

**Contents and information for teachers**

# **VICTORIAN SEASIDE HOLIDAYS**



# VICTORIAN SEASIDE TRUNK



A trunk of Victorian treasures belonging to a little girl who has just returned from a visit to the seaside to stimulate a 'Left Luggage' enquiry.

## Clothing

Cape



Straw bonnet



Swimming costume



Nightdress



**Seaside / childhood paraphernalia**

Cup and ball



Skipping rope



Bucket and spade



Union flag



Mask



Souvenir



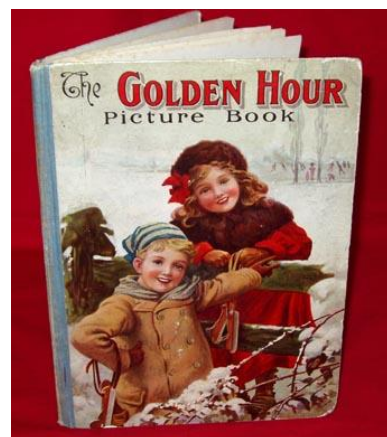
Penny lick



At the time, ice cream was served on these small glass holders. The indentation where the ice cream sat varied in depth. Less generous vendors used holders with very shallow indentations.

Book: *The Golden Hour*

This item has a bookplate giving the trunk owner's name and clues about her age. It should be left 'forgotten' in the bottom of the trunk until the very end of the Left Luggage activity.





## Personal items

Small wicker hamper (repack with toiletry items)



Toothbrush, toothpaste pot and soap



Huckaback towel



Manicure set (8 items) in roll-up case



Small padded coat hanger



Tortorine hair comb



Tortorine (imitation tortoiseshell) hair combs were very popular with Victorian ladies.

Dip pen and travelling inkwell



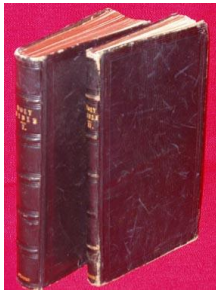
Binoculars



Child's basket with purse containing Victorian coins



Bible (2 volumes)



Memento case containing various photographs and cards.



Chamberstick (candle holder) and candle



Calendar bookmark (facsimile)



The calendar is dated 1879 which is about 30 years before the supposed owner left the trunk containing it at a railway station. This is explained in the Journal extracts by the writer saying it used to belong to her Grandmamma and now she uses it to mark her place in her Journal.

### Other items

Codd bottle



Codd bottles held fizzy drinks. They were sealed by a glass marble jammed in the top. They were opened by using a Codd bottle opener. These looked like wooden bottle tops but had a wooden peg inside them which touched the marble. By banging the opener down hard the marble was forced down into the bottle (and drink) and could only be retrieved by breaking the bottle.



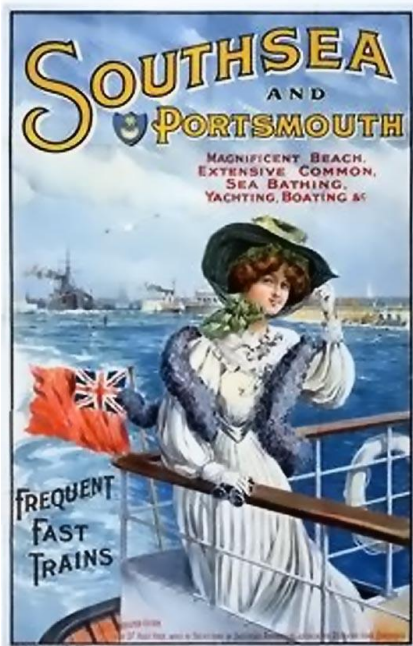
## Illustrations

Railway station scene (A3)



This is used at the denouement of the Lost Luggage activity – remove from trunk but keep close to hand

Southsea advertising poster (A4)



Souvenir seller (A4)



These are provided **for use during the journal extracts activity** or for classroom display – please ensure they are taken down and returned with the artefacts if used for this purpose.

## GETTING THE BEST OUT OF THIS COLLECTION: LEFT LUGGAGE ACTIVITY

To get the best out of this collection we recommend it should be used for a Left Luggage activity where children try to deduce whom might have owned the trunk from its contents. The following pages describe how this works.

### On receiving the trunk

**It is very important that you familiarise yourself fully with the trunk's contents prior to use** for several reasons:

Firstly, **children need to be given objects from which they, as individuals, will derive most benefit.** Obviously you will need to give able children items that present a real challenge. Similarly, children with little prior knowledge and experience need to be given objects that, with effort, they can make sense of.

