

## FIRST FLOOR

### North Corridor (between the Exhibition and Razumovsky Rooms)

Even the suitcases on the plinth in the Corridor window are deceptive, belying first impressions. They could almost be the cases the evacuees brought with them when they first arrived – but a peephole viewer reveals another view of Waddesdon – in the hidden dolls' house model within.



Children playing games on the Parterre

## SECOND FLOOR TURRET

### Camera Obscura

At the end of a hunt, there should be treasure. Waddesdon, however, hardly needs more of this. The treasure at the end of this trail is of a more otherworldly kind. In a final photographic loop, at the top of a tower, you will find a walk-in camera obscura hiding behind a black curtain.

A camera obscura is like a large pinhole camera. It has been made with a double screen so that you may walk around either side to view images of the Parterre and fountain or the beautiful stone façade of Waddesdon.

After your eyes have become accustomed to the darkness, light and shadows will grow distinct, colours will emerge, movement will be apparent.

Though it might be far-fetched, I like to imagine that an adventurous evacuee child wandering the Manor alone could also have experienced this phenomenon - having stepped into a darkened room where a tiny chink in the shutters let in just enough light to create one more magical interaction between Waddesdon Manor and the imaginations of its visitors.



Children on the Parterre



When the children are in bed; page from a historic album; photograph by Jan Dunning



*Clockwise:*  
Untitled (Green Room)  
from the series Precarious Rooms (2009-13)  
Memory  
Untitled (Red Room)  
from the series Precarious Rooms (2009-13)  
Untitled (Bedroom)  
from the series Precarious Rooms (2009-13)  
All other photographs © The National Trust,  
Waddesdon Manor

**I am grateful to Tony Willett at Amazing Camera Obscura for his expertise in designing and installing the camera obscura.**  
[www.amazingcameraobscura.co.uk](http://www.amazingcameraobscura.co.uk)

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WADDESDON  
Rothschild Collections

JAN  
DUNNING  
Rascal  
Shadows

Rascal **Shadows** is a series of photographs and installations by the British artist Jan Dunning.



*Footprints in the snow, January 1945, page from a historic album; photograph by Jan Dunning*



*We love shelling peas, 1943; page from a historic album; photograph by Jan Dunning*

Visiting Waddesdon with my youngest daughter made me consider the experience of Waddesdon for children; like a fabulous dolls' house with which one is forbidden to play, it seems simultaneously inspiring and inaccessible.

I was intrigued to learn that no custodian from the Rothschild family had ever produced a natural heir to Waddesdon, and that children had rarely set foot in the house. The only time when this was not the case was during the Second World War, when the house was used to accommodate one hundred evacuee children under the age of five from bomb-threatened Croydon.

The reality of the evacuees really became tangible when I studied photographs contained inside three small albums in the Archive.

The banality of the children's activities and routines - blowing bubbles, shelling peas, taking baths, having naps, or playing circle games on the lawn - contrasts with Waddesdon's imposing walls as the backdrop that framed and protected their play. The humour in the accompanying captions brought the personalities of the children and their teachers to life.

My installations at Waddesdon take the albums as a starting point. The work hopes to honour and reference the story of the evacuees, while also making this aspect of Waddesdon's history engaging to children now.

In her recollections of the evacuees' time at Waddesdon, Mrs James de Rothschild casts them as lovable rascals. I wondered just what these small children would have made of the fairytale house in which they found themselves living...

## GROUND FLOOR Breakfast Room

This is the site of the first of two installations on the ground floor. Look for an other worldly miniature landscape. Here, the 'Rascal **Shadows**' are the vestiges of play, traces of the children's presence almost overlooked.



## Dining Room (displayed in Ante Room)

The first of four photographs can be found here. The evacuees took their daytime naps in the Dining Room.

As an artist, I work with photography, and often with pinhole cameras. A pinhole camera does not have a lens; instead, as the name suggests, it has a tiny hole, through which the light enters.



Pinhole photography can be a slow process. An exposure takes minutes rather than fractions of a second, and I am unable to view the captured image straight away (as one might in digital photography) as I shoot on film. A pinhole image is often dreamlike.



*Afternoon naps in the Dining Room*

To create the photographs in Rascal **Shadows**, I built models of four of Waddesdon's great ground floor rooms. They are not accurate copies and the out-of-scale, surreal details within each photograph (the ideas for which came from images in the hand-made photo albums) prompt you to question the truth of the images.

These impossible scenes deliberately cross into a world of fairytale - they are the imagined memories or projected fantasies of an evacuee child who has found themselves transplanted into Waddesdon's magical surroundings.



## Red Drawing Room

The Red Drawing Room was used as a dining room by the evacuees. Mrs James de Rothschild, who lived at Waddesdon during the Second World War, particularly bemoaned the terrible damage done to the damask walls by sticky fingers and coloured chalk!

The tree in the photograph is inspired by an image of a fallen tree in one of the hand-made albums.



*Blowing bubbles, 1943; page from a historic album; photograph by Jan Dunning*

## Grey Drawing Room

Bubbles have found their way into this formal room...

## West Hall

Despite the fairytale nature of the house, the war was never far away. Here model aeroplanes and battalions of lead soldiers ambush other toys, all within the cavity of the fireplace.

## Morning Room

During the children's time in residence, the collection itself was safely packed away while nearly all the other rooms in the Manor were given over to their use. Boxes were stacked in the Morning Room and statues covered in cloth.

