



“Ladies of Quality and Distinction”

In this, the centenary year of women’s suffrage, the Cheshunt Foundation has been asked to join in with a fascinating celebration of influential women from the 1720s and 1730s – the 21 “ladies of quality and distinction” who helped philanthropist Thomas Coram set up his Foundling Hospital in London.

Long before women were given the vote, these ladies were influential in helping Coram secure a Royal Charter for his Foundling Hospital, which was set up to support and care for some of London’s abandoned ‘foundling children’. One of the ladies was Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who also founded Trevecca College for young men to train for ministry – which later moved to Hertfordshire and became Cheshunt College.



The Earl and Countess of Huntingdon, by Andrea Soldi (c.1703-1771)
With permission of the Trustees of the Cheshunt Foundation, Westminster College, Cambridge

These marvellous ladies are being celebrated this Autumn with a remarkable exhibition at the Foundling Museum in London. The Collections Manager, Alison Duke, came to visit the College recently to look at the painting in situ, and to discuss how best to transport it to London for the exhibition. Alison has written about her visit for Art Funding website [here](#).

We look forward to seeing the Countess surrounded by her peers – or, strictly speaking, her Peeresses – in September! The exhibition opens to the public on September 21st and will run through into January 2019.

To find out more about the exhibition at the Foundling Museum, have a look at the [Foundling Museum website](#) ...and to find out more about the 21 Ladies, and about Thomas Coram, visit the website of [Coram, the charity which continues their work today](#).

To see all the oil paintings at Westminster online, visit https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/view_as/grid/search/keyword:westminster-college-cambridge