














Ashby de la Zouch Museum

Victorian Life





School Loan Box

Object	Image	Description and teaching points
Flat iron		This would be heated up on the kitchen range before use. The owner would probably have several warming at the same time so that when one cooled down she could pick up the next one without having to wait. Feel how heavy it is. Try pretending to iron with it and see how long it takes before your arm aches! Imagine having to do a whole week's washing with this!
school pen and nib		This pen dates from the 1920s but was typical of the pens used in Victorian classrooms. It would not have been very easy to write with and you were quite likely to make a blot in your book which would mean big trouble!
ink bottle		Stoneware bottles like this were used to fill the ink wells in the children's desks for the dip pens. Usually, one child was appointed ink monitor for the day to make sure all the inkwells were full. Think what a messy job this would be and what would happen if you spilt the ink?
virol food jar		Virol was a food made from bone marrow that was available from Victorian times to the early part of the 20 th century. Note that it is described as the "ideal fat food". Compare this with modern thinking about diet. Many children in poorer areas of Britain at this time were undernourished.
Medical inhaler		This is rather fragile so please take extra care. This would have been filled with boiling water and a medicine such as Friars Balsam. The patient would inhale the steam through the glass mouthpiece. A comparison could be made with modern inhalers.
Spectacles		Please do not allow children to wear these glasses for safety reasons. Note the flexible wire arm-pieces that wrap behind the ears, one of which is broken.

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Pottery hot water bottle		This would have been used to warm the bed on cold winter nights. To stop it burning your feet, it would have been wrapped in a towel. Poorer people would probably have heated a brick on the range and wrapped it as a bed warmer. Imagine having to undress and get into bed on a freezing winter night with no central heating in the bedroom!
button hook		There were no zips or Velcro fastenings in Victorian times. Boots were fitted with lots of small buttons which were very fiddly to do up so this hook would have helped to pull the button through the button hole.
sugar cutters		Groceries, such as sugar, were not bought in packets like today. Sugar would be in the shop in the form of a hard cone that had to be broken up with a hammer. These cutters were used on the tea table to break up smaller pieces to put into tea.
cork screw		There were no screw tops to bottles in Victorian times and cork screws were used for all types of bottles, not just wine.
Codd's lemonade bottle		The Codd's bottle was invented in the late Victorian times to sell lemonade and ginger beer in small bottles. The gas pressure pushed the marble in the neck against the rubber rings that kept the drink fizzy. The bottles could be taken back to the shop for refilling but many of them were deliberately broken because children wanted the marble from the neck to play with.
butter pats		These wooden paddles were used to shape loose butter into blocks or pats. They were also known as "Scotch Hands". Human hands were not supposed to touch the butter. The butter would be wrapped in greaseproof paper to hand to the customer in the shop.
tin opener		There were no ring pulls in Victorian times. Tins would have to be opened with tools like this which were much more dangerous than modern tin openers! This was an advertising opener from Fray Bentos who were the main importers of Argentinian corned beef at this time. It is probably that the term "bully beef" for corned beef came from these openers.

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horse's hoof protector		Farmers would have used these to protect the hooves of plough horses. A plough horse that damaged a hoof on a rock in the field would have been useless for the job.
dolly pegs		These are the Victorian equivalent of modern clothes pegs, used to peg out washing on the line. How many of your mothers (or fathers!) still peg out washing? Do they dry it all in a tumble drier?
laundry tongues		The washing would have been in a big metal tub filled with very hot water. The water would have been too hot to put your hand in so when you wanted to get the washing out you would need a pair of tongues like this to get hold of it.
coffee tin		This is a very old coffee tin. Have a look at the writing on the outside; it has a connection with Ashby de la Zouch!
flour bag	no picture	The grocer would have had a supply of bags like this. The flour would have been loose in a big sack and when the customer came into the shop and ordered some it would have to be weighed and put into a bag like this. The grocer would not have weighed the flour using grams. He or she would have been weighing in pounds and ounces. How many grams are there in a pound? (answer: 453.59g)