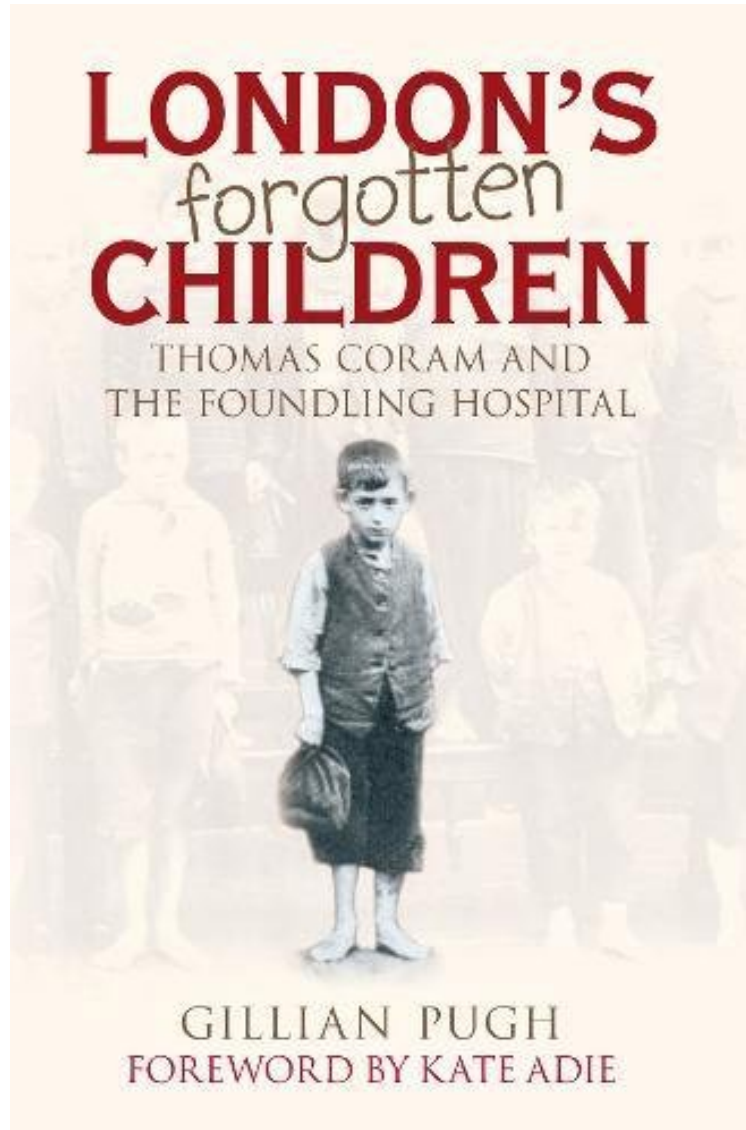


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London's Forgotten Children

Dame Gillian Pugh

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Dame Gillian Pugh : London's Forgotten Children before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised London's Forgotten Children:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Foundling Hospital Inmate By Charles MacLeod-Stuart This book has given me an insight into the life and times of "unwanted children" and is a valuable tool for those searching for family who may have passed through the doors of the Foundling Hospital. Note: Records will only be released to family members after 110 years from the date of entry. On a personal note, it has taken over 50 years to locate the records of my grandmother, who was left in the care of the Foundling Hospital. This institution took children from single mothers,

changed the names of the children and placed them into servitude or the military. A harsh and thankless life for thousands of children. My grandmother was admitted to the Foundling Hospital on the application of her mother, deserted by her baby's father. She would have been a first baby for her mother as the Governors only accepted first children. The aim was to give mother and baby a fresh start in life in the days when unmarried motherhood carried great social stigma. All babies admitted were baptized with a new name, to protect the identity of the mother (I think perhaps the father more so than the mother!). In this way it was hoped that the mother would be able to earn her living once more and to re-establish her life. These rules of admission were strictly applied and, after 1836, every case fitted the same general picture of a young woman of previous good reputation falling pregnant and being let down by the baby's father. Having been baptized on admission with her new name, my grandmother was looked after in infancy by a foster mother before coming in to the Hospital in London for her education. Life for girls was preparation for domestic service. Following admission and baptism, my grandmother went to a foster home in Surrey, an area where the Foundling Hospital traditionally had a large number of foster mothers. She was probably five years old when she would have been forced to leave her foster mother's home to enter the Hospital in London. This was not any easy move for small children, and many were distressed by it, but the Governors believed in education and training as a way of creating opportunities in life.

After 17 years of campaigning, Thomas Coram managed to persuade sufficient 'persons of quality and distinction' to support his petition to the King to grant a Royal Charter for the building of the Foundling Hospital in Bloomsbury. This history of the first children's charity charts the rise of this incredible institution.