Secondly, you will need to make sure the artefacts are revealed in a controlled manner, with the most specific clues to the likely owner of the trunk being revealed last. To this end, we recommend that you **re-pack the artefacts with the most specific clues packed at the bottom**, and the more general ones at the top.

Thirdly, **the posters are not used in the initial Left Luggage activity so they should be removed from the trunk prior to the activity. BUT keep the A3 railway station scene close to hand** as it is shown at the end of the Lost Luggage activity. The resort advertising poster and buying souvenirs scene are used for the journal extracts activity.

#### **Most Important:**

The final **clenching clue** is a child's **book with a bookplate** inside the front cover that reveals the name of the owner and their age (Title: *My Seaside Holiday Book*). You should make sure this book is NOT given to a pupil but is left 'forgotten' in the bottom of the trunk (or you might prefer to hide it, either in the classroom close to where you will be sitting or about your person). This clue can then be revealed (by you) after all the other clues have been identified and discussed.

### Prior to using the trunk in the classroom

Children will probably be excited when the trunk appears in the classroom, and keen to look at the contents of the box. The temptation is to let them start *discovering* as soon as possible. There are several reasons why you should delay at this point to reinforce some critical teaching points.

- **Pupils need to know that the objects are very fragile and can easily be broken.** and that if any were broken, they would be very difficult to replace because they come from such a long time ago. Even if we did find replacements, they would be very expensive.
- The **children need to explore the objects with all their senses**, not just the visual. For this reason the objects have been carefully wrapped in tissue paper. It is often a good settling activity to begin the session by passing around the class a clean

unmarked piece of tissue paper. Can the children handle it so carefully that it returns from its journey around the class in pristine condition?

## Setting the scene

When you are ready to start disclosing the artefacts, set the scene:

A railway worker has found this trunk buried in the back of a left luggage office at a railway station, it's obviously been there a very long time. That's our first clue.

But who does the trunk belong to? Our job is to return the trunk to its rightful owner (or their family), so we'd better start looking for more clues.

## Distributing the artefacts

1. Start by asking named individuals to take an object from the trunk. It is often best to **point to one or two objects for them to choose from**. You will have made your own list so you have a fair idea of what they will be finding. Tell them NOT to unwrap their chosen artefact if it is wrapped, but to sit with a partner and wait with it placed carefully in front of them until all the artefacts are distributed.
2. When all the artefacts have been removed from the trunk, ask pupils simply to **feel it through the wrapping and describe it** in turns to their partner who needs to listen carefully to the description.
3. When both have described their objects, **the time comes to unwrap the artefacts**. They can then briefly discuss the properties of the object in detail, what it is made of etc.
4. Then ask them to think what it might be (if it's not obvious) and who might have owned it, ready to tell the rest of the class in a few minutes.

## Deducing what the artefacts can tell us:

1. **Begin with the items that just show that the contents of the trunk are not from today, i.e. toothbrush, toothpaste pot, chamberstick and snuffer, dip pen and pen case, shoe horn/button hook, codd bottle, old-fashioned binoculars, purse and coins.**

Ask the pupils that have these items to explain what their item is and its likely owner. Keep your questions very open at this stage, for example:

- If they do not know what the item is, can anyone else guess or are there any clues as to what it might be?
- Is it something we still use today?
- Can they tell if their item belongs to an adult or child?

You might also try to get children to deduce just how old the items might be – the toothbrush and toothpaste pot, dip pen and pen case all look very old and you should aim to get pupils using language such as: *a very long time ago, before Granny and Grandad were born* etc.

After these items have been discussed, recap/make explicit what we can conclude so far – the trunk contains things from the past.



2. Next, **move on to selecting pupils that have the items that offer clues about the age and sex of the owner** i.e. **hair and clothes brush – female**, **straw bonnet – female**, **gloves and glove stretchers – female**, **skittle set – child**, **bubble pipe – child** (pupils may think this is a pipe for smoking tobacco which would belong to a man), **small wicker basket – child, probably female**, **nightdress – child** (note that although quite large, the sleeves have been shortened to fit a child). Children may assume the nightdress indicates the child is female (which the lace confirms), but point out that a long time ago both boys and girls would have worn nightdresses).

Ask the pupils that have these items to start by saying what the item is (or what they think it is) one pair at a time, of course. Then prompt discussion of the likely owner if necessary with such questions as:

- Do they think their item belongs to an adult or child?
- Do they think it belongs to a male or a female?

