



Welcome to The MERL

This picture guide will help you find your way around The MERL at the Magical Lights event.

There are pictures of what you can expect to see and information on the facilities available, including seating areas and toilets.

Please note: some photos are taken in daylight but some of the areas shown will be a lot darker or lit differently during this special event.

This is the Museum of English Rural Life (also known as The MERL). You will arrive at the museum through one of two entrances into our small carpark.

For this event, you can park in the MERL car park if there is space, or Acacia Road car park without needing a parking permit (permits are usually required).



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.

You will be welcomed by staff members at the entrance. They will check you in and give you some further information about the event.



In our reception you will be greeted by friendly members of staff.



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



The staircase on your left will take you to the Community Case and The Nook. The reception lift is currently boarded up as it is not in use while being refurbished.



In these spaces, there is some comfy seating and the space can often be quieter.

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**.



In here you can do some Magical Lights making activities (see map and programme)

Back out in the Welcome Space, we have 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.



The garden looks like this in the daylight.



At this event, it will look more like this and there will be some activities to do (see map and programme).



We have a Shepherd's Hut where you can see the moons and stars magic display (photo from previous event)



We also have chickens in the garden!



Retrace your steps and back in the building to visit the galleries where you can have a go at our torchlight trail.

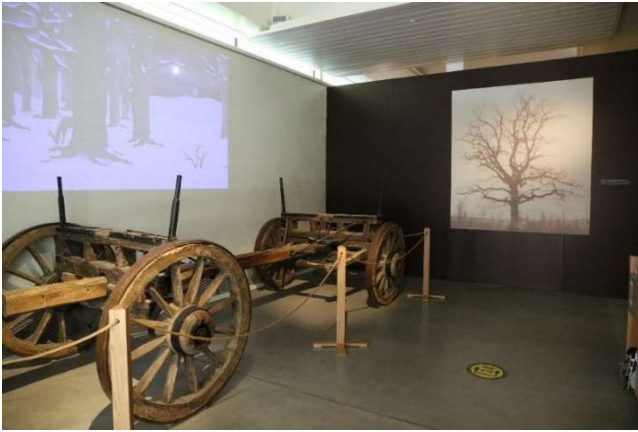


Remember, these photos show how the galleries are lit usually. They will be much darker.

There will be some breakout space tents in the galleries.

Shaping the Land Gallery

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



A Year on the Farm Gallery



You will see mannequins in this gallery. There will also be a model of a slaughtered animal.



Town and Country Gallery

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



Our Object handling trolley will be displaying a taxidermy barn owl.

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 and 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.

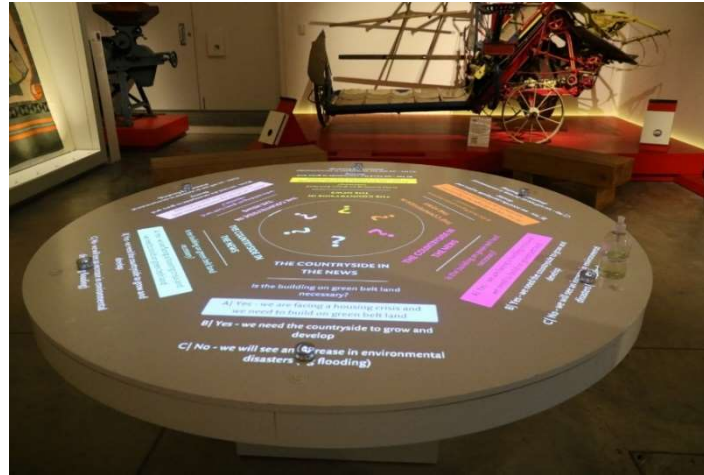
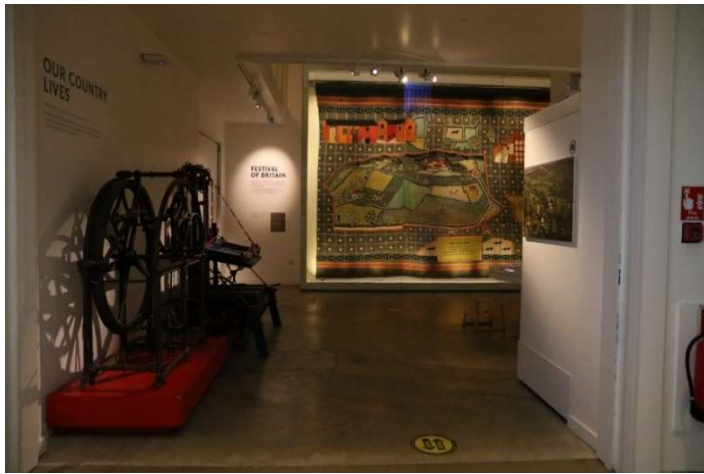


There is another set of toilets at this end of the gallery and a fire exit for emergencies only.



