

News release



14 May 2025

Funding secured for twelve new permanent exhibits to complete major redisplay at Oxford University Museum of Natural History

A further twelve new permanent displays will open at Oxford University Museum of Natural History in spring 2026, completing the transformation of the Museum's main court that began in 2020.

This phase of the redisplay project, titled *Earth: A Planet and Its Life*, is generously supported by funding of £498,000 from Biffa Award, a multi-million pound fund that helps to build communities and transform lives through awarding grants to communities and environmental projects across England and Northern Ireland as part of the Government's Landfill Communities Fund.

The project will use the Museum's collections – including historically significant Oxfordshire Dinosaur material – to tell a story of the intricate relationships between planet and life, through evidence of ancient ecosystems. Alongside the twelve new displays, visitors will enjoy revamped touchable specimens and a digital interactive 'pod' that recreates Cambrian and Jurassic ocean environments.

Housed in six new conservation-grade showcases, the exhibits will feature a visually striking combination of fossil and skeletal specimens, along with bespoke models and stylised environmental networks to recreate past ecosystems and key points in the evolution of life on Earth. Combined with the 36 displays installed over the past five years, the project completes a major element in the Museum's *Life, As We Know It* masterplan.

Janet Stott, interim director of Oxford University Museum of Natural History, said:

"We are very excited to be embarking on the development of these new exhibits, which will bring ancient ecosystems to life for visitors, and reveal the fascinating story of Earth over hundreds of millions of years. We are especially grateful to Biffa Award for supporting this phase of our redisplay and look forward to presenting it to our visitors from early 2026."

Rachel Maidment, Biffa Award Grants Manager, said:

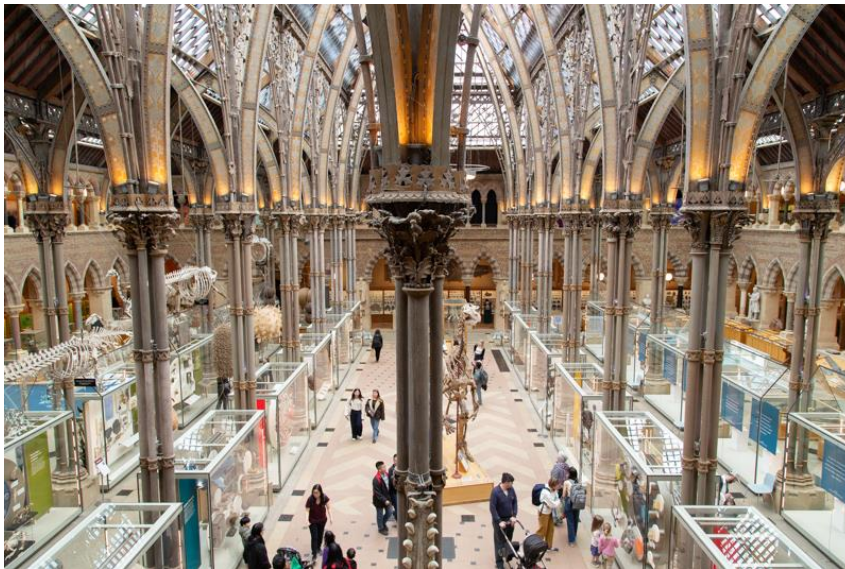
News release

“We are thrilled to be supporting this exciting new phase of redisplay at Oxford University Museum of Natural History. The *Earth: A Planet and Its Life* project will create imaginative, engaging exhibits that bring ancient ecosystems to life for visitors of all ages. It is wonderful to see how the Museum is using its extraordinary collections to inspire curiosity, learning, and a deeper understanding of our planet’s rich history.”

Since the *Life, as we know it* project began, the Museum’s visitor numbers have exceeded any in its 160-year history, welcoming more than 834,000 people during 2024.

While the new displays are under development, a temporary exhibition of the spectacular high-magnification insect photography of Levon Biss will run in the new showcases until 4 January 2026. Each of the eleven insects in the *Microsculpture* exhibition is shown alongside 1.2 metre prints of Biss’s photographs, revealing the incredible 'microsculpture' structures of the animals.

The Museum of Natural History is open daily from 10am – 5pm and admission is free.



Oxford University Museum of Natural History main court. The twelve new displays will be installed in six showcases on the right-hand side of this image.

A high-resolution version of this image can be downloaded here:

<https://dams.oumnh.ox.ac.uk/?r=162323&k=399b288b4f>

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For further information:

Scott Billings

News release



Life, As We Know It project manager

Museum of Natural History

scott.billings@oum.ox.ac.uk

01865 270925

Notes to editors

About Oxford University Museum of Natural History

Founded in 1860 as the centre for scientific study at the University of Oxford, the Museum of Natural History now holds the University's internationally significant collections of entomological, geological and zoological specimens. Housed in a stunning Pre-Raphaelite-inspired example of neo-Gothic architecture, the Museum is free to enter, and its growing collections underpin a broad programme of natural environment research, teaching and public engagement.

www.oumnh.ox.ac.uk

www.morethanadodo.com

About Biffa Award



Since 1997, Biffa Award has awarded grants totalling more than £189million to thousands of worthwhile community and environmental projects across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The programme administers money donated by Biffa Group Ltd through the Government's Landfill Communities Fund.

www.biffa-award.org

About Landfill Communities Fund / Scottish Landfill Communities Fund



The Landfill Communities Fund and Scottish Landfill Communities Fund - any waste that is discarded which cannot be reused, reprocessed or recycled may ultimately be disposed of in a landfill site. To encourage the re-use, recycle and recovery of more value from waste and use more environmentally friendly methods of waste disposal, Landfill Tax is charged on each tonne of waste sent to landfill. Landfill Operators (LOs) are able to redirect a small proportion of landfill tax liability to support a wide range of community and environmental projects in the vicinity of landfill sites

through the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) and Scottish Landfill Communities Fund (SLCF). The LCF is regulated by ENTRUST on behalf of HM Revenue & Customs, and the projects are delivered by enrolled

News release

Environmental bodies (EBs). The SLCF is regulated by SEPA on behalf of Revenue Scotland and projects are delivered by Approved Bodies (ABs).