Again round up by drawing a conclusion – the owner is *probably* female and maybe a child, but can we find out for sure?

3. Now, **home in on pupils that have the items that tell us the owner is definitely a girl and is probably on a trip to the seaside** i.e. **cape and bloomers – both are small, therefore owner is a girl**, **swimming costume**, **bucket & spade**, **penny lick**, – **seaside trip**, **souvenir postcards from Brighton – destination**.

Here your questions should home in on the fact that the owner of the trunk is a girl and the purpose of the train journey was a trip to the seaside. But can the children tell if she was going to the seaside or coming home? **The souvenir post cards** show she must have been on the return journey.

### What else might be deduced from the contents of the box?

- she has taken a **nightdress** and **chamberstick** with her so has stayed over at least one night
- for the more-able, conclusions can be drawn about the date – from the **coins**, and her lifestyle – the **quality of her personal possessions** indicate she is from a reasonably well-off family.

### The denouement

This is where you play a devious trick on the children by 'noticing' that there is still one object from the trunk which we haven't looked at. It might contain some vital evidence. **Now produce the previously hidden book with its bookplate**. From this you get **the child's name and the date on which she received it**. From this it is possible to gauge when the trunk was left at the station.

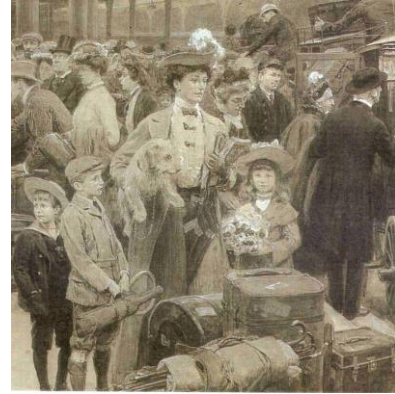
### Returning the objects to the trunk

1. When the children, as a class have drawn as many conclusions as they can, there arrives the less exciting part of returning the objects to the trunk. We suggest you do

this in the following way. Select pupils in turn and ask them to **take the object held by their partner**, i.e. NOT the one they selected initially.

2. Now **ask them to carefully wrap the object and walk to the trunk**. Standing by the trunk they have to **explain to the class, "This object is a... it helped me to work out that ..."** This is to make sure that they have been listening to what others have had to say about their objects.
3. Doing this helps to consolidate information about the objects and ensures that children continue to handle the objects with care as they return them to the trunk under your supervision. It also saves you having to re-pack it yourself!

To help children form a visual representation of the owner in their mind, the session ends by **showing the crowded Victorian railway station scene** included in the trunk. At the centre is a young girl standing behind a whole pile of familiar looking trunks. Could this be our owner?



## JOURNAL EXTRACTS

Having completed the Lost Luggage activity you might want to introduce these Journal Extracts. They feature the type of things people at the time would have done at the seaside to extend pupil's understanding of the period. They feature **artefacts** and **pictures** that are contained in the trunk (identified by the shading) which you might like to point to/ display/ have children hold up/wear as they are mentioned. Using these will greatly enhance children's understanding of the differences between seaside holidays today and seaside holidays when they first became popular in late Victorian times.

First, tell the children that you are going to read out some pages from a diary written about a seaside holiday a long time ago. The diary is in a museum but someone at the museum has kindly copied the pages for us.

### August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1900

Dear Diary, well at last it is almost here, outside, the rain is pouring down and making everywhere look grey and dismal. But I shall not worry because tomorrow the sun is sure to come out because tomorrow our adventure begins – our first ever trip to the seaside! All this rain will only make it seem all the nicer when it is sunny during our stay at the coast. I helped Mamma pack my trunk this afternoon. Some of my clothes went in Mamma's trunk, but I am taking a trunk all of my own too. I wanted to pack my **bathing costume** in my trunk but Betty had already packed it in Mamma's trunk after she ironed it. It really is most exciting Dear Diary, thinking about going into the sea! Mamma's trunk is so big I heard Betty say she didn't think Mamma's trunk would fit through the door of the railway carriage when Mamma was out of the room! I am so excited goodness knows how I will ever sleep tonight, Dear Diary. But I suppose the morning will come all the faster if I do sleep the night away, so I will put **Grandmamma's bookmark** in here now and blow out the candle. God bless me and all my family, Good night.

