

A VICTORIAN WRITER'S WORLD

Who was Samuel Butler?

In the exhibition cases around the Library are lots of artefacts relating to Samuel Butler. We will be using these historical artefacts to help us build up a picture of a Victorian writer's world. We will try to find out:

- what Samuel Butler did during his lifetime, and when;
- what else was happening at the same time;
- what Samuel Butler was like as a person.

We cannot ask Samuel Butler about his life and the world he lived in, because he died more than 100 years ago.

If we want to find out about people from the past we have to look for **evidence**, then use the evidence to form our own impression of what life was like for them.

You will need to look very carefully at the artefacts on display, and think of them as 'clues' that will help you solve the mystery of who Samuel Butler was.

Turn over the page to begin your trail around the exhibition!

NOTE: The exhibition cases are numbered from 1 to 10, but the order is not important – you can start anywhere.

Case I

The *Origin of Species* is one of the most important books ever published. It is all about the scientific theory of **evolution**, and it offers an explanation of how life on earth has come to be the way it is.

In which year was this book first published?

Who wrote it?

Next to it is another copy of the *Origin of Species*, which Samuel Butler bought in 1876 (almost 20 years after it was first published). The notes scribbled in the book are by Samuel Butler.

Do you think Samuel Butler agreed with Charles Darwin's explanation? Give a reason for your answer.

Samuel Butler wrote his own books on the subject of evolution. Two of these are on display elsewhere in the exhibition. When you find them, write down their titles and the years in which they were first published:

1.

2.

Did Samuel Butler write about evolution before or after Charles Darwin?

Case 2

Here is one of Samuel Butler's account books, where he kept a record of the money he spent on one of his main hobbies. What was this hobby?

Look closely and you will see he has listed his expenses in chronological order, year by year. In which year did he purchase a 'Detective camera'?

What evidence can you find elsewhere in the exhibition to prove that Samuel Butler used the photographic equipment he bought?

Case 3



Samuel Butler painted this picture in 1856, while he was at university in the town depicted. Where did he go to university?

In this case there are also some notes written out by Samuel Butler. What kind of lessons do these notes record?

When did Samuel Butler write these notes?

Case 4

Here is a reproduction of an oil painting by Samuel Butler, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in London in 1874. The title of the painting is *Mr Heatherley's Holiday: An Incident in Studio Life*.

Mr Heatherley was the manager of an art school. Which skills do you think Samuel Butler practised in Mr Heatherley's studio?



Samuel Butler has written his address at the top of this map. Where did he live?

Which shop does this map come from? (You might recognise the name!)

Lots of red lines have been drawn onto the map with a pen. What do you think these lines represent?

Which modes of transport do you think Samuel Butler used to travel so many miles around the south of England?

Case 5

In which country is Canterbury Settlement?

When was Samuel Butler's account of life in Canterbury published?

This object is a sheep-brand. It was registered in the *Brand Book for Canterbury*, under Samuel Butler's name, on 26th November 1860.

What job do you think Samuel Butler was doing at this time?



Case 6

Here is a family photograph, taken when Samuel Butler was about 30. Write down three words to describe the atmosphere or people in this photograph:



Samuel Butler's most famous painting is *Family Prayers*, dated 1864. Do you think Butler enjoyed his religious upbringing? Give a reason for your answer.

Butler also wrote a novel, *The Way of All Flesh*, based on his family experiences, but he said it must not be published until after his death. Why do you think Butler was worried about publishing this book?

Case 7

Here are two books written by Samuel Butler. Based on their titles, do you think these are works of **fiction** (stories) or **non-fiction** (factual)?

Which other writer is mentioned in the title of **both** of these books?

Case 8

Look closely at this humorous sketch of Samuel Butler and the book of music that belonged to him.

Which musical instrument did Samuel Butler play?

Which classical composer did Samuel Butler most admire? (The composer's name is included in the drawing and on the music.)

Case 9

Here is one of Samuel Butler's photograph albums, containing pictures taken in and around London. In which year were these pictures taken?

Write down two things you can see in these photographs that would be different today:

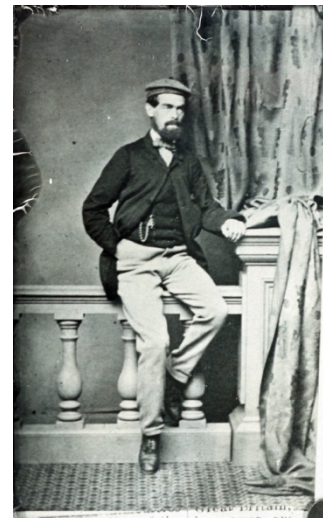
Case 10

Match these portraits of Samuel Butler to the correct descriptions:



Samuel Butler with his
friends at university
(about 1856)

Samuel Butler a few months
before his death (1901)



Samuel Butler in his room
at Clifford's Inn, London
(about 1892)



Samuel Butler in New Zealand,
or shortly after his return
(about 1863)

