

LIVE
BORDERS
MUSEUMS
GALLERIES
& ARCHIVES

Victorian
Household
Loan Box

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Introduction to Loan Boxes

LIVE Borders Loan Boxes have been designed to expand people's experience and knowledge of history through object handling. All the objects in this Loan Box are designed to be handled. Fragile and heavy objects are marked accordingly on the [Hazards/Risks](#) page 17 of this Loan Box booklet.

People viewing the Loan Box objects will be very curious about them and where they came from, what they were used for and how were they made. What we do know about the objects contained in this Loan Box is in the [Content Information](#) section of this booklet, Pages 4-12. We have also provided prompts for [Questions and Activities](#) to aid further learning and understanding of the objects in this guide - pages 13-15.

What to do during a Loan Box session

- All the objects in this Loan Box have been checked and packed securely before being dispatched. Please inform us immediately if objects have been damaged in transit.
- All the objects should be handled with care - the most fragile/heavy have been marked on the [Hazards/Risks](#), page 17 of this booklet.
- Make sure the objects are in a safe, clean environment. Be especially careful of heavy, awkward, and/or fragile objects and supervise/display them accordingly.
- Handle objects with clean, dry hands, and keep away from potential damage hazards such as water, paint, and pens.
- Encourage handling of the objects for a better understanding of what they are.

Victorian Household-Content Information

Ladies Kidskin Gloves



Kidskin or kid leather is a type of soft, thin leather made from the skin of young goats that are traditionally used for gloves (hence the phrase 'kid gloves', used as a metaphor for careful handling). Kidskin is widely used for other fashion purposes such as footwear and clothing.

There were many rules of etiquette for wearing gloves. One book advised women to "never go out without gloves; put them on before you leave the house. You should no more be seen pulling your gloves off in the street than tying the strings of your bonnet."

Other glove etiquette rules existed for men and women, shaking hands, wearing gloves indoors and out, in warm or cold weather, and at funerals, balls, or dinner parties. By the end of the 1800s, gloves were considered optional at social events. However, people still wore gloves at most times, and it was common for people to own multiple pairs for different types for weather and occasions.

Ladies Bonnet



Hats and gloves were crucial to a respectable appearance for both men and women. To go bareheaded was simply not proper. The top hat, for example, was standard formal wear for upper- and middle-class men. For women, the styles of hats changed over time and were designed to match their outfits.

Victorian hat styles came and went every few years, and grew from large to small bonnets, short to tall hats, and plain to elaborately decorated. Changes mimicked dress fashions as well as hairstyles. There were hats for every occasion from walking, riding, morning and home use.

Working Men's Clogs



Clogs are wooden-soled shoes, commonly worn until the beginning of the 20th century. In Europe, their origin is thought to be the Roman bath shoe, which was worn to protect people's feet from hot tiled floors.

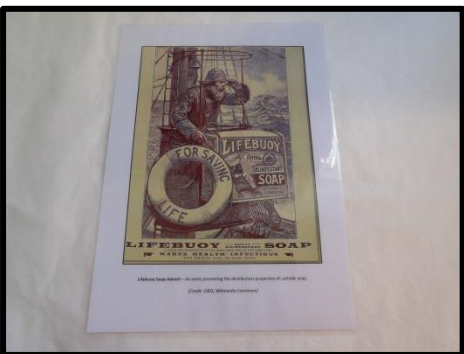
Clogs were generally cheaper and easier to repair than all-leather shoes. They were generally suited to colder, wetter climates as wood provided better insulation and could elevate the wearer's feet above the ground more than all-leather shoes.

The inflexibility of wooden soles was a major drawback, along with unsuitability in wet snow and heavy soil. With the arrival of rising wages and mass production, clogs fell out of everyday use and fashion.

