



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, a bit of information of 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.

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.



The 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.

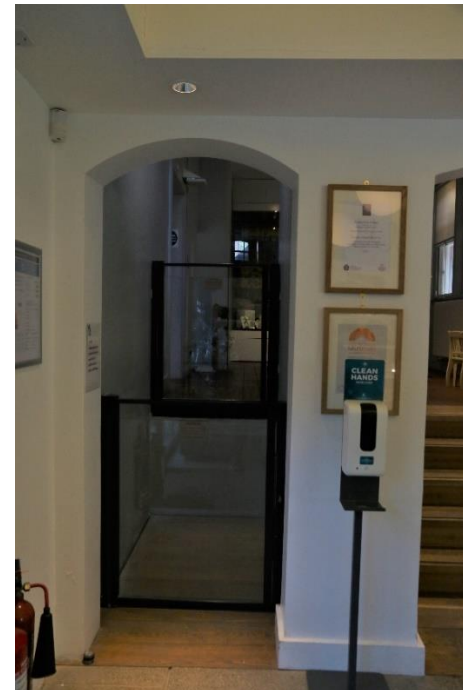


As you enter, the shop will be on your right.



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

There is hand sanitiser provided between the lift and stairs.



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.

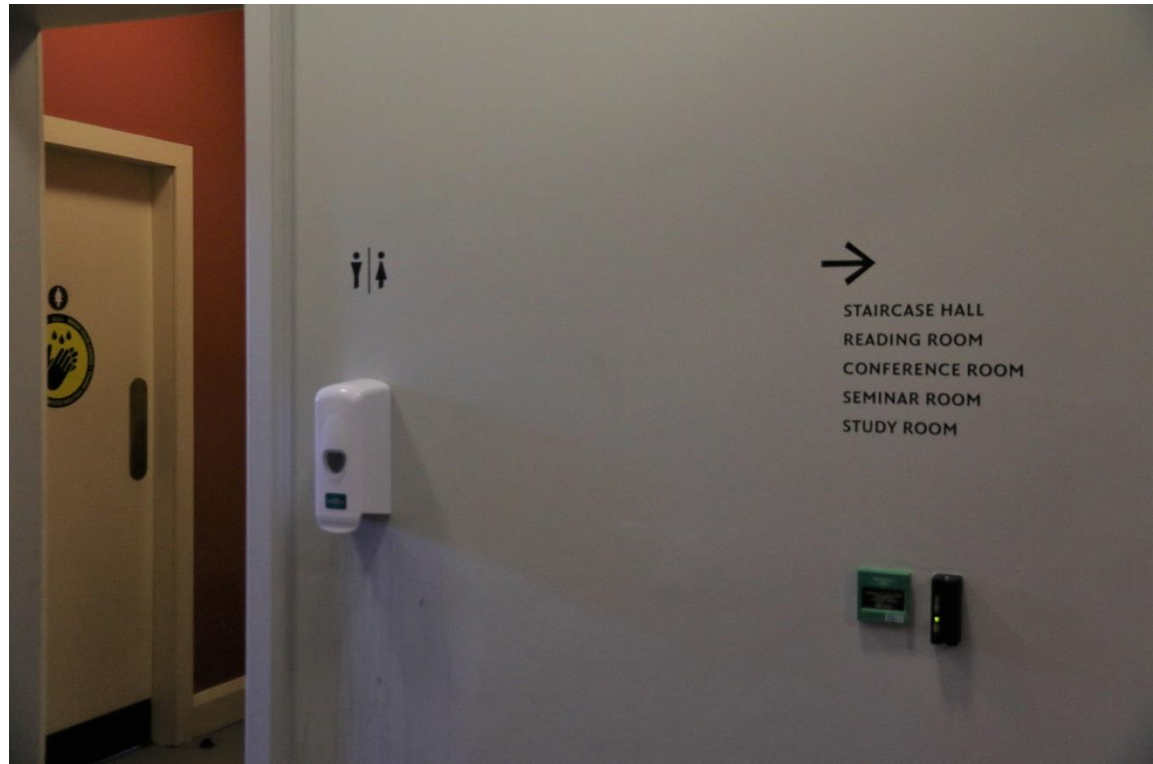


Or, if you'd prefer, take a seat at the cheese table for a view of the courtyard.



Turn left through this exit for the toilets.

The toilets are just through here on the left.



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**.

There is a notice on the door asking that the doors be kept open when the room is in use.



In here you can do a brass rubbing, use the large space and see our sensory cow unless the room is in use.



