



# We ARE Amused (Pit Cottage)

## Guidelines for Supervising Teachers

**Preparing for Your Visit:** It is strongly recommended that supervising staff should arrange a pre-visit to familiarise themselves with facilities at the Museum. Complimentary tickets are available on request in order to assist with planning and risk assessments. A Hazard Identification Sheet is shown below in order to help you with your risk assessment.

### Practicalities:

- **Where to Go and How to Get There:** The activity takes place in The Pit Village in **No. 5 Francis Street**. Please escort your group to the **back** of 5 Francis Street where you will be met by a member of staff. If the door is closed please knock. To reach The Pit Village either take a tram to Home Farm tram stop and walk down the hill, use the access route from the Main Entrance or the woodland walk from Pockerley.
- **Arriving on Time:** If your school has the first session of the day (10:30 start) it is advisable to walk straight to the Pit Village from the Main Entrance. In the event of a late arrival every effort will be made to accommodate the full time of the activity, however, due to other bookings this may not always be possible.
- **What to Bring/Wear:** Pupils will need appropriate clothing. Please remember Beamish is an open air museum and the weather may be inclement.
- **Toilets:** It is advisable that pupils visit the toilets before the activity (the nearest toilets are at The Lamp Cabin beside the mine or adjacent to Hetton Band Hall).
- **Health and Safety Information:** A Hazard Identification Sheet is provided in order to advise you of any possible risks or hazards. The whole group will be briefed on the activities and health and safety at the start of the session.
- **Access:** An access bus is available to take anyone with access needs into The Pit Village. If there is anyone in your group with access needs please contact the bookings officer on [bookings@beamish.org.uk](mailto:bookings@beamish.org.uk) or telephone 0191 370 4026 and they will be able to advise you.

**Outline of Activity:** In this activity pupils learn, through hands on experience, about the different toys and games which would have been played with in the Victorian and Edwardian eras. Although the activities will be co-ordinated by a member of museum staff, some of the groups will be supervised by adults from your school.

Children will be given different original and replica toys to play with, with groups swapping over to ensure each group experiences as many toys and games as possible. Pupils will also make a thaumatrope. A thaumatrope is a toy whereby a picture is drawn on one side of a piece of card, and another picture is drawn on the other side. Held by two pieces of string at either side of the card, the card is turned over several times, and when it is released the two drawings will appear together, tricking the eye. Drawings were commonly a bird in a cage, or a goldfish in a bowl, but the children will be encouraged to make their own, and think of their own ideas.

At the end of the session a discussion will take place about the similarities and differences between toys today and toys in the Victorian/Edwardian era. Pupils then depart to continue their visit taking anything they have made with them.

**Objectives of Activity:**

- To explore toys and games which were played in the Victorian/Edwardian era.
- To understand the similarities and differences between the toys and games children play with now and those children would have played with in the past.

**Background to Activity:**

Many Victorians did not have a lot of free time but there were periods of rest and entertainment. All sorts of shows and entertainments travelled the country. There were animal shows with dancing bears, elephants and camels. Actors also travelled the country and performed in tents and church halls. Another form of theatrical entertainment was provided by the music halls. Shows at music halls tended to be full of songs and dancing. Magic Lantern shows also toured the country with the showmen giving shows in wealthy family homes, schools or village halls. Home entertainment usually took the form of singing around the piano when the family gathered together on Sunday evenings. Everyone would have their 'party piece' to say or sing. Both adults and children would also make silhouettes for display or as part of shadow puppetry. The cheapest puppets were called penny-puppets and were made out of card and paper held in place and made moveable by split pins or simple joints. Either string or long wooden poles were used to provide movement to the puppets' limbs. Their shadows

were cast onto a white sheet using a candle or a gas lamp. Coloured sheets could also be used to give background effects such as night scenes, mists or to reproduce changing seasons.

**Ideas for Pre and Post Visit:**

- **Pre:** Pupils could explore the toys they have and choose their favourite toys, explaining why. They could be encouraged to think about what toys children played with in the past and how they think these will be similar or different to their own.
- **Post:** Pupils could pick their favourite toy they played with whilst at Beamish, drawing them and explaining why. They could compare this toy to their favourite toy from today. They could also think about what toys will be like in the future and draw/design this toy.

**Contact us:** If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Simon Woolley, Head of Learning on 0191 370 4011 or email [education@beamish.org.uk](mailto:education@beamish.org.uk).

