

  
**NUMBER**  
TWENTY NINE

# A Young Person's Visit



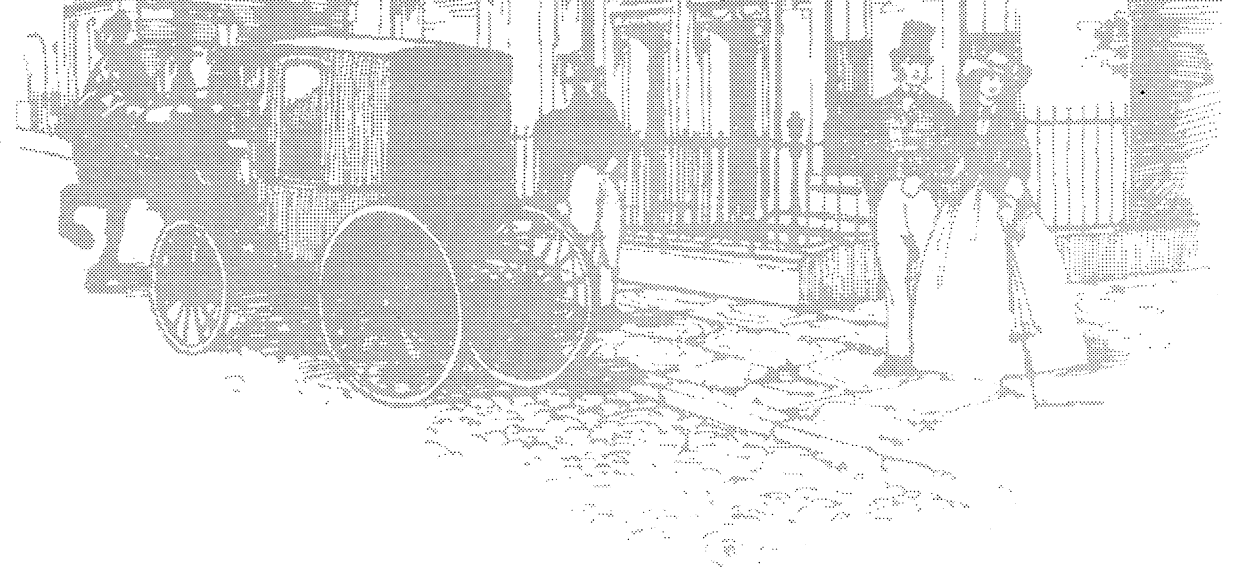


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# NUMBER TWENTY NINE

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**Welcome to Number Twenty Nine, Lower Fitzwilliam Street**, a completely restored middle-class home of the late-18th century. This house was completed in 1794 by John Ussher, an apothecary (pharmacist) and property developer. The first owner was Mrs. Olivia Beatty, a widow who bought the house for £320 and moved in with her family of three children, David, Olivia and Frederick. Her late husband had been a wine merchant and paper manufacturer, and had left her quite well off. Mrs. Beatty sold Number Twenty Nine in 1806 for £700 to Mr. Ponsonby Shaw, a banker and founder of the Royal Bank of Ireland (which shows how inflation was even then). The house was altered from time to time as fashions changed and this exhibition reflects some of these changes.



**Number Twenty Nine** consists of a basement and four floors above. The main entrance to the house is through the front door which, when the house was lived in would have been used by the family, their relatives and friends. The servants would have used the entrance to the kitchen in the basement, which was through a gate in the railings at the front and down some stone steps. The basement consists of a work area where the furniture and appliances would have been functional rather than decorative. The atmosphere changes as you ascend through the house. You will notice this particularly on the ground and first floors, where the plasterwork or stucco is ornate and the furnishings are grand. Some of this grandeur continues to the second floor, but the ceilings are not as high here and the carpets and plasterwork end on the landing of this level. The third floor was probably one of the livelier areas of the house; the Governess' room, the nursery and a playroom were located here.

**3rd Floor**

The Governess' Room, The Nursery

**2nd Floor**

The Boudoir, The Main Bedroom, The Dressing Room

**1st Floor**

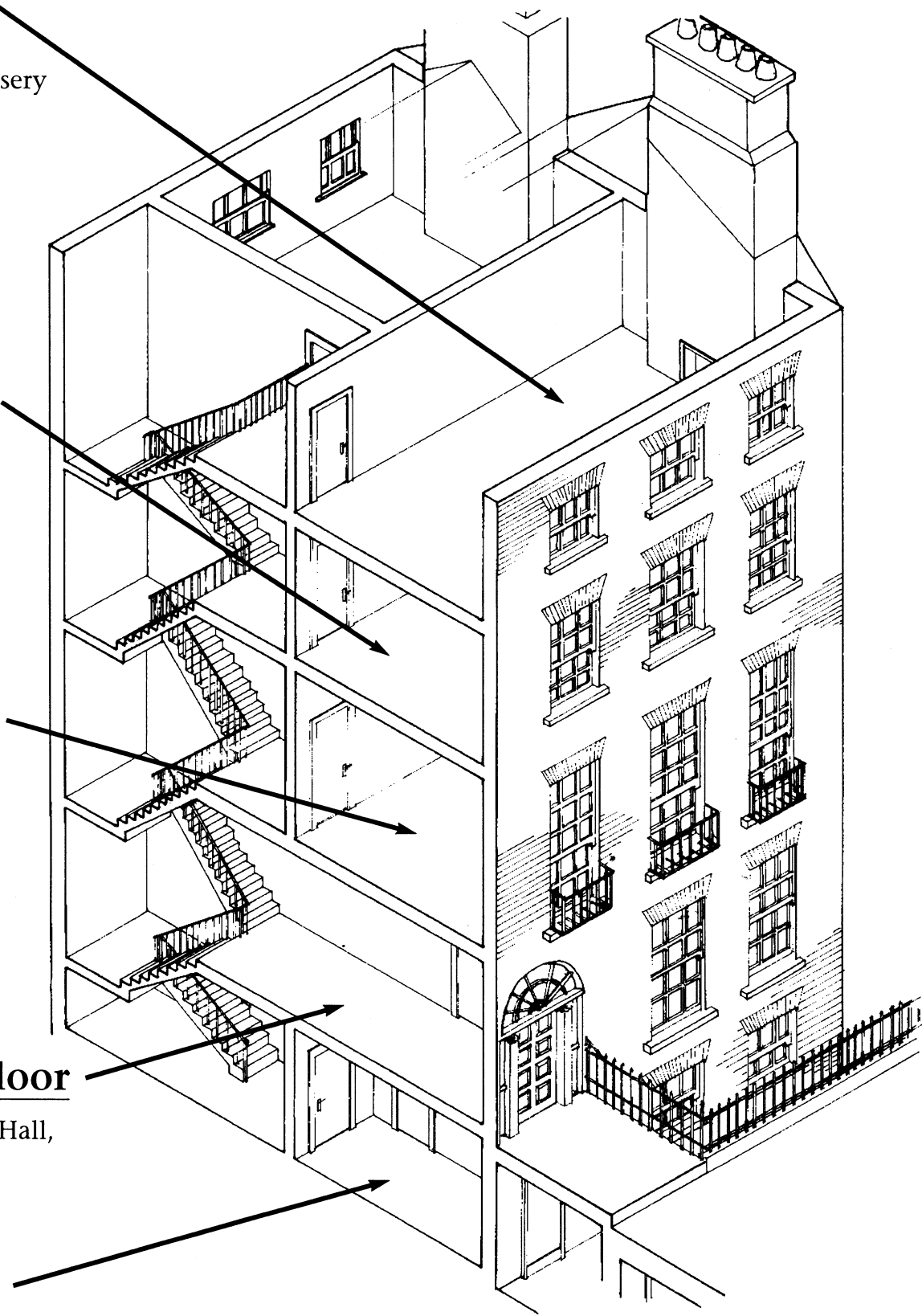
Front Drawing Room, Back Drawing Room

**Ground Floor**

Main Entrance Hall, Dining Room

**Basement**

The Kitchen Hall, Wine Cellar, Scullery, Pantry and Housekeeper's Room.

