Tin Bath in front of the fire
Suggested Questions

- Did you have a bath like this in your house?
- Where was it kept?
- When did you have a bath? Morning? Evening?
- Did you have to share the bath?
- Was there an order to use it?
- What soap did you use?
- How was water heated?
- When did you get a fixed bath?
- Did you have hot water taps?
Old black lead range
Suggested Questions

• What is a black lead fire?
• Have you seen one?
• What was it used for?
• How was it cleaned?
• Who cleaned it?
• What was it cleaned with?
• What was cooked on it?
• What would the water be used for?
• What was it powered by?
• How was the fire made?
• What did you need to make it?
• If you didn’t have one how did your family heat the house, heat water, cook?
Dolly tub, rubbing board, posser
Possing is an older word than dolly; it means beat down or thrust. There are early 17th century references to linen being possed, and to possing tubs, and the big Oxford English Dictionary quotes a 1764 source describing a posser as a "log of wood". The first written mention of a washing dolly is in the last decade of the 18th century, when the word started to apply to rods or paddles in early washing machines. The plain wooden stick used for lifting the laundry from a tub of boiling water to a cold rinsing tub was also called a dolly or dolly-stick.

- Have you used any of these?
- Seen anyone else use one?
- How was your washing done when you was a child?
- What products were used to clean the laundry?
- Who did the washing?
- Was it on a set day?
Mangle
A mangle or wringer is a mechanical laundry aid consisting of two rollers in a sturdy frame, connected by cogs and, in its home version, powered by a hand crank or electricity. While the appliance was originally used to wring water from wet laundry, today mangles are used to press or flatten sheets, tablecloths, kitchen towels, or clothing and other laundry

- Did you have one in your home?
- How did use it?
- Did anyone have a mangle related injury?
- They are now used in car washes! And can be collectable!
Outside toilets
The ‘privy’, ‘Outhouse’ ‘Long Drop’, was within living memory generally an outside feature of the house. Until late Victorian times, houses were not constructed to include toilet facilities. Mains water and sewage systems hardly existed and one’s toilet was a function carried out using a chamber pot stored under the bed. If there was a toilet room it would be easier and less smelly to site it in the garden where the disposal of waste (often using council-run dung carts) was easier to manage.

So when the flushing toilet did arrive it was normal to add it on as an optional extra to the standard house layout, as a lean-to. It took Government action as late as the post-war era to see indoor toilets be made a minimum requirement for a new dwelling, and council grants in the 70s spurred many indoor conversions into bathrooms and shower rooms that incorporated a toilet. The cold and dingy outdoor facilities became sheds, or were swept away in favour of a conservatory or a kitchen extension.

But they have now become fashionable again! We are today encouraged to live the ‘indoor/outdoor life’ (when the weather permits) and whether it be for children running around the garden, barbeque functions, parties or for ‘tradesmen’, the outdoor toilet is extremely handy to have.
Listening to the wireless
Early Wireless (radio)

Foxhole radio

World War 2 created widespread urgent need for radio communication, and foxhole sets were built by people without access to traditional radio parts. A foxhole radio is a simple crystal sets radio receiver cobbled together from whatever parts one could make (which were very few indeed) or scrounged from junked equipment. Such a set typically used salvaged domestic wiring for an antenna, a double-edged safety-razor blade and pencil lead (or bent safety-pin) for a detector, and a tin can, magnet and some wire for an earpiece. Razor blades of the era were chemically coated ("blued") and this coating could function as a diode, in the same way that a galena-catwhisker detector operates.

Wooden consoles

The console radio was the center piece of household entertainment in the era of radio. They were big and expensive, costing hundreds of dollars in the late 1930s and were often coupled with a phonograph. Tending to be a major acquisition for a middle-class family, these large radios were usually placed in living rooms. Most early console radios were tall and narrow, but as the years went on they got shorter and wider in accordance with the Art Deco design precepts which had become popular.

Consumer console radios were made by RCA, Philco, General Electric, Montgomery Ward (under the Airline brand name), Sears (under the Silvertone brand name), Westinghouse, Motorola, Zenith and others. Brands such as Zenith made a few high priced models ("Stratosphere") mainly produced moderately priced radios

- What radio shows did you listen too?
- Where was your radio kept?
- What programmes (Home Service, Light Programme)
First Televisions
Television in the United Kingdom started in 1936 as a public service which was free of advertising. Currently, the United Kingdom has a collection of free-to-air, free-to-view and subscription services over a variety of distribution media, through which there are over 480 channels for consumers as well as on-demand content. There are six main channel owners who are responsible for most material viewed. There are 27,000 hours of domestic content produced a year at a cost of £2.6 billion. Since 24 October 2012, all television broadcasts in the United Kingdom have been in a digital format, following the end of analogue transmissions in Northern Ireland. Digital content is delivered via terrestrial, satellite and cable, as well as over IP. As of 2003, 53.2% of households watch through terrestrial, 31.3% through satellite, and 15.6% through cable.

