A Summary of Human History in Conwy County

Please note that this document is not intended to be a comprehensive or definitive history of Conwy County. Its purpose is to highlight certain parts of the diverse history and character of this area, spanning thousands of years.

Prehistory to 1066 AD

The county we know as 'Conwy' today is relatively new in the scale of human history. People have been travelling, living and being buried in this area for hundreds of thousands of years, long before Conwy was even given its name. These people would have travelled from far and wide looking for places to hunt and settle, bringing family groups with them.

The upper jaw of a 9-year-old Neanderthal child was found in St Asaph, Denbighshire, 15 miles east of Conwy Culture Centre. This bone is the earliest hominid remains found in North Wales, dating back to 230,000 years ago during a period known as the Palaeolithic, or Old Stone Age. Little is known about these people other than the scant evidence we find in caves near the Conwy coast. Over time Neanderthals would die out leaving only Homo sapiens, also known as modern man. At Llandudno four human skeletons were discovered in Kendricks Cave on the Great Orme, Llandudno. These were found with animal bones and a decorated horse jawbone, one of the finest pieces of prehistoric art of this period. The climate grew colder and this area was abandoned for about 8,000 years (21,000-13,000 years ago) as thick sheets of ice covered the landscape. This jawbone is dated to around 10,000 years ago towards the very end of the Palaeolithic period in Wales.

When the climate warmed up around 12,000 years ago, people slowly returned to the area where Conwy is today. This period, called the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age, lasted 7-8,000 years. There would have been large family groups travelling around looking for places to hunt and gather food, depending on the time of year. These people would have lived in camps and small caves at different seasons, mainly living near the coast or near to rivers. Flint tools from this period have been found near Llandudno and the town of Conwy, as well as at a large flint-working site near Llansannan. This way of life would continue for millennia until farming was slowly introduced to Britain by travellers from the Middle East, as well as travellers from the continent.

Most evidence of human activity in the area begins 5,000 years ago in the New Stone Age (Neolithic). At this time people started building houses to live in, as well as farming by growing crops and raising animals. The first industries of Conwy and Britain as a whole can be traced to this period. Neolithic axe production grew around Craiglwyd, Penmaenmawr, with axe heads transported across the United Kingdom, including to the Midlands, Yorkshire and even London. During this period people would be buried in large stone tombs called burial chambers – these took many people to build. Some of the stones used

could weigh more than a family-sized car! One of the best examples of these tombs can be seen at Capel Garmon, a 'Cotswold Severn' tomb suggesting that people travelled here from outside Conwy to settle.

Over 4,000 years ago a new industry would come into play, fuelled by the demand for a new material – bronze, made by adding tin to copper. This material was very important in prehistoric culture, so much so that it even gave its name to a new period in British history – the Bronze Age. In Conwy county, between 1,800-600 BC, the largest prehistoric copper mine in the world developed on the Great Orme and began trading as far as France and Germany. Ideas of status and wealth became more widespread – communal graves such as stone tombs and burial chambers were abandoned in favour of barrows and individual furnished graves, in which bodies were buried with personal belongings. Barrows can be found all over the county, in places such as Betws yn Rhos, Cerrigydrudion and Caerhun. Other monuments of this period include standing stones; the function (and even the age) of most of these monuments remains unclear.

As the climate got colder, approaching the Iron Age, resources became fewer and those rare resources became more valuable. People built small, defended homesteads to protect what they had. Some of these were isolated lowland or valley dwellings whilst others were impressive hillforts on the uplands. These hillforts include places such as Caer Seion near Conwy, Bryn Euryn near Llandrillo yn Rhos and Mynydd y Gaer near Llannefydd. At this time early written sources talk about Celtic tribes such as the Ordovices, a tribe which owned much of central and north-west Wales by the late Iron Age.

People's lives were governed by the seasons and the climate as these affected every part of their lives. Entertainment probably included storytelling, music, painting and simple games. Sadly there is scarcely any evidence of toys from this period having been found in the county, suggesting they may have been made of perishable materials like wood, leather or straw.