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



This is the **Café** with a view of our large garden.

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



We have more seating in the garden.



In the garden, there is also lots of space to walk around and play in.



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



We also have chickens!



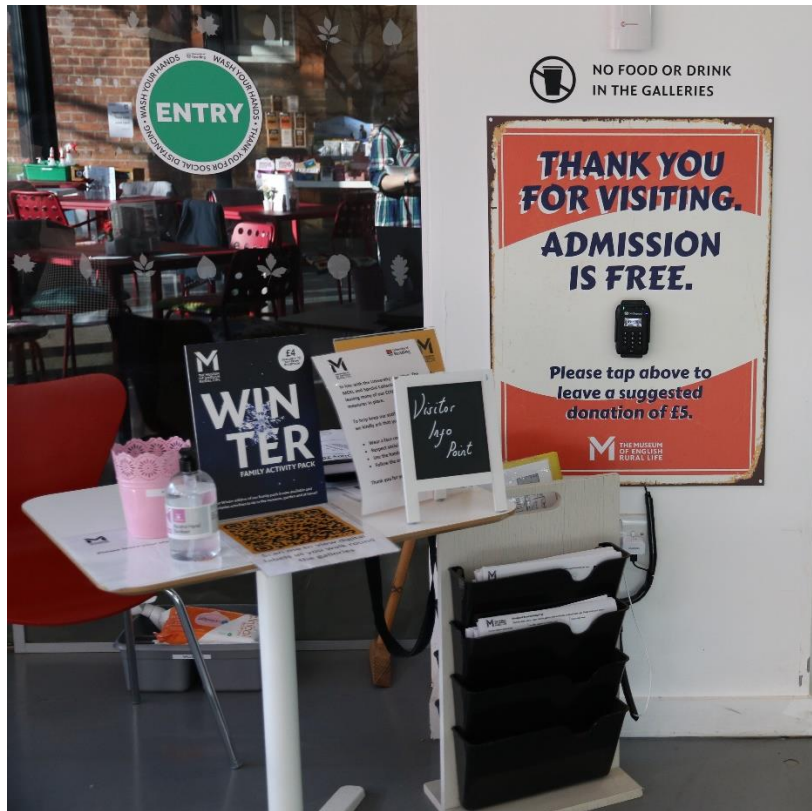
And a tractor to play on, though we do ask you 'drive' carefully.



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.



Retrace your steps and back in the building, we now have an information point between the entrance to the galleries (to the left) and the stairs upstairs (to the right). New orange QR codes are available to scan here and throughout the galleries.

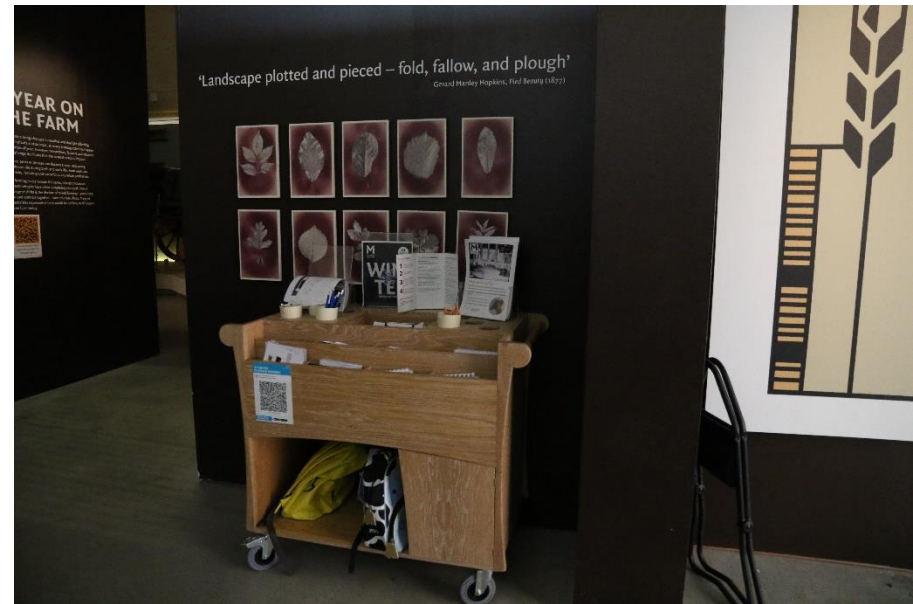


This is our entrance to the museum galleries.



