ANNUAL



REVIEW

2025/6



ANNUAL REVIEW

March 2025 - February 2026

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Introduction from Dame Hannah Rothschild

The Rothschild Foundation, rooted in more than seventy years of family leadership, seeks to make a lasting difference in the arts, local communities and the environment. At the heart of this work is Waddesdon Manor, a place where our interests in culture, community and the environment come together, and from which many of our wider charitable activities flow.

We believe that the arts can inspire, challenge and connect us, that strong communities create opportunity and belonging, and that the natural world should be protected and sustained for future generations.

Our values are drawn from the Rothschild family motto and guide both our decisions and our actions.

Concordia reflects our belief in partnership and collaboration, working with openness, empathy and mutual respect.

Integritas reflects our commitment to integrity, transparency and accountability.

Industria reflects our determination to pursue excellence, show initiative and encourage creativity.

The year covered by this review has been one of preparation and renewal. While our charitable purpose remains unchanged, we have refined our identity and strategic direction, drawing on the distinctive heritage of Waddesdon and the opportunities and challenges of the years ahead.

At Waddesdon Manor, we continue to preserve and share one of Britain's most remarkable historic houses and collections. Through our grant-making, we support organisations and projects that enrich cultural life, strengthen communities and promote environmental responsibility.

During the year, significant investment was made in major capital projects at Waddesdon, including plans for ground source heat pumps and a new woodland playground. These projects demonstrate our determination to reduce the estate's environmental impact while enhancing the experience of visitors of all ages.

None of this work would be possible without the dedication and expertise of our staff, volunteers, partners, advisers and grantees. My fellow Trustees and I are deeply grateful for their contribution.

We are equally grateful for our longstanding partnership with the National Trust, which helps ensure that Waddesdon Manor remains cared for, accessible and relevant to the widest possible public.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Trustees, family members, colleagues and partners for their continued support.

Together, we are building on a remarkable legacy while ensuring that our work continues to make a meaningful difference for generations to come.

Dame Hannah Rothschild DBE CBE

Waddesdon Manor Review



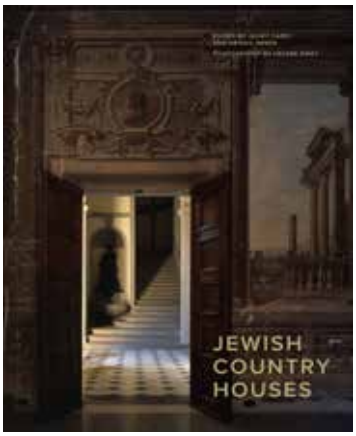
South Front Parterre. Photo: Hugh Mothersole © Waddesdon Manor Image Library

WADDESDON MANOR



Reflecting on 2025/6

In a year of uncertain consumer confidence, Waddesdon's varied programme of exhibitions, activities and events was key to attracting and retaining visitors. From art and culture-seekers to those simply wanting a nice day out with families, Waddesdon's well-constructed programme had something for everyone. Bookings were nevertheless slow, with many visitors booking very late or not booking at all and with great price sensitivity. Data from the Association of Large Visitor Attractions (ALVA) indicated this was a widespread issue throughout the leisure sector.



The House opened with two new exhibitions: *Discovering Jewish Country Houses: Photographs by Hélène Binet* featuring photographs from the *Jewish Country* Houses book, and *Significant Signatures*, extraordinary autograph letters and manuscripts collected by Baron Edmond de Rothschild, on display for the first time ever.

In the grounds, a full family programme saw children coming in free for a Summer of Play. Summerfest returned in June, and Chilli Fest in September. Talks and tours ran in the House and Gardens. The Conservation Hub offered a series of events and activities championing Waddesdon's sustainability ambitions. The Aviary had an excellent breeding season and achieved Confined Institution status from EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria), allowing it once more to transfer birds between EU zoos. The 150th anniversary of Eythrope's acquisition by Miss Alice was celebrated in great style with an open weekend for the general public in August – another first.

The theme for Christmas this year was *The Grand Festive Tour*, inspired by Baron Ferdinand's travels around Europe accompanied by his poodle, Poupon. Deeply rooted in Waddesdon's own history, collections and archives, the playful and charming storyline, both in the House and outside, was very well received by the Press and visitors alike.

Ever mindful of the need to attract and retain visitors, new marketing initiatives included a website redesign, brand strategy review and audience evaluation surveys. Other major projects nearing completion were the redisplay of the Family and James and Dorothy Rooms and a new woodland playground. Plans were also mooted for a sculpture walk and park in memory of the late Lord Rothschild. New digital asset and customer relation management systems were made possible through a Bloomberg Digital Accelerator Grant.

Sustainability and biodiversity strategies saw progress on power and waste management, exploration of water harvesting and solar power generation. The major project in partnership with the National Trust to convert the Manor boilers to ground source heat pumps beneath the North Front also made good headway with work due to start onsite in early summer 2026.



© Hélène Binet



Guercino, *King David,* 1651 © Waddesdon Manor Image Library, Mike Fear



Joshua Reynolds, *David Garrick…Between Tragedy and Comedy*, 1761.
© Waddesdon Manor Image Library

March saw the opening of the Jacob Rothschild Sixth Form Centre at Waddesdon Secondary School, funded by the Rothschild Foundation in partnership with the council: a tangible embodiment of Waddesdon's work supporting young people. Back at Waddesdon, the Education and Learning team ran school workshops and activities, and a range of Rothschild Foundation-funded initiatives facilitated access and engagement for schools and local community groups.

In early May the first of the Acceptances in Lieu from the Estate of the late Lord Rothschild was agreed. Guercino's *King David* was allocated to the National Gallery, joining the national collection and reunited permanently with its two pendant Sibyls. Subsequently, Joshua Reynolds' *David Garrick…Between Tragedy and Comedy*, and *Mrs Lloyd* were also accepted in lieu and allocated to the National Trust for Waddesdon, where they remain in the Red Ante Room.

The Senior Leadership team welcomed a new member: Sara Aspley joined from the Stratford Town Trust as Chief Operating Officer, taking charge of the Trading Company (RWL) and Operations teams (Security and Transport, the Property, Sustainability and Housekeeping). After 21 years at Waddesdon and with many highly significant exhibitions and research projects to her credit, Juliet Carey, Senior Curator, Paintings,Sculpture and Works on Paper moved on to a new role at the Fitzwilliam Museum.

2025/6 in Numbers

Visitors

168,000 Grounds visitors in the main summer season

68,000 House visitors in the main summer season

16,806 Conservation Hub visitors

116,000 Christmas season visitors

57,000 Grounds Christmas visitors

48,000 House Christmas visitors

7,712 Chilli Fest visitors

429 new NT memberships (820 new members) between May and November

Collections, Gardens and Stewardship

2,000 objects inventoried

1,140 dahlia tubers in Aviary gardens display

661 Eythrope garden visitors

658 new digital photography records created

77 new object records created

62 birds from 17 species reared to independence in the Aviary

Family, Education and Schools Programme

5,369 school visits

74 schools and community groups took part in Education & Learning's Christmas project, contributing 14,067 pieces of artwork

Digital Reach

348,000 Waddesdon website sessions

Over **100,000** e-newsletter subscribers

95,814 Collections, House and Gardens page views

68,500 YouTube views

58,000 Facebook followers

54,000 Instagram followers

6,502 exhibition page views

2,351 TikTok followers

Press and PR

£4,232,270 total advertising value equivalent for media and broadcast coverage

782 media articles (online and print)

18 articles for the *Significant Signatures* exhibition

Staff and Volunteers

8,761 hours contributed by House Hosts

3,044 hours given by Gardens volunteers

427 volunteers contributed a total of 24,110 hours

46 work experience placements





Collections

Our curatorial, collections management and exhibitions programmes are key to Waddesdon's mission to share the wealth of its collections and research activity with as wide an audience as possible.

Two of the year's major exhibitions were inspired by the Jewish Country Houses research project, while the third was drawn from Waddesdon's permanent archival collections.

Exhibitions

Significant Signatures: Baron Edmond's Autograph Letters: 26 March to 26 October in the Family Room

This was a display of 150 letters and papers collected by Baron Edmond de Rothschild in the late 19th century, written or signed by some of the greatest and most influential figures of the last 500 years. There were letters from Elizabeth I (1533-1603), Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), Lord Byron (1788-1824), Victor Hugo (1802-1885), and even a musical manuscript by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). Some were written in the knowledge they would be made public, while others were clearly intended to be private. They offered a fascinating insight into some of the greatest minds of their time and the lives of people who continue to intrigue us hundreds of years later.

Discovering Jewish Country Houses: Photographs by Hélène Binet: 26 March to 22 June in the Exhibition Room

Transferring from Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham, the Hélène Binet exhibition presented 20 photographs, including four large images of Waddesdon, showcasing Hélène's research into the architecture of Jewish country Houses in the UK and Europe. It was accompanied by a short film. The exhibition was curated by the *Jewish Country Houses* book's co-author, Juliet Carey. After closing at Waddesdon, the exhibition travelled on to the Liebermann-Villa, Wannsee, Berlin.

Pablo Bronstein: the Temple of Solomon and its Contents: 16 July to 2 November 2025 in the Exhibitions and Drawings Rooms

A second response to the Jewish Country Houses project, this exhibition by Pablo Bronstein consisted of two sets of large, hypothetical paintings on paper depicting designs for the exterior of the Temple, in different styles, a ground plan and designs for the Ark of the Covenant and the menorah. Pablo, one of Britain's leading artists, also selected drawings from Waddesdon's collection for part of the exhibition. At the same time there was a display of the 17th-century Temple embroideries in the Drawings Room. A launch lunch, in conjunction with Herald St Gallery, was held on 8 July. A film was commissioned for the exhibition, and a book about the artworks published, adding to the series of artist's books for some of his most significant collaborations (Sir John Soane's Museum, Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris, for example). These are collectors' items in themselves.

Online Exhibitions

The exhibitions reached an even wider audience through the Waddesdon website and the Bloomberg Connects app. All three exhibitions were available via the app, with multimedia content. Users viewing the *Significant Signatures* exhibition were able to access transcriptions of the historic letters, adding another layer of interpretation.




Discovering Jewish Country Houses:
Photographs by Hélène Binet



Acquisitions and Loans

Acquisitions are an important expression of Waddesdon's vitality and are made in the Rothschild spirit. The Rothschild Foundation acquires works for Waddesdon which complement the collections or relate to the Manor and the Rothschild family.

Acquisitions

In line with the late Lord Rothschild's wishes, Joshua Reynolds' *David Garrick…Between Tragedy and Comedy* and *Mrs Lloyd* were accepted under the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme from his Estate for allocation to the National Trust at Waddesdon Manor, generous transfer to our visitors and the wider public.

Following the *Hélène Binet: Jewish Country Houses* exhibition, the Rothschild Foundation acquired four photographs of Waddesdon by Hélène for periodic display.

Mia Jackson secured from eBay a porcelain plate made for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild's steam yacht, The Rona, for inclusion in the *Christmas Grand Festive Tour* display.

October saw the arrival at Windmill Hill Archive of Alastair Laing's archive and library, an extensive and outstanding resource (approximately 6,000 books and catalogues and 20,000 archive documents).

Loans in and out

Loans-in from the private collection

Gainsborough's A Country Road (1746-1747) ahead of its loan to Tate Britain in 2027; two Sèvres vases for conservation and photography, and a selection of glasses from the Ferdinand and Evelina service for possible loan to the Sèvres Museum.

Loans from the Rothschild Foundation

Photographs from Helene Binet: Dining Room, mirror frame; Green Boudoir, detail of clock; Dining Room, mirror frame, and Ante Room, panelled with stone from Belgium, Italy and France. Manutacturer Minton pottery and porcelain factory; plate; c 1896; English.

Manufacturer Minton pottery and porcelain factory; plate; c 1896; English

Loans-in for Exhibition

Nine paintings on loan from Pablo Bronstein for display in his exhibition *The Temple of Solomon and its Contents*, returned at the end of the exhibition.



Christmas Grand Festive Tour display, The Deck Saloon of *Rona*, c 1895; RYS *Rona*, c 1895; Captain Matthews and G Peel on deck, 1897 © Waddesdon Manor Image Library



Nicholas Hilliard, (1547-1619), *Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603)*, 1576-8, Rothschild Family; Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619), *Sir Amias Paulet (1532-1588)*, 1576-8, Rothschild Family

Loans-out for Exhibition

There were no new outward loans.

Returned from loan

George Romney: *Emma Hart, Lady Hamilton as Circe* (1782) – from Sir William and Lady Hamilton at the Gallerie d'Italia, Naples, 24 October 2024 to 2 March 2025.

French School: *Trompe L'Oeil with Writing Implements, a Print by Jacques Callot and Spectacles*, and *Trompe L'Oeil with Writing Implements*, a Print by Jacques Callot and Scissors (both 1780-1800), from 1520 to the present day at Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris, 17 October 2024 to 2 March 2025.

Guercino: *Moses* (1618-1619) – from Guercino e i Ludovisi a Rome at the Scuderie del Quirinale, Rome, 30 October 2024 to 26 January 2025.

New Requests to Borrow

Thomas Gainsborough: *Gainsborough Dupont* (1773) – for Gainsborough 300 (working title) at Gainsborough House Museum, Sudbury, Suffolk, 14 May to 31 October 2027

Long-term loans in and out

Notable long-term loans which departed in the period included Guercino's *King David* (1651) and Nicholas Hilliard's portraits of *Queen Elizabeth I* and *Sir Amias Paulet* (both 1576-1578). *King David* was subsequently accepted under the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme from the Estate of the late Lord Rothschild for allocation to the National Gallery. The painting was unveiled in its new home as part of the National Gallery 200 rehang in May.

Other long-term loans returned were *Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk* (1563) by Hans Eworth and *Herdsmen and a Milkmaid with Cattle, Sheep and a Dog* (c.1660-1690) by David Teniers II. Both were transferred to Sotheby's ahead of a possible sale. These paintings had been on loan to Waddesdon since 2015.

Academic Programme

Members of the Collections department host and take part in a wide range of academic activities both at Waddesdon and elsewhere. They speak at conferences, carry out research and develop specialist collaborations and partnerships with many institutions.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Jewish Country House Project

In addition to a series of UK events to promote the *Jewish Country Houses* book published in 2024, co-editors Juliet Carey and Oxford University's Abigail Green undertook a series of book talks in the USA, at University of Yale, Brandeis University and the Boston Athenaeum. Many sold out. They also gave lectures to New York Museum of Jewish Heritage, Jewish Historical Society of England, Highgate and London and Ontario Jewish Community, Canada.

Conferences arising from the Jewish Country House research project included Jews, Liberals and the Land at Fondazione Hallgarten-Franchetti, Villa Montesca, Umbria 9-11 June at which both Catherine Taylor and Pippa Shirley spoke, and the workshop Jewish Engagements with Antiquity: Material Culture, Intellectual History and Institution Building, Warburg Institute and Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 18-19 June.

Other related publications included two books co-edited by Tom Stammers, one of the co-investigators on the Jewish Country House research project, and Silvia Davoli: *Jewish Dealers and the European Art World 1860-1940: Negotiating Cultural Modernity and The Contours of Jewish Collecting: Art and Identity in Modern Europe 1860-1940*.

Also drawing on research from the project was a book on Jewish Business Dynasties by Abigail Green.

Historic Houses Archivists Group

Several new members joined this group, chaired by Waddesdon's Catherine Taylor, which exists to promote good practice and offer support and advice to those caring for archives within a historic House setting. The group visited the National Archives in late April, and during its AGM at Blenheim Palace in October, members had a tour of the roof works there as well as the gardens and archives.

The Reynolds Digital Research Resource

Led by the National Gallery, a two-year, ACRC-funded collaboration began to draw together Reynolds conservation and analytical information into a single, accessible resource. Other partners included the Courtauld institute of Art, English Heritage, Hamilton Kerr Institute, National Museum of Wales, National Portrait Gallery, National Trust, Royal Museums Green which, Tate and the Wallace Collection.

Community Engagement Project

The Rothschild Foundation-funded Community Engagement Programme aims to improve access for hard-to-reach audiences, the local community and those with disabilities or neurodivergence. Over 600 people took part in on- and off-site workshops and activities including visits to the Conservation Hub, and outreach art workshops inspired by the Sèvres porcelain collection.

