

# W.A.D.D.H.A.M.S.

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## PHEW, IT'S ALL OVER!

Well, now that Christmas is over, we can all get back to some normality!

It's time to take down all the decorations, even those in Dolls Houses, and it can leave everything looking quite bare.

More reason to treat yourself to something nice to make up for all the "new found space"!

And what better place than at the Dolls House Fair at Stafford on 15th January 2006.

The show runs from 10.30am to 4.00pm and is held at the County Showground on Weston Road, Stafford.

There will be around 90 stalls and admission is just £3 for adults.

In this month's Newsletter we continue our look through the ages with the Victorian era. This era is very popular with Dolls Houses and there is so much to write about it that it wouldn't all fit in! There are lots more interesting facts about this pioneering



age and perhaps we can cover some more aspects with a second part later on in the year.

Also featured this month, as it has been so cold!, is a history of fireplaces. They were always a great focal point of houses and it is a shame they are being replaced by more efficient, but much less heart-warming, electric and gas fires.

Luckily, Dolls Houses seem to always have a place for a good old fireplace and they are, more often than not, the most attractive section in the room. We all know that so much can be done to make the Dolls House fireplace special and I will cover some of these tricks of the trade next month.

*Michelle*

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *WADDHAMS Club Nights—every first Wednesday in month at United Reform Church, Penn Road, Wolverhampton from 7.30pm*
- *Stafford Collectors Fair, Sunday 15th January, County Showground, Stafford, 10.30am—4.00pm*

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## REVIEW OF DECEMBER MEETING



The December Meeting was a nice get together for the Christmas Period. We had a lovely selection of “nibbles” from everyone bringing something nice with them.

We exchanged cards and took the opportunity to socialize for the whole of the meeting. The Club kindly subsidized the tea and coffee too!

Gwen and Angie bought a nice selection of festive items that went very well and kindly donated a lovely bird cage for the raffle prize that was won by Rebecca, to the envy of everyone else!

In the absence of Sue and Jayne, we will have some more nibbles this meeting to make up for it!

Yum, yum!

## HISTORY OF THE FIREPLACE

Before the 15th century houses had an open hearth in the centre of main living room. Logs were burnt resting on the bar between two “fire dogs”. The introduction of canopies to guide the smoke away led to Fireplaces being moved to the wall where the canopies were easier to support.

The Fireplaces in medieval kitchens were extremely wide to accommodate large logs and cooking spits. The opening was spanned by an oak beam or Fireplace Mantel and there was room to sit by the fire, the ingle-nook (from the scots word aingeal meaning fire and nook meaning a corner)

The early 16th Century saw the introduction of the enclosed wall Fireplace with the chimneystack containing the flue running up from the hearth. Most hearth openings were rectangular and spanned by a stone or wood lintel. The Fireplace was treated as part of the wall but soon became a dominant feature of most rooms with the development of the fire surround or Fireplace Mantelpiece.

The fire surround was devised during the renaissance in Italy and was inspired by classical Greek and Roman architecture. The surround took the form of a pair of legs on either side of the hearth linked by an entablature. The legs were columns, pilasters, carved figures or simple architectural mouldings. The entablature was a decorative frieze. The surface of the chimneybreast was also decorated

with a wooden or stone over Fireplace Mantel

When much of England’s woodland disappeared due to the demands of shipbuilding it led to widespread coal burning and the introduction of baskets to hold the coal.

The first coal burning fire baskets with a small fireback and bars all around developed into the heavy dog grate raised above the hearth. Another way of providing a small fire basket was the hob grate. With shelves on either side of the fire, it was the first grate to be permanently built in. To prevent cinders falling on the floor, fenders were introduced.

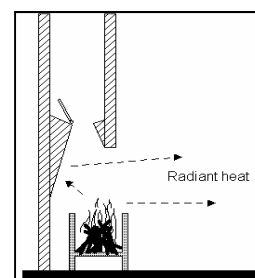
Over the centuries many technical and decorative changes were made to the Fireplace. Canting of the sides of the hearth was introduced to reflect heat into the room. There were reductions in the size of the hearth and flue to increase the draw of air.

The excesses of Jacobean decoration were followed by a return to classical style. Fireplace recesses were usually square with simple moulding in wood, stone, marble or painted plaster. The recess could be lined with cast iron or have an ornamented fireback to reflect heat into the room. 17th century classicism was followed by first baroque and then rococo style before reverting to classicism with the Adams brothers. Their marble Fireplaces set a style, which continues to this

day.

The areas between the legs and the hearth or grate were lined with marble, slate or ceramic tiles. Picture panels were incorporated. The over Fireplace Mantel was dispensed with and picture or mirrors were hung on the chimneybreast.