Shaping the Land Gallery

This gallery is normally quite dark and small with a bright animation projected onto the wall. It also has a trolley with guides, activities and trails.



A Year On The Farm Gallery



You will see mannequins in this gallery.

There will also be a model of a slaughtered animal.



You will find a sheep with a woolly jumper. You can pet it to hear it baa! You will also see our touch screen interactive games and jigsaw puzzles which you are more than welcome to play with.



You will see these new scannable orange QR codes around the galleries that will tell you more information about the objects you are looking at.



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 another QR code 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 **Collecting England** gallery).



Making Rural England Gallery

This gallery includes some objects relating to hunting.

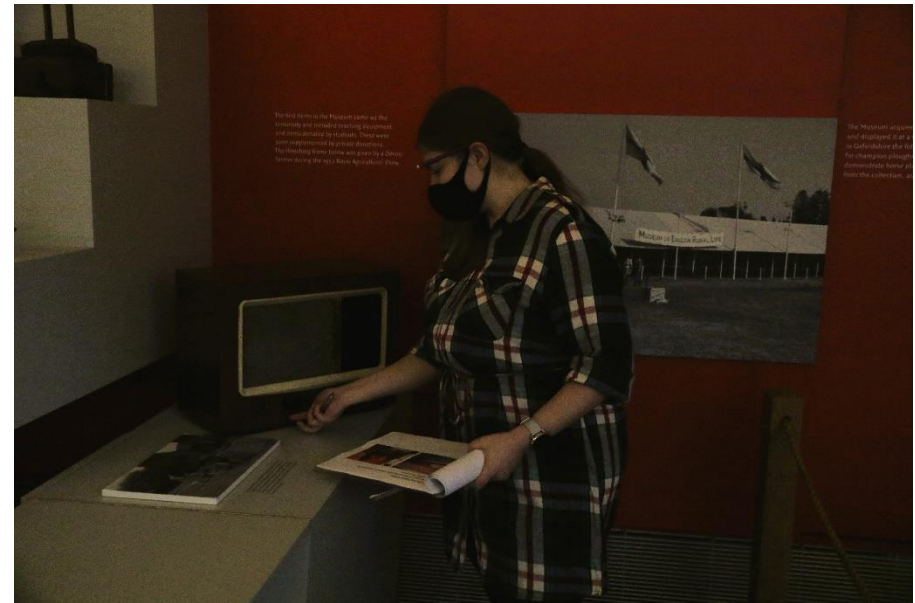


You will also see some domestic items.



Collecting England Gallery

In here you can listen to the radio with audio clips from the soap opera, The Archers.

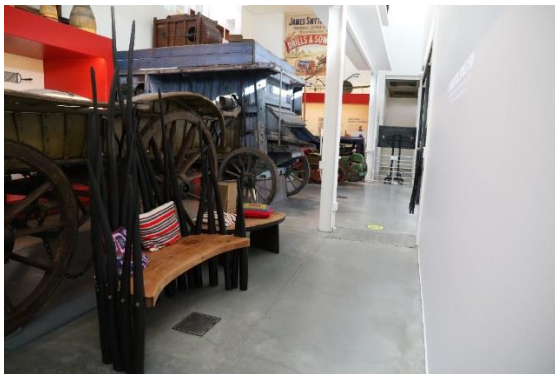


Forces for Change Gallery

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.

