

## Childhood Through Time

A selection of objects, ranging from school to leisure, that would have been familiar to a child during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### Links to QCA schemes of work

History Unit 2 – What were homes like a long time ago? [KS1]

History Unit 11 – What was it like for children living in Victorian Britain? [KS2]

#### 1] Tapestry sampler



**Sewing** classes were thought to be a very important part of the education of girls in Victorian times. Most schools had a part-time 'sewing mistress' and the girls were taught to make up 'samplers'. A sampler was a piece of cloth on which the girls sewed patterns, letters of the alphabet, and simple designs using different stitches and brightly threads. It was usual for the girls to sew their own **names** and the **date** as part of the design, and the Victorian samplers which have survived are now quite **valuable**. In many cases the original bright colours of the thread have faded, but the children often proved that they were very **skilled** at needlework.

#### 2] Christening gown and underskirt



A baby would have worn a gown like this when he or she was **christened**. It is made from **cotton** and stitched by **hand**. Christening gowns like this were often **passed down** and used for **each** of the children in the family. This gown was made in **late Victorian times**.



Christening underskirt

### 3] Tin bucket



**Wealthy** families began to visit the **seaside** in the **18<sup>th</sup>** century, but it wasn't until the **19<sup>th</sup>** century that the **seaside holiday**, as we know it, developed. It was made possible by the **expansion** of the **railways** in the 1840s and 1850s, which made long distance travel **affordable** for most people. Initially the **first** toys for the beach were made of **wood**, but soon **tin** became more common, especially for buckets as it gave more opportunity for colourful **patterns** and **pictures**. Today most seaside toys are made of **plastic**, which means they no longer become rusty.

### 4] ABC minors badge



ABC Minors was the name of a **film club** based at the ABC cinema which used to be at the corner of Abbey Road and Holker Street [recently demolished]. It ran a **Saturday morning movie club** for children in the **1950s** - where children would sit on the worn velvet seats and watch 'Roy Rogers', 'Lassie', 'Zorro' and 'Flash Gordon'. Children were proud to wear the **badge** and sing the **Minor's song**:

'We are the boys and girls well known as minors of the ABC  
And every Saturday all line up, to see the films we like, and shout  
aloud with glee.

We like to laugh and have our sing-song, just a happy crowd are we.  
We're all pals together; we're minors of the ABC.'

In 1959 Bryn Trescatheric, [our Local Studies Officer] remembers winning a box of chocolates for being the first one onto the stage wearing blue socks !

### 5] Penny money bank

'A penny saved is a penny earned .' In the late 1870s penny money banks were made in their **thousands** to capitalize on a nation-wide trend toward **thriftiness**. It was also thought to be **fun** to save money. P e n n y banks were produced in different shapes and **sizes** with different **designs**. They were mainly made of **cast iron**, but the most **popular** and **valuable** ones all had some type of **mechanical action**, either by using **gravity** or by the release of a **spring operated plunger**. The better the penny bank action, the bigger the urge to save! The ones with merely a **slot** to receive the coin, [like the one in the box] became less popular. There was never much money inside any of these banks. The worth was in what the bank taught - and in the bank itself!



### 6] Pigs in clover puzzle

A dexterity puzzle which may have been used to teach hand-eye co-ordination to children. This **rolling ball puzzle** was invented in 1889 by an American, Charles Crandall, and it took the country and the world by storm. The Pig Pen in the centre resembled **The White House** and each marble [the pigs] was a well known **politician** of the time. The object of the game was to see which politician reached The White House **first**. The Museum's puzzle was based on the original but made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



### 8] School slate and slate pencils

## 7] Large and small boulie hoop



This game would have been **played** out in the streets by Victorian children. The hoop would have been **run** along the ground using the **stick** to push it along until it gathered speed. The **stick** could then be used to **hit** the hoop and keep it **moving**. Alternatives were made from **wood** or **iron** and the rings from cooper's barrels. This game dates back to the time of the **ancient Egyptians** and early **North American** colonists brought this pastime with them from Europe.

## 8] School slate and slate pencils



These are typical of the slate boards and slate pencils used by children in school during the 19th century.

## 9] Cup and ball



This became popular in 15<sup>th</sup> century Britain and could be seen in many Victorian playgrounds. The object of the game is to **swing** the **wooden ball** into the **cup**, which is not at all as simple as it appears to be. Children would play against each other to see who could get the ball into the cup a number of times in a row.

## 10] Canterbury feeding bottle



This **double-ended** feeder was invented in **1894**. It had a **teat** at one end and a **valve** at the other end. This enabled the **flow** of milk to be **constant** but more importantly it was the ease of **cleaning** that made these bottles such a great **success**. This design was around for about **50 years** and saw off many other models to retain its place at the top of the popularity tree and rightly so. There are **ounces** marked on one side and **tablespoons** on the other.