The Victorian period saw a number of changes in style. The High Victorian Style was a natural progression, begun in the Regency period, towards excessive embellishment leading to the ornate or cluttered look that most of us associate with the term “Victorian”. Victorian England was the first mass consumer society. Wealth grew rapidly with industrialisation as did the range and variety of mass-produced goods available. Fireplaces were made from cast iron, marble chimney pieces were prefabricated and pieced together. Fireplace Mantel-shelves became wider to accommodate clocks, candles and ornaments.



*In the late 1700's Count Rumford produced this classic layout which forms the basis of most modern open fireplaces.*

## HISTORY THROUGH THE AGES—THE VICTORIANS

The Victorian Era ran from 1837 to 1900 and was so called because of the record length of reign of Queen Victoria.

The Victorians gave us many things that are still around today and were pioneers of some of the great inventions that are paramount in the development of Britain.

However, there was still a great divide between the rich and poor and there were many extremes during this time. A lot of the houses built in this era are still around today. More

and more people moved into the new industrial towns to work in the mills and factories and rows of terraced back-to-back houses were built to house them.

These houses were very small with two rooms upstairs and two downstairs. There were no gardens, only small back yards with outside toilets.

Victorian houses were made of brick with tiled roofs. The Victorians invented a way to make big panes of glass, called 'sheet glass', so Victorian

houses had bigger windows.

Many people in Victorian times lived in homes without any of the modern comforts we take for granted today.



People had to manage without central heating or hot water from the tap – instead they had open fires and heated water on a big cooker called a range. Without vacuum cleaners or washing-machines, looking after the home was very hard work.

### Poor Houses

Poor people in Victorian times lived in horrible cramped conditions in run-down houses, often with the whole family in one room. Many people during the Victorian years moved into the cities and towns to find work in the factories. People crowded into already crowded houses. Rooms were rented to whole families or perhaps several families. Most poor houses only had one or two rooms downstairs and one or two upstairs. Families would crowd into these rooms, with several in each room and some living in the cellars. These houses had **no running water or toilets**. Each house would share an outside water pump. The water from the pump was frequently polluted. Some streets would have **one or two outside toilets for the whole street to share!**

Houses were built close together with narrow streets between them and open sewers running down the middle of the streets. Rubbish was tipped into the streets. It was no surprise that few children made it to adulthood.

### Rich Houses

Homes for the middle classes and the upper classes were much better. They were better built and were larger. The houses had most of the new gadgets installed, such as flushing toilets, gas lighting, and inside bathrooms. Wealthy Victorians decorated their homes in the latest styles. There would be heavy curtains, flowery wallpaper, carpets and rugs, ornaments, well made furniture, paintings and plants. The rooms were heated by open coal fires and lighting was provided by candles and oil or gas lamps. Later in the Victorian period, electricity became more widespread

and so electric lights were used. Rich Victorian had water pumps in their kitchens and their rubbish was taken away down into underground sewers. Most rich people had servants and they would live in the same house. They slept on the top floor of the house or in the attic. The servant rooms were often cold in the winter and stuffy in the summer. Girls as young as twelve worked as maids. They were clothed, fed, and given a roof over their heads in return for a wage – a maid would earn about £7 a year.

### Lighting

Candles continued to be an important source of lighting. Paraffin lamps were introduced in the 1860s, and gas lighting became increasingly common as the century went on.

### TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTORIAN HOUSES

- BAY WINDOWS
- IRON RAILINGS
- FLEMISH BRICK BOND
- PATTERNS IN BRICKWORK
- STAINED GLASS IN DOORWAYS
- ROOFS MADE OF SLATE



Most children had a few toys like a ball or a doll. Girls were given dolls and tea sets to play with whilst boys were given toy soldiers and marbles. During Victorian times, people became fascinated by toys that made pictures move. One of the earliest and simplest of these was the thaumatrope. This is a disc with a picture on either side that is attached to two pieces of string or a stick. When you spin the disc quickly, the two pictures appear to combine into one. Rich chil-



dren had rocking horses with real horse hair manes, and dolls houses full of beautifully-carved miniature furniture. Other popular toys for rich children included china or wax dolls for the girls and clockwork train sets for the boys. Children were often forced to work as soon as they were old enough. This was not something new to the Victorian period as children had always been expected to work as soon as they were old enough for hundreds of years.

The lucky children got apprenticed in a trade, the less lucky ones worked on farms or helped with the spinning. When new types of work appeared with the development of **industries and factories**, it seemed perfectly natural to

use children for work that adults couldn't do; Crawling underneath machinery or sitting in coal mines to open and close the ventilation doors. Another job they could do better than adults was **chimney sweeping**. A chimney boy worked for a chimney sweep. His job was to scramble up inside the chimney, to scrape and brush soot away. He came down covered in soot, and with bleeding elbows and knees. Some boys got stuck and died of suffocation. In 1832 the use of boys for sweeping chimneys was forbidden by law, however, boys continued to be forced through the narrow winding passages of chimneys in large houses.