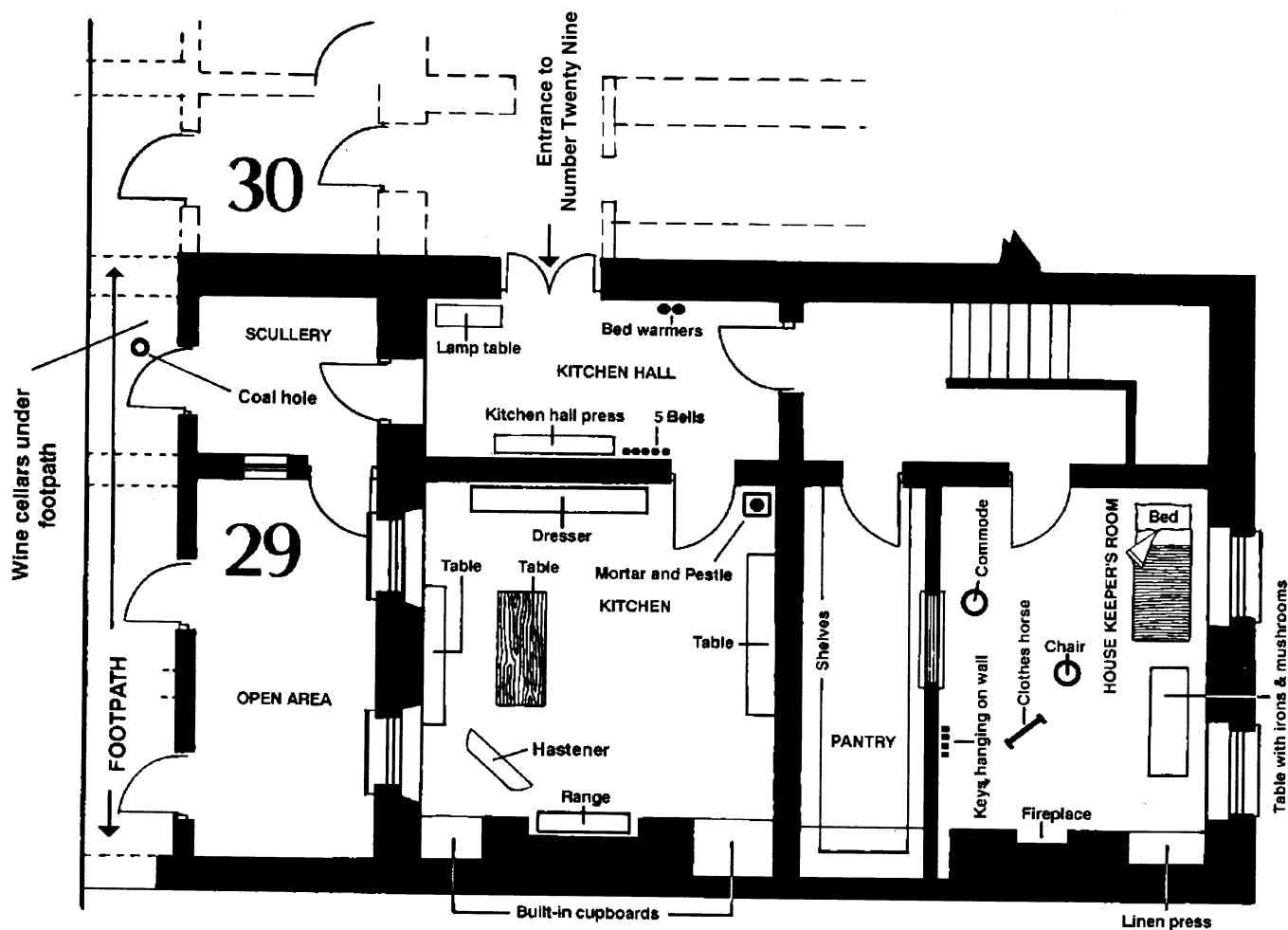


Drawing - David Begg

# The Basement

The basement of Number Twenty Nine contains the kitchen hall, wine cellar, scullery, kitchen, pantry and Housekeeper's room.

This was the busiest area of the house. All the storage, preparation and cooking of the food and the washing and cleaning took place here. It was also the trade delivery area.



# The Scullery

The scullery is where the vegetables were prepared and the washing was done.

How was the water carried to the rest of the house ?

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# The Kitchen Hall

Mrs. Beatty rarely, if ever, visited this area of the house so how did she communicate with the servants?

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Why do you think the bells are different shapes and sizes?



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|---------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Paving and Lighting Tax<br>(1 year) .....         | £0 10s 6d |
| Watch Tax for Night Watch Man<br>(1/2 year) ..... | £1 9s 0d  |
| Foundling Hospital Tax<br>(1 year) .....          | £2 10s 0d |
| Window and Hearth Tax<br>(1 year) .....           | £24 5s 5d |
| Church Rates (1 year) ....                        | £3 15s 0d |
| Minister's Money<br>(1 year) .....                | £2 10s 0d |
| Grand Jury Cess<br>(to Easter) .....              | £7 3s 9d  |



## Household Taxes

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, there were many compulsory taxes for householders. This is an example of the taxes for one home in January 1819.

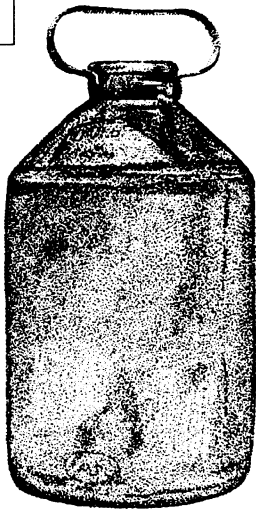
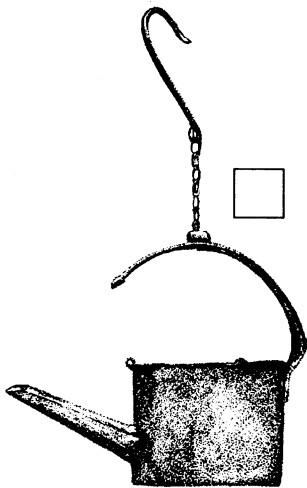
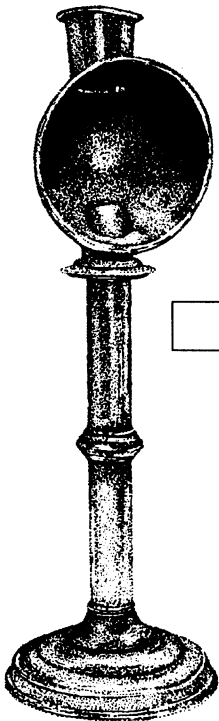
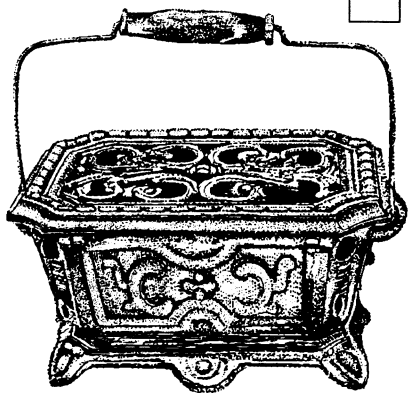
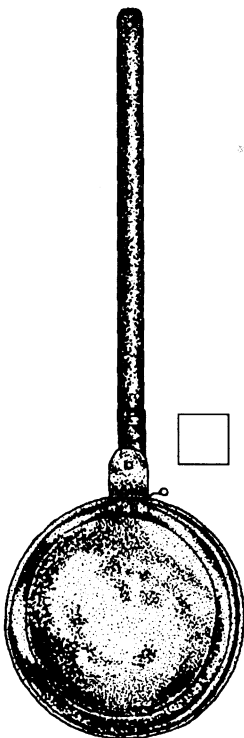
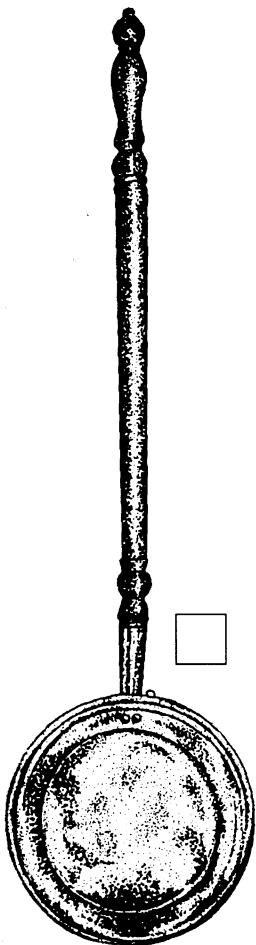
Much effort was put into **lighting** and **heating** this house. There is plenty of evidence of this.



Can you identify each object below?

Number boxes correctly

1. Carriage heater
2. Bed Warmers
3. Oil Lamp
4. Draught proof candlestick
5. Whale oil container



# The Kitchen

Have a good look around the kitchen. This is where the **food** was prepared and cooked, the **water** was boiled and the **servants** ate their meals.

The range is made of **cast iron** in a mould, while some of the utensils are made of **wrought iron** and hammered into shape.

## Look at the range.

How many ovens are there? ☐

What do you think each oven was used for?

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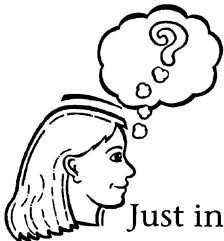
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The three-shelfed piece of furniture on wheels is called a **hastener**. Your guide will tell you what it was used for.

