

VICTORIAN STREET SELLERS

In Victorian times street sellers would walk through the streets advertising their goods and wares with songs. These street cries could be heard each day in the cities and towns. Here are some examples of popular street cries of the time.

RIPE STRAWBERRIES RIPE

Most fruit was sold by the pound, but strawberries were sold by the pottle which was a kind of cone shaped basket used to measure out the fruit. If you have seen the musical *Oliver*, you will have heard some of these Victorian street cries including Ripe Strawberries Ripe.



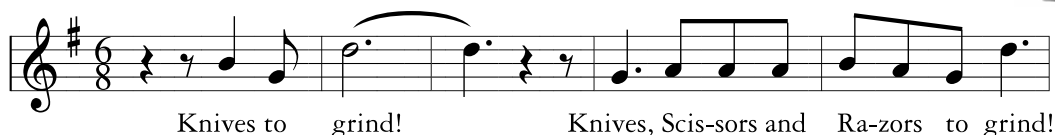
MILK BELOW MAIDS

Fresh milk was sold by milkmaids from big churns carried on their shoulders. They would cry Milk Below Maids to the servants that were working below stairs in the large Victorian houses.



KNIVES SCISSORS AND RAZORS TO GRIND

The knife grinder was a familiar figure on the streets. He would sharpen the knives, scissors and cutlery that became blunt with regular use. His charges usually varied from a penny to three halfpennies depending on the size of the blade and the amount of polishing required.



THINGS TO DO: -

Imagine you were a street seller today.
 What kind of things would you sell?
 Make up some "cries" and a tune to help you sell your wares or goods.



A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

Christmas was an important part of Victorian family life. The tradition of sending Christmas cards began in Britain around 1840 when the first Penny Post public postal delivery service began. The efficiency of the postal service was greatly increased by the new railways that were being built all over the country. A card in an unsealed envelope could be posted for one half penny, half the price of an ordinary letter. Christmas cards traditionally showed religious scenes of Mary, Joseph and Jesus or winter scenes.



Many of the Christmas carols that are a familiar part of Christmas today were written during the Victorian times, including *Once in Royal David's City*, *O Come All Ye Faithful* and *We Three Kings*.

Carol singers would go *wassailing* and would hopefully be rewarded with mulled wine or figgy pudding. The Christmas song *We wish you a Merry Christmas* is about this practice.



VICTORIAN CAROL SINGERS
"WASSAILING"

In Victorian times Christmas was an important part of the year and everyone from servants to nobility was expected to attend church.

The increasing popularity of the piano and harmonium meant that many people could sing Christmas carols at home together. Educated people were expected to be able to play an instrument so there was no shortage of performers. Impromptu concerts were often given when families got together for the holidays.

The Christmas tree was introduced into England during the Victorian period by Prince Albert in 1841. Traditionally it would be decorated with candles, ribbons and candy canes. The Christmas song *O Tannenbaum* which celebrates the Christmas tree was written during the 19th century.

THINGS TO DO: -

Try to compose a Christmas carol of your own. Think carefully about the words first and then the tune. Try to have a chorus that is easy to remember with a catchy tune and a strong rhythm. Once your words and tune are written choose the instruments you wish to play the music. Think about what instruments and sounds remind you of Christmas.

Or

Design a Christmas card that illustrates a popular Victorian Christmas carol. On the inside of the card try to write the words for a new verse to the carol you have chosen.