

Victorian Kitchen

A variety of utensils that would have been found in a Victorian kitchen

Links to QCA schemes of work

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

1] Blackening brush



Blacklead brushes and liquid firegrate polish were used to **blacklead** the kitchen range **every morning** after the fire had been **cleaned** out. This stopped it from **rusting** and made it **shine**.

2] Butter hands

In the 19th century, on farms, **butter pats** were used to shape butter into **bricks**, making butter ready for **sale** and **use**. The excess moisture would be **squeezed** out of the butter, which was



then transferred to a **wooden board**. The butter maker would hold one of these pats in **each hand** and work the butter into shape. **Butter pats** and **moulds** were washed in **salted water** to help prevent the butter from **sticking** to them. These wooden pats are **thin, light** and **easy to hold**.

The inside face is **serrated** to **grip** the butter and **squeeze** out any further water. It was also used to make **patterns** on the finished butter. Butter pats are also known as **Scotch Hands**.

3] Donkey stone

Donkey stones are **scouring stones** which were originally used in the textile mills of Yorkshire and Manchester, to provide a **non-slip surface** on **greasy stone staircases**. The stones were available in three colours; **cream, brown** and **white**. Later proud housewives took to stoning their **front doorsteps**, which became a form of **decoration** and great competition between the



women. The housewife might also treat her **stone door surround**, **window sill** and even “**her**” section of the **pavement in front of her house!** “**Doing the step**” was an ideal occasion for gossip between neighbours, as well as a source of rivalry. People would get their **stones** from the **rag totter**, in exchange for **old rags!**

4] Tea caddy tin

Tea leaves were sold **loose** and stored in a **tin**. There were **no tea bags**.



5] Coffee grinder

Tea became the **national drink** in the **18th century** and then **coffee** was introduced, but it was a **luxury**, confined to the **wealthy**. Coffee beans were **ground** in the **grinder** but obviously only rich households could afford them. Household inventories show that coffee grinders were normally kept in the **parlour** (or the **study**) but rarely the **kitchen**. 18th century coffee mills were usually **wooden vessels** but **cheaper** coffee mills made in **cast iron** were made in **large numbers** throughout the 19th century. **Instant coffee** was not available in shops until the **20th century**.



6] Jelly moulds

Victorians loved to make their food look **fancy** and moulds such as these could have all sorts of patterns and shapes inside them, such as **fruit**, **flowers** and even **animals**, which would make the jelly set in their shape. To get the jelly out, you would have to **plunge** the mould into **hot water** for a few seconds before turning it **upside-down** on a plate.



7] A selection of Victorian moulds

Tinplate and pewter moulds such as these provided a cheaper alternative to the earthenware ones, although, according to Mrs Beeton, earthenware moulds were preferable to those of tin or pewter for red jellies as the latter would spoil 'their colour and transparency.'



8] Marmalade storage jar

Until fridges became generally available most fresh foods would not last above a few days so stoneware jars were used to preserve and store food, such as marmalade, salt and flour.



9] 3 piece grater

Graters were in use by the 17th century to provide bread crumbs which had many uses in cooking. By the 19th century it was common for graters to be provided with several different grating textures.



10] Potato masher

This potato masher is made of sycamore which was used because it did not transfer the taste of foods. Potato mashers became very popular in the 18th century following the adoption of potatoes as a staple of the British diet.



11] Biscuit cutter

Pastry was cut to shape using jiggers, small cutting tools made of wood or brass with a revolving serrated wheel at one end and often a pastry crimper at the other, and circular tinplate cutters.



12] Hartley's Ulverston bottle

Originally beer was carried in **stoneware** or **leather** containers and because there was a heavy **tax** levied on **glass** there was **little** to encourage the spread of **bottled beers**. Then it was discovered that the **quality** of the beer **improved** if it was kept in a **glass bottle**, and **sealed** adequately. Unfortunately in the early 19th century the **only seals** were **wired-on corks**. In 1872 **Henry Barrett** introduced the **internal screw stopper** and this was without serious rival until **automatic machinery** for filling and capping bottles was introduced. This bottle



was made by **Hartley's Brewery** in **Ulverston**, where beer was made from **1754** and was described in the first edition of the good beer guide as, '**One of the best**.'

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13] Candle holder

For most people in the 18th and 19th century a **candlestick** was as commonplace as the **kettles** and **pans** in the **kitchen**. They were always extremely **plain** and widely used in **poorer homes**. This one is made of **tinplate** which was common through the 18th and 19th century. It has a **grease pan** which is large enough to catch the **extra drips**, caused by a candle burning away rapidly, or '**sweating**,' as it was carried through a **draught**. It was recommended 'as the **Housekeeper's Best Friend**, and one of the most **necessary** and **perfect inventions** of the day, and should always be in the **poor man's house**.'



14] Egg whisk

This one is made of **wire** and was used for whisking eggs, but earlier ones were made from **bunches of twigs**.