## Look closely at the hastener.

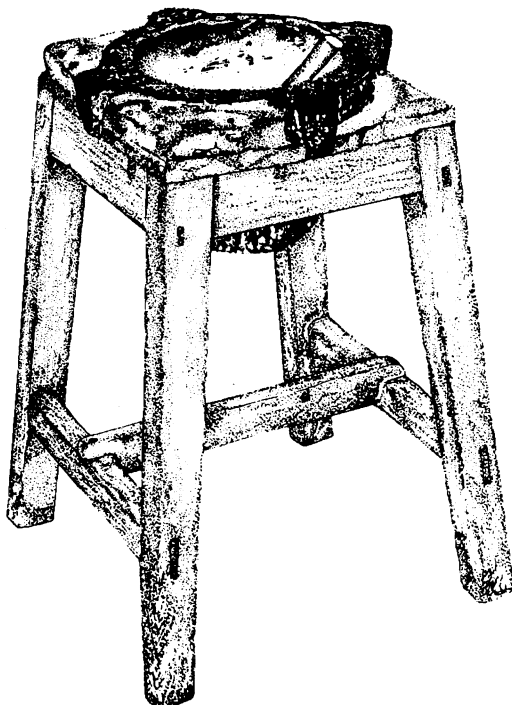
Why do you think the inside was lined with tin?



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Just inside the door there is a mortar and pestle.



It could have been used for breaking up sugar or for herbs and other foodstuffs.

The servants ate their food off **pewter** plates. Pewter is an alloy of tin and lead, and is often described as 'poor man's silver'. There are pewter plates on the shelves of the dresser.



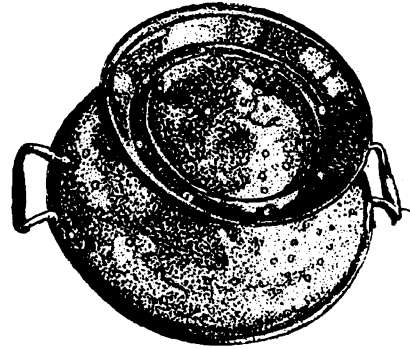
The kitchen utensils are made from different materials.

**Match the following utensils with the correct materials.**

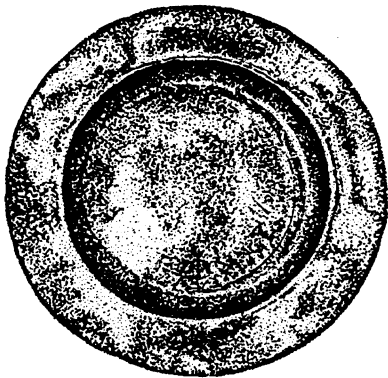


Write the correct number in the box beside the utensil

1. Tin
2. Wrought Iron
3. Earthenware
4. Pewter
5. Wood
6. Copper



☐ Vegetable colander

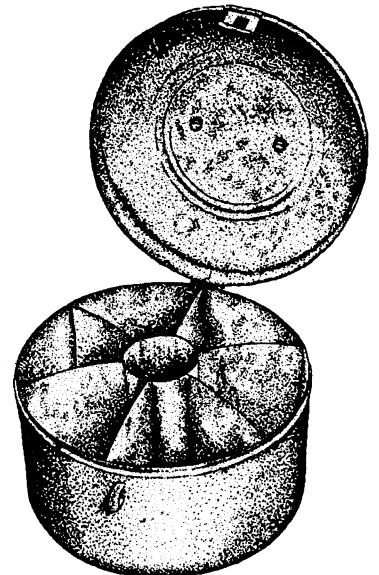


☐ Servants' plates



☐ Three prong toast fork

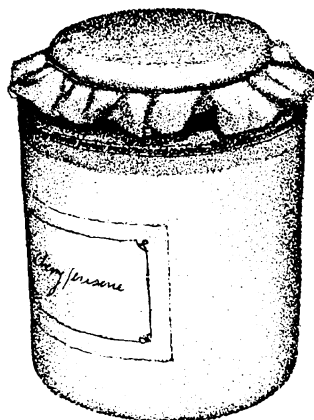
☐ Straining spoon



☐ Herb box in window



☐ Salt box hanging on wall



☐ Storage jars on shelf



☐ Servants' plates



Have a look at the water filter on the dresser.

Why was the water filtered?

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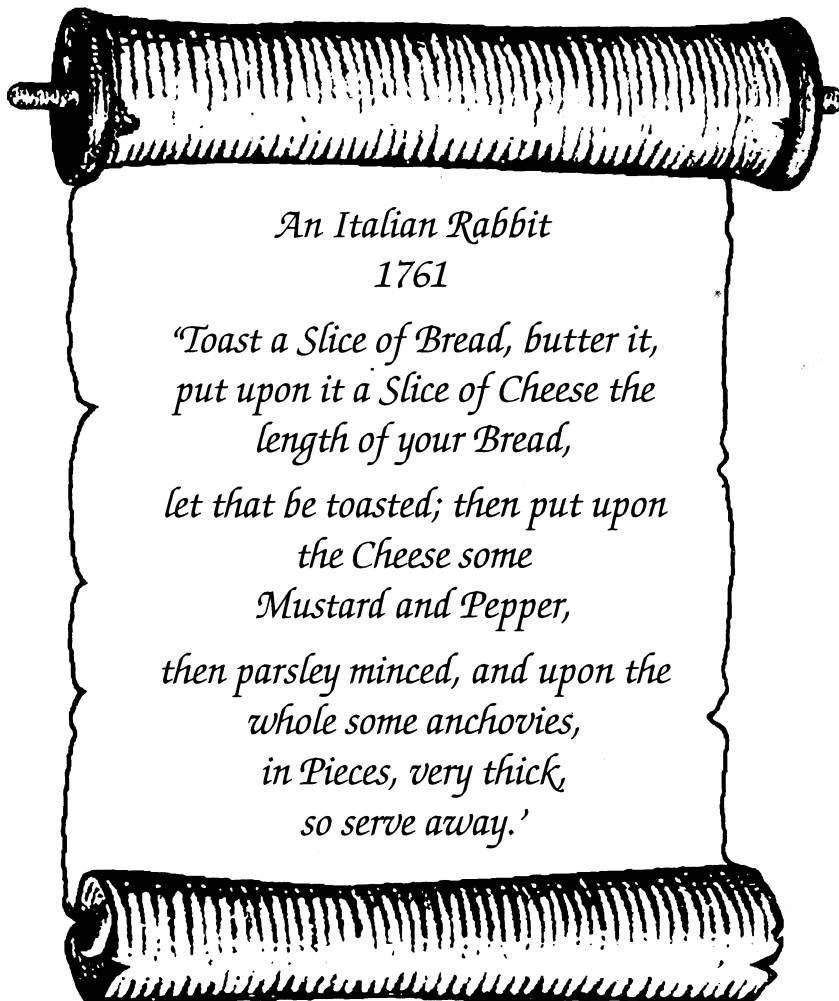
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An unusual item here is the **cricket box**. According to legend, every happy home had a cricket. W. B. Yeats mentions a cricket in his poem *'The Lake Isle of Innisfree.'* Read this poem when you have an opportunity.

## Recipe

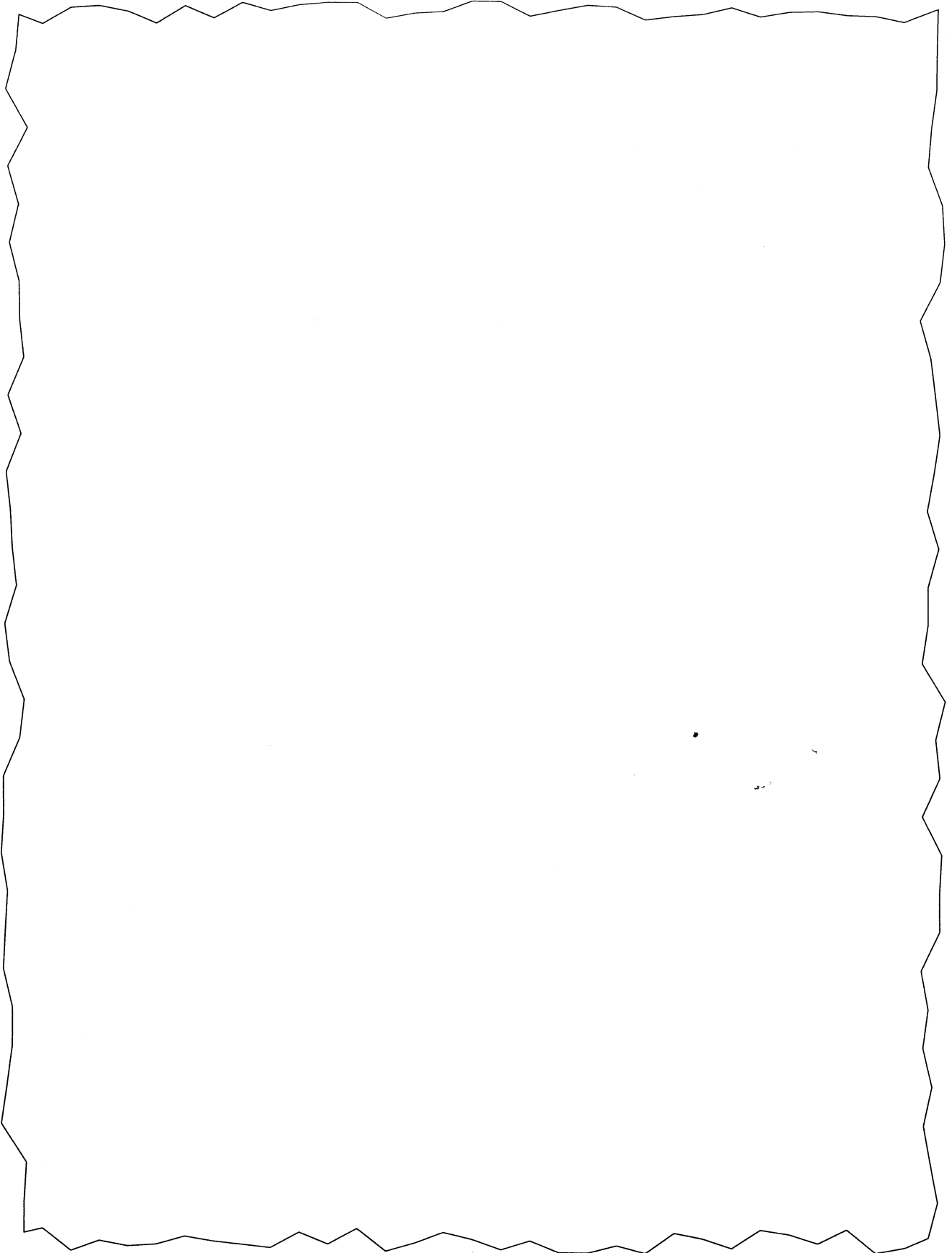
This recipe could have been used for a main course at this time.





