

NATIONAL TRUST PRESS RELEASE
28 September 2021
M/011/21

Images at bottom of page:

The Peacock Dress at Kedleston Hall features elaborate gold and silver zardozi embroidery ©National Trust

Series of displays will shine a light on treasures cared for by the National Trust in the Midlands

This autumn, visitors to National Trust places in the Midlands will be able to learn more about objects in the recent book *125 Treasures from the Collections of the National Trust*.

The book is a fascinating tour through some of the Trust's most precious and intriguing objects, spanning paintings, books, furniture, silver, sculpture, ceramics and textiles. It also tells intriguing tales of those who made, commissioned, acquired, saw or used them. Together, they tell the story of how private collections became public treasures.

At Kedleston Hall near Derby, this will be the last chance for visitors to see the glittering Peacock Dress – one of the most popular pieces in the collection – for several years.

The Peacock Dress was made for Lady Mary Curzon to wear at the ball following the Coronation Durbarran in Delhi in 1903 – the high point of her husband, Lord Curzon's, term as Viceroy of India (1899-1905). Handcrafted in the workshops of Kishan Chand, India and House of Worth, Paris, the dress has been on display at Kedleston for over 25 years and at the start of 2022 it will be sent to the National Trust Textile Conservation Studio in Norfolk to be conserved.

Maria Jordan, Textile Conservation Studio Manager, said, 'One of the things that makes the Peacock Dress so striking is the elaborate gold and silver zardozi embroidery (a complex Indian technique) which covers it. However, this also makes it incredibly fragile. The dress is very heavy, clocking in at 4.5kgs (10lbs), and gravity can put strain on the fabric when the dress is displayed upright. The environment it's kept in also needs to be carefully monitored for temperature and humidity, to prevent the threads tarnishing or mould developing on the fabric.

'In January, the dress will be laid flat for the first time in more than 25 years and every stitch will be meticulously checked and conserved.'

The Peacock Dress is on display at Kedleston Hall until 20 December 2021, Friday-Monday. The conservation work is expected to last for several years, after which the dress will be re-displayed on a new, custom designed mannequin to protect the dress for years to come.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kedleston-hall

Other 125 Treasures displays in the Midlands

Wightwick Manor in the West Midlands is a Victorian Aesthetic Movement house containing an important collection of Pre-Raphaelite pictures and Arts and Crafts furnishings.

Among those being showcased are the 'Sussex' chair, possibly designed by Philip Webb for Morris & Co.; four animal drawings, again by Philip Webb for William Morris, which were used in the tapestry 'The Forest' by Morris & Co; one of the boldest and most compelling works by English artist and ceramic designer William De Morgan; and the most important late painting by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Sir Edward Burne-Jones, *Love Among the Ruins*.

Items are on permanent display.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wightwick-manor-and-gardens

Built for Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, also known as Bess of Hardwick, in the 16th century, **Hardwick** is famed for its spectacular interiors with huge Flemish tapestries, painted wall hangings, inlaid furniture, original portraits and 16th- and 17th-century textiles.

To mark *125 Treasures*, the Sea Dog Table, 16th-century Chinese ewer and 'Bess of Hardwick' portrait will all be displayed in one large display case, while the portrait of Elizabeth I and Penelope wall hangings will be seen in their historic settings. Items will be highlighted from September 2021.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardwick-hall

Other locations with displays include Upton House and Gardens and Charlecote Park in Warwickshire, Dudmaston and Attingham Park in Shropshire, Calke in Derbyshire and Shugborough Estate in Staffordshire.



The items mentioned here are all featured in the National Trust book *125 Treasures from the Collections of the National Trust*, available from selected National Trust shops and nationaltrust.org.uk/shop.

- ENDS -

**For more information and images please contact:
Cat Edworthy: cat.edworthy@nationaltrust.org.uk or 07484 500852**

Notes to Editor

About National Trust collections

The National Trust's collections make up, as a whole, one of the world's largest and most significant holdings of art and heritage objects, a living cultural resource accessible to everyone. From vast tapestries and artistic masterpieces to precious personal possessions, the range and breadth of the collection is astonishing. Many objects in the collection were commissioned, acquired and accumulated by country house owners over the centuries and still survive in their original settings.

Highlights include:

- **Oil paintings:** more than 13,000 oil paintings at over 200 historic houses across England, Wales and Northern Ireland – the largest number of any organisation in the United Kingdom. The extraordinarily diverse collection of works includes those by Turner, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Rembrandt, Titian and many others.
- **Furniture:** approximately 55,000 individual pieces, amongst the largest and most important international collections in the world. The Trust's English furniture collection is particularly important because of its rarity and craftsmanship.
- **Textiles and Tapestries:** a vast textile collection of nearly 100,000 individual items. These range from grand furnishing such as state beds and rich hangings to fine tapestries and to costumes of nearly all periods and styles. There are around 650 tapestries, the largest collection of tapestries in Britain and one of the largest in the world.
- **Sculptures:** around 6,000 sculptures of every shape and size, from enormous monumental marble statues to miniature carvings in ivory.
- **Ceramics:** more than 80,000 diverse ceramic objects that tell a global story. Highlights include treasures from imperial China and Mughal India, Italian renaissance maiolica, French royal porcelain and outstanding Meissen and Wedgwood products.
- **Books:** over 400,000 titles, held in over 160 historic houses and properties. The collection provides an unparalleled record of private book ownership and use over many centuries and includes everything from a leaf from

the Bankes Fragment, one of the first copies of the Bible to be produced in England (c.698–716), to works by Beatrix Potter and Agatha Christie.

- **Photographs:** the photographic collections reflect the development of British photography from the 1840s to the present day and we look after over 80,000 photographs across hundreds of sites. They include nationally and internationally important collections, such as the Fenton Collection and photography by William Fox Talbot at Lacock.
- **Wallpapers:** the most important collections of historic Chinese wallpapers in the world, on permanent display at 18 country houses.

The National Trust Collections website provides the opportunity to search the collections as a whole; explore highlights of each place; discover further resources including guides to the collections, research articles and online exhibitions. www.nationatrustcollections.org.uk

About the National Trust

The National Trust is a conservation charity founded in 1895 by three people: Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley, who saw the importance of the nation's heritage and open spaces and wanted to preserve them for everyone to enjoy. Today, across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we continue to look after places so people and nature can thrive.

The challenges of the coronavirus pandemic have shown this is more important than ever. From finding fresh air and open skies to tracking a bee's flight to a flower; from finding beauty in an exquisite painting or discovering the hidden history of a country house nearby – the places we care for enrich people's lives.

Entirely independent of Government, the National Trust looks after more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 780 miles of coastline and 500 historic properties, gardens and nature reserves.

The National Trust is for everyone – we were founded for the benefit of the whole nation. We receive on average more than 26.9 million visits each year to the places we care for that have an entry fee, and an estimated 100m visits to the outdoor places that are free of charge. Paying visitors, together with our 5.6 million members and more than 53,000 volunteers, support our work to care for nature, beauty, history. For everyone, for ever.

-- The National Trust is a registered charity no. 205846. Our registered office is Heelis, Kemble Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 2NA. The views expressed in this email are personal and may not necessarily reflect those of the National Trust unless explicitly stated otherwise. This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error, please notify me immediately. If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you should not copy it for any purpose, or disclose its contents to any other person. Senders and recipients of email should be aware that, under the Data Protection Act 2018, the contents may have to be disclosed. The National Trust has scanned this email for security issues. However the National Trust cannot accept liability for any form of malware that may be in this email and we recommend that you check all emails with an appropriate security tool.