The project continued to build partnerships and consult with a wide range of community groups and audiences to find new ways to interpret the grounds and collections. These included local social clubs for the elderly; access groups such as Aylesbury Deaf Coffee Morning Club and Autism Bucks; Whiteleaf mental health; minority ethnic groups; refugee and asylum seeker groups, and Aylesbury's Women's Aid Centre.

The response from participants, many of whom would not ordinarily take part in creative workshops, was overwhelmingly positive:

"Our hearts are full! On Wednesday, 36 of our Wednesday Club members had the most wonderful day at Waddesdon Manor, from meeting by the main fountain to being welcomed like old friends."

Feedback from a group leader from the Wednesday Club after a visit to Conservation Hub in September

"I felt very welcome, like I belonged there." Participant feedback from the Aylesbury Caribbean Lunch Club, after a visit to Waddesdon Manor in July."

Participant feedback from the Aylesbury Caribbean Lunch Club, after a visit to Waddesdon Manor in July

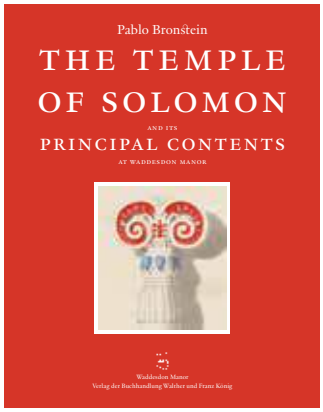
"Thank you so much for giving our group such a wonderful experience.""

Feedback from an Asian Elderly lunch club group leader after an outreach session in November

Higher Education and Specialist Teaching

Specialist groups and teaching included the Courtauld Institute of Art, Wadham College, Oxford, Buckingham University and Birmingham University. These in addition to regular visits from Warwick University Art History First Year BA cohort (60 in all) for a module on cataloguing and object research.





Publications

A book was published to accompany the Pablo Bronstein exhibition, and John Mallet continued his preparatory work for the publication of the Maiolica at Waddesdon catalogue.

Lectures and Conferences

Pippa Shirley gave a paper on *The Rothschilds & Archaeology: A Brief Overview* at the Jewish Antiquities Workshop at the Courtauld Institute of Art. She spoke about her work on the Reviewing Committee for the Export of Works of Art on the Art and Heritage Law Podcast, and again at a joint Historic Houses Association/Sotheby's conference on historic house collections.

Mia Jackson hosted the Sèvres session on Royal Collection Studies and also co-taught a session at the Wallace Collection with Sarah Grandin for her new MA course at the Courtauld Institute of Art, The Matter of Encounter in Early Modern France, focussing on objects made in 18th-century France but with global materials. Mia returned to the Wallace to speak at their Boulle Study Day, about the Rothschilds as Boulle collectors.

Juliet spoke to the Friends of Kenwood House about Waddesdon's 18th-century portraits, and Pippa Shirley gave a presentation on Alice de Rothschild's gardens to the North Cotswold NT Association.

Michael Shrive mentored year 12 students from Waddesdon Church of England School for the Articulation Prize.

Specialist Visitors and Groups

The Butrint Foundation and the Linbury Trust held an event hosted by His Excellency the Albanian Ambassador to celebrate the work at Butrint and highlight plans for the site's future which was very well attended and received.

The Fine Arts Museum of Los Angeles brought a group of 40 patrons to the UK in September, with their Director, Tom Campbell, choosing to end their Grand Tour at Waddesdon with a tour of the House and dinner White Drawing Room.

Other visiting groups included patrons and trustees from the Hillwood Museum, USA; the Royal Academy of Art; the Alte Pinakothek, Munich; Kenwood House; the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Young Patrons from the V&A; the Manuscript Society, and the Association of CEOs which brought together 38 CEOs of cultural institutions for a meeting and a tour of the Collection.

Individual visitors included Nathaniel Hepburn, CEO of Charleston; Ruth Zandberg, the Fondation Edmond de Rothschild, Paris; Karin Jestin and Claudia Marcelioni, the Edmond de Rothschild Family Philanthropy; Uma Horder, Cambridge University; Diana Spiegelberg, CEO of Somerset House; Pierre Marty, University of Toronto; Joseph Davies, the Josh Lilley Gallery; James Cockbill and Linzi Stauvers, the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Helen Jacobsen, Attingham Trust; Davide Gasparotto, J P Getty Museum in San Franciso; Viviane Mesqui, Sèvres musèe national de cèramicue; Will Gompertz, Sir John Soane Museum; Kathleen Soriano, Hasting Contemporary Museum, and Chris Stevens, Holburne Museum.



Aerial view of the Castle, Forum and Theatre at Butrint, 2005 © Butrint Foundation, Daniel Renton



Stewardship

Caring for our Collections, House and Gardens, now and forever.

Conservation and Sustainability

Conservation

The organ from the Orpheus Organ Clock travelled to the Museum Speelklok, Utrecht for conservation. Clock conservator Thomas Ellis Reese visited for two weeks in April and May to repair the Cartel Clock in the West Wing, the East Gallery Mantle clock, the Manor Restaurant clock, the Fountain Bedroom clock and the Low White Mantle clock. Contractors Cliveden carried out a programme of work in August on the South Fountain, greatly improving the stability and appearance of the sculptures. In October the Stewards spent two days dismantling and removing *The Lawn at Goodwood* (c 1886) by Lowes Cato Dickinson ahead of room refurbishments. Conservator Alan Derbyshire completed work on the first batch of 16 miniatures and began conservation of a further 16 as part of a rolling programme. In July Jonathan Betts returned to fit the repaired lily and sunflower to the base of the elephant automaton, finishing off the project to clean and service it which began several years ago. Campbell Norman-Smith visited in August to carry out minor repairs on a variety of objects including the central display case in the Family Room ahead of its removal from the room ahead of refurbishments.

A comprehensive furniture survey of over 700 items, begun in December 2023 with Paul Tear, furniture conservator, assisted by Michael Shrive, was completed. The survey recorded the condition and stability of all historic furniture (on and off display), flagged up display issues, noted keys and parts and photograph details.

Work began, with specialist Zenzie Tinker, on conservation of the damaged original 19th-century Prelle wall silk from the southwest corner of the Morning Room. After recording in detail the condition of the silk, Zenzie and her team spent two days removing them for transfer to her studio where vulnerable areas of textile were stabilised and reinforced, and a sample of the silk sent for dye analysis to gain a better understanding of what may have caused uniform discoloration across the whole room.

Stewards were kept busy managing access visits, installing and taking down the Hélène Binet and Pablo Bronstein exhibitions, removal of works of art and objects for the start of the Family Room project and regular conservation cleaning and rolling maintenance programmes.



Hubert Martinet (active 1770–1790), musical automaton, 1768–1772, (acc. 2202); Cleaned, repaired and finally the automaton reinstated

Sustainability

Examples of Waddesdon's Sustainability Strategy included initiatives to reduce carbon emissions; water quality monitoring; soil testing; a Biodiversity Action Plan focusing on habitat improvement and the Conservation Hub for visitors.

A second year of bat and bird surveys returned encouraging data for Waddesdon's biodiversity, recording a healthy, breeding, bat population totalling nine species around Lodge Hill, and 72 species of birds across the site. Areas left unmown by Gardens staff encouraged wildflowers, benefiting the ecosystem and attracting Kestrels and Barn Owls to hunt on Lodge Hill. A further 20 bird and bat boxes, built by local primary school students, were erected.

Bird-ringing in Jubilee Wood at the end of November captured 35 Redpolls, one having been rung previously in Leicester, over 100 miles away, an indication of Jubilee Wood's evolution from agricultural field to a burgeoning nascent wood within just 12 years.

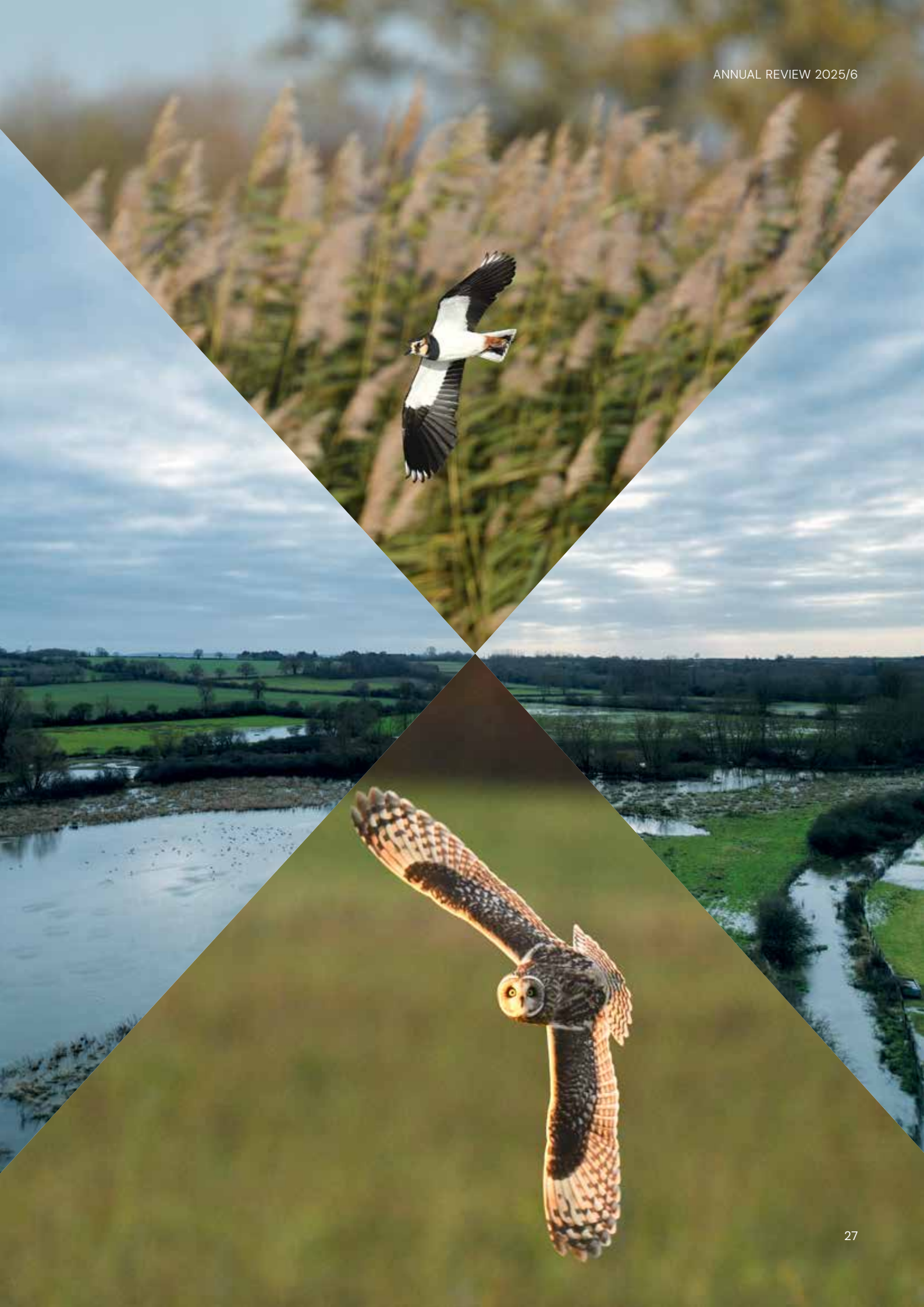
Helping tackle the environmental damage posed by litter to habitats and watercourses, pupils from Waddesdon Primary and Secondary schools collected a full van load of litter from Silk Street wood. A litter pick by volunteers yielded five further bags of rubbish hidden in the undergrowth around the Manor, Aviary and Miss Alice's Drive.

In its second season, Waddesdon's Conservation Hub in the Gardens had nearly 17,000 visitors, including over 5,000 during October half-term alone, on one day attracting more people than the House itself! Designed to highlight environmental issues, the Hub explores the conservation and biodiversity work underway at Waddesdon for wildlife, habitats, soils and water in the Gardens and on the wider Estate. Hub activity included outreach talks, outdoor exploring for school groups, bird and tree walks, council-led conferences, farm cluster gatherings and volunteer coffee mornings. Volunteers undertook a wide range of tasks such as seed collection, erecting bird and bat boxes, litter picking, bird surveys, tree guard removal and dead heading.

A Sustainable Champions pan-departmental group was created in August, to encourage and assist the continued drive towards sustainability at Waddesdon. External relationships were nurtured with the National Trust, Natural History Museum, Zoological Society London, the River Thame Conservation Trust, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Nature Engagement Partnership, Freshwater Habitats Trust, Buckinghamshire Owl and Raptor Group.







Managing our Collections

Inventory and Documentation

Over 2,000 objects were inventoried during this period in display rooms and stores and at Windmill Hill and the Stables. 77 new object records were created for previously undocumented or uncatalogued items.

A complete inventory and organisation of the Photographic Archive began at the start of September to ensure that every object is accessioned, digitised and properly packed and stored.

Image and Book Library

Over 600 new digital imagery records were created on the Collections database, comprising scans of historic postcards, photographs and documents from the archive along with in-house and new professional photography, to ensure that all object records contain at least one colour digital record image. As well as responding to queries from external institutions and individuals, the Image Library supplied images in-house in response to Press and editorial requests. It provided captions and source images for all copy, including leaflets, posters, labels, interpretation panels, and acquired copyright clearance for all in-copyright works. Five titles were added to the Research Libraries last year.

Cataloguing

Under Mia Jackson's supervision, Oxford Intern, Arundhati Saraswatula, completed catalogue records for the Razumovsky Service and began work on the loans for the Rothschild Sèvres exhibition.



Archives and Records Management

Resolving enquiries contributes to our knowledge and understanding of the archives and the history of Waddesdon.



There were 20 research visits to Waddesdon's archives at Windmill Hill during the year, a study day visit by Waddesdon school A-level pupils in July, and a corporate event for 50 guests.

The team answered 95 archive and research queries on a wide range of topics including family, staff and Waddesdon villagers, Waddesdon landscape history, historic moth data and Rothschild collections. Half of all queries received were a about the archives which Waddesdon stores and cares for on behalf of the Colnaghi Foundation, and a smaller number about the Butrint Archaeological Archive, also cared for at Waddesdon. In September the Archive hosted a visit from Butrint Foundation trustees to discuss next steps for the archive, and to help clarify some of the more mysterious plans, photographs and documents.

Preparatory work on the Collections database continued ahead of uploading more archive entries to the new online catalogue. Over 800 entries were edited or created on the Vernon database, bringing the total number to over 23,000.
In late October the Archive took ownership of Alastair Laing's archive and library.

Head Archivist Catherine Taylor entered her final year serving on the Archive Service Accreditation Committee and continued as Chair of the Historic Houses Archivists Group.

Volunteers continued to add greatly to our understanding of the Collections: Carol Hardy completed her transcript of Liste B, Rothschild collecting practices; Liz Whetton to created new descriptions for Dorothy Rothschild's diaries; Gary Blackwood worked on the Rothschild Foundation digital archive; Bobby Wainman finished cataloguing the Ivor Burnell local history collection and began scanning historic staff record cards, and Helen Ward added more detail to Waddesdon staff records from the early 20th century.

Records Management & Data Management

Over 300 records management enquiries were answered over the year, the majority about SharePoint, as well as retrieving and accessing files and accessing information from the Archive.

A review of the Corporate Records Retention and Disposal schedule was completed, and an initial review of the organisation's ROPA (Register of Processing Activities) undertaken. Catherine Taylor rolled out GDPR refresher training session to Waddesdon staff, and the team contributed to efforts to improve Waddesdon's information security helping and ensure compliance with the PCI-DSS standard and other legislation.



Gardens

It was the hottest summer ever for the UK, with a mean temperature breaking the previous record set in 2018.

Spared a hosepipe ban, Waddesdon was nevertheless mindful not to waste water. The lawns suffered and for most of the summer were brown and straw-like, although green shoots soon appeared once the rains returned. The bedding displays were immensely vivid and much admired, particularly the Aviary display which was enhanced by the new dahlia border. The garden hosted a range of events through the summer including Summerfest, making a return in June to the North Front, theatre performances on Aviary Glade, Chilli Fest in September and open-air cinema on the North Front. A family wedding was held on the Parterre, South Terrace and the North Front in the autumn.

The Florence Nightingale charity returned in April with a display of metal roses in the Rose Garden, commemorating lost loved ones, and sold to raise funds for the charity. Over 1,000 visitors attended the all-day event.

During the winter the team blitzed the Water Garden at the Dairy, focussing on the area behind the Pulham rockwork and removing a great deal of overgrowth from the rockwork itself.

