



# Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain

By Susie L. Steinbach

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*Understanding the Victorians* paints a vivid portrait of this era of dramatic change, combining broad survey with close analysis and introducing students to the critical debates taking place among historians today. Encompassing all of Great Britain and Ireland over the whole of the Victorian period, it gives prominence to social and cultural topics alongside politics and economics and emphasises class, gender, and racial and imperial positioning as constitutive of human relations.

This second edition is fully updated throughout, containing a new chapter on leisure in the Victorian period, the most recent historiographical research in Victorian Studies, and enhanced coverage of imperialism and working-class life. Starting with the Queen Caroline Affair in 1820 and coming up to the start of World War I in 1914, Susie L. Steinbach uses thematic chapters to discuss and evaluate topics such as politics, imperialism, the economy, class, gender, the monarchy, arts and entertainment, religion, sexuality, religion, and science. There are also three chapters on space, consumption, and the law, topics rarely covered at this introductory level.

With a clear introduction outlining the key themes of the period, a detailed timeline, and suggestions for further reading and relevant internet resources, this is the ideal companion for all students of the nineteenth century.

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**"The engaging style and comprehensive coverage of Susie Steinbach's *Understanding the Victorians* makes it perfect for an advanced undergraduate class, while the wealth of information it provides on a range of topics – including space, consumption, sexuality, and religion – will enlighten even the Victorian specialist. My students love this book as much as I do."**

Carol Herringer, *Wright State University, USA*

**"This lively, engaging book is a superb introduction to the world of the Victorians. Employing a thematic approach that ranges from class and consumption to science and sexuality, Susie Steinbach succeeds in capturing the remarkable richness and complexity of nineteenth-century British culture and society."**

Dane Kennedy, *George Washington University, USA*

**"This refreshing and lively book offers a readable introduction to the Victorian period – presenting a fresh perspective on established themes in Victorian cultural history such as class, gender, religion and imperialism as well as bringing new agendas, including space and consumerism, to the fore. From the streets inhabited by the urban poor to the palaces of the aristocracy and the political elite, Steinbach deftly evokes the Victorian social and cultural world, bringing us closer to understanding the far-reaching social changes that swept over the British nation in this period."**

Jane Hamlett, *Royal Holloway, University of London, UK*

**Steinbach's book is remarkable for its complex and nuanced understanding of culture and for the clarity in which this is expressed. Care is taken to pull out examples which represent the age, but analysis is subtle and aimed at gaining a precise understanding of their significance to Victorian society... [It] integrates old topics and new frameworks in a way that offers an overview of the discipline and which, through careful synthesis of diverse approaches, offers new perspectives on the Victorians and their place in British history."**

*Annual Bulletin of Historical Literature*

About the Author

Susie L. Steinbach is Professor of History at Hamline University. She is the author of *Women in England 1760-1914: A Social History* (2004) and the editor of *Millicent Garret Fawcett by her Contemporaries* (2008), and has written widely on Victorian history, with a particular emphasis on gender and the law.

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