

Let's explore



ENTRANCE GALLERY



BASEMENT GALLERIES



BUILDING
TIMELINE



ABOUT
US

**HISTORY
OF SCIENCE
MUSEUM**



1

1683 & 1924 displays



You're standing in the oldest public museum building in the world.

GALLERY TEAM STORY

Fish like this one were popular in European museum collections in the 1600s and 1700s.



This Spotfin Burrfish has been a fan favourite with visitors since the Museum building opened in 1683.

Inv. 77644

Ask the Gallery team for more stories

3

A Healthy Future for All?



What did we learn from the pandemic? Explore the science behind the headlines.

GALLERY TEAM STORY

Oxford is one of the NHS centres currently trialling a new type of treatment that uses vaccines to fight cancer.

Scientists are applying mRNA technology – the same approach used to make many COVID vaccines.

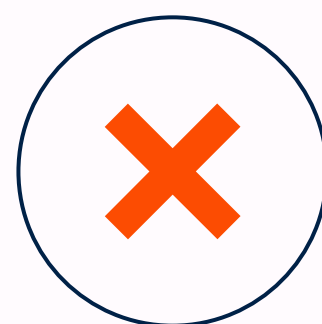
It's a bit like developing a 'WANTED' poster the immune system can use to 'unmask' and destroy cancer cells hiding in our bodies.

Ask the Gallery team for more stories





Vision24



Take a look at the Museum's future. We'd love to hear your views.

GALLERY TEAM STORY

We're on a transformational journey to preserve this beautiful building's heritage and safeguard its future.

And we need you!

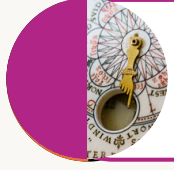
Our Vision24 project is all about making your Museum fully accessible and inclusive for generations to come.

We'd love to hear your feedback, and thank you for spending time with us in the Museum.

[Ask the Gallery team for more stories](#)



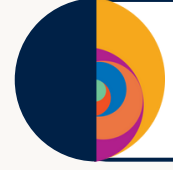
Early ideas for a new Welcome space including the Museum Shop