Working closely with the Conservation and Sustainability team, the Gardens team contributed to soil improvement through no-dig at Eythrope and began a new composting regime in the Manor Gardens. Forage of leaf and shrub cuttings were supplied to ZSL Whipsnade for the giraffes and elephants. Over the summer, the team explored possible ways of reducing Gardens' reliance on mains water.

Abstraction of groundwater via a borehole at Eythrope proved unviable and attention consequently turned to rainwater capture.

The ongoing challenge of managing the garden trees continued with inspections, record keeping and remedial work where necessary, to ensure both conservation, insurance and health and safety compliance. Waddesdon's Tree Management Plan, devised in conjunction with the Estate and consultants Oakbank, was approved by the Forestry Commission in October. Sadly, a large Common Beech near Poupon's Grave was found to be infected with Meripilus Fungi and consequently steps were taken to manage and prolong the decline of this significant senior tree which was part of Baron Ferdinand's plantings.

In October, the established winter to summer naturalised bulb display in Upper Deer Pen was extended by 400 square metres with the planting of 53,000 bulbs. Work began on the creation of a plant database, a record of permanent planting across the site including the Dairy Water Garden.

To make way for the North Avenue Christmas light display, the Teapot created by Joana Vasconcelos was given a new home in the centre of the Trial Bed. Duck topiary was reinstated at the end of Exit Drive onto the A41. The fabulous Auricula Theatre pumpkin display at Eythrope was transferred to the Manor Conservatory for Halloween, complete with the addition of a pumpkin from Kate Malone's exhibition at Waddesdon in 2016.



© Tom Hatton

Eythrope Walled Garden

At Eythrope the 150th anniversary of its acquisition by Miss Alice was celebrated in great style with its first ever weekend opening to the public on Saturday 16 August, enjoyed by 360 appreciative visitors. Summer overall was glorious at Eythrope, with visitors wowed by The Pot Garden. Plant displays representing the five women who have influenced Eythrope (Miss Alice, Dorothy de Rothschild, the late Lady Rothschild, Dame Hannah and Beth Rothschild) were a great way to shine a light on their importance in the history of the garden. Nearly 700 visitors enjoyed the garden in 2025, with many tours sold out.

As part of the on-going drive for greater biodiversity, local beekeeper Stephen Drotske was invited to rehome a few of his colonies at Eythrope, locating the hives outside the walled garden in an adjacent coppice.

Aviary

During the 2025 season, 62 individuals from 17 species were successfully reared to independence, a notable increase on the previous year. Significant breeding successes included: five Socorro Doves (*Extinct in the Wild*); four Blue-crowned Laughingthrush (*Critically Endangered*); three Rothschild's Myna (*Endangered*) and two Sumatran Laughingthrush (*Endangered*).

Following a successful inspection in September, Waddesdon Manor Aviary achieved both Confined Institution and Balai status, permitting the transfer of birds between EU institutions. This accreditation required enhanced biosecurity protocols, improved record keeping, and closer collaboration with our DEFRA-approved veterinarian.

As part of Waddesdon's role in managing five EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) studbooks, it gave recommendations to over 30 European zoos.

To address the decline of the Asian fairy-bluebird *Irena puella*, Waddesdon Curator of Birds, Ian Edmans, collaborated with population biologist Nora Hausen to develop a Long-Term Management Plan, published through EAZA and distributed to all studbook participants, aimed at ensuring a sustainable future for the species. In March, Ian attended the EAZA Mid-Year Bird Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) meeting, held at Nordens Ark Zoo in Sweden.



Rothschild's Myna; Chestnut-backed Thrush; Socorro Dove; Asian Fairy-bluebird





Gavin Harrison, Assistant Curator, represented Waddesdon Aviary at the 2025 EAZA Annual Conference in Łódź, Poland, 9–13 September, which brought together over 1,000 delegates from more than 300 institutions across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Gavin also attended a series of TAG meetings and held discussions on RSPB-led conservation initiatives.

Though not direct members of BIAZA (British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums) Waddesdon attended this year's Bird TAG Conference in Farnham through its affiliation with the Avicultural Society. Ian Edmans delivered a short presentation on Asian Fairy Bluebirds, addressing the challenges of managing this species in captivity and proposed strategies for improved welfare and breeding outcomes.

Fieldwork continued in Samoa to support Tooth-billed Pigeon conservation where two new sightings near Uafato brought the total number of sightings to six in the past decade. Building on the success of the Japanese Wood Pigeon project, plans were mooted for a cat-focused predator control programme around Uafato, potentially offering renewed hope for one of the world's most endangered species.

The Rothschild Foundation also continued its support for the Cikananga Conservation Breeding Centre's conservation work throughout Indonesia. Amongst its achievements were Javan Green Magpie and Rufous-fronted Laughingthrush breeding successes and husbandry training for Gembira Loka Zoo. In parallel, CCBC expanded outreach with poachers, farmers, and schools, promoting wildlife-friendly livelihoods, sustainable coffee production, and eco-tourism.

Major Projects

Capital Projects come out of our long-term strategy to maintain and develop Waddesdon for the future.

The new gallery at the Coach House, designed by architects ZMMA, with new environmental controls and air source heating, was completed in time for the schools' Christmas exhibition.

Plans were finalised for two major projects: the replacement of Manor gas boilers with a ground source heating system, and the repair to the fabric and sculptural ornament on the North and South Pediments of the Manor.

The project to redisplay the Family Room and James and Dorothy de Rothschild Room, scheduled for completion by the start of the 2026 season, was designed to offer a chronological progression through the family history, focussing on the Waddesdon Rothschilds, using display panels, digital interpretation, images and objects.

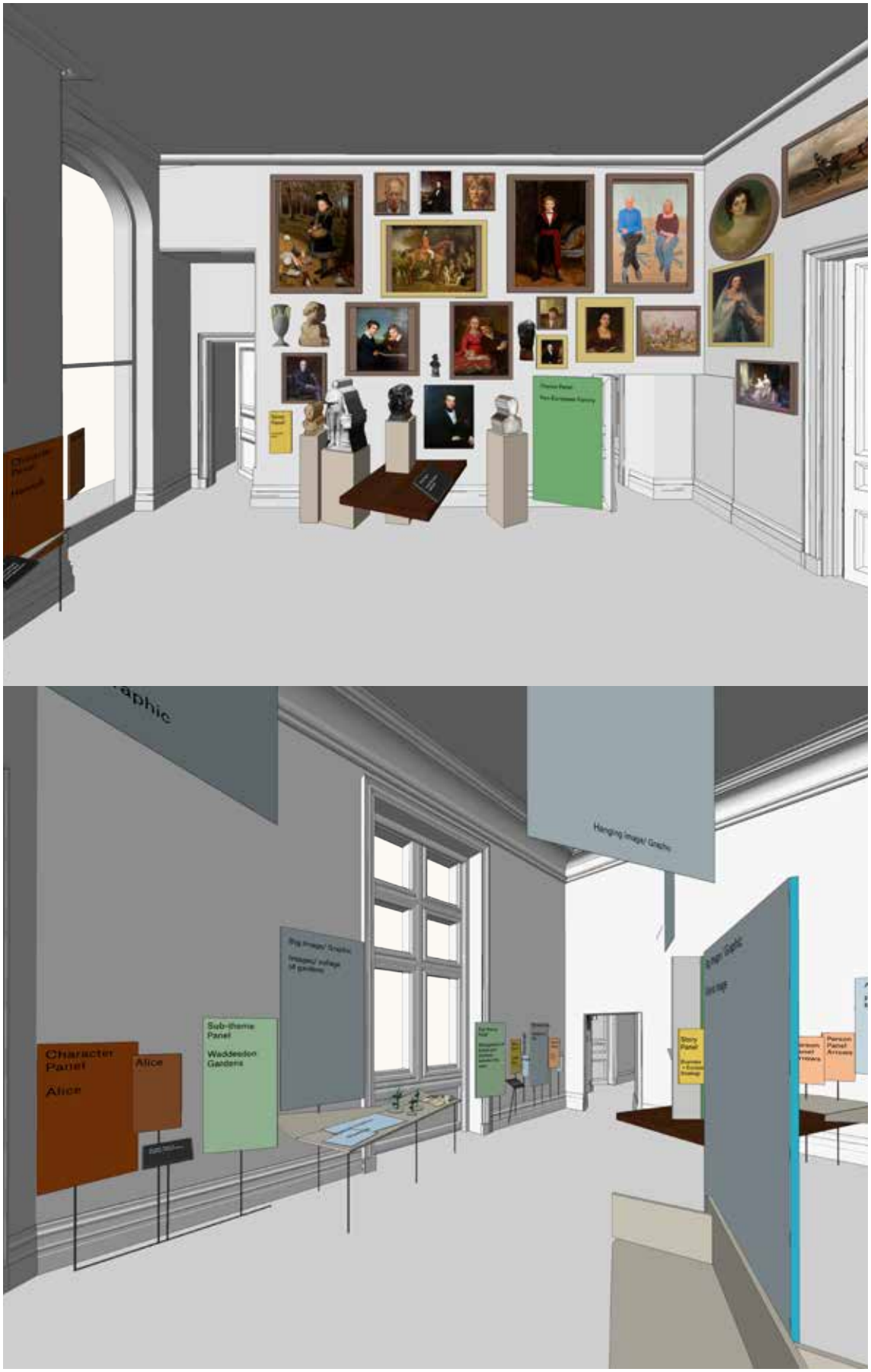
Work began in January on a new playground scheduled for opening in May 2026. On the footprint of the existing Woodland Playground, it is a wonderfully imaginative scheme, inspired by the architecture and character of Waddesdon, designed by Touchwood to encourage natural and creative play for a wide age group.

Planning began for the creation of a walk through the Gardens to celebrate the late Lord Rothschild's love of Waddesdon and contemporary art with commissions of benches from leading contemporary artists. It links to a longer-term plan to explore the idea of a Sculpture Park, connecting the Dairy, Manor and Windmill Hill, making the most of the landscape and encouraging visitors to explore and engage with outstanding art.

New websites were created for Waddesdon Manor, Rothschild Foundation, Five Arrows and The Bow.



Approval of a Bloomberg Digital Accelerator project grant enabled the commissioning and implementation of a Digital Asset Management System (DAMS) and a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The former allows centralisation of our collection of images and multimedia, giving staff the freedom to search, download and upload assets whilst being able to view all relevant metadata and copyright information, while the latter allows us to collect, analyse and deploy visitor information for experience and marketing in a much more effective and efficient way. Bloomberg Technical Fellow Ros Mearns headed up both projects, supported by Richard Nicholls as Bloomberg Digital Accelerator Coordinator.



Designer's visualisation of the new exhibition galleries © ZMMA

People

The Manor's programming for visitors, including for special events and families and its learning and engagement programmes reflect its mission to engage. inspire. inform and create lasting connections.

Visitors

Alongside the exhibitions in the House, a varied programme of activities and events included the return of Summerfest in June and Chilli Fest in September. A full family programme saw children coming in free for a Summer of Play with open air theatre, games and engagement activities. Talks and tours included House Highlights, exhibition tours, introductory and Spring bulb tours at both the Manor and Eythrope Garden, Meet the Expert and Meet the Keeper at the Aviary.



Accessible visitor initiatives included relaxed House openings, BSL interpretation and the reintroduction of the mobility buggy, taking visitors between the North Fountain and House entrance for the first time since 2019. Work continued with our Rothschild Foundation-Funded Community Engagement Officer consultant to explore how to attract hard-to-reach audiences.







Events

Inspired by the National Trust Blossom campaign, spectacular floral displays were created in the Oval Hall, Breakfast Room and Conservatory for the House opening in March, accompanied by a Blossom Trail highlighting objects in the Collection with horticultural connections. Eythrope tours showcased its cherry blossom, with the glorious Chestnut blossom celebrated in a blog by Pippa Shirley.

At Easter, over 4,000 visitors followed a family-focused trail around the gardens, as part of the National Trust Easter Adventures campaign, boosting Easter visitor numbers by around 6,000 compared with the previous year.

A new initiative over May half-term saw leading land and environmental artists led by James Brunt deliver Art in Nature, a land art festival showcasing new works inspired by and created in the grounds. Using white line marker applied through knapsack sprayers, an immense mandala was created over four days on the south lawns. There were five days of workshops, masterclasses, Q&As with the artists including Jon Foreman, Tim Pugh, Mark and Rebecca Ford, Richard Shilling, Julie Brooklyn and Portuguese artist Ana Castilho. Visitors were encouraged to join in with the making of artwork, using materials found on site.

Summerfest returned in June on the North Front, a two-day celebration based on the historical Baron's Treat, with free entry to the House, handling and engagement sessions with curators and stewards, pop-up performances, music and the return of the extraordinary dance circus company MotionHouse.

Halloween saw a trail for families, spooky afternoon teas in the Manor Restaurant and wonderful displays of Eythrope pumpkins and gourds in the Conservatory.

Christmas

The theme for Christmas this year proved to be one of the most popular ever. The Grand Festive Tour led visitors in the footsteps of Baron Ferdinand, accompanied by his faithful poodle, *Poupon*, on his travels around Europe, exploring the festive traditions of each stop along the way, from Paris and Venice to Lake Geneva, St Petersburg and Athens. Based on detailed archival research and written accounts and photographs by Ferdinand and his friends, displays in the House were designed by Jane le Bon Creative and her son, light, digital and sound designer Tom le Bon, working closely with the House teams. A model of Ferdinand's yacht, The Rona, on which he cruised the Mediterranean, was on display for the first time. Work by contemporary paper artists Nathan Ward and Dawn Thornhill also featured in the displays.

Outside, the relocation of the Christmas Fair to the South Terrace allowed a digital animation on the façade to be extended to include for the first time the whole North Front, including lawns and trees, in an integrated display. *A Grand Festive Tour* animation on the House was particularly spectacular, full of detail from the Collections, taking spectators to four European destinations by train and then finishing at Waddesdon. The outdoor illuminations for the Light Trail were coordinated by designers Woodroffe Bassett Design and Luminism (with whom we have worked for many years), and the projection designed by Illuminos, new partners for us.





Learning and Engagement

In-Tentz

Over 100 young people attended our third annual Scout and Guide two-day camp, In-Tentz, in Aviary Glade at the beginning of July, enjoying a wide range of activities, including archery, a cave bus, Lego crazy golf, orienteering and a silent disco. The scouts and guides also made use of the Conservation Hub, investigating different species and going on a bat walk.

Schools Programme

The Learning team welcomed 5,369 school visitors between March and the end of December, for a variety of workshops. Most popular were the Key Stage One sessions of Fun with Fairytales (based on the *Sleeping Beauty* paintings of Leon Bakst) and Garden Explorers. Feedback from schools was consistently excellent.

Two new sessions developed during the year were Arts Award, a flexible, national qualification run by the Arts Council to encourage under-25s to explore the arts and their creative potential, and Unpacking Your Plate, examining food and how it is grown, introducing themes of sustainability.

Education Projects

Schools Access Fund

The Schools Access Fund continued to be vital in enabling pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to benefit from the Learning and Education team's programme. Without this Rothschild Foundation-supported grant scheme, many teachers told us a visit to Waddesdon would be impossible for their students.

These comments were typical of feedback from schools who drew on the fund:

What I valued most about my visit to Waddesdon was how it brought history to life for children. The House, gardens, and exhibitions were engaging and sparked curiosity, helping children learn through exploration, storytelling, and hands-on experiences. These things are often difficult to recreate at school in a classroom.

The chance for the students to engage with experiences that many would not normally undertake or had never previously experienced. Although they may not recognise or appreciate it as such it is / was a culturally enriching and character-building experience for some of our most vulnerable students.

The children were able to visit the Manor and enjoy the grounds and the workshops. The workshops were very well lead and were hands on experience for the children. The children made bug hotels as were which was a valuable experience for them and was enjoyed by pupils and staff alike.

I can't thank you enough for looking after us so well today and providing such an engaging, interactive and special experience for the children. They were all absolutely overjoyed with the day and it was a delight to see them all rush out of the classroom to tell their parents all about it. The day was so well organised and pitched just right for our children which made for an especially relaxing and rewarding day for myself and Mersey, Cedar's class teacher. Please can you say a huge thank you to your wonderful team of volunteers for giving up their time to support us today too. We will obviously be highly recommending your visit and will greatly look forward to returning next year.





