The Great Exhibition: Incredible Inventions

In the summer of 1851, Hyde Park played host to an enormous exhibition showcasing marvellous inventions from around the world. Have a go at being a Victorian inventor by creating solutions to the problems on the next pages. Use clean recycling, things you have lying about your house (make sure you ask permission) and a little bit of imagination.

We’d love to see your inventions, send us a tweet to share what you’ve created! @theroyalparks
Invention Inspiration: Perpetual Plant Pot

Did you know?
The phrase “Spend a Penny” is thought to have originated from The Great Exhibition where the world’s first pay toilets were installed with a penny fee.

You are going on holiday for two weeks and would like to see your houseplant alive on your return.

Create a self-watering plant pot.

You will need:
• Clean recycling
• Imagination!
Optional:
• Scissors
• Glue
• String
Invention Inspiration: Egg Escape

Did you know?
The Great Exhibition was open from 1st May until 11th October 1851 and in that time over 6 million people visited, equivalent to about one third of the British population at the time.

We have breeding little owls in Hyde Park, but windy conditions mean their eggs can drop from the trees.

Build an invention that will prevent the eggs from breaking when they fall.

You will need:
• An egg (or egg substitute)
• Clean recycling
• Imagination!
Optional:
• Scissors
• Glue
• String
Invention Inspiration: Hedgehog Heist

Did you know?
One of the more curious inventions on display in The Great Exhibition was a Leech Barometer where the Leeches would cause a bell to ring when a storm was approaching.

We want to encourage Hedgehogs into Hyde Park but are surrounded by roads.

Design and build a hedgehog bridge to help our prickly friends cross the road in safety.

You will need:
• Clean recycling
• Imagination!
Optional:
• Scissors
• Glue
• String
Invention Inspiration: Catapulting Conkers

Did you know?
Special trains were put on to enable factory workers and countryside dwellers to travel down and see the breath-taking Great Exhibition.

Historically the military have been stationed in Hyde Park, where no doubt they practiced using new weapons.

Build a catapult and use it to throw conkers at a toilet roll tower.

You will need:
• Conkers (rubbers work well too!)
• Three toilet rolls (for the toilet roll tower)
• Clean recycling
• Imagination!
Optional:
• Scissors
• Glue
• String
Invention Inspiration: Catapulting Conkers

Did you know?

At the time of The Great Exhibition, souvenir stereoscopes (a cardboard viewer to make images look 3D) were all the rage. Victorian visitors to the exhibition were able to buy a three-dimensional view of the Great Exhibition to take home with them.

Think of your own problem, and design your own solution.

You can either create your invention or draw out a design using pencil and paper.

You will need:
• Clean recycling
• Imagination!
Optional:
• Scissors
• Glue
• String

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