



WADDESDON



Hamza Yassin takes a flight of fancy at Waddesdon Manor

Saturday 8 June 2024

Waddesdon is delighted to announce the launch of a new Conservation Hub in the Gardens, a space for visitors to engage with the rich wildlife, habitats, landscape and conservation projects at the National Trust property in Buckinghamshire.

The opening was marked by renowned presenter, wildlife cameraman and self-confessed 'nature-nerd', Hamza Yassin, cutting the ribbon on Saturday 8 June. Hamza's presence drew a crowd of fans who also had the opportunity to enjoy meet-and-greet sessions and a talk that revealed his passion for wildlife, birds, photography and the natural world.

Hamza Yassin said, *"I had a wonderful time at Waddesdon Manor. The Conservation Hub at Waddesdon Manor is a testament to the importance of nurturing our natural habitats and educating the next generation about the wonders of wildlife."*

Dickon Leigh-Wood, Sustainability Lead, at Waddesdon, added, *"We are excited to launch the Conservation Hub for our visitors. It provides a unique and enriching opportunity to learn about our conservation efforts and*

engage in new ways with the natural beauty that Waddesdon has to offer. Supporting biodiversity and habitats is vital to us all, and the balance of the planet. We can all play a part, and we're hoping that this will inspire people to get involved in whatever way they can."

The Conservation Hub will host a variety of activities, including interactive workshops, wildlife camera streams and nature trails. Visitors can meet staff and volunteers to hear about sustainability initiatives and conservation projects at both the Manor and on the Waddesdon Estate, including the creation of a new Wetland for migratory birds. It's supported by the Rothschild Foundation, as part of its funding for the environment.

The opening of the Hub and Hamza's visit forms part of *Flights of Fancy*, Waddesdon's summer-long celebration of birds. From 22 May to 27 October 2024, the National Trust property is hosting an array of bird-themed exhibitions, interactive events and outdoor activities. Highlights include:

- ***Flights of Fancy* exhibition in the Manor:** The first ever exhibition solely focused on porcelain, paintings and drawings by Louis-Denis Armand (1723-1796), widely acknowledged as the finest painter of birds at the world-famous Sèvres porcelain manufactory in 18th-century France, many of which have never been seen in public before.
- **Paper bird sculptures:** As if birds have broken free, enjoy a series of installations by paper artist Andy Singleton who has been inspired by the collection, the Aviary and Armand's art to create a paper trail of bird sculptures throughout the Manor.
- **The Rococo Aviary:** one of Europe's smallest zoos and home to threatened and endangered species bred on site, Waddesdon's recently restored Aviary allows visitors to observe birds like the rare Socorro Dove and the vibrant Painted Bunting up close. You can also enjoy 'Meet the Keeper' talks and behind the scenes tours to learn more about the Aviary's inhabitants and see all that is involved with the running of a modern zoological collection.
- **Tell it to the Birds:** An interactive contemporary art installation by environmental artist Jenny Kendler, where visitors can hear their words transformed into birdsong.
- **In the gardens:** Enjoy avian-inspired artistic interventions, including two impressive 3D carpet bedding bird sculptures and a specially designed carpet bed that translates a drawing by the artist Louis-Denis Armand of two orioles into a complex living mosaic made up of over 25,000 succulent plants.
- **Calling all Bird-Spotters:** With the opening of the new Conservation Hub comes the launch of the Waddesdon Bird Spotters Guide. Pick up a copy and see which birds you can spot on your walk around the grounds.

With so much to see and do, Waddesdon Manor promises a summer filled with discovery and delight for visitors of all ages. Whether you're an avid bird enthusiast, an art lover, or looking for family-friendly activities, *Flights of Fancy* offers something for everyone.

For more information and to plan your visit, see: www.waddesdon.org.uk/flights-of-fancy

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

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- Hamza Yassin opening Waddesdon's Conservation Hub. Image © Waddesdon, A Rothschild House & Gardens. Phot Adam Hollier.

Waddesdon Manor was built at the end of the 19th century by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in the style of a French early 16th-century château. Baron Ferdinand was an inspired collector, and the house was designed to showcase his exceptional collection of English and Dutch paintings, French 18th-century furniture, Sèvres porcelain, and other decorative arts. When Ferdinand died in 1898, he left Waddesdon to his sister, Alice, who also was a great collector. Upon her death the house passed to her great-nephew, James de Rothschild, who inherited a substantial part of his father Baron Edmond's great collection. In 1957, to ensure its future in perpetuity, Waddesdon was bequeathed to the National Trust. The Rothschild family continues to run Waddesdon through a family charitable trust, the Rothschild Foundation. Until February 2024, it was under the chairmanship of Jacob, 4th Lord Rothschild. His eldest daughter, Hannah Rothschild, is now the chair. More at <https://waddesdon.org.uk/about-us/press/notes-for-editors/>

For more information on Waddesdon Manor and its exhibitions, visit www.waddesdon.org.uk, like @WaddesdonManor on Facebook, follow @WaddesdonManor on Twitter and @waddesdonmanor_nt on Instagram.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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