

History of Tobacco

THE HISTORY OF SMOKING

Cigarettes are a very familiar sight in today's world but where do they come from? As you will see, if it weren't for the actions of a few historical figures then maybe smoking wouldn't play such a huge part in many people's lives today.

For approximately eight thousand years tobacco has grown on earth. Circa 6000BC – tobacco started growing in Central America.

MEDICIANL TOBACCO DISCOVERED IN THE NEW WORLD

1000 BC – Mayan civilisation began to smoke and chew the leaves of the tobacco plant. They also mixed the leaves with herbs and other plants to make medicines for the sick and wounded. Ancient carvings show a priest smoking a tube pipe so smoking was an important part of their religious rites; it was used to communicate with the spirits.



The Mayans dispersed throughout the Americas and wherever they went the tobacco plant went too.

Christopher Columbus was a great explorer and probably the first European to see the tobacco plant. In 1492 he arrived in 'San Salvador' where the natives thought that he and his men were divine beings sent by the Gods. They presented Columbus with gifts including wooden spears, wild fruits and dried leaves. Columbus did not smoke; indeed he threw the leaves away!!

That same year another European by the name of Rodrigo de Jerez landed in Cuba and it is him who takes the title of first European tobacco smoker.

PIPE SMOKING – THE PRESERVE OF THE RICH OR POSSESSED!!



On returning home to Spain Rodrigo de Jerez stunned people by smoking in front of them. Imagine seeing for the first time a man with smoke coming out of his mouth and nose!! It was thought by many that he had been possessed by the devil and consequently he was imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition for seven years. However whilst Rodrigo was incarcerated many Spaniards became regular smokers.

1530's – Enterprising Europeans began to cultivate large tobacco farms in the Caribbean. The tobacco was exported back to Europe.



1571 – Monardes, a Spanish doctor wrote a paper listing 36 illnesses which he believed could be cured by tobacco. They included toothache, falling fingernails, worms, halitosis and cancer!!



1600 - Sir Walter Raleigh reputedly gave Elizabeth I of England a pipe to smoke, it made her so sick that she believed she had been poisoned. Sir Raleigh had been introduced to pipe smoking whilst on a trip to America where he had met Ralph Lane the Governor of Virginia. The British Colony of Virginia subsequently provided a great source of tobacco for the United Kingdom.

1604 – King James I of England was the first to impose a heavy tax on tobacco.

17th Century – by the beginning of the century tobacco was being regularly imported into the UK. Pipe smoking was very trendy and many people believed it would improve their health.

1665 – In response to the Plague boys at Eton Public school were made to smoke a pipe every morning in order to make them strong!! One boy refused his pipe and was flogged.

THE BIRTH OF THE CIGARETTE - SMOKING BECOMES CONVENIENT

1815 - Cigars reached Britain following the end of the Napoleonic wars. The Houses of Parliament even had a smoking room.

1828 – The pure form of nicotine is discovered – soon after scientists realise it is a dangerous poison

1852 – Matches are introduced making smoking more convenient.

Mid 1800's – The cigarette as we know it began to be manufactured. Machines produced 200 cigarettes a minute and consequently the industry boomed. Cigarettes were now more easily affordable and available. Improvements in cultivation and processing had reduced the acid content in tobacco making smoking a more pleasant experience.

1856 - Soldiers returning from the Crimean war brought cigarettes from Turkey. A link between soldiers and smoking remained; they were even given cigarettes to smoke in order to keep them occupied during times of low morale. Smoking in the trenches spawned a whole generation of nicotine addicts.

1908 – Children's Act bans the sale of tobacco to children under 16

1916 – Tobacco is included in army rations during the First World War.

SMOKING ATTRACTS THE LADIES

1925 - Post War with the male population hooked the tobacco manufacturers changed tactics and began to target the other side of the market. Advertising and glamorous Hollywood films were used to encourage ladies to smoke.

Still their popularity soared. There were no health warnings and innocently a whole generation became consumed with the habit of smoking.

1939 – 1945 - Second World War – American President Roosevelt made tobacco a protected crop. The fighting troops were smoking so many cigarettes that there were shortages of tobacco in the Americas and UK.

1947 – A 43% increase in cigarette tax causes a 14% drop in consumption amongst British men.

HEALTH WARNINGS BEGIN

1950's - The first health warnings began – they had discovered the link between smoking and lung cancer. Drs Wynder and Graham published a study showing that of 650 men with lung cancer, 95% had been smoking for 25 years or more.

1958 – Salford opened the first health authority withdrawal clinic.

1964 – The US Surgeon General reported that smoking caused lung cancer. Advertising on television and radio was consequently banned. Health warnings on cigarette packets became compulsory.

1968 – A lettuce based non-tobacco cigarette brand is released. Without nicotine it fails to gain support.

1969 – The Radio Times implemented its own ban on cigarette advertising.