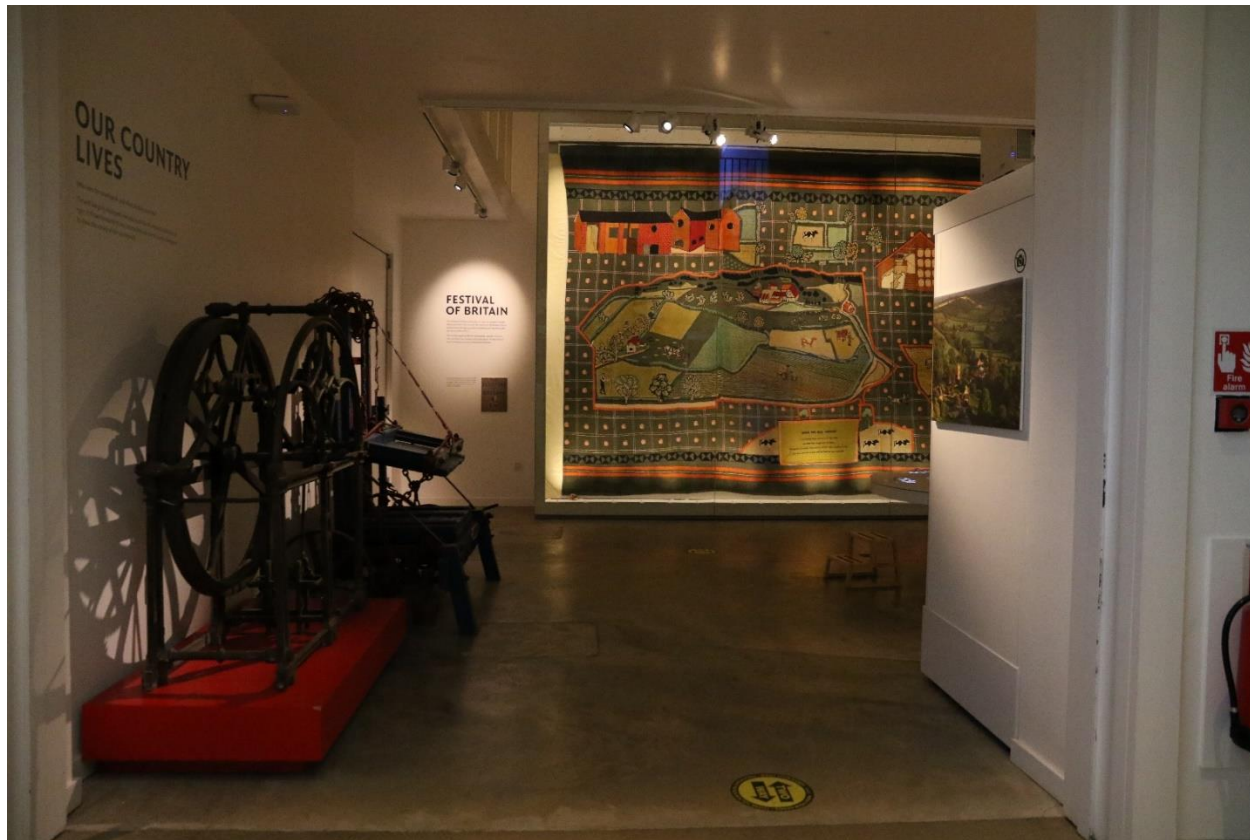


Here you will also find the lift upstairs to the **Digging Deeper** and **Ladybird Gallery** for those who require it. It has notices on the door. If you need further help, please ask at reception.