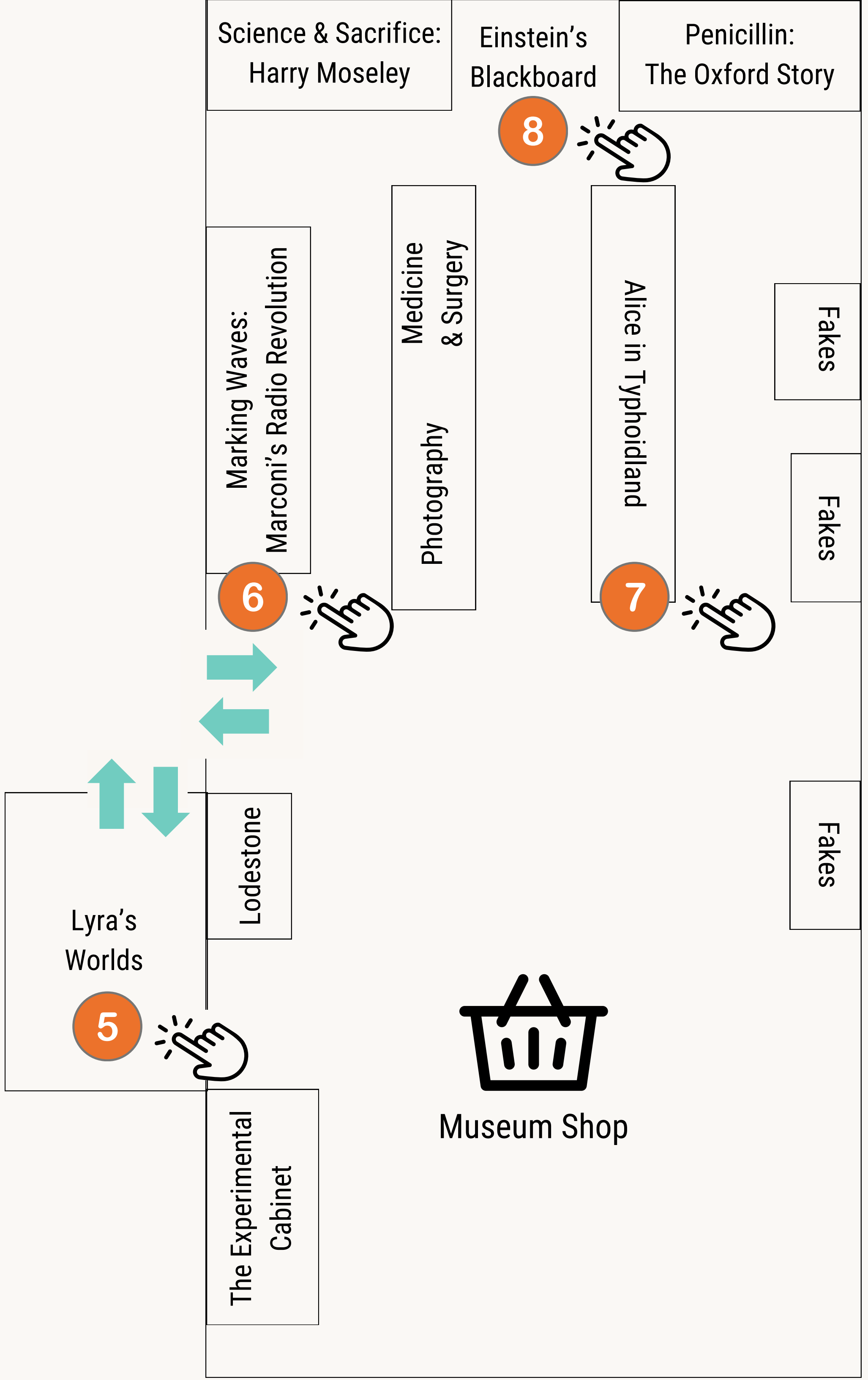
ENTRANCE



TIMELINE



MENU



5

Lyra's Worlds



Discover Lyra's alethiometer from the hit books & TV series *His Dark Materials*.

