



Welcome to The MERL

This picture guide will help you find your way around The MERL.

There are useful tips for activities you can do and a bit of information about the different objects you may see in the galleries. There is also information on the facilities available, including seating areas and toilets.

This is the Museum of English Rural Life (also known as The MERL). It is a free museum and open Tuesday to Sunday. It is usually closed on Mondays, except for special events.

You will arrive at the museum through one of two entrances into our small carpark. If you park in The MERL car park you don't need a permit. However, if you park on the Acacia Road carpark, one of our friendly members of staff will be able to provide you with a parking permit in the museum reception.



From the car park, a gateway leads into a courtyard towards our main entrance.



The courtyard has a push button at the entrance for wheelchair access.

In our reception you will be greeted by a friendly member of staff. As you enter, the shop will be on your right.

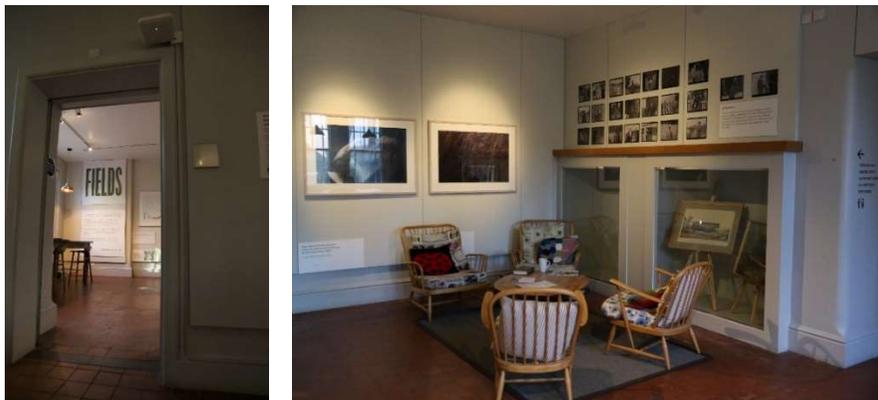


The staircase on your left, or the lift next to it, will take you to the **Community Case** and **The Nook**.



In front of the **Community Case** you can sit on the sofa to view the latest exhibition.

Onward, through the door on the left, **The Nook** offers comfy seating and a quiet space to relax in.



Or, if you'd prefer, take a seat at the cheese table for a view of the courtyard.



Turn left through this exit for the toilets. The toilets are just through here on the left.



Turn Right here for the Staircase Hall. You will go through two glass doors and one wooden door that will be open.



The Staircase Hall has changing displays of collections and art.



Back at reception you will find more of the shop and **Welcome Space**.



The door on the right will take you to the **Learning Studio**.



Sometimes this room is in use and closed. During weekends and school holidays, you can sometimes do activities and workshops, like our 'Farming Cycle' brass rubbing.

This is the **Welcome Space** where you will find more of the shop and a **Café**.

You can sit with a drink or snack, and we have a variety of options available for you to buy from our shop.



From the café you can go through a door to the garden or a door to the galleries.



We have more seating in the garden and there is also lots of space to walk around and play in.



You can also see panels for the Forty Farms exhibition in the garden.



We have a **Shepherd's Hut** where you can sit and relax or read a book



We also have chickens!



And a tractor to play on, though we do ask you 'drive' carefully.

From the bottom of the garden, you can see its size and the different options, whether it is a space to play in or to sit and read a book and relax.



To enter the galleries, retrace your steps back into the café and go through the glass sliding door.

There is an activity trolley at the entrance to the galleries. When available, there's a Welcome

Volunteer here who can tell you more about what you can see and do in the galleries. You can help yourself to trail sheets and leaflets as well as our Sensory Backpacks.

QR codes are available to scan here and throughout the galleries.



Shaping the Land Gallery

This gallery is normally quite dark and small with a bright animation projected onto the wall.



A Year On The Farm Gallery



You will see mannequins and a model of a slaughtered animal in this gallery.