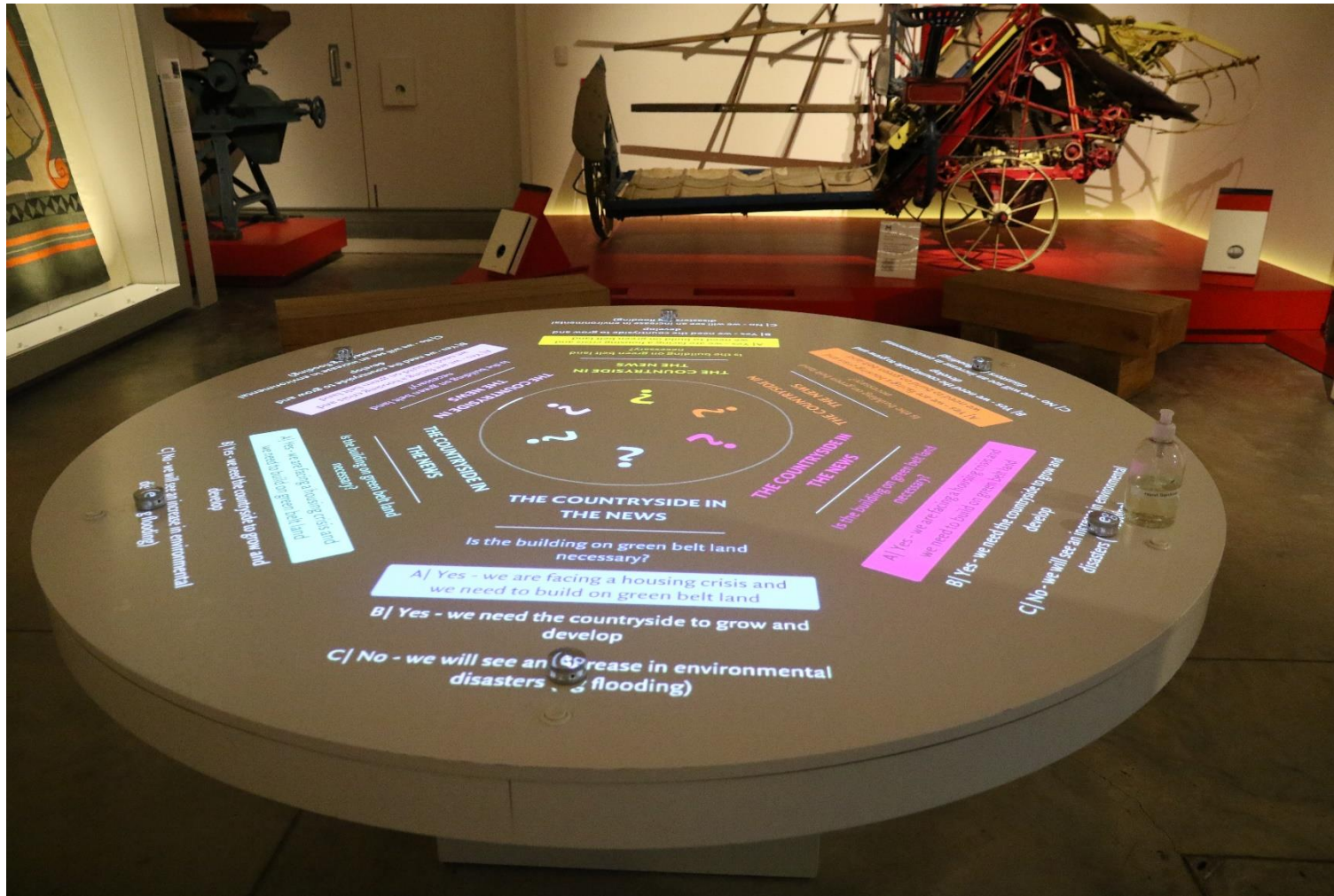


Our Country Lives Gallery

This gallery has dimmed lighting.



In the centre is a bright, large interactive table where you can play games.



You will also see our toy cabinet and our wicker model of King Alfred.

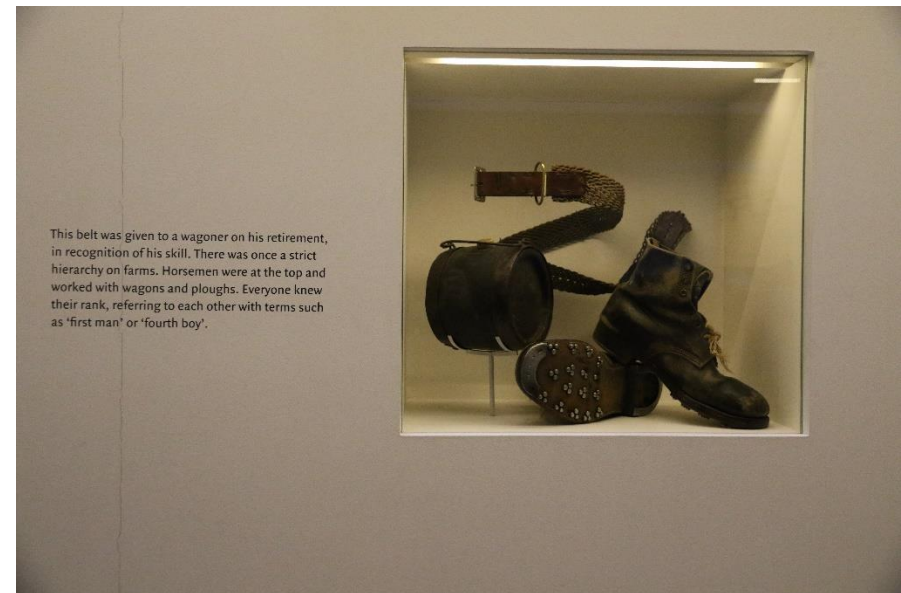
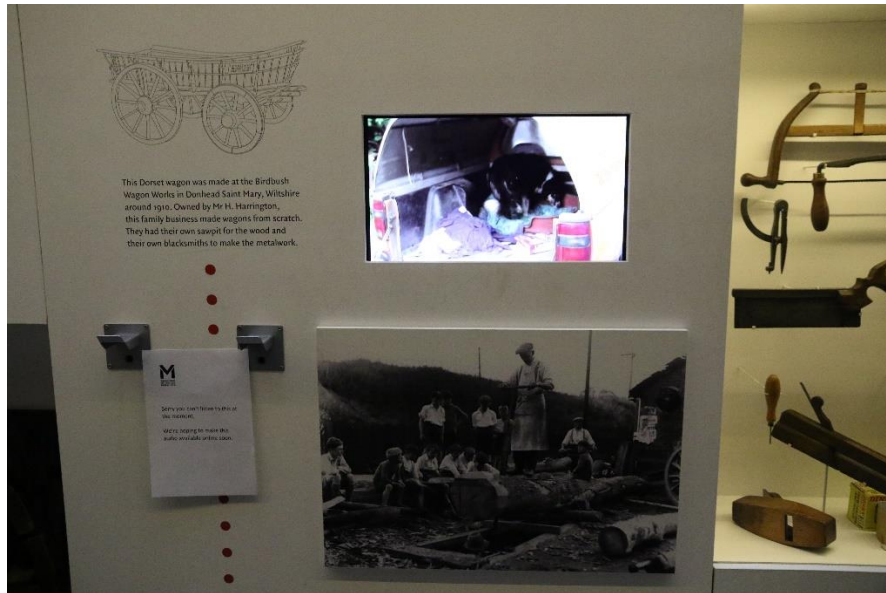