## Hazard Identification Sheet - We are Amused

Location: Pit Cottage

Potential Hazard	Who is particularly at risk	Context of hazard and steps to be taken by accompanying adults to prevent accidents	Risk of accident/dangerous occurrence High/medium/low	If high or medium what additional precautions or measures need to be taken to reduce risk to low
Slips and trips	Children and Adults	<p>The kitchen floor and yard of the Pit Cottage is stone and can therefore become wet and slippery in bad weather.</p> <p>Inside the Cottage can be dimly lit during poor weather, making it harder to see obstacles such as rugs on the floor.</p> <p>Supervising adults should ensure that children are wearing sturdy shoes. Children should always walk during the session. As children will be split into groups during the session, supervisory adults should ensure that there is an adult assigned to each group and that they supervise the children under their care to guard against slips and trips.</p>	Medium	<p>Beamish staff will monitor the condition of the yard and floor and take precautions if necessary.</p> <p>Beamish staff will give a brief health and safety talk, warning adults and children of any potential trip or slip hazards.</p>
Splinters from wooden objects	Children and Adults	<p>Although care is taken with the selection of objects in the Pit Cottage, the objects being used are original and it is therefore possible that some of the wooden objects may splinter. Beamish staff will aim to ensure that all objects have smooth edges before starting the session.</p> <p>Accompanying adults should supervise children to ensure that due care is taken with any objects.</p>	Low	
Injury from heavy objects	Children and Adults	<p>Some of the objects in the Pit Cottage, such as the hot water bottle are heavy and, if dropped, could cause injury or bruising.</p> <p>Beamish staff will emphasise the dangers of picking up heavy objects and how to handle these objects safely</p>	Low	

		at the beginning of the session. Accompanying adults should supervise any use or lifting of heavy objects.		
Burns from fire or candles in Pit Cottage	Children and Adults	As the Pit Cottage is portraying working life in the 1900s there will be a coal fire in the range for the course of the session. There will always be a guard on the fire and Beamish staff will explain the danger of going too close to the fire before the session begins. Any candles will be placed out of reach of children. Supervisory adults should observe the children under their care at all times to ensure that children do not go too near the fire. Only Museum staff are to manage the fire.	Low	
Dust/smoke from fire	Children and Adults	Due to the fact that a coal fire will be burning there is a possibility of some smoke. With the smoke and potentially dust in the air there is the possibility of asthma attacks from inhaling smoke/dust. Supervising adults should make Beamish staff aware of any asthmatics in the group and should also ensure that participants have necessary inhalers/medication.	Medium	Beamish staff keep the cottage ventilated and will ensure that all participants are aware of the fire and potentially dust in the air. Supervising adults should ensure that all participants have necessary inhalers/ medication.
Injuries from mangle	Children and Adults	A mangle will be present in the Pit Cottage or yard. Whilst it will not be used during the activity, if played with, fingers could become trapped. Beamish staff will arrange for the mangle to be out of the way as much as possible and tell the group not to touch it. Supervising adults should watch the children under their care to ensure that they are not playing with the mangle.	Medium	Beamish staff will put the mangle out of the way and tell the group not to touch it. Supervisory adults should also ensure that the children under their care do not use the mangle.
Equipment – colouring pencils, felt tips, pencil sharpeners, scissors, string – risk of cuts, strangulation.	Children and adults	All equipment used will be age appropriate and supervised as necessary. String will be used on the thaumotropes in short lengths	Low	

Toys – period toys	Children and adults	The toys used are predominantly replica toys. Any period toys will be assessed (e.g. for toxic paint, loose parts) before they are used to ensure they are safe.	Low	
Toys – cups and balls – bumps and bruises	Children and adults	The cups and balls involve swinging a small wooden ball on a string into a cup – Beamish staff and accompanying teachers should all watch to ensure children have plenty of space to do this to avoid hitting one another with the balls.	Low	
Toys – pick up sticks	Children and adults	Pick up sticks could cause eye injuries if not used properly. Beamish staff will model how to play the game safely and adults to supervise children when playing.	Low	
Toys – skipping ropes – trips, hits	Children and adults	Museum staff to keep the space clear of any trip hazards, to pick up unused toys and supervise children to ensure toys are being used correctly and safely. School staff to also supervise their group.	Low	
Group work – security issues	Children and adults	The gate into the Pit Cottage yard will be locked, giving the school the exclusive use of the cottage and yard. The group must be supervised by teaching staff. Beamish admits free supervising places to a ratio of 1 adult to 5 children (1 adult to 3 children for those under 5 years of age).	Low	
Winter weather – snow and ice	Children and adults	Beamish is an open air museum. The Pit Cottage is heated by an open fire and is difficult to keep warm. Museum staff will take all practicable actions to keep the paths clear. School staff should advise children to wear warm winter clothing, including warm coats, hats, gloves and sturdy shoes.	Low	

**NB Please ensure that all children wash their hands of completion of the activity. The closest toilets are in the Lamp Cabin beside the mine and adjacent to the Band Hall.**

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Author: Catherine Rice, Learning Co-ordinator