### August 4<sup>th</sup> 1900

Dear Diary, the adventure has begun! This morning after breakfast a cab collected us from home. Papa and the driver loaded the trunks onto the cab roof. Edward helped too so got to ride on top next to the driver with Papa. Mamma, Albert, Emily and I rode in the cab and off we went to the station. The station was really noisy and a bit scary. We were stood close to a huge locomotive when it suddenly swooshed out steam below and hooted its whistle, it really made me jump. By the time the porter had loaded our trunks onto the train it was almost ready to leave. Albert and Edward were already on the train and had to shout for us to board quickly or we would have missed the train. Then where would we be? No trip to the seaside. On the journey the stations we stopped at had **posters advertising attractions in Southsea** (A4 picture). They made it look so exciting we were all even more desperate to be there. And what a magical place the seaside is, Dear Diary! You cannot imagine how big the sea is. When I saw it for the first time from the train it almost took my breath away.

Our hotel for the week is very pleasant and the staff who run it are very nice too. We had a lovely tea this afternoon when we had unpacked. Then we went down to the seafront to walk along the promenade. Such a throng of people walking to and fro! And so many entertainers and street sellers to look at my head was almost spinning. It was so difficult



not to rush on to the sand and down to the waves, but Papa says we will spend all day on the beach tomorrow. And now Dear diary I am going to blow out the **candle** and go to sleep because all these adventures have worn me out and tomorrow will come all the faster if I sleep. Good night and God bless us all.

### **August 5<sup>th</sup> 1900**

This morning, Dear Diary, I was up and dressed before Mamma came to wake me because I was so excited about the day to come! The hotel had provided a huge breakfast that the boys and I could barely eat because we were so desperate to be off to the beach. Then when everyone had finished Papa reminded us we must brush our teeth first. So off we each went to the bathroom in turn with our **toothbrush** and **toothpaste pot**. Then Mamma insisted on brushing my hair – twenty strokes on each strand. We thought we should never get to the beach. But finally we made our way to the front.

You have never seen such a scene as met us at the beach, Dear Diary. The donkeys were all lined up ready to give rides and the Punch and Judy man was just setting up his show tent. The sun was shining, so all the ladies arriving on the beach had their parasols open and I wore my **straw bonnet** to keep off the sun. Edward and Albert had to go straight into a bathing machine to change into their new costumes then they rushed right into the sea. Papa hired deckchairs for himself and Mamma. Then he took me over to one of the kiosks on the promenade and bought me a **bucket and spade**. Then we spent ages and ages building the best sandcastle you have ever seen. It had four turrets and we used shells for windows and Papa went backwards and forwards to the sea to fetch water for the moat. We even put a **Union flag** on top which Papa bought from a street seller on the promenade.

The hotel packed a picnic for us to have lunch on the beach. There were lots of sandwiches and cakes that Edward and Albert ate most of and a pork pie for Papa. There were **codd bottles** of pop too. At first we thought the hotel staff had forgotten to put a codd bottle opener in the picnic basket, but then Mamma found it under the cloth at the bottom. In the afternoon Papa took me over to the man who does the donkey rides and I had a ride all along the beach and back. My donkey was called Belle and she was the same colour as the sand. This afternoon Mamma and Papa said we will go to the Music Hall at the Pier Theatre one evening. I have had such a magical day. This holiday really is going to be the best holiday anyone ever had, Diary. Now God bless us all and goodnight.

### **August 6<sup>th</sup> 1900**

Today Dear Diary, Mamma and Emily hired a bathing hut. They climbed in and the man led the horse pulled the bathing hut down the beach and right into the water. Then he made the horse turn round so that the door of the hut was facing the water. Emily came out first wearing her new bathing costume. Then Mamma came out and joined Emily in the water. They swam for about half an hour and said it was really cold but so exciting that they will probably go swimming again tomorrow. One day I'm going to learn to swim, Diary, then I'll use a bathing hut too. But paddling is nice too. Emily helped me collect some shells to take home. I am going to use them to decorate an old cigar box of Papa's to keep all my momentos of the holiday in. When I'm a bit sad I will open the box and look at the momentos and then I'll be happy again. This afternoon, on the promenade, Papa bought us all **penny lick ice-creams** from an ice-cream cart. The vendor scooped the ice-cream

onto small glass holders and we sat in a shelter watching everyone on the beach while we ate them – they were delicious! Now God bless us all and goodnight.