**To do later**

**Sketch the most interesting or unusual  
item in the kitchen.**



# The Pantry

The pantry was well ventilated and fitted with shelves and hooks. To ensure cleanliness, the shelves were dry-scrubbed regularly. It is believed that the pantry was usually locked and that food brought in and taken out was weighed.

The high shelf suspending from the ceiling is called a **rat shelf** and expensive foods were stored here.

**List the foods that you think might have been stored on the rat shelf? (Your guide will help you.)**



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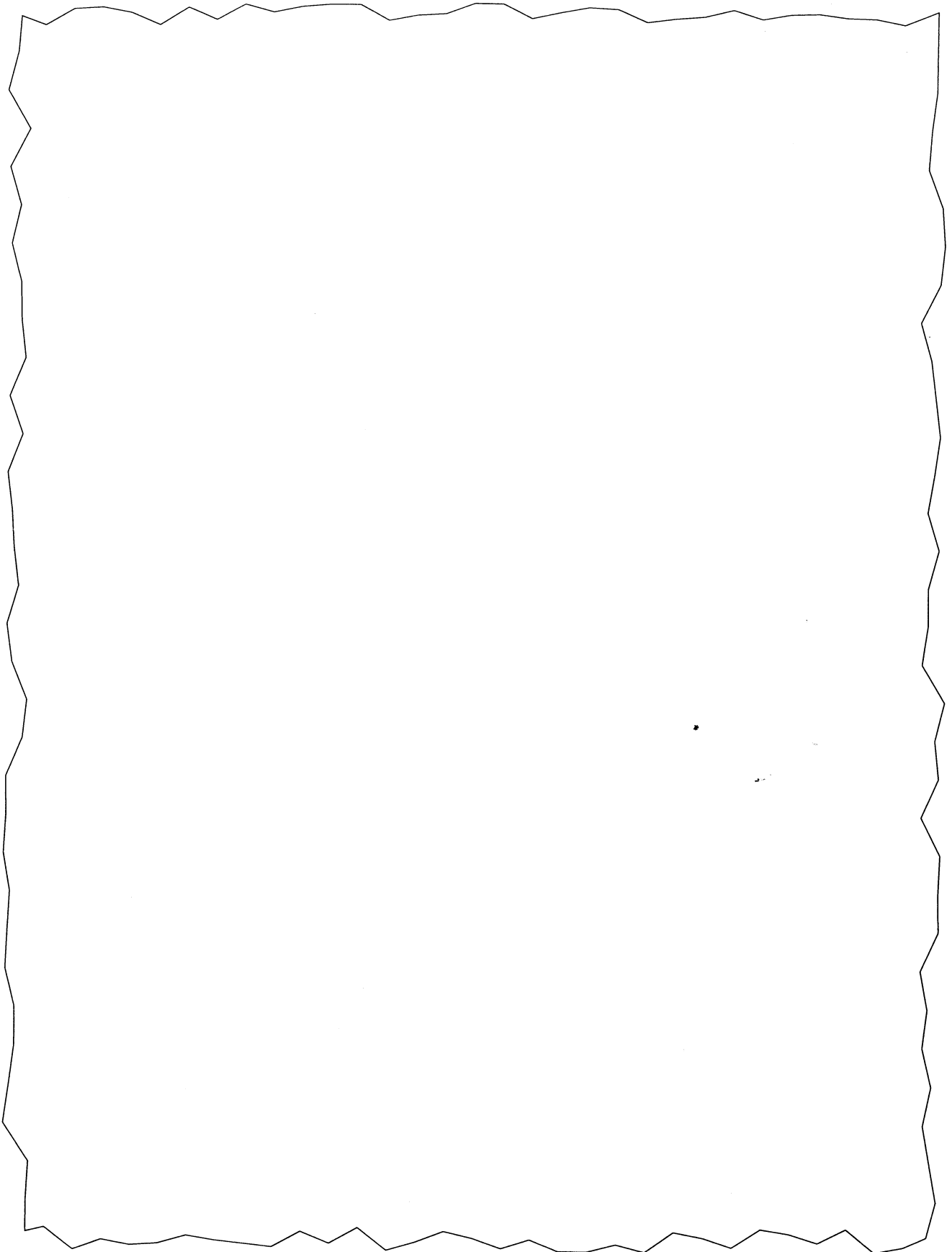
A good housekeeper was expected to lay in quantities of the ‘provisions that will keep’ as they were ‘cheapest in quantities’.

**Did you notice the hip bath on the floor?**



**To do later**

**Sketch the foods you think might have  
been stored on the rat shelf**



Food was available according to season and there was a wide variety as we can see from the following advertisement:

In 1793 William Middlewood's Fruit and Seed Warehouse, No. 32 Grafton Street, Dublin, advertised:

# WILLIAM MIDDLEWOOD

**Fruit & Seed Warehouse**

No 32 Grafton Street, Dublin.

## Real Ripe Raspberry Oranges



The richest oranges for many years,  
**at 1s 7d per dozen,**  
American apples 'of a quality much superior to any  
other imported this season'  
**at 5 1/2d per dozen.**

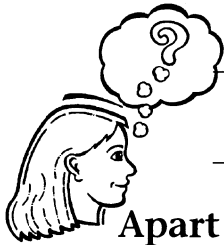
# The Housekeeper's Room

The room beside the Pantry belonged to the Housekeeper. She was the principal servant of the house. She supervised the housekeeping and usually kept the accounts and was also in charge of the other servants. She took care of the furniture and linen. She organised the groceries and their storage, as well as making all the pickles and the best pastry.

The Housekeeper was expected to be a steady middle-aged woman and a member of the 'Established Church'. Her annual salary in about 1825 was from 25 to 50 guineas (1 guinea was equal to £1.05). The job was considered to be a very good position in those days. The furniture in the room was better than elsewhere in the servants' quarters since the Housekeeper was given first choice of the furniture no longer needed by the family.

Note where she kept her keys and accounts.

**What records or accounts would she have kept?**



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**Apart from letting in light, why do you think there is a window between the housekeeper's room and the pantry?**

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**Why do you think the rat shelf is in full view of the Housekeeper's room?**

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**What housework did the housekeeper do in this room?**



