



THE GOLDEN COMPASS TRAIL

Location
Oxfordshire
film tv photography

Oxford and The Golden Compass

Oxford is well known as the inspiration for Philip Pullman's 'Dark Materials' Trilogy and it is not surprising that when they came to film the *Golden Compass* the city became one of their busiest locations. The film, starring Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig, uses the architecture of the university and city to evoke Lyra's fascinating and yet slightly threatening childhood world. Jordan College, where Lyra lives, is based on Exeter College in Turl Street where the author studied as an undergraduate.

1+2 Exeter College. (Open: Mon – Sun 2.00 – 5.00. Information 01865 279600. No charge)

Lyra saves Lord Asriel's life early in the film and they take a walk in Exeter College's Fellows garden. The camera swings up to show the impressive Radcliffe Camera in the background. Make sure you go up to the raised garden at the back to get one of the great views in Oxford! As you go out of the college look up in Exeter's front quad to see the roof top architecture – meticulously copied and recreated in the studio to create another part of Lyra's mysterious world.

3. Radcliffe Square.

Early shots in the film of Radcliffe Square establish Lyra's magnificent playground. It is here that she and Roger run around to escape from the Gyptians to take refuge in Jordan College at the start of the film

4. Queens College.

The backdrop to the appearance of Lord Asriel early in the film with the unmistakable College cupola caught on those early shots as he walks down the college passageways.

(Queens College is not open to the public but the Guild of Guides, based at Oxford's Tourist Information, offer special tours. Information and booking 01865 252037. Charges apply)

5. Christ Church Meadow. (Open from 8.00am to dusk every day. No charge)

At the beginning of the film Lyra, Roger and the Gyptians throw mud and chase each other around the field before making off to Jordan College.

6. Christ Church. (Open: Mon-Sat 9.00-5.00. Sun 2.00 – 5.00 Info. Ox 276492. Charges apply)

In the film Christchurch becomes Cardinals and it is here in the main quad that Mrs Coulter, taking Lyra by the hand, climbs into the Zeppelin airship and flies off to London. There was no airship in the shot of course as that was all generated by computer in the studio.





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2. Exeter College



3. Radcliffe Square



4. Queen's College



1. Exeter College



6. Christ Church College



5. Christ Church Meadow

