# Bathtub of UK’s notorious hitman John Childs unveiled at True Crime Museum



The story of John Childs, the UK's most infamous hitman, continues to haunt the annals of British criminal history more than four decades after his capture. Now in his late 80s and serving a whole life sentence, Childs was responsible for a series of gruesome murders between 1974 and 1978, claiming six victims for a price of £2,000 each. Among them was a tragic case involving a 10-year-old boy, whose life was taken as he was present during a contract killing. The chilling modus operandi of Childs included shooting his victims, dismembering their bodies in the bath of his flat in Poplar, and using a hacksaw and a bread knife to conceal his heinous acts.

Recently, the very bathtub where Childs committed these atrocities has taken on a macabre significance, as it now forms part of an exhibit at The True Crime Museum in Hastings. According to museum curator Joel Griggs, the bath was salvaged from Childs' flat by his great uncle shortly after his arrest. Initially repurposed as a planter for flowers in memory of one of Childs' victims, the bath eventually found its way to the Griggs family home, where it was used for various mundane tasks, completely oblivious to its grim past. Only in later years did Griggs learn of its true history, which sparked a deep fascination that ultimately contributed to the establishment of the museum in 2014.

As Griggs shared, "I was in my 20s when I learned from my dad where the bath actually came from - I was like 'why didn't you tell me?'" This revelation instilled in him a desire to confront the uncomfortable truths of criminal history, making the bathtub an inspiring element of the museum's collection.

The True Crime Museum, which has been gaining recognition as a dark tourism hotspot, houses a range of exhibits that explore the chilling realities of crime, from serial killers to notorious gangsters. Other artefacts include the actual acid containers used by John George Haigh, known for dissolving his victims, and even a genuine lethal injection deathbed. Griggs has emphasised the importance of presenting these items with tasteful education in mind, stating, “I believe they can transmit an aura even without knowing the provenance.”

Childs’ notoriety, while profound, often gets overshadowed by other infamous criminals like the Yorkshire Ripper, Peter Sutcliffe, or the Wests. The grisly details surrounding his crimes—to cut up corpses in his flat’s bathtub and then dispose of the remains—grapple with the morbid curiosity of the public. As the museum features his bathtub, it serves as a grim reminder of a bleak chapter in Britain’s criminal saga.

The grim legacy of Childs is further underscored by the fact that the remains of his victims were never recovered, leaving families and communities to grapple with the unresolved pain of their losses. His arrest came after a member of his criminal gang turned him in, leading to his conviction on six concurrent life sentences. Despite his sinister legacy, Childs' story has been relatively unexamined compared to the sensational tales that dominate the true crime genre today.

As the bathtub continues to draw attention, it not only bears witness to Childs' gruesome past but also serves as a catalyst for deeper conversations about the nature of crime and its impact on society. Thus, the True Crime Museum not only commemorates the victims but also confronts the darker folds of human experience, ensuring that the stories of those who suffered at the hands of criminals like Childs are never forgotten.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14749755/The-bathtub-Britans-prolific-hitman-used-bread-knife-hack-saw-dismember-victims.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.murderpedia.org/male.C/c/childs-john.htm)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14749755/The-bathtub-Britans-prolific-hitman-used-bread-knife-hack-saw-dismember-victims.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.sussexlive.co.uk/news/sussex-news/hastings-crime-museum-jack-ripper-8050113), [[4]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1940597/hastings-true-crime-museum-dark-tourism)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.truecrimemuseum.co.uk/), [[5]](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g186274-d6542717-Reviews-The_True_CRIME_Museum-Hastings_East_Sussex_England.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1940597/hastings-true-crime-museum-dark-tourism), [[6]](https://www.murderpedia.org/male.C/c/childs-john.htm)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14749755/The-bathtub-Britans-prolific-hitman-used-bread-knife-hack-saw-dismember-victims.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.sussexlive.co.uk/news/sussex-news/hastings-crime-museum-jack-ripper-8050113)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14749755/The-bathtub-Britans-prolific-hitman-used-bread-knife-hack-saw-dismember-victims.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1940597/hastings-true-crime-museum-dark-tourism)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14749755/The-bathtub-Britans-prolific-hitman-used-bread-knife-hack-saw-dismember-victims.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.truecrimemuseum.co.uk/> - The True Crime Museum in Hastings offers a chilling insight into the world of serial killers, forensics, gangsters, and more. Exhibits include a genuine lethal injection deathbed and the actual acid containers used by John George Haigh to dissolve his victims. The museum is open daily from 10am to 5pm, providing an immersive experience for those fascinated by true crime history.
3. <https://www.sussexlive.co.uk/news/sussex-news/hastings-crime-museum-jack-ripper-8050113> - SussexLive highlights the True Crime Museum in Hastings as a dark tourism hotspot, featuring exhibits like the bathtub used by hitman John Childs to dismember his victims. The museum's curator, Joel Griggs, emphasizes the importance of confronting the reality of crime history and presents exhibits in a tasteful manner to educate visitors.
4. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1940597/hastings-true-crime-museum-dark-tourism> - Express.co.uk reports on Hastings becoming a dark tourism hotspot due to the True Crime Museum, which houses items from Britain's grisliest crimes, including artifacts related to John George Haigh and Rose West. Curator Joel Griggs discusses the museum's role in educating the public about the darker aspects of history.
5. <https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g186274-d6542717-Reviews-The_True_CRIME_Museum-Hastings_East_Sussex_England.html> - TripAdvisor provides reviews of the True Crime Museum in Hastings, noting its chilling yet fascinating exhibits, including a genuine lethal injection deathbed and the actual acid containers used by John George Haigh. The museum offers a unique experience for those interested in the dark world of crime.
6. <https://www.murderpedia.org/male.C/c/childs-john.htm> - Murderpedia offers a detailed profile of John Childs, a British hitman and serial killer convicted in 1979 for a series of contract killings. The profile includes information about his background, the murders he committed, and his conviction, providing context to the exhibits at the True Crime Museum in Hastings.
7. <https://www.catmorley.com/blog/2018/7/28/hastings-true-crime-museum> - Cat Morley's blog post provides a personal account of visiting the True Crime Museum in Hastings, describing exhibits like the bathtub used by John Childs to dismember his victims. The post offers insights into the museum's interactive features and the chilling artifacts on display.