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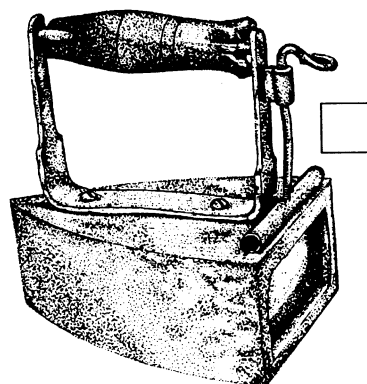
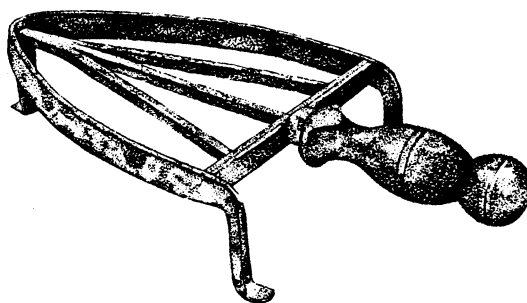
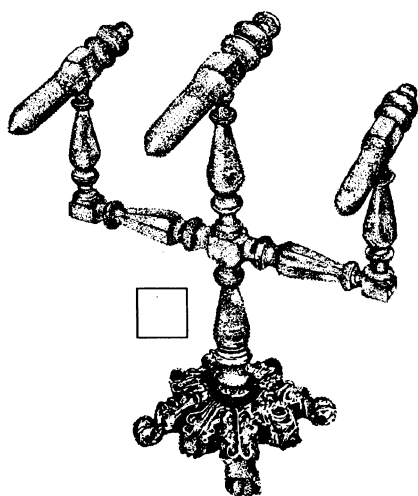
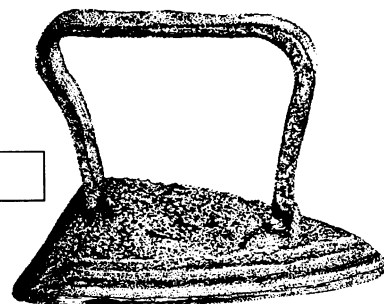
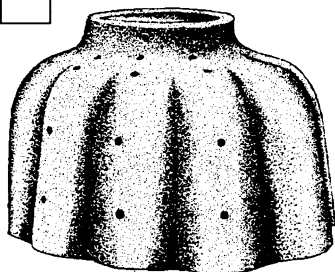
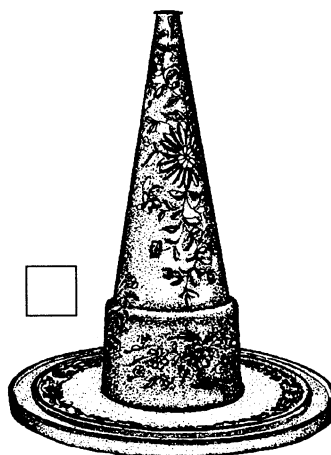
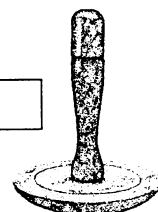
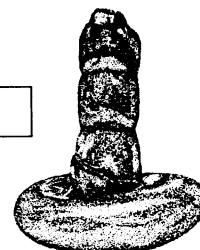
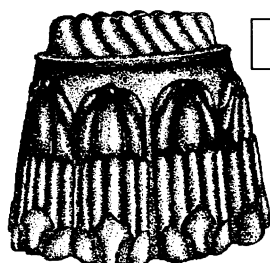
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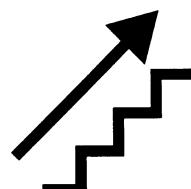
## Can you identify these objects?

Number boxes correctly

1. Jelly Moulds
2. Irons
3. Linen Smoother
4. Goffering Iron for Frills
5. Darning Mushroom



Her press contained the ironed linens and jelly moulds. Take note of the jelly moulds!





# The Main Entrance Hall

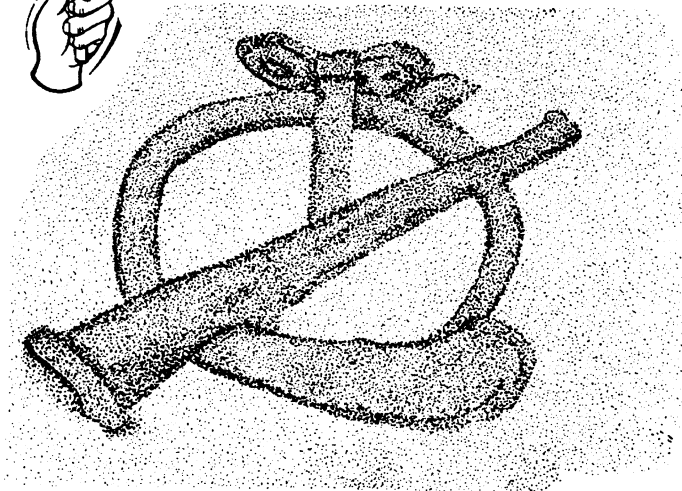
This entrance hall was used by the family and their relatives and friends.

Note the ornate plasterwork or stucco on the cornices of the ceiling. The main themes of this stucco are hospitality, entertainment, music and the arts.

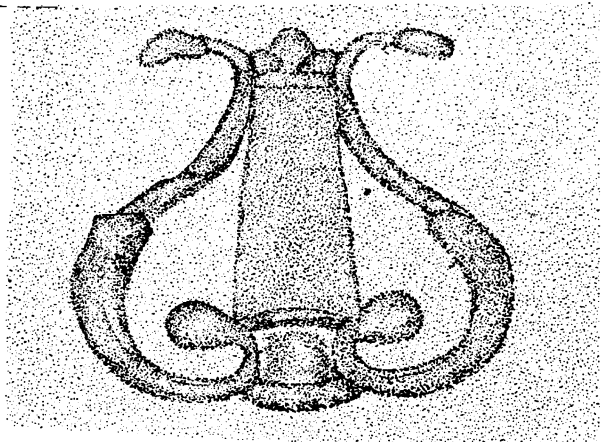


Can you identify

The 'horn of plenty' ☐



The musical instrument  
'the lyre'? ☐



**Look at the front door.**

The fanlight and the sidelights are made of wood and glass.

What suggests to you that the Beatty family were security-conscious?

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**Now look at the painting of Howth.**

**Can you spot**

- (a)** a Martello Tower
- (b)** Ireland's Eye
- (c)** a steam packet?

Howth Harbour was built between 1807 and 1810. Up to then, the Pigeon House harbour was used. But Kingstown or Dún Laoghaire harbour which was begun in 1817 then became more important.

**List some of the things that you would not see if you visited Howth today?**



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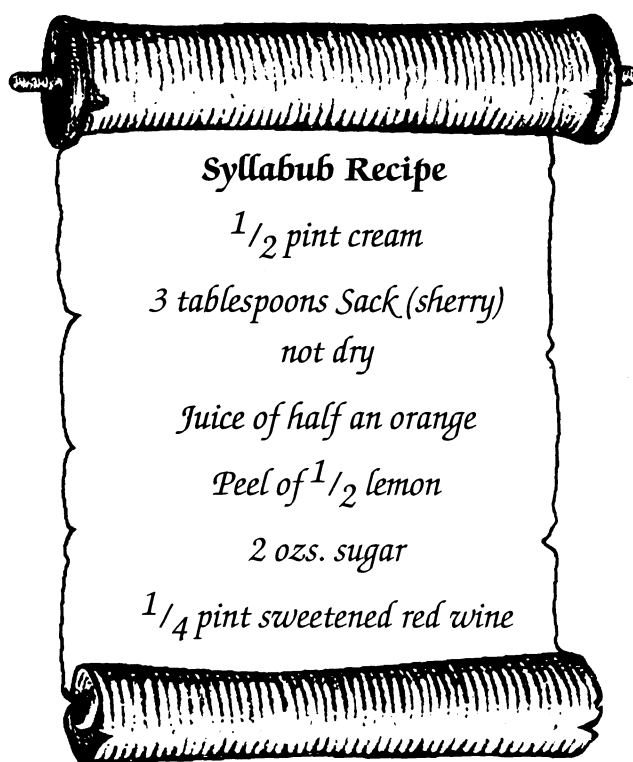
# The Dining Room

The idea of having a particular room for dining became popular in this type of home in the mid-18th century. Before that, people dined at small tables in either a parlour or an eating room on the ground floor. The time at which dinner was served also changed. In the early 18th century, the cost of candles meant that people lived by daylight and therefore had dinner at 3pm, with tea at 5.30pm. The introduction of the oil lamp changed this, since it gave cheaper and brighter light. By 1800, the main meal of the day was served in the evening.

The Dining Room was a formal room and, apart from eating, its only other function was at parties, when the carpet was rolled up for dancing.

Dining was one of the great pleasures of life in the 18th century. For special guests, dinner menus consisted of several different courses. The first usually contained soup, fish, boiled and roast meats, savoury pies and one or two sweet dishes such as cheese cakes, 'creams' and tarts. The second course was similar but without the soup, the meat dishes were slightly lighter, and jellies, sweetmeats and fresh fruit in season were served. For very grand occasions, the dessert was a separate course consisting of pyramids of fresh fruits or preserved oranges and jellies in glasses, syllabubs and various nuts.

## **This is an early eighteenth century Syllabub Recipe**



Family meals were on a smaller scale, with perhaps one course of five or seven dishes. Supper was always a one-course meal.

Nowadays, we take many aspects of food for granted. We usually associate **jelly** with birthday parties, but in the 18th century ‘transparent pudding’ or jelly was a real treat. It was made from calf’s hoof, boiled down to get gelatine, and it took 3 or 4 days to make. The result was a colourless jelly, in which almonds and fruits were suspended. The jelly was made in a special mould with a decorated central cone, which could be seen through the jelly when the mould was removed.

Tea was very expensive then. It was kept under lock and key at all times and was served in small cups.

The glass in the mirror is described as **convex**. It has a round effect.

How many candle branches does it have? ☐



Why was this type of mirror used in a dining room?  
(Your guide will help you to figure this out.)



