GUNNERSBURY

PARK & MUSEUM

Family Trail

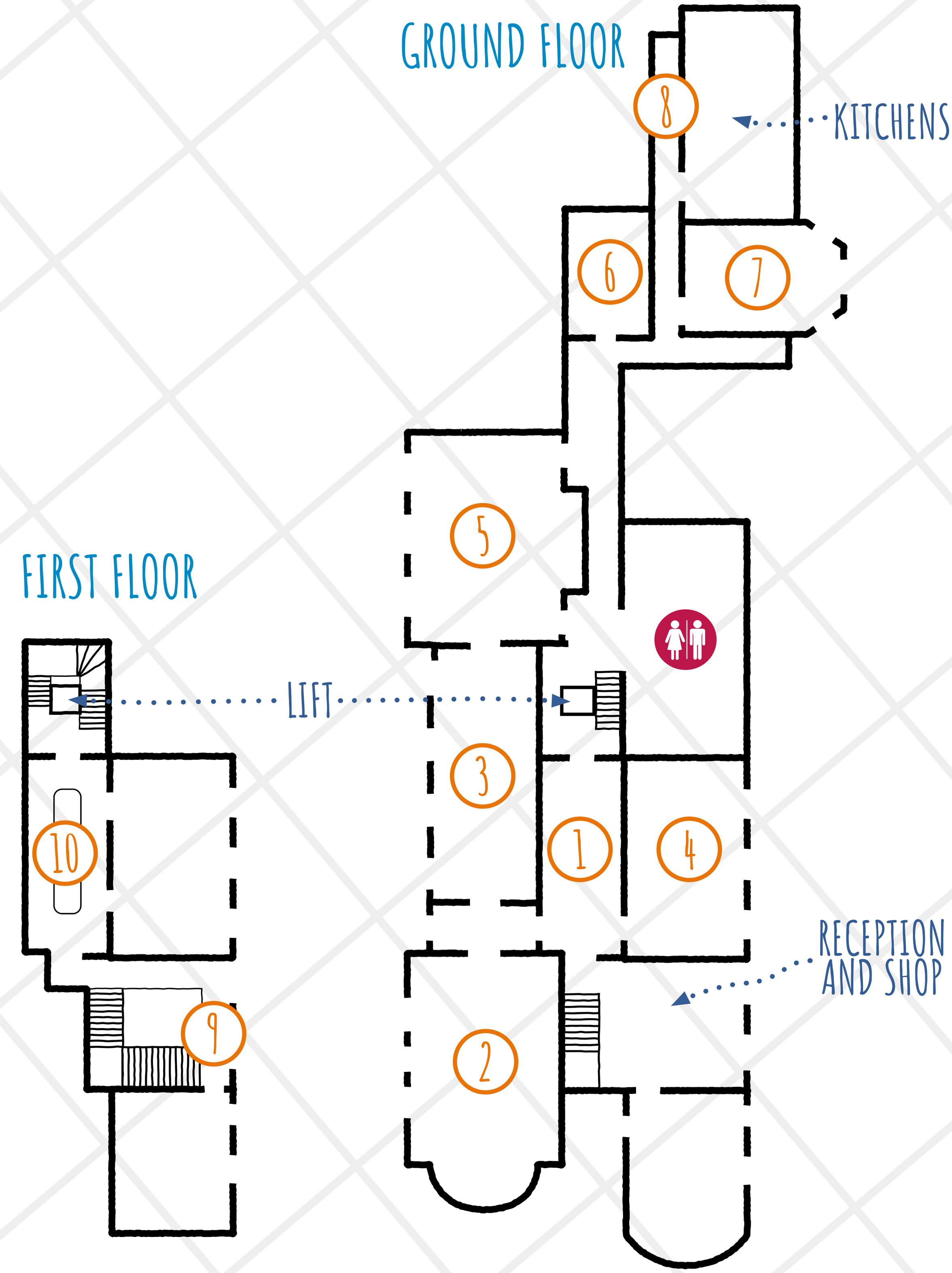
GUNNERSBURY PARK HOUSE

HI, WELCOME!

Thanks for downloading this Family Trail, designed to show you around some of the amazing rooms and stories in Gunnersbury Park House.

This step-free trail works best on a mobile phone screen, and all you need is a sense of adventure!

Your trail starts just next door to the Museum's reception, in the Skylight Corridor.



Meet the Family

For a lot of its history, this building was the countryside home of the **Rothschild family**.

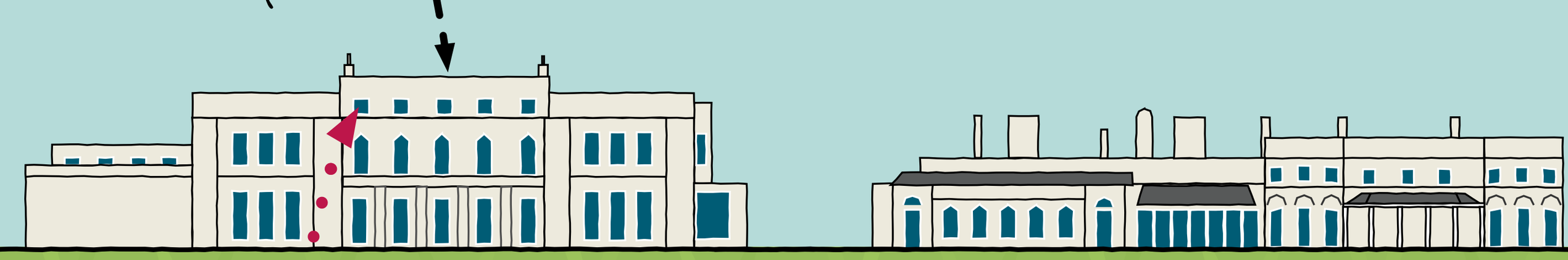
LONDON HAS GROWN A LOT OVER THE YEARS!

Their main house was about 8 miles away in central London, but here at Gunnersbury the family enjoyed their garden and entertained all kinds of important guests.

The Rothschilds lived here for 90 years. **Nathan** bought the house, his wife **Hannah** used it as her second home for many years, then their son **Lionel** took it over.

Later still, the house was passed down to **Leopold** who wanted *even more* space and bought the Small Mansion next door too.

LARGE MANSION (WHERE YOU ARE NOW)



SMALL MANSION (WHICH IS STILL PRETTY MASSIVE)

LOOK FOR THE SMALLER WINDOWS

It wasn't just the Rothschilds who lived in this house though...

Almost 20 **servants** worked here too, with many of them sleeping in rooms on the top floor of the house.

