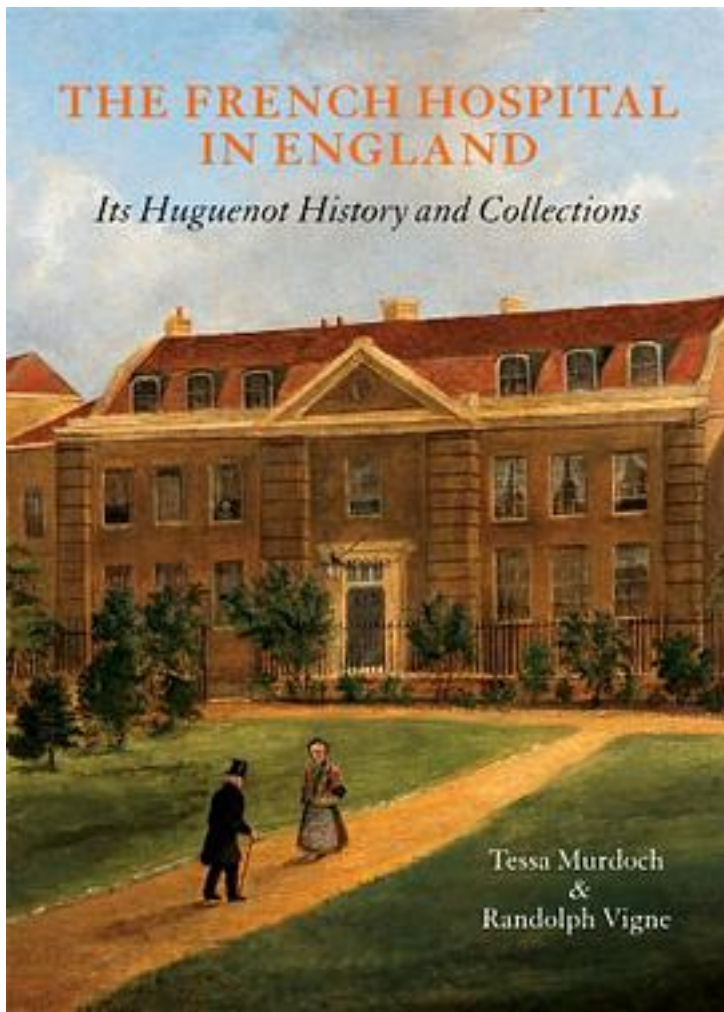


The French Hospital in England



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The French Hospital for poor French Protestants and their descendants residing in

Great Britain was incorporated in 1718. Affectionately known as La Providence, it was one of the earliest foundations to cater for London's needy immigrants, and one of the first in Britain to provide sympathetic care for the mentally ill. This book charts the hospital's history from its early days in Finsbury to its present location in the cathedral city of Rochester, Kent, where it provides sheltered housing for elderly people of Huguenot descent. Over the years many distinguished Huguenot settlers or their descendants have been associated with the hospital, among them the soldiers Henri, Earl of Galway, and John, Earl Ligonier, the lawyer Sir Samuel Romilly and the archaeologist Sir Henry Austen Layard. The ivory carver David Le Marchand died there in 1726. The architect Robert Lewis Roumieu designed the spectacular new building in Victoria Park, Hackney, which was the French Hospital's home from the late 1860s to the early 1940s. More than a hundred new photographs of the hospital's collections of paintings, engravings, silver, furniture and memorabilia provide a unique visual record. Portraits featured include the eighteenth-century Huguenot merchants Jean-Henri Guinand and Pierre Ogier. The early hospital records held at the Huguenot Library include tradesmen's bills, portraits of inmates and hospital staff. An eighteenth-century steward's diary records that one inmate hid over half a hundredweight of the hospital's coal supply under her bed. Heraldic shields and book-plates record some of the principal Huguenot families who have served as directors, and a transcription of the 1742 inventory compiled in French lends historical colour. This richly illustrated account will appeal to a wide audience including social and art historians and all who are interested in Huguenot heritage.

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