

House Guide

Begin your journey here...

THE ORIENTATION ROOM

This room was added to the house in 1794, a year after the death of Gilbert White as a dining room. In this room we introduce our three explorers of the natural world and explain why the museum is the home of the Oates Collections. The portrait above the mantelpiece is of Robert Washington Oates the museum's original patron, who helped the museum to open in 1955.

Step through the door into the...

LITTLE PARLOUR

This room is part of the original 16th Century building. Gilbert White's grandfather, also called Gilbert bought the house in around 1726. His portrait is just visible at the bottom of the staircase. Gilbert White moved here with his parents, siblings and Grandmother in around 1728 when Gilbert was 8 years old.

At the time the house was very modest, with only this room, the ones behind and above for the large family. On the walls are images of Selborne Village as it was in White's time. The two on the back wall are originals by Samuel Hieronymus Grimm, who Gilbert White commissioned to illustrate *The Natural History of Selborne*.

The painting over the mantelpiece is based on Grimm's painting of the Plestor which is just over the road in front of the church.

Use the door opposite the one you've just come through to the...

GREAT PARLOUR

This room was added in 1777 by Gilbert White. Gilbert was a fan of entertaining and this room would have served as a place where he could host friends and family. Around the walls are portraits of some of White's closest relatives and friends, as well as a family tree. When White died at the age of 72 he could boast having 72 nephews and nieces.

Continue through to....

BELL'S LIBRARY

This room was added around 1850 by Thomas Bell an eminent zoologist who bought the house because of its link with Gilbert White. In this room we celebrate Gilbert White's work *The Natural History of Selborne*.

Here you can either exit through the double doors into the gardens, or head back towards the Little Parlour and out of the door next to the information board that reads 'Oxford & Selborne'. Head towards the wooden door then turn left into...

THE OLD KITCHEN

Nestled in the back of the house is the Old Kitchen. This room and those above it are late 17th century additions to the original building. This most likely would have served as the White's dining room, a kitchen leading off from the now blocked off doorway. The floor would have been level with the viewing platform.

Head up the stairs towards...

GILBERT WHITE'S BEDCHAMBER

This room is probably the least changed out of all the rooms in the house. Before the Great Parlour was built in 1777 this solar would have been the family's main parlour, but later it became the master bedroom. These are the original bedhangings that were in this room at the time, some of the other furniture in this room also belonged to Gilbert White.

The portraits on the landing are of Gilbert White's maternal family the Holt's. From left to right Thomas & Anne Holt Gilbert White's maternal Grandparents. Anne White Gilbert White's Mother and Anne Ford Gilbert White's Great-grandmother.

Go up the stairs to the...

LEGACY ROOM

In this room added in the year after Gilbert White died in 1794, you can learn about the legacy of Gilbert White in the fields of ecology, biodiversity, natural science, literature and art.

Head down the stairs and turn right into the...

STUDY

Part of the 17th century house, in this room you will see Gilbert White's desk, which is inscribed with his initials and the date 1755. On the desk is a Hawfinch specimen which is believed to have belonged to Gilbert White.

Turn right to the...

CENTRAL STAIRCASE

This staircase was added in the 19th century. The portraits are of Edmund and Hannah Yalden, who lived in Newton Valence Vicarage and knew Gilbert and his family well. Below them is Gilbert White's grandfather.

Continue up the stairs to...

FRANK OATES GALLERY

These rooms tell the story of Frank Oates (1840-1875) from his childhood in Leeds to his final African expedition.

Continue on to...

THE PONTING ROOM

In this room is a 15min video of Herbert Ponting's 90 degree South, showing footage of the Terra Nova team's preparations to get to the South Pole.

Continue on to...

ANTARCTIC GALLERY

Here we tell the story of Lawrence Oates (1880-1912) from his time in the 2nd Boer War to the fated Antarctic expedition with Captain Robert Falcon Scott.

Head downstairs to...

THE DISCOVERY ROOM

One of the most recent additions to the house. This room was added at the beginning of the 20th Century as a billiard room. It is now a space for our temporary exhibitions, study, events or to relax. There are toilet facilities in this room.

You can either use the double doors to exit into the gardens or carry on down to the...

LONG CORRIDOR

Leading from the Discovery Room along the front of the house to the Little Parlour, the long corridor was added in the 1890s. Along the ramp you can see in places the original exterior of the house. We use this corridor to temporary exhibitions.

You have now reached the end of your journey; you can either go through the Little Parlour and Orientation Room back to the gift shop or use the doors in Bell's Library (level access) or Discovery Room into the gardens.

Please return this guide to reception when you have finished with it.