### **August 7<sup>th</sup> 1900**

Dear diary, we went on the pier today. It was really crowded. We walked right to the end and then looked out across to the Isle of Wight through **a pair of binoculars**, it looked so close I could have touched it. Then Edward looked through them the wrong way round and said it couldn't be the Isle of Wight, it must be France because it was so far away! Then we listened to the band playing for a while until Edward and Albert got fidgety and wanted to look at the slot machines. Papa let them put a penny each into the machines. Pleasure boats come right up to the pier and take people on trips along the coast. I should be too scared to step across from the jetty onto a boat bobbing about on the sea like that.

Later we went along the promenade. The gardens along the promenade are very beautiful. We sat in a little park for a while and the boys sailed a toy boat in the lake and played with a **cup and ball** Papa bought them from a street seller. Edward is very good at it already but Albert misses the ball quite often, but then he is a year younger. I took my **skipping rope** with me and played skipping games with a girl called Elizabeth who I met in the Park. She's on holiday too. Papa bought food and pop from a street vendor on the promenade and we ate it in the park and fed the crumbs to the ducks on the lake. Later, Mamma, Emily and I bought postcards from a kiosk on the prom. We came back to the hotel early to write them. Albert said I shouldn't pack a **pen and ink** because the ink would spill in the trunk, but I told him the special inkwell would be alright, and it was! I am sending my postcard to Amy to let her know what a wonderful holiday we are having in Southsea. Mamma said she will get a stamp for me and post them all tomorrow.

### **August 8<sup>th</sup> 1900**

A really exciting day today, Dear Diary. We watched the Punch and Judy show on the beach this morning and went along the promenade. Edward and Albert thought Mr Punch was very funny but I thought he was rather naughty. But the real excitement was tonight because we went to the Pier Theatre! I wore my new dress and the silk shoes Mamma bought me before the holiday and Emily did my hair really prettily curling it all round with the tongs and then pinning it up with a **comb** at the back. Her and Mamma looked beautiful too and Papa had his top hat and cane. Even Edward and Albert washed without being told to. The hotel porter said what a picture we looked when we were ready to leave for the theatre!

The theatre was really busy and very warm. Mamma and Emily had to use their fans quite a lot. But the show was tremendous, there was a fire-eater, a magician, a comedian (although I did not understand many of his jokes, the rest of the audience laughed so much) and a lady singer who Papa said was as good as Marie Lloyd. Everyone joined in with the songs, the boys were still humming them as we walked back to the hotel. After the show Papa bought me **a souvenir mask** from a man selling them outside the theatre. It makes me look just like the lady singer! I'm going to surprise Amy with it when I get home. I'll knock on her door holding it over my face and she'll wonder who on earth is calling. It was really late and the moon was out, it was quite eerie seeing the Moon reflected in the sea beneath the pier. It was so hot in the theatre, I'm glad I had my **cape**

because it felt really quite cool walking back. And now, Dear Diary, its time for sleep, I'm so tired and so happy. God bless all of us and goodnight.

### August 9<sup>th</sup> 1900

A sad day Dear Diary, our last full day at the seaside. After the beach this morning, Mamma, Emily and I went to buy some souvenirs to remember our holiday by. I had some pennies Aunt Jane gave me for my birthday, so took my **basket and purse** to the beach. A **girl was selling souvenirs** (A4 picture) on the beach, from a box hanging round her neck. Mamma said her family probably needed whatever money she could make, so we looked at what she had. I bought **a tiny souvenir vase** with the Southsea crest on it. I shall keep it on my bedside table at home, to remind me of our wonderful time here.

I packed most of my trunk after dinner this evening as the cab will be coming straight after breakfast to take us back to the station for the journey home. I seem to be going home with much more than I came with! I will not be too sad though, because at home I will be able to go next door to see Amy and tell her all about our holiday. Now God bless us all, and the donkeys and the souvenir seller and goodnight.

You can now ask pupils whose journal they think they might just have heard the extracts from. - Josephine's of course, because her journal mentioned many of the things they found in the trunk.

## POSTCARD WRITING

The journal extracts will have given children lots of ideas about things people visiting the seaside in late Victorian/early C20<sup>th</sup> times would have done whilst there. These can be used to prompt a **journal or postcard writing** session as if pupils are on a Victorian seaside holiday. However, for this they must include proper period details and vocabulary – no going to the arcade to play video games!

Before pupils write we suggest you have a session where relative artefacts and word cards (for items not represented by artefacts, like pier, promenade etc) are sorted into a **Venn diagram** made from hula hoops/skipping ropes on the floor first. Any items/words in the 'Now' section, cannot be included in the journal or postcard.