12 October 1951: BBC TV North transmitter opens, serving the North of England. 15 January 1952: BBC TV Scotland transmitter opens. 2 June 1953: Biggest outside broadcast to date: Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. 22 September 1955: Commercial television (ITV) starts broadcasting in the London area.
Telephones
Alexander Graham Bell (March 3, 1847 – August 2, 1922) was a Scottish-born scientist, inventor, engineer, and innovator who is credited with inventing and patenting the first practical telephone. He also founded the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) in 1885.

Bell’s father, grandfather, and brother had all been associated with work on elocution and speech and both his mother and wife were deaf, profoundly influencing Bell’s life’s work.[8] His research on hearing and speech further led him to experiment with hearing devices which eventually culminated in Bell being awarded the first U.S. patent for the telephone in 1876. Bell considered his invention an intrusion on his real work as a scientist and refused to have a telephone in his study.

Many other inventions marked Bell’s later life, including groundbreaking work in optical telecommunications, hydrofoils, and aeronautics. Although Bell was not one of the 33 founders of the National Geographic Society, he had a strong influence on the magazine while serving as the second president from January 7, 1898, until 1903

Alexander Graham Bell stumbled upon the idea for a whole new form of communication while searching for ways to improve the code-based telegraph system. Researching ways to send multiple telegraph signals down a single wire, he was struck with the idea of a “harmonic telegraph”, that would transmit sound rather than visual information. From here, he spent many years experimenting with the transmission of non-verbal sounds, until in 1875, he used the first telephone machine to call his assistant, Thomas Watson, with the immortal words, “Mr. Watson -- come here -- I want to see you”. One year later, he was able to demonstrate his invention to the world at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, and within a decade, telephone exchanges began popping up around the USA, allowing telephone signals to be directed to specific receivers.

The Growth of Home Phones

By the 1930s, it was common for affluent homes in the UK to have their own telephones, with networks spreading far enough for calls to be made across several cities. The majority of callers continued to use local phone boxes or pay phones until the 1950s and 60s, when improvements in home phone technology made systems cheaper and more easily available. Alongside push-button telephones, which replaced the old fashioned rotary or dial phones, the 60s introduced the answer machine, making it possible for callers to leave short verbal messages if the phone wasn’t picked up. The 1980s brought a particularly insightful addition to the home phone family, with the invention of the cordless handset, allowing callers to move around the house while talking on the phone, and paving the way for later mobile phone technology.
Irons
Blacksmiths started forging simple flat irons in the late Middle Ages. Plain metal irons were heated by a fire or on a stove. Some were made of stone, like these soapstone irons from Italy. Earthenware and terracotta were also used, from the Middle East to France and the Netherlands.

Flat irons were also called sad iron or smoothing irons. Metal handles had to be gripped in a pad or thick rag. Some irons had cool wooden handles and in 1870 a detachable handle was patented in the US. This stayed cool while the metal bases were heated and the idea was widely imitated. Cool handles stayed even cooler in "asbestos sad irons". The sad in sad iron (or sadiron) is an old word for solid, and in some contexts this name suggests something bigger and heavier than a flat iron. Goose or tailor's goose was another iron name, and this came from the goose-neck curve in some handles. In Scotland people spoke of gusing (goosing) irons.

You'd need at least two irons on the go together for an effective system: one in use, and one re-heating. Large households with servants had a special ironing-stove for this purpose. Some were fitted with slots for several irons, and a water-jug on top.

At home, ironing traditional fabrics without the benefit of electricity was a hot, arduous job. Irons had to be kept immaculately clean, sand-papered and polished. They must be kept away from burning fuel, and be regularly but lightly greased to avoid rusting. Beeswax prevented irons sticking to starched cloth. Constant care was needed over temperature. Experience would help decide when the iron was hot enough, but not so hot that it would scorch the cloth. A well-known test was spitting on the hot metal, but Charles Dickens describes someone with a more genteel technique in *The Old Curiosity Shop*. She held "the iron at an alarmingly short distance from her cheek, to test its temperature..."

The same straightforward "press with hot metal" technique can be seen in Egypt where a few traditional "ironing men" (*makwagi*) still use long, heavy pieces of iron, pressed across the cloth with their feet. Berber people in Algeria traditionally use heated metal ovals on long handles, called *fers kabyles* (Kabyle irons) in France, where they were adopted for intricate ironing tasks.
Allotments
Allotments have been in existence for hundreds of years, with evidence pointing back to Anglo-Saxon times. But the system we recognise today has its roots in the 19th century - during the rapid industrialisation of the country - when land was given over to the labouring poor for food growing.

- Did you have an allotment? Do you now?
- What did you grow on your allotment?
- Where was it?
- How did you pay for it?
- Did you give fruit and veg to family?
- Did you/do you have a green house? What did you grow?
Washing lines
Suggested Questions

- Did you/do you put clothes to dry in the street/garden?
- As a child/young adult did you have a set day to wash laundry? Was it Monday?
- How did the wash lines get put up across streets? (pully systems. Props)
  - Did it cause any issues? (cars, lorries)
  - Do you prefer clothing dried outside?
- Wash day was a full day of work before washing machines esp with terry nappies! Did you use Terry nappies? How did you wash them? They are coming back as they are better for the environement and cheaper than disposable nappies?
- When did you get a twin tub/washing machine?
  - Where was washing done?