



Welcome to the Health Histories resource

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We have created this pack to enable your class to explore the history of dentistry and pharmacy through source-based materials, drawn from the collections of the British Dental Association Museum and the Museum of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.

How does it work?

There are separate sets of resources for pharmacy and dentistry. Each consists of:

Information and enquiry sheets – for students

These provide all of the sources in context with a short glossary and suggested questions and activities that use the material. The sheets each cover a different time period starting at the beginning of the 20th century.

Oral history extracts – for students

Download these short recorded memories to provide additional source material.

Source sheets – for students

All of the sources shown on the Information and enquiry sheets are reproduced in a large size, alongside a full transcript of the oral history extracts. Some of the sources are in landscape format and some in portrait format.

Teachers' notes

These provide background information and additional resources for each of the sources used in the Information and enquiry sheets.

You and your class can use the material in a number of ways:

- choose either pharmacy or dentistry, and work your way through the **Information and enquiry sheets** in order. You could pick and choose from the questions and activities, or work through them all.
- choose a topic and work through both the pharmacy and dentistry **Information and enquiry sheets** to allow the class to compare the two areas.
- choose activities from the sheets to suit your needs – some are suitable for individual study, some for small group work, and some for a whole class.
- use the **Source sheets** as inspiration to develop your own activities.





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Background information

You might like to make use of our web pages to supply additional information:

BDA Dental Museum www.bda.org/museum

Museum of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society www.rpsgb.org/museum

The resources also refer to British money prior to decimalisation. Here's a very useful website to help you interpret this:

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/questions/moneyold.htm>

What do you think?

We are always keen to find out how our resources are being used. If you have any feedback, please get in touch:

museum@rpsgb.org or museum@bda.org





How did people treat illness in the early 20th century?

Source A: Charts of a woman's weekly spending for a family of eight, 1910

Taken from *Round about a Pound a Week* by Maud Pember Reeves, 1913.

From 1909 to 1913, The Fabian Women's Group recorded the daily budgets and lives of thirty working-class families in Lambeth, living off about a pound a week (20 shillings). This investigation, led by Maud Pember Reeves, took place in the aftermath of the Children's Act of 1908 which prosecuted parents for not looking after their children properly.

It was generally believed by the middle and upper classes of society that working-class mothers were too ignorant to know how to feed and care for their children and that this was the reason for high infant mortality amongst the poorer classes. The Fabian Women's Group studied the effect of insufficient nourishment on women and their children before and after birth to help understand the difficulties women from these families faced.

Some of the terms used in this table may be unfamiliar:

- burial insurance was paid weekly into a fund run to cover costs if someone in the family died
- boot club was also a weekly payment into a fund to cover the costs of new boots
- soap, soda and blue were all necessary for the weekly wash.
- "Blue" was a dye used to make white clothes stay white.

Source B: Photograph of Ada Richardson

She qualified as a 'Chemist and Druggist' in 1906. Women had been working as registered pharmacists in the nineteenth century, and by 1905 there were 195 on the Register of the Pharmaceutical Society (1.2% of the total).

Source C: A doctor's prescription, 1928

For centuries, and still today, doctors provided information about a medicine recommended for a patient in a prescription. However, before the National Health Service was established in 1948, most people could not afford to visit a doctor. The National Health Insurance scheme made doctors' services available for more people. Until recent decades, prescriptions were written entirely in Latin.

Source D: Oral history interview

Betty Severn was born in 1922 in Birmingham. She was interviewed for this resource in May 2009, aged 87.

Daisy Moore was born in September 1928 in Lambeth, London. She was interviewed for this resource in March 2009, aged 80.



How did people treat illness in the early 20th century?

Source E: An advert for Beecham's Pills, 1906

By the early 20th century Beecham's Pills were one of the most well-known medicines in Britain, having been available for over fifty years. They contained aloes, ginger and powdered soap, and acted as a laxative. Advertised extensively, the company claimed that they could treat conditions as far-reaching as headaches and "pimples and blotches on the skin."

Source F: An assessment on Beecham's Pills from 'Secret Remedies', 1909

Taken from *Secret Remedies: What they cost and what they contain*, 1909.

This was published by the British Medical Association in 1909 to expose the results of their investigation into the ingredients and costs of some of the most popular medicines on the market.





Did reforms in the early 20th century have an impact on health?