Carbolic Soap



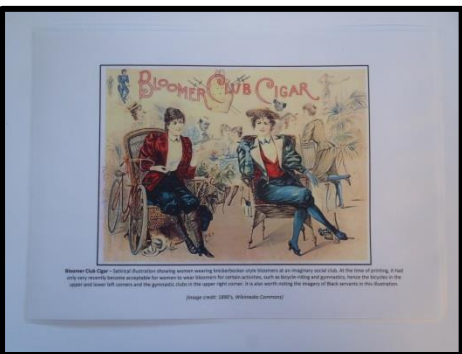
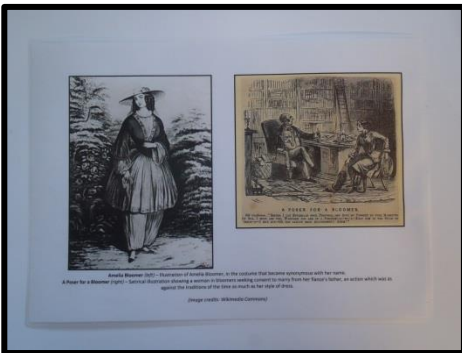
Carbolic soap gets its distinctive colour and smell from carbolic acid, which was first made from coal tar or petroleum sources in 1834 by a German chemist named Friedlieb Ferdinand Runge. In August 1865, Dr. Joseph Lister applied carbolic acid onto the leg wound of an eleven-year-old boy in Glasgow Royal Infirmary. After four days, he renewed the dressing and discovered that no infection had developed.



Advert - Lifebuoy Soap

Eventually, this acid was added to soap, which was first mass-produced for the public in 1894. It could be bought in hardware shops and was often cut from larger blocks and wrapped in paper to take home. It soon became a common sight and smell in Victorian households, hospitals, and schools due to its disinfectant and antiseptic properties. In households, it was used on a daily basis for many things, including bathing and washing clothes, hands, face, and hair. It was even used to clean out chamber pots in the morning.

Bloomers



Bloomers were part of the Victorian dress reform movement of the middle and late Victorian era, where people proposed, designed, and wore clothing considered more practical, comfortable, and healthy than the common fashions of the time. Dress reformists were largely middle-class women involved in the first wave of feminism in the United States and in Britain, from the 1850s through the 1890s.

Bloomers were first developed in 1851 by an American temperance activist named Libby Miller, who based the loose trouser design, gathered at the ankles, on the style worn by Middle Eastern and Central Asian women. The trousers were worn with a short dress or skirt and vest. This style was promoted in *The Lily*, a magazine edited by fellow activist Amelia Bloomer. Her promotion of the style in the magazine and personal use led to the new style being dubbed "Bloomers".

Women who wore bloomers were ridiculed and harassed in the press and on the street.

Amelia Bloomer herself dropped the fashion in 1859, saying that a new invention, the crinoline, was a sufficient reform. The bloomer costume fell out of fashion until it returned in a shorter form, gathered at the knees rather than the ankles and named *rational*s, or *knickerbockers*, as women's athletic wear in the early 1900s.

Lighting & Heating - Candle Mould



Today we expect to have light at the flick of a switch, but in the Victorian era, houses were lit by candles, oil, and paraffin lamps. These methods of lighting were also joined by gas and electricity in the late 19th century. Many Border towns did not have electricity until the 1920s and '30s. Remote cottages in areas such as Ettrick and Yarrow valleys were without electricity until the 1970s.

Before paraffin and electricity, homes were lit by candles which were made in moulds. A cotton wick was placed down the middle of each mould and melted animal fat was poured in. This hardened quite quickly so the candle could be taken out and used straight away. One problem with these candles was that the fat burned faster than the wick, leading to the candle getting very smokey.

Wick Trimmer



To stop this candles getting smokey, the wick often needed to be trimmed using a special tool called a wick trimmer. Some models had a box attached to one blade, and a flat cover for the box attached to the other blade. The scissors trimmed the wick, and the box collected the remains (the 'snuff'). The introduction of the self-trimming plaited wick (as used in candles today) removed the need for wick trimmers.