In 48 AD the Romans invaded what we now call North Wales. They fought for control but struggled with the mountainous landscape and the guerrilla skills of the local tribes (Britons). The Romans built road networks into North Wales to help combat the natives, with a Roman milestone dedicated to Hadrian (dated 10th Dec. 120 – 9th December 121 AD) found near the county border at Llanfairfechan. They appear to have met little resistance from the British tribe east of the River Conwy, the Deceangli, but west of the River Conwy, the Ordovices continued to resist for 30 years. Archaeologists have found evidence of locals fighting back against the Romans at Bryn Euryn, and slingstones have been found at Caer Seion, Conwy. The Romans built a fort, Canovium (the site now known as Caerhun), to guard the strategic crossing of the River Conwy. The first fort was built of earthwork banks and ditches but was later rebuilt in stone. The fort was abandoned around 200 AD and then reoccupied until the late 4th century. It was not all conquest however, as the Romans introduced sanitation, literacy and coins. Roman coin hoards have been found near Penmaenmawr and Llandudno, with Roman lead mining at Capel Curig taking place at this time.

It is also at this time that we have the earliest record of board games being played in Conwy. A stone 'game board' with counters was found at Canovium. This would have kept the soldiers at the fort entertained during their breaks.

Little is known about the history of the area following the Roman withdrawal from Britain. It is assumed that native people may have returned back to an earlier Celtic lifestyle, but remained influenced by Roman culture. Christianity, introduced by the Romans in the third century, may have been one of these influences. Early Christian gravestones bearing Latin inscriptions have been found in the county, including at Bodafon (Conwy), and there are several post-Roman gravestones at Penmachno, one of the largest and most historically significant collections in Wales.

At this time the earliest Welsh kingdoms begin to form. At Deganwy, archaeologists have found evidence of trade with North Africa during the 5th Century AD. Gwynedd, then known as Venedotia, is mentioned on one of the gravestones at Penmachno. Once a small kingdom, Gwynedd would eventually take over most of north-west Wales by the time of the Norman Conquest. One of its earlier kings, Maelgwn Gwynedd, is mentioned by later English chroniclers. The area's increasing political power led to clashes with the neighbouring English kingdoms at this time.

By the late 8th century a huge earthwork boundary known as Offa's Dyke marked the border between Wales and the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia. This border would come to roughly mark the present-day boundary between Wales and England. Battles between the Welsh and English took place in Conwy county at this time – in 881 a fierce battle was fought between Welsh and Saxon armies near the western shores of the Conwy river at Cymryd, 1km south of Conwy. Following intense fighting the Welsh proved victorious, with the Saxon army forced to flee back to Mercia.

1066 AD-1699 AD

Following William I's conquest of England in 1066, Wales had become a country of infighting. The Welsh Law of Succession meant that land had to be divided between the sons or brothers of the deceased, rather than everything going to a single heir. This infighting made Wales weak and sometimes hindered attempts to provide a united resistance against invaders. William the Conqueror found it difficult to venture far into Wales due to the wild terrain. Eventually, he gave control of the area to the Marcher Lords who formed a 'border' between Wales and England of motte-and-bailey castles.

A time of princes in Wales followed, with civil war (more infighting) and English attacks, but eventually three quarters of Wales became united under Llywelyn ap Iorwerth. This Llywelyn would later become known as 'Llywelyn the Great' – he was said to have been born near the site of Dolwyddelan Castle in the 1170s, before fleeing to the Marches following infighting between his uncles vying for control of Gwynedd. At the tender age of 16 Llywelyn, with the help of his older cousins, would fight his uncle Dafydd at Aberconwy in 1193. Llywelyn was different from his forebears – he had married into English aristocracy with Joan, King John's illegitimate daughter, and received public recognition from the king of France in 1212 – which marked the growing recognition of Llywelyn and the kingdom of Gwynedd at this time. When Llywelyn died in 1240 he was buried in an ornate stone coffin at Aberconwy Abbey, now St Mary's Church

One of his staff, Ednyfed Fychan, was a prominent member of his court. He once held a property on the site of Llys Euryn, Rhos on Sea, now lost under the present day ruins of the site. The church at Rhos on Sea may have contained his own chapel area at one time – sealed arches on one of the northern walls are said to mark where it stood. However, Ednyfed Fychan is significant for another reason: his bloodline eventually lead to the birth of the Tudor dynasty.

