

Npower reveals appliances save women 10 years of housework

Submitted by: pr-sending-enterprises

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To mark the end of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year, npower has launched an online archive called 'Remember How We Used To' on Historypin.com. Images submitted by the public show how lives have changed over the years, particularly in the home. In the 1950s, women would spend whole days cooking and cleaning as high-tech gadgets such as washing machines, tumble dryers, microwaves and vacuum cleaners were the preserve of a lucky few***.

To examine how lives have been transformed by energy over the last 60 years, the energy supplier (<http://www.npower.com/home/index.htm>) commissioned Warwick Business School to compile a report on the topic. Findings show that women of the 1950s spent an incredible 50 hours each week on housework - 12 more than the average full-time job today**. In comparison, women now spend just 18 hours a week on housework, 62% less than 50 years ago*.

According to Warwick Business School, these differences are largely due to mass electrification in the 1950s and the boom of labour-saving appliances in the 1960s. Homes today have three times as many appliances and gadgets compared to a typical 1950s household***.

In the 1950s, only 3% of homes had a refrigerator*** meaning that women would have to undertake food shopping on a daily basis and in the absence of a supermarket, and fresh food was bought from a number of individual shops. Meanwhile, only 7.5% of homes had the luxury of a washing machine***, meaning tubfuls of laundry were done manually and on a daily basis, while water for baths was often heated in a boiler powered by the coal fire.

Will Skillman from Warwick Business School explained: "Spending in excess of 50 hours a week** on housework is more than a full-time job, and so it's not surprising that there was less spare time for a career or hobbies for the 1950s housewife.

"Women would get up early to do an hour's housework before making the family's breakfast, and then, after walking the children to school, it would be back to the house to do the washing by hand before ironing and baking followed. The evening would be taken up with cooking the dinner and tidying up afterwards before preparing for the next day.

"The surge in appliances in the last 60 years has significantly reduced the time needed to maintain a home, resulting in an important revolution for women. Women now make up 46% of the workforce, compared to just 30% in 1952****."

"The daily routines for both men and women now are so different to that of our parents and grandparents. Today, 99% of homes have a fridge****, 94% a washing machine*** and 92% of homes are centrally heated*****. There's a risk that future generations may never know how life was before these appliances became commonplace, hence the introduction of the energy archive."

- ENDS -

Notes to editors:

All findings, unless stated otherwise, are attributed to the Warwick Business School.

*Based on a survey commissioned by npower and completed by Opinion Matters in December 2012 in which the responses of 978 UK adults (including 577 women) were recorded.

**1950 housework stats based on evidence compiled by the Cabinet Office in its paper 'Families in Britain: An Evidence Paper'. 1950s stats calculated on a 6% decline per decade.

www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Families%20Evidence%20Paper%20v0%2032%20181202.pdf

***Household appliances and the use of time: the United States and Britain since the 1920s (Bowden and Offer) onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468--?0289.1994.tb01399.x/pdf

**** Chartered Institute of Professional Development

www.cipd.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4C4C717A-2EDD-424E-9BD0-592367D444A6/0/5758WorkAuditWEB.pdf

*****Fashion Era www.fashion-era.com/1950s/1950s_8_society_never_had_it_so_good.htm

*****Lloyds Banking Group

www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/media/pdfs/research/2010/50_Years_of_Housing_UK.pdf

About npower:

npower is one of Britain's largest electricity suppliers and supplies gas, electricity and related services to 6.6 million customers across the UK. npower supplies green energy to Wembley Stadium and the Liberty Stadium in Swansea. npower is a market leader in renewable energy and sources the green energy for juice directly from renewable sources.

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