

# Historian Ruth Goodman Presents New Podcast The Curious History of Your Home

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A new weekly podcast will investigate the remarkable hidden history of everyday objects in your home.

Made by award-winning history network, Noiser.

It's now available on BBC Sounds as well as all other podcast platforms.

The Curious History of Your Home takes you on a journey to discover how the ordinary items that surround you, all have their own remarkable story.

In each episode presenter Ruth Goodman delves into the intriguing tales behind commonplace items, revealing their extraordinary origins.

From the sleek and compact vacuum cleaner, once powered by horses and operated by four to six people, to the ancient Greek practice of tooth brushing with ground-up bones and oyster shells, each episode promises a captivating exploration of our domestic surroundings.

Launching with a fascinating exploration into Wallpaper, Ruth Goodman uncovers a wealth of captivating facts about this deceptively simple home decor item.

Did you know that the origins of paper trace back to Ancient China, credited to the inventive mind of Cai Lun, who drew inspiration from observing a wasp craft its nest? The concept of wallpaper, traversing the ancient Silk Road, gradually eclipsed tapestry hangings in popularity. Notably, historical figures such as Oliver Cromwell attempted to suppress its production, deeming it frivolous.

Venturing further into the Victorian era, designer William Morris left an indelible mark by creating stunning wallpapers. However, these exquisite designs concealed a perilous secret—vibrant green pigments infused with arsenic. Shockingly, these wallpapers became, quite literally, to-die-for, as physicians of the time attributed a spate of mysterious deaths to the arsenic content.

Talking on the series Ruth says: “Our homes are full of history, but not just in the dusty photo album in your cupboard. We are surrounded by household items that we often take for granted, but each of them has its own remarkable tales of discovery and invention. Everything from forks, wallpaper, curtains, to household pets, each has a story that’s just waiting to be told. And that’s exactly what I do in this new podcast series!”

Full episode line up including fun facts discusses are as follows:

Episode 1: Wallpaper - Oliver Cromwell considered wallpaper frivolous, so he banned its manufacture.

Episode 2: The Fridge - Ruth discovers how the ancient Persians had an eco-friendly way of storing ice... in the desert!

Episode 3: Baths - In medieval London, bathhouses known as stews doubled as brothels. Eventually Henry VIII shut them down to halt the spread of a deadly new disease – syphilis.

Episode 4: Lights - Prehistoric cave paintings were done by lamplight. Animal fat was burned in a stone receptacle to provide light to paint by, without producing too much smoke that would damage the paintings.

Episode 5: Washing Up - An early dishwasher inventor, William Howard Livens, was also the inventor of projectile weapons during WWI.

Episode 6: Forks - Ruth tells the stranger than fiction tale of how during the Industrial Revolution, a steelmaker found a new way to make forks which was so successful, a rival steelmaker snuck into his workshop disguised as a beggar, and stole away with his trade secrets.

Episode 7: Coffee - In 1600, the pope was asked to weigh in on whether coffee really was the invention of Satan – and he declared it safe to drink!

Episode 8: Gardening - Did you know that ancient Egyptians believed gardens could help guide them in the afterlife, and often took miniature gardens with them to their tombs?

Episode 9: Cats - In this episode Ruth discovers that in Medieval England, the most common name for cats was Gilbert.

Episode 10: Chairs - The first mass-produced chair went into production in Vienna in 1859. You might recognise this bistro style chair, because it's still in production today.

Speaking on the making of the series, Pascal Hughes, Noiser CEO says: "We are all about history at Noiser, we usually explore significant events and people from the past, but this podcast is all about uncovering the epic in the ordinary. Ruth has a special talent for bringing these stories to life, it's a dream pairing."

Listen to The Curious History of Your Home, each Tuesday, wherever you get your podcasts.

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About Ruth Goodman

Ruth Goodman is a social and domestic historian working with museums, theatre, television and educational

establishments. She has presented and consulted on several highly successful television series including “The Edwardian Farm”, “The Victorian Farm”, “Victorian Farm Christmas” “Tales from the Green Valley” and “The Victorian Pharmacy” (all for primetime BBC Two) as well as presenting a variety of films for The One Show and Coast. “The Victorian Farm” was one of BBC Two’s biggest hits in 2009 and was nominated for a Royal Television Society Award. The book of the series, also called “The Victorian Farm” went to No. 1 in The Sunday Times’s best seller list. These were followed by The Wartime Farm which regularly attracted up to 3 million viewers per week and was also accompanied by a successful book of the same title. In 2013 she presented Tudor Monastery Farm and earlier in the year ‘The Wonder of Dogs’ (BBC 2). She was the Judge on BBC 1’s ‘24 Hours in the Past’ and is the historical expert on BBC 2’s “Inside the Factory: How our Favourite Foods are Made (now in its 8th series). Ruth is currently Presenter on Channel 5’s “On the Farm”.

As well as her tv tie-in books, she has published “How to be a Victorian” and “How to be a Tudor” (Pub: Penguin Viking) both critically and commercially successful in the UK and abroad including the US and China. Her most recent books are “How to Behave Badly in Renaissance Britain” was published in 2018 by Michael O’Mara and “The Domestic Revolution – How the introduction of Coal into our homes changed Everything” was published in 2020.

As well as her television work, Ruth offers advisory services, lectures and holds practical workshops around the country. As a social historian she works with a whole range of people, institutions and museums such as The Weald and Downland, The Globe Theatre, Shakespeare’s Birthplace Trust, the National Trust and the heritage and drama departments of several universities.

Her particular interest is the domestic; how we lived our daily lives and why we did the things we did. How seemingly little things change the world. Our day to day routines have a huge cumulative effect on the environment; our shopping habits can sway the world’s patterns of trade and how we organise and run our family life sets the political tone of nations.

## About Noiser

Noiser are an award-winning podcast network reaching millions of listeners every week.

Creators of hit podcasts Real Dictators, Short History Of, Real Survival Stories, and more.

Specialising in history and true stories, Noiser are renowned for their immersive storytelling. Their style is unique in the podcast space, featuring interviews with top historians, mixed with dramatic narration, original music, and sound design for a cinematic audio experience.

Since launching in 2020, the independent podcast network has seen sustained growth and won multiple accolades including the Gold Award for Best Arts and Culture for hit series Real Dictators, and Bronze Award for Best Network at the British Podcast Awards in 2023.

The network has attracted the attention of Spotify, who have promoted the series Real Survival Stories via a dynamic billboard in Leicester Square, and the BBC who have acquired the non-exclusive rights to multiple Noiser originals to feature on BBC Sounds.

Noiser’s podcast History Daily has attracted the attention of tens of thousands every day, including Canadian American actor Ryan Reynolds. Reynolds who claims to have never missed an episode, went on to

host an April Fools' prank on the podcast, acting in as the host Lindsay Graham.

Noiser's podcast Short History Of was voted by Time Magazine as one of their top 10 best podcasts of 2022.

A collage of magazines

Website: [www.noiser.com](http://www.noiser.com)