In 1282 Edward I, the 'Conqueror' and 'Hammer of the Scots', invaded and took control of Conwy. He arranged for Aberconwy Abbey to be moved 13 miles upriver, to a site known as Maenan Abbey. The Abbey has since disappeared, having been largely demolished by the late 16th century, but recent work by archaeologists has helped uncover a few fragments from this once great

building. Edward I also abandoned Deganwy Castle and built the new Conwy castle across the River Conwy. The castle was designed by Master James of St George; he was a renowned castle designer responsible for many of the castles of the 'ring of iron' – the string of fortresses built in North Wales as a show of strength and domination by the English. Edward I was forced to take refuge in this castle during the winter of 1294 following a local uprising that year. Poor weather stopped food and rescue boats coming in, leading to the possibility of Edward I and his men perishing in the castle. Luckily for them, a change in the weather and the withdrawal of the Welsh rebellion army saved his life.

The last big Welsh rebellion from 1400 was led by Owain Glyndŵr with support from Rhys and Gwilym ap Tudur ap Goronwy. The Tudur brothers tricked their way into Conwy Castle, probably disguised as tradesmen, and managed to take control of the castle with only 40 men. They held on to the castle for 3 long months before surrendering it on favourable terms. The 'favourable' terms of surrender were negotiated by the Tudurs and included pardons – but not for 8 of their men who were executed by the English as part of the deal. Across Wales, 9 years of fighting would ensue with Glyndŵr securing many alliances (including with the French) and treaties in pursuit of a sovereign Wales. In 1409 Harlech Castle was taken by the English and most of Glyndŵr's family were taken prisoner (they all died in the Tower of London before 1415). One of the Tudur brothers, who had taken Conwy Castle 9 years earlier, was executed in Chester in 1410. Glyndŵr escaped and was never seen again.

Wales was divided into the Principality, governed by the Prince of Wales, the heir to the English throne, and some 40 Marcher Lordships. In 1535-42 Henry VIII declared Wales part 'of this Realm of England and Wales'. One reason for this was to stamp out lawlessness, though outlaws continued to be a problem in some parts of Wales for decades afterwards. Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries in England and Wales saw many abbeys, monasteries and important churches in Conwy County defaced – in 1536 Maenan Abbey was targeted – their precious metals were stripped and melted down, with stone and timber from the buildings carted off for building works elsewhere. Legend says that Llywelyn the Great's stone coffin was stripped bare of its gold and jewelled decoration, with Llywelyn's body being dumped into the river Conwy! The wooden rood screen from the abbey, as well as the base of Llywelyn's coffin, can now be seen at St Grwst's Church in Llanrwst.

Conwy Castle over time became less important strategically. By the 16th century the castle was a prison and a potential residence for important visitors to the area. The castle passed down to three successive (and related) gentlemen, each called Edward Conway. The castle saw military reuse during the Civil War, when it was used as a Royalist fortress by Archbishop John Williams. A dispute with one of King Charles I's commanders saw Conwy Castle fall to Parliamentarian hands by 1646, mainly due to John Williams himself who promptly changed sides. This action may have spared Conwy Castle, as it didn't face much damage in terms of 'slighting' compared to other castles in Wales such as Aberystwyth's. However the 3rd Edward Conway stripped the site of all valuable metals and left it to fall into disrepair.

The latter half of this period saw the beginnings of the Welsh gentry, a class above those who made up the lower classes at this time. The Welsh gentry of the 17th century however were poorer than their English counterparts, and more focused on the importance of pedigree than money. Nearly every Welsh estate at this time could trace their ancestry to the early Welsh princes and kings – a position which elevated their status locally. The accuracy of these statements however remains very much in doubt. One of the most important families of this period was the Wynn family, who owned properties and houses across the county.

Numerous important buildings from this period can be found in Conwy, both in the town and the county as a whole. These include Aberconwy House, a surviving 14th century merchant's house. Many of the old timber framed houses in Conwy were demolished by the 20th century as a means of 'modernising' the town with only a few survivors. Old prints and drawings can tell us much about what used to exist in the town at this time. Other important houses include Plas Mawr, built in 1576 by the Wynn family and one of the finest Elizabethan town houses in Britain. Its courtyard design was based on the fashion in continental Europe at this time. Another is Gwydir Castle, the fortified manor house just outside Llanrwst which was the main residence of the Wynn family.

It is around this time that the earliest references of ball games can be found. While there is no physical or written evidence that the game was played in Conwy in earlier times, references to ball games can be found across Roman and Dark Age Britain. These ball games would be played with an inflated pig or cow bladder, although by the 19th century rag and even paper balls were said to have been used in many parts of Wales. These games would often be played across fields and open areas, with whole villages said to have taken part! In South Wales a game similar to football was known as 'cnapan', and was very popular during the 17th century.