You will also find a sheep with a woolly jumper and our touch screen interactive game and jigsaw puzzles which you are more than welcome to play with.

Town and Country Gallery

At the entrance you will see our wicker model of a horse and further down a larger steam engine!



In the 'Dairy to Doorstep' section you will find more QR codes available. There are more interactive touchscreens in this gallery too.



At the end of this gallery, you will see a glass panel displaying a large print of a map (through the glass you will also be able to see the **Model Farming** gallery).



Making Rural England Gallery

This gallery includes some objects relating to hunting.



You will also see some domestic items.



You will also be able to look into a vardo (wagon/caravan).



Model Farming Gallery

This gallery is our Model Farming gallery showcasing our amazing toy collections. This exhibit also includes a farm table that visitors of any age can use.



Forces for Change Gallery

You can see some more modern machinery.



In this gallery you can choose a film to watch while sitting on the bench.



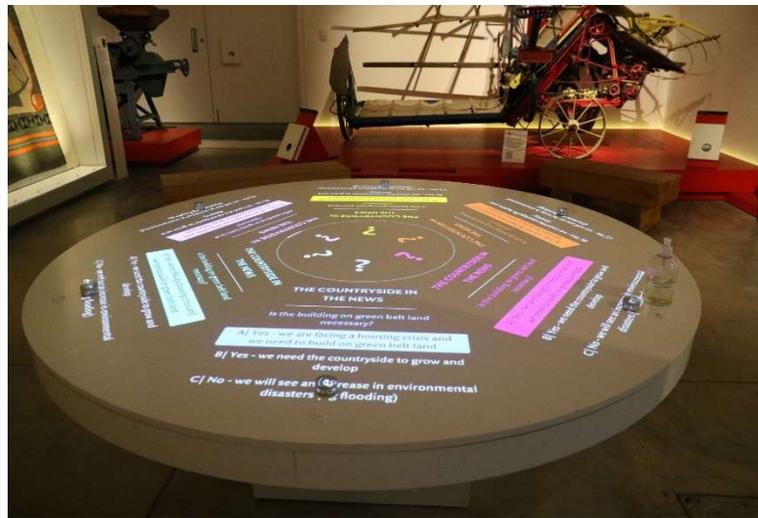
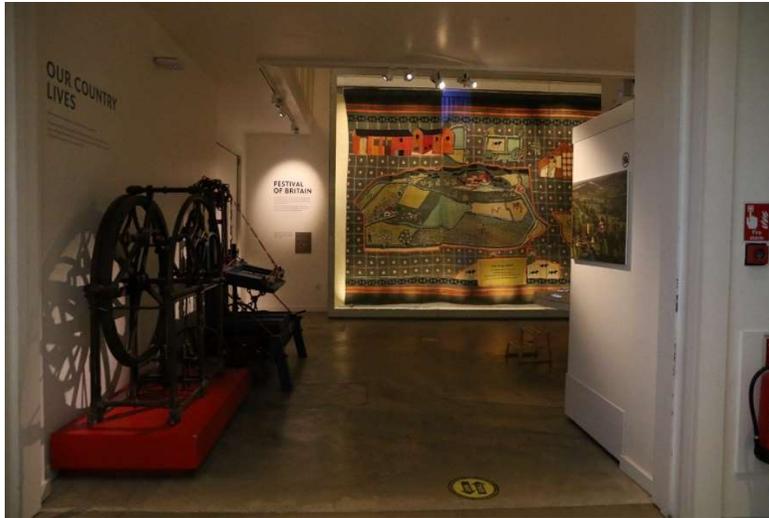
There is another set of toilets at this end of the gallery and a fire exit for emergencies only.



Here you will also find the lift upstairs to the **Digging Deeper** and **Ladybird Gallery** for those who require it. It has notices on the door. If you need further help, please ask at reception.