Source A: A working man's spending out of his own pocket money, kept back from the family expenditure, c.1913

Taken from *Round about a Pound a Week* by Maud Pember Reeves, 1913.

From 1909 to 1913, The Fabian Women's Group recorded the daily budgets and lives of thirty working-class families in Lambeth, living off about a pound a week (20 shillings). This investigation, led by Maud Pember Reeves, took place in the aftermath of the Children's Act of 1908 which prosecuted parents for not looking after their children properly.

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Source B: David Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a speech to Parliament, 4th May 1911

David Lloyd George (1863 - 1945) was a member of the Liberal Party, and served as Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1908 -1915. He went on to become Prime Minister from 1916 - 1922.

Source C: Letter to the Pharmaceutical Journal, 27th May 1911

The Pharmaceutical Journal was founded in 1841 and is still sent to all pharmacists in Great Britain.

Source D: Oral history interview

Betty Severn was born in 1922 in Birmingham. She was interviewed for this resource in May 2009, aged 87.

Daisy Moore was born in September 1928 in Lambeth, London. She was interviewed for this resource in March 2009, aged 80.

Source E: A pharmacy advertising the dispensing of 'panel' prescriptions, 1930s

Although we don't have any information about where this pharmacy shop was based and what date the photograph was taken, its Art Deco style dates it to the 1930s.

Above the door is a sign saying 'Panel Prescriptions' which shows that the pharmacy was part of the National Health Insurance scheme.





Did the establishment of the National Health Service change pharmacy in Britain?

Source A: National Health Service leaflets were made available to the public to let them know what the new service would provide

This leaflet was produced by the government to explain the National Health Service.

Source B: A pharmacist's memories of the early days of the NHS

Taken from the *Pharmaceutical Journal*, 4th July 1949.

This was a supplement to mark the 50th anniversary of the NHS.

Source C: Table to show prescription dispensing in the year before and in the first year of the NHS

Taken from the *Pharmaceutical Journal*, 1949.

Each line in the table refers to an individual pharmacy in the area. You can see that in some areas e.g. Derbyshire statistics were gathered from more than one business.

For comparison, in 2008 the average number of prescriptions dispensed in a community pharmacy was 73,548. (source: *General Pharmaceutical Services in England 1999-2000 to 2008-09*, published by The Health and Social Care Information Centre in 2009).

Source D: Pharmacists' memories of the early days of the NHS

Taken from the *Pharmaceutical Journal*, 4th July 1998.

This was a supplement to mark the 50th anniversary of the NHS.

Source E: Photograph of a dispensing technician making up a prescription in the dispensary

Peter Homan, pictured here in the late 1950s, went on to become a pharmacist. The main differences with today's dispensary is that many more medicines were in liquid form, and were supplied to the pharmacy in bulk, to be made up by staff, rather than pre-packaged as they are today.

Source F: Oral history

Betty Severn was born in 1922 in Birmingham. She was interviewed for this resource in May 2009, aged 87.

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Biographical outlines of the oral history interviewees

Betty Severn

Betty was born in 1922, as the youngest of four daughters. She grew up in Birmingham, in an area that was not as poor as some, about two miles from the centre of the city. They lived in a terraced house with three bedrooms. Their grandmother lived with them as well. They didn't have a bathroom, and simply had a bath in a cupboard off the kitchen which had to be filled from the boiler, a container over a fire which had to be fed with coal.

Betty's father was a skilled craftsman making gun parts in a factory in Birmingham. However, during the Depression in the 1930s he lost his job and there wasn't enough food for the whole family. Her mother took a job to pay for her elder sister's school uniform. She served in a shop, and took in washing. She died when she was 49 and Betty was nearly 11.

Betty left home aged 15, as soon as she was able to earn her own living. Her first job was in an office. Once she was married, she had two children, the first when she was aged 20.

Daisy Shannon

Daisy was born on 19th September 1928. She has spent her life in Lambeth in London, although she moved with her family for a short period at the beginning of the Second World War to Yeovil in Somerset and she was also evacuated to Rutland for a year towards the end of the War.

Her father worked in a police station during the War, but used to roam the streets looking for work at other points. Her mother had to work as she had three children. She worked as an office cleaner. They had one big room and all slept in the same room. Daisy's parents had one bed and the children slept in the other bed. There were much poorer families than hers in the area, as her parents were always in work.

Daisy left school at 14, and worked at W.H. Smiths until she got married aged 20. She had two children.

