

## National Trust Press Release

Wednesday 3 June 2026

IMAGES CAN BE FOUND [HERE](#) from 04.06.26

(Other images will be uploaded, EOP 11.06.26)

### New exhibition at The Children's Country House explores 100 years of childrenswear

This summer, a brand-new exhibition showcasing the transformation of children's fashion over a century, will take place at The Children's Country House.

Running from 12 June until 7 September, inspired by the **National Trust's 100 Things to Wear** publication, *Wearing Feelings: Childhood in Black and Bright*, will explore the evolution of childhood through fabric, fit and design.

Tied through a theme of emotion, visitors are invited to experience a nostalgic journey through fashion and how that evokes feelings of sorrow, joy and even rebellion.

From Victorian mourning to party wear, to flower power sixties denim, and sportswear of the eighties, nineties and beyond, curated pieces will be displayed in several of the historic rooms including the Great Hall, Saloon, Lady Vernon's Sitting Room and Library.

Megan Hunter, Collections & House Manager at The Children's Country House at Sudbury said:

*"This exhibition aims to take visitors on a journey through the decades, looking at the wearability of children's fashion and how it has evolved.*

*Through a selection of iconic historic garments from our collection, visitors can discover how changing attitudes towards childhood have shaped clothing.*

*The curatorial concept aims to highlight how childrenswear has become less about restriction and instead increasingly gives children permission to self-express, through colour, comfort, movement, and emotional connection."*

Dressed thoughtfully to complement each clothing era, rooms will offer an evocative visual, sensory and audio experience by featuring sentimental accessories, fabric swatch books and music from the decades.

From scouting to the space race, the emergence of the internet, and the influence of iconic noughties bands and leading sports figures, garments will engage visitors of all

ages to travel through childhood where times of constraint, shift to adventure, optimism and joy.

Highlights will include iconic Victorian puffed sleeve velvet and tartan mourning dresses from the Sudbury Hall & Museum of Childhood collection, a corduroy WWII Winston Churchill inspired siren suit loaned by National Trust's Wightwick Manor and a variety of colourful and nostalgic items from M&S Archive, Preston Park Museum and small local fashion businesses.

Megan Hunter, continued:

*"One of the most interesting aspects of our exhibition will be how it spotlights such a variety of pieces. These range from a 1980s boy's shell suit through to a silver NASA jacket from around the 1970s, worn as part of a child's astronaut dressing up set."*

*"As well as historic garments, we are also extremely excited to celebrate the talent of contemporary sustainable designers and look forward to revealing a uniquely hand-crafted new tartan design commissioned by award winning weaver Jackie Stephens."*

The exhibition has been designed on the ground floor to enable accessibility to all display areas.

*Wearing Feelings: Childhood in Black and Bright* will open Friday to Monday each week during term times, and daily during Derbyshire school summer holidays.

For more information on opening days visit:

[Wearing Feelings: Childhood in Black and Bright | National Trust](#)

The exhibition is included in general admission and is free for National Trust members, however, donations are welcomed.

**– ENDS –**

**For further media information please contact:**

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**For images:**

Images to support this story can be downloaded from here: [Media Assets - Asset Library - Childrens Country House Sudbury Wearing Feelings - Childhood in Black and Bright exhibition - All Documents](#)

**Notes to editors**

## **About the National Trust**

The National Trust is an independent conservation charity founded in 1895 to preserve historic and natural places in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and open them up for everyone to enjoy. 131 years later and that mission is still at the heart of what we do.

Over the next decade, our cause will be delivered through our [People & Nature Thriving strategy](#). We have three ambitious goals: to restore nature - not just on National Trust land, but everywhere; to end unequal access to nature, beauty and history; and to inspire millions more people to care and take action.

With our 5.3m members, 40,000 volunteers, and our supporters, partners and communities, we collectively represent a cause that's bigger than just ourselves: it's about caring for nature and heritage everywhere, for everyone, for ever.