

Victorian Tatton

The Domestic Scene in Victorian England

The Servant Hierarchy

Servants in all great country houses were strictly ranked, each with their own special skills and tasks. Even amongst the servants themselves there was a strict code of protocol, which meant that those at the top of the tree were treated almost as respectfully as members of the master's family. In the late nineteenth century, Tatton had 40 indoor servants, 24 gardeners and over 100 farming and estate workers. The family living here at that time was not large by Victorian standards, but Tatton was well known in aristocratic circles for its great parties and social events culminating in a visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1887. All in all, there was plenty of work to keep the following servants occupied:

Lower Servants:

It was these servants who did most of the hard work! This meant keeping the house clean without the benefit of modern technology and looking after the family and their guests. They included: Footmen; Under-Butlers; Housemaids; Nursery-Maids; Still-room Maids; Kitchen Maids; Scullery Maids; Laundry-Maids; Dairymaids; Kitchen Men; Baker and Helpers. Some of their jobs will be undertaken by your class!!

Lower servants ate plain food in the Servant's Hall, sharing small dark rooms in the attic. Promotion prospects were good however, and conditions were often far better than at home....

A Typical Housemaid's Day from a Victorian Diary

Average Yearly Wage £12 - £25

6.00am	<i>Woke up, swept state rooms, cleaned grates and fireplaces, took hot water upstairs for family and guests.</i>
8.00am	<i>Breakfast in Servants Hall.</i>
8.30am	<i>Cleaned bedrooms, made beds, emptied slops and refilled the coal buckets. Swept staircases.</i>
1.00pm	<i>Took hot water upstairs for family to wash before lunch</i>
1.30pm	<i>Servants lunch</i>
2.00pm	<i>Returned to bedrooms to empty water. Dusted and tidied.</i>
4.00pm	<i>Put clean towels etc. out, answered calls from mistress.</i>
5.00pm	<i>Re-lit bedroom fires. Cleaned glass and china in the drawing and dining room.</i>
7.00pm	<i>Took up more hot water. Lit lamps.</i>
8.00pm	<i>Tidied bedrooms whilst guests were at dinner.</i>
10.00pm	<i>Made up bedroom fires for the night.</i>
11.00pm	<i>Answered requests from guests for drinks of water!</i>
11.30pm	<i>Retired at last.</i>

Upper Servants

The lower servants were supervised by the Upper Servants who had their own quite modest apartments and took their meals in the stewards room - a diet based on that of their employers. They included the House Steward who engaged all servants and kept accounts; the Housekeeper who hired and fired all women servants and supervised work both above and below stairs; the Butler who had complete responsibility for the wine cellar, the Cook or Chef and the Valet and Ladies Maid who were personal servants of Lord and Lady Egerton.

The Lower Servants at Tatton

For our living history programme we find it useful if you can allocate each member of your party, adults included, with a name from the list of real servant's names below.

On arrival at the Mansion, the Housekeeper or Butler, will take a register of the 'new' servants and at the end of the day, allocate jobs to each of them. Each child will memorise the name you have given them, in order to find out what their job is. If desired, get the children to write a letter of application to the Housekeeper, asking for a job. They need to give reasons why they think they would be suitable for a position at the Mansion (remember that the Housekeeper did not take on any outside staff). Could we please ask you to send these letters in advance to give the Housekeeper a chance to read them.

Also, to assist you in your history project, we find it helpful if the children are encouraged to make up an imaginary Victorian family. This means lots of brothers and sisters and parents with appropriate Victorian jobs who were likely to send their children into service. This may help them to understand some of the social differences between today's society and that of the Victorians.

Female Servants

Clarrie Appleby Edith Badrock Jane Barker Matilda Burton Annie Callister Katy Carter Sarah Davies	Olive Fenton Mary Hope Elizabeth Hulme Elizabeth Jennings Jane Johnson Noreen Kelly Ann Massey	Ann Morris Fiona Morris Ann Painter Ann Partington Francis Pawley Florence Peterson Ann Swift	Mary Taylor Jane Tinkler Alice Watson Hilda Wilding Connie Wilkinson
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Male Servants

Abraham Hitchens Alfred Lawrence Charles Blake Charles Ealey Charles Robey Charles Sibley Edward Mackroone Edward Whitfield Fred Beswick	George Chorlton George Slaney George Worth James Ashton James Duckworth James Judson James Platford James Rice James Vernon	John Hatfield John Johnson John Manton John Murphy Joseph Green Richard Isaac Samuel Plant Stephen Kimber	Thomas Jeal Thomas Pavier Thomas Walker Thompson Flood William Ashborne William Baker William Holt William Marsh
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The Upper Servants at Tatton

From historical records, it is possible to identify the kind of wages that Upper Servants would have earned in the Egerton household during the 19th century.