1700 AD-1837 AD

Across Europe a movement was growing that became known as the Age of Reason or Age of Enlightenment. It was a time of thought, reflection and theory both in the world of science and philosophy. These advancements circulated through the upper classes, but they took a long time to reach the poorer people. One of the most important changes was the idea that children should be seen as people and be given the right to flourish. Early in this period, children were treated cruelly. Parents (both poor and rich) thought that their role was to discipline, and even to break the child's will, physically and mentally. This continued to be the way children were brought up in rural areas for a long time. Children were expected to work as adults but were punished brutally for failing to live up to adult standards.

When things did begin to change, girls and boys continued to be treated very differently. Boys learned literacy and numeracy to prepare them for work, while girls were taught to be wives.

During this time, the rich got richer and the poor got poorer, again! The rich landowners started to introduce taxes, e.g. toll roads, and the church received tithes (payments of crops, meat or earnings (see below for more details). The taxes were high and left the poor struggling and often failing to meet the growing demands and unable to feed their own families. Often families would send their sons to the towns and cities to do an apprenticeship (and to learn a trade such as bookkeeping. However, some unscrupulous business owners would charge for this 'service' and then not provide the training or the standard of living promised.

These young boys were often left to fend for themselves and began to form gangs for protection – 'strength in numbers'. This was happening all over the UK and the unrest amongst working people began to stir up rebellions. At the same time, the Industrial Revolution (1750-1840) began, where manufacturing moved from building homes and using hand tools to building factories and using

machinery. Mass production made items cheaper, cheaper than the handmade versions. As a result, wages and living standards increased, even though poverty was still widespread.

Following the construction of the first modern road along the North Wales coast, prominent Scottish engineer and designer Thomas Telford was brought in to consult on the roads and highways in 1811. At this time many roads in Wales were nothing more than trackways, some of which followed Roman routes. The reason for road modernisation was not for the benefit of locals however – this new road would facilitate the quicker delivery of political messages from London to Ireland via Holyhead, Anglesey. At this time horse and carriage was the only means of reliable transport, a form of transport easily hampered by bad roads. Thomas Telford was tasked to design and supervise this road improvement – his work forms the basis of the A5 road we know of today. By 1819 improvements to the roads to Holyhead and a number of bridges were complete. The crossing at the mouth of the river Conwy, used by ferries up to this time, remained the only obstacle for Telford to overcome. To remedy this, Telford designed a suspension bridge – similar to its larger sister bridge at Menai Bridge, Anglesey. The bridge was completed in 1826.

The construction of these bridges would have had a massive impact on Conwy. These routes would help facilitate the growth of towns such as Llandudno, Penmaenmawr and other coastal regions, enabling tourists to visit the area. However, smaller local industries such as the Conwy ferry would quickly become obsolete, an industry which had existed in the area for hundreds of years.

Victorians 1837-1901

Mass production was still increasing, and factories grew in size and number. In Wales the landscape changed forever due to the mass mining of coal. Despite the official abolition of child labour, it was still happening. Young children could get into small spaces and were often working in the dark during daylight hours, leading to illnesses such as rickets (lack of Vitamin D from sunlight - there has been a reoccurrence in 2018-19 due to some children spending all of their time indoors on computers). A number of quarry accidents due to poor working conditions are recorded around Penmaenmawr: in early October 1865 Evan Hughes was killed after falling thirty yards off a steep rock face, having slipped off the rope he used to descend downwards. On the 15th of May 1877 another quarry worker, Robert Roberts, was killed by an explosion at Penpenmaen Quarry. Robert's brother Joseph, who was working with him at the time, survived but suffered serious injuries. Another quarry worker, Scotsman John Bostock, also shared Robert's fate at Graiglwyd Quarry only a few years later.

