

## PRESS RELEASE

Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop of Covent Garden, London has branched out to the 'country' and opened a second shop in Stable Yard, Hatfield House.

The seventeenth century stables alongside the Elizabethan Palace have recently been refurbished to house a number of specialist retailers. The entrance to the area is free from October 1<sup>st</sup> when the Children's Adventure Playground is due to be opened complete with a miniature version of the manor house for children – one where running and climbing WILL be allowed!

Pollock's specialises in traditional toys and the Hatfield shop will carry a selection of it's world famous paper toy theatres as well as puppets, music boxes, noah's arks, toy soldiers, pocket money toys as well as traditional bears, mobiles and vintage handmade quilts for babies.

All this brings to mind a certain classic English story – Alice in Wonderland. And so to celebrate the opening of our new shop we are putting on a Lewis Carroll Storytelling event for children and families this half term as well as an Alice themed treasure hunt.

Come and hear storyteller Vanessa Woolf perform 'The Three Foxes'. This is a distinctively Victorian tale which Lewis Carroll, the "Alice" author used to tell to children. The 'lost' story has never been published in full, although part of it survives in his strange work 'Sylvie and Bruno' and was never heard read in public until Vanessa started to perform it this year.

Lewis Carroll was a visitor to Hatfield House and engaged in correspondence with Lord Salisbury about electoral reform. He enjoyed mixing with the guests, more aristocratic than he, and once wrote jokingly about it to Isa Bowman, in 1889. (She was about 13, so considered a child in those days):

"There is the Duchess of Albany here, with two such sweet little children. She is the widow of Prince Leopold (the Queen's youngest son), so her children are a Prince and Princess: the girl is "Alice," but I don't know the boy's Christian name: they call him "Albany," because he is the Duke of Albany. Now that I have made friends with a real live little Princess, I don't intend ever to *speak* to any more children that haven't titles. In fact, I'm so proud, and I hold my chin so high, that I shouldn't even see you if we met!"

Come and listen to "The Three Foxes" at Benjamin Pollock's Toyshop, Stable Yard, Hatfield House on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> October at 2pm. Places are limited so to ensure a space please pick up a FREE ticket beforehand on the day. Tel: 01707 258363. The storytelling performance will be approx half hour duration.

The shop also features Alice inspired toys – tea sets, Alice in Wonderland paper masks, John Tenniel illustrated playing cards, colouring books and you may even spy a Cheshire Cat. Check our website for ideas <http://www.pollocks-coventgarden.co.uk/index.php/lets-shop>

Email [louise@pollocks-coventgarden.co.uk](mailto:louise@pollocks-coventgarden.co.uk) for any more information or images.