Around the corner is the **Wagon Walk**.

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 like these boots.



When you reach these wheels, you are nearly at the end of the **Wagon Walk**.



The end of the **Wagon Walk** will then take you back into the shop and **Welcome Space**.



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 38) to access these galleries.



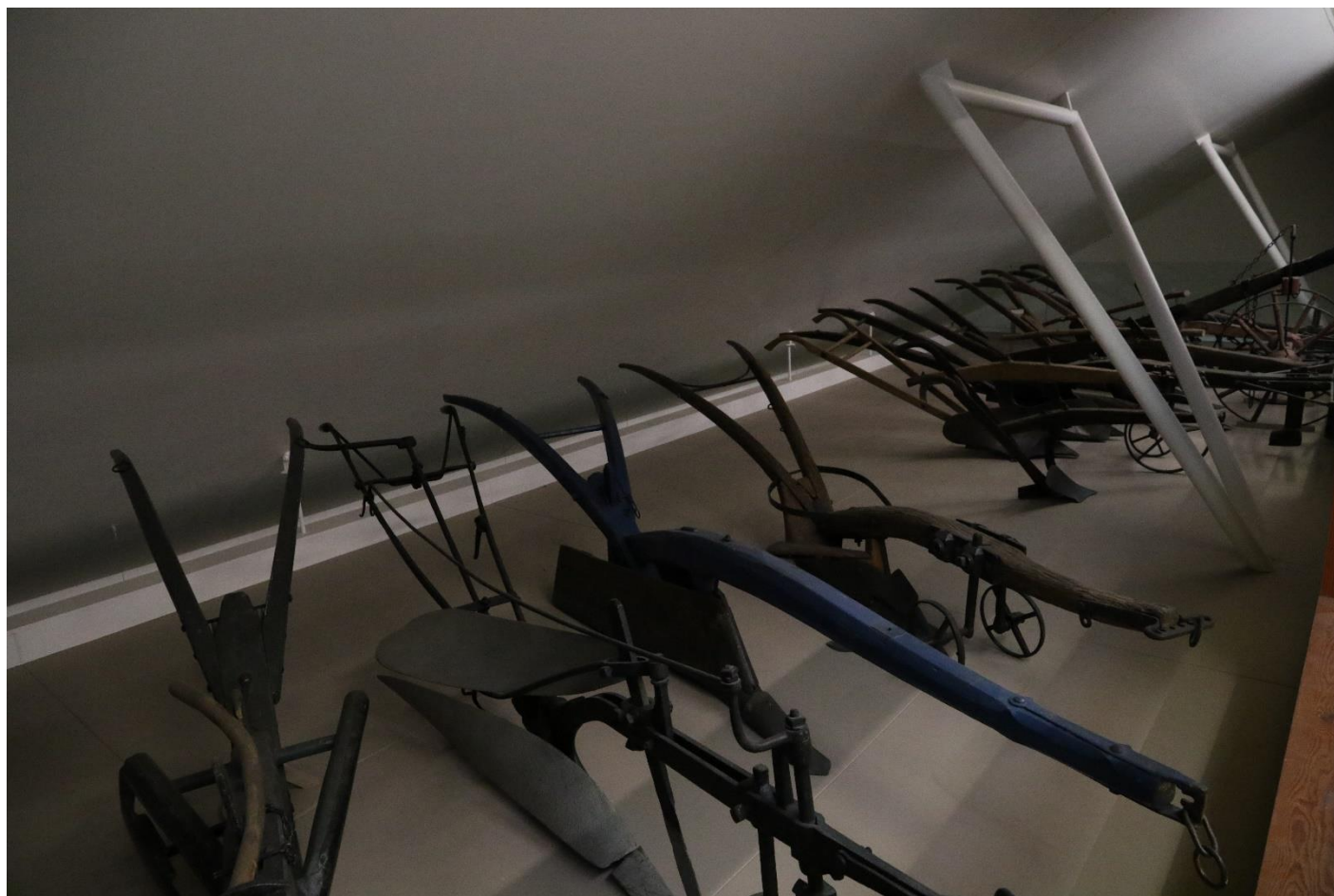
It is very long and narrow and with the gridded path you can see the floor below.