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Can you identify the bell pull? Yes ☐ No ☐



There are two cutlery boxes on the table between the back windows. The silver cutlery was stored here.

Give reasons why the silver cutlery was stored and washed here and not downstairs?

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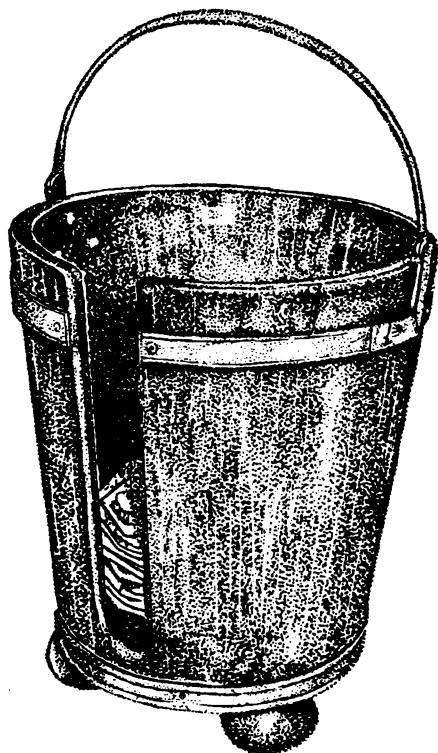
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The dinner plates were carried upstairs in a plate bucket after they had been warmed in the hastener.  
This plate bucket has a slit.



What is the reason for this?

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Invite your friends around for an eighteenth century meal and try one of the recipes in this guide!



**'To Pott Salmon'**  
**1760**

*'Cut Salmon in pieces, Salt well and let lye two hours. Scrape off but don't wash; season with Mace, Nutmeg, Cloves, Ginger, Lemon peel and Bay leaves. Bake it, when enough pour off the Gravy and fill up with fresh Butter.'*



How would you describe the dress of the guests?



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**To do later**

**Complete the sketch**





**Now look at the table which is situated between the two front windows of the room.**

**Can you identify the scallop shell carving in the centre of the apron of the table ?**

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**What do the legs resemble ?**



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**What other carvings can you identify on the table ?**

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**Can you find the Kirk children and their dog?**

**Where are they?**

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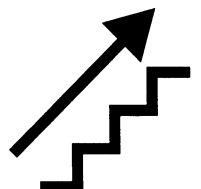
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**On the way up the stairs notice the carpet. It was made in Navan and is a copy of a pattern from Fota House in Co. Cork.**



**Where is Navan?**

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# The Front Drawing Room

 Look at the paintings hanging in this room. They are original paintings.

Name the main painters.

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What is unusual about the way they are hanging on the walls?



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There is an interesting painting of Ballsbridge by James Arthur O'Connor. It shows an early industrial scene of Duffy's Cotton Mills on the banks of the River Dodder.

# The Back Drawing Room

This was the family Drawing Room. The name is derived from the custom of people withdrawing from the dining room after dinner to this room.

There was a great interest in music in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, so it was here that the musical instruments were kept. Have a good look at the furniture and items in this room.

Now list some of the activities that might have taken place in this family room?

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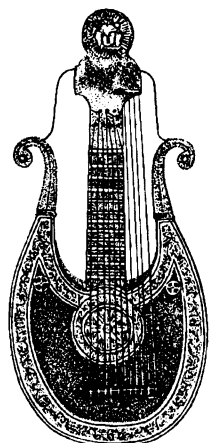
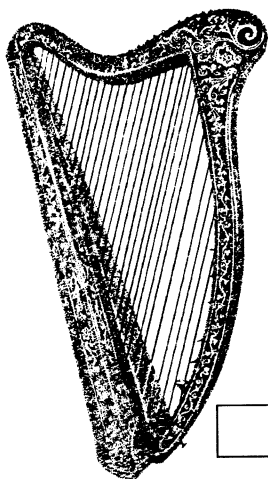
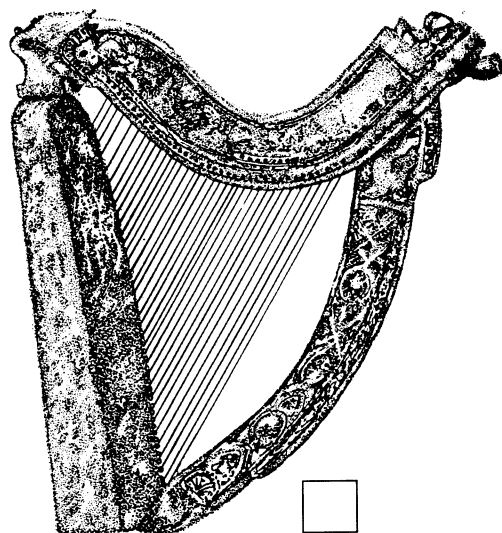




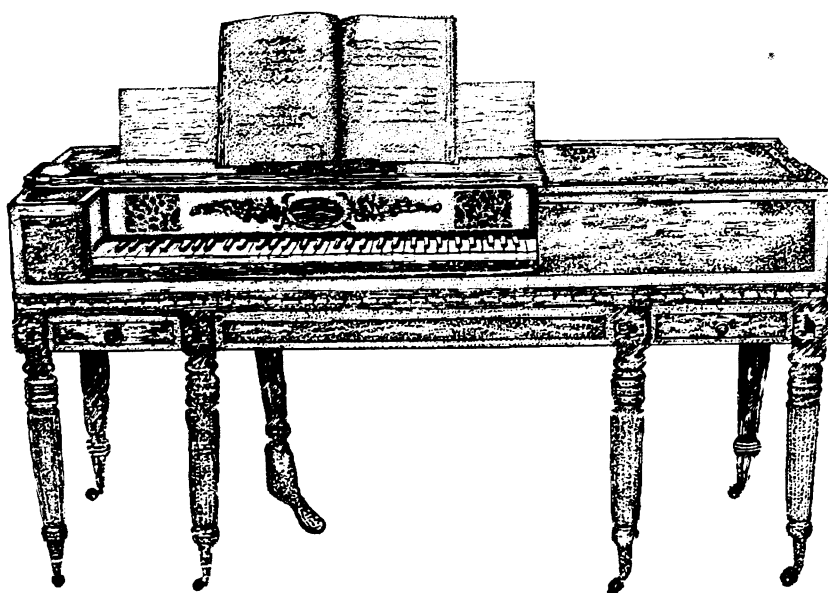


Can you identify these musical instruments? Place the correct number in the correct box.

1. Small harp
2. Square piano
3. Cloyne harp also known as the Dalway harp (note the steel strings)
4. Lyre



The small harp was made in Dublin, by John Egan in about 1815.



Note the square piano. It was popular before the upright piano became fashionable. This one was made in Dublin by Samuel Morland in the early 19th century.

**Why do you think the tea was kept here rather than downstairs?**

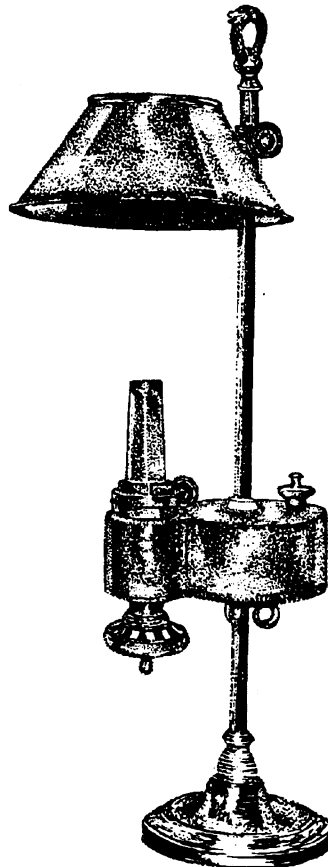


**What was the pole screen used for?**

Your guide will explain this to you.



The **Argand lamp** was an early oil lamp with a circular wick. It could produce the same amount of light as about ten candles.