1971 – Smoking bans on public transport and in cinemas begins.

THE ANTI-SOCIAL ERA BEGINS

1980's – Health warnings began to change social attitudes and rising taxes took their toll.

1982 – The British Medical Association asks the Government to ban all forms of tobacco advertising.

1984 – National No Smoking Day is launched; it remains an annual event during March.

1987 – Following the King's Cross underground fire smoking and tobacco advertising is banned on the London Underground.

1988 – A USA court awarded damages against a tobacco company to the family of Rose Cipollone, a smoker who died from lung cancer.

1992 – The Home Office state that smoking can be listed as a cause of death on death certificates.

1996 – Guernsey's States become the first government in the British Isles to ban tobacco advertising.

1999 – The UK Government follow Guernsey's lead and ban tobacco advertising.

2003 – Large health warnings such as 'Smoking is highly addictive, don't start' appear on cigarette packets.

2004 – Ireland becomes the first country in the world to ban smoking in public places and workplaces.

2006 – Scotland becomes the first part of the United Kingdom to ban smoking in public and workplaces.

2007 – England becomes smoke-free, following Scotland's example.

As interesting as the history of smoking may be, the fact remains that humanity could have done without it!

Today, the tobacco industry survives despite a wave of negative publicity. Scientists bombard us with new evidence to prove the addictive and deadly affects of the cigarette. As legislation in developed countries tightens so the tobacco manufacturers turn their attentions to less informed developing countries.

By kind permission of GASP.org.uk
<http://www.gasp.org.gg/history-of-smoking.htm>

Useful Websites

The information in these factsheets is sourced from a range of reputable organisations. Contact details are given below, should teachers require more detailed information on any topic area, or wish to download additional teaching resources.

www.canstopsmoking.com

Developed by Health Scotland, this website provides information on the reasons behind why people smoke and what support is available if they are looking to quit. Local smoking cessation services can be found on this website.

www.ashscotland.org.uk

ASH Scotland is the leading voluntary organisation campaigning for effective tobacco control legislation. For 30 years, ASH Scotland has played a key role in raising awareness about tobacco use and its harmful effects and has contributed to the implementation of effective public health policies to help smokers to quit and to protect children from tobacco.

www.healthscotland.com

The national health improvement agency for Scotland.

www.ash.org.uk

ASH is a campaigning public health charity working for a comprehensive societal response to tobacco aimed at achieving a sharp reduction and eventual elimination of the health problems caused by tobacco. Includes visual and presentation resources available to download in PDF for teachers.

www.tobaccoinscotland.com

Working with key partners, ASH Scotland developed Tobacco Information Scotland to provide the best possible gateway to smoking and tobacco-related information in Scotland.

www.bbc.co.uk/health

Good interactive site for children, including the 'Body Tour' (www.bbc.co.uk/health/kids/btourshtml). Useful information source

for teachers/older adolescents on a range of addictions (www.bbc.co.uk/health/addictions).

www.gasp.org.uk

Web catalogue containing 350 stop smoking and tobacco control resources, including leaflets, books, activity packs, training materials, displays, models and posters.

www.mindbodysoul.gov.uk

Targeted at 14- to 16-year-olds, but there are several relevant sections for younger children, e.g. 'Scary facts about smoking', 'Vanity facts' and 'What's in a cigarette'?

www.quitbecause.org.uk

A guide for young people on how to give up smoking.

www.clearingtheairscotland.com

A Scottish Government website which provides the background and detailed guidance for the smoking ban in enclosed public places.

www.tobaccoagechangescotland.co.uk

Information on the change in age legislation.

www.roycastle.org/kats

Lively and interactive site supporting Kids Against Tobacco initiative, which was developed by the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation.

www.tobaccopapers.com

In 1999, the House of Commons Select Committee acquired access to internal documents of the main advertising agencies of the UK tobacco industry as part of their investigation into the conduct of the tobacco industry. Contains an interesting case study on the Tobacco Market and Young People.

www.who.org

The World Health Organization is the United Nations specialised agency for health. Includes *The Tobacco Atlas*.

www.globalink.org

A US site with a tobacco encyclopaedia.

References

Health Scotland – Tobacco Facts

www.ashscotland.org.uk

www.ash.org.uk

www.clearingtheairscotland.com/faqs/pdf/info-leaflet.pdf

www.treehugger.com/files/2007/02/smoking_envirom.php

www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/155323/0041722.pdf – *Towards a Future without Tobacco*

www.drugmisuse.isdscotland.org/publications/local/SALSUS_2006.pdf – Scottish Schools Adolescent Lifestyle and Substance Use Survey (SALSUS)

www.rdoc.org.uk/smoking_tobacco_risk.html – Mouth Cancer Foundation

www.mhra.gov.uk – Report of the Committee on Safety of Medicines Working Group on Nicotine

