

History

The Victorian era

The Victorian era was the time when Queen Victoria was on the throne. It lasted from 1837 until 1901. It was a time of huge change in Britain. The introduction of steam power revolutionised transport, factories, and farming, leading to the Industrial Revolution. Social change saw the rise of the Suffragette movement- the struggle for women's right to vote. Working conditions and education also improved during the Victorian era.

Schools in Victorian times

When Queen Victoria first came to the throne, most children did not go to school. However, during her reign, it became law that children between five and thirteen must attend school. There could be 70 to 80 children in a class. Lessons were formal and teachers were strict. Children sat in rows and recited their times tables or copied words or calculations from the background onto a slate. Children from rich families were taught at home by an educated lady called a governess, until the age of ten when boys were sent away to boarding school. Girls continues to be taught at home.

Crime and Punishment

The main punishments for serious crimes in Victorian times were hanging or transportation to Australia. Thieves or debtors, who owed people money, were sent to prison. Many new prisons were built during this era to replace old prison ships, called Hulks. Crime prevention very much improved at this time. The first police force was formed in 1829 by Sir Robert Peel. The first police officers became known as 'Bobbies' or 'Peelers' after him.

Revolution

Queen Victoria

Victoria was born in 1819 and became queen in 1837. She married her cousin, a German prince called Albert, in 1840. They had nine children. Queen Victoria reigned for 63 years. During that time, Britain became the most powerful country in the world. Its empire spread across the world, the population more than doubled and industry expanded. Queen Victoria became well-known for her high moral standards. Prince Albert died in 1861 and Queen Victoria was so grief-stricken that she wore a black mourning dress for the rest of her life.



Rich and poor

There was a huge difference between the lives of the rich and poor in Victorian times. Rich Victorians lived in large, comfortable houses with servants. Children were looked after by a nanny. Poor people often lived in cold, damp houses in areas called slums. Poor children were sent out to work because their families needed money. Very poor people with no home and no money were sent to the workhouse, where they had to live and work in terrible conditions.

Famous Victorians

There was a lot of social change, innovation and creativity during the Victorian era. Many important and well-known people were working during this time: Dr Barnardo, Florence Nightingale, Charles Dickens, William Morris, Alexander Graham Bell and Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

Victorian timeline

- 1819 Victoria is born.
- 1825 The first steam railway in the world opens.
- 1829 Robert Peel starts the police force.
- 1834 A law is passed stopping people from giving money to the poor. The workhouses were introduced.
- 1837 Victoria becomes Queen.
- 1840 Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert.
- 1842 The Mines and Collieries Act prevents underground work for girls and boys under ten.
- 1851 The Great Exhibition opens at Crystal Palace.
- 1853 The Crimean War begins.
- 1859 Charles Darwin's 'On the Origin Of Species' published.
- 1861 Prince Albert dies.
- 1870 The Education Act makes education compulsory for children between the ages of five and thirteen.
- 1891 School becomes free for all children up to the age of 15.
- 1901 Queen Victoria dies.

Revolution

Geography

Railways and Canals

Canals were used to transport bulk materials, early in the Industrial Revolution but were superseded by the spread of the railways. The first iron rails were laid on wooden blocks between Stockton and Darlington, and opened on 27th September, 1825. As well as carrying coal, the train also included a purpose-built railway passenger coach called *Experiment*. The carriage, which seated 18 passengers, must have provided an uncomfortable and bumpy ride, as it had no springs!

Art

William Morris and Laurence Stephen Lowry

William Morris (24th March 1834 - 3rd October 1896) was a revolutionary force in Victorian Britain: his work as an artist, designer, craftsman and writer dramatically changed the fashions of the era.

The William Morris Gallery displays the life and work of the radical Victorian designer. It is housed in a Georgian house, built in the 1740s and set in Lloyd Park, North-East London.

The Lowry is named after Laurence Stephen Lowry (1887-1976) - an artist who spent much of his life in Salford and whose work is strongly associated with the city.

Salford Museum and Art Gallery has been a long-standing collector of his work and some four hundred individual works - as well as an extensive archive of photographs, press cuttings and exhibition catalogues - were transferred to The Lowry on its opening in April 2000.



Music

Parlour Music

Parlour music was a type of popular music which, as the name suggests, was intended to be performed in the parlours of middle-class homes by amateur singers and pianists. It began as a result of a steady increase in the number of households with enough surplus money to purchase musical instruments and instruction in music. Various other genres were also performed in the parlour, including patriotic selections, religious songs, and pieces written for the musical stage.

Computing

Photography during the Victorian era started to be used more widely amongst the upper classes. The people would have had to stand still for a long time and they did not smile. All photographs were in black and white.



