

mtp

matthew townshend productions

Victorians

What's happening?

The year is **1853** and **Queen Victoria** has been on the throne for sixteen years. Engineers and inventors are changing the way we live and the land we live in, building railways, iron bridges and steamships. Now, a Yorkshire baronet called **Sir George Cayley** believes he has discovered the secret of flight. There is even a rumour that he has made his coachman climb aboard a machine made of wood and cloth and that the servant has been launched across the valley on the Cayley estate.

Who am I going to meet?



Mr. Vick - Sir George's carpenter and craftsman.
For many years, Mr. Vick has been building machines invented by Sir George.

What's my role?

You could be local people:

Domestic **servants**.

Tenant **farmers** and their **farmworkers**.

Trades and **crafts**people.

Members of the **professional class** – eg. teacher, vicar or chapel minister, lawyer.

Landowners like Sir George

Or you could be a **manufacturer** (a factory owner) from a nearby town.

Why am I here?

Everybody wants to know what Sir George has been up to – is the story of the flying coachman true? Today also happens to be Sir George's eightieth birthday – a pretty good age at any time, not least in the mid-nineteenth century. We are going to wish him many happy returns.

Useful to know about:

The **railway boom 1844-5**.

The Great Exhibition of 1851.

Famous engineers such as the **Brunels**, the **Stephensons** and **Joseph Paxton**, designer of the '**crystal palace**', home of the Great Exhibition.

The experiments of **Henson** and **Stringfellow**, who have been trying to build a steam-powered flying machine.

Henri Giffard's **steam-powered balloon flights** in France.

Questions to ask:

If you were alive one hundred and fifty years ago, how would you react to the suggestion that a family might travel by air as easily as by railway? How safe is rail travel at this time?