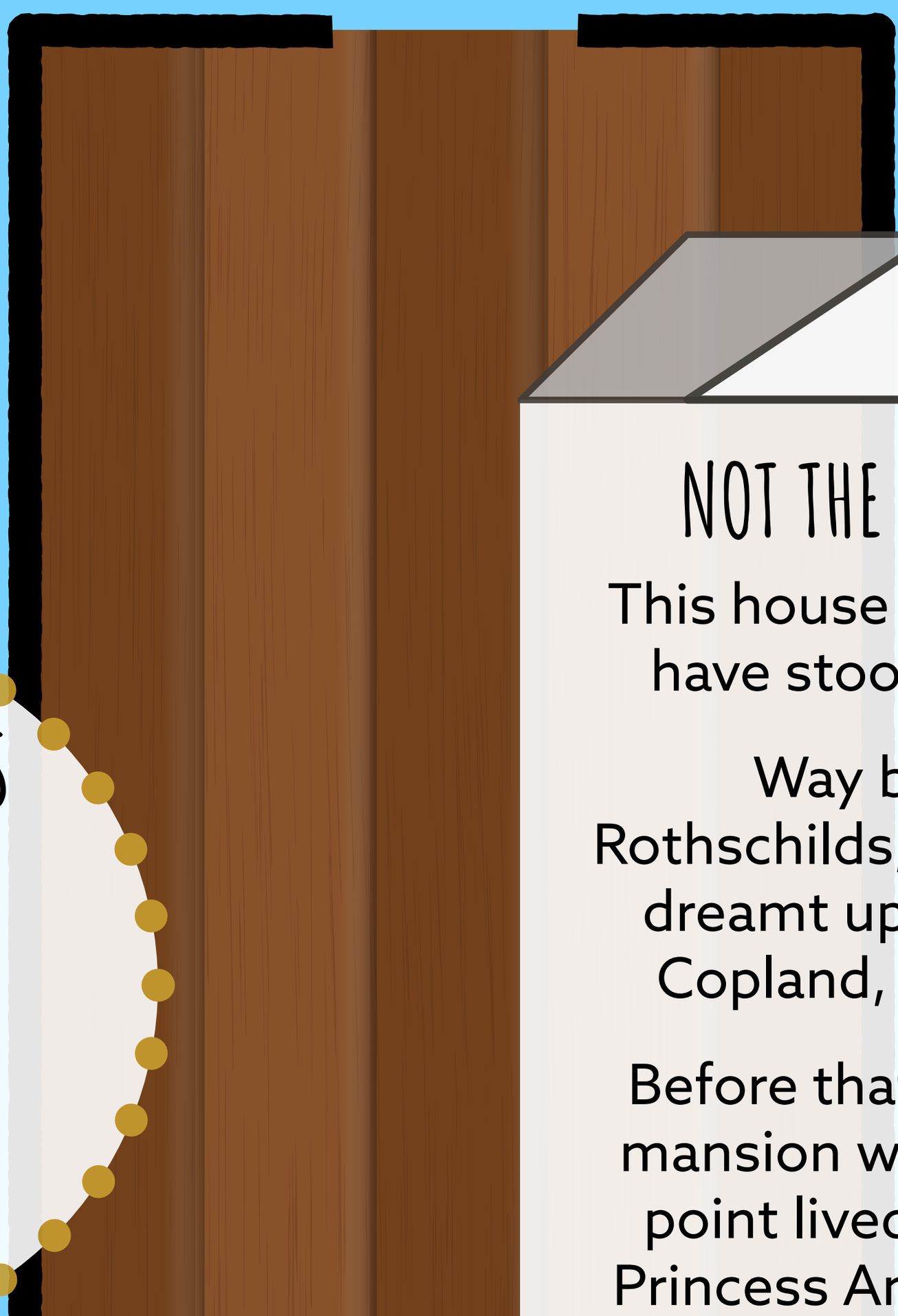
NOW WE KNOW WHO'S WHO, SHALL WE START EXPLORING?

1

Skylight Corridor

Welcome to a very bright corridor, thanks to a clever window in the ceiling. Daylight shines all the way from the roof down the ground floor, and there's loads of space for guests to move between the grandest rooms in the house.

ON A NICE DAY, ANYWAY



NOT THE FIRST HOUSE

This house isn't the first to have stood on this site.

Way before the Rothschilds, this house was dreamt up by Alexander Copland, a rich builder.

Before that, a much older mansion was here, at one point lived in by royalty: Princess Amelia, daughter of King George II.

Can you spot the drawings of it on the wall?

REMEMBER THIS FOR LATER!

THIS WAY IN TO THE SKYLIGHT CORRIDOR

WHEN YOU'RE READY

Take the first door on the left from where you came in

or follow the ramp to the Dining Room for a step-free route

2

Drawing Room

(Short for 'withdrawing room')

CONCORDIA, INTEGRITAS, INDUSTRIA

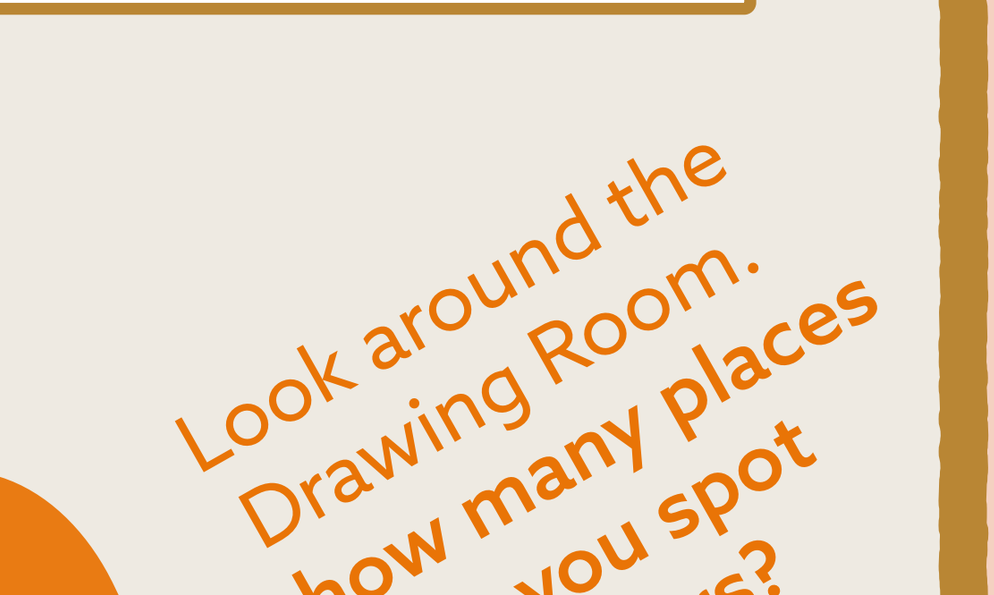
That's
Harmony, Integrity
and Diligence
to you and me.

The Rothschild family picked these words as their motto - a quick phrase that described their goals - and proudly displayed it in this room. Can you see it?

Decide together what three words would make your family motto. Where would you display it?

The Rothschild family LOVED gardening. In fact, the gardens and house at Gunnersbury were thought of as one. That's why there are almost as many flowers inside as out!

Look around the Drawing Room. In how many places can you spot flowers?



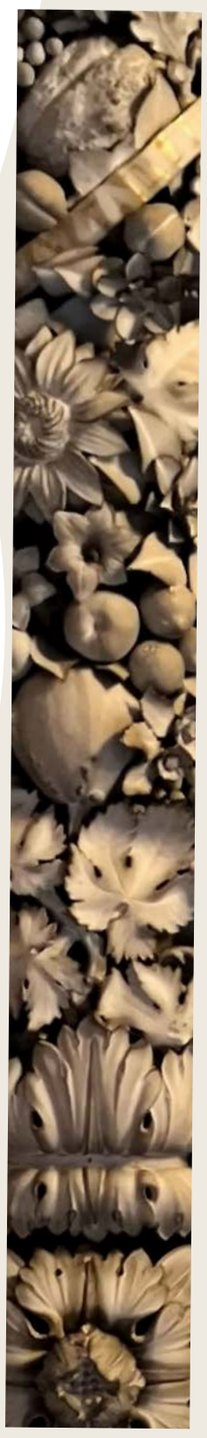
2

Drawing Room

P.S. WANT TO KNOW A SECRET??

