

# MIDDLE-CLASS LIFE c1900

## WHAT DID THE MIDDLE CLASSES DO FOR FUN?

We often think of the Victorian period as stuffy or even grim and depressed; however, there was a lighter side – especially for the middle classes, but also for a large proportion of the working classes.



*Panoramic View of the Morecambe Sea Front, 1901*

1. Study *Comic Pictures in High Street, West Bromwich* (1902) all the way through. What is the main type of fun the people are enjoying here? (Think hard because the answer may be so obvious you do not realise it – many of us enjoy this kind of fun today!).

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2. Study the banner towards the end of the film. What kind of fun is it advertising?

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3. Do you think the people in this film knew they were being filmed? Does this make the film a less useful historical source for finding out about what Victorians considered to be fun?

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4. Now study the films *Panoramic View of the Morecambe Sea Front* (1901), then *Whitsuntide Fair at Preston* (1906).

- ▶ List all the activities, stalls and entertainments shown in the films.
- ▶ How many of these are still found at holiday resorts and fun fairs?
- ▶ Which features of modern holiday resorts and fairs are not found in the films?

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5. You could do more research by looking at websites on Victorian leisure. Excellent starting points are 'Victorian Britain: A happy nation?' (<http://www.learningcurve.gov.uk/victorianbritain/happy/default.htm>) and 'Victorian fun and games' (<http://www.logicmgmt.com/1876/funandgames.htm>).