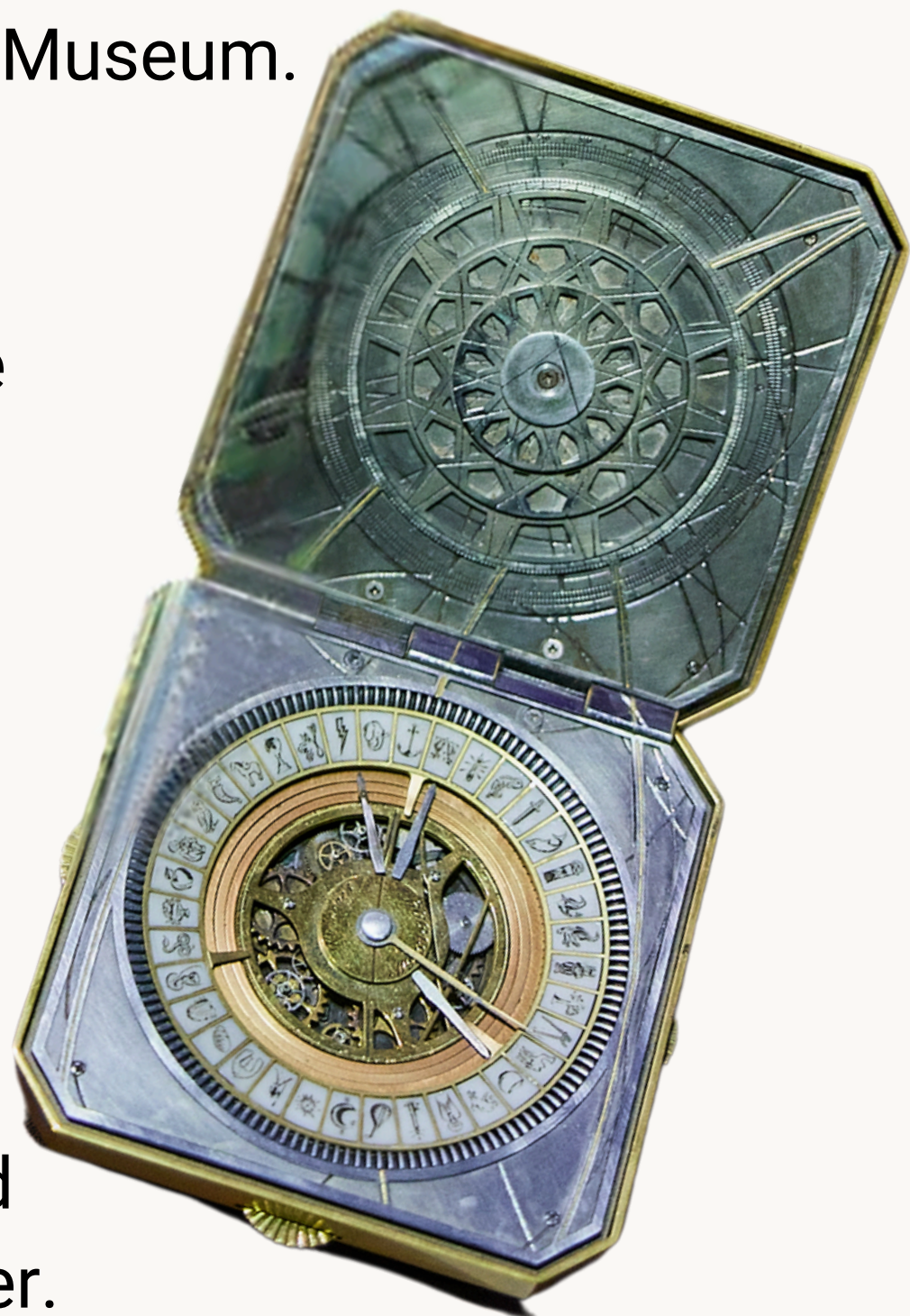
GALLERY TEAM STORY

Once upon a time, a writer came to visit the History of Science Museum.

He was captivated by the beautiful dials that read the rhythm of the universe. And idea started to form in his mind ...

That writer was Philip Pullman.

And the device he imagined became Lyra's alethiometer.



Lyra's alethiometer from the BBC HBO series *His Dark Materials*

Ask the Gallery team for more stories

6

Making Waves



Discover the story of
Guglielmo Marconi's vision
to connect a wireless world.

GALLERY TEAM STORY

Guglielmo Marconi was a man on a mission to connect the world through wireless technology.

In 1909 Marconi was the first inventor-entrepreneur to win the Nobel Prize in Physics (shared with Ferdinand Braun).

And in 1931 he was the driving force behind the world's first international shortwave broadcast station in the Vatican.



Ask the Gallery team for more stories

Photograph of Guglielmo Marconi,
1900s CE, Inv. 34711



Alice in Typhoidland



Explore the story of the battle against typhoid in Victorian times and today.