The beautiful flowers, leaves, nuts and fruits in the ceiling are made out of...
paper mache!

(so you could have a go at making your own at home if you fancied)



DIRECTIONS

1

Turn around and go back through the door you entered the Drawing Room

(HAVE A LOOK OUT OF THE GLASS DOOR INTO THE GARDEN IF YOU LIKE)

2

Go straight forwards and through the doors into the Long Gallery

3

Long Gallery

(AKA THE 'GREEN ROOM' BECAUSE IT'S... GREEN)

The Rothschild family spent loads of their time in the Long Gallery, a bit like a living room today.

The big French windows provided a great view out to the garden, yet they still wanted to see more! A huge mirror reflects the outside back into the room, and the ceiling pretends to be the sky...

STAND WHERE THE X IS ON THE MAP AND LOOK UP

The Rothschild family loved nature and their garden so much they even decorated their ceiling!

The characters painted on the ceiling represent different seasons: which do you think is spring, summer, autumn and winter?

A LIFE OF LUXURY (FOR SOME...)

A whole team of staff helped to keep the place sparkling clean and be on hand at every hour of the day.

Pick up the phone and listen to **'Working for the Rothschilds'** to hear from someone who started work here aged 14.

X

THIS WAY IN TO THE LONG GALLERY

"Knock Knock"

What's that, an important visitor
is here to see us?

We'd better meet them in the Library.

DIRECTIONS

1

Turn around and
go back through
the door you
entered the
Long Gallery

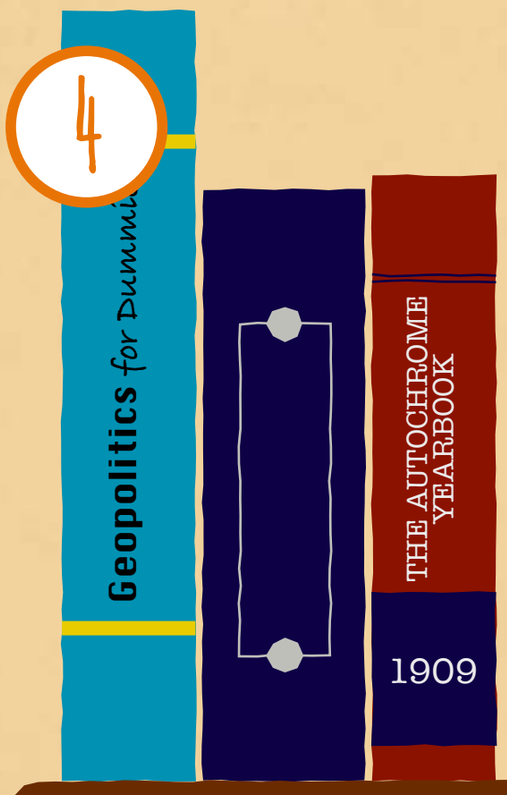
2

Turn Left
towards
the Skylight
Corridor

Go straight across
and through the
door opposite

3

Step free route: head into the Dining Room, take the first door on the right, then follow the ramp back into the Skylight Corridor



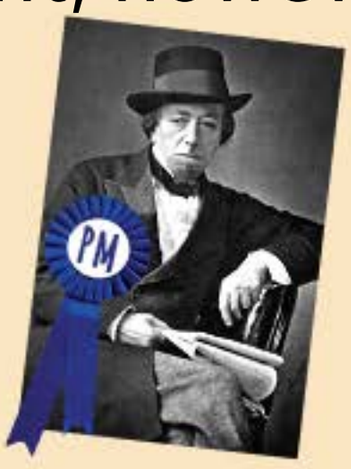
Library

Lionel de Rothschild went into his family's banking business (their offices are still in London today, near Bank Station) and controlled a *huge* amount of money.

AN IMPORTANT GUEST

Who knocked at the door?
The Prime Minister!

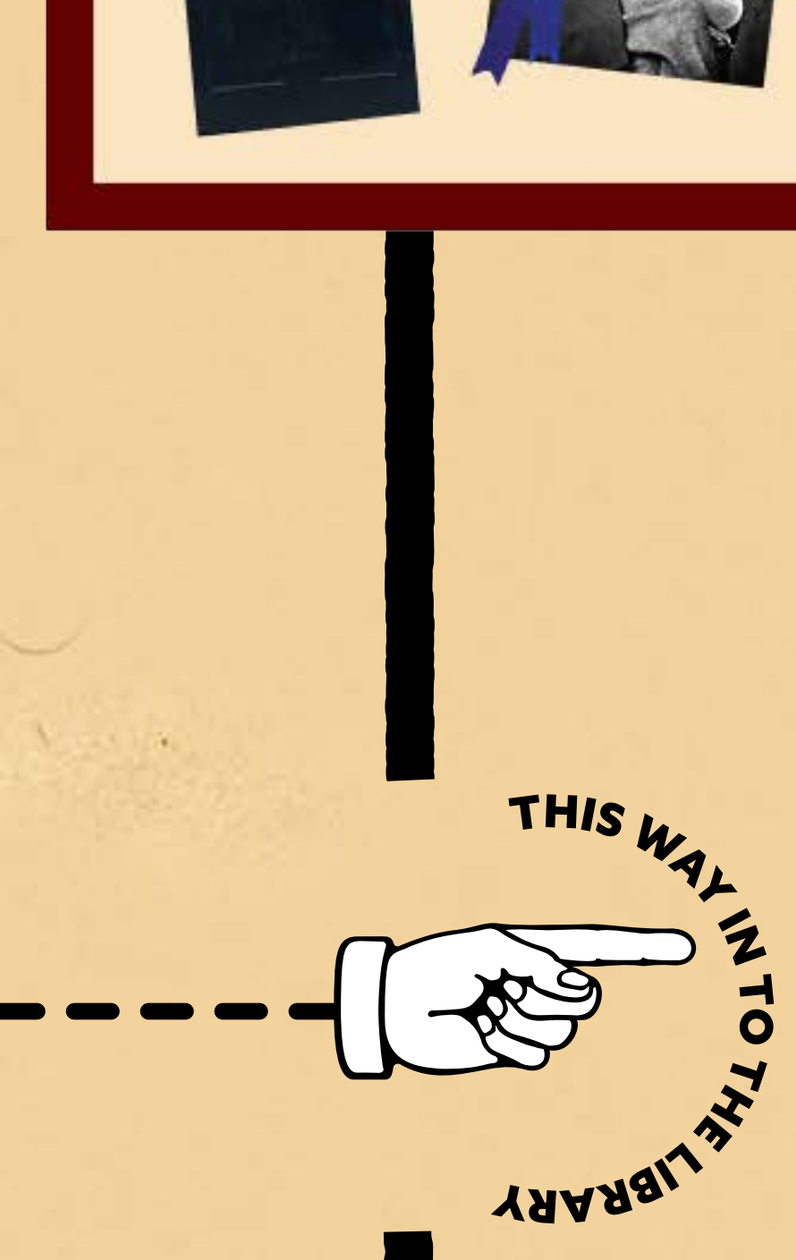
Benjamin Disraeli was very good friends with the Rothschilds and a frequent visitor at Gunnersbury. One visit is thought to have been particularly important, however...