Waddesdon Church of England School Partnership

The arrival of Hannah Rayner as Waddesdon School Partnership Manager in March consolidated collaboration with the school. Hannah's first task was to mentor students who had taken part in pilot projects for their showcase at the opening of the Jacob Rothschild Sixth Form Centre in April. These included an art project for Year 7s, Legendary Hybrids, based on the *Flights of Fancy* exhibition, and a creative haiku writing project for Year 8 looking the works by Guercino. The Sixth Form also completed a project on antisemitism, including a visit to the archive at Windmill Hill.

Articulation

Twelve students from Waddesdon School and Oxford Spires Academy attended a Discovery Day in October designed to raise awareness of the National Gallery's Articulation Prize. Students participated first in a public speaking workshop, led by Ian Wainwright, a project producer at the RSC, followed by a tour of the Manor, focussing on three artworks in detail, before dividing into groups to write their own speeches on those pieces. Each group received feedback from Ian and Michael Shrive, Assistant Curator. Subsequently, three Waddesdon School students chose to compete for the Articulation Prize, receiving mentoring from Michael Shrive and Sarah Dewberry.

Flights of Fancy

In October, the whole of Waddesdon School's Year 7 visited Waddesdon to work on their Legendary Hybrids project and create their own fantastical animals, drawing inspiration from the art they saw at the Manor.

Art History Link-Up

Waddesdon's partnership with Art History Link-Up to develop a programme of art history teaching for local secondary schools saw the extension of the Higher Project Qualification (HPQ) to Year 9 students. Led by Victoria Hull, teacher at Waddesdon school, and supported by Sarah Dewberry at the Manor and Ludo Amory of Art History Link-Up, this 18-week course, consisted of weekly one hour taught sessions along with visits to the Manor and Windmill Hill. The aim was for students to create their own *Wunderkammer* or cabinet of curiosities, in the manner of Ferdinand. This project played an important in establishing a longer-running link to students at the school and a sense of stewardship of the Manor by pupils.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award

A new 12-week programme for DoE Bronze Award students started in January. Year 9 students spent time with the Learning, Stewarding and Conservation teams to contribute to the volunteering requirement.




Flights of Fancy
Proportion





Christmas Project

Based on Christmas music and songs, the Learning team's Christmas project, Sounds of the Season, once again involved working with local schools and community groups across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and beyond. In total, 74 schools and community groups took part, with 14,067 pupils' artwork featured. Twelve artists helped deliver workshops in schools, double the number of the previous year. These included willow artist Michelle Dufaur, fabric artist Jane Charles, and mosaicist Cathy Ebbels. The Learning team also worked with local artists Paige Denham and Anne-Marie Abbate, as well as Brighton-based Patrick Bullock, Sandrine Case and Jo Coles, and Staffordshire-based Protean Art, and had further support from illustrator Amanda Loverseed, propmakers Norse Sky and art education specialist Emily Gopaul.

Feedback from teachers was overwhelmingly positive, a rare opportunity in a crowded school curriculum for students to access art and creative workshops. Pupils relished the chance to meet professional artists, and to discover the possibility of art as a career.

Students also performed, recorded and produced fifteen of their own songs, including an original nine-minute composition by Year 12 student Joshua Guest. Waddesdon School's Art and Design and Technology departments created the I Saw Three Ships installation. Designed by Year 9 pupils, working in batik with artist Jane Charles, the ships were installed onto a moving automaton, designed by DT students, allowing the waves and ships to move up and down on a motor. A real feat of engineering!

Marketing and PR

Campaigns were created for exhibitions, events, branding and for the RWL trading company (comprising Private Events, the Five Arrows hotel and The Bow pub). Use of paid, closely tracked, social media activity continued to be a key focus for campaigns, with activity monitored and adjusted for maximum impact. For the first time, Waddesdon hosted a Press briefing at Spencer House to highlight the year ahead.

Exhibitions

The *Significant Signatures* exhibition was promoted onsite, featured in print, e-news, organic social posts and a promotional collaboration with Anya Hindmarch launched in May, which included a capsule collection based on the exhibition by Anya Hindmarch Bespoke. The marketing campaign for *Discovering Jewish Country Houses: Photographs by Hélène Binet* included Press advertising in Art Quarterly & RA Magazine. The exhibition was also promoted onsite, in the Highlights leaflet and with a last chance to see push through paid social media ads, outdoor digital 6-sheet posters and digital display ads from May onwards.



The campaign for *Pablo Bronstein: The Temple of Solomon and its Contents* also included Press advertising in Art Quarterly and RA Magazine, plus a *Jewish Chronicle* readers' event, and it too was promoted onsite, in the Highlights leaflet and with a last chance to see push through paid social media and digital display ads during October.

The striking image and film content of the Art in Nature mandala on the South Lawns went viral on social media and attracted high engagement.

Public Events

In May, paid media including digital, social and outdoor advertising and print distribution began for Summerfest, attracting local Press and radio coverage. The event was launched with a 20% off Early Bird offer sent via email to over 70,000 What's On subscribers. Paid social advertising for Chilli Fest went live from July, alongside organic posts, targeting family audiences within a 10-mile radius. A promotion with local directory Muddy Stilettos featured on their website, socials and mailings. Ten thousand Chilli Fest leaflets were distributed to the local area. Fine Dining Dinners were also promoted through organic and paid social media.

Eythrope Walled Garden

In its 150th anniversary year, Eythrope was the subject of a campaign running on and offsite through leaflet distribution, and a Meta ad campaign targeted local, specific interest audiences alongside organic social posts. There was also a Press day, a familiarisation trip for group travel organisers, and a sold-out public open day.

Summer Brand Campaign

The summer brand campaign built awareness and drove visits, with a wide leaflet distribution, adverts on Chiltern Trains and paid social ads across Meta.

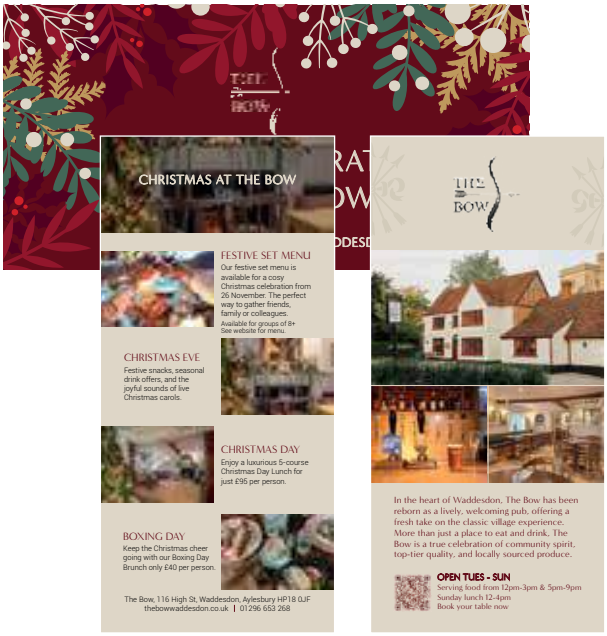




Print

Leaflets were produced for Waddesdon, Eythrope Walled Garden, Highlights for Summer and Autumn, Haunted Half Term, The Bow and Christmas at Waddesdon. These were distributed onsite to promote upcoming events and offsite to segmented audiences within an hour and a half's drive.
A newly designed map by the Hand Drawn Map Company was introduced for main season and printed carbon negatively with 100% renewable energy, zero water and no harmful chemicals, in line with Waddesdon's sustainability strategy.





RWL Marketing

The Marketing team took on responsibility for promoting The Bow pub, The Five Arrows hotel and Private Events, and retail, wine and commercial events. The Bow's one-year birthday was celebrated with an evening event of live music and food and drink offers, advertised via Waddesdon and The Bow social channels. For Christmas, a leaflet was distributed to local villages, parts of Aylesbury and West Bicester promoting the festive events and menus. Events at the Five Arrows were successfully promoted through social media. The team worked with a digital agency to run Meta social adverts to drive traffic to the Private Events website and also hosted wedding Open House events, in partnership with suppliers, and promoted via paid and organic social media and listings.



PRESS and PR

Between 1 March 25 and 28 Feb 26, a total of 919 pieces of coverage were generated across print, digital and broadcast media, reaching with a total advertising value equivalent of over £4 million.



One of the highest single value was attributable to the *BBC News at One* Halloween piece, featuring an interview with Pippa Shirley, broadcast on 28 October. Aired across *BBC South Today*, *BBC London* and *BBC News Online*, with an advertising value equivalent of £130,000.

May saw the joint announcement with partners the National Gallery and the V&A of the Acceptance in Lieu of Guercino's *King David* and the marble relief *Edward and Eleanor* by John Deare, followed in August by the announcement of the transfer to the National Trust of two of Sir Joshua Reynold's paintings: the portraits of *Joanna Leigh, Mrs Richard Bennett Lloyd* (1775-6) and *David Garrick, torn between Tragedy and Comedy* (1761). Key highlight coverage included features in *The Art Newspaper* (online), *Apollo* (online) and *Homes & Antiques* (print).

A Press release put out jointly with the British Museum in July on the Holy Thorn Reliquary and its replica generated coverage with *The Times, The Art Newspaper* and *The Guardian*. Waddesdon also worked with the Museum's influencer @tash_archaeo on a film to promote the display and its links to Waddesdon Manor which over 202,000 views across Meta platforms.

The PR campaign for Summerfest launched in May secured both national and local coverage, including in *The Times* (print and online), *Yahoo* and *The Daily Telegraph* (print), as well as local features across the *Oxford Mail* (print and online), *The Bucks Herald* (print and online), *BBC Three Counties Radio, Bicester Advertiser* (print and online), *The Oxford Times* (print). During the 1 May – 31 October 2025 period, the campaign earned 29 articles, with an advertising value equivalent of £86,000.

The Christmas PR campaign launched in August generated a standout feature in the Autumn-Winter issue of the *National Trust Magazine* alongside national media coverage featuring Waddesdon amongst the UK's top Christmas events and light trails in *The Times* (online), *House Beautiful* (print) and *The English Garden* (print and online). The campaign generated further coverage across local media including *Families Magazines, Living Magazines, Bucks Free Press, Bucks Herald* and *The Oxford Magazine*. During the 1 May – 31 October 2025, the campaign achieved 38 articles, with an advertising value equivalent of £42,000.

Another PR highlight was a piece on the Manor's history and collection by Simon Heffer for *The Telegraph* in April with an advertising value equivalent of almost £15,000.

Further PR highlights included inclusion in *The Times* and *The English Garden's* round-ups of the best gardens to visit during the summer. Wine tastings at Waddesdon were featured in *The Guardian's* best wedding gift round-up, while the Wedding Cake also appeared in repeat broadcasts of *George Clarke's Amazing Spaces* on Channel 4.


Waddesdon Manor
Assistant Curator, Michael Stone, gives visitors a peek inside this monumental desk. One of the most extraordinary pieces of furniture at Waddesdon, it was made by Ren... See more


Waddesdon Manor
The Dairy at Waddesdon is opening its doors for a sustainability focused seasonal showcase on Saturday 18 October, 10am
Sat 18 Oct 10am - 4pm


Waddesdon Manor
Turn up the heat at our annual Chilli festival. Explore food and drink stalls and the shopping village and enjoy live music and
CHILLI FEST
Chilli Fest | Waddesdon Manor
Learn more


The Guardian
'A cipher for crazy self-projection': why are architects so obsessed with Solomon's Temple?


Daily Mail+
Grassterpiece


The Guardian
Discovering Jewish Country Houses review – crumbling symbols of staggering success


art in nature
WADDESDON


ArtReview


How Lord Nelson's handwriting reveals his secret character


THE TIMES
19 of the best UK Christmas light trails for 2025


MAGAZINE
MERRY AND BRIGHT















Exhibitions Coverage

The *Significant Signatures* exhibition caught the interest of the Press generating significant international coverage, including features in *The Observer* (print and online), *The Times* (online), *The Telegraph* (print and online), *Antique Collecting* (print) and Italian newspaper *Corriere Della Sera* (print).

As well as Waddesdon's own campaign, the *Hélène Binet: Discovering Jewish Country Houses* exhibition benefited from wider PR efforts for the announcement of the Strawberry Hill exhibition and for the launch of the *Jewish Country Houses* book in November 2024. Waddesdon was featured in coverage with *The Spectator* (print and online), *Country Life* (print), *Literary Review* (print and online), *Jewish News* (print), *The Critic* (online), *The Art Newspaper* (print and online), *The Oldie* (print), and *The Times Literary Supplement* (print). Around the time of opening in March, the exhibition received a three-star review in *The Guardian* (online) and was featured in the Exhibitions of the Week listings in both *The Guardian* (print and online) and *Artlyst* (online), alongside further dedicated coverage from the local Press.

The *Pablo Bronstein: The Temple of Solomon and its Contents*' PR campaign launched in April and supported by a Press View for its opening in July, generated coverage across both national and arts Press, including features in The Guardian (print and online), Art Review (online), Frieze (online) and the RA Magazine (print). During the 1 May to 31 October 2025, the campaign secured 18 articles across print and digital media, with an advertising value equivalent of £45,206.

Coverage for Art in Nature exhibition included articles and features across the Mail Online, The Art Newspaper (print), ITV Meridian (broadcast) and Artlyst (online), as well as local magazines and newspapers circulated across Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and London. During the 1 May – 31 October 2025, the campaign earned 19 articles, with an advertising value equivalent of £10,000.

Digital and Website

Images and film shared across all social channels created engaging, regularly refreshed content of appeal to all audiences. Films were made to promote the Pablo Bronstein exhibition, a trailer for the Christmas season, and filming in the House and Grounds produced one longer edit and various short edits to showcase Waddesdon throughout the year. 26 e-newsletters were sent to over 100,000 subscribers.

Amongst the most popular Explore the Collection website pages were the Elephant Automaton, Paintings, A Rothschild Treasury, and Ceramics, Enamels and Glass. Out of a total of 6,502 exhibition page views until the end of main season, the Pablo Bronstein exhibition was the most popular with 3,802 page views.

The Bloomberg Connects app guide was refreshed and amended, with new tours, items and exhibitions added for the main and Christmas seasons. Onsite signage with QR codes helped raise awareness and mobile devices were available for visitors to borrow. Development of a web browser platform facilitated access and helped boost the app's popularity, with over 1,200 institutions using it across the globe and a user base of nearly 5 million people. Outside the UK, the Chinese were the biggest users, followed by various European countries.

Work on the online publication of *The Writings of Ferdinand de Rothschild* made more volumes of Ferdinand's writings, catalogues and personal documents, including the Waddesdon Visitors' Book, available using ISSUU page-turning software, accompanied by a short introduction.

Social Media

A strategy based on paid social media marketing campaigns on Meta (Facebook/ Instagram) aimed to balance interaction and engagement content with sales driven posts. Waddesdon's in-house influencer outreach generated 16 visits during the May-October, with subsequent content reaching a combined audience of nearly 120,000. It generated almost 24,000 Reel plays, 2,800 likes and 2,204 comments.

Campaigns focused on nano and micro influencers with between 5,000 and 35,000 followers, serving tightly targeted audiences, delivering authentic content to highly engaged followers, and providing quality content for use across Waddesdon's own social media channels.

A series of films by influencer (@tash_ archaeo) to promote the *Holy Thorn Reliquary* on display in the Waddesdon Bequest Gallery and Waddesdon Manor, achieved 22,000 views, 2,795 likes, 208 comments, 123 shares and 18 reshares.

Facebook continued to be our most popular social media platform with 58,000 followers and 4.4 million views, whilst our Instagram profile with 54,000 followers achieved 2.2 million in reach. The best performing paid posts were for Art in Nature, Chilli Fest and the Wedding Open Day, and organic posts on the René Dubois desk, James Brunt landscape artist and autumn equinox in the gardens achieved the most interactions.

Waddesdon also continued to post on TikTok, with over 2,351 followers, and to place content on X (formerly Twitter) and Pinterest. Collections content was hosted on X either on the main Waddesdon account or through the specific Waddesdon Curator's feed which clocked up more than 1,300 followers. The Helene Binet exhibition trailer ran across Instagram and Facebook with a reach of 12,000 people. Regular posts on Meta about the Pablo Bronstein exhibition on Meta reached over 13,000 with more than 190 interactions. Following the lead of other cultural institutions, Waddesdon has also started to post on Bluesky as an alternative to X.

The most popular Waddesdon webpages were Christmas at Waddesdon, Your Visit, and Haunted Half-Term. Pages featuring the *Pablo Bronstein*, and *Photographs by Hélène Binet* and *Significant Signatures* exhibitions attracted over 4,000 views between 1st May – 31st Oct.

