



The Jill Grey collection at the British Schools Museum

Jill Grey was an active member of the History of Education Society. For 25 years she collected material relating to the history of elementary education and to the social history of children.

The collection is one of the most significant and comprehensive in the country. Within it are important individual items, an outstanding example being the first edition of *The Governess* by Sarah Fielding (1749). The British Museum has the second edition only; there are many examples of this in the collection.

The collection includes more than 17,000 books, including children's text books and fiction, history of education and social history, dating from the 17th century to the present day. There are 4000 to 5000 ephemera, among them copybooks, exercise and drawing books, reward cards, certificates, school documents, journals, magazines, greetings cards, prints and pictures. Over 10,000 photographs and postcards depict schools (classrooms and buildings), children, family groups, hobbies, recreation and holidays. As if that were not sufficient, there are at least 2000 objects: desks, slates, domestic science articles, laundry, needlework and P.E. equipment, educational and recreational toys and games, school medals and costumes.

Following Jill Grey's death the collection was bequeathed to North Herts. District Council. The collection was housed courtesy of the County Council, but no public access was possible.

It was at this point that the collection was transferred to the newly-created British Schools Museum in Hitchin.

We are now building on this legacy, transcribing the hand-written book inventory so that it may be incorporated into our catalogue system and be placed online for people to browse and search this unique collection.

Thank you for your help!

Mark Copley

Curator

British Schools Museum

