

A Victorian Christmas in Ranfurly House

Ranfurly House was opened in 1854 as the Dungannon Branch of the Belfast Banking Company. It was designed by the architect Sir Charles Lanyon. It is the ideal location in which to celebrate the festive season and to learn more about the traditions, games and artwork of Christmas of the Victorian era.

Old Time Toys

This activity is for Foundation/Key Stage 1 pupils.

Old Time Toys is facilitated by Time Steps Living History. Two living history facilitators are present at this activity and they play the roles of toy testers in Hamleys Toy Shop in London in the 1890s. They ask the children to assist them as toy testers by playing with the toys. The ladies then describe and explain the use and construction of the indoor and the outdoor toys.

Among the indoor toys are marbles, a spinning top and a small, wooden, moving gymnast. Among the outdoor toys are a skipping rope, a hoopla game and wooden skittles.

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will:

- Be introduced to the concept of toys at Christmas
- Learn about toys from the Victorian era
- Play with indoor and outdoor toys
- Find out what the toys are made from

Old Time Toys takes place in the Square Box and it lasts for one hour. The class is divided into two smaller groups so that each child has the opportunity of playing with all of the toys.

The first session begins at 10.00am and the second at 11.15am.

Victorian Christmas Art

This activity has been designed for Key Stage 2/3 pupils.

In the mid-19th century, the Christmas tree and seasonal indoor decorations were introduced to the UK by Prince Albert, the German husband of Queen Victoria. This new fashion is referred to by writers of the time, including Charles Dickens in "A Christmas Carol".

In *Victorian Christmas Art* the pupils follow the Victorian trend of making their own decorations: cornucopias and Christmas doves. These are created from recycled materials, under the guidance of a professional artist, Hazel from Artikles. These decorations are taken home at the end of the session.

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will:

- Be taught how to make Victorian-themed Christmas decorations
- Be guided and assisted by an artist and centre staff
- Create Christmas cornucopias and doves that they can take home

This activity takes place in the Arts Studio. *Victorian Christmas Art* begins at 10.00am and at 1.00pm and it lasts for 1½ hours.



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Victorian Christmas Customs

This activity is suitable for Key Stage 2/3 pupils.

Victorian Christmas Customs is a living history presentation which is facilitated by Time Steps Living History. It is set in 1890 and is led by Mrs Smith, the housekeeper of Northland House, Dungannon. She tells her audience about the Christmas season in the local big house, and encourages all present to compare their Christmas customs with those from 1890.

Mrs Smith gives details of the seasonal customs and traditions of all of the occupants of Northland House, from the housemaids to Lord Northland. She demonstrates the way in which a Victorian Christmas tree should be decorated, shows Christmas cards from 1890 and also describes the use of natural materials, such as holly and mistletoe, in the decoration of the home. Mrs Smith tells us of the special Christmas Day dinner, while asking the pupils to share details of their favourite Christmas foods.

The children are invited to take part in Christmas parlour games, such as the egg and spoon race and "Ha, ha! Hee, hee!" and are also encouraged to ask questions and to make comments.

Learning Outcomes

Pupils will:

- Take part in a living history presentation, set in 1890 and led by Mrs. Smith, the housekeeper of Northland House, Dungannon.
- Learn about the traditions of the Victorian Christmas, finding out how these customs originated.
- Participate in Victorian parlour games, ask questions and make comments.

This activity takes place in the Square Box and it lasts for approximately 45 minutes. *Victorian Christmas Customs* begins at 10.00am and at 1.00pm.

If schools wish to book both *Victorian Christmas Art* and *Victorian Christmas Customs* on the same day, a room will be made available where the pupils and the staff may eat packed lunches.

For more information about *A Victorian Christmas in Ranfurly House* contact the Education Officer, Peter Lant:

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