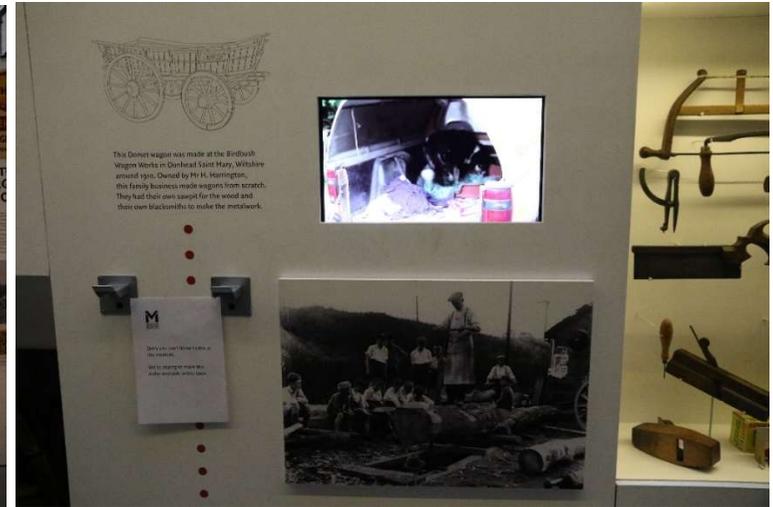
Our Country Lives Gallery

This gallery has dimmed lighting. In the centre is a bright, large interactive table where you can play games. You will also see our wicker model of King Alfred.



Around the corner is the **Wagon Walk**.

This is very long and narrow and one way. You may hear other people walking along the walkway above you as you look at the wagons through history.



You can watch a film and see some other items in cases along the wall.

When you reach these wheels, you are nearly at the end of the **Wagon Walk**, which takes you back to the shop, café and Welcome Space.



At this end, you will find a quad bike, which you are welcome to sit on. Take care!



From the **Welcome Area** you can follow the stairs up to the **Digging Deeper** and **Ladybird Gallery** on the upper floor. The upper floor is called the **Mezzanine Level**.

Alternatively, you can use the lift seen in the galleries (on page 20) to access these galleries.



It is very long and narrow and with the gridded path you can see the floor below.

If you look to your left, you will see a variety of objects from lamps, to mouse traps, to clothes.



If you look to your right, you will see ploughs... and more ploughs.



You can continue past the staircase on your left, which is the exit- don't worry you can come back to it, you will be able to view the galleries below on either side, here for example, milk churns to the left and wagons to the right.



Keep walking in this direction (straight on past the lift on your left) and you will find the **Ladybird Gallery**.

The **Ladybird Gallery** overlooks the gallery below, with a 'book corner' immediately to the right of the door.



To exit, head back through the doorway, and you will see this view of the **Mezzanine**.



Follow the path along with the ploughs on your left and objects on your right until you return to the first set of stairs on your right (the ones you passed by previously).

Here is what they look like from the top of them.



These Stairs will take you back down to the ground floor of the museum.

You will be facing the **Model Farming** section of the galleries (page 18. From here you can exit through the galleries.

To access the **Mezzanine Level** with lift access, you will need to make your way through the galleries to the lift by following the route on pages 12 to 20 to reach the lift at the end of **Forces for Change** gallery.



Once in the lift there are instructions showing you how to operate it. You will arrive by the **Ladybird Gallery**.

From here this will be your view.



You can choose to either explore the **Ladybird Gallery**, please see page 27.

Or you can see the collections along the **Mezzanine** by first seeing the wagons on the left and milk churns on the right.



You will next see lots of ploughs on the left.



On your right you will see a variety of objects from lamps, to mouse traps, to clothes.



Once you have viewed all you wish to, you will travel the opposite way back along the **Mezzanine**, to the lift.

From here you will be able to return to the **Forces For Change** gallery and follow the route to the exit.

As you exit the museum, feel free to explore the **Welcome** space and shop more or visit the café or garden.

You will exit through the courtyard.



We hope you enjoyed your visit with us. We look forward to welcoming you back!