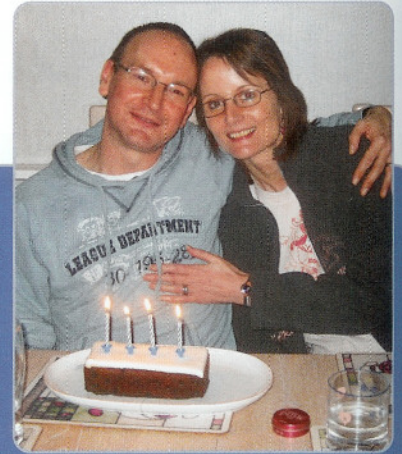


## Our Wonderful Week In Oxford

By Dave and Fiona Bradbury

Fiona and Dave, both 43, live in Walthamstow Village in North East London. Fiona was diagnosed with MS in 2000 and Dave in 2004. Both former civil servants, they are medically retired. They met via the online disabled dating agency [www.whispers4u.com](http://www.whispers4u.com), fell in love, got married three years ago, and lead 'an idyllic life'.



Fiona and David - so much to celebrate

**T**o celebrate our third wedding anniversary and also Fiona's birthday we decided to go to Oxford, that sweet city with her dreaming spires. Like many others, we visited and fell in love with this beautiful city.

We're both fans of the Inspector Morse and Lewis series which show wonderful scenes of Oxford and we wanted to see these for ourselves.

We'd booked The Holiday Inn online and can't recommend it highly enough. Fiona uses a wheelchair for longer distances and the hotel is fully accessible.

The staff were extremely helpful and respectful of specific needs without ever being patronising. The hotel also boasts an indoor heated swimming pool, a great restaurant, as well as bar food.

We had booked online with the Oxford tourist information centre for the Inspector Morse tour which only runs on a Saturday afternoon. We did the tour on our first day and it was wonderful going to various places featured in the episodes, in which some strange murder occurs.

A very knowledgeable tour guide walked us around many of



The Randolph Hotel, which often features in 'Lewis'

the sites, such as the Randolph Hotel, and told us some of the stories behind the characters and strange things which had

*Oxford's dreaming spires*



happened during filming.

Some of the colleges are not accessible with a wheelchair but we managed the few steps into Oriel College, which has been featured in a number of episodes.

## Vibrant City Centre

The High Street, in the centre of Oxford, is one of Oxford's greatest streets. A vibrant, slightly curved street that is host to a number of Oxford's finest restaurants, jewellers, fashion outlets, antique dealers, the famous Oxford University shop and St Mary's church.

Around this area there are many little alleys, still cobbled and untouched for hundreds of years. The buildings are much older than they look and some of the architecture is simply stunning. The High Street ends at the beautiful Magdalen Bridge, where students gather for the May Day ball each year.

The centre of Oxford is marked by the awesome Carfax tower which is a great starting point for an overview of the city before checking out the myriad of things to see and do.

Each day we went the short ride into town via a taxi (lots of black cabs), though there are many disabled parking spaces in Oxford city centre. We couldn't find many public toilets but it's easy to use shops like Debenhams or Marks and Spencer, or restaurants.

Shopping in Oxford is very varied with plenty of choice and an indoor market. The Covered Market is a wonderful, unique experience in the town centre; a thriving, bustling, quirky and colourful epicentre for some of Oxford's finest independent traders. Fashion boutiques with a difference that are colourful and individual, fresh food suppliers

ranging from quality fruit and vegetables through to conventional and organic meat outlets.

There's a huge variety of places to eat in Oxford. On the anniversary of meeting we had dinner in Browns restaurant and on Valentine's night in Cafe Rouge.

## Interesting Tours

On our last day we joined the Oxford Ghost Tour run by [www.oxfordwalkingtours.com](http://www.oxfordwalkingtours.com).

There are a number of other interesting tours around the city. One is through the heart of the historic city centre, illustrating the story of Oxford and its university, describing the architecture and traditions of its most famous buildings and institutions, one being the Pitt Rivers Museum with its strange and quirky treasures.

On a Family Tour you can discover the difference between a gargoyle and grotesque, and hear

interesting facts about Lewis Carroll, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Philip Pullman and their creations and on a Rivers and Rowing Regatta tour you can enjoy a walk around the beautiful Christ Church Meadow, walk beside the river Cherwell, or go for a gentle punt.

There's also a Pub Tour where you do the rounds of Oxford's fascinating pubs and inns, a Ghost Tour where you search out the city's ghoulish past, and a tour of the locations used in famous films and TV series.

On top of that there are wonderful gardens, magnificent university parks and Oxford's historic western quarter where there's the remains of a Norman castle and a Nineteenth Century prison – now the luxurious Malmaison Hotel.

Having spent a week in Oxford we can not recommend it enough. There is a broad range of activities and points of interest and amenities and

we found the locals very friendly and helpful.



The tour, led by Stuart, was lively, entertaining and informative and included lots of fun stories and good information. He has a good relationship with the college porters which opened the doors into many colleges which are not always open to the general public.

### Info Box

[www.visitoxford.org](http://www.visitoxford.org)  
[www.oxfordcity.co.uk](http://www.oxfordcity.co.uk)  
[www.oxfordwalkingtours.com](http://www.oxfordwalkingtours.com)  
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