In Wales, landowners and politicians continued to introduce ways to tax people. The road tolls in Wales led to the Rebecca Riots https://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/history/sites/themes/society/politics_rebecca_riots.shtml in South and Mid Wales, , and the increased pressure on farmers to give more of their income to the landowners and the Church caused disturbances including the Mochdre Tithe Riots. Tithes were traditional payments which entitled the Church to a tenth of people's annual income. Traditionally the payments were made in kind in the form of crops, wool, milk and other produce, to represent a tenth of the yearly production. In 1836 a new piece of legislation, the Tithe Commutation

Act, was passed. This substituted the payment in kind with a cash payment. An agricultural depression in the 1870s and 1880s increased local tensions amongst farmers, who were unable and sometimes unwilling to pay these new fees – as a result a number of farms were seized by the government which led to even greater tensions. Between 1887 and 1888 things came to a head, with violent protests recorded in numerous places in Conwy County.

Mochdre was host to one of these conflicts. On 16 June 1887 a magistrate, church commissioner, solicitor, auctioneer and six cattle drovers arrived at Mochdre, accompanied by bailiffs, more than 100 police and a company of the Cheshire Regiment (c. 200 soldiers). Cannons were fired on a nearby hill, and violent clashes between police and locals took place. It wasn't until the reading of the Riot Act to the crowd (the punishment being execution for those caught) that the crowd began to disperse.

At the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign, most children only went to Sunday school and learned scriptures – not reading and writing. Rich children had nannies to teach them, although the inequality between girls and boys continued throughout the century. By the end of the Victorian age, it was compulsory for children under 12 years of age to go to school. Parents had to pay for school until 1891. Some couldn't afford it and others had the double struggle of losing a pair of helping hands in the family AND having to pay. Some parents refused to let their children go but ended up in court with fines. People were struggling to feed their families and wanted change, but those in charge, in London, refused to believe it and described the Welsh as 'greedy', 'barbarians' and 'backwards'. Some politicians even blamed the Welsh language. This led to a period of suppression of the Welsh language.

The Education Act of 1870 required elementary schools to be set up nationwide. However, there was no teacher training and few resources. The suppression of the Welsh language in schools caused untold problems. Most often the teacher and the children couldn't speak English and had no way of learning it. They struggled, often finding it impossible to learn anything. When the schools were inspected, the inspector was shocked at the standard of teaching and learning and noted that children needed to be 'taught English in order to be taught in English!'.

The Welsh Not was used in some schools as a way of punishing children if they spoke in Welsh. A child heard speaking Welsh was handed a stick or lump of lead or wore a plaque. The only way they could get rid of it was if they heard another child speak Welsh, told the teacher and then the Welsh Not was passed on. The child in possession of it at the end of the school day was punished physically (often with a cane). In some schools though, the punishment was dished out to anyone who had had the Welsh Not that day. In 1891 schooling became free to all and very slowly things started to improve.

Entertainment became increasingly important and bizarre. Exploration was opening up the world, introducing new cultures, ideas and animals. The coming of the railways brought artists from Liverpool and Manchester. These artists

arranged to meet a group of like-minded Welsh artists, and from this meeting a group was formed called the Cambrian Academy of Art, which has been based in the town of Conwy since 1886. The Academy's rapid growth was recognised the year after its formation, when in 1882 Queen Victoria commanded that it should be called the 'Royal' Cambrian Academy of Art. Circuses, theatres, zoos and shows like the one in The Greatest Showman added spectacle to the Victorian times. This had a huge influence on the toys that were made and how children played.

With improvements to rail technologies, transport saw further improvement in the region. The addition of a railway line to Holyhead was seen as the next logical step for transporting goods and messages across the country both to and from Ireland. A train would be able to travel a long distance far quicker than a carriage would – travel times by carriage might take several days whereas a train could do it in less than 24 hours. Robert Stephenson was tasked with the creation of a new railway line to Holyhead from Chester. The tubular bridge at Conwy, built in 1848, was used as a prototype for the Britannia Tubular Bridge on Anglesey, built in 1850. The advent of train transport would lead to further tourism in the area, but also caused the decline and subsequent loss of other industries such as droving – drovers would walk livestock over large distances to markets including across the English border. However, the new railway was not without incident – in 1868 a line of runaway wagons crashed into a steam train, The Irish Mail, outside of Abergele. The wagons, loaded with flammable paraffin oil, exploded – killing 33 people: one of the greatest rail disasters in Great Britain for its time.

