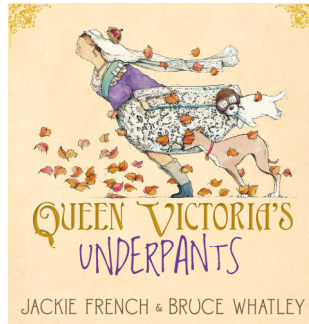


# ***Queen Victoria's Underpants***

**By Jackie French & Bruce Whatley**



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## **Book Description**

Meet Lizzy, whose family are in the clothing industry. Very few people probably know that Queen Victoria made the wearing of underpants popular. At the beginning of her reign very few women wore them. But Queen Victoria made tartans, perambulators and chloroform fashionable. By the time she died just about every woman in Britain wore underpants like hers.

Ages: 4+

## **About the Author**

**Jackie French's** writing career spans eighteen years, forty seven wombats, over 130 books and translations into twenty three languages. Jackie's picture books, on which she collaborates with Bruce Whatley, have proved outstandingly successful. *Diary of a Wombat*, published in 2002, gained numerous awards, both in Australia and internationally.

Jackie is one of the few writers to win both literary and children's choice awards, with her historical fiction appearing consistently on the shortlists for the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards. *Pharaoh* was included in 2008's shortlist for Older Readers. *Hitler's Daughter* won the CBCA Award for younger readers in 2000. *A Rose for the Anzac Boys* was named an Honour Book in 2009.

Jackie's award-winning non-fiction includes the account of the Australian involvement in the Apollo 11 moon landing *To the Moon and Back* won the CBCA's Eve Pownall Award for Information in 2005.

Jackie lives near Braidwood in the Araluen Valley, NSW.

### **About the illustrator**

**Bruce Whatley** is one of Australia's best-loved and most-respected author-illustrators. His most recent books include the enormously successful and award-winning *Diary of a Wombat*, written by Jackie French, and its companion volume, *The Secret World of Wombats*, also illustrated by Bruce. The best selling team have also collaborated on *Pete the Sheep*, and most recently, *Josephine Wants to Dance*. Two of Bruce's previous books, *The Ugliest Dog in the World* and *Tails from Grandad's Attic*, were named as Notable Books by the Children's Book Council of Australia in 1993 and 1996 respectively. *Looking for Crabs* was shortlisted by the Children's Book Council in 1993 and *Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase* was named an Honour Book by the Children's Book Council in 1998. Bruce has illustrated forty books to date, including a number that he has co-written with Rosie Smith. Their latest collaboration was *Little White Dogs Can't Jump*.

### **Note to teachers**

Whilst this is a picture book targeting children as young as four years of age, there are many opportunities for using the book with older primary school aged children and some of the activities are pitched accordingly.

### **Themes**

- Queen Victoria, her life and times
- Clothing and underwear of the Victorian Era
- Trades in Victorian England
- Women of the era
- Inventions of the era

### **Characters**

- Queen Victoria and members of the royal household
- Lizzie and her family

### **Key Dates in Queen Victoria's Reign**

<b>1837</b>	Queen Victoria comes to the throne (at 18 years of age)
<b>1840</b>	Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert
<b>1840-57</b>	Queen Victoria gives birth to nine children
<b>1842</b>	Attempted assassination of Queen Victoria
<b>1845</b>	The potato famine in Ireland
<b>1854-56</b>	The Crimean War
<b>1861</b>	Prince Albert dies
<b>1877</b>	Queen Victoria made Empress of India
<b>1897</b>	Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee (60 years)
<b>1901</b>	Queen Victoria dies

### **Preparing for reading**

- What do you think the book might be about? Why do you think so?
- What do we know about the author and illustrator?
- How is this book similar or different to other books by the author and/or illustrator?
- Who was Queen Victoria and what do we know about her or the times in which she lived?
- How might you interpret the cover illustration? Discuss the look on the Queen's and the dog's face and what they may be thinking.

### **Discussion questions after reading**

- What was Sam's uncle's secret weapon for fighting against Napoleon?
- How did William's grandpa help Captain Cook find Australia and which invention assisted this?
- Discuss the image of Bridget's father driving the steam train.
- What profession would Lizzie's mother have practised in order to be asked to make the Queen's underpants? Do you think this would be seen as an important job then? And now?
- How did Lizzie's mother receive the news that she was required to make Queen Victoria's underpants?
- How did Lizzie's family get involved in the creation of the underpants?
- Why did Gran initially disapprove of underpants and what made her change her mind?
- In which situations did the children think Queen Victoria might *need* underpants and what sort of impact did they think this should have on the design?