The upstairs level will be closed for this event.

Our Country Lives Gallery



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

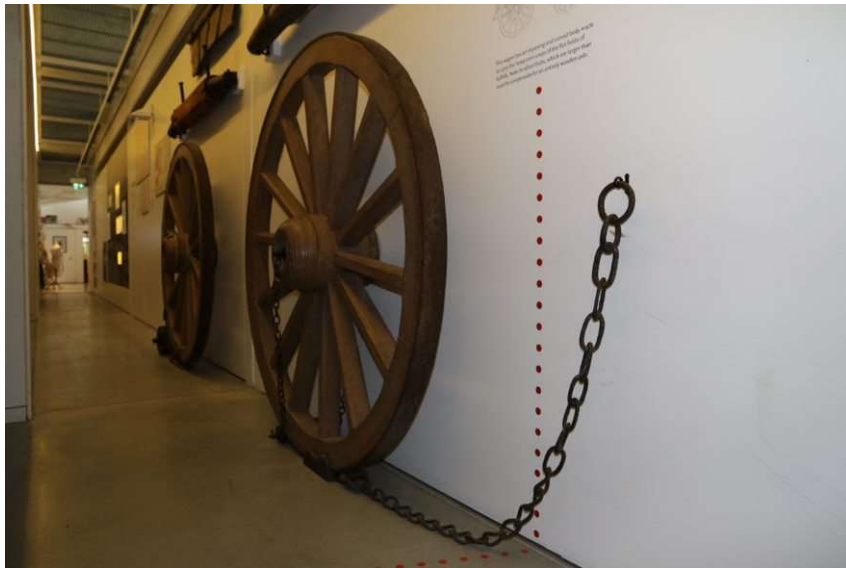
You may also see our wicker model of King Alfred.



Around the corner is the **Wagon Walk**. This is very long and narrow.



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

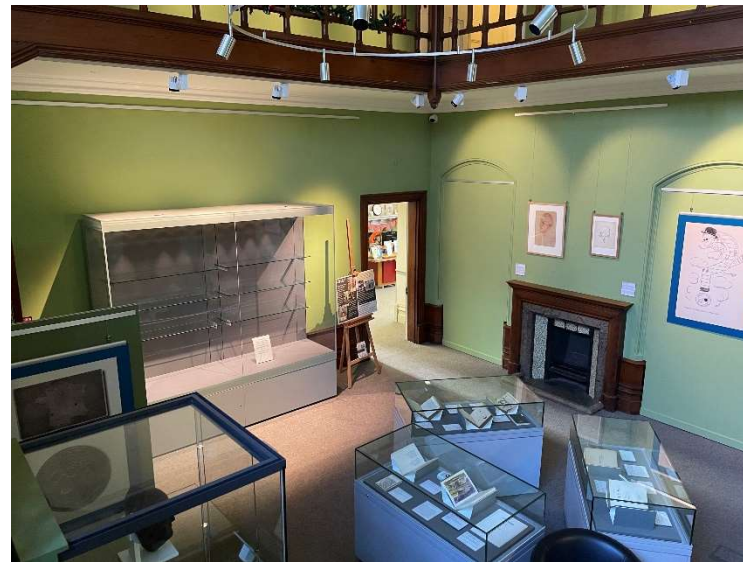


The end of the **Wagon Walk** will then take you back into the shop and **Welcome Space**.

Leaving the event

If you would like to exit the museum from an area that will not be too busy, please join us in the garden at 5.30pm for a lantern parade. we will lead you to our Staircase Hall area for a Goodbye song.

You can then exit the building safely from this area by 5.45pm, so that families attending our second session can enter the museum via the main entrance.



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