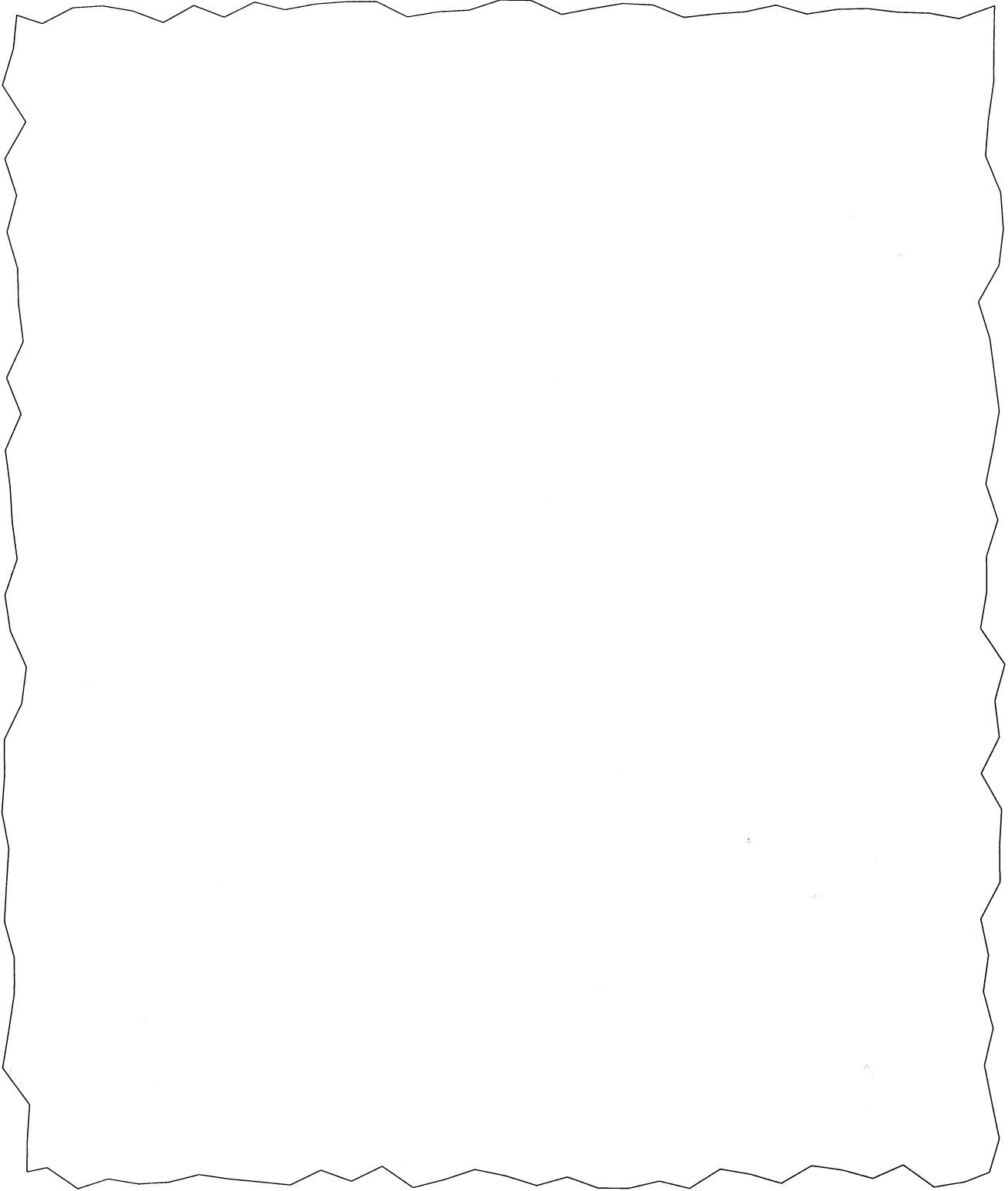
**What difference would a lamp like this have made to the family's life?**



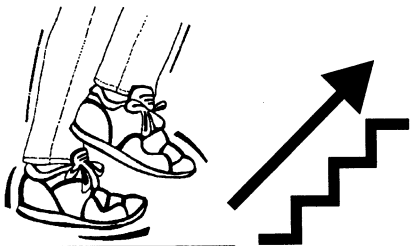


**To do later**

**Sketch your favourite item in this room.**



Notice that the carpets and plasterwork  
no longer decorate the landings.



# The Boudoir

The boudoir was a private or personal sitting room which often contained a bed. The lady of the house would dress and have her breakfast in this room, often spending half the day here, maybe entertaining close friends. The boudoir has sometimes been described as the 'moody' or 'sulking' room.

The morning routine in Number Twenty Nine might be something like the following. The maid would call her mistress, inform her of the hour, lay out her clothes and bring her hot water for washing. Then the maid would retire for her own breakfast. She would return again when her lady's bell rang, to comb her hair, wait on her until she dressed, fold away her night clothes, clean her combs and brushes, and organise her dressing table.

There are various tables in this room



**Can you identify:**

1. Dressing Table

☐

2. Sewing Table

☐

3. Breakfast Table

☐

There is also a writing bureau.

Your guide will show you the lady's hot water bottle or 'belly warmer'.



**To do later**

**Sketch whatever you consider the most unusual item in this room.**

A large rectangular area with a wavy, hand-drawn border, intended for a sketch.

# The Main Bedroom

This bedroom shows the medieval idea of protecting the sleeper from draughts by drawing heavy curtains around the bed at night. As window curtains became popular, the weight of bed curtains was reduced.



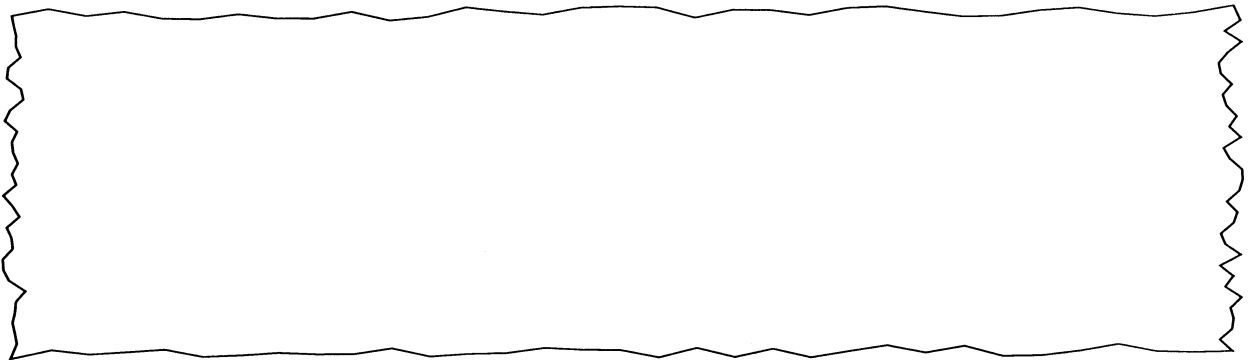
**Look closely at the bedspread.**

This type of needlework is called **embroidery**.



**To do later**

**Draw a spray of fern or an oak leaf**



Throughout the 18th century, there was a problem with bed bugs or blood-sucking insects. Feather and down mattresses were mainly used, but in an attempt to reduce the bed-bug epidemic, it was recommended that metal or wooden beds without curtains should be used. Some householders had difficulty in changing their bed style, but they 'encouraged' their servants to use horsehair and straw mattresses.

The **tallboy**, or chest of drawers, was made by Theophilus Jones, a cabinet-maker of Mountrath Street (now Charles Street West) in Dublin during the late 18th century.

A piece of furniture which you would find in most modern bedrooms is missing from this bedroom.

**Can you name it ?**

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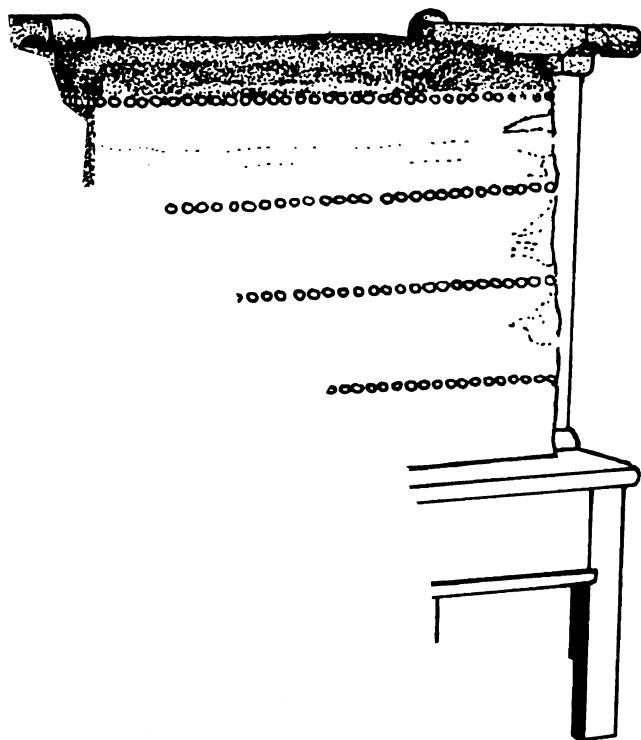
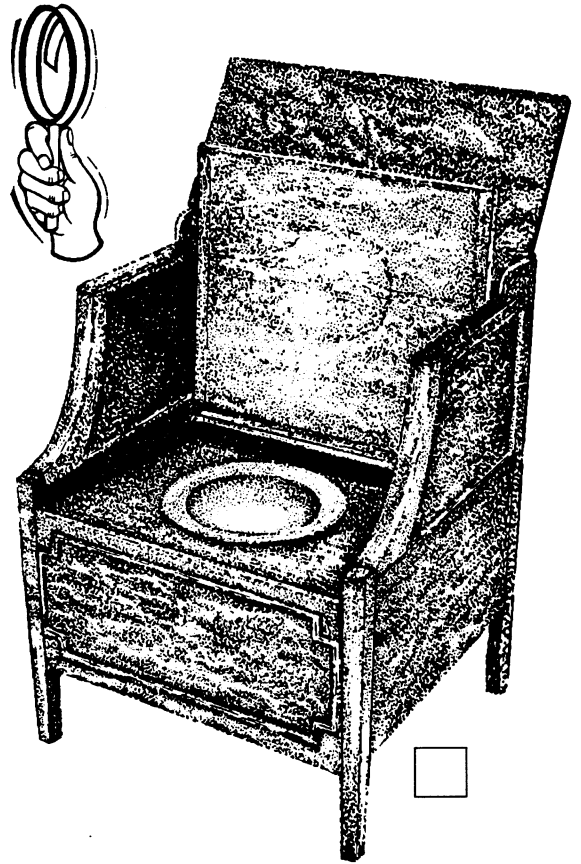


Notice the painting over the mantelpiece. It is by Thomas Snagg and depicts 'The Grand Canal Company Hotel, Portobello, Rathmines' in 1809.