Early 20th Century to WWII

In 1903 the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was started to help lobby for women's rights - the main aim was for women to be able to vote. The suffrage movement began. The first branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in Wales was formed in 1907, during a meeting in Llandudno at which Mrs Walton-Evans became the president of the branch. A summer school was set up by the NUWSS in the Conwy Valley which provided training for women in public speaking. Despite the activities of the suffrage movement, votes for women still failed to be a priority for the government before the war. But it was impossible to deny women the vote after their contribution to the war effort; in 1918 the workforce of the Newport Shell Factory was 83% women. The Representation of the People Act was passed in 1918. To conciliate the opponents of women's votes, only women over 30 who were householders or married to householders were allowed to vote, which meant that men remained the majority of the electorate. These changes also extended the voting age for all men over 21. For soldiers, the voting age was lowered to 19, and the rule that only men living in the country for 12 months prior was scrapped. This led to massive changes in voting demographics across the country; in Wales the electorate rose from 430,000 to 1,172,000. The Equal Franchise Act of 1928 brought the voting age for women down to 21, allowing women the same voting rights as men (excluding those serving in the military).

World War I (1914-1918)

Following a recruitment drive in Caernarfon, which left the Royal Welsh Fusiliers 100 men short, a further recruitment drive in Y Felinheli and Colwyn Bay saw mass crowds encouraged to enlist as 'Pals' battalions. These battalions consisted of men from the same village, town, football team or work establishment enlisting to create a 'Pals' battalion who went to war together. A drawback of the 'Pals' battalions was that a single village or town could lose a huge number of their men in a single day of battle. 30-40,000 Welsh people died during WWI, nearly all of them men.

World War II (1939-1945)

Over 1,000 men worked in secret during the night at Conwy Morfa on the part construction of the Mulberry Harbour. This portable floating structure helped towards the landing of 2.5 million men, 500,000 vehicles and 4 million tons of goods during the Allied invasion of Normandy.

Welsh engineer Hugh Iorys Hughes from Bangor was given the task of trialling designs for the Mulberry Harbour in Conwy. The area became a huge construction site and was taken over by workers making and testing the prototypes. Hughes foresaw that the Allies would need to build harbours from prefabricated components on distant beaches because the established French ports were too heavily guarded. Senior officials were alerted to his concept by his brother, a Royal Navy commander.

From 1942 to 1944, almost 1,000 men worked at Conwy Morfa, the beach and dune area north of the town where the estuary meets the sea. The structures were towed to France and linked to form two harbour walls.

A short distance away, Llandudno was the host to the Royal Artillery's Coast Artillery School, a sprawling training site atop the Great Orme's head. The site, used between 1940 and 1945, was once based at Shoeburyness (Essex), but moved to the area following German bombing of the east English coast during the war. The base was massive and covered a vast swathe of the summit of the Great Orme. It included a large number of workshops, stores, searchlight emplacements, and gun platforms for Naval and military training. At its peak in 1942 the site had over 700 personnel based here, including officers, trainees and other military staff. Meanwhile, the building on the Great Orme summit, previously a hotel for golfers, was used by the RAF as a radar station.

Post WWII - 2020

Following WWII, lots of things changed. Women, who had filled the jobs of men during the war, had proven themselves capable and were given more equality and rights (this is still ongoing!). Children had been protected as much as possible in the war but had witnessed the terror and destruction of it. The seeds of the peace movement were planted.

BS Bacon (Games) Ltd was opened sometime in the late 1940s-50s in Llanrwst. They employed lots of women and young people as well as men. They are best known for making the Conway Valley series of doll's houses. From 1947 a large house in Penmaenmawr called Penholm became home to the Rogark Doll Factory. By the mid-1950s there were 20 people employed there, while 100 local women also worked on the dolls at home. There were 50 more on a waiting list.

Throughout the 20th century, education changed and children had access to free, mixed schools. Corporal punishment in schools had been made illegal by the end of the century.

More and more homes had TVs and people were exposed to new ideas, entertainment and adverts. There were advances in technology and accidents that led to inventions. Dropping a spring in a car factory in America led to the 'slinky'. A chap developing wallpaper glue made the first playdough.

Fridges and freezers mean that food can be kept fresh for longer, and the development of plastic as a by-product of the petrochemical industry helps with preservation and hygiene.

Plastic starts to replace materials in every industry and home. People buy and consume more. No one questions where the plastic will go or how big the plastic mountain will grow! Calls for more sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic put pressure on governments and companies.

In 2019 climate change marches and protests were held all around the world, led by young people who wanted all governments to make the radical changes needed to save our planet. Is it working? Is there any progress?