Films on Waddesdon's YouTube channel hosted 68,500 views and were watched for 2,200 hours. Some of the most popular films during this period were *The Rothschild Family and Waddesdon* with 21,800 views and *Lord Rothschild presentation at Sothebys* which, though several years old, had 14,400 views. New films included a *Christmas* trailer which had 9,700 views and *Pablo Bronstein: The Temple of Soloman and its Contents* with 1,200 views.

The number of user-reviews continued to increase on Facebook, TripAdvisor and Google, totalling 8,956 reviews and boosting our Google rating to 4.7/5 stars.

Marketing partnerships were forged with Aylesbury Waterside Theatre; Bicester Motion, promoting wine and Waddesdon to its members, and Anya Hindmarch to create a capsule collection themed around the *Significant Signatures* exhibition.

Groups and Travel Trade

Groups and Travel Trade

In a year when many attractions reported a quieter summer, Waddesdon group bookings showed a small increase and private groups continued to perform well.

Travel Trade Events

Waddesdon staff attended several travel trade events, a mix of domestic and international exhibitions and sales missions targeting tour and coach operators and group travel organisers. These included Osaka Expo for Japanese tour operators; UKinbound, London; VisitBritain's Americas event in Mexico; TopResa, Paris; Group Leisure and Tourism Show, Milton Keynes and the GEM (Global European Marketplace), London, all key to further enhancing Waddesdon's profile within the travel trade, nurturing existing contacts and highlighting new products.

In June, 30 tour operators visited Waddesdon to view the House followed by lunch at The Bow and a guided tour of Eythrope Gardens, followed in October by a visit from 15 tour operators and online travel agents and marketplace operators who enjoyed a tour of the House, free time in the Grounds followed by lunch in the Manor Restaurant and a presentation in the Wine Cellars. Both the events were well received, generating, enquiries and bookings.







Staff and Volunteers

Staff

We were delighted to welcome Sara Aspley as Chief Operating Officer, with Claire King appointed as her Executive Assistant. Peter Smilie joined us as Deputy Head of Security, Ben Williams as Senior Grants Manager - Environment and Communities, Lydia Brennan as Digital Content Manager and Rebecca Doherty as Hospitality Marketing Officer.

Senior Curator Juliet Carey left us to take up a new position with the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, and Assistant Archivist Laura Noble departed to become Head of Archives for Woburn. Schools Liaison Officer Hannah Rayner decided to return to her teaching roots, and we completed the reduction of the Private Events department with the departure of Sophie Harris, Senior Events Manager and Maisy Cooke, Events Coordinator.

Heather Dawson-Mains returned from maternity leave as Digital and Collections Project Manager. In addition to running the Image Library, Richard Nicolls was appointed the Bloomberg Digital Project Coordinator, working with Rosalind Mearns. Pippa Shirley continued to serve on the Reviewing Committee for the Export of Works of Art. Michael Shrive was appointed Events Secretary of the Furniture History Society. Mia Jackson was elected joint Chair of the French Porcelain Society.

Antonio Corben left the Gardens team to pursue a career in pitch care at MK Dons football club. James Bateman and Lauren King joined in seasonal one-year gardening roles.

Additional posts were approved for a part-time Volunteer Administrator and Transport Administrator. Approval was also given for the expansion of the core Security team to provide an increased presence in the House and across the outlying buildings in response to the requirements of new anti-terrorism legislation Martyn's Law.

A staff survey undertaken in the autumn provided a clear, data-led view of organisational strengths and areas for development. Subsequent action points were tailored to strengthen cultural alignment, improve collaboration, and enhance transparency and trust across teams. A key priority was a structured development programme for Heads of Department, covering Insights Discovery, Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Neurodiversity-informed leadership, with the aim of building capability, self-awareness, and resilience within this group before rolling out wider staff development.

Now in its third year of operation, the Financial Assistance Fund, providing, one-off grants of up to £750 to support staff experiencing short-term financial hardship, continued to be well utilised.

Work Experience

Waddesdon's work experience programme was redesigned to accommodate the increase in applications over the last couple of years, and to ensure alignment with security and safeguarding procedures across the organisation. In 2025 we supported 46 placements. A new Handbook for Mentors, Welcome Pack for students, age appropriate This is Me forms, and work experience role profiles were created.

Pathways Internship Programme

Now in its third year, the Pathways Internship Programme expanded from seven to 11 internships with new roles introduced in Chef and Kitchen Management, Hotel & Events Management, Property Management, and Information Management & Data Protection, and refinements made to Learning, Marketing & Communications, and Visitor Experience roles. Pathways remained a work-based training route with a clear line of sight to employment, particularly for local young people, supported by a new structured learning workbook, funded internal and external qualifications (e.g. the wine qualification WSET). Shared core training on-site included interpersonal skills development and attendance on our EDI and Sustainability staff and volunteer committees.

In the autumn, the Foundation hosted its first alumni dinner, bringing together former interns, senior managers, and mentors. The event strengthened ongoing relationships, bolstered professional networking, and provided an informal but valuable opportunity to reflect on alumni career progression and the longer-term impact of the internship programme.

Oxford University Intern Arundhati Saraswatula, a history graduate with a very strong interest in French 18th-century literary and visual culture including a dissertation on Diderot's *Enyclopédie*, joined Collections department in September.

Volunteers

Volunteers continued to play a vital role in supporting Waddesdon. Between June and December over 400 volunteers contributed an impressive 24,110 hours (equivalent to nearly 25 full-time staff members). Of these, House Hosts accounted for the largest share at 36% (8,761 hours), followed by the Waddesdon Garden Team with 3,044 hours (13%), and Grounds Hosts with 2,119.25 hours (9%). Our current volunteer cohort stands at 427 individuals.

A focus on inclusive and flexible volunteering opportunities resulted in more roles for young people and those needing extra support. The Conservation & Biodiversity Team welcomed two young people: one student joining the Hub team and another supporting Waddesdon's nature monitoring programme. At the Stables Café, we welcomed a young adult with learning disabilities.

In June, a Retention Group was established, a team of volunteers to support the volunteering team with ideas and suggestions to retain volunteers and offer meaningful social events and opportunities.

Social events for volunteers during the year included coffee mornings with engaging speakers - such as the Sustainability Lead and Head Chef - and our annual volunteer picnic at Eythrope.




WADDESDON
VISITOR SERVICES
WADDESDON
Gardens

Commercial Enterprise

Every penny generated by commercial activity is re-invested in the running of Waddesdon Manor.

Waddesdon Trading (RWL - Rothschild Waddesdon Ltd)

Rothschild Waddesdon Limited (RWL) continued to face significant challenges, reflecting broader difficulties in the hospitality and retail sectors nationally and within the heritage sector specifically. Catering and Retail performance is closely tied to visitor numbers, while the Five Arrows Hotel and The Bow are less affected as they operate outside the pay barrier, though they benefit when the Manor experiences high footfall.







Grants Review



Windmill Hill Archive. Photo: Chis Lacey © Waddesdon Manor Image Library

ROTHSCHILD FOUNDATION



Grant-making in Numbers

174 grants National, Buckinghamshire (Local) and Green Fund.

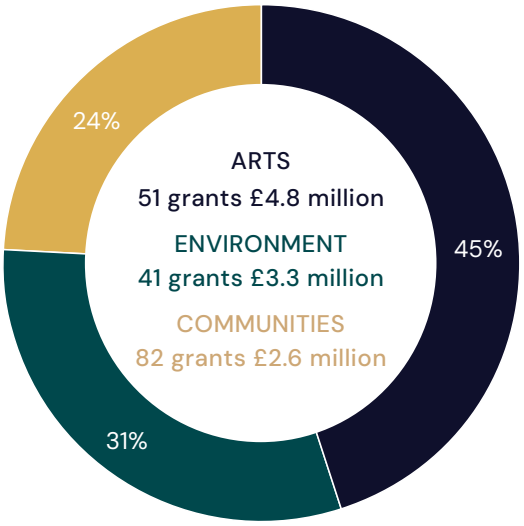
- Arts £2.8M
- Communities £2M
- Environment £3.3M
- New Year Grants £2.5M (*Arts £2M/Communities £0.5M*)

44% of RF funding supports beneficiaries in South East, showing our commitment to our local area in Buckinghamshire. 27% supports beneficiaries UK Wide.

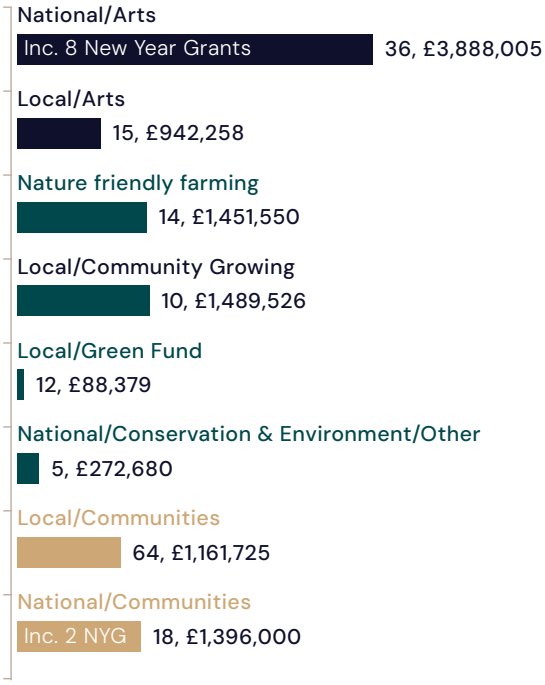
Plus 72 pre-designated programme grants:

- 10 Dialogues programme grants
- 37 School Access Fund grants
- 1 Charity of The Year grant to Youth Concern
- 2 Aviary grants
- 22 Staff sponsorship grants

Total amount awarded by funding pillar FY26



Total grants value by sub team FY26



Note: Data label shows number of grants, £ value of grants awarded New Year Grants were set at a value of £250k per grant in FY26.

New Year Grants

These grants awarded for the first time at the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025 marked the start of the next generation of family leadership at the Rothschild Foundation, led by our Chair, Dame Hannah Rothschild DBE. This year the 10 grants awarded recognise excellence in our core aims of arts, communities and the environment.

30 Birds Foundation UK
Rebuilding pathways for Afghan girls to learn, lead, and live freely. The 30 Birds Foundation is a charity dedicated to ensuring that all Afghan girls can pursue their academic, professional and personal dreams.

Ballet Rambert Limited
Rambert's production programme, including commissions from leading choreographers, large-scale collaborations performed by its permanent ensemble, and participatory workshops.

Friends of the Nations' Libraries
Support in perpetuity to fund acquisitions.

Milton Keynes Gallery
MK Gallery's core programme, including three major exhibitions with associated catalogues, activities for families, schools and communities across the region.

Royal National Theatre
Stories Start Here, including main-stage and touring productions, the NT Skills Centre's training and work placements, digital initiatives, and nationwide learning programmes.

Somerset House Trust
Development of a 25-year Master Plan for Somerset House.

The Bowes Museum
Unrestricted funding towards the Bowes Museum's galleries and parkland.

The David Nott Foundation
To equip doctors with the knowledge and skills required to offer treatment in countries affected by war or natural disaster.







The Glasshouse International Centre for Music

The inclusive Music Academy, enabling young people in the North East to access high quality music education and creative development opportunities.

"The Rothschild Foundation's support arrives at exactly the right moment as we grow our Music Academy. It means more young people across the North East will have real opportunities to step into music – many for the very first time.

For me, the heart of this support is simple: more young people learning, creating, and finding a place where they truly belong. That's what this commitment makes possible."

Wendy Smith, Creative Director

The Wallace Collection

For conservation work, exhibitions and public programmes that deepen engagement with the Collection.



Arts

Culture, heritage and the arts are cornerstones of the Rothschild Foundation's grants programme. Our funding includes support to renowned cultural institutions as well as grassroots projects that have a direct impact on creativity in communities. We are committed to supporting the sustainability of the sector so that it is able to innovate and experiment, and enable opportunities that are accessible to all.

Grants Awarded National

Art at Goodwood
A year-round programme of exhibitions, featuring visual and audio works and outdoor installations.

Arts at the Old Fire Station
Community partnerships, training and volunteering opportunities that involve vulnerable people in the life of the arts centre.

ARTS EMERGENCY
Arts Emergency is a mentoring charity dedicated to ensuring young people aged 16-25 from underrepresented backgrounds face no closed doors to creativity and the creative industries.

Awarded a three-year grant, Arts Emergency will deliver its core mentoring programming for 300 young people in Greater Manchester and Merseyside. The aim is to help young people to make decisions and take steps towards their chosen futures as they move beyond compulsory education.

Working with schools and colleges, each young person will be matched with a dedicated, trained and DBS-checked mentor from a diverse network of over 10,000 creative professionals.

"Mentoring really brought me out of my shell. I felt so safe in knowing that, irrespective of the month I had, I'd be able to report back to my mentor, and there was always someone there who had my best interest at heart to guide me through my next steps if I ever felt lost or confused. I was given work opportunities, invaluable experiences and advice through my mentor."

Arts Emergency mentee, 2025



London Introduction Event 2025 - Central Saint Martins. Photo: Yusuf Uddin

Association for Art History

Research and development of teaching resources to introduce Art History into the curriculum.

"I look forward to supporting quality provision of art history at school. I believe it's needed more now than ever."

Divya Marie Kato FRSA, Artist, Atelierista, Curriculum Developer



Attingham Summer School class of 2025 at Boughton House

Attingham Trust

The Dame Rosalind Savill Scholarship, awarded to a candidate in the decorative arts sector attending the Attingham Summer School or Royal Collection Studies.

"The generous grant from The Rothschild Foundation meant that we were able to far exceed our fund-raising target and have been able to secure the future funding of at least one annual scholarship to honour the memory of Dame Rosalind Savill."

Dr Helen Jacobsen, Executive Director

Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art

An Endowment Fund with a specific focus on learning and community outreach.

"The Rothschild Foundations grant towards Baltic's Endowment Fund will continue to benefit future generations through annual investment income, focused on learning and community outreach, forming a lasting legacy and achieving impact year on year in perpetuity."

Katie Martin, Development Manager



Compton Verney

Enabling the delivery of four major exhibitions each year, the care and presentation of six permanent galleries, and the ongoing curation of Sculpture in the Park.

Good Chance Theatre

An Endowment Fund with a specific focus on learning and community outreach

"Thanks to the Rothschild Foundation, we've been able to create two foundational projects: The Hope Shows give people with lived experience of displacement the chance to devise and perform in their own Good Chance production on a UK stage. The Stage Door programme gives people from refugee backgrounds the chance to gain paid work experience and training in leading arts organisations across the UK. Together, these initiatives show that people from displaced backgrounds belong both in the stories on our stages - through narratives that they personally craft and perform - and in the teams behind the scenes who make those stories come to life."

Hannah Harding, Communications and Marketing Manager

Hot Poets

The Ignite project, delivering arts and climate action activities, including schools-based workshops and resources, for young people.





Hypa Studios | Little Sparta Trust. Photo: © Andrew Lawson

Hypha Studios

Development of Hypha Curates, covering technical set-up, legal support, marketing, events, and staffing costs required to launch and operate the online platform.

"The support from the Rothschild Foundation has been instrumental in Hypha Studios successfully launching our new art sales platform Hypha Curates, designed to support emerging and mid-career artists with a new model for selling work to new audiences while supporting the art ecosystem. Our launch exhibition A Moveable Feast, curated by Cathy Wills, in October 2025, coinciding with Frieze London, was a great success and was supported with a feature interview on The Art Newspaper podcast. Since then, support from the Rothschild Foundation has ensured we continue to grow and have the capacity to support more artists, have our second guest-curated selling exhibition, and take on a part-time member of staff as Hypha Curates Manager. Funding has also allowed us to extend an invitation onto the platform to more artists from across the UK following open calls."

Will Jennings, Interim Managing Director

Illuminated River Foundation

Somerset House 25th Anniversary collaborative project.

Little Sparta Trust

Emergency repairs to the gardens at Little Sparta caused by storm damage.

Make a Wish UK

Memorable experiences for critically ill children.

"We are so grateful to the Foundation for your continued belief in our work. Your generous support has brought life changing wishes to children who need them most. Thank you for making these moments of joy and hope possible."

Gia de Picciotto, Interim Chair, Art of Wishes, as part of Make-A-Wish UK



National Portrait Gallery. Photo: © Jonny Guardiani

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

The National Portrait Gallery houses an extensive collection of portraits, celebrating people who have shaped British history and culture.

