



## The Victorian School Experience

### A Victorian School Day in your own School

These are some guidelines to help you to plan a Victorian Day at your school. The exact format may vary and can be tailored to your requirements. Ideally we need a classroom that can be made to look more like a Victorian Classroom. You might also like to consider using a nearby Victorian hall or building. Generally we would want to work in groups of about 25-35, but we might be able to work with larger groups by arrangement. The children may come dressed in Victorian costume, or we can provide suitable quick change Victorian clothing if required. We supply a “Victorian” teacher, but the help of the regular teacher or classroom assistant is encouraged. We bring with us a number of props and useful teaching aids. One lesson lasts 30-40 minutes, but may take longer if the children have to dress. Sometimes the school also likes to take photographs. A longer session could be split into two 30 minute blocks with playtime in between

### The Edwardian School Experience

Some schools have asked us to provide Edwardian days, usually to tie in with an anniversary. There are a few differences, but essentially the format is the same as a Victorian Day.

### What we teach in the classroom

- **Deportment**  
Children are instructed on standing still and upright, without talking, beside desk until told to be seated. They learn how to greet their teacher. They also learn that if any teacher visits the classroom, they should show respect by standing up and wait to be instructed to sit again. A brief teaching is given on deportment and hygiene.
- **Writing**  
Introduction to writing with the sand tray, and then the children get to write using slates. Depending on time and age of children, some instruction in style of writing is given. Introduction to the dip pen and copybooks. If there is sufficient time, older children might like to practice copybook style writing.
- **Punishment**  
A little bit of information about slow or “stupid” pupils is given, with a volunteer being asked to wear the dunce's hat. This is usually a photo opportunity. Brief introduction to school punishment such as cane, slipper, chalk, etc. Children learn how much tighter the discipline was in Victorian times.
- **Reading**  
If time permits (unlikely in half hour sessions) we can introduce the primer and talk about the moral teaching of schools, we might touch on the history of schools, development from Sunday Schools and church schools, and talk about the daily prayer and hymn.

If time permits (ditto) we also do some teaching on lesson materials, such as reciting tables, reading out and learning dates of Kings and Queens, and studying a map of the British Empire.

- **Arithmetic**

We usually do a little bit on old money, allowing children the chance to examine some old coins for themselves, and old weights and measures.

### **What we can do in the playground (Additional activity)**

Usually start out by doing PT (physical training) getting the children to do old fashioned exercises. (The version we use actually dates back to just after WW2, so it is quite "modern" but it is a good way for children to learn old fashioned skills such as standing in a straight line and standing still.)

Introduction to the types of games that might have been played by children, such as hopscotch, marbles, skipping, tops, stilts and hoops. The children then get the chance of playing some of the games for themselves.

We then sometimes play some old fashioned games such as tag and "party" games.

If the weather is bad, then some activities could still be done in a hall.

### **An additional craft activity (optional activity)**

We can offer a number of craft activities and these will vary with age and number of children.

### **What we bring**

A selection of artefacts including slates and playground toys. We can also bring dressing up clothes if required.

### **The cost**

The total cost is made up of these elements:

- a) The visit charge
- b) The travel charge
- c) Additional services charge

#### **a) Visit charge**

##### **STANDARD VISIT to school**

Basic charge of £300 per full day. (This is for one teacher. Additional staff are chargeable, please enquire)

£250 per day for subsequent days.

£1100 for a full week.

The price includes public liability insurance.

*You can combine various classes or even share a visit with another local school.*

#### **b) Travel charge**

Mileage is charged at 30p a mile each way, and we will quote a price which includes travel costs.

#### **c) Additional services charge**

- We include for the use of up to 35 children's costumes if required. Additional costumes, adult or child, may be supplied when available, but will be charged at normal hire rates.
- 40p per person is added for craft activities where pupil materials are supplied. For some specialized craft activities such as toymaking it might be more than this, we will advise.

VAT is added to all the prices, but we will provide a VAT invoice so you can reclaim it.

We will confirm the charges once you have let us know your requirements.

We can combine visits with other schools in the area. The visit could be shared over two or three classes each day, or if a local teacher handles the playtime activities, then we could probably do five or six classes. This compares reasonably with the cost of taking the children to an external Victorian facility, and is much easier to accommodate.

