The House of Lords was unelected and had the right to reject Acts of Parliament and stop them becoming law.

By 1910 only 2% of British homes had electricity.

In 1901 most children left school aged 12. Only 2% went onto secondary studies.

Income tax was paid at 5% on income above £150. Less than 1 million people paid this. (Out of a population of approx 34 m).

10% of the British population owned 90% of the country’s wealth.

In 1901 Seebohm Rowntree’s survey of York discovered over a third of people were living below the “poverty line.”

The film industry was starting to flourish with Britain’s first purpose built ‘picture house’ being built in Lancashire in 1907.

The British Empire covered almost one quarter of the globe.

The 1904 Interdepartmental Commission on Physical Deterioration claimed one third of school children regularly went hungry. Diseases such as diphtheria, consumption, rickets and whooping cough were common.

Between 1870 and 1914 British industrial growth was 2.3%. The USA’s was double that.

The textile industry was responsible for over half of all British exports and employed 1.5 million people. Half of these were women.

In 1901 one third of women had regular jobs. 40% were employed in domestic service.

In 1901 there were 10, 000 motor vehicles on British roads. The maximum speed limit was 14 mph. By 1910 there were 83,000 vehicles.

The franchise had been extended in 1867 and 1884 for men, but still only about 60% of male householders over 21 had the right to vote in national elections.

Popular and influential authors included Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes), Joseph Conrad, HG Wells, Rudyard Kipling, Henry James and Thomas Hardy. Books included *The Wind in the Willows, The Railway Children and Peter Pan.*

In the first ten years of the 1900s the new “red brick” universities of Birmingham, Sheffield, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds were created.

Queen Victoria, who had reigned almost 64 years, died in 1901. Her son, Edward VII became king.

Music hall provided the most popular form of entertainment for the working-classes, with acts ranging from singers to magicians and comedians.

Women have achieved improvements to their rights in relation to divorce, ownership of property and education, but do not have the right to vote.

Between 1899 and 1902, 7,800 British troops were killed in the Boer War in South Africa. 13,200 died of disease. 27,900 Boer women and children died in British concentration camps.

Communication was improving with increasing use of telegrams, telephones and new radio technology.

No sickness, unemployment or old age pensions existed. Those seeking poor relief had to enter a Workhouse.