- What kinds of underpants were suggested for the Queen and why?
- Which fabrics were discounted and why?
- How many pairs of underpants did Lizzie's mum cut out? Why do you think the Queen would need so many or why that number exactly?
- What was embroidered on the underpants?
- In what ways might people see the Queen's beautiful underpants?
- Why did the Queen wear a secret smile?
- Discuss the use of humour both in the text and the illustrations. What impact does it have on the story and its content?

### **Information about Queen Victoria**

**Victoria (Alexandrina Victoria; 24 May 1819 – 22 January 1901)** was Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from 20 June 1837, and the first Empress of India of the British Raj from 1 May 1876, until her death. Her reign lasted 63 years and 7 months. The time of her reign is known as the Victorian era.

Queen Victoria was married to Prince Albert for nearly 21 years and was apparently very much in love with him. She gave him the title 'Prince Consort' and responsibility in the running of the country. Victoria and Albert had nine children:

1. Victoria (born 1840)
2. Edward (born 1841)
3. Alice (born 1842)
4. Alfred (born 1844)
5. Helena (born 1846)
6. Louise (born 1848)
7. Arthur (born 1850)
8. Leopold (born 1853)
9. Beatrice (born 1857)

### **Follow-up activities**

#### **Project and activity ideas:**

Create a project on one of the following topics and present it as a poster, PowerPoint, booklet or in your chosen format:

#### **Queen Victoria and the Victorian era**

- Queen Victoria's reign
- Any aspect of Queen Victoria's life such as her marriage, her children, her influence on the era, or what her subjects thought about her.

- Queen Victoria made the wearing of underpants fashionable. Research one of the following items, the use of which was also made fashionable by the Queen: tartans, perambulators or chloroform.
- Any aspect of the Victorian era in England – lifestyle, children – school and work, dolls/toys, music and dance, fashion, the industrial developments and inventions, the Golden Jubilee (1887) and the Diamond Jubilee (1897), or the royal cypher (as depicted on all of the Queen’s undergarments).
- A ‘did-you-know?’ style pamphlet about Queen Victoria’s life and times.
- A class newspaper with articles about the Queen and her family as well as other important events from the time including an article on Lizzie’s mother and her creation of the Queen’s underpants.
- Imagine what it would be like to be Queen at 18 years of age. Write a story in the first person about Victoria’s feelings and experiences on becoming Queen.
- Queen Victoria lived for 82 years. There were many changes to everyday life in those years. Find out about some of them and present your findings to the class. Compare those with the changes that have occurred in your lifetime or that of your parents. (You could write some interview questions and interview your mother, father or grandparent.)
- Queen Victoria’s Household – who lived in the Queen’s household, what were their roles and what was involved in running the palace?

### **Clothing and underwear of the Victorian Era**

- Look at images of Victorian fashions and undergarments. Design some underpants with a purpose such as the ones the children in the book suggested.
- What kinds of materials could be used to make underpants in Victorian times? How does that compare with the materials used today? Consider comfort, feel, elasticity etc.
- How did underpants help to liberate Victorian women?
- What about the men – did they have underwear as well?
- Underpants had many different names throughout history such as bloomers, britches, drawers, and pantaloons. Can you think of any other names that were used to describe underpants throughout history?
- Find images of different types of underpants and other undergarments from throughout history (you could choose one era to focus on) and create an illustrated project to share with the class.
- Why might Queen Victoria or any woman of Victorian times need underwear?

### **Trades**

- Trades in Victorian England - Make a list of some of the trades that were part of life in Victorian times i.e. seamstress, laundress, footman, cook etc. and then choose one to research and write about.
- Find out about child labour and some of the worst jobs of the era.
- What is a footman? Describe the type of work they did and find out if there is a comparable job in our world today.

### **Women in the Victorian Era**

- In her notes at the back of the book the author describes how Queen Victoria improved the life of women in Victorian times. Find out how this occurred and what some of the outcomes for women were.
- Apart from the life of the Queen, what was life like for ordinary women of the time?

### **Inventions of the Victorian Era**

- Some of the innovations of the Victorian era included the steam engine, paddle steamship, iron bridge, spinning mill, blast furnace, Brunel's ship design. Choose one of these to research and write about.
- Choose a recently invented item such as the mobile phone and discuss the design elements and the positive and negative impacts of this invention.

### **Food in the Victorian era**

- Research the types of food available in this period and compare the food of the wealthy and the poor. Plan a meal or cook a recipe from the era such as the Queen cake recipe below. You could then hold a class tea party with tea, cakes and sandwiches.