In this room the PM asked to borrow £4 million (that's the same as over £450 million today!)

Lionel agreed and the British government was able to buy part of the giant Suez Canal in Egypt. Today, 8% of *everything* in the world transported by boat goes through the canal.

THAT'S 1.8 BILLION FREDDO BARS IN CASE YOU'RE HUNGRY



EYES AT THE READY?

Find the photo showing how the Library looked way back in 1906. You've got 15 seconds, go!

Found it?
Now, what's still the same today?

To get to the Dining Room

...follow the directions below

4

Turn left into the Dining Room

3

Slalom around the lift

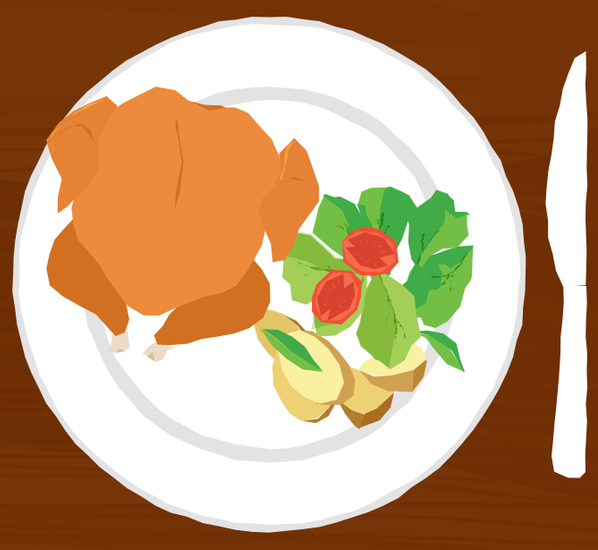
2

Head up the ramp

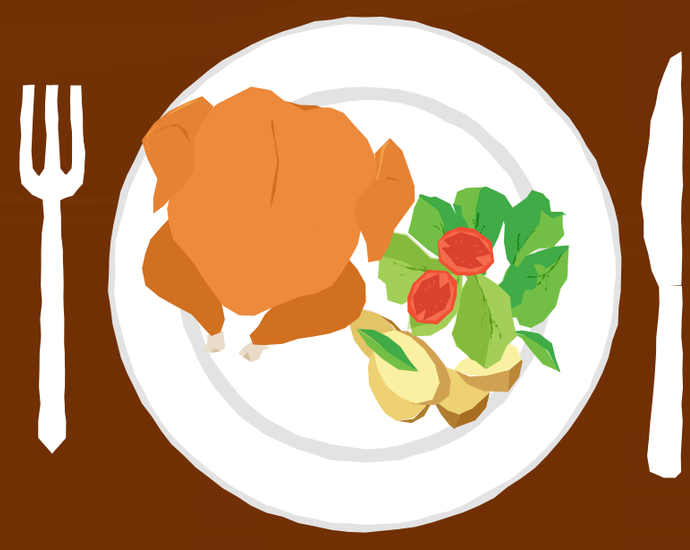
1

Leave the Library and turn right into the Skylight Corridor

5



Dining Room



Dinners at Gunnersbury Park House were some of the fanciest in the land, described by Mr Disraeli as being even better than those at Buckingham Palace.

IMAGINE

Picture in your mind this room absolutely packed with long tables, important people and the smell of delicious food being served. Mmmmmm.

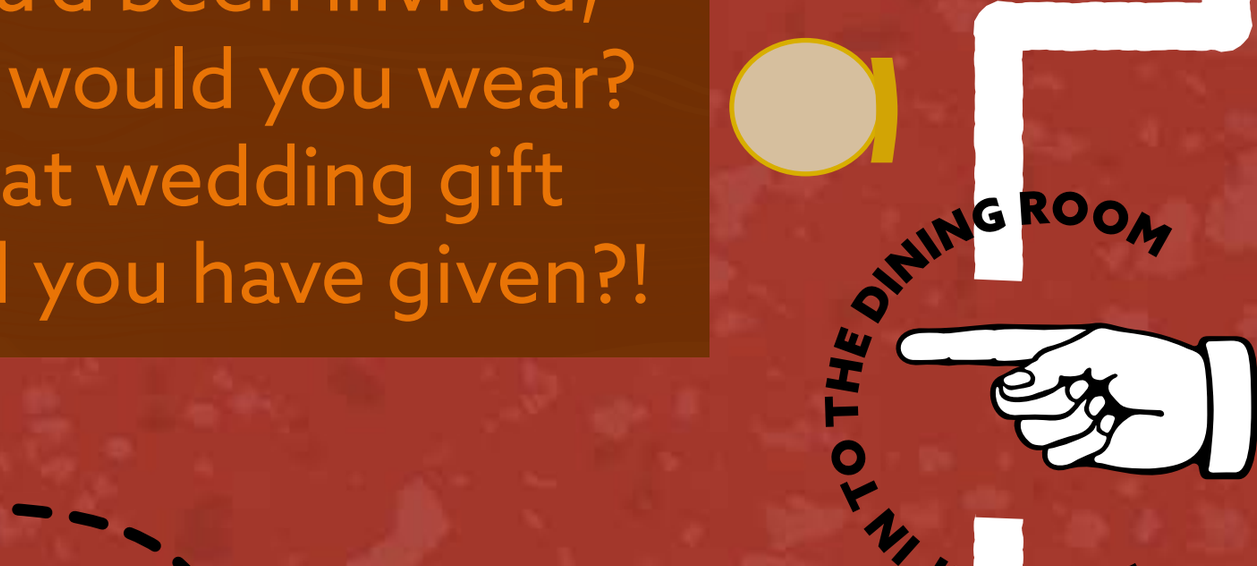
One of the biggest parties in this room was Leonora de Rothschild's wedding.

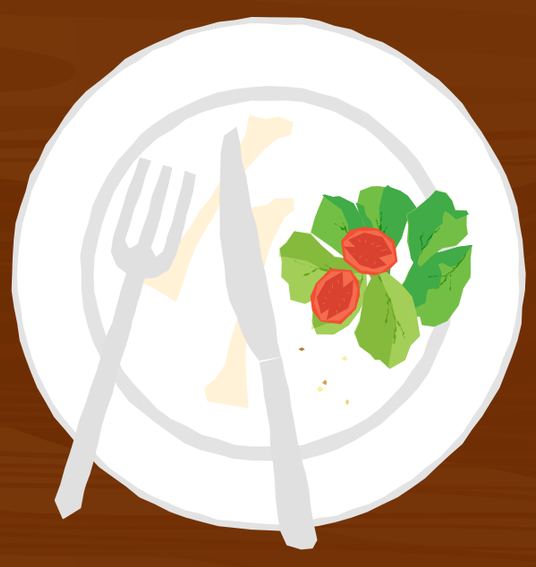
If you'd been invited, what would you wear? What wedding gift would you have given?!