### **A Victorian Work Day in your own School**

This is a more practical, hands-on experience than the Victorian School Day, and is particularly suitable for younger children. Children are taught about Victorian domestic life and consider the differences between then and now. Starting with consideration of how water would have been obtained, they go on to look at the ways in which domestic washing would be carried out. There are many objects that can be examined and explained; the washing dolly, posser and washtub; carbolic soap, washing pegs, the mangle and so on. The flat iron is shown and its usage described. Children can try practical tasks such as folding blankets and hanging them on the line. Mention is also made of the tin bath, once the feature for family washing – of the person and of larger clothing. Other cleaning tasks are then covered, such as carpet cleaning, and some children can beat a “carpet” (actually a thick blanket with a sprinkling of baby talc.) If there is time, there are boots to clean, silver to polish and various kitchen duties.

For this busy day, children dress in suitable clothes and are usually led by the housekeeper, sometimes assisted by the butler.

This is a fun day, but there is a great deal to be learned along the way.

The cost is the same as the standard charge given above.

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

We are sometimes asked to take part in special events. These might be anniversary events, Victorian Days, charity fundraising, or even corporate events. We can also provide talks on Victorian topics. Special events may be for children or adults. We welcome enquiries and will quote a price based upon what is involved. Please provide as much information as you can when making an enquiry.

### **Security**

Some of the items we bring with us are valuable because they are old, not always in financial terms, but in rarity, so it is important that we can use a room that is reasonably secure. It is also helpful to use a dedicated classroom, as it takes some time to pack and unpack the equipment we use. If there is a difficulty with this then do let us know and we can find a suitable work around.

### **Contractual**

Although we will make every effort to fulfill bookings on the date and time agreed, there may be occasions when, for circumstances beyond my control, this is not possible, for example illness, bad weather or vehicle breakdown. Should this occur, then our liability will extend to a maximum of

refunding any fee paid, and we will not be responsible for consequential losses. In most cases, the event can be rescheduled at a mutually agreed time.

A date cannot be reserved until a firm booking is received. This is to enable all schools to have a fair chance of getting the date they want. If a booking is cancelled by the school we may make a cancellation charge of £50.

An invoice is usually provided within a few days of the visit. Please ensure that this invoice is paid quickly and that there are no causes for delay. If the invoices are to be paid by a local authority or other third party you should ensure that we are made aware of any additional requirements for processing our invoice as these may incur extra charges. In addition our contract is deemed to be with the organization placing the order and may not be assigned.

### **About Our Staff**

**Alan:** Alan has always had an interest in history and also of re-enactment so combining these together makes him an ideal choice to lead a Victorian day. Having worked for many years in banking, he has also spent a lot of his spare time in youth work and loves challenging young people to think beyond their immediate situation. He taught for some years in a Grammar School, and has had more than 25 years experience in working with young people. He also provides reenactment days for other historic periods and enjoys traveling around the country to different schools.

**Stephen:** Some years ago I started working as a volunteer, in my spare time, at a genuine Victorian school and museum. I served as Chairman of the museum for a while, was also a Trustee, and most recently have been the Victorian headmaster. At 60 years of age, I have never actually been a real teacher, although I have done many years of youth work, been a school governor, provided careers advice for school, and was voted the most scariest exam invigilator at our local school!

You will also find that we sometimes have other helpers, especially on larger school visits, but all these helpers will have additional skills to offer.

### **Preparing a modern classroom to look old**

A Victorian classroom would be quite austere and bleak, so try to cover up notice boards and things like that. The children would sit in rows not in clusters. Girls would generally not sit with boys. Hopefully you could arrange the desks in lines. Obviously you can only work with the furniture that you have got. Teachers/helpers can then sit around the edge. Teacher's desk and chair at the front. If possible, a blackboard and easel, definitely no whiteboards or interactive boards.

On the wall, things such as charts of tables, usually hand written. Probably a map of the British Empire. A portrait of Queen Victoria.

### **Staff Training and Advice**

We can provide training to your staff, or provide advice on aspects of the Victorian School Experience.

### **Contact**

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