

Exploring British History: Changes in  
leisure and entertainment since 1837.

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To create a timeline of key events  
from 1837 to 2015.

# What is History?

History is defined as the study of past events, particularly in human affairs or, the whole series of past events connected with a particular person or thing.

We study history, the events of the past, to help us understand who we are and inform the actions of the future. We view history in time periods, it is broken up to make it easier to study.

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# Victorian Era

The Victorian era or age is a period in British history from 1837 to 1901. The period is named after Queen Victoria who was on the throne during the time. Queen Victoria came to the throne after her uncle William IV died. She was only 18 when she became Queen and there were many who believed she was not fit for the job.

The Victorian age was a time of great change and discovery. The population of England and Wales almost doubled, creating more demand on resources. There were many changes and developments that touched every aspect of life including – industrial revolution, social reforms, the rise of the middle class, the growth of democracy, expansion of the Empire and the growth of leisure pursuits.

# Victorian Era

Leisure became increasingly important, seaside holidays, the development of public parks, museums and libraries and also the increase in popularity of theatres and music halls.

The Victorian era was also a time of science, technology and invention. Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, was passionate about science. New inventions saw changes in the life of everyday people. Steam trains and ships revolutionised travel. Factories were built which created large industrial cities. Life was changing, getting better.

# The War Years

The war years again changed Britain. They spanned from 1901 to 1945 and covered the build up to the Great War, the war itself, World War Two and the period in between. This period saw the reign of four monarchs – Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII (who abdicated shortly after) and George VI.

# The War Years

Motor cars would become an everyday sight. The 'unsinkable Titanic' was launched on her fateful maiden voyage, aviators were the new pioneers and the world would be faced with horrors beyond imagination as two world wars were fought across every continent and touched everyone's lives. Technology moved on at a roaring pace both in terms of transportation and in leisure and entertainment. The cinema was the place to go, radio the at home entertainment.

# The War Years

The First World War changed all aspects of life. It highlighted the need for proper housing and nutrition at home whilst on the battlefields men would be changed forever. It was called the war to end all wars and for a while it seemed to be. Changes at home made living standards better. Women gained the right to vote and more freedoms and technologies continued to develop.



# The War Years

But then the world was brought to a halt again. The rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party would affect all parts of people's lives. Horrors were witnessed both across Europe and at home. Severe bombing would change the face of many cities. But good things would come out of the war. A sense of patriotism, a nation united against a common enemy. Bomb damage was rebuilt, better houses replacing the destroyed. Women experienced freedom like never before and technologies created for the war effort would filter down into everyday life.

# Post War Era

Post war era began in 1945 after the end of the Second World War and continued until the start of the Digital age in 1970. The Post War era continued the hardships of the war years, rationing carried on until the end of 1954. This era however was lifted by the events of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth 11. Technology continued to develop with television becoming part of everyday life.

## Post War Era

Television and film would lead the way in creating a product driven consumer society. For the first time companies used marketing and advertising to persuade people to purchase their products. New manufacturing technologies meant products were cheaper and easier to produce. Households were now consumed with the latent technologies and gadgets. The television was to be the centre of the home especially with the events of the 1960s

## Post War Era

The space race was to capture the world's attention and imagination. The 1960s brought a sense of freedom and excitement. Whilst new boundaries were being broken in space at home new music and fashion were creating a youth culture. In 1966 England won the football World Cup. Britain had four Formula One World Champions – Jim Clark, Graham Hill, John Surtees and Jackie Stewart. The sixties were indeed swinging.

Then on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1969 mankind took a giant leap. Commander Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the moon. The digital and modern era had arrived.

# The Digital Age

The modern or digital era describes the period since 1970 when technology became integrated into people's daily lives. Technology continued to develop and evolve, before the end of the millennium we would see computers shrink in size and grow in speed and complexity. Mobile technology would become an integral part of our lives; starting with the Walkman and brick like mobile phones and leading to tablets, music and video streaming and who knows what next.

Film and television continued to dominate and drive the consumer society feeding the pressure and need to have the latest device or follow the latest trend.

# The Digital Age

The 1970s saw the era of global travel begin; the 80s the micro-chip and the 90s the expansion of the World Wide Web. Life in Britain and indeed the world has changed beyond both belief and recognition since the start of the Victorian age. Many factors were driving that change. Technology and consumerism now dominate our lives bringing both benefits that are too immeasurable to count but also bringing drawbacks and unseen difficulties.

We can only guess how the next 100 years will change our lives further.