THIS WAY IN TO THE DINING ROOM

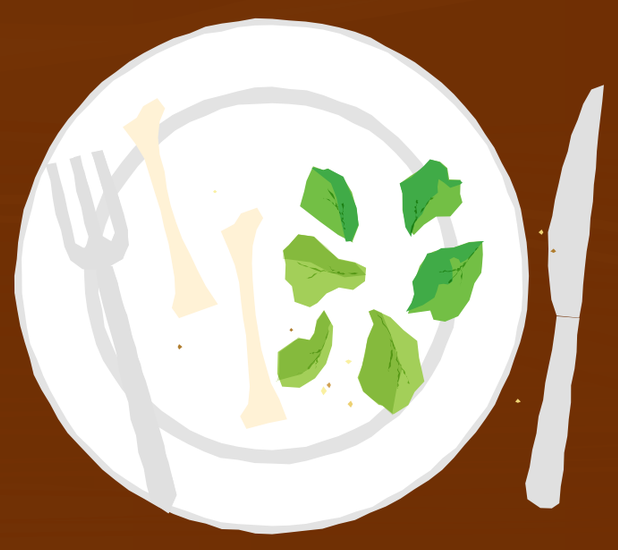
Not enough room?

There were soooo many people invited to Leonora's wedding in 1857 they had to extend the Dining Room out into the garden by the length of a double-deck bus.





Dining Room



BEFORE YOU MOVE ON...

Have you met Mr Sheppard, the butler, yet?

(Or played a game of spot the pineapple?)

WHEN YOU'RE READY

1. Leave through the same door you came into the Dining Room
2. Turn left into the corridor
3. Go straight on to the Butler's Pantry

6

Butler's Pantry

The Butler's Pantry was at the heart of the house, between the kitchen, the cellars and the family rooms we've just been in.

What's a pantry? Here it was an office, workroom, storeroom, polishing room and more all in one!

PICK YOUR JOB

Do have a seat! You're in the very capable hands of Mr Sheppard, Gunnersbury Park's butler. He was just the tip of the iceberg when it came to the household staff, though. Watch and find out about the team that kept the household spick and span.

Who would you say was the most important of the household staff? And which job would you like?

30 SECOND JELLY HUNT

Find the jelly mould! What shape does it make?

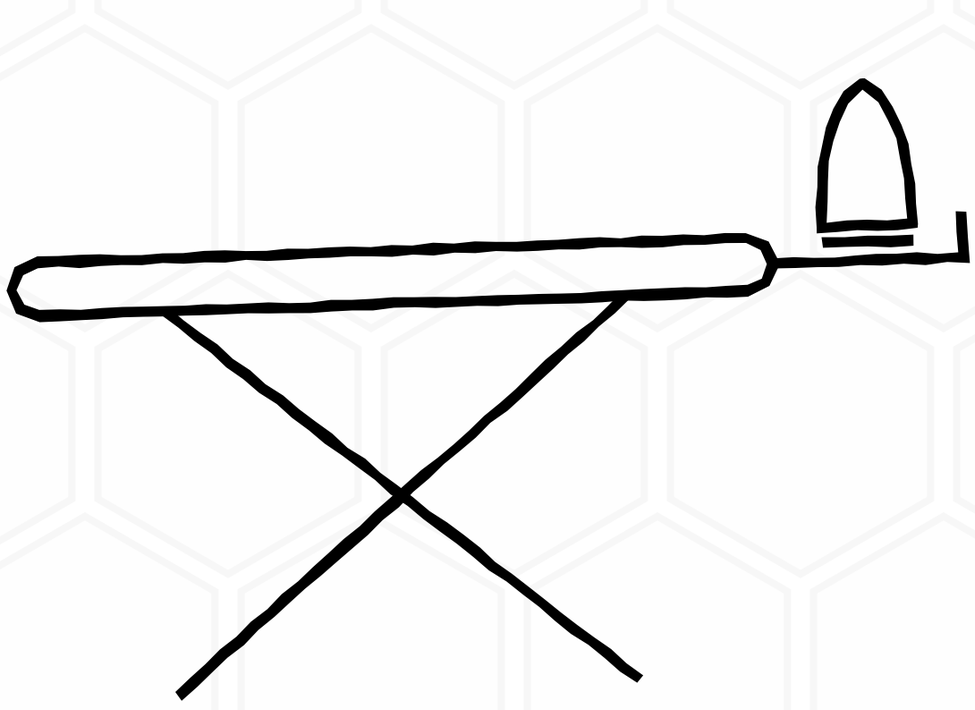
THIS WAY IN TO THE BUTLER'S PANTRY

6

Butler's Pantry

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the jobs carried out in this room was...



...to iron the daily newspaper so that the ink wouldn't come off on the fingers of the Rothschilds!

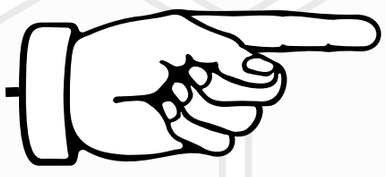
WHERE NEXT?

Turn around and go back into the corridor

1

Turn left and just around the corner is the Servant's Hall

2



1

Servant's Hall

Challenge #1 in this room: Ignore the toys! Servants in a house like this would never have had *that* much fun.

(BUT **YOU** CAN - CHECK OUT OUR OTHER FAMILY TRAIL)

This is where the 'lower' servants to the Rothschild family would have eaten their meals.

It's a bit different to the family's Dining Room, don't you think?

WHAT ARE ~~THEY~~ YOU WEARING??

Find the photo on the wall of the servants in 1914.

What do you think of the staffs' clothes? What would *you* wear for cooking, cleaning, and serving the Rothschild family?

Why not try some outfits on and see for yourself?

THIS WAY IN TO THE SERVANT'S HALL

FIND THE DOG!

Where's the family dog? (The little pooch might also be hiding in another room later on, so keep your eyes peeled!)

READY TO MOVE ON?

Head out the door and turn right into the Kitchen Corridor

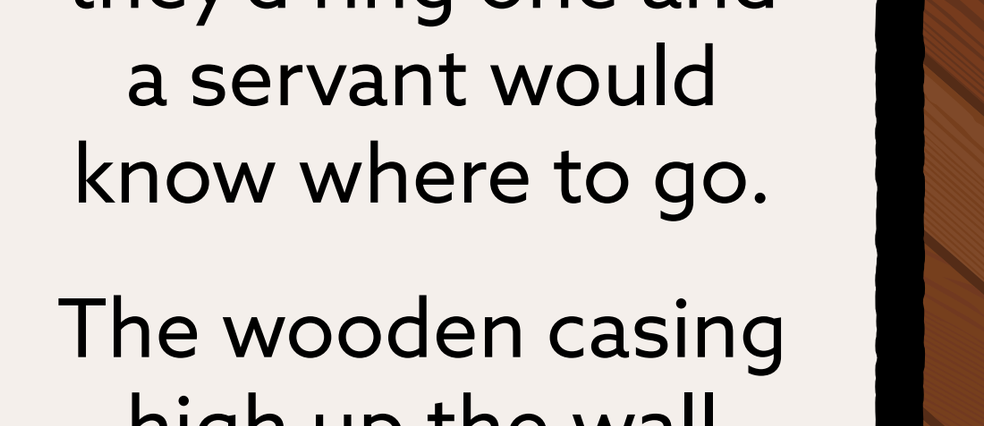
Kitchen Corridor

SPEAKING OF WHOM...

