

Derby Day



Points for class discussion

William Powell Frith was a famous Victorian artist who was one of the first to draw pictures of people from all classes of society.

Frith composed this work as a morality picture, which would have been easily understood by the Victorians. It is about a day at the races, Frith was interested in the many different people from different walks of life in the crowd there.

Search the picture from left to right for the following small scenes:

- Gambling – a scam involving spotting where a pea was hidden under three thimbles.
- A man stealing bottles of champagne
- A boy pickpocket
- A group of women and children begging
- A boy looking hungrily at food
- A rich man “eyeing up” a young girl

These “cameos” represent social issues e.g theft, gambling, inequalities between people. What social issues are there today? Are they the same as in Victorian times? If you were to compose a morality picture today what would your setting be? What “crimes” would you portray?

Activity

Using any art materials available (Sketching, magazine collage, felt tip pen drawing, labelled diagram) individually or in small groups, children create a cameo of a modern social issue. E.g. theft, vandalism, drug taking, alcohol. Then create a large picture by pasting all the work onto one large background.

Produce labels and writing to explain the picture.