

# Victorian times

*The following extract concerns a young boy called Robbie who has managed to travel back in time to the year 1875. He has met a girl called Charlotte who is showing him round the garden of her rather grand home.*

They reached a clearing from where there was a wonderful view down to the house and to the river valley below it. Robbie stood still and looked and listened. It was so unbelievably different. There were lots more trees and between the clumps of trees there were small fields. Where he might have expected to see tractors there were horses, giant cart horses, led by burly farmers.

He couldn't see any roads. He could see hedges, between which roads might pass, but he couldn't see the roads themselves. He was sure he would be able to normally. Perhaps Mum would bring him to visit one day. That would surprise her, if he actually asked to visit a National Trust property. His usual reaction when she suggested such a thing was to sound horrified but then to go anyway as he felt that she needed the company.

Most amazing, though, was the silence. No, actually not silence. Robbie realised that he could hear birds, more than he would normally hear. He could hear the distant sounds of sheep baaing, cows mooing and, somewhere, an axe falling against timber. But what he couldn't hear was traffic: no tractors, no cars on the side roads, no lorries on the main road, no helicopters, no jets training for the Navy, no trains, no anything. It was stunning!

Robbie continued staring at the view. So green, so clear. There were farmhouses dotted about and a village in the distance. Over to the right was a small town. Very small but big enough to have a church, a ruined castle and a red-brick factory with a tall chimney from which smoke was rising.

"That's Father's factory," said Charlotte, following Robbie's gaze.