The other items of furniture are

- 1. Exercise Horse
- 2. Commode.

Number boxes correctly



Complete this drawing of the exercise horse.

## The Dressing Room

The phrase 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness' was coined in about 1800 when people began to wash themselves and their clothes regularly.

Why was water used sparingly?



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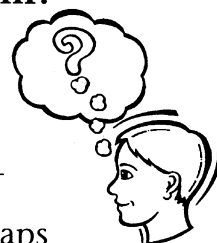
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People also took care of their teeth and false teeth were available.

What do you notice about the shoes in this room?

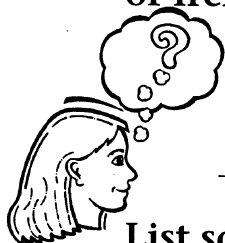
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Note the **prints** hanging on the wall. They are prints of maps drawn by John Speed in 1610.

What do you notice about the spelling and the shape of Ireland in them?



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List some of the other items in this room.

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The blanket chest on the landing was used to store bedclothes. It was also used for the family's clothes, which were neatly folded away by the servants.

When you reach the landing notice there is no more decorative plaster on the ceilings and no carpet on the stairs or landings



# The Top Floor

The third or top floor of Number Twenty Nine would have been a lively area of the house. It was reserved exclusively for the **children and their governess**. They lived, ate, played and slept here; as well as undergoing the important business of education. The Beatty family, like most families of the time, would have favoured private education for their children by a respectable, well-educated female, who was always a spinster or unmarried woman.

## The Governess' Room

The sort of lady who became a governess would have come from a family which was unable to support her financially. The qualifications necessary to become a governess included the following: a genteel manner, a member of the Church of Ireland, a good knowledge of English, with some French and Italian, music, arithmetic, drawing and the use of the globes. Being able to play the piano and teach dancing was also an advantage. All such ladies would be good at needlework, both plain and ornamental. Their manner would have to be such that they could also act as their lady's companion and join the family on many social occasions.

**Would you like to be employed as a governess?  
Give reasons for your answer.**

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Servants usually owned a travelling chest or lodging box in which they kept their Sunday clothes and other items such as sheets, towels and knitting wools. The Governess would also have kept some personal belongings in her room as well.



**Can you see her travelling chest?**

**What kind of things do you think she would have had?**

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From what you see here, how do you think she spent her spare time (if she had any)?



There is a brass **brazier** under her chair. Your guide will explain to you what this was for.

There are framed **stitch samplers** hanging on the wall between the windows. These are samples of sewing stitches which children were expected to learn.

Both boys and girls worked samplers when at home as it was thought that the occupation taught them discipline.

## The Nursery

This room would have been a busy place. It was recommended that the sleeping room should be spacious, dry and airy so feather beds and bed curtains were not recommended.

Why ?



The children usually slept two to a bed and sometimes servants would have slept in the nursery as well. The maid who worked here would have been a nurse, most probably of a lively and cheerful disposition, perfectly good tempered and clean and neat in her habits and person. It was she who took charge of the infants from birth and cared for them throughout their young lives. She would have had a nursery maid, who rose at about 6am to light the fire and do the household work of the nursery before the children got up.

A typical day in the life of the children of Number Twenty Nine might have been as follows. They would have got up at around 7am. The head nurse would have washed them with a sponge and warm water, then dried and dressed them. Their breakfast was prepared and the children were placed at their meal in the most peaceable and orderly manner.

After breakfast, they were taken out for air and exercise for an hour or two. On their return their hands and feet were washed, if damp or dirty, and then they attended lessons until dinner time. After dinner, the children were taken outdoors again. They would play games, such as, chess and cards and do other activities until their bedtime which was usually at around 8pm.

Can you identify the walking frame? ☐

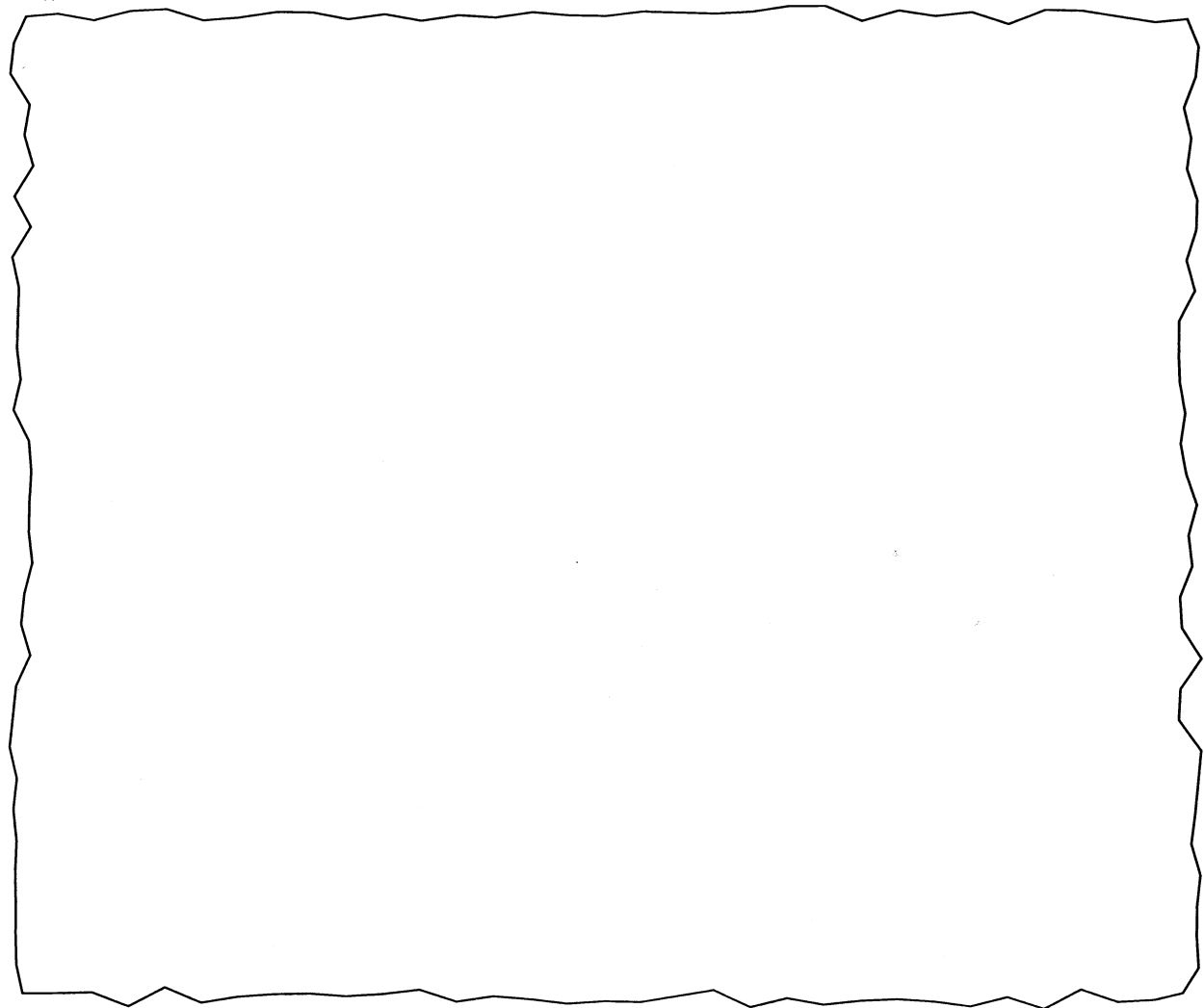


Now have a good look at the toys.

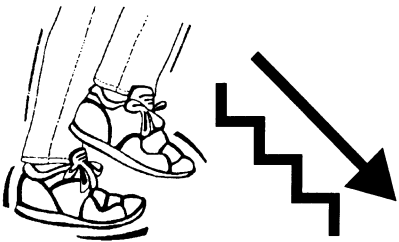


**To do later**

**Sketch some of your favourite ones.**



As you go downstairs notice the ceiling lights on the landings and notice the patterns which the lights reflect on the walls.





# Notes