Remember the bell that's now hanging in the Skylight Corridor?

Once upon a time, this wall had lots of bells on it - one for each room the Rothschilds lived in. Whenever they needed anything, they'd ring one and a servant would know where to go.

The wooden casing high up the wall still hides over 30 little wires that controlled each bell!



Is it just me or has it got pretty cramped in here?

This corridor was once busy with 19 indoor servants rushing between jobs, helping the Rothschild family throw parties.

It's a bit different to the Skylight Corridor we started in though. Which of the following do you think are true?

→ NARROWER ←

No daylight

Plainly decorated

Paint that smells like chocolate

IS IT DINNER TIME YET?

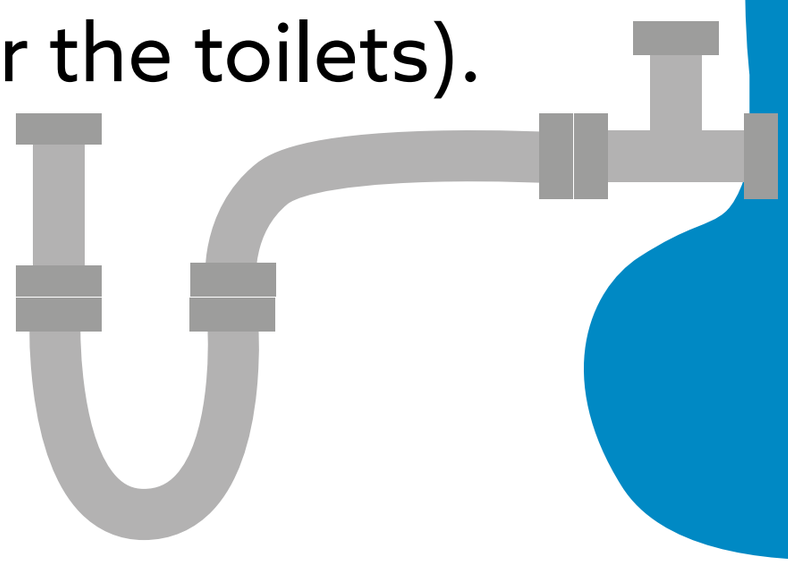
This is the door to the kitchens. Want to look in?

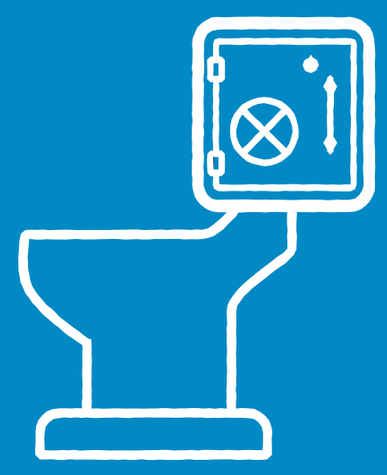
Ask an attendant or at the museum front desk for their opening times.

LEVEL 1 COMPLETE

CONTINUE?

It's up to you whether you finish this trail here, or continue with us to see a couple more cool things upstairs. Either way, **head back towards the central staircase and lift** (just after the toilets).

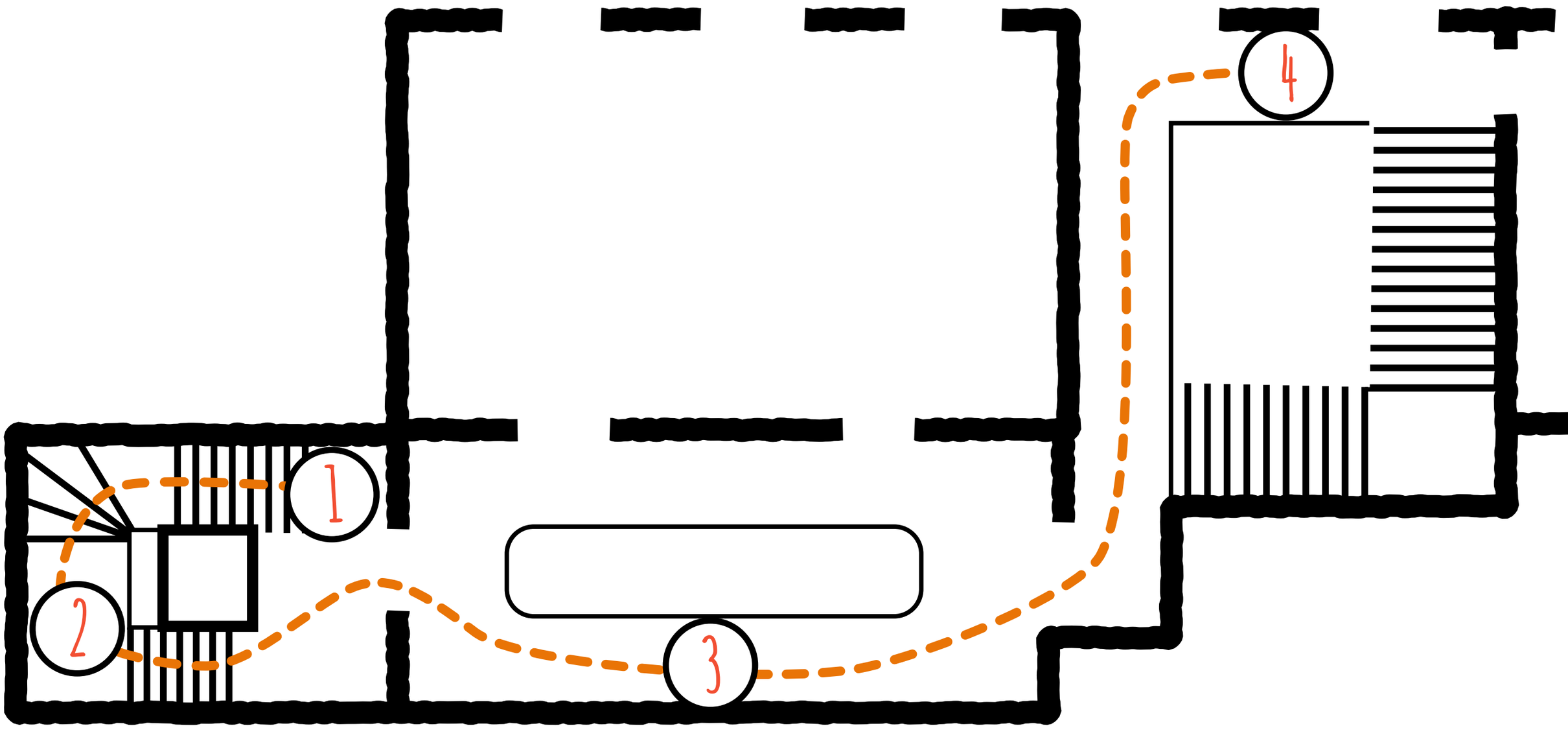




SHHHH!