The Rothschild Foundation awarded a grant for the gallery's Youth Programme over a three-year period. This offers a pathway of creative activities for young people aged 14-25 years. The aim is to not only to widen access to the cultural sector but to nurture confidence, build professional skills and readiness for further education or employment in the arts.

Young people are invited to lead the programme through a Youth Forum, and young producers' stage late-night events, develop exhibition interpretation, films and audio trails, digital content and displays.

For Cecil Beaton's House Party the young people transformed each room in the Gallery's Will Gompertz, Deborah Loeb Brice Director at Sir John Soane's Museum. Learning Centre into a unique experience, exploring Beaton's fashion, photography and art, inspired by his eccentric parties.

"This funding has helped transform the ambition of youth engagement at the National Portrait Gallery. It has enabled the experience and insight of young people to be embedded and supported a new chapter of activity where young people are now co-creators, decision-makers and leaders. We are building a dynamic youth community, strengthened by creative and professional opportunities that directly support their futures. Thanks to the Rothschild Foundation, our youth programme is now thriving and the Gallery is a vibrant space of creativity, belonging and possibility for young people."

Liz Smith, Director of Learning and Engagement

Sir John Soane's Museum

Towards the Soane's programmes for young people, plus digital and communications support.



"The generous support from the Rothschild Foundation has been transformative for Sir John Soane's Museum, enabling us to open up the worlds of architecture and design to young people who might not otherwise encounter them. Through our partnership with Ark Soane Academy, where many students come from disadvantaged backgrounds, the grant has made it possible to create a six-week architecture enrichment programme that runs repeatedly throughout the year so that all Year 7 students can take part. The programme expands horizons, fosters creativity, and makes these professions feel within reach."

Will Gompertz, Deborah Loeb Brice Director

The Strawberry Hill Trust

Curator's salary, curatorial assistance and exhibitions programme.

"Our Rothschild Foundation grant has enabled Strawberry Hill House & Garden to think and act beyond its size. It has allowed us to lay the foundations for a lasting curatorial legacy, building our collections management resource, deepening the interpretation of the historic buildings, garden and collections and developing research partnerships with institutions from Yale to Vienna. Above all, it has created long-term planning capability for the curatorial and scholarly work that is central to Strawberry Hill's vision and mission."

Dr David Gaimster, Executive Director







Toy Theatre, Tony Roche Studio (2025), inspired by the 19th-century tradition of paper toy theatres and based on set designs from Charles Kean's Shakespeare productions, after a toy theatre by M. Trentsensky. Photo: Lucy Spiers. | Henry VIII's Lost Dagger: From the Tudor Court to the Victorian Stage. Ottoman daggers, 16th century. On loan from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, and the Portland Collection, Welbeck Abbey. Photo: Matt Chung. | Display including a playbill for The Winter's Tale at the Princess's Theatre (1856), the Laroche Album of photographs of Charles Kean and his company, a bound volume of royal command play programmes at Windsor, prints from Charles Kean's scrapbook (reproduced with permission from the Folger Shakespeare Library), and three illuminated light boxes showing theatrical tableaux of Kean in historical roles. Displayed in the Great North Bedchamber at Strawberry Hill House. Photo: Matt Chung.



The Trustees of the British Museum

A workshop exploring the Waddesdon Bequest's Holy Thorn Reliquary and its replica from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

"Research undertaken at the British Museum with the support of the Rothschild Foundation enabled assumptions that the Holy Thorn Reliquary had been extensively reworked in the nineteenth century to be disproved...The questions raised during the Round Table concerning the object's early biography now promise to inspire further research, with the potential to reshape fundamentally our understanding of this remarkable work."

Dr Rachel King, Curator of Renaissance Europe and the Waddesdon Bequest

Turner Contemporary

Contribution towards major exhibition *Bridget Riley: Learning to See*, November 2025 – May 2026.

UK Music Masters

Piloting a new programme to help state-supported primary schools improve their music provision.

University of Oxford

Towards Day of Psalms, curated by Edmund de Waal, exploring the enduring resonance of the Psalms across faiths and cultures through interdisciplinary artistic and scholarly engagement.

Untold Narratives CIC

Editorial input to a non-fiction work published by Profile Books in the UK.

Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust

Restoration and reframing of 13 paintings by Flemish painter Gerard Seghers.

West-Eastern Divan Trust

Performances in the UK, including concerts at Bechstein Hall, the Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall as part of an international tour in 2026.

"The Rothschild Foundation's support has been instrumental in enabling the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra to deepen its presence in the United Kingdom and to reach new audiences through meaningful artistic encounters.

Through performances at influential international gatherings and carefully curated events in London, the funding has allowed us not only to present chamber music of the highest artistic standard, but also to create spaces for dialogue, reflection and personal connection with our mission. These moments of exchange are essential to share our belief that music can open pathways to mutual understanding where political discourse alone often reaches its limits."

Daniel Barenboim Stiftung, CEO & General Manager

Buckinghamshire

Amersham Festival of Music
School singing sessions in five local state schools led by experienced music leaders, leading to a joint performance during the Festival's spring season.

DSCVR Creative CIC
Produce Your Sound Project to help young people to develop music production skills.

Eye Music Trust
Colourscape light and music workshops taking place at Waddesdon Manor and Stocklake SEN school.



GARSINGTON OPERA
Garsington Opera, best known for its seven-week summer festival, also delivers a year-round programme of activities for young people, connecting professional artists with the local community.

With the support of a three-year grant, Garsington Opera aim to see young people progress from their first experience of opera to professional-standard performance opportunities.

The OperaFirst schools initiative and the Youth Company together will engage around 1,000 young people through partnerships with state and SEN schools. Youth Company members will perform solo roles and take part in the children's chorus within main-stage Festival productions. Talented participants will return to Garsington Opera through the Emerging Artists' programme.

In addition, workshops will introduce young people to backstage careers in the production arts, including lighting, stagecraft, and prop-making.

"The Rothschild Foundation has been a vital part of our work, supporting Garsington Opera as we broaden access to arts and culture in Buckinghamshire in under-represented communities, particularly for young people with fewer creative opportunities in their formal education settings. We are able to offer many more people the opportunity to develop their creativity, enhancing wellbeing and building confidence through opera, both on stage and backstage. In 2025, we engaged over 1,800 young people through this work, including working with over 23 local schools, to support the development of creative and life skills, as well as increasing a sense of belonging to the Garsington community."
Verity Williams, Development Officer

Museum of Music History
An outreach programme with Chiltern Music Academy and local schools.

National Literacy Trust
Literacy initiatives at HMP Grendon, HMP Aylesbury and HMP Springhill.



Ben, Freddie and Aaryan doing photography

National Paralympic Heritage Trust
Viability appraisal to assess the condition, significance, and future use of four huts associated with the first Paralympic Games.

Neuroverse Artist Collective Ltd
Establishing an accessible website featuring 50 neurodivergent artists, two online exhibitions, and a mentoring programme.

"Early backing from the Rothschild Foundation enabled Neuroverse Artist Collective to develop the online platform at the core of our vision and to establish a meaningful presence within Buckinghamshire's cultural landscape. This support has allowed us not only to build constructive relationships with neurodivergent artists, but also to open dialogue with the wider creative industries, receiving an encouraging and positive response from professionals keen to engage with our network. The funding has given us the infrastructure, credibility and momentum to grow a connected community of artists and creative industry partners."

Chris Kelly, Founder

The Theatre Shed
Theatre Shed's Children's and Youth Theatres, as well as collaborations and outreach with partners in Chesham.

Vache Baroque
Enabling new collaborations, expanded education and outreach, and strategies to grow audiences and income.



Don Giovanni at Waterperry. Photo: © Jonny Guardiani

Waterperry Opera Festival
Targeted education and outreach programmes in Aylesbury Vale.

"We are extremely grateful to the Rothschild foundation for funding Waterperry Opera Festival's Learning and Participation activity. So far, it has allowed us to plan strategically for the future and work closely with our schools and education trust partners to provide a meaningful, sustainable music offer to young audiences. We are so excited to continue this work in the coming months and years to come, firmly embedding the festival in our community."

John Savournin, Artistic Director & CEO

Wycombe Museum, Wycombe Heritage & Arts Trust
For Wycombe Museum's core programme with contributions to Community Development, Curatorial and Director posts.

Other Arts

The following awards recognise the Rothschild Family's long held connection to the Island of Corfu, and surrounding area. In particular, our support of the Butrint Foundation, a UK registered charity founded by Lord (Jacob) Rothschild and Lord Sainsbury. Working closely with the Albanian Ministry of Culture, the Albanian-American Development Foundation and UNESCO, the Butrint Foundation aims to restore, develop and preserve the Butrint World Heritage site.



Clockwise: Mosaic motif of bird; Pan from M. Mile; Great Basilica and Lake Butrint | Matt Smith, *Flux*, 2018 at The Fitzwilliam Museum; Rebecca Stevenson, *In Transformation*, 2023, V&A Museum; Amy Hughes, *After Alhambra*, 2021, Cynthia Corbett Gallery

Butrint Foundation

Continuation of core, muti-year funding enabling expert consultancy support towards the ongoing care of Butrint as it develops its visitor offer, alongside sensitive conservation of the site.

Funding also enabled a core grant to the Butrint Heritage Centre, based at Butrint, and publications and ongoing development of the Butrint Archive which is currently located at Windmill Hill Archive, Waddesdon.

In addition, a separate grant was made to the Butrint Heritage Centre to support research into the fortification walls of Butrint to inform future scientific study and conservation. The research was led by Dr Nevila Molla, Institute of Archaeology, Tirana.

Waddesdon Manor

The Foundation provided funding to support initial concept scoping for artists Amy Hughes, Matt Smith and Rebecca Stevenson to work with and exhibit at Waddesdon Manor.

Community

Guided by the motto of the Rothschild Family - integrity, harmony, and hard work, our funding recognises these qualities in the organisations we support.

Nationally, this means proactively identifying organisations, each dedicated to meeting the needs of the communities they serve.

Locally, we operate a Community Fund which supports organisations serving communities experiencing disadvantage and inequality in Buckinghamshire with multi-year and flexible funding. Whilst the fund responds to a broad range of needs there is a particular focus on homelessness, financial hardship, mental health and physical and learning disabilities. During this year, we provided funding to 62 organisations in the county.

CONCORDIA INTEGRITAS INDUSTRIA



Grants Awarded National

5Rights Foundation
Research into how AI-driven educational technologies impact children's learning in the UK, with a focus on inclusion and equity.

"'The Rothschild Foundation's support enabled us to publish A Child Rights Audit of GenAI in EdTech, providing robust evidence to inform policy and practice. This research underpinned our advocacy for stronger protections in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and has contributed to growing momentum for a code of practice on data use in EdTech.

It has also positioned us as a trusted partner to the Department for Education, where we are contributing to the development of technical standards for the safe use of AI in schools, a taxonomy for EdTech systems, and approaches to ethically monitoring children's use of AI.

Alongside this, the funding supported wide dissemination and engagement, including national media, parliamentary evidence from our Youth Advisory Board, and events at the London School of Economics, where we shared insights from engagement with over 450 pupils and teachers across all four nations.'"
Clément Taquet, Chief of Staff

Chapel & York UK Foundation
The Obama Leaders network, including the delivery of a future Obama Leaders network convening at Waddesdon Manor

James' Place
Therapeutic services at James' Place centres, providing men over 18 with timely, in-person mental health support following referral or self-referral.





Prostate Cancer Research Centre
Expansion of research and investment in new technologies to improve prostate cancer screening and treatment

"The Rothschild Foundation's commitment to core funding has been a true catalyst for our growth and influence. By supporting our organisational foundations, they have empowered us to be well on our way to doubling our investment in academic and social research; including the launch of our Bone Mets Collaboration Grant Programme and our vital Racial Disparities Call.

This stability has also allowed us to move at pace with our £1 million Philanthropic Fund, where we have already successfully funded eight of our twelve target projects. Beyond the lab, we have secured 11 front-page newspaper articles in just six months to drive the conversation on prostate cancer screening. We are now leading a coalition of 18 organizations to challenge and revise the government's current screening model. The Foundation's support ensures we have the capacity to lead, innovate, and ultimately transform the landscape for every man facing a diagnosis."
Oliver Kemp, CEO



Royal Marsden Cancer Charity
The Ever After Garden in Grosvenor Square to raise awareness of people affected by cancer.

"The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity is extremely grateful for the Rothschild Foundation's support towards the Ever After Garden. Funds raised from the Ever After Garden will help ensure our nurses, doctors and research teams can provide the very best care and develop life-saving treatments, which are used across the UK and around the world.

The project underpins the hospital's most pressing needs, including supports life-saving research that will save lives across the UK and around the world, state-of-the-art equipment that is vital to achieving major breakthroughs in cancer research, and will support training of the cancer specialists of the future to support people affected by cancer everywhere."
Sarah Atkinson, Senior Philanthropy Manager

Sustain: the Alliance for Better Food and Farming
Salary of the Local Food Growth Manager, supporting the development of local food strategies which work hand in hand with nature restoration, including convening a Local Food Working Group, delivering a credible plan which is actively shaping policy.

Tessa Jowell Foundation
Head of Development and Engagement role. The Tessa Jowell Foundation works with clinicians, hospitals, researchers, patients, and policymakers to improve treatment and care for people with brain cancer.

The Westminster Roman Catholic Diocese Trust
24-hour, trauma informed services for women at Bakhita House.

"Through the Rothschild Foundation's grant we are able to support women survivors of trafficking, modern slavery and exploitation by responding quickly and holistically to provide not only practical essentials, but the time, space and specialist care that women need to heal and rebuild their lives."
Karen Anstiss, Head of Caritas Bakhita House



Left: Ever After Garden | The Westminster Roman Catholic Diocese Trust. Every woman gets a room of her own; Volunteers teach basic English language skills



The Glasshouse
Relocation of The Glasshouse garden from the RHS Chelsea Flower Show to HMP Downview.

"This support meant so much to The Glasshouse. The garden and building were relocated to HMS Downview immediately after Chelsea. The garden is thriving and used daily for mental health appointments, release-planning meetings and contemplation space. The women in custody at Downview helped install and care for the garden. They take great pride in it and feel valued and worthy to have received such a beautiful and peaceful haven in what can be a very dark place. Rothschild's funding allowed the garden to be relocated quickly from Chelsea and fulfil its real purpose, to support women and give them hope as they prepare for a better future after custody."
Kali Hamerton-Stove, Founder and Director

TimeGivers
Programmes providing young people with opportunities to enhance their education through real-world experience and holiday volunteering.

Buckinghamshire

aMAZing Therapy Centre C.I.C.
Counselling services for YMCA residents in High Wycombe.

Autism Early Support
Circle Centre nursery for 20 children aged 2–5 who have special educational needs.

Aylesbury Foodbank
Delivery of emergency food provision.

Aylesbury Homeless Action Group
Homelessness prevention advice service.

Aylesbury Vale Child Contact Centre
Funding to support supervised family sessions.

"We received a grant from the Rothschild Foundation grant for the first time last year. It has enabled us to continue to offer children from very broken families, the chance to develop a proper relationship with their non-resident parent, who they would most probably otherwise have lost contact with. It's such a great feeling to be able to keep open to enable this to happen, and for once to focus on further developing our free service, rather than to be constantly worrying about finances."

Aylesbury Women's Aid
Circle Centre nursery for 20 children aged 2–5 who have special educational needs.

Aylesbury Youth Motor Project
Aylesbury Youth Motor Project, is a motor vehicle education centre and workshop that supports a range of young people particularly those facing challenges in mainstream education. The project operates as both a working garage and a vocational training centre, offering an alternative learning environment that focuses on practical skills and personal development. Core funding supported the relocation and expansion of premises and purchasing of new essential equipment.

They have demonstrated significant positive outcomes for over 70 beneficiaries aged from 13-16 years through improved self-confidence, increased engagement in learning and development of practical and employable skills. Their outstanding reputation has provided new connections with local schools, Pupil Referral Units and other agencies and positive relationships have continued with Thames Valley Police and Bucks Council.

"I would like to express how monumental Rothschild's support has been in enabling AYMP to expand our curriculum and relocate. Our move in 2025 saw us nearly double the number of students on roll with us, and this would not have been possible without the new equipment and tools that we were able to purchase with Rothschild's support. We are seeing stronger engagement from our students and with the increased floorspace in our new unit, we are now able to accept more opportunities for guest speakers and demonstrations. We are proud to say that our students are learning on modern equipment which is in-line with the industry's current technologies. I hope that with Rothschilds continued support, we can keep equipping our students with the valuable practical skills and confidence needed for a bright future ahead."

