs bar, but the upstairs one is a more minimalist effort with a few stools dotted about. After all, you don't want them in the way of the dance floor do you?

PARK END

PARK END STREET

Everyone knows that biggest doesn't necessarily mean beStreet It's what you do with it that counts, right? Well, so it is with Park End. Oxford's largest club (don't get excited, it's still not that big) has multiple dance floors (OK, so two are usually open) and, err, three whole bars at least! The main dance floor is usually playing your typical Britney/Bryan Adams/S Club 7 staple while the other is more R&B influenced. It's good if you're drunk and with a big bunch of friends, but isn't everywhere? Often referred to a Shark End for some unfathomable reason.

LOLA LO

MAGDALEN STREET

Yet another underground (in the geographical sense) club in the centre of town, Po Na Na attempts to attract the more classy student clientele, yet still resorts to a massive wall mirror to try to make the place look bigger. Some good DJ nights, but overpriced and under strength drinks.

CINEMA

THE PHOENIX

WALTON STREET

In the heart of Boho Oxford - that's Jericho - we are pleasantly surprised to find the Phoenix. It's purple! There's a wee bar upstairs! Two screens (one is big, one is small). The Phoenix shows a good mix of independent cinema and the slightly more- intelligent mainstream slush (i.e. yes to Kill Bill, no to Dumb and Dumberer). This is your place for arthouse, though, and if you plan to visit more than twice a month it's worth looking into their membership deals, which could save you a lot of money.

THE ULTIMATE PICTURE PALACE

JEUNE STREET

This place rocks - there is no foyer, or lobby, or what-you-will, just a little man behind a window in what looks like someone's garage. Fleapit of the year, every year. And great films. A mix of arthouse and mainstream, and always showing that film that you missed at the larger cinemas, about a month before it emerges on video. About as close as Oxford gets to genuine, top-grade scuzz, and an experience to remember.

THE ODEON

MAGDALEN STREET/GEORGE STREET

There's two of them, one on Magdalen Street and one on George Street. They are like all the other Odeons in the world. Apart from the screens, which (especially in the George Street Cinema) can be very very tiny indeed. The popcorn is sometimes a bit stale, and they have been known to run out of refreshers in the pick n mix. But we just keep going back, especially now they do the two-for-one Orange Wednesdays there.

THEATRE

THE OXFORD PLAYHOUSE

BEAUMONT STREET

Oxford's properest [sic] theatre, with comfy red seats and ice-cream people in the interval, and thereby Oxford's most expensive theatre, although with healthy student discounts if you get your act together. Loads of interesting stuff (and quite a bit of dross) comes hither from far and wide. There are usually one, if not two, 'flagship' student productions there a term.

THE BURTON TAYLOR

GLOUCESTER STREET, OFF BEAUMONT STREET

A.K.A. the 'B.T.': a (tiny) little studio theatre round the back of the Playhouse.

Like a sauna in the summer if the summer ever gets going. Rivers of perspiration. The B.T. runs two plays a night during term - sometimes I like to think of them as Richard and Elizabeth. This is where it gets experimental and homegrown. Can be a lottery, but an evening here is rarely boring, if occasionally appalling. It's also a fair bit cheaper (well, a pound or two) than the OFS and the Playhouse.

THE OFS

GEORGE STREET

This is student theatre central and one of the few performance spaces where the thesps have to compete with the neighbouring discotheque after the interval. This can lead to some intriguing cocktails (Beckett and Busta Rhymes, anybody?) Seats can get painful, but some corking plays get put on here. The other thing about the seats is that they can be arranged in two opposing banks - not so much in the round as in the corridor, but it can work, oh yes, fear ye not.

THE PEGASUS THEATRE

MAGDALEN ROAD

Out in the deeps of East Oxford on Magdalen Road, the Pegasus is where the emphasis is on the contemporary and the youthful. There's rarely any Oxford University input (no bad thing). Dinky but not dull.

MOSER THEATRE, WADHAM COLLEGE

PARKS ROAD

Here we might also mention St John's Auditorium, and a few others, under the rubric of college theatres. Such is the enthusiasm for am-dram in Oxford Town, and such are the ardent actorly aspirations of the undergraduate populace, that the above venues cannot house everyone's efforts, so up steps the wonderful Moser Theatre - also known as the Wadham Badminton Court - along with some purpose built intramural performance spaces secreted about the wealthier colleges. Phew!

OTHER STUFF TO DO IN OXFORD

PUNTING

Imagine the scene: serenely gliding along the river in the afternoon sunshine with a glass of Pimm's in your hand and the birds singing sweetly in your ear. Then the pole gets stuck in the riverbed, the punter falls in, and you end up in a tree – but that's half the fun of punting! The college has a deal with the Cherwell Boathouse and a punt hirer next to Folly Bridge that means punts are available free for college members, all you have to do is book in the lodge and then turn up with your ticket at the punt house and you can experience this great Oxford tradition. I can't recommend it highly enough, just take someone with you who knows what they're doing to avoid going in circles all afternoon.

MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

BROAD STREET

Free of charge as a most museums in the city, the Museum of the History of Science was extensively refurbished a few years ago (mainly to stop it from collapsing into Broad Street). Scientific instruments from throughout the ages are on display along with informative information about which of your all-time favourite scientists used them. A popular attraction is a blackboard that retains the scrawlings of Einstein himself from a lecture he gave in Oxford once-upon-a time on some sort of relativity... Great! Go on arts students, you know you want to!

CONCERTS

The range and variety of classical music on offer every weekend in Oxford is amazing. Concerts are generally advertised using poster boards around the city centre, and most are also listed on Daily Info (see www.dailyinfo.co.uk) so you can take your pick. The most popular venues are the Sheldonian Theatre which hosts the largest concerts, among them Oxford's premier orchestra, the Oxford Philharmonia, and the Holywell Music Room on Holywell Street, the oldest music hall in Europe, a more intimate venue. Most colleges also have a choir or an orchestra, or both as in the case of Hertford, and their concerts can be good.

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM AND THE PITT RIVERS MUSEUM

PARKS ROAD

Oxford has a large number of museums considering the size of the city, some of which are more tourist-orientated than others. The location of the Natural History Museum on Parks Road makes it less tourist-infested than some, and, all in all, it's a pretty interesting place to while away an afternoon. The roof is like an enormous 19th century conservatory and is worth going to see in itself, and there are lots of fossils on display. However, the most interesting bit is the Pitt Rivers Museum, accessed through a small door at the back. This atmospherically gloomy hall mostly contains items that were "acquired" during the years of the British Empire: tribal weapons, shrunken heads, a Polynesian boat, those kinds of things.

THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

BEAUMONT STREET

The Ashmolean Museum is the University Museum of Art and Archeology. It has a wide range of exhibitions from pre-dynastic Egypt to Asian cultures. It is an excellent museum that offers a lot of interesting temporary exhibitions. If you like the British Museum you will like this museum!

MODERN ART OXFORD

Pembroke Street

Not exactly the MoMA but nonetheless but they do put on some interesting temporary exhibitions. For those of you who are modern art lovers, and go insane by all the old stuffy nature of Oxford, this is your breathing hole. For those of you who are not too keen on modern art: you might give it a try anyway as its for free.