### **Queen Cake Recipe**

1. Mix ½ kilo of dried flour, ½ kilo of sifted sugar and ½ kilo of washed currants.
2. Soak half a kilo of butter in rose water, beat it well, then mix in eight eggs, yolks and whites beaten separately, and put in the dry ingredients gradually; beat together for 5 minutes.
3. Butter small patty tins, teacups, or a cake tin.
4. Sift a little fine sugar over immediately before putting into the oven.
5. Bake at 180 degrees for 12-15 minutes for small cakes, longer for a single pan (depending on the size of the container used.)

### **Craft and Art Projects:**

- Make a lift-the-flap cut out of Queen Victoria or one of the other characters from the story, drawing or cutting out clothes and underpants to add to the character.
- Make a paper doll with Victorian clothing and undergarments (each garment could have small side flaps suitable to fold over to attach to the body of your doll. You could make a few changes of clothes for your doll.)
- Design and make a diorama depicting a scene from Victorian England. (It could contain character dolls made from recycled materials as well as Victorian era furnishings as seen in Lizzie's house or suited to the royal palace.)
- Draw or paint a portrait or full body image of Queen Victoria (in Victorian era fashion). First look at various photographs and paintings of the Queen and then draw or paint her in a scene from the story, either indoors or outdoors.
- Make a crown using foam sheets, fabric or cardboard, sequins and other decorations. Instructions can be found here:  
Paper crown - <http://www.dltk-kids.com/p.asp?b=mandp=http://www.dltk-kids.com/crafts/pcrown.asp>  
Foam crown - [http://www.firstpalette.com/Craft\\_themes/Wearables/craftfoamcrown/craftfoamcrown.html](http://www.firstpalette.com/Craft_themes/Wearables/craftfoamcrown/craftfoamcrown.html)  
Fabric crown - can be made using felt, craft glue, sequins etc.
- Using pen and ink for your final draft, design a piece of jewellery for Queen Victoria.
- Make a 2D collage of Queen Victoria using fabric and lace for clothes, underwear, jewellery etc. Alternatively you could make a Papier Mache sculpture of the Queen.
- Look at some samples of embroidery and cyphers of different royal families throughout the ages. Then design a cypher for your family and then embroider it onto some fabric. For embroidery stitch lessons, go to: <http://www.craftown.com/instruction/embroidery.htm>
- Hold an art show to showcase all the art works created by the children in response to the book.

### **General**

- Research one of the major events of the Victorian era such as the Queen's coronation, jubilee, the Potato famine or one of the wars.
- Create an author or illustrator biography or a review of another title by the author and/or illustrator to share with the class. See the section on Jackie's web site for project information: <http://www.jackiefrench.com/projects.html>

### **Author's Note**

Read and discuss the author's note at the back of the book. What would you write in an author's note for this book?

### **Jackie French's Books**

For a comprehensive list of Jackie's books, go to:

<http://www.jackiefrench.com/booklist.html>

<http://www.jackiefrench.com.au/>

### **Bruce Whatley's Books**

- *The Ugliest Dog in the World* (CBCA Notable Picture Book, 1993)
- *I Wanna be Famous*
- *Looking for Crabs* (Short listed CBCA Picture Book of the Year, 1993)
- *That Magnetic Dog*
- *Whatley's Quest*
- *Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase* (Honour Book, CBCA Picture Book of the Year, 1998)
- *Wait! No Paint! 2002*
- *All Things Bright And Beautiful*
- *I Wanna Be Famous*
- *Danny Da Vinci: The Flying Machines Of Lombardy*
- *Zoobots* by Bruce Whatley and Ben Whatley Smith

### **All of the following books involved collaboration between Jackie French and Bruce Whatley.**

- *Diary of a Wombat*
- *Josephine Wants To Dance*
- *Baby Wombat's Week*
- *Emily And The Big Bad Bunyip*
- *Pete The Sheep*
- *The Shaggy Gully Times*
- *The Secret World of Wombats*
- *How High Can a Kangaroo Hop?*

### **Books about Queen Victoria and the Victorian era**

- *Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria* by Kyra E. Hicks Illustrated by Lee Edward Födi
- *In the Days of Queen Victoria* by Eva March Tappan
- *Queen Victoria and her Enormous Empire* by Alan Macdonald
- *Horrible Histories* Book or Audio CD: *The Vile Victorians* by Terry Deary



- My Story series novels: *Mill Girl: A Victorian Girl's Diary, 1842-1843* by Sue Reid or *Workhouse: A Victorian Girl's Diary, 1871* by Pamela Oldfield