Bellows



Bellows were (and still are) used to help get and keep fires going. They were a common sight in any home that had an open fire for cooking and heating. These small bellows are for domestic use. The top and bottom are made of flat pieces of wood and the 'bellows' section in between is made of leather, which is nailed to the wood so that no air can escape. Opening the bellows draws air through the small circular grill on top, which is expelled when the bellows are closed.

Paraffin Lamp with Glass Chimney



A big improvement on candles came in the 1850's when a Scot, James Young, discovered how to make and use paraffin for lamps. Paraffin is a flammable liquid which is held in a metal or glass bowl at the bottom of a lamp. A wick was placed in the bowl where it would soak up the paraffin. The top of the wick was held in a type of clamp where it could be lit to give out a clear, steady light. The flame was made even brighter by protecting it with a glass funnel. The lamps could be hung up from the ceiling, to the wall or even placed on a table. In some lamps the bowl was made out of glass. This would allow you to see when the paraffin was running out.

Occasionally the burnt wick was trimmed with a wick trimmer. Some lamps had double wicks and so burned even brighter.

With this new type of lighting, people could see better at night to do things in the home such as reading, sewing, etc. Hand and coach lights were also made so that people could go out at night.

Stone 'Pig' Hot Water Bottle



We still use hot water bottles but nowadays they are made of rubber. The hot water bottle shown here is ceramic. It is called a stone because heated stones and bricks were a common and very old way of keeping hands and feet warm.

The hot water bottle is fairly heavy and would be heavier still when filled with water. It has a screw top at one end where the water was added. It has a flat base so that it can stand upright, either in a bed or on the floor of a coach or train carriage, all of which could be cold and draughty places. Women would have been able to warm their feet well as their long skirts covered the bottle, forming a tent to trap the heat.

Spectacles & Case



Along with increasing rates of literacy, the means for people with poor eyesight to be able to read improved with the introduction of spectacles. Whilst eyewear had been available in many forms over the centuries, it was during the Victorian era that their availability became commonplace.

Some Victorian-era commentators were alarmed by the popularity and availability of spectacles. The author of the '*Health, Beauty and the Toilet*' column of the *Bow Bells Magazine* asked "WHY do we see so many children wearing glasses now-a-days when it was not the case twenty years ago?"

Newspaper



Reading became a more common activity in the Victorian Era due to advancements in technology, distribution and education. In 1855 newspaper stamp tax was abolished, making them cheaper and more accessible to people on lower incomes. As well as covering recent local and international events, novels in serial parts were published in newspapers and magazines.

Newspapers increasingly made their profit from selling advertising to appeal to the increasingly affluent middle class that sought out a variety of new products and for most of the 19th century, the biggest daily newspapers carried nothing but densely-packed adverts on their front page.

The Courier, a newspaper established in 1801 and published by D. C. Thomson & Co. in Dundee, was unusual in maintaining this format until 1992, before adopting the headline-news format.

Clay Pipe



For Native American tribes, smoking had already been an important ritual that had been practiced for many centuries before European colonists invaded and introduced tobacco, smoked with the aid of clay pipes, to Britain in the late 16th century. Slave labour was used on the American plantations to ensure that plentiful supplies of tobacco reached British shops, a situation reflected in the size of British clay pipe bowls, which grew steadily bigger.

By the mid-17th century, the manufacture of clay pipes was a well-established trade, and most towns and cities in Britain had pipe makers. Longer pipes protected smokers from the heat of the bowl but also broke more easily and so they were often thrown away on the spot.

Victorian clay pipes were often intricately designed, incorporating shapes of animals, fruit or fish. Popular pipe symbols were roses, thistles and shamrocks. In 1856, the first cigarette factory in Britain was opened, leading to the rapid decline of clay pipe manufacturing.

Coins



Coins used in Victorian Britain had been much the same for 300 years and were based on a system that had existed for more than a millennium, finally being decimalised in 1971.

