

A walk in which you will see most with your nose in the air.

Oxford has many gargoyles and grotesques. Gargoyles were originally created to throw water away from buildings (and still do). The word comes from the old French 'gargouille' – meaning throat. Grotesques are carved heads, usually having no function, but often they are images of notable people. Grotesques can be mistaken for gargoyles, especially since they are at times placed where they might be thought to be performing a gargoyle's function.

This walk will show you high-up features that are worth seeing, even though they might be neither a gargoyle nor a grotesque.

The walk

1. From **Bonn Square** turn left and walk along **Queen Street**. Note the carvings on the 1888 building opposite **Marks & Spencer**. Between 'Miss Selfridge' and 'Monsoon' is what must once have been the entrance to this fine building. Here, and at the top, are the crests of the University and the City.
2. Continue to the end of **Queen Street**. On your left see the gargoyles on the 13th Century **St Martin's church tower**. Above the former church gateway, now the entrance to the Carfax Café, St Martin is depicted giving his cloak to a beggar. The miniature men on **Carfax** clock become animated when the clock strikes.

There are fine weathervanes to be seen – above **Lloyds Bank** a ship; above the **Town Hall** (down **St Aldates** to your right) an ox.

3. Walk straight ahead along **High Street**, keeping to the left side footway. See the **Swan** above the Karen Millen shop (on the opposite side); then the dog holding a 'fob watch' above **Payne's Silversmiths** and the passageway that leads to the **Chequers** pub; then the interesting faces of the grotesques above **NatWest Bank** (at the corner of Alfred Street).
4. By the **Mitre Hotel** turn left into **Turl Street**. See the carved mitre on the hotel. Walk along Turl Street. On its right side you will see many

grotesques along the walls: firstly of **Lincoln College**, then of **Exeter College**. Beyond **Market Street**, on the left side, there are angels and grotesques on **Jesus College**.

5. As you approach the end of Turl Street look up to see the **Anthony Gormley statue** (his own torso) high above **Blackwell's Art and Poster shop**, at the corner with Broad Street. Turning right into **Broad Street**, more grotesques, gargoyles and other figures can be seen on the side of **Exeter College**.
6. Walk east along Broad Street towards **Holywell Street**. See the 'emperors' atop pillars surrounding the **Sheldonian Theatre** – the third set (the originals dated to the 1660's), created by Michael Black between 1970-72. See also the statues of the nine muses atop the **Clarendon Building** – original printing house of the Oxford University Press - and the statue of **Lord Clarendon** in a niche high on the west side.

The former **Indian Institute**, on the corner of **Catte Street** and **Holywell Street**, has elaborate carvings and its wind vane shows an elephant.

7. At the crossroads turn right into **Catte Street**. Where **New College Lane** enters from the left, see the '**Bridge of Sighs**' of **Hertford College**, with its carvings.
8. Also here, look up to see the grotesques on the **Bodleian Library** (on the right side of Catte Street). Among the grotesques high on the library building, can be seen the initials 'TB' for **Thomas Bodley**, whose funds provided the Bodley (or Bodleian) Library in 1602.
9. Turning, walk along **New College Lane**, passing beneath **Hertford College's 'Bridge of Sighs'**. Ahead, beyond the wall, you will catch sight of gargoyles on the slender eight sided turret of **New College's tower**. Follow the lane, turning right, then left. Ahead you will see three statues above a rear gate into **New College**.
10. Follow the lane, and after turning right (and passing beneath an archway and by a traffic barrier), then turning another (left) bend in the winding lane, you will see the grotesques high on the **New College** buildings, beyond the wall to your left. Also, to your right as you walk, see the winged creature atop the **Queen's College** library.
11. After the next (right) turn in the lane (which has now become **Queen's Lane**) see the 14th Century tower of **St Peter in the East** (now the library of St Edmund Hall). There are gargoyles here on the church. After passing the tower and then the adjoining boundary wall,

look on the left through the gateway (which is set back a little) into the original churchyard - see the statue of **seated St Edmund** there.

12. At the end of **Queen's Lane** turn right into **High Street**. On your right is **Queen's College**. Beneath the central cupola is a statue of **Queen Caroline** – not of Queen Philippa (wife of Edward III) after who the college is named.
13. Walk along **High Street**, past **Queen's College**. On your right side, see the effects of acid rain on the soft stone of the grotesques at the **University Church of St Mary the Virgin** (under restoration).
14. On the far side of **High Street** see the grotesques on **University College**, with the statue of **Queen Anne** above the gate; and then above **Oriel College's Rhodes Building**, the uppermost statue of Cecil Rhodes with others of **Kings Edward VII** and George V below. The capital letters in the Latin inscription to Rhodes identify the year of construction.

The walk ends here.

If wishing to return to Bonn Square, continue along High Street to Carfax Tower, then straight ahead along Queen Street.

If you find any anomalies on this route, please email info@oxstreets.org.uk

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