**Life as a Child: Then and Now**

**Easy Read Document**

(The meaning of some words will be explained in a glossary on page 5, these words will be indicated with the \* symbol.)

**PAGE 1**

**Life as a Child**

**Then and Now**

This activity uses memories of growing up in Cardiff to explore how children made their own fun in the past compared\* to today.

You will read people's stories and learn how they made toys and games when they were young.

You will be asked to think about the things we throw away and how they could be reused\* to make new things, like toys and games.

**Did you know?**

Many Victorian children would have been lucky to have toys.

They might have had simple things like skipping ropes and marbles.

**Did you know?**

Plastic toys were not made until the late Victorian period.

A lot of toys today are made with plastic.

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**Making Toys and Games**

Children in the past would use their imagination to make games and turn the things they found into toys.

**Read the stories below:**

**1920s**

Edward Kendrick remembers finding items to make his own go-carts:

“One had to obtain\* a set of wheels from the local rubbish tip and after, a box in which you sat and steered with rope tied to the front wheels.”

**1970s**

Alyson Hawkins remembers making toys and games:

“We created games all the time, which usually involved the entire main group of friends. We used to make lolly stick boomerangs, weaving different lolly sticks together.

We also made kites, from sticks and brown paper, with paper bows...”

**2010s**

Eliza, aged 7, tells us about her favourite toy:

“My favourite game is my Nintendo DS, because when you play the games you choose a character and you do stuff with them. You can play on your own or you can play against someone else.

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**Things from the Museum of Cardiff Collection**

Here are some things that have been donated\* to the Museum.

**Which one of your toys would you donate and why?**

**1940s**

IMAGE

A colour photograph of a little wooden Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer marionette puppet hanging from strings. The delicate little puppet has one missing hoof and quite a few chips in its brown paint, it's clearly been played with a lot which has caused the slight damage.

TEXT

Marian's father made this wooden marionette puppet in the 1940s.

**1950s**

IMAGE

A black and white photograph of a young boy sat in front of a wooden rocking horse with a chuffed grin.

TEXT

Wally's grandfather made him this wooden horse in the 1950s.

**1980s**

IMAGE

A colour photograph of a colourfully painted little tricycle. It has a white painted metal frame, red plastic seat and handles, and yellow wheels. It has no scratches or chips, it's obviously been well cared for.

TEXT

This tricycle belonged to Ivor, who remembers riding it around his garden in the 1980s.

**1990s**

IMAGE

A colour photograph of a black plastic games console. Its shape is a simple block. It’s completely black with just a few red buttons on the front and the words “SEGA”, “16 Bit”, and “Megadrive Two”. On top it has a long thin slot for a game cartridge to be inserted.

TEXT

This SEGA Megadrive games console belonged to Jim. He remembers inviting friends to his house to play in the 1990s.

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**Make Do and Mend**

The idea of 'Make Do and Mend' was first used by the government in the 1940s, to encourage people to repair, reuse and find new uses for their old clothes.

**Children making wicker baskets in school.**

IMAGE

A very old black and white photograph of Victorian period school children in class holding up half finished wicker baskets. The schoolchildren are sat in rows on long benches. The girls are dressed in quite frilly frocks and the boys are wearing smart shirts. They all have very serious expressions, as though they've been told to not smile for the camera.

TEXT

In the past, ready-made things were not easily available for most families to buy.

Families would repair their clothes and pass them down to younger members for them to be reused.

Food, clothes, and other items were rationed\* during the Second World War.

**Did you know?**

There were no supermarkets in the UK until 1948.

Before that, families would have to go to individual shops, like butchers and grocers, to get what they needed for their weekly shop.

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**Life as a Child, Then and Now**

**Glossary of Words**

* **Compared** – To look at more than one thing, to show the differences and the things that are alike about them. For example, this toy is blue compared to this toy, which is red.
* **Reused** – To use something again.
* **Obtain** – To get something.
* **Donated** – Something that is given, usually for free. For example, to a museum or charity.
* **Rationed** – When things that people need are shared out in small amounts. For example, some food and clothes were rationed during the Second World War to make sure that what was available was shared.

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**Activity: Making New Things out of Old Things**

Ideas of 'Make Do and Mend' continued for a long time after the Second World War ended in 1945. Some of these new ideas can be used today, to reduce waste we make and help us look after our planet.

Making new things out of old things.

1. Write a list of things you usually throw away.
2. Now think about how you could use these things to make something new, like a toy or game.
3. Draw a picture of it and write about how it will be used.

**Things I throw away.** (List them in the space below.)

**Drawing of my new thing.** (Draw or describe it in the space below)

**How it will be used.** (Describe it in the space below)

**PAGE 7**

**Fun Outside**

Cardiff's parks and green spaces have been popular with children for a long time.

**Children paddling in Roath Park Brook, c1900.**

IMAGE
A very old black and white photograph of a great big group of children playing in a stream. There are twenty or so children playing in and around the stream. They're all wearing big baggy woollen bathing suits and most of the girls are wearing wide brimmed straw sun hats.

**Children outside of school, c.1940s.**

IMAGE

A black and white photograph of six children stood smiling in front of a brick school building. None of the children are wearing school uniforms, instead the girls are in tidy frocks with cardigans, while the boys are wearing shorts and sweaters over a shirt and tie.

TEXT

Phillip Bristow remembers how there were seasons for different toys and games:

“We always seemed to be out of doors playing on the pavement or in the road. As the road was mostly empty of traffic there was plenty of room.

We had bat and ball, hoops, tops, marbles, and games of hopscotch over chalk marks on the pavement.

There were seasons for most of these and, of course, conkers. These seasons came round almost unnoticed, but it was not done to play the wrong game out of season.”

Now that you have explored how children played in the past, what do you think is different now and what is the same?

How do you think children will have fun in the future?