The pound Sterling was (and is) the central unit of money, and was divided into twenty silver coins called shillings. Each shilling was divided into twelve copper or bronze coins called pennies or pence. Smaller value coins made up of shillings and pennies. Farthings were worth a quarter of a penny, and a Halfpenny (pronounced 'ha'penny') was worth half a penny. There was a two-penny piece (pronounced 'tuppence') and a four-penny piece, previously known as a groat. Gold coins were called sovereigns and were worth a pound, half sovereigns being worth half a pound.

There was also a unit that did not have a coin or note known as the guinea, worth one pound and one shilling. It was used for professional fees as it was seen as a gentlemanly amount. Tradespeople such as carpenters, butchers, and farmers were paid in pounds, but a gentleman, perhaps an artist, doctor or lawyer, was in guineas.

Tin of Marbles



The Victorians loved to play marbles - their favourite marbles were made of real marble and were thought to be the best for shooting, but they were very expensive. Marbles made of glass were cheaper and for people with very little money, ones made of clay were more affordable.

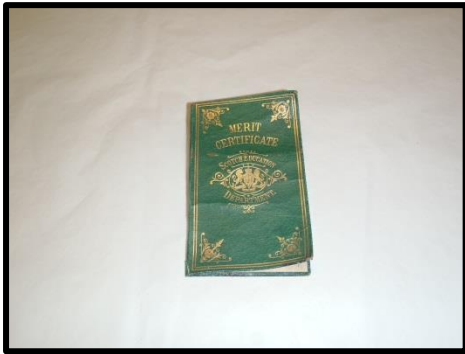
Codd Bottle



In 1872, British soft drink maker Hiram Codd of London, designed and patented a bottle designed specifically for carbonated drinks. It had a unique closing design based on a glass marble which is held against a rubber seal, which sits within a recess in the lip. The bottles were regularly produced for many decades, but gradually declined in usage.

Since children smashed the bottles to retrieve the marbles, vintage bottles are relatively scarce. Codd bottles are still used for the Japanese soft drink *Ramune* and the Indian drink *Banta*.

Scotch Education Department Merit Certificate



School attendance in Scotland became compulsory for children aged between 5 and 13, with the introduction of the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872. A ruling body called the Scotch Education Department was created, whose role was to take over the running of all schools from the Church of Scotland. The department's offices were initially based in London but by 1918 objections were raised in Scotland and the department transferred to Edinburgh and was renamed the Scottish Education Department.

The Merit Certificate was introduced in 1892 to signify the end of a pupil's period in elementary education. Initially, the certificate was to be achieved by the age of 13 but by 1903 it had evolved into a qualifying examination to be taken by all children aged 12 in elementary school. Those who achieved a high success rate in the exam were entitled to progress to a five-year course in secondary school, culminating in a leaving certificate.

The transcript for the enclosed Merit Certificate is as follows:

Isabella Allen Tait – Geography – December 1899

"The Lords of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education in Scotland, Hereby Certify that Isabella Allen Tait a Scholar in the Melrose Public School having been examined in December 1899 has shown thorough proficiency in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and English according to the requirements for the Merit Certificate, and has received efficient instruction in an approved curriculum of studies embracing the following subjects:-

Geography

H. Craik, Secretary

I Certify that Isabella A Tait's character and conduct have been entirely satisfactory

Age last birthday 13

Thomas Ingram, Head Master"

What questions should I ask during a loan Box session?

The question prompts below can help you to get the most out of using the objects for learning.

Questions about the physical characteristics of an object		
What does it look, feel, sound, smell like?	How big is it?	What shape is it?
What is it made of?	What colour is it?	How heavy is it?
Is it mass produced or unique ?	Does it have any marks , which show us how it was made, used or cared for?	Is it complete or part of an object?
Is it in good condition or worn/used?	Has it been altered, adapted, repaired or changed ?	Does it look like anything modern?

Questions about the functions of an object		
Why was it made?	What is it used for?	What would it have been like to use it?
How might it have been used?	Who might have used it?	Where might it have been used?
What skills were needed to use it?	Might it have been used with other objects ?	Has its use changed ?

