

# Mexborough St John the Baptist C of E Primary School – History

**Topic: The Victorians**

**Year: 5**

**Strand: British History**

## What should I already know?

Periods of history that come before the Victorians e.g Roman, Viking, Tudor

Most people lived and worked in the countryside before the Victorian era

The Victorian era was a time of invention, discovery and change

Lots of our current day infrastructure in London is based on Victorian design

Many changes and discoveries made in Victorian times affect our lives today

## Prominent Victorians

### Queen Victoria (1819-1901)



Victoria was the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from 20<sup>th</sup> June 1837 until 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1901. On 1<sup>st</sup> May 1876 she was granted the additional title of 'Empress of India.' Her reign of 63 years and 7 months was the longest of any British monarch aside from Queen Elizabeth II, and was known as the Victorian era. Although much of the ruling power at the time was already handed to the government, Victoria still held significant sway in the rule of the country and empire. She became a national icon aligned with the strict standards of personal morality that are associated with the time. She married her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in 1840 – their nine children married into noble families all across Europe, earning her the nickname 'the grandmother of Europe.' When Albert died in 1861, Victoria sank into deep mourning. She died in 1901 at the age of 81.

### Charles Dickens (1812-1870)



Charles Dickens was a writer, who is widely regarded as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. His works, including *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations* and *A Christmas Carol* were extremely popular during his lifetime, and have gained even further recognition since. His novels often dealt with the harsh social conditions experienced by the poor at the time, critiquing the attitudes of those with power and wealth.

### Charles Darwin (1809-1882)



Charles Darwin was a naturalist and biologist who is best known for his theory of evolution. Darwin established that all species share common ancestors, and that natural selection has shaped the diversity of life on earth. Whilst his theories were initially rejected by many in scientific, religious, and public circles, they are now broadly considered as scientific fact. Darwin has been described as one of the most influential figures in history.

## Legacy

Improvements in health, sanitation and working conditions. Education system. Transport, police and postal service



## Important Events and Life in Victorian Times

<b>The Industrial Revolution</b>		In the Industrial Revolution, the manufacturing of goods moved from small shops to large factories. This meant that more people moved into the cities. It was a time of new technologies and a new, more modern way of life.	<b>When?</b> Around 1760-1850	<b>Key Fact:</b> Queen Victoria took to the throne at the very end of the revolution.
<b>The Irish Potato Famine</b>		In the early 19 <sup>th</sup> Century, potatoes were the main source of food and income in Ireland. A fungus: 'potato blight' made the potatoes rot, to catastrophic effect: about 800,000 died, and 1 million emigrated to the UK and the US.	<b>When?</b> Around 1845-1849	<b>Key Fact:</b> Many blamed the British government's inaction for the depth of the tragedy.
<b>The Public Health Act 1848</b>		The Public Health Act was drafted in response to requests to improve public health conditions in poor areas, where sewage openly flowed through the streets. It is seen as the first step on the road towards improved public health.	<b>When?</b> Initiated in 1848	<b>Key Fact:</b> The act was unpopular with many, seen as a government intrusion.
<b>The Crimean War</b>		The Crimean War was fought between Russia and an alliance of France, the UK, and the Ottoman Empire. The Allies eventually prevailed. The war became known for tactical incompetence and the mistreatment of soldiers.	<b>When?</b> October 1853 to February 1856	<b>Key Fact:</b> People at home heard about the war for the first time, through journalists and photographers.
<b>Class</b>		Despite the revolution, there were still distinct social classes: the upper class, middle class, and working class. Life was terrible for the poorest: <b>Awful working conditions and little food.</b>	<b>Who?</b> The upper classes was made up of very few people.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The upper class lived prosperous lives, with servants and cooks.
<b>Life for Children</b>		Until the late 19 <sup>th</sup> Century, education was a reserve of the rich. As many families were so poor, lots of children instead had to work. They worked long hours for little money.	<b>What?</b> Children were often exploited, paid very little for long hours.	<b>Key Fact:</b> Only in 1880 did primary schooling become compulsory.
<b>Health</b>		Medicine was nowhere near as advanced as today, <b>Many</b> diseases were rife, and childbirth and poverty were very real dangers to people living in the era, especially the poor.	<b>How?</b> Poor public hygiene played a large part in people's poor health.	<b>Key Fact:</b> On average, middle class people lived to 45. Working class were lucky to live half that time.
<b>Workhouses</b>		Workhouses were places where a person went if they could not afford to financially support themselves and their families – they quickly became extremely crowded and unpleasant.	<b>How?</b> People slept in dormitories, where disease was easily spread.	<b>Key Fact:</b> Many orphans ended up growing up in workhouses.
<b>Food</b>		As with all aspects of life, there were vast differences between the diets of the rich and poor. The poor survived on little more than potato scraps and rotten vegetables.	<b>What?</b> Workhouses only offered basic rations.	<b>Key Fact:</b> The rich dined on fine foods, using expensive cutlery, with servants.
<b>Clothes</b>		For the rich, expensive clothes were a must. Clothes were almost always made to measure. Aristocratic women wore elaborate dresses, blouses and bonnet hats, whilst men wore high-waisted trousers, cravat tops and top hats.	<b>How?</b> Poor Victorians had to buy their clothes 2nd hand.	<b>Key Fact:</b> Over the many years of Victoria's reign, fashion trends changed a great deal!

## Victorian Timeline

1837 – Victoria becomes Queen aged 18.      1840 – Britain claims New Zealand as a colony to head off the French.      1843 – Charles Dickens publishes 'A Christmas Carol.'      1845-1849 – Ireland suffers the Great Potato Famine, causing the deaths of about 800,000 people.      1850 – Workhouses were opened, offering basic food and beds in return for work.      1856 – Britain defeats Russia in the Crimean War.      1861 – Prince Albert dies of typhoid.      1880 – School compulsory for 5-10 year olds.      1901 – Queen Victoria dies. Her son, Edward VII, becomes King.