London’s Forgotten Children: Thomas Coram and the Foundling Hospital

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Thomas Coram
1668 – 1751

As painted by William Hogarth in 1740

• Born in Lyme Regis
• Went to sea at 11

• Built up a successful ship building business south of Boston

• Married Eunice, had no children

• Spent 17 years gathering support to set up the Foundling Hospital
Heading to the subscription roll for the Foundling Hospital, designed by William Hogarth
Engraving of a view of the Foundling Hospital, 1751
Detail from a map of London by John Rocque, 1746. The site of the Foundling Hospital was north of the northern edge of London.
A PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, WITH EMBLEMATIC FIGURES.

Myriad of Proselytes sustain thy Cause,
Throwing to thy Altar and obey thy Laws;
From hence fair Virtue, spring those sweet Hymnals
To fill the Mansions which to thee arise.

These Mansions raised by Patrons kind & great,
Where Babb is deserted, find a safe Retreat.
The Frenchmen see? Their boasted first Design,
British Benevolence shall far outshine.

To his Grace John Duke of Bedford, the Plate is humbly Inscribed
by his Grace most Dutiful and Obedient Servant, Margaret Granville.
Captain Thomas Coram
Painted by B. Nebot
1741
In addition to painting three major pictures for the Foundling Hospital, Hogarth was a founding governor and he and his wife fostered children from 1760 until his death in 1764.
March of the Guards to Finchley by William Hogarth 1750
Hogarth – *Moses Brought Before Pharaoh’s Daughter* 1746

Hayman – *The finding of the Infant Moses in the Bulrushes* 1746
The Court Room, photographed in 2004, showing Hogarth’s and Hayman’s paintings of the foundling Moses
The Foundling Hospital by Richard Wilson, 1746, one of eight roundels painted for the Court Room
Marble mantelpiece in the Court Room – *Charity and children engaged in navigation and husbandry* – by Rysbrack  1745
Terracotta bust of George Frederic Handel by Roubiliac 1739

Handel became a governor of the Foundling Hospital and gave annual fund raising concerts, including the first performance in England of *Messiah*
Invitation to the first performance of Handel's *Messiah*, 1st May 1750
Because of the high level of demand for tickets “The gentlemen are desired to come without swords and the ladies without hoops”
The Foundling Hospital Chapel looking west by John Sanders 1773
The Foundling Hospital, Guildford Street. Site Plan 1912
Chapel and west wing of the Foundling Hospital 1912
An exact Representation of the Form and Manner in which Exposed and Deserted Young Children are Admitted into the Foundling Hospital.

To His most Sacred Majesty ALVA GEORGE the Second, in whose Auspicious Reign the Ever Memorable Charity first began, The Royal Family, The Most Noble, R. Honorable, and Worshipful Governors of the said Hospital.

This Plate is most humbly Dedicated by his Majesty's Dutiful Subject and Servant.

Raphel Dickenin.

Admission of children to the Hospital by ballot by Samuel Wale 1749
Tokens left by mothers with their babies
The Christening
by
Emma Brownlow King
1863
The Foundling
Restored to its
Mother by Emma
Brownlow King 1858
A foster mother in East Peckham, around 1900
Uniforms designed by William Hogarth and little changed over the years

*A Foundling Girl* and *A Foundling Boy* by Harold Copping 1914
A cuff link engraved with the school crest, designed by Hogarth
Boys’ dormitory and boys’ dining room, photographed in the early 1900s
Girls’ dining room by John Sanders, 1773, showing the Hogarth portrait of Thomas Coram hanging on the right of the picture.
Girls in the Chapel by Sophia Anderson 1877
Visitors watching children eat Sunday lunch by Swain, after T.H.Thomas, from Illustrated London News 7th December 1872
Music was an important part of life in the Foundling Hospital

Choir practice, 1924

The choir at a musical event in the chapel 1920s
Leaving certificate for apprentice Esther Mayhew, 1855
Ackworth branch hospital in Yorkshire, one of six branch hospitals built to take the additional children during the “general reception” between 1756 – 1760. Now a secondary school run by the Society of Friends.
Charles Dickens lived nearby in Doughty Street during the 1840s and wrote about his visit to the Foundling Hospital in *Household Words* in 1853.
Infants schoolroom, early 1900s

Girls school room, early 1900s
A parade outside the Foundling Hospital, early 1900s
The Duke of Connaught, president of the Foundling Hospital, inspecting the children, early 1900s
Girls exercising outside the Foundling Hospital
Decorating for Christmas 1920s

A visit to the circus
The highlight of the year – the annual summer camp 1926

Eating cherries

Trampoline
Girls lining up for lunch at camp, with the older ones taking care of the younger ones. 1928
Children marching out of the Foundling Hospital for the last time in 1926
Girls at Redhill School, cooking and singing 1932
The Foundling Hospital School at Berkhamsted, Hertfordshsire in the 1930s. It was later known as the Thomas Coram School and is now Ashlyns Comprehensive School.
Coram Adoption
Creative Therapies
Work with young children and young people
The grounds of the old Foundling Hospital today – run by the charity Coram’s Fields
Painting of the Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Square by Ann Usborn, with statue of Thomas Coram to the right
Statue of Thomas Coram outside the Foundling Museum and the head quarters of Coram in Brunswick Square
This lecture based on
London’s Forgotten Children: Thomas Coram and the Foundling Hospital by Gillian Pugh, History Press, 2007

Further information from

www.coram.org.uk

www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk