

Victorian Home

Ashes Rake



In Victorian times, coal fires were used for warmth and cooking. Once the coal had burnt down it created ash that could be very messy and would no longer burn. The rake could be used to move the ash out of the way for more coal to be added. The rake would have been hand forged by local blacksmiths out of iron (metal).

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Rag Rug



Victorian houses had stone or clay flags on the floor, which were very cold to walk on. To create warmth, the women and children would cut up old clothes and furnishings from their home. These small scraps of fabric could then be used to create a rug. Coal was often delivered in large hessian sacks and it was the sack material that would be reused to make the backing of the rug.

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Rag Rug Prodder



A rag rug prodder was used to push or poke the strips of fabric through the holes in the hessian sack material. To save money on buying a specialist tool, people would often carve a wooden peg to have a sharp end which would do the same job and was cheaper. This Rag Rug tool had a variety of different names; such as: proddy, prodder, stobbie, progger, clippie etc.

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Bellows



Bellows were used in the home to blow oxygen onto the fire to feed the flames and to bring the fire back to life as it died down. This was achieved by expanding the handles to let the air in through the mesh hole and then pushing the handles together to force the air out of the end in the direction of the fire. When people were cooking, using the bellow would raise the temperature of the fire.

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Flat Iron



Flat irons were also known as sad irons (sad meaning solid). They were the most common type of iron used in the home for clothing in Victorian homes. They were used in pairs with one iron being heated up on the kitchen coal fire, while the other was used for ironing put creases in clothes/ bedding. Victorian women used to spit on the hot iron surface to test if it was sizzling hot. The open fire in the kitchen was called a range.

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Darning Mushroom



A darning mushroom is a wooden mushroom-shaped tool used for repairing socks and linen. The sock would be stretched over the curved top of the mushroom and gathered tightly around the stalk to hold it in place for darning (sewing). The sewing would weave in and out in different directions to match the weave of the material. The darning mushroom would have been an essential tool and women would pass on the skill to their daughters.

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Glove Stretcher



Glove stretchers were used to open the fingers of gloves before they were put on. The stretchers were two strips of wood with rounded ends. They were hinged in the middle and when the stretcher was put into the glove-finger it could be opened, stretching the finger out. Gloves were made in a variety of fabrics, but the 'kid' brand was very common. Kid is very fine leather, which fits over the hands like a second skin.

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Needle Case



In Victorian times, needles were precious items and easily lost. Needle cases were essential for storing these fragile items and were often highly decorative. Needle cases were usually tubular shaped, and the two pieces tightly fit together to keep the needles secure. Victorian girls would learn the skill of hand-sewing from their mothers and knew how to make repairs to clothes, create tapestries and they would even make their own clothes out of old curtains.

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Clothes Pegs

In Victorian times, pegs were used in the same way as today, for hanging clothes on a washing line to dry. They were made from thin branches and would be split lengthways across the grain. The two pieces of wood would then be shaped with a carving tool and held together with a nailed-on strip of tin can. These would have been made by local craftspeople and would be relatively cheap to make.



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Wash Tongs



In Victorian times, clothes were washed in large wash tubs. Wooden Wash Tongs were used for lifting clothes and linen out of the water when it was very hot to avoid getting burnt by the water. This would have been necessary for washing that was being done over a fire, when the water could become scalding hot.

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Hot Water Bottle



Hot water bottles were used to warm up people's beds, as there were no radiators and rooms would get very cold, especially in winter. The screw cap would come off, leaving a hole for the boiling water to be poured into. The water would be heated on a coal fire in the kitchen. The metal would get very hot and could burn the skin and often people would wrap them in towels or bed sheets to prevent accidents.

Victorian Kitchen

Pie Mould



Wooden pie moulds were used for making hand raised pork pies. The mould was placed in the centre of a circle of pastry and the pastry was then pushed up around the sides. The mould would then be pulled out and the centre would be filled with the meat mixture. A pastry cover was then put over the top and would be crimped together. Hand made pies are still made in the same way today.