Questions about the design and construction of an object

What material is it made of?	Why were the materials it was made of chosen?	Could different materials have been used to make it?
Is it attractive to look at?	When and where might it have been made?	Is it hand-made or machine-made ?
Who might have made it?	How was this object made?	How might this object work ?
Can it be taken apart ?	If it can be taken apart, then how is it put together ?	What do these tell us about the people who made and/or owned the object?
Is it decorated or plain ?	Are there any marks or images on the object?	What does this object tell us about the period we are studying?

Questions about the value and importance of an object

What difference did the object make to people's lives?	What does the object tell us about the people who owned it?
How important was the object to the people who made it and/or the people who used/owned it compared to today?	Is it mass-produced , rare or unique ?
In what way is the object important today ?	Is the object financially, sentimentally, culturally or historically valuable ?
How much do you think the object cost when it was made?	How much do you think the object is worth now?

Activity Ideas

Below are some ideas for activities that will help your students get the most out of learning from the objects in the Loan Box and the period they came from.

Before & After	
At the start of a Loan Box session, place the objects either on general display or divide a few objects amongst smaller groups of students. Set a timer for 2-5 minutes, and get them to spend the time quickly looking at the objects and writing down guesses as to what they are. A rule can be set that objects are not to be handled to make guessing more difficult. Once the time is up, reveal the answers either in one go, or spread throughout the session as part of the introduction to that object. At the very end of a Loan Box session, return to the original answers to review what the students have learned about the objects since their initial guesses.	Skills developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Descriptive• Observational• Questioning• Thinking Skills

Asking and Answering Questions about Objects	
Get students to write down all the words they can think of that would be used to describe an object that they have with them (e.g. their school bag), then get them to write down the questions they would need to ask in order to identify the object. They could also prioritise the questions into categories (i.e. physical characteristics/descriptive, design and construction, function and value) and importance (i.e. pick five questions that are essential to understanding this object).	Skills developed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Descriptive• Questioning• Thinking skills• Categorising

Object images at a glance - to check off

		
1x pair Kidskin Gloves	1x Ladies Bonnet	1x Men's Clogs
		
1x Carbollic Soap	1x Pair Bloomers	1x Candle Mould
		
1x Wick Trimmer	1x Paraffin Lamp	1x Glass Chimney
		
1x Bellows	1x Stone Pig	1x Spectacles & Case
		
1x Newspaper	1x Clay Pipe	5x Coins
		
1x Tin of Marbles	1x Codd Bottle	1 x Merit Certificate
		1x The Victorian Ironmonger Book - No Image
1x booklet Laminated Images	1x Victorian Servant book	

HAZARDS/RISKS

FRAGILE OBJECTS

Paraffin Lamp base

Glass Chimney for Lamp

Clay Pipe

Newspaper

Kidskin Gloves

Merit Certificate

Glass Codd Bottle

HEAVY OBJECTS

Stone Pig Hot Water Bottle

TO BE AWARE OF

Wick Trimmer – sharp

Bellows – metal end

Mechanism in Paraffin Lamp base

What to do before returning the Loan Box

- Check the objects against the [Object Images at a glance](#) page, above. You can print this page out to help you ensure all pieces are present.
- Pack the objects securely into the box, making sure that fragile objects are protected and in original packaging.
- Please let us know if any items are damaged or lost by phone or email.
- Pack any damaged items separately with a note inside the box.
- Boxes can either be returned directly to St Mary's Mill in Selkirk, or left at your nearest library. You will already have arranged which library this is when you booked the loan box. For any queries please get in touch at libstock@liveborders1.org.uk

Feedback Form

Before returning the Loan Box, please fill in the feedback form with this pack.

This will help us to try and improve our services. Please send the completed feedback form to libstock@liveborders1.org.uk

We hope that you have enjoyed your Loan Box experience. We have more in our collection! Please get in touch or see the live Borders website for more details. www.liveborders.org.uk