Kristina Rana-Simpson, Funding Co-ordinator





Babies1st CIC
Part time project manager to consolidate and expand services.

Black Park Shed
Workshops and training sessions to members focusing on woodwork and traditional craft skills.

"The Rothschild Foundation Grant is used to run training and skills development courses, mainly in the area of woodworking and associated crafts. The Grant has allowed us to deliver a number of different courses to our Members. Due to popularity, every course is usually oversubscribed. However, the Grant has allowed us to deliver repeat courses, so more members have the opportunity to be engaged, socialise with each other, and feel a sense of achievement from learning new skills and having made something they have never made before."
Tommy Musgrave, Chairman

Bucks Community Boxing CIC
Equipment and hire of new venue.

Bucks Cricket CIO
Community cricket programmes in High Wycombe.

Bucks Vision
Support services for people with sight loss.

Community Unity Projects
A weekly lunch club in Quarrendon.

Creative Partnerships Beaconsfield
Arts and heritage trail in Beaconsfield Old Town showcasing high-quality mosaics developed in inclusive workshops.



Dementia Carers Respite
Dementia-trained carers to deliver a home-based respite care model.

"It makes such a difference just to be able to take a breather for a couple of hours. Even if you sit by yourself in a cafe and have a cup of coffee and know that he is fine, someone's got him for a couple of hours and he's fine."
Service User



Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity
A Co-ordinator to oversee the delivery of the Compassionate Neighbours project.

Heart of Bucks
The Young Futures Fund, including support and development of the panel of young people awarding grants.

Heart of Bucks
The Bucks Data Exchange Coordinator role, key marketing and communications activity, and a three-year contribution to the Local Insight platform, ensuring small charities receive operational support and free access to high-quality local data.

"The financial support has made a huge difference to some notable partnerships, for example the Bucks Data Exchange, as we have worked with this partnership of local organisations to make granular data available for free to the local community, supporting a range of different outcomes. This type of infrastructure support is badly needed for the VCSE sector and local groups using the service feedback that the Local Insight tool, as well as workshops, training, and 1:1 advisory sessions provided. Highlighting the value of using data, in an accessible way, is a critical element of ensuring a sustainable, thriving VCSE sector in our area."
Henry Allmand, Chief Executive Officer

Heart and Soul Hub Community interest company
Community growing and creative activity.

Holmer Green Youth Club
Social activities and life-skills courses for young people living in Holmer Green.

"We have been operational since 1966. Over the course of a year we have 200 young people from Years 6 to 10 use our club. As well as being a place to hang out with their friends and contemporaries we also offer a range of training in life skills - and support 2 local Junior schools in their provision of first aid training. We employ 4 trained staff members on a part time basis. We are financed partly by charging subs to attend but set these at a rate that hopefully doesn't exclude any. Subs only cover 40% of our ever escalating operating costs.

We are therefore dependent upon our partner organisations who support us in the provision of our youth club. Over the past 4 years our primary partner has been the Rothschild Foundation. Without their invaluable support we would probably have had to close our youth club. Unlike most charitable funding bodies the Rothschild Foundation help us with our operating costs. These other bodies only support projects that a charity will undertake. By supporting our operating costs the Rothschild Foundation have enabled us to carry on our work supporting the youth in Holmer Green and surrounding areas."
Mark Olsen, Chair of Trustees

Horses Helping People CIC
Weekly activity and social sessions to improve participant mental and physical wellbeing.

In This Together Bucks CIC
One-to-one mentoring and drop-in sessions for young people.

"Our volunteer-led Compassionate Neighbours scheme, with dedicated coordinators now in place ahead of its launch this June in Aylesbury will connect trained volunteers with individuals experiencing loneliness and social isolation, particularly those nearing the end of life, offering friendship and emotional support, with plans to expand across Buckinghamshire as it develops."



Rothschild Volunteer learning how to prune a rose under instruction from staff; Consent Garden Buddy Scheme Lindengate © Lindengate

Kindness in Bucks CIC
Baby Baskets and postnatal social and wellbeing support to new parents in need.

Lindengate
The Green Volunteers programme.

"It has given me a stress-free place to relax and work on my social anxiety."
Volunteer

Minding the Gap Education CIC
Tutoring, homework and learning support to children from low- income households.

Mindsnaps CIC
Six creative workshops with the Bucks Recovery College and Oasis Partnership.

MK Community Film Club CIC
Half term holiday clubs in Aylesbury which deliver hands on filmmaking workshops.

More Horizons
More Horizons are committed to improving people's health, wellbeing and social inclusion. They provide health and wellbeing programmes, offer practical and emotional support and run community sessions and workshops to build confidence, motivation and healthier lifestyles.

Core funding towards their Bollywood dance workout sessions supporting over 100 female participants. The programme is an innovative venture targeting global majority communities that are experiencing health inequalities with participants commenting that the program has strongly benefited their goals in staying healthy and improving their mental wellbeing.

"Thanks to the generous support from the Rothschild Foundation, our 'Arts for Health' Bollywood Dance Workout Sessions have created a vibrant, inclusive, and empowering space for women across the Aylesbury community. The programme has not only encouraged physical activity and improved wellbeing, but has also strengthened confidence, social connections, and community cohesion. Seeing ladies come together with joy, energy, and mutual support has been truly inspiring. The Rothschild Foundation's support has enabled women from diverse backgrounds to come together, celebrate culture, stay active, and support one another in a positive and uplifting environment."
Supriya More, Head of Programmes and Partnerships



Nest Aylesbury Vale Limited
Volunteer-led, in-home peer-to-peer support service.

"We've been matched with the perfect person. Our volunteer has made such a huge difference to our lives and we can't be more grateful. I reached out to Nest when pregnant with my second child and battling a rare disease. I was physically unable to do a lot of things around the house and I was finding it so overwhelming. After several months of support, both practical and emotional, I'm feeling much better about things. Our volunteer has supported not only myself, but my husband too, she's been such a lifeline for our family, and I don't know where we'd be without her and the support of Nest."
Family who has been provided in-home support

NewGround Foundation
Coffee and barista training program within HMP Springhill to assist with employment opportunities.

"NewGround was able to see the person behind the conviction. If they can do that for me—an ex-gang member from South London with a history of violence—then they can do that for anyone. I don't have a bad word to say about them."
Biggs, NewGround training graduate

One-Eighty
Therapeutic support for young people to sustain their education.

Queens Park Arts Centre
The Creative Producer role delivering theatre projects at the centre and in the community.

"The Rothschild Foundation funding has enabled Unbound to greatly expand and develop its calendar of theatre, audio, and film projects, which would otherwise be unsustainable. These projects engage hundreds of local creatives - and reach tens of thousands of people - every year. Through funding the creative producer role and various storytelling projects, the grant ensures that Unbound can continue to be a linchpin and driving force for Bucks-based creatives, volunteers, and audiences, who cannot find these opportunities elsewhere."
Sarah Lewis, Chief Executive

Restore Hope
Continuation of the 'FoodLife' scheme.

Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Service South Buckinghamshire
Counselling for individuals affected by sexual violence, abuse, and harassment.

Rokil CIC
Inclusive Rhythms, supporting neurodiverse children through music-focused workshops.

Rosie's Rainbow Fund
Music therapy for sick or disabled children, young people and their families who are patients at Stoke Mandeville Hospital .

"Rosie's Rainbow Fund is deeply grateful to the Rothschild Foundation, whose generous support is enabling us to bring much-needed music therapy to more children at Stoke Mandeville Hospital — children facing serious or life-limiting conditions, or recovering from major surgery. For families living through what can be the darkest of times, music therapy offers moments of joy, confidence, and connection. Thank you."
Carolyn Mayling, Founder



Sexual Assault and Abuse Support Service, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes
Services for survivors of sexual assault and abuse.



Southcourt & Walton Court Community Project
Children's holiday club and activities.

"They are so caring for the children, and they are like home to home. A real asset non-profit club who go the extra mile for us as parents and also put children. Emma and Lisa are amazing managers of the club and deserve any help towards running this club. I have never seen a child leave sad, and actually most ask to stay longer."
Parent

South Bucks Counselling
The Counselling Support Fund for low-income service users.

Sparkles – Supporting children with Down's Syndrome
Speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy for children with Down's Syndrome.

The Reading List Foundation
Bursaries for students from lower-income households to purchase books for their studies.

"We have been lucky enough to receive support from the Rothschild Foundation most years since 2018, and both the value and consistency of the support has been instrumental is our being able to support Scholarships at schools and colleges across Buckinghamshire. Thanks to the Foundation we've supported over 85 exceptional students from lower-income backgrounds succeed at university by helping them access the textbooks they need rather than just those they can afford. We've supported Buckinghamshire students studying subjects ranging from Agriculture to English Literature, at universities ranging from nearby Buckinghamshire New University up to the University of St Andrews, and most of those in between. Every year we're excited to see where our Scholarship winners progress onto Higher Education, and this summer will be no exception."
Alan Terry, Co-founder

The Pepper Foundation
Specialised play sessions at home for children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions.



Triveni Aylesbury
Cultural community events, monthly lunch clubs and mindfulness and meditation sessions.

"We love the fact that the charity volunteers served food with so much love and affection, this hot dinner is unique to this community."
Attendee



Waddesdon and Rothschild Foundation staff at opening of Jacob Rothschild Sixth Form © Waddesdon Manor Image Library. Photo: Ben Crowther Photography

Waddesdon Church of England School
The realisation of the Jacob Rothschild Sixth Form centre.

"The new Sixth Form Building not only allows me to become more independent in Year 13, it also gives me the freedom to choose where and how I work, concentrating on what matters to me: my education.

The Auditorium is preparing me for university study and feels professional. I love having time to collaborate and socialise, but also have quieter areas for focused study. I feel that when we moved into the building, everyone became more focused as the new environment motivates us all."

Sixth Form Student

Waddesdon Cricket Club
Replacement of the men's toilet facilities.

Waddesdon Hall
To assist with food insecurity, sustainability and fostering of social inclusion.

Westcott Cricket Club Pavilion Fund
Construction of a two-bay outdoor net practice and coaching facility.

Wendover & Villages Ukrainian Support (WAVUS)
Health and wellbeing sessions for newly settled Ukrainians and their families.

Winslow Activity Club
Weekly sessions held at Southcourt Church for adults with moderate to severe learning and physical disabilities.

Wycombe Homeless Connection
Homelessness prevention advice service.

Wycombe Mind
Mental health support services.

"The Rothschild Foundation grant funding has ensured the security of our Equalities services. At Wycombe Mind we are committed to equality and inclusion and we work alongside different communities to promote mental health and wellbeing, working together to address inequalities. We thank the Rothschild Foundation for enabling us to continue this work."
Jenny Stokes, Services and Projects Manager

Wycombe Refugee Partnership
Core support to welfare programmes for refugees.

Wycombe Women's Aid Ltd
Therapeutic group work for women who are not prioritised by statutory contracts.

"The funding we have received from the Rothschild Foundation has enabled us to continue delivering our group work programme for women living in the community who have experienced domestic abuse. Without this funding, our group work programme would have stopped altogether meaning women would no longer have had access to this vital service. This would have been disastrous, so the funding from the Rothschild Foundation has been, both literally and metaphorically, a life saver for women."
Sophie Ussher, Operations Manager



Wycombe Food Hub - Social Supermarket and Community Hub
Salary costs of part time staff to ensure provision of food in and around High Wycombe.

Wycombe Wanderers Foundation
A Warm Hub at Adams Park, providing hot food and social contact for older residents.

Youth Concern
Homelessness prevention activity, careers advice and counselling.

Other Community



Schools Access Fund

In Buckinghamshire we also have a focus on supporting our schools community, delivering a Schools Access Fund with the Learning Team at Waddesdon Manor. The Fund offers grants to cover the costs of school trips to the manor and gardens. Grants of up to £1,000 are available for transport and staff costs, workshop fees and National Trust Education Group Access Pass and are prioritised for schools with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. In FY26 the Schools Access fund supported 37 Buckinghamshire Schools to visit Waddesdon.

"What I valued most about my visit to Waddesdon was how it brought history to life for children. The house, gardens, and exhibitions were engaging and sparked curiosity, helping children learn through exploration, storytelling, and hands-on experiences. These things are often difficult to recreate at school in a classroom."

Monks Risborough CE Primary School





Environment

The past year has seen the launch of an exciting new strategy for the Rothschild Foundation's environmental grant programmes, which will advance the Foundation's philanthropic goals and make an impactful contribution to local Biodiversity and Nature Recovery action plans.



Within our food and farming work we have embraced a more regional focus on the upper Thames valley, spanning the Cotswolds to the North, the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs to the South, with Waddesdon Manor at the heart. This tighter geographic footprint for our grants will enable greater connectivity between our grantees, building infrastructure and capacity within the region, and enabling greater impact over the medium term.

We continue to support key national networks of funders and farm cluster facilitators, as well as building more opportunities for farmer-led research.

Locally in Buckinghamshire, we continue to invest in local food, both directly supporting community growing initiatives, and investing in the wider food system, ensuring that locally grown produce can reach the tables of families which benefit most from it.

Grants Awarded Regional

Cluster & Landscape Connect CIC
A regional forum for farmer led groups to connect, exchange and build knowledge on regenerative farming.

Cotswolds Conservation Board
The Regenerative Agriculture Accelerator Programme (RAAP) in the Cotswolds recruits cohorts of 25 farmers for peer-to-peer learning to enable a farmer-led transition to more nature-friendly farming practices.

Following two cohorts funded through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme, the Rothschild Foundation has funded a third phase of this programme, enabling a further 25 farmers to benefit, as well as providing ongoing support to members of previous cohorts. The grant will support farm tours, workshops and training events to enable a diverse group of farmers to move collectively towards more sustainable farming practices.

As well as on-farm activities, RAAP will draw from key local assets including the Royal Agricultural University, FarmED, and the North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster, all of which are supported by the RF.



FarmED CIC
Events and public engagement, as well as training courses for early-career land managers and farmers. Funding will also enhance FarmED's research capacity and its role as a demonstration site for academic and collaborative projects.

"As an organisation, we rely on the generosity of the Rothschild Foundation to enable us to deliver our core work of providing a space that brings people together to inspire, connect and educate to accelerate the transition to a regenerative agriculture.

It also allows us to expand the research we conduct on the farm, that feeds into our educational work, on areas like carbon cycling and soil fertility improvement. At FarmED we collaborate with scientists from Oxford University and Rothamsted Research. We are also in the third year of our work within The Centre for High Carbon Capture Cropping.

The support of the Rothschild Foundation allows us to continue to develop these ambitious projects, expanding the reach and breadth of our public engagement, at a critical time for climate, health and nature."

Charlie Allan-Lamb, Communications & Operations Manager

Food Farming and Countryside Commission
For the start-up phase of Act on UPF, led by Dr Dolly Van Tulleken and Dominique Walker.

Pasture-Fed Livestock Association
Enabling farmer-led research, peer-to-peer learning, and a certification scheme, supporting the transition to more nature-friendly farming practices.



Springtail Productions CIC

Six Inches of Soil is the inspiring story of a group of British farmers standing up against the industrial food system to transform the way they produce food – to heal the soil, benefit our health, and provide for local communities. On its release it was widely acclaimed to have enormous educational potential, but its feature-length nature meant that it was not accessible in class.

A grant from the Rothschild Foundation has enabled the production of six educational short films, accompanied by practical teacher resources. These films target a range of ages from Key Stages 1 to 3, and address topic areas from the wonder of soil and soil biology, to the economics of farming and food supply chains, to how farmers are working practically to regenerate their soils.

All six films, and their supporting resources, are free to access to UK schools via the Six Inches of Soil website.

The Food Foundation

Scoping opportunities for legume and pulse cultivation in the UK, including identifying the support needs of farmers to increase production.

The Iris Project

The Iris Prize, awarded annually to young people leading work on environmental sustainability, with a focus on the global south.

The Royal Countryside Fund

Farm support programme aimed at family farms, guiding the shift to nature-friendly farming, with 1:1 advice, peer learning, and local delivery through trained coordinators and partner organisations.

"As a charity, we've been helping farmers and rural communities for over 15 years and running our flagship Farm Resilience Programme. A lot has changed since 2016 and our new programme was designed using the feedback and input of the farmers we've supported, as well as local farm support groups. The programme provides free, practical, and locally-tailored business and environmental training to help farming families get a better handle of their finances and operations and build confidence for the future of their farm. By bringing nearby farmers together, this programme also provides a valuable opportunity for them to learn from one another, find solutions that are right for them, and make the whole farming community more resilient.

