

# Picturing Hetty Feather

26 May - 3 September 2017



## The Foundling Museum opens its first ever exhibition devoted to *Hetty Feather* and the Foundling Hospital

Since the first book was published in 2008, Dame Jacqueline Wilson's *Hetty Feather* series has delighted young audiences with the adventures of its eponymous heroine, the spirited Victorian foundling Hetty Feather. A new family-friendly exhibition, *Picturing Hetty Feather*, will explore how this much-loved character has brought to life the history of London's Foundling Hospital, on page, stage and screen. Visitors can discover the world of Hetty Feather through television props, rarely-seen archival items and hands-on activities.

In 2008, Dame Jacqueline Wilson became one of the Museum's first Foundling Fellows. For her Fellowship, Wilson researched the Hospital's history and developed her character Hetty Feather, a girl who uses imaginative storytelling or, as she calls it, 'picturing' to deal with life's challenges. Immensely popular with her young audience, Hetty has gone on to feature in five books which have sold millions of copies, the first two of which feature the Foundling Hospital. The popularity of the *Hetty Feather* books has led to an Olivier Award-nominated stage show and BAFTA-nominated CBBC television series.

*Picturing Hetty Feather* will explore the ways in which curators, writers, directors and designers have used historical evidence and factual gaps to

bring the nineteenth-century Foundling Hospital to life. On display for the first time will be key elements of the CBBC's *Hetty Feather* television set, including props and original costumes, alongside treasures from the Foundling Hospital Collection and archive, some of which have not been seen before by the public. Visitors will be able to try on costumes made for the CBBC production, and try their hand at script writing by creating their own Foundling Hospital character as part of a selection of hands-on activities.

This immersive exhibition will transport visitors to the Foundling Hospital, inviting them to discover their own 'picturing' abilities in relation to the Foundling Hospital story, and imagine what life was like for Hetty and the real-life foundling children.

Dame Jacqueline Wilson said: 'I was proud to be made a Fellow of the Foundling Museum, one of my favourite places in London. The Museum asked me if I'd ever thought of writing a novel about a foundling child. I absolutely loved this idea and almost immediately *Hetty Feather* sprang to life inside my head. There have been five *Hetty Feather* books so far (watch out for another soon!), a long-running stage play and three television series too. It's wonderful that *Hetty* now has her own special exhibition in the very museum that inspired her story.'

Director of the Foundling Museum, Caro Howell, said: 'History and storytelling are inextricably linked and with *Hetty Feather*, Jacqueline Wilson brought the nineteenth-century Foundling Hospital to life in a way that is vivid and relatable. By exploring the ways in which curators, writers and art directors tell stories using history's facts and gaps, we hope to inspire children to do the same.'

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### Notes to Editors

**Dame Jacqueline Wilson** is one of Britain's most outstanding writers for young readers. Known for her contemporary stories, many featuring feisty characters like the enduring Tracy Beaker, she has also used historical settings for many recent books such as *Hetty Feather* and *Clover Moon*. Over 38 million copies of her books have been sold in the UK alone and they have been translated into 34 languages. Jacqueline has been honoured with many of the UK's top awards including the Guardian Children's Fiction Award, the Smarties Prize and the Children's Book of the Year. She was the Children's Laureate from 2005-2007

and is the Chancellor of Roehampton University. She also holds Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Kingston, Bath, Winchester and Dundee. *Wave Me Goodbye* by Jacqueline Wilson is published by Doubleday on 18 May and features three children from East London who are evacuated to the countryside at the outbreak of WW2.

**The Foundling Museum** explores the history of the Foundling Hospital, the UK's first children's charity and first public art gallery, and through a dynamic programme of exhibitions and events celebrates the ways in which artists of all disciplines have helped improve children's lives for over 275 years.

The Foundling Hospital, which continues today as the children's charity Coram, was established in 1739 by the philanthropist Captain Thomas Coram, as 'a hospital for the maintenance and education of exposed and deserted young children'. Instrumental in helping Coram realise his vision were the artist William Hogarth, who encouraged leading artists of the day to donate work, and the composer George Frederic Handel, who gave annual benefit concerts of his *Messiah*. In doing so, they created London's first public art gallery and set the template for the way in which the arts can support philanthropy.

**Coram** has been creating better chances for children since 1739. They help children and young people today through their pioneering work in adoption, parenting support, housing support, alcohol and drug education, creative therapies and championing legal rights in the UK and overseas. [coram.org.uk](http://coram.org.uk)

#### **Visitor Information**

The Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AZ

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[foundlingmuseum.org.uk](http://foundlingmuseum.org.uk)

Open: Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 - 17:00, Sunday 11:00 - 17:00, Monday closed

Admission: £8.25 adults, £5.50 concessions (incl Gift Aid), free for children, Foundling Friends & National Art Pass holders. An additional nominal charge for adults applies for *Picturing Hetty Feather* (free for children & Foundling Friends)

Tube and train: Russell Square, King's Cross St Pancras and Euston