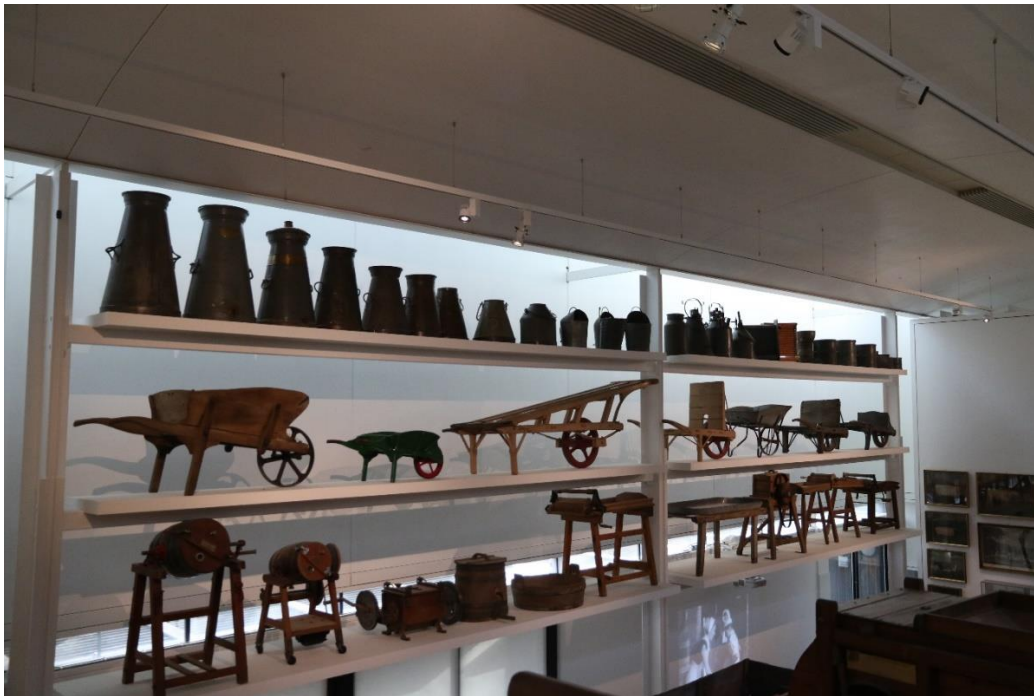
If you look to your left you will see a variety of objects from lamps, to mouse traps, to clothes.



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.

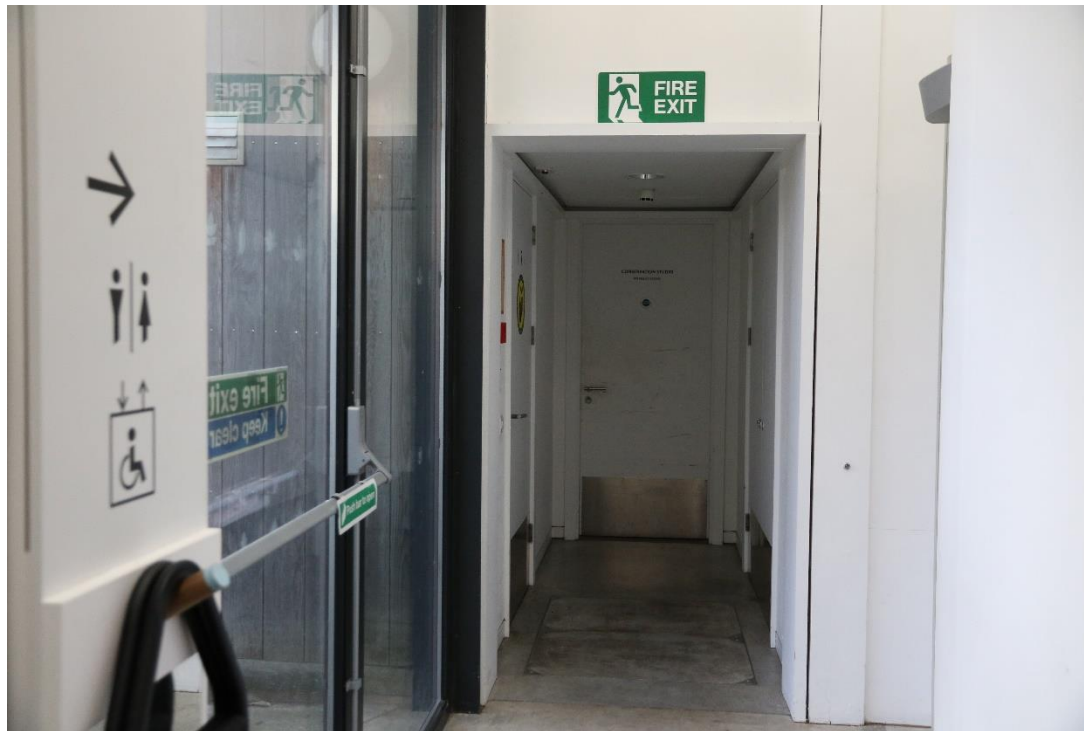
These Stairs will take you back down to the ground floor of the museum.

You will be facing the **Collecting England** section of the galleries, with the Museum of English Rural Life banner in front of you and with the 'Modern Machinery' and this silver tractor on your right.



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 2 to 36 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.**

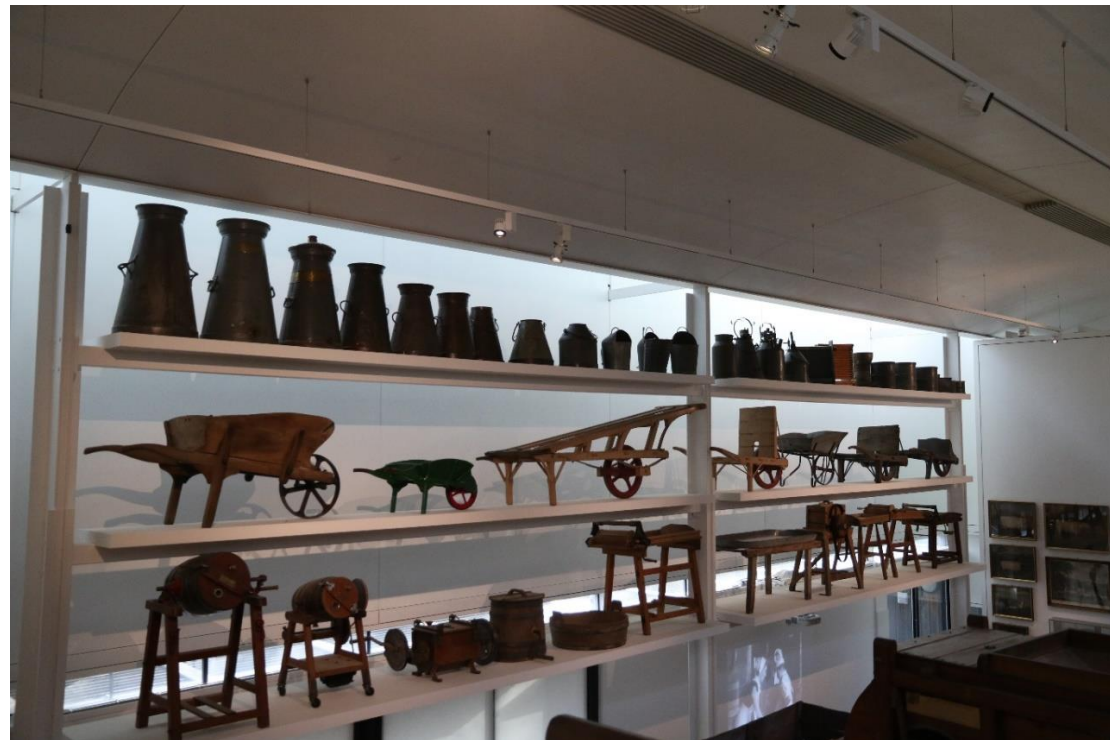


From here this will be your view.



You can choose to either explore the **Ladybird Gallery**, please see pages 48 - 49.

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. You will exit through the courtyard.





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