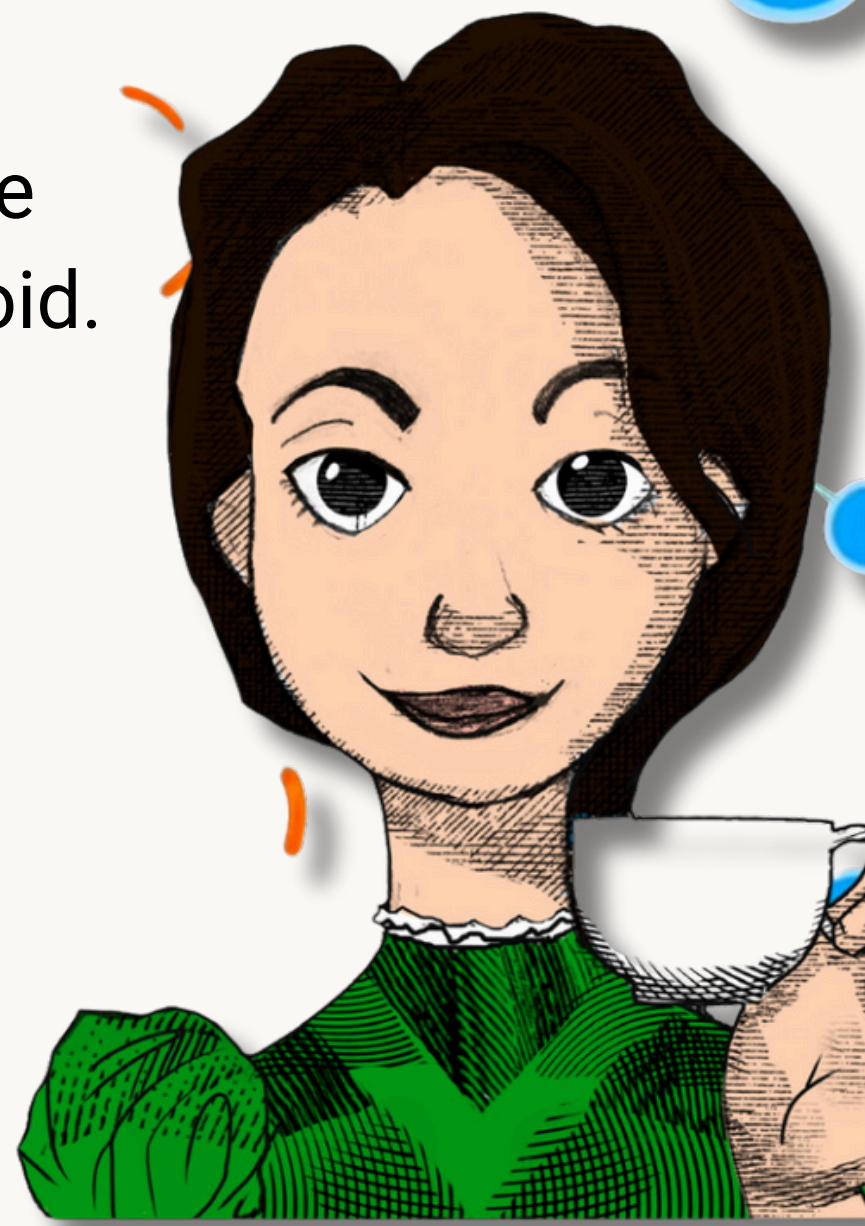
GALLERY TEAM STORY

In 1800s CE, Oxford was hit by wave after wave of typhoid outbreaks.

Everyone was at risk: in 1879, the mayor of Oxford died from typhoid.

One of the leading campaigners for public health reform was Dean Henry Liddell.

And it was Dean Liddell's daughter Alice who inspired the bestselling children's story *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.



Ask the Gallery team for more stories



Einstein's Blackboard



Take a glimpse into the mind of a genius. Discover the story behind the blackboard.

GALLERY TEAM STORY

Einstein wasn't a big fan of people like us keeping the blackboards he created for his lectures.

The idea of rescuing this one came from some Oxford dons who attended one of Einstein's lectures here in May 1931.

Our curators actually received two blackboards.

Sadly, one of them was accidentally wiped by a cleaner! But we still have it in our archive.



Albert Einstein, c. 1929, Topical Press Agency/Getty Images

[Ask the Gallery team for more stories](#)

Oxford University designed this beautiful building as a dedicated space to explore 'Natural Philosophy', what we now call science.



1683

On 24 May, the Duke of York (later King James VII and II) opens this building to the public. Robert Plot becomes Keeper of the Museum and Oxford's first Professor of Chemistry.

1700s

The Museum thrives as a public space.

The **basement** includes a state-of-the-art chemistry laboratory and space for public autopsies.

The **middle-floor** lecture hall is a hive of learning and practical science demonstrations.

The **top gallery**, home to Elias Ashmole's recently donated collections, gives practical support for research and learning.

1800s - early 1900s

The original collections outgrow this building and move to new homes in the Museum of Natural History, the Pitt Rivers Museum and the Ashmolean Museum.

From 1901-1939, *The Oxford English Dictionary* is based on the middle floor. J.R.R. Tolkien, author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, works here for two years.

1924 - present day

In 1924, Lewis Evans donates his collection of scientific instruments to the University of Oxford. In 1925, it goes on display in the top gallery.

As the collections gradually spread to every floor, our building becomes a museum once again.

Thanks for visiting

History of Science Museum

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Opening hours

12-5pm, Tuesday-Sunday

Closed on Monday



Free Museum WiFi



No public toilets in the Museum



Lift currently unavailable

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