What are now the men's toilets used to be the **Strong Room**, where the Rothschilds kept all their silver and valuables. But that's just between us, capeesh?

① If you want to continue, head upstairs to the first floor
(you can also carry on to the top floor to see the rooms the servants slept in, if you like)



② Take a mental photograph of the staircase and keep it in your mind for a little later

③ Walk straight across the Skylight Balcony
(we'll be back in a minute, don't worry)

④ Head to the other staircase and stop so you're looking down over the railings

9

A tale of two staircases

From this balcony you can look below to Gunnersbury Park House's main entrance. This staircase was designed to make a grand first impression as guests arrived.

The staircase you just came up, however... that was the service staircase, to be used by a very different group of people - and definitely **not** seen by guests.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Have you got that mental photograph you just took of the service staircase ready?

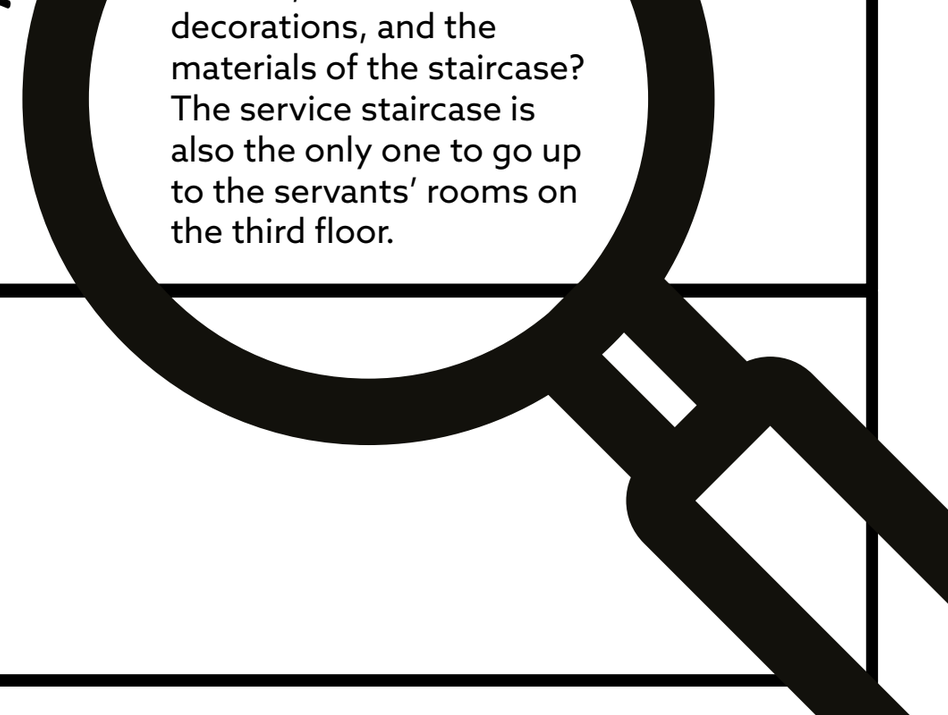
Play a game of spot the difference. Take it in turns to find something different between the two staircases. Last one to keep finding differences wins!

NEED A HINT? ZOOM IN

Have you thought about the size, the kind of decorations, and the materials of the staircase? The service staircase is also the only one to go up to the servants' rooms on the third floor.

WHEN YOU'VE CROWNED YOUR WINNER

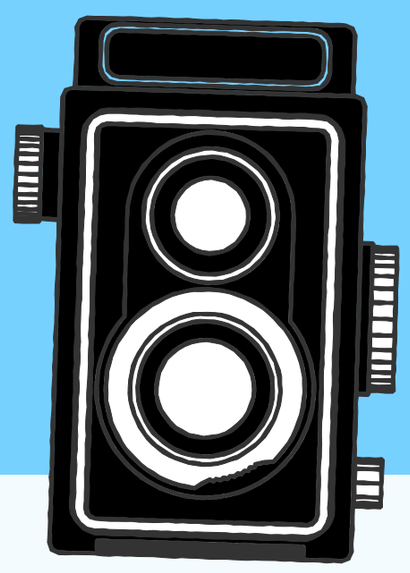
Turn around and head back to the Skylight Balcony



10

Skylight Balcony

Welcome to the final desination of the trail, up above where it all started earlier today.



HOBBIES + GADGETS

Imagine only being able to take photographs in black and white mode on your phone, then one day an update arrives and you can capture the world in colour.

That's pretty much how Lionel Nathan de Rothschild felt in 1908 when autochrome photography was invented.

And what did he take photographs of? His gardens, of course.

Have a look at the photos on display. Bonus points to whoever spots the family dog (twice) and... FLAMINGOS!

SAY CHEESE!

If the weather is nice, why not explore the gardens and take your own photos, matching them up with the places the original autochrome photos were taken?

They're on the very last page of this trail so you can take them with you.

What next?

HEAD BACK DOWNSTAIRS

Pick your staircase: are you a Rothschild, a special guest, or a servant?

IS THE WEATHER NICE?

You could try the autochrome photo challenge mentioned on the previous page, exploring the gardens as you do. Share your pics with us using #GPMuseum

IS THE WEATHER ICKY?

You could try our other family trail that explores the museum collection here. You can download it at **visitgunnersbury.org** via the free WiFi at the entrance desk.

