

Home Life

Image: The hallway of Erasmus Darwin House, Lichfield (reconstruction).

Photograph: David Remes (2003).

Despite Erasmus Darwin's busy medical practice, meetings with scientific friends, research, experiments and inventions, there was still time for happy family pleasures.

Erasmus and Polly both enjoyed their married life. They often entertained guests, and kept open house. They both liked fine, costly objects and, thanks to Darwin's successful medical practice, they were able to afford them. Their home was decorated with prints by Angelica Kauffmann framed at Soho Manufactory, ormolu wares by Matthew Boulton, and Wedgwood's pottery. Darwin's library contained expensive, fine editions printed by **John Baskerville**. A splendid portrait of Darwin by Joseph Wright of Derby, his patient and friend, found its place there in 1770. Later it would be Erasmus Darwin to whom the first successful reproduction of the Portland Vase was given by Josiah Wedgwood.