### **Other Books about underpants**

- *Phredde and the Ghostly Underpants* by Jackie French
- *Captain Underpants* series by Dave Pilkey
- *The Terrible Underpants* by Kaz Cook
- *Aliens Love Underpants* by Claire Freedman

### **Web Links**

Images of Queen Victoria

[http://images.google.com.au/images?hl=en&cr=countryAU&pwst=1&rlz=1G1GGLQ\\_ENA\\_U366&q=Queen%20victoria&revid=1468007457&resnum=0&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=wi](http://images.google.com.au/images?hl=en&cr=countryAU&pwst=1&rlz=1G1GGLQ_ENA_U366&q=Queen%20victoria&revid=1468007457&resnum=0&um=1&ie=UTF-8&sa=N&tab=wi)

A UK site about Queen Victoria specifically designed for children

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/victorians/victoria.htm>

A Brief overview of Queen Victoria and her reign

<http://history1800s.about.com/od/leaders/p/victoria-bio.htm>

Queen Victoria's underwear

<http://www.victoriana.com/Royalty/Queenvictoriaunderwear.htm>

<http://www.victorianstation.com/Queen.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_of_the_United_Kingdom)

[http://www.fashion-era.com/the\\_victorian\\_era.htm](http://www.fashion-era.com/the_victorian_era.htm)

<http://www.fashion-era.com/undergarments.htm>

History of men's underwear

<http://maetribe.com/mensunderwear/historyofmensunderwear.html>

An overview of underwear in Victorian times

<http://www.tudorlinks.com/treasury/articles/viewvictunder1.html>

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/victoria\\_queen.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/victoria_queen.shtml)

Life for children living in Victorian England

<http://www.channel4.com/learning/microsites/Q/qca/victorians/>

A site depicting all things Victorian

<http://www.victoriana.com/>

<http://www.victoriana.com/Queenvictoria/>

Kidsnet - Victorian era

[http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/vi/Victorian\\_era](http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/vi/Victorian_era)

Royal cyphers

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal\\_cypher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_cypher)

Varied information on the era including information about fashion, daily life, food etc.

<http://www.erasofelegance.com/history/victorianlife.html>

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**Work Sheet 1**

**Match the underpants with the purpose for which they were invented by drawing a line from left to right.**

<b>Type of underpants</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
bagpipe underpants	to hold cake
balloon underpants	to play music
well padded	for the cold and draughty palace
a secret pocket	for flying
a warming pan	for riding
pockets	for bows and arrows

**Now create your own grid to share with a friend.**

<b>Type of underpants</b>	<b>Purpose</b>

**Answers**

- bagpipe underpants – to play music
- balloon underpants – for flying
- well padded – for riding
- a secret pocket – to hold cake
- a warming pan – for cold and draughty places
- pockets – for bows and arrows

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**Work Sheet 2**

**CLOZE ACTIVITY**

Queen underpants ladylike	Victoria's footman petticoats	padded linen itch	warming pan embroidered lace
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\_\_\_\_\_ was Empress of half the world. She owned palaces and huge armies. Mighty sultans gave her precious jewels but she didn't have any \_\_\_\_\_. A \_\_\_\_\_ brought the message that the Queen wanted Lizzie's Mum to make her underpants. Gran didn't think women needed underpants, especially if they wore \_\_\_\_\_ or took \_\_\_\_\_ steps. Lizzie's family thought the Queen should have underpants that were well \_\_\_\_\_ but not ones that split or made her \_\_\_\_\_. The family suggested the underpants be made of \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ and be \_\_\_\_\_ with the Queen's cipher. Gran also thought the underpants needed a built-in \_\_\_\_\_ as the palace could be cold and draughty. The Queen wore the underpants with a secret smile.

**Answers**

- |               |               |                 |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Queen      | 5. petticoats | 9. linen        |
| 2. Victoria   | 6. ladylike   | 10. lace        |
| 3. underpants | 7. padded     | 11. embroidered |
| 4. footman    | 8. itch       | 12. warming pan |

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**Work Sheet 3**  
**WORD CHALLENGE**

See how many words you can make from each of the following using  
each letter only as many times as it appears in the word:

**EMBROIDERED**


**UNDERPANTS**


**Answers to Worksheet 3**

These are not exhaustive lists.

**EMBROIDERED**

- |           |       |         |
|-----------|-------|---------|
| embroider | bored | mob     |
| border    | bed   | bromide |
| bred      | rid   | dime    |
| red       | rib   | dire    |
| rob       | ride  |         |
| robe      | deem  |         |
| bore      | rode  |         |

**UNDERPANTS**

pants

under

red

ants

pat

sat

stun

pun

nun

spat

pen

tune