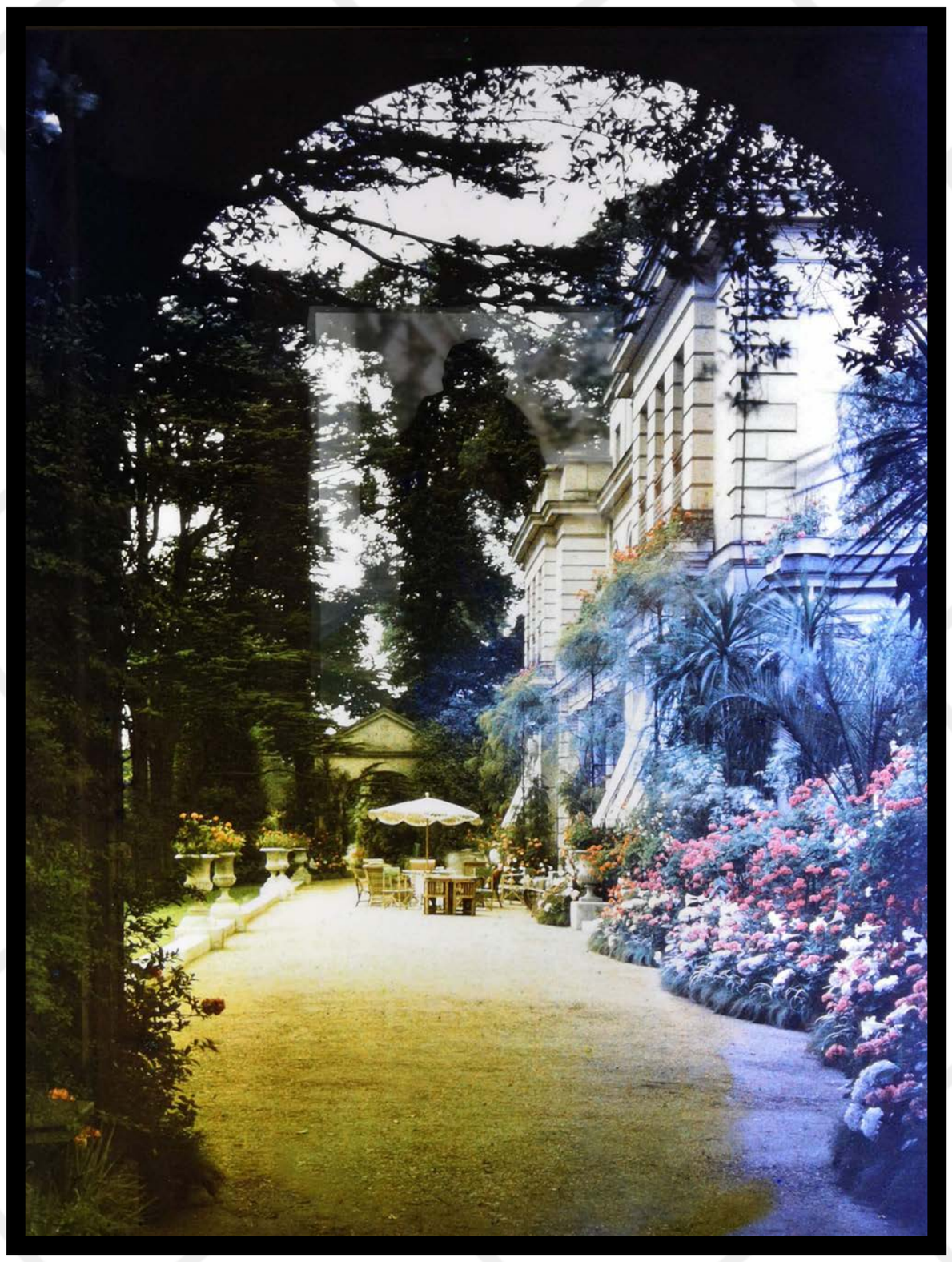
SHARE YOUR PICS!

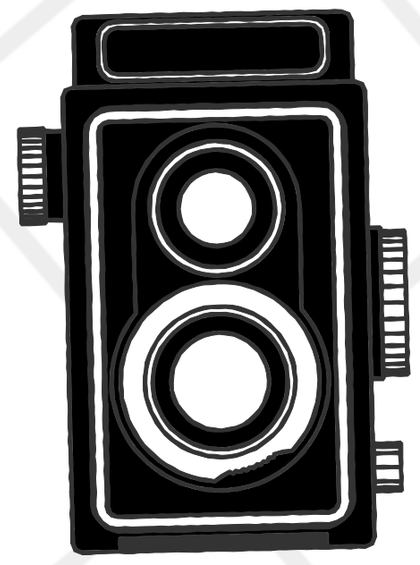
@Gunnersbury1 @Gunnersbury1 @gunnersburyparkmuseum

Trail designed and illustrated by Matt Belcher / matt-belcher.com
© Gunnersbury Estate (2026) CIC. Some illustrations courtesy of vecteezy.com and Freepik

A

TAKEN IN ABOUT 1912





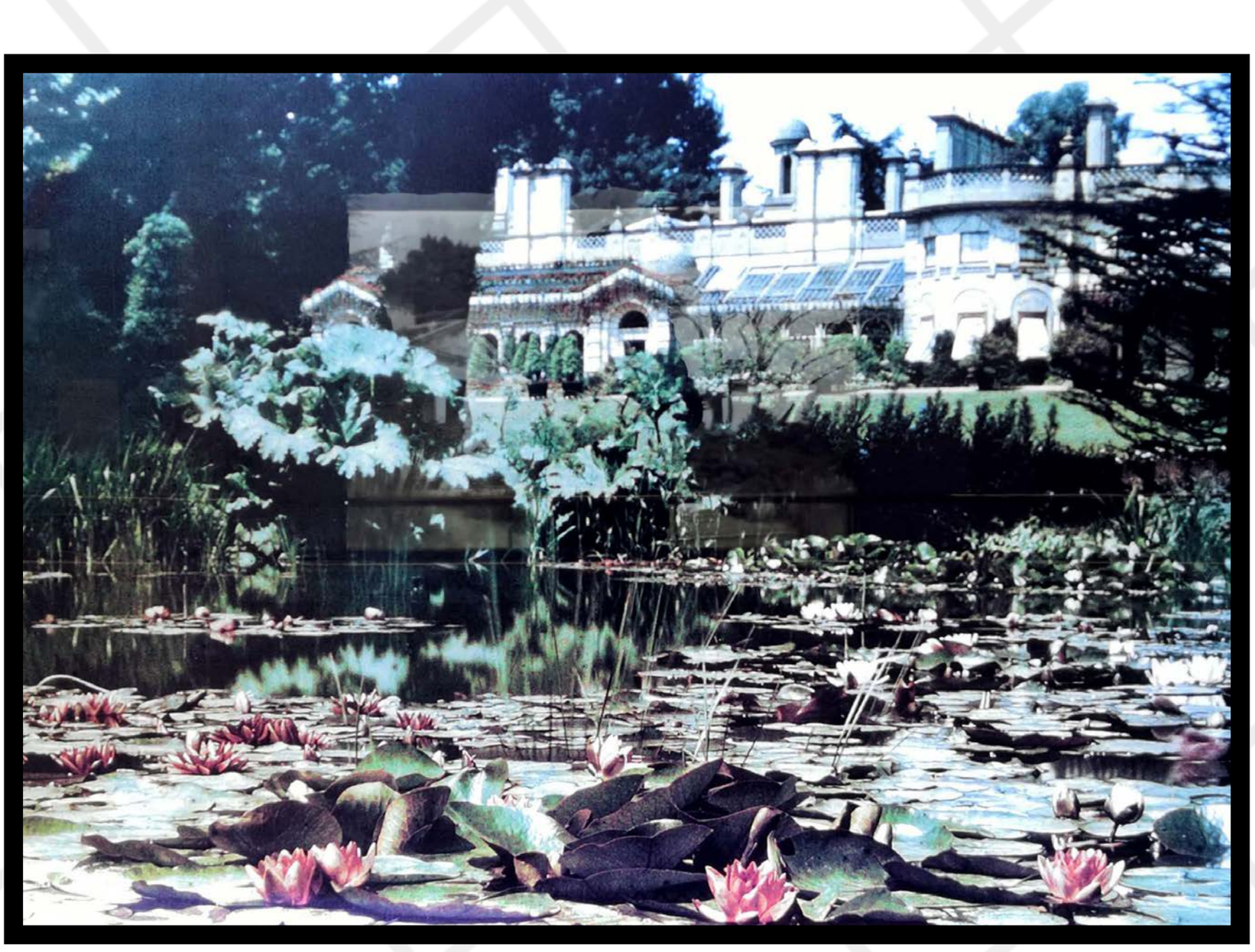
AUTOCHROME PHOTO CHALLENGE

Explore the gardens and take your own photos, matching them up with the places the original autochrome photos were taken!

Share your pics with us using #GPMuseum

B

TAKEN IN ABOUT 1909



C

TAKEN IN ABOUT 1909

(THIS VIEW IS A BIT SNEAKY THESE DAYS)