The House Steward

Wages £100 -120 per year

Engaged all servants, paid bills and wages, kept accounts, ordered all supplies and wrote all business letters when Lord Egerton and his family were at their London home during the summer season. In his master's absence, the House Steward ran the estate and kept his master informed by letter.

The Housekeeper

Wages £80 - 100 per year

On a virtual par with the steward, she hired and fired all women servants except personal attendants such as the Lady's Maid and Cook, who were engaged by the mistress of the house. The Housekeeper ruled with a rod of iron and had her own apartments in the house. She supervised work both above and below stairs, ordered supplies for the storeroom and linen cupboard and also kept the keys to the china closet and still room. She did not wear a uniform and would have stayed to look after the house when the family were in London.

The Butler

Wages £50 - 80 per year

His complete responsibility was the wine cellar, and he therefore had to have an excellent knowledge of wine - his master's reputation depended on it. He was also in charge of the silver plate. In a smart black dress-coat and white tie, he waited at all meals, ensuring that the table was correctly laid.

The Valet and Ladies Maid

Wages £20 - 30 per year

Personal servants of Lord and Lady Egerton, they acted as companions and looked after their employers from dressing them to carrying their money on journeys. Neither wore uniform, and both were smartly dressed in the latest fashions.

The Cook or Chef

Wages £30 - 50 per year

The cook was always highly paid and in a house like Tatton where there was a great deal of entertaining, his importance in the hierarchy reflected his high degree of skill. At the turn of the century Tatton employed a French chef, which was most fashionable at the time.



Costume Information Sheet Victorian Servants

Date: 1896/7, Victoria is Queen of England

Where are we going?

You are going to the Mansion at Tatton Park to work as a servant for the day. Some of the work you will be doing is very hard! This might include scrubbing cold, hard stone floors on your hands and knees, and carrying heavy buckets of coal up to the bedrooms, so be prepared! You will be met by adult servants who will teach you your jobs and look after you during the day.

Etiquette

This means 'how to behave'! In Victorian times everybody knew 'their station' (position) in society and there were lots of rules. During your day at Tatton you must remember not to speak to members of the family unless you are spoken to first. You should call the butler "Sir" and the Housekeeper "Ma'am". If you happen to meet a member of the family or a visitor in the house, stop to let them pass. Boys should then bow, and girls must curtsy.

What to bring?

You need to bring a packed lunch. A Victorian lunch would have been simple, for example bread, cheese, an apple, a piece of cake and a drink. You might like to try this.

What to wear?

We find that some sort of costume, however simple, helps everyone to enter into the Victorian servant's world. However, you should remember that big country houses like Tatton are often cold and draughty, it's important that you are warmly dressed!

Boys

Servants were turned up collars with a plain necktie or cravat and a crisp, white shirt.

Plain, dark coloured waistcoats were worn by all the menservants and were usually a cast-off from the master. Trousers can be either long or short, tucked into socks or cut off and elasticated at the knee.

Socks should be long and dark coloured. Wear black shoes or pumps or lace-up boots, but not trainers!



Girls

A mob cap can be made from a circle of white cotton, gathered with a drawstring or elastic. Hair should be tied back tightly or tucked under the cap.

Wear a long dark or printed dress buttoned up to your neck, or a light blouse and long, dark skirt with a wide belt.

Flat shoes are essential, preferably in a dark colour. To be really authentic, you could wear lace up boots...

We can provide a long white apron for girls and a short one for the boys, when you get here. **Teachers and accompanying adults** - please come in costume too! You will need to bring your own apron and please note Victorian servants would not wear make-up or jewellery so please bear this in mind when getting into character! Thank you.!