This funding enables us to provide our training for free and ensure that there is a real future for family farms for generations to come."

Keith Halstead, Executive Director



Wildlife Trust (Berks, Bucks and Oxon)
Purchase of Hamgreen Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located four miles north-west of Waddesdon.

Wildlife Trusts (Central HQ)
Land advice skills programme, including the salary of a Land Advice Knowledge Exchange Officer, GIS Officer and knowledge sharing events with expert input.

"The Rothschild Foundation support is a vital catalyst, that will enable The Wildlife Trusts to develop industry leading, place-based land advice that delivers nature's recovery at scale. By piloting 'test and learn' sessions with a broad range of partners, that include sustainable farm finance in Devon, to regenerative agriculture in Wiltshire, we are developing the skills necessary to lead a just transition in the farmed environment. This investment is allowing us to scale our advice sustainably through our new organisational maturity model (the 'Land Advice Ladder'), and in the future from our skills hubs to ensure that high-quality, data-led expertise is at the heart of a resilient and nature-positive rural economy."

Dan Pescod, Head of Landscape

Buckinghamshire



Building the hayrick; Clearing the Farm Pond © Chiltern Open Air Museum

Chiltern Open Air Museum

Expanding the museum's farming and community growing capacity.

"Thank you to the Rothschild Foundation for supporting the farming team and the effort they were able to put in over the last year. The team is lead by two members of staff and supported by a large group of local community volunteers. Without the leadership of this group we could never have dealt with last year's record harvest of produce. We grow apples, soft fruits and allotment vegetables and produced more bottles of juice and jars of jellies, jams and chutneys than ever before in 2025! We were also able to sustain our flock of Oxford Down sheep and make plans to increase their number in 2026. We purchased a new breeding ram to add to the flock and have 12 ewes expecting lambs in the next three weeks, timed for visitors to see them over the Easter break."

Martin Curtis, Chief Executive

Food Behind Bars

Initial research to explore how food education and production can be better integrated in Buckinghamshire prisons. Followed by restoration of the walled garden at HMP Spring Hill to grow produce for the prison kitchen and provide prisoners with practical growing and cooking roles, putting the research into action.

Friends of Berrycroft

Development of an allotment to improve physical and mental wellbeing through outdoor activities, healthy eating, and community activities in partnership with Aylesbury Primary Care Network.

"The allotment has also had a personal impact on me. As someone who experiences anxiety, I've found every visit to be calming and grounding. Whether I'm helping with planting, organising key holders, or coordinating volunteers, the space has consistently offered a sense of peace and purpose."

Rhiannon, Care Coordinator

Initiative Earth

The Buckinghamshire Regenerative Skills Hub, delivering hybrid online and site-based learning to local communities.



Young people making seed balls during a session about nature and birds; Seeds of change Beaver visit; Stony Dean College Group; New Growing Beds © Lindengate

Lindengate

Delivering a three year nature-based programme targeting 16-25 year olds facing barriers to mainstream provision, delivering food growing skills alongside pastoral activities promoting wellbeing, self-confidence, and developing youth leadership for the programme. Food produced through this initiative will be distributed within local communities.

"The Seeds of Change programme enables us to empower diverse groups of young people to learn about nature, sustainability and food growing - field to fork - whilst empowering them with education skills and an ability to share their knowledge with the wider community."

Andy Grant, CEO

Lopemede Nature Connection CIC trading as Future Oaks

Scoping a programme of educational activities at Lopemede Farm.

Real Farming Trust

Pilot supporting five entrant growers with land, agroecological training, infrastructure, and Basic Income, to build resilient local food systems and encourage more sustainable horticulture.

Restore Hope

Community growing and pathways to employment for under-represented groups, specifically targeting younger people with additional needs, or facing barriers to education or employment.

"Support from the Rothschild Foundation over the last three years has been transformational for Restore Hope. Our market garden, first developed in response to the food crisis experienced by many during the pandemic, is now providing seasonal fresh produce for more than 100 families in need each week, with the fruit and veg grown by volunteers and young people with special educational needs.

Our market garden is thriving, bringing together community, purpose and practical support onto our estate. Our Community Garden has also been developed over this time, offering a safe, welcoming space where people can improve their wellbeing, build relationships and regain confidence through growing flowers, herbs, and produce for personal enjoyment.

Your funding of Restore Hope is helping people grow healthier and happier!"

Caroline Sence, Development Director

The Theatre Shed

Development of an accessible allotment with raised beds, wheelchair access and supervised activities, allowing members of this all-ability group to grow and share fresh fruit and vegetables.



The Soil Association Land Trust

Restoration of the Black Barn at Woodoaks Farm to support a new Community and Engagement Hub.

"We are very grateful to the Rothschild Foundation for your major grant support of Woodoaks Farm Black Barn Project, which is all about connecting people to nature, food and farming. The centre-piece of the project is the delivery of a new Education and Community hub on the farm, which is due for completion in early 2027."

Simon Farley, Head of Fundraising

The Wilds Farm CIC

Support for a new Community Interest Company based ona farm in North Buckinghamshire, to use the farm as a place of education about food production, animal husbandry, and traditional farming techniques.

Thomley

Funding for the expansion of Thomley's sustainable horticulture, cooking and life-skills programmes to include community allotments, on-site composting, beneficiary run food stalls, introduction to animal husbandry, gardening club and cooking workshops.

"The support we have received from the Rothschild Foundation has elevated Thomley's offer for our beneficiaries. We have been able to provide more services related to our Sustainable Food Systems programme than ever before. Our visitors are actively learning about animal husbandry, food produce and are contributing to our outcomes by providing healthy and educational contributions to their lives outside of Thomley. The grant has enabled us to scale our operation and this is just the start of exciting developments for our visitors and the wider community."



Other Environmental

In 2024, we asked the Rothschild Foundation's grant holders about their approach to environmental sustainability. Highlights from what we learnt can be found here. In response in 2025, we launched the Green Fund to explore how we can support our local grantees in Buckinghamshire to address the challenge of climate change within their own organisations.

Green Fund

Amersham Museum
Installation of secondary glazing and thermally efficient blinds for single-glazed Victorian windows in the Museum's temporary exhibition gallery and activity room.

Waddesdon Hall
A community-led sustainability project One more step to cut emissions, boost energy efficiency, reduce waste and engage the community through eco-education.

Lindengate
A nature-based water management system that supports the environment and biodiversity.

"Through the Green Fund we are creating a much-needed wetland, sedge and reed bed system that naturally cleans our grey water while creating a valuable wildlife habitat that runs clean water into our ponds and ditches."
Andy Grant, CEO

Queens Park Arts Centre
Capital improvements to the Art Centre's roof and development of an organisational sustainability framework.

Vana Trust
Creation of a sustainability strategy: reducing waste and energy use, supporting biodiversity, and empowering the team as climate-conscious environmental ambassadors.



Horses Helping People CIC
A comprehensive biodiversity audit of the Horses Helping People site.

Road Farm Countryways CIC
Improvements to the thermal efficiency of Road Farm Countryway's studio.

Chiltern Rangers
A comprehensive sustainability plan as part of the planning process for Chiltern Rangers' new depot.

Wycombe Food Hub - Social Supermarket and Community Hub
Energy efficiency upgrades, volunteer and staff sustainability training, community education campaign and set up of a repair and reuse station.

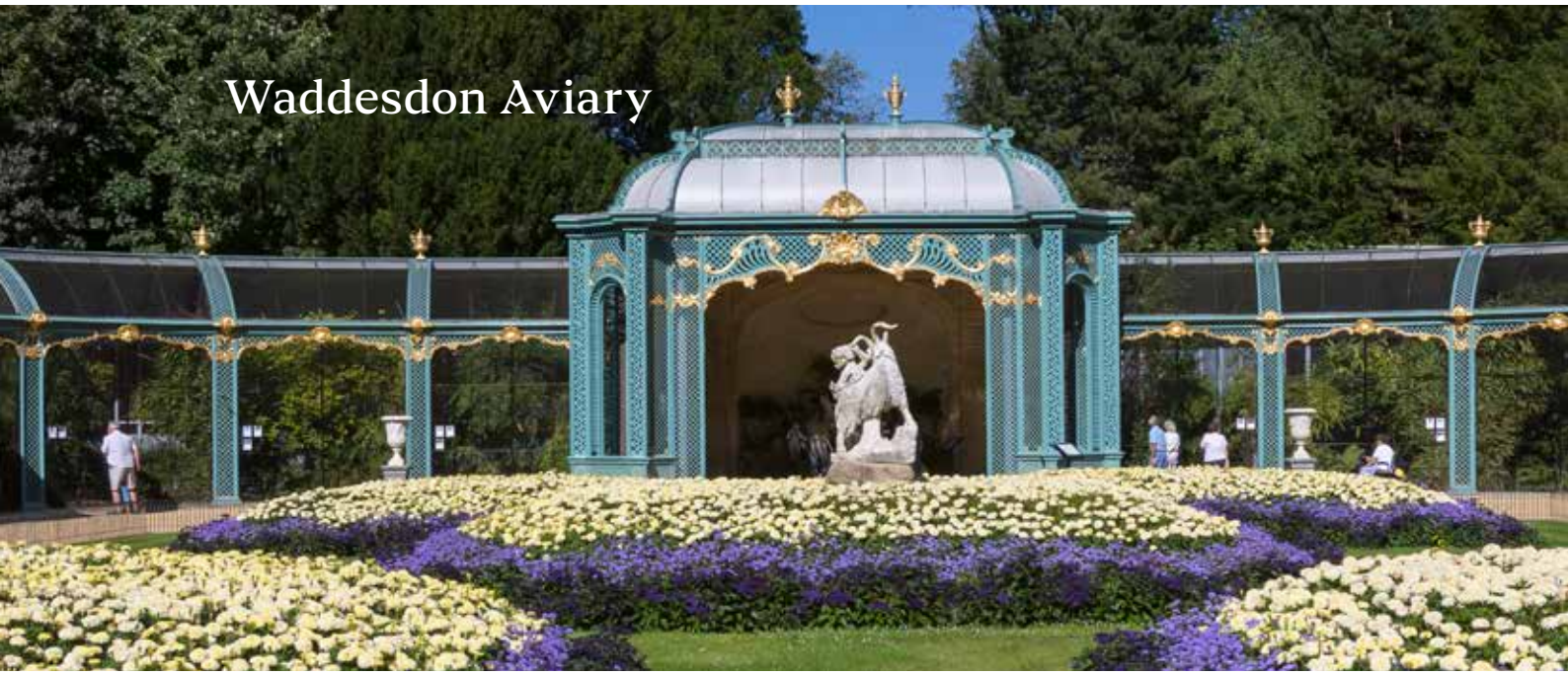
Grow Together Bucks
Development of a sustainability policy and to procure new composting and rainwater harvesting equipment for the charity's allotment.

Buckinghamshire Culture
Development of a sustainability strategy for the organisation, including setting up a carbon baseline.

"Bucks Culture are delighted to be developing a Sustainability Strategy. The work is focussed on creating an Environmental Plan that sets out Buckinghamshire Culture's commitment to reducing its environmental impact while continuing to support and champion arts, heritage and culture across the county.

The baseline assessment shows that our main environmental impacts arise from digital activity (cloud storage, website use, online meetings, email and social media), employee commuting, and events, particularly audience travel to in-person activities. We are looking forward to sharing our learning with the sector."

Vache Baroque
Creation of a sustainability strategy for Vache Baroque: auditing impact, reducing waste and energy, and supporting biodiversity.



Waddesdon Aviary

The Rothschild Foundation supports the Aviary at Waddesdon Manor, including maintaining its status as a zoo through the provision of grants to partner conservation organisations.

This year, a grant was made to the Zoological Society London to support expert based searches for the Tooth-Billed Pigeon. A grant was also made to the Cikananga Wildlife Center for the preservation of endangered and critically endangered Songbirds through conservation breeding in Indonesia.



Dialogues

As well as funding, we look for ways for the Foundation's wider assets to support our charitable objectives. This includes using the inspirational spaces we have on the Waddesdon Estate to convene, stimulate discussion and debate which can lead to collective action across our three pillars.

This year, the following convenings were supported with grant funding:



Emergent Generation Speakers Corner

Buckinghamshire Culture
A Disability Access Summit for local arts and heritage organisations and representatives of disability organisations.

Emergent Generation
Emergent Generation annual event, including bursaries for young people to attend.

"Thanks to the Rothschild Foundation's support, in September 2025 we held our 4th annual Emergent Generation Summer Gathering at Conygree Farm in Gloucestershire. It was our largest event yet, welcoming 103 young people passionate about building a food system that nourishes people and planet. Over three days, participants explored a vital question: how can we reconnect town and country, farm and fork, and foster understanding across rural and urban perspectives? Funding for bursaries made the event accessible to 19 young people who otherwise could not have attended, directly enabling greater inclusion and connection among the next generation of food system leaders."

Becky Grove, Director and Co-Founder

National Hedgelaying Society
The National Hedgelaying Championships taking place on the Waddesdon Estate.

"From the start we had nothing but great support from the estate team and the Rothchild Family in making the event a great success. The members of the National Hedgelaying Society are very appreciative of the grant from the Rothschild Foundation."

Progressive Farming Trust Limited
Management and delivery of a farmer cluster facilitator event in November 2025.

"Through the support of the Rothschild Foundation, Agricology has significantly strengthened its position as a central knowledge platform for regenerative farming in the UK. We have been able to delivered an exceptional volume of new content, expanded partnerships across the sector and engaged farmers through both digital resources and in-person learning opportunities. Through this expansion of combining farmer experience with research evidence, Agricology's ability to inspire practical change on farms has grown extensively and we are better positioned that ever before to support the transition towards more resilient and nature-friendly farming systems."
Matt Smee, Head of Agricology

Progressive Farming Trust Limited
Production of a report on the Farmer Cluster Facilitator event.

Real Farming Trust
The ORFC/OFC Common Ground Project.

Royal Agricultural University
The RAU Groundswell event.

Sustainable Food Trust
Collaborating for Impact initiative, supporting CEOs from leading food and farming NGOs to adopt effective co-working practices, and leverage investment for food system transition.

The Food Foundation
A panel discussion on the merits of beans at Groundswell.

Youth Concern
Price matching of honey and chocolate sold in Waddesdon Manor's shop as part of our Charity of the Year initiative.







Staff and Volunteer Initiatives

Charity of the Year

As voted by staff and volunteers, the 2025 Waddesdon Charity of the Year was Youth Concern.

Youth Concern

For 45 years, Youth Concern has played a vital role in supporting young people aged 13–25 across Aylesbury Vale—particularly those experiencing additional life challenges. The charity provides a welcoming Drop-in Centre, a counselling service and homelessness prevention projects, offering both emotional and practical support when young people need it most.

Youth Concern's wide-ranging services are designed to empower young people, help them overcome barriers and provide the resources they need to lead healthy, happy and fulfilling lives. These include access to emotional support and counselling, guidance on education, training and employment, and practical assistance for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The Drop-in Centre also operates the first dedicated youth food bank in Aylesbury and offers signposting to specialist services covering substance misuse, sexual health, financial advice and legal support.



Staff and volunteer Bake Off in support of the Charity of the Year.

Staff Sponsorship and Nominations

Staff and volunteers at Waddesdon and the Rothschild Foundation can apply for a donation of up to £500 in support of a chosen charity. Over the year, 22 staff sponsorship grants were made to organisations with challenges including Walk for Hearts for the British Heart Foundation, the London Marathon for Action on Pre-Eclampsia, the Great North Run for WWF-UK and Big Kev's Ride for Ordinary2Extraordinary.

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

We are committed to developing and promoting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in all that we do at the Rothschild Foundation. We recognise the real benefits of a diverse community of applicants, employees, volunteers and visitors and we are working to build and maintain a culture which ensures that equality, diversity and inclusion are implicit in all that we do.



BudDDy tour of Waddesdon Manor

Access Support Fund

In 2024 The Rothschild Foundation created the Access Support Fund to enable the Rothschild Foundation's resources to be accessible.

Access Support Fund grants are available for people with literacy, language, vision or other needs and that need support using our grants portal, writing applications and understanding the reporting guidance.

The fund may be used to pay for a support worker, scribe, translator